

# Compelling Conversations



*Questions & Quotations for  
High-Intermediate Japanese English Language Learners*

## Chapter Twelve: Exploring Cities



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# 12

## EXPLORING CITIES



### VOCABULARY WARM-UP

Which words do you already know? Underline them, and circle the words you are unsure about. Then review your answers with a partner.

archaeology      capital      commute      hometown      landmark  
renovate      skyscraper      slum      tourist attraction      zoning

### ACTIVITY 1: SHARING EXPERIENCES

Cities can be confusing, exciting, and fast paced. Some people love living in cities; some people prefer living in the countryside. Share your experiences and feelings about cities with your partner.

1. Do you still live in your hometown? Can you describe it?
2. What do you like to do in cities? What makes them fun?
3. Which big Japanese cities have you visited?

4. How can people find tourist information about Japanese cities? What do you recommend for Japanese tourists? For international tourists?
5. How do people usually get around in Japanese cities? What are some advantages of public transportation? Disadvantages?
6. What's the most northern city you have visited in Japan? Can you tell me a bit about the place?
7. What makes the capital of Japan an attractive city? Do you have a favorite area?
8. What adjectives describe Tokyo? Why did you choose them?
9. Where do you suggest international tourists visit? Why?
10. Do you recommend that tourists stay in hotels or *ryokans*? Why?
11. Why do you think so many tourists love to go to Kyoto? How has Kyoto changed over the last decade?
12. Which Japanese cities have important archaeological areas?
13. Can you compare Tokyo to Osaka? How are they similar? How are they different?
14. What about Himeji and Hiroshima? How are they similar? How are they different?
15. How is Tokyo preparing to host the 2020 Olympics? Are you excited about the 2020 Tokyo Olympics? Why?

## ACTIVITY 2: EXPANDING VOCABULARY

Look at the definitions and example sentences below. Do the definitions match what you and your partner expected in the vocabulary warm-up list? If not, what is different?

**archaeology**, *noun*: the study of historic sites and ancient buildings.

- ◆ *Many Japanese like to visit Egypt because of the fascinating archaeology.*

**capital**, *noun*: money invested and used to create more wealth.

- ◆ *Adequate capital makes opening a new business much easier.*

**capital**, *noun*: a city that is the seat of government in a country or state.

- ◆ *Tokyo is the charming capital of Japan.*

**commute**, *noun*: the time or path of travel to your job from your home and back every day.

- ◆ *My commute to campus is only 20 minutes by scooter.*

**commute**, *verb*: to travel as a commuter

- ◆ *Sachiko uses public transportation to commute to work.*

**hometown**, *noun*: the city where a person was born.

- ◆ *Kasuga is my hometown, but I have lived in Fukuoka for three years.*

**landmark**, *noun*: a place of historical or cultural importance; a significant event or idea.

- ◆ *The Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, and the Statue of Liberty in New York City are urban landmarks well-known around the world.*

**renovate**, *verb*: to make an object or place new again.

- ◆ *The government announced several projects to renovate the ancient site.*

**skyscraper**, *noun*: a high rise building in a city; a tall office tower.

- ◆ *In 2010, Dubai built the tallest skyscraper in the world.*

**slum**, *noun*: the poor, overcrowded section of a city.

- ◆ *This fashionable neighborhood used to be a slum.*

**tourist attraction**, *noun*: an interesting sight of cultural or historical importance that brings travelers to a spot.


- ◆ *Kiyomizu-dera Temple has become one of Kyoto's greatest tourist attractions.*

**zoning**, *noun*: laws that restrict how property can be used in a specific area.

- ◆ *The new zoning laws will renovate the run-down area and reduce traffic jams on the narrow streets.*

### ACTIVITY 3: ASK MORE QUESTIONS

- A. Select five vocabulary words from the list above and write a question for each word. Remember to start your question with a question word (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, Is, Are, Do, Did, Does, etc.). You will also want to end each question with a question mark (?). Underline each vocabulary word.

 Example: What are some local landmarks?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

B. Take turns asking and answering questions with your partner or group members.

**ACTIVITY 4: PHOTOGRAPHS TO START CONVERSATIONS**

Photographs capture moments, inform viewers, and start conversations. In small groups, examine the photograph and discuss the questions that follow.



