

Podcasts in Japanese Language Learning

By Miriam Davis

Never before has it been so easy to find lots of Japanese listening materials at a variety of levels of ability which can be downloaded free onto to a computer, Ipod or MP3 player. Type 'Japanese language' into the search box at <http://www.podcast.net>; click on <http://www.nihongojouzu.com/audio/index.html>; or try out some of the home pages introduced below.

For Beginners

- www.JapanesePod101.com
This site is highly recommended for beginner through intermediate learners with its **daily podcasts** on a variety of topics from culture to grammar to news and survival phrases. It is topical, user friendly and the recording quality is excellent. The user guide at <http://www.japanesepod101.com/help-center/user-guide/> lists the free materials (all audio files) and the many supplementary materials for self-study that you can subscribe to.
- [mp3japan](http://www.mp3japan.com) is an archive of mp3 files from the [NHK audio series](http://www.nhk.or.jp/basic/) "Basic Japanese for You" and "Brush up your Japanese" which are only available in streaming form on the NHK site. 100 and 50 episodes respectively, 3-4Mb per episode. <http://www.hickorytech.net/~nic111/> There is a considerable amount of explanation in English from a non native.

For Intermediate to Advanced Students

- <http://www.voiceblog.jp/nippon/>
This site seems to be aimed at non-Japanese and transcriptions of the Japanese text without furigana are on the web site. The speaker reads clearly at a moderate speed. It is helpful to be able to read and listen at the same time. Indeed, these podcasts can be an aid to learning kanji as you read and listen at the same time. There are some interesting topics related to Japanese life such as 'Tofu', 'Setsubun', 'Geisha and Maiko' and authentic sound effects. Podcasts are around 5 minutes in length. Sadly, nothing seems to have been added to this site since March 2006.
- <http://www.njuku.com/>
This blog provides casual reading material with audio for intermediate and advanced students of Japanese. "Narrator Rieko discusses common mistakes and areas of improvement garnered from her efforts teaching her American husband to speak Japanese. The material is relevant and practical - for example, how to accept compliments, what pronoun to use when talking about yourself. Each podcast is short - all are under 6 minutes and most are under 3 - making them perfect for when you don't have a lot of time. Sound good? There's more - [the companion blog](http://www.companionblog.com/) has full transcripts of each podcast and for those too lazy to install [rikaichan](http://www.rikaichan.com/) or [LiveDictionary](http://www.live-dictionary.com/) the transcripts come complete with vocabulary lists of the meatier expressions". (quote from www.nihongojouzu.com)
- <http://www.voiceblog.jp/amane/>
This is a voice blog and is not aimed at Japanese languages so be prepared for fast speed and a variety of topics. The recordings are of high quality but are almost too short to make it worth downloading them. The blog is added to several times a week so the best use of this site might be for those in need of repeated listening to

the same material at the speed of normal Japanese speech.

- <http://podcast.yomiuri.co.jp/>
“Listening to the news is great, but when you have to leave the house what do you do? Download the Yomiuri Shimbun News Podcast, stick it in your portable mp3 player and listen to the news on the go. The podcasts are 20 minutes long and daily, but suffer from a small time lag - reporting on the news of the previous day. Even so this is a perfect resource for intermediate to advanced learners.” (quote from www.nihongojouzu.com)
- If 20 minutes is too long for you try NHK radio news online at <http://www.nhk.or.jp/r-news/>. There are four broadcasts daily, 10 minutes at 7am and midday and then 15 minutes at 7pm and 10pm. **The speed at which the broadcasters speak can be adjusted to slow, normal or fast, making it handy for repeated listenings.**

Very advanced

- 365 日物語(365 Days of Stories) at <http://eureka-i.jp/365/> is a series of three minute readings from the book (1,500 yen) of the same name by Haruyama Yoichi (晴山陽一). It is suggested you read the book together with the podcasts. Each episode takes one day of the year and introduces an important event in world history that took place on that day. A great way to learn world history while improving, vocabulary, listening and reading skills in Japanese.
- Japanese Classical Literature at Bedtime at <http://eloise.cocolog-nifty.com/rodoku>
This is a non commercial site with Japanese classical literature audio books read by Kasumi Kobayashi. It includes readings from such famous texts as the Genji monogatari, Ki no Tsuraki (Tosa Dairy), Hojiki and Matsuo Basho.