

JaLaChamp 2026

Japanese Language Championship for Young Learners UK

Application Guidelines (Secondary School Students)

1. Aims

For this contest, we ask secondary school students studying Japanese in the United Kingdom to submit speeches and videos using your Japanese skills to present your thoughts, views, ideas and messages.

Starting from this year's contest, in the Video Category, all student videos will be made available on the website of the Japan Foundation, London, so this is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and ideas with a wide audience.

Shortlisted finalists in both the Speech and Video Category will be invited to participate in the Finals Day event to either give a speech or have their video played on a large screen. It's a great chance to meet other Japanese language learners! We hope that through entering JaLaChamp, you will be able to improve your Japanese and deepen your interest and understanding of Japan and Japanese culture. We hope this contest will provide opportunities for you to challenge yourselves and to have fun expressing your thoughts using Japanese. We look forward to receiving your speeches and videos!

2. Categories and Eligibility Criteria (Secondary School Students)

Eligibility: Secondary school students studying Japanese in the United Kingdom

These are the Application Guidelines for secondary school students. For the guidelines for primary school students, please check [our website](#).

[Overview and eligibility criteria for each category]

Category	Speech Category →	Video Category →
Overview	Give a speech on a theme of your choice (between 4 and 5 minutes in length)	- Make a video based on the provided theme. - Apply to either Secondary School Division 1 or Secondary School Division 2. (Select only one division based on your level of Japanese proficiency). - The length of video differ based on division.
Individual or Group	Individual only	Both individual and group applications accepted.
Eligibility	- Secondary school students studying Japanese as a foreign language.* - Those who speak Japanese at home or have lived in Japan for six months or more since the age of six are NOT eligible to apply.	- Students studying Japanese in the United Kingdom. - Those who speak Japanese at home or have lived in Japan for over six months are eligible to apply.
Japanese Level*	- B1 level ** - Post-GCSE students or with Japanese knowledge at an equivalent level.	- Secondary School Division-1: A1-A2 level ** - Secondary School Division-2: B1 level **

* Speech Category First Prize winners from previous JaLaChamp contests are not eligible to apply to the Speech Category.

** Please see each category's details for more information regarding Japanese levels (page 2 and page 4):

3. Application deadline

Please submit your files through your Japanese teacher. The deadline for each category is as follows:

- **Speech Category:** 15:00 GMT Tuesday **3rd March** 2026
- **Video Category:** 15:00 GMT Tuesday **10th March** 2026

4. Finals Day

We would like to ask all selected finalists to attend Finals Day. If you apply as a group, we would like at least one member of the group to attend Finals Day.

Date: Saturday 20th June 2026

Venue: Japan House London (101-111 Kensington High Street, London, W8 5SA)

5. How to apply

- Please ask your Japanese teacher to submit your application.
- Please check the guidelines and application details for the category to which you would like to apply:

[→ Speech Category](#) 

[→ Video Category](#) 

Speech Category

[→ Top](#)

[→ Video Category](#)

In the Speech Category, secondary school students studying Japanese as a foreign language are asked to give a speech on a theme of their choice where they express their thoughts, messages, and any points they would particularly like to emphasise.

1. Eligibility

The applicant must meet all of the following conditions to be eligible for this category:

- Those who are secondary school students studying Japanese in the UK
(Students studying outside of a secondary school setting, such as at a Saturday school or with a private tutor, are also able to apply)
- Those who have a **Japanese level equivalent to B1 level** of JF standard for Japanese-language Education/CEFR (**Post-GCSE level**).*
- Those who have **NOT** spent a total of 6 months or more in Japan since the age of six.
- Those who have **NO** family members who are Japanese native speakers and do **NOT** use Japanese as family language at home.
- Those who have **NOT** previously won first prize in the Speech Category of a previous JaLaChamp.

* Please find the information below regarding Japanese levels:

B1 Level: Can talk in a Straightforward and prepared way about a familiar theme, describing what you have researched or found out, or what you thought about it.

* For more detailed information please check [here \(CEFR Self-assessment grid\)](#) :

2. Speech theme and length

Theme: Any

- The speech should have a title.
- You should also be clear about the points you want to raise and express your own views on why you want to deliver them.

Length: Between 4 minutes and 5 minutes

Important: - You cannot use a script written by a teacher or someone else. Please write and present your speech on your own.