1. Can you describe this picture?
2. What does LAX stand for?
3. Have you ever seen this sign in movies? In magazines? In books?

4. Have you ever been in Los Angeles? What are some of your impressions of that city?
5. What are some airports you know?
6. Which airport is the best? Which airport is the worst? Why?

**ACTIVITY 5: PARAPHRASING PROVERBS**

A. Read the following proverbs, and discuss them with your partner. What do they mean? Circle your favorites. Explain your choices.

1. He who is always right will never get around the world. —Japanese

Meaning: .....

.....

2. The city for wealth; the country for health. —English

Meaning: .....

.....

3. Rome wasn't built in a day. —Latin

Meaning: .....

.....

4. A city that sits on a hill can't be hidden. —Greek

Meaning: .....

.....

5. If you are traveling toward the East, you will inevitably move away from the West. —Japanese

Meaning: .....

.....

B. Can you add another proverb related to places to live?

1. ....

## ACTIVITY 6: PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

You can speak English with a distinctly Japanese accent and still be clearly understood. However, reducing confusing sounds can greatly improve your communication with English speakers and help to eliminate want to end each question with a question mark.

### FINAL “I” SOUND SPELLED WITH “Y”

How can we tell the difference between the noun and verb forms? Sometimes the adjective form of a word will end with a final “i” sound—spelled with a “y”. This exercise will review several words that follow this common pattern. English students often learn how to spell adjectives ending in “y” for this reason.

### FINAL “K” AND FINAL “KI”

Much like the previous chapter, the difference between ending a word with a “k” sound or a “ki” sound can also be the difference between the word being a verb or a noun, or being an adjective.

When words end with a “k” sound, you do not need to make any voice. Simply pause the air in the back of your throat and let a small blast of air out quickly.

No “i” sound (noun)	“i” sound (adjective)
fun	funny
luck	lucky
yuck	yucky
smell	smelly
sun	sunny
smoke	smokey
spike	spiky
stick	sticky
pick	picky
gum	gummy

English, of course, is full of exceptions. Adding a final “i” sound to the noun “monk” gives us the very different noun “monkey.” The correct adjective form of “monk” is “monkish.”

No “i” sound (noun)	“i” sound (noun)
monk	monkey

**Culture Corner:  
Names, Nicknames, and a Final “y”**

Sometimes this same final “y” sound makes the difference between a male and female name, such as Jack and Jackie. However, it’s more common for some males to add a final “y” in a nickname to show friendliness. For instance, some American politicians use a nickname to show a more “man of the people” image. U.S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy, the brother of U.S. President John F. Kennedy, was also known as “Bobby” Kennedy.

Almost a decade later, a little-known former southern governor asked voters and journalists to call him “Jimmy” Carter as he successfully ran for president. Likewise, the rock musician Billy Joel was born William Martin Joel, and the American actor and producer Johnny Depp was born John Christopher Depp II.

Can you think of some other celebrities who chose nicknames that end in the “y” sound for professional careers?

Jack	Jackie
Robert/ Bob	Bobby
Tom	Tommy
Bill	Billy
James/Jim	Jimmy
John	Johnny
Shigemitsu	Shiggy



Review the words below and use the correct word to complete the sentences. With your partner, find the best answer to fill in the blanks. Hint: Each sentence only uses one word.

Jack	Jackie
luck	lucky
monk	monkey
spike	spiky
stick	sticky

1. My brother has a lot of ..... Last year he won the lotto!
2. Seiji is very serious and religious. When he grows up he will probably be a Buddhist .....
3. Why is the ground so .....? Did somebody spill juice?
4. Akihiro couldn't tell if the giant spider was dead, so he decided to move it with a .....
5. My best friend growing up was a girl named .....

### **ACTIVITY 7: THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES**

Let's continue to explore cities with one or two classmates. Use complete sentences to respond.

1. What do you expect to find in a modern city? Why?
2. Have you traveled outside of Japan? Where did you go?
3. Can you think of some famous urban landmarks? Which ones have you been to?
4. Have you ever taken a tour? When? Where did you go? What attractions did you see?
5. Do you feel safer in cities or in rural areas? Why?
6. How does archaeology help us understand cities?
7. Do you often go to museums in cities? Which ones have you visited? Which museums would you like to see and why?
8. Has any place surprised you? How was it different from what you expected?
9. Where would you like to travel next? Why?

