



Asia: Japan

Year 4

In Year 3 children studied the continent of Asia, focussing on India and China. In this unit, children will study the physical and human geographical features of Japan. They will begin by identifying Japan's location in the Northern Hemisphere. They will learn about Japan's position on tectonic plate boundaries and what the consequences are for the islands of Japan and the people who live there. Children's understandings of earthquakes gained from studying Japan, will be built upon in Year 5 when they study New Zealand.

Looking to meteorology, children will learn that Japan is located at a position where two large air masses meet; one from the Asian continent that has travelled over land and one from the Pacific Ocean that has travelled over the sea. Children will study meteorology in more detail in Science in Year 5. Understanding the meeting and interaction of these two air masses will help children to understand how Japan's climate can be so varied. When studying physical geographical features of Japan, children will look at Mount Fuji, Mount Asama and Mount Sakurajima, some of Japan's volcanoes. They will revisit Japan's location on a tectonic plate boundary and will learn about the undersea earthquakes that can cause tsunamis in Japan.

Building on their knowledge of cities around the world, children will learn about the capital of Japan, Tokyo, and its second city and former capital city; Kyoto. Children will learn about the bullet train that carries passengers around Japan at high speeds. As part of understanding some of Japan's cultural traditions, children will learn about Feudal Japan and the class system that was important in the past. Children will understand that traditions from the past are still valued and celebrated in Japan.

This unit will give children an opportunity to apply their geographical skills of using an atlas, reading maps, reading climate graphs and considering the impact of geographical location on a country.