# JAPAN: Places, Images, Times & Transformations

Suggestions for the Middle and High School Classroom

# Onomatopoeia - Hiroshi Nara

* **Objectives:**
  + Define onomatopoeia.
  + Understand how different vowels and consonants could represent different meanings in the Japanese language.
* **Suggested Units for Inclusion:**
  + ELA units that explore mimetic language.
  + Japanese units that introduce onomatopoeia.
* **Lesson Ideas:**
  + 1. Individual Research Homework
    - Students can be assigned the *study questions* or *develop questions for the class to discuss*
  + 2. Compare and Contrast
    - Students make lists of English onomatopoeia and their corresponding Japanese sounds. Have students discuss what differences they see and what those differences tell us about their respective languages.
  + 3. Mimetic Charades
    - Split Japanese students into two teams. One person from each team has to silently act out a Japanese onomatopoeia given to them by the teacher and their team has to guess the correct onomatopoeia within 60 seconds. The team with the most points at the end wins.
* **Study Questions:**
  + Define *Mimetic Language*.
  + Think about onomatopoeia used in English. What examples can you think of? Where do we often see onomatopoeia in English?
  + What observations does the author make about how consonants and vowels are used in Japanese onomatopoeia? Give examples of each.
  + Take a look at the list of onomatopoeia the author gives. Other than sounds, what kinds of actions do these words represent?
  + What is one reason why there might be so many onomatopoeia in the Japanese language?