

# Elementary school lesson plan

## Warm up

I usually use this activity as an ice breaker in my first class. The objective is to get Japanese students to break away from the norm and not to bow their head whilst shaking hands. The format is a role play between the HRT (Home Room Teacher) and ALT, where both are meeting for the first time, but confine themselves to behavior from their native background. As the two approach one another, the HRT bows, whilst the ALT puts forward their hand. The two then welcome each other using greetings from their native background. Amidst a state of “*confusion*”, with both screaming out “*eeeh – nani?*” or something similar, the two attempt a rehash, albeit with no change.

### Enter the children.

The HRT must then prompt the children to point out what is wrong. The children then teach the ALT about Japanese mannerisms, after which the ALT adopts the Japanese greeting fashion, but this time shouting “*Konschwichiwa*” and bowing far too deep. This is then repeated several times until an immaculate 45° bow and an articulate “*Konnichiwa*” can finally be executed, leaving the children screaming “*OK*” and waving their hands in joy.

Switch over and teach the HRT how to articulate a perfect handshake with eye contact. The HRT of course gets it completely wrong and shakes the ALT’s hand too hard, refuses to look at their face... the possibilities are endless! Practice with a few children at the front and even prompt the children to teach the HRT – this will also allow you to gauge who the more confident are which can be very useful for future classes. The HRT and ALT finally demonstrate a smooth greeting, leaving the children to ponder whether the HRT is in fact Japanese!

\*Disclaimer: This activity has been adapted from a Vodafone commercial I once saw, where a Japanese and Western businessman meet for the first time and perform a cultural blunder just as in the above activity.