# JAPAN: Places, Images, Times & Transformations

Suggestions for the Middle and High School Classroom

# Language of Deference - Hiroshi Nara

* **Objectives:**
  + Understand the complexities of deference in the Japanese language.
  + Identify ways in which deference is created linguistically.
  + Identify situations in which keigo could be used.
* **Suggested Units for Inclusion:**
  + Social Studies or Japanese units that explore Japanese culture.
  + ELA units that explore rhetorical devices and how language is used to convey an array of meanings.
  + Japanese units that explore keigo.
* **Lesson Ideas:**
  + 1. Individual Research Homework
    - Students can be assigned the *study questions* or *develop questions for the class to discuss*
  + 2. Role Play
    - Create notecards that have different roles written on them (ex. Employee, Boss, Parent, Child, Student, Friend, Stranger). Have students act out a situation several different times with different roles and observe how their language might change when the roles of the speakers change.
  + 3. Skits
    - Similar to the activity above, Japanese students can write their own skits and demonstrate how keigo is used depending on the roles of each participant in the conversation. Students should be able to explain the choices they made in creating the skit and how it affects the level of deference used in the conversation.
* **Study Questions:**
  + What are two different ways you can show deference in a language? Give examples for each.
  + What does the author say the speaker should pay attention to when using keigo?
  + What kind of language does a speaker usually use when referring to themselves in keigo? What kind of language do they use when referring to an outside party?
  + The author references a number of groups an individual could belong to. How many different “groups” do you belong to? Who are in these groups and how do you change your language and behavior based on this idea of in-group and out-group?
  + In the three examples given on page 3, briefly summarize all shifts in language between the situations. Who is using what language in each situation? Why?
  + Create a situation where not using keigo would be considered rude. Create a situation where you want to avoid using using keigo. Why is it important to find the right balance of keigo in each situation?