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# Counting in Japanese

Kino and Jiya both attend school during the winter months. There they learn to read, write, and do math. It is hard work, but the boys enjoy it. Learning to read and write the Japanese language is not easy. The Japanese system for writing words and numbers is different from English. Words are especially difficult. Instead of using an alphabet of twenty-six letters, the Japanese use many different symbols. Often the symbol stands for a whole word. There are thousands of symbols to learn in the Japanese language.

Use the chart below to practice saying and writing the numbers one through ten in Japanese. Then work with a partner to make your own Japanese counting book to share with the class.

Number	Japanese Symbol	Japanese Pronunciation
1	一	ee-chee
2	二	nee
3	三	sahn
4	四	shee
5	五	go
6	六	ro-koo
7	七	shee-chee
8	八	hah-chee
9	九	koo
10	十	joo

**Challenge:** Try writing some word problems using the Japanese number symbols. Exchange with a friend to see if you can solve the problems.

# Traditions

A *tradition* is an action, belief, or custom which a person or group of people act out over and over. Often traditions are handed down from one generation to another. An example of a family tradition might be making a special cake every year to celebrate a birthday. Traditions are very important to many Japanese families. Kino and Jiya both honored special traditions in their families.

Read the traditions listed below. For each tradition, explain why you think it has importance to the characters. Be ready to share these ideas with your classmates.



The people who lived by the sea had no windows facing the water.

No one spoke at the table until the food was served to everyone.

No one wore shoes in Kino's house.

Kino's family took a holiday every fall.

Kino's father stayed awake and watched the earth and sea when the volcano was active.



**Extension:**

What traditions do you have in your home? On the lines below, write down your family traditions and explain why they are important to you. Be ready to share these ideas with your classmates.

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