

How to use this text, precautions, and requirements while learning

From here we will explain the specifics when using this text.

■ **Instead of learning from the book or the teacher, find your own answers by yourself**

This book does not teach you the correct knowledge or the only answer. Rather, find your own answer by yourself through dialog with others. There may be times when the answer you find is different from that of others. In those cases, you should all learn from each other. Think critically about why you thought the way you did, and why others thought the way they did. Then you will likely learn something that cannot be found within yourself.

Accordingly, this book aims for you to learn with initiative. This book cannot be used at all for a class in which the teacher teaches you, you remember it, and simply follow what is written in the text. That is because the answer is not written in this book. For teachers using this book, change your mindset from the idea that teaching means giving the right answer. The role of the teacher is to create a flow by which the learners can take the initiative to learn on their own and engage in meaningful dialog, and by which you lead them to the goal. You must never try to indoctrinate the learