

3/1/26

Japanese Loan Words

Estimated play time: Approximately 15 minutes

Number of players: Unlimited

Supplies needed: Scoring board/pad; noisemakers

Suitable for visually impaired players.

Overview:

In English, we have borrowed many words that originated in Japan, including such common words as *bonsai*, *kimono*, and *futon*. How much more Japanese do you think you know?

Instructions:

1. This game can be played by individuals or in teams.
2. Read the first definition. Discussion is permitted among teammates. Prior to the start of the game, a method to signal when a team is ready to answer must be determined. Ringing bells and New Year's blowers are just two inexpensive noisemakers. Raised hands work, but the host must be vigilant to watch for whose hand went up first. The host always has the final say in any disputes.
3. After a player/team is recognized as the first to signal, they may give an answer. If the first answer is incorrect, the other teams may "buzz" in and answer.
4. Scoring: Give 10 points for each correct answer.

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QUESTIONS

1. In this Japanese wrestling sport, the heavyweight class begins at 253 pounds.
2. Translated as "divine wind," this word referred to a Japanese soldier in World War II who crashed an airplane into a target, resulting in his own death.
3. This Japanese number placement puzzle became an international hit in 2005.
4. What is the Japanese word for a large wave caused by earthquakes or other underwater disturbances?
5. The literal translation of this word is "great prince" or "high commander." In English, it describes a wealthy business leader.
6. Gilbert and Sullivan knew this dated term for "emperor," since they wrote a comic opera about one that premiered in 1885 and included the songs "A Wand'ring Minstrel I" and "Three Little Girls from School Are We."
7. While taekwondo is Korean and kung fu is from China, five of the top ten martial arts taught in the US are of Japanese origin. Can you name two of them?
8. This term for "head" or "group leader" was brought back to the US by servicemen stationed in Japan during the occupation following World War II.
9. In English usage, this word refers to the many ornamental varieties of the common carp; in Japan it simply means "carp."
10. How do you say "goodbye" in Japanese?
11. What is shiatsu?
12. What is the name of the Japanese art of paper folding?
13. "Skosh," which is often used in English, comes from "sukoshi." What does "skosh" mean?

All of the remaining words are food or cooking related:

14. What is a hibachi (hib•AH•chee)?
15. What is ramen?
16. What is sake (SA•key)?
17. What is tempura?
18. What is a bento box?
19. What is daikon (DIE•con)?
20. What is edamame (ed•ah•MA•me)?
21. What is gyoza (ghee•OH•za)
22. What is panko?
23. What is sukiyaki?
24. What is udon (OO•don)?
25. What is wasabi?
26. What is yakitori?

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Japanese Loan Words

ANSWERS

1. Sumo
2. Kamikaze
3. Sudoku
4. Tsunami
5. Tycoon
6. Mikado
7. Aikido, judo, jujitsu, karate, ninjutsu
8. Honcho
9. Koi
10. Sayonara
11. A Japanese massage
12. Origami
13. A small amount; a bit or a few.
14. A small, portable charcoal grill.
15. The Japanese version of Chinese noodle soup.
16. An alcoholic beverage brewed from rice. In Japanese, the word commonly refers to alcoholic drinks in general.
17. A classic Japanese deep-fried batter-dipped seafood and vegetables. The word is probably from the Portuguese *tempêro*, meaning seasoning, although it is now considered a Japanese word.
18. A single-portion takeout meal; a box lunch.
19. A kind of white radish.
20. Soybeans boiled whole in the green pod and served with salt.
21. Gyoza is the Japanese name for Chinese dumplings, also called pot stickers in English (if they are fried).
22. Japanese white bread flakes. Panko is made from bread without crusts; thus it has a crisper, airier texture than most types of breading found in Western cuisine.
23. A one-pot Japanese dish consisting of thinly sliced beef, tofu, noodles, mushrooms, and vegetables.
24. A type of thick wheat-based noodle.
25. Also known as Japanese horseradish, wasabi is a pungent green condiment commonly served with sushi.
26. A Japanese chicken kebab.