10. Can you list five cities that have hosted the Olympic Games? Do you remember when? Do you prefer to watch the summer or the winter Olympic Games?
11. How do most people commute to work in Japan? Is it by car, by train, or by bus? Why?
12. Which city has the tallest skyscraper in Japan? Would you like to go to the top floor?
13. Are you a city person? Why?
14. What are the advantages of living in the suburbs? What are the advantages of living in cities?
15. In your opinion, what makes a city feel civilized? Why?

### ACTIVITY 8: DISCUSSING QUOTATIONS

Take turns reading these quotations out loud and discuss them with your partner. Do you agree with the quotation? Disagree? Why? Afterwards, pick a favorite quotation by circling the number and explain your choice. Remember to give a reason or example.

1. “Walk around Tokyo and all you see are people trying to sell you something.”  
—*Natsuo Kirino (1951–), Japanese novelist*  
 Agree     Disagree  
Why? .....
2. “The people are the city.”  
—*William Shakespeare (1564–1616), English playwright*  
 Agree     Disagree  
Why? .....
3. “City life: millions of people being lonesome\* together.”  
—*Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), American writer*  
 Agree     Disagree  
Why? .....
4. “I’d like to design something like a city or a museum. I want to do something hands on rather than just play golf.”  
—*Brad Pitt (1963–), American Actor*  
 Agree     Disagree  
Why? .....

5. “Compared to U.S. cities, Japanese cities bend over backward to help foreigners. The countryside is another matter.”

—Charles C. Mann (1955–), American journalist

Agree     Disagree

Why? .....

6. “Los Angeles is a city no worse than others; a city rich and vigorous and full of pride, a city lost and beaten and full of emptiness.”

—Raymond Chandler (1888–1959), American author of crime stories

Agree     Disagree

Why? .....

7. “I go to Paris, I go to London, I go to Rome, and I always say, ‘There’s no place like New York. It’s the most exciting city in the world now.’”

—Robert DeNiro (1943–), American actor

Agree     Disagree

Why? .....

8. “A great city is that which has the greatest men and women.”

—Walt Whitman (1819–1892), American poet

Agree     Disagree

Why? .....

9. “Until we’re educating every kid in a fantastic way, until every inner city is cleaned up, there is no shortage of things to do.”

—Bill Gates (1955–), American entrepreneur

Agree     Disagree

Why? .....

10. “Every one of a hundred thousand cities around the world had its own special sunset and it was worth going there, just once, if only to see the sun go down.”

—Ryu Murakami (1952–), Japanese novelist and director

Agree     Disagree

Why? .....

My favorite quote was: .....

.....

Why? .....

## ACTIVITY 9: TELL ME ABOUT JAPAN ... IN ENGLISH

People want to know about Japan and Japanese culture. Next time you travel abroad or meet a foreigner, you can tell them about a Japanese tradition in English.



Kinkakuji is one of the most famous temples in all of Japan. What do you know about The Golden Pavilion Temple?

For example: Kinkakuji was founded in 1398 by Yoshimitsu Ashikaga.

Think of three more details visitors to Japan might want to know about Kinkakuji.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

With your partner, can you ask and answer three questions about the Kinkakuji?

For example: What is the best time of year to visit Kinkakuji in your opinion?

- 1Q. ....  
A. ....
- 2Q. ....  
A. ....
- 3Q. ....  
A. ....

**SEARCH and SHARE**

**Exploring a Foreign City!**

Student Name: ..... Date: .....

Class: ..... Teacher: .....

Let’s explore a foreign city together! Find an article in English about a city outside of Japan. Carefully read the article and summarize it, then bring the article to class and share some information with your classmates.

Title: .....

Author: ..... Publication date: .....

Length: ..... Publication: .....

1. What’s the main idea?
2. How many sources were quoted?
3. Were there any illustrations? What kind?
4. What did you learn about the country where this city is located?
5. What was the most interesting part for you? Why?
6. Write down five new vocabulary words, idioms, or expressions.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
7. How would you rate the article on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?
8. Why did you choose this article?

**“The bold adventurer succeeds the best.”**  
—Ovid (43 B.C.E.–17 C.E.) Roman poet