

A1. b) Take off your shoes.

In Japan, before entering a home people first remove their shoes in an area just inside the entrance, called *genkan*.

This area serves as a border with the outside, and is more than just a doorway.

When entering a home, it is polite to arrange shoes that have been removed by pointing them back toward the door and placing them to the side like the picture on the right.

The inside of the home is built one step higher than the *genkan* to offset heavy rain and high humidity.



A2. b) The kimono must be tied with the right side on the inside.

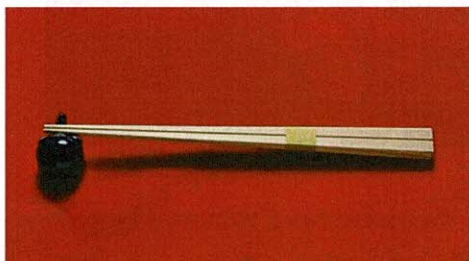


The kimono is a rectilinear dress made with sewn strips of cloth, but when worn and tied with a rope and *obi* (sash), it curves nicely around the body. When putting on the kimono, the right side is folded underneath, closer to the skin. The left side is only folded below when dressing persons who have died, and doing so in daily life is thought to be a bad omen.

Because kimono are expensive, restrict the range of motion, and take a long time to put on, most Japanese people wear western-style clothing in their daily lives.

However, children and young people can be seen wearing kimono during special occasions like *shichi-go-san* (The Seven-Five-Three Festival), the Coming-of Age Day, and weddings.

A3. c) It is bad manners to hold your chopsticks over the food on the table while you think about what to eat next.



Chopsticks are used for all eating maneuvers, including picking up, tearing, and cutting. Chopsticks have been used for over 1,500 years. The earliest chopsticks were like a set of tweezers made from a single folded piece of bamboo.

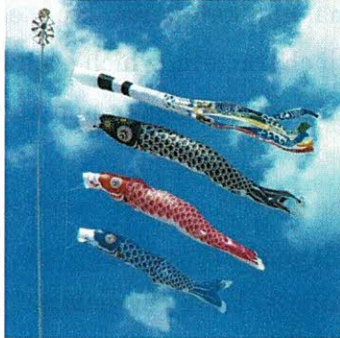
In Japanese homes, each person has their own set of chopsticks. There are various rules on how to use them, and things you're not supposed to do with chopsticks include licking them, sticking them into food, pulling dishes with them, and placing them on top of plates.

A4. a) Avoid stepping on the edges of the tatami mats and on doorsills.



The proper way of sitting in tatami rooms is on top of a square cushion (*zabuton*). When entering a tatami room, one should take care not to step on the door threshold of the room partition or the edges of the mats.

A5. b) Children's day



Japan has a variety of traditional events and holidays. The Doll Festival on March 3 is a day to pray for the health of girls and celebrate their growth. Families with girls display special dolls adorned in clothing from the Heian Period (794-1192).

May 5 used to be called the Iris Festival, or Boy's Day, but today it is known as Children's Day and is reserved for wishing for the health and growth of all children. This day has been a national holiday since 1948. Therefore, the correct answer is "Children's Day." Families with boys display carp-shaped flags in their yards and decorate the inside of their homes with dolls of Kintaro (a Japanese folk-tale figure) or warriors.

A6. a) Be built on water



Kansai International Airport is unique in that it was the first airport in the world to be built on water. It was constructed on reclaimed land off the coast of Osaka in September 1994.

The airport is located on the ocean where no one lives in order not to disturb residents of nearby places with airplane noise.

The airport covers 540 hectares. It has one runway 3,500 meters long, and another 4,000-meter runway was completed in the summer of 2007.

A7. b) Three

Japanese has three types of characters: kanji, hiragana, and katakana. Japanese is written by combining these three character types. Kanji characters, which each have their own meanings, came to Japan from China long time ago. Hiragana and katakana are simpler characters that represent sounds only.

There are 46 hiragana and 46 katakana. Kanaji, on the other hand, are much more numerous. There are around 2,000 commonly used kanji characters. First-year elementary students learn hiragana, katakana, and about 80 kanji characters.

き キ 木 Tree

はやし ハヤシ 林 Woods

もり モリ 森 Forest

やま ヤマ 山 Mountain

かわ カワ 川 River

あめ アメ 雨 Rain