- Please note that speeches which don't follow the guidelines will be disqualified.

3. Judging Criteria

The speeches will be judged based on the following points. Details of the judging decisions will not be made public.

Criteria		Description
1	Originality of the theme	Whether the theme is original, whether it expresses one's own ideas and viewpoints, and whether the title matches the content.
2	Structure of the speech	Whether the structure is persuasive or encourages audience sympathy.

3	Japanese	Pronunciation and fluency (if the speech is clear and easy to hear)
		Grammar and vocabulary (accuracy, appropriateness, range of use)
4	Presentation skill	Whether the speaker engages the audience (e.g. volume of voice, pauses, eye contact, gestures, etc.)
5	Q&A	Whether the speaker can respond to questions which will be asked after the speech (with the same level of as in the speech transcript).

4. How to apply

(1) For students applying:

Please prepare for the following two files and share them with your Japanese language teacher*.

① Sound file of your speech

Format: MP3

File name: 'YOUR FIRST NAME + SURNAME_audio'

E.g. 'Michael Smith_audio' if your name is Michael Smith.

Please make sure that your voice is loud and clear enough to be evaluated.

② Script of speech in Japanese

Format: Microsoft Word, PDF, or a scan of a handwritten script

File name: 'YOUR FIRST NAME + SURNAME_script'

E.g. 'Michael Smith_script' if your name is Michael Smith.

Language: Japanese

*If you are studying with a private tutor or at a Saturday school etc, you should ask your teacher to submit your application. You should also notify a teacher at your secondary school letting them know that you are entering this contest.

(2) For teachers of Japanese:

- Teachers should fill out the online application form. Applications will open in October 2025.
- Please submit application via the online form: <https://forms.office.com/r/ZL06wpTGbt>
- Upload **your students' files** to [mailto: a cloud service \(e.g. OneDrive or Google Drive\)](#), create a shared link, and let us know the link in the online application form.
- ※If you use a school email account, please make sure that you are able to use it to share files with someone outside of your institution and that you give permission for us to download the files.
- ※Please obtain permission from students' parents or guardians regarding application to this contest.
- ※If the student is selected as a finalist, we will send a consent form to be signed by their parent or guardian regarding the student's participation in the event and requesting permission to use videos of their speech. This form must then be returned to The Japan Foundation, London.

5. Application deadline

Application Deadline for the Speech Category: 15:00 GMT Tuesday **3rd March** 2026

6. Finals Day

Finalists will be contacted about the results of their application between mid-March and mid-April. We hope all finalists will be able to attend.

Date: Saturday 20th June 2026

Venue: Japan House London (101-111 Kensington High Street, London, W8 5SA)

7. Contact

The Japan Foundation, London

E-mail: speechcontest@jpf.go.jp

Tel: 020 7492 6570

Video Category (Secondary School Students) [→ Top](#) [→ Speech Category](#)

In the video category, students are asked to create a video according to a set theme, either individually or as part of a group. We want to encourage you to show us your creativity in full and have fun making your video! Starting from this year's contest, all student videos submitted in the Video Category will be made available on the website of the Japan Foundation, London, so this is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and ideas with a wide audience.

1. Eligibility criteria

- Secondary school students studying Japanese in the United Kingdom may enter.
- Students studying Japanese outside of school, students who have lived in Japan in the past, and students who speak Japanese at home can all apply.
- Students can apply individually or as part of a group (group size is 6 students maximum. All members of the group must be secondary school students).
- Those who have participated in the Video Category of a previous JaLaChamp are welcome to apply.

2. Divisions

Division	Secondary School Division 1	Secondary School Division 2
Japanese Level*	• A1-A2 Level of JF standard for Japanese-language Education/CEFR	• B1 Level of JF standard for Japanese-language Education/CEFR
Theme**	My/Our Favourite Sandwiches 私(わたし)のおすすめのサンドイッチ ※The video category theme can be interpreted in various ways. For more details, please refer to 4.Video creation guidelines.	
Length of Video	1½ to 2½ minutes	2½ to 3½ minutes

* Please find the information below regarding Japanese levels:

A1 Level: Can introduce your favourite things in simple way, while displaying photos and images.

A2 Level: Can talk in simple Japanese about your favourite things, such as what sort of thing it is, why do you like it, what parts of it do you like and so on.

