

# Japanese Calligraphy

## Materials/Tools:

- Calligraphy brush
- Paperweight
- Sumi Ink
- A Container (for Sumi Ink)
- Papers (If calligraphy paper is available, that would be preferred.)
- Desk pad (Felt fabric is recommended.)
- Newspapers or tablecloths (To protect tables)
- Writing Sample (Indicated on the final page of this lesson plan.)

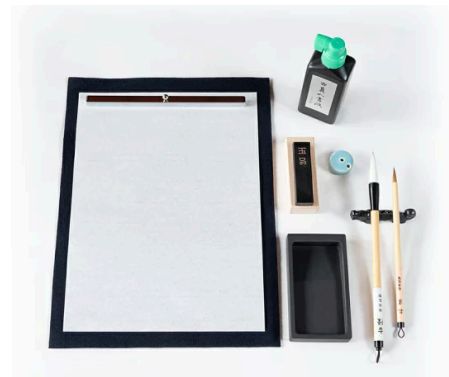
## Where I can get materials

- Japanese Calligraphy Set: Amazon( <https://a.co/d/07GplRgV>)
- \*You can find everything what you need for this Japanese Calligraphy activity in this set.
- Sumi Ink: Amazone ( <https://a.co/d/089WIC68>)
- Can be substituted with common household objects: a paperweight, a container, and papers

## Instruction: **Hands-on Experience**

### Step 1: Preparation & Posture

- **Mindset:** Clear your mind. Sit up straight. Your posture reflects the strength of your lines.
- **Refer to the photo on the right for the correct placement of your tools.**



### Step 2: Basic Practice

- Practice the "Vertical Line."

Feel the pressure: Press down to start, move steadily, and "Stop" (*Tome*) firmly at the end.

- Notice how the speed of your hand changes the texture of the ink.

### Step 3: Your First Letter

- Select your favorite Japanese Word from the Writing Samples below.

## Step4: Prepare for the Next Letter

After finishing each piece, please blot the excess ink on the desk pad using a cloth or scrap paper. This ensures the ink won't smudge onto your next clean sheet.

### Overview:

## 1. Shuji (The Art of Penmanship) vs. Shodo (Artistic Calligraphy)

**Concept: Understanding the two faces of Japanese writing.**

- **Shuji (習字):** The foundation. It is a part of Japanese compulsory education where students learn the correct stroke order and balance to write beautiful, legible characters. It's about discipline and "correctness."
- **Shodo (書道):** The "Way" of the brush. This is the artistic evolution of writing. It focuses on self-expression, emotional depth, and the beauty of the overall composition.
- **Cultural Context:** In Japan, calligraphy is a lifelong journey. Children start in elementary school (often as a popular after-school education), and many continue into adulthood to find peace and focus.

## 2. The Aesthetics of "Wa" (Japanese Beauty)

**Concept: It's not just about the ink; it's about the space.**

1. **The Beauty of Empty Space (Yohaku-no-bi):** In Shodo, the white space on the paper is as important as the black ink. The balance between the "written" and the "unwritten" creates the energy of the piece.
2. **Harmony with Nature:** All tools are gifts from nature—brushes made of animal hair, ink from pine soot, and paper (*Washi*) from plant fibers.
3. **Delicate Precision:** The beauty lies in the details—the slight fade of ink, the sharp "flick" of a stroke, and the varying thickness of a single line.
4. **The Beauty of Silence:** Shodo requires a quiet heart. The "Tranquility" (*Jaku*) found in the process of grinding ink and focusing your breath is a form of meditation.

## 3. The "Why" Behind the Rules

**Concept: Writing as an act of respect.**

- **Stroke Order (Kakijun):** Why does the order matter? Correct stroke order makes the character easier to remember and naturally more beautiful.
- **Three Essentials:**
  - **Tome (Stop):** A firm stop at the end of a stroke.
  - **Hane (Jump/Hook):** A decisive flick upwards.
  - **Harai (Sweep):** A gradual release of pressure.
- **The Philosophy:** Writing clearly and correctly is a reflection of **Omotenashi** (hospitality). It shows respect and consideration for the person who will read your words.

Pro-Tip for the Instructor/Host:

If you are in the U.S., you can easily find **Fude-pens (Brush Pens)** and **Calligraphy paper** on Amazon. Suggest that participants try writing their own names or a favorite word using the 'Stop, Hook, and Sweep' techniques!

\*FYI, traditionally, brush pens (fude-pen) are not used for Shuji or Kakizome.

Writing  
Sample:

勇氣  
*Courage*

愛  
*Love*

幸  
*Happiness*

力  
*Strength*

平和  
*Peace*

夢  
*Dream*