

Learning Plans

Making learning plans helps you to think through what you want to achieve and plan a process to achieve it. Make it realistic: you need to plan activities that you are willing to commit to. We can't always know how to do what we have never done before, so for some things it will help to talk to a teacher or experienced learner for ideas.

Planning for learning Japanese can be done at different levels. Educators often differentiate *goals* which are general 'big picture' intentions, and *objectives* which are specific outcomes or abilities that contribute to the achievement of a goal. The important thing is to understand what you want to achieve and then break it down into the things that you could do to help you get there. So, for example, to be able to read news articles on a certain topic, you need to develop recognition of kanji and vocabulary related to that topic, understand the grammar, be familiar with the structure of written articles and have some general knowledge of the field.

Read the 'Example of a learning plan' and then work on a plan of your own using the frame below. You could pair up with another learner and swap your draft plans. Give each other feedback on the questions:

- Does it make sense?
- Will the activities contribute to achieving the goal/objective?
- Does the timeframe seem reasonable?
- Does the overall plan seem realistic/doable?

Example of a learning plan

Learning Plan – Example		
Plan (fore-thought)	What are your <i>objectives</i> ? (e.g. 'to be able to write 500 kanji',)	...to be able to write messages to my friends in Japanese on social media in the chatty style that they write in.
	Realistic steps to achieving your objectives (What will you do, when, where, how often? e.g. 'learn a new kanji each day and review four; look up, write, make flash cards, record readings and meanings...')	Read messages of the type I want to send. Note the style features that I already use. List unfamiliar ones. Make some notes on the features of the target style (e.g. what kind of verb endings are used? How are vocabulary and expressions used for functions such as greeting or showing sympathy? How are punctuation and emoji used?). Look for resource material (see below) on the language of social media in Japanese. (2 hours x 4 weeks) Write some practice messages and ask an experienced writer for feedback. (2 hours x 2 weeks) Gradually incorporate the features of the style into my messages. (Over 6 months)
	Resources (people to talk to, reference books, samples of language use,)	The real posts and messages received from peers through social media. Texts, research papers or websites on the language of social media in Japanese. Peers who are good at using the style of language targeted.
	Timeframe (When will I be able to do this by?)	In six months time.
	Evaluation (How will I know I have achieved this?)	Compare the language in my messages to those of Japanese peers and look for differences. Ask peers to comment on the naturalness and accuracy of my messages.
	Reflect (after-thought)	Evaluate how well you have achieved your objective.
Reflect on the process. (What are the reasons for your successes or failures?)		I am now more aware of the features of casual message language and how they are different from casual speech and more formal writing. Working out the 'rules' from other's messages wasn't too difficult and didn't take long once I did it systematically. I wasn't always confident in incorporating the new language without checking with others first. Some native speakers that I talked to were not very tuned in to the way the language worked. Others were very helpful.
Re-plan (if needed). Make changes to the steps you took so that the process will be more effective.		Now that I know what to look for, I will keep up the process of looking for potentially useful features in messages I read and noting them and trying them out.

Learning Plan				
Plan (fore-thought)	What is your <i>goal</i> ? (e.g. 'to read a newspaper article', 'to communicate with friends on social media', 'to pass the course')			
	What are your <i>objectives</i> ? (e.g. 'to be able to write 500 kanji', 'to be able to write in a chatty style suited to communications on social media')	1	2	3
	Realistic steps to achieving your objectives (What will you do, when, where, how often? e.g. 'learn a new kanji each day and review four; look up, write, make flash cards, record readings and meanings...')			
	Resources (Who can I talk to? Are there reference books and samples of language use I can access?)			
	Timeframe (When will I be able to do this by ?)			
	Evaluation (How will I know I have achieved this? e.g. 'make a list and test myself', 'match my messages to those of others'; 'ask someone for feedback')			
Reflect (after-thought)	Evaluate how well your have achieved your objective.			
	Reflect on the process. (What are the reasons for your successes or failures?)			
	Re-plan your process. Make changes to the steps you took so that the process will be more effective.			