B1 Level: Can talk in a straightforward and prepared way about a familiar theme, describing what you have researched or found out, or what you thought about it.

* For more detailed information please check [here \(CEFR Self-assessment grid\)](#) :

** Regarding the video theme, please refer to “4. Video Creation Guidelines (4.1 Theme).”

3. Judging criteria

The videos will be judged based on the following criteria. If the Japanese in the video is as per the level described under each division, the applicant can score full points for those criteria. Details of the judging decisions will not be made public. Please also see 4. Video Creation Guidelines.

Criteria	Description
Structure	There is a key argument, with other parts of the speech relating to and supporting it.
Originality of the theme	Thoughtful interpretation of the theme. The content of the video is original and expresses the applicant's own personality. 【Secondary School Division-1】 Has clear explanation on ingredients of the sandwich, preparations and aspects that are new or the applicants made efforts with. 【Secondary School Division-2】 In addition to the criteria for Division-1 (ideas about the sandwich are well-explained), the content of the video includes more detailed explanations and shows some research on the chosen sandwich.
Japanese	【Secondary School Division-1】

	Not necessarily fluent, and with some vocabulary and grammatical errors, but with a good understanding of what you want to express. 【Secondary School Division-2】 Ideas are supported by research and are presented in a clear and well-sequenced way. Has enough vocabulary and expressions to communicate what they want to convey.
Visual expression & editing	• The speaker's voice is loud and clear enough to hear. • Includes English subtitles. • Includes credits for any background music, images, and quotes. • Font, colour and placement of text other than subtitles are easy to read. • Great effort has been made in the editing of the video, including the use of scene changes and special effects. • The volume of the voice and background music is appropriate and easy to hear.

4. Video creation guidelines

Videos should be created according to the following guidelines. **Videos that do not follow these guidelines will be disqualified.**

4.1 Theme

In 2025, a new strawberry-filled sandwich was launched and became popular in the UK. It was a sandwich filling that we hadn't seen in the UK before. We want to know about your favourite sandwich recipes and new sandwiches that don't exist and that you wish existed. Let us know why you like them and the reasons they are good. You can tell us about the sandwiches that you don't like and compare with the ones you like. You can also let us know about recipes for onigiri, sushi rolls, wraps and hamburgers that you would like to introduce instead of sandwiches.

4.2 Video Creation Tips

Videos including the following content will score high however it does not necessarily mean all of them must be covered. If the video meets the criteria explained in "3. Judging Criteria" (page 4-5), the applicant can still score full points even if the video does not include all the aspects listed below.

【Secondary School Division-1】

- Let us know about a sandwich you wish to have for your school lunch.
- Why do you think it's good?
- Is there anything new about the sandwich? Are there any points where you made a particular effort?
- For comparison, you can also explain about a sandwich you don't like. Why do you think it's not good?

【Secondary School Division-2】

- Come up with a sandwich that you think would be a popular item if it were sold in supermarkets or bakeries.
- What makes it so appealing and why? What aspects of the sandwich do you recommend?
- Please also let us know more about your chosen sandwich (Eg. History of the sandwich, any popularity rankings, healthy ingredients, any differences between sandwiches in the past and present etc)

4.3 Format and Style

- Your video must be within the specified time limit for your division.
- You can make your video in whatever style you prefer – presentation style, a dramatic skit, using photos and animation etc.
- Give your video **an original title** using the English alphabet and make sure that the title is included somewhere in the video.
 - * Please select a title reflecting the content of the video and avoid using the same title as the theme.
 - * If you would also like to give a title in Japanese, you can include this in addition to the title in English.
- Make sure to **include credits** at the end of your video (school name, names of those who made the video etc). The credits count towards the total time of the video, so please make sure the video is within the time limit. For further information about credits, please refer to 4.6.

- Please submit the videos as MP4 files.
- Please make sure that your voice is loud and clear enough to hear over any background music.

4.4 Language

- The video must contain the voice or voices of someone/multiple people speaking in Japanese.
- Please **include English subtitles**.

4.5 Makers of the video

- Videos made by individuals or groups are both accepted.
- You cannot be involved in more than one submitted video. In essence, one person cannot participate in multiple group videos, or one person cannot submit both an individual video and a group video.
- If you are a student and fulfil the eligibility criteria laid out in Section 1, you can take part. Students born in Japan or who have lived in Japan can also take part.
- For the secondary school divisions, students must be responsible for creating the video without aid from their teacher.
- It is essential that applications are made through a teacher of Japanese. If you are studying Japanese outside of school, please notify a teacher at your school about your application to the contest.

