

# Japanese online

*Face-to-face communication is an essential part of language learning, particularly for conversational ability, but there is no doubt online resources can be fantastic tools for gaining and improving skills. And if you know where to look, there are some great authentic materials that make you feel you are learning a living language.*

*Here are a couple of recommendations.*

## NEWS WEB EASY

Perfect for learners wanting to improve their ability to understand the news and to acquire more sophisticated vocabulary, this excellent site by Japan's public broadcaster NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai) presents each news item as text with audio files. The text has furigana to help read the kanji (Japanese characters) and the furigana can then be hidden. For most news items, you can then watch the original video as broadcast on the main news. News Web Easy has been designed for Japanese primary and junior high school students and foreigners living in Japan to understand the daily mainstream news.

[www3.nhk.or.jp/news/easy/](http://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/easy/)

## MINATO

### Learn Japanese anytime, anywhere

Japan Foundation's Minato is a type of online school where students can begin free self-study courses at any time. Moreover, Minato is designed with beginners in mind. Courses can take students from basic greetings (A1-1) through to being able to talk about their childhood (A2-4). There are also separate courses to learn hiragana and katakana, the basic Japanese scripts. Those who have reached the A2 level can do a course to learn to communicate in the Kansai dialect.

<https://minato-jf.jp/>

## HIROGARU

This Japan Foundation website is a great way for students with some Japanese to study while learning about topics they are interested in. Topics are the stars and night sky, the outdoors, martial arts, cafés and tea, sweets, supermarkets and markets, calligraphy, anime and manga, books and libraries, temples and shrines, music, and aquariums. Video supplements audio and text, and you can turn furigana on and off to read the kanji.

<https://hirogaru-nihongo.jp/>

# Sodeisha: Japanese ceramics at Newcastle Art Gallery

The Newcastle Art Gallery has one of the best collections of Japanese 20th century ceramics by the Sodeisha movement outside Japan. They are currently on display together with new works by Japanese and Australian artists at the exhibition *Sodeisha: connected to Australia*.

Sodeisha is an avant-garde ceramic movement that emerged in Kyoto in the late 1940s and became the most influential contemporary movement in Japanese ceramics. Young ceramic artists broke free of tradition. Building on received techniques and skills, they explored new techniques and rediscovered lost ones. Above all, they sought to express themselves through their work—functional pieces gave way to artworks called 'objets'.



Consul-General Takewaka had the pleasure of officially opening the exhibition on 1 March. Here he is pictured with artist Satoru Hoshino [2nd left] one of the original Sodeisha artists who gifted works to the Gallery, and Federal Member for Newcastle Ms Sharon Claydon MP [left] and Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes.

How did the Gallery end up with this outstanding collection of works by this highly influential movement in contemporary Japanese ceramics?

In 1979, the Gallery hosted the original touring exhibition of 62 Sodeisha works; after the tour concluded in 1981, 58 of the works were gifted by the Sodeisha group to the Newcastle Art Gallery. The variety of works, both the original and recent ones, makes for very enjoyable viewing for anyone interested in ceramics, and given that this wonderful exhibition is free, anyone with a passing interest in Japanese art should consider visiting.

One of the most impressive works is the large installation by Satoru Hoshino, pictured in part above, called "Beginning Form—Spiral '17" (2017). The Gallery commissioned a video by John Cliff to record the six-day installation process (<https://vimeo.com/322385403>) and interview the artist, who explains the beginnings of the Sodeisha movement and his own practice.

***Sodeisha: connected to Australia — on now until 19 May 2019***

Top image: **Yosuke NAKANISHI Globe B** n.d earthenware with Oribe glaze and trailed slip 27 x 37 x 17cm Gift of members of the Sodeisha Group 1981 Newcastle Art Gallery collection