

Japanese at Purdue

Heritage Speaker:

The term heritage speaker of Japanese refers to individuals who were exposed to Japanese during childhood or early adolescence or who self-identify as heritage language learners. Heritage speakers are often second or third generation speakers who were raised speaking the language in a natural environment outside of Japan. Typically, heritage speakers do not receive formal instruction in the home language until later in life (high school or college) but have good oral skills. Thus, there is often a wide range of proficiency across the bilingual continuum. For this reason, heritage speakers should make an appointment with the Chair of Japanese for a formal interview to determine appropriate placement. The chair may wish to appoint another faculty member to conduct the interview. Upon completion of the course into which heritage speakers are placed with a minimum grade of C-, they are eligible for credit for JPNS 101, 102, 201, or 202.

The above criterion of what constitutes a heritage language learner is based on previous linguistic background (exposure to the family language during early childhood or adolescence--generally before the age of 14) and not on ethnic or cultural background. Students who immigrate to the United States past the age of 14 typically have a fully developed native grammatical system and are recommended to enroll in literature, culture, or linguistics courses such as JPNS 241, 341, 361, 363, 480, or 490.

Native Speaker:

Students from Japan are considered native speakers if they received elementary and junior high school education with Japanese as the primary language of instruction (generally before the age of 14). Due to their native proficiency in the language, they are not permitted to take the placement exam nor any language courses, including JPNS 101, 102, 201, 202, 301, 302, 401, or 402. Native speakers may take literature, culture, or linguistics courses such as JPNS 241, 341, 480, or 490. No credits for lower-level courses (JPNS 101, 102, 201, 202) will be granted after completion of any literature, culture, or linguistics courses.

Questions and Concerns:

Any questions or concerns about issues related to heritage or native speakers of Japanese should be directed to the Chair of Japanese or to the SLC Language Testing and Placement Coordinator, or to the Undergraduate Advisor for the SLC.