(1) Applying as an individual:

- Please make your video on your own. Your family etc can record you speaking or doing actions.

(2) Applying as a group:

- Number of students in each group: up to a maximum of 6 students
- Group members must be from the same school. If you study Japanese outside of school (such as at a Saturday school), you may make a video with those you are studying Japanese with.
- Students in the group may be in different year groups. However, university students are not permitted to take part, and primary and secondary school students cannot take part in the same groups.
- A student who is not studying Japanese may participate. In essence, a student who does not speak Japanese may be a group member. Group members can work together based on their individual skills at filmmaking, editing and so on, to create the video.
- Be sure to give your group a group name.
- Make sure to include everyone the credits (For more information, please refer to 4.6.)

4.6 Credit

- Make sure to include all the following information using the English alphabet in the credits:
 - a) **School name**
 - If you study Japanese with a private tutor, please put the name of your full-time secondary school.
 - If you study Japanese at a Saturday school etc please put the name of the school where you study Japanese and the name of your full-time secondary school.
 - b) **Group name** (if applying in a group, your group name can be in either/both English and Japanese)
 - c) **All applicant names and their respective roles**
 - You may use nicknames.
 - d) Please be **sure to credit any background music, images, and quotes (if any)**

※As stated in 4.3, you must make sure to display the title somewhere in your video.

※If your video is shortlisted for Finals Day, the title of the video and your name (or nickname) in the credits of the video and your school name/s will be used for publicity and reporting purposes including our event programme and reports about the event. We plan to show all submitted videos on the Japan Foundation London's official YouTube channel, including those not shortlisted for the Finals Day. Please obtain consent from participants' parents/ guardians regarding students' names in the video credits.

4.7 Copyright and portrait Rights

- Music, photos, illustrations and so on made by people other than yourself will have copyright. If you would like to add background music to your video, then make sure to use Royalty Free or Creative Commons license for attribution (BY) and non-commercial use music.
- *** Please do not use material from animation, comics, television or film.**
- People's photos or images will have portrait rights. When making your video, make sure to only include the faces of the group members and no one else, OR you may feature the faces of other people as long as you have received permission from them.
- You may not use company, group or brand logos without consent. If you are filming in an area such as a shop or café, please obtain permission from the staff there.
- In the event of problems arising related to copyright or portrait rights, the Japan Foundation accepts no responsibility.
- If you have any questions or concerns about copyright or image rights, please talk to teachers of citizenship studies, design and technology, and/or any other related subjects.

5. How to apply

(1) For students applying:

Please submit your video through your Japanese language teacher.

(2) For teachers of Japanese:

- Please submit application via the online form: <https://forms.office.com/r/c0Ed10Pv4u>
- Upload **your students' files to a cloud service (e.g. OneDrive or Google Drive)**, create a shared link, and let us know the link in the online application form.
- ※ If you use a school email account, please make sure that you are able to use it to share files with someone outside of your institution and that you give permission for us to download the files.
- Please obtain permission from the parents or guardians for the student/s to participate in the event and for the use of their video. The forms for all participating students must be submitted with the students' video. We are unable to accept applications without parental consent forms. The parental consent form for Video Category applicants can be downloaded from:
<https://www.jpf.org.uk/whatson.php#1439>
- ※ There is no limit as to how many videos a single school can submit. We hope to receive many applications.

6. Application deadline

Application Deadline for the Video Category: 15:00 GMT Tuesday **10th March** 2026

7. Finals Day

Finalists will be contacted about the results in mid-March to mid-April. We hope all finalists will be able to attend. If you apply as a group, we would like at least one member of the group to attend Finals Day. The finalists' videos will be shown and will be awarded (they won't be ranked at the Finals).

Date: Saturday 20th June 2026

Venue: Japan House London (101-111 Kensington High Street, London, W8 5SA)

We plan to show all submitted videos at the Japan Foundation London's official YouTube channel, including those not shortlisted for Finals Day.

8. Contact Us

The Japan Foundation, London

E-mail: speechcontest@jpf.go.jp

Tel: 020 7492 6570



[Top](#)



[Speech Category](#)



[Video Category](#)