

# Intercultural Understanding Guide: Japanese Culture

## Geographic context:

- Japan is an island country in East Asia and the official language is Japanese.

## Religion:

- Both Shintō and Buddhism each became the state religion at different points in Japanese history.
- 69.0% of the population practices Shintō, 66.7% practice Buddhism, 1.5% practice Christianity and 6.2% practice other religions.

## Values:

- Behaviour and communication in Japan tends to be informed by the concept of face, which refers to a person's reputation, pride and honour, and can be saved or lost based on one person's behaviour.
- Humility is one of the most important cultural aspects.

## Communication style:

- Japanese people are indirect communicators. Refusals, negative replies and comments are often avoided.
- Interrupting conversations is considered rude in Japanese culture.
- People generally greet each other by bowing.
- Nodding is also very important in social life while listening to show respect to others.
- A handshake is appropriate upon meeting.

## Social norms/structure/hierarchy:

- Japanese society is based on a hierarchy that emphasises age and social standing.
- An honorific form of speaking is considered as a necessary way of paying respect through everyday speech.

## Demographics in Australia:

- According to the 2021 Australian Census, there are 42,421 Japanese currently living in Australia. There are also 78,049 Australians who have Japanese ancestry.



## References:

- [Japan Guide](#)
- [Ediplomat](#)
- [Asia Highlights](#)
- [Rosetta Stone](#)