

# SOAS LANGUAGE CENTRE RESOURCES ROOM

## *LEARNERS' VOICES* Techniques for Learning Japanese

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Below are summarised techniques which may be helpful to beginner-intermediate learners of Japanese:

### **VOCABULARY** 言葉

- Write each word down as soon as you come across it.
- Might be helpful to group or categorise the new vocabulary (e.g. food, clothes etc).
- For difficult/complicated vocabulary, construct simple yet memorable sentences. In some cases, the more absurd the sentence, the more memorable it becomes.
- Create flash cards for each vocabulary. Practise constructing a sentence for each word as you drill them. Look for example Japanese flash cards in the Resources Room.

### **SPEAKING/LISTENING** 話す・聞く

- Try and expose yourself to as much spoken Japanese as possible. For example, Japanese friends/language exchange partners, Japanese TV/films. Watch the off-air recordings of news and soap operas in the Resources Room.
- Again, don't be overwhelmed by details, try and focus on the main points of what you are listening to. Paying attention to keywords, speech nuances, tone of voices and any visual clues.
- Try and speak a little everyday, either to friends or to yourself (recording yourself is very helpful!). Maybe you can try and order a meal in Japanese, or set yourself a topic and speak about it for 3-5mins.

### **KANJI** 漢字

- Try writing new kanji which you come across.
- For each new kanji you come across, look up five or so words associated with it.
- Create flashcards which include both the Chinese and Japanese reading (ON/KUN-yomi) and a few compound nouns for each kanji.
- Drill yourself using the flashcards, remembering to write down at least one sentence for each kanji you drill yourself on.
- Make notes on any kanji which you are having problems remembering and work through them after the drill.
- Remember to drill yourself on old kanji regularly, as they are easy to forget!

### **READING/WRITING** 読む・書く

- Read various articles, texts, etc. Newspaper articles are particularly excellent for keeping up to date on current affairs and exposure to new words. Free magazines and newspapers can be picked up from places like Japanese restaurants, or the Japan Centre. Browse the Internet for online editions of newspapers.
- Don't get caught up with details, try and focus on the main points of the article/text.
- Make a note of new words/kanji which you come across, and memorise them using the techniques outlined above.
- Write short articles yourself, mainly trying to include words/kanji which you've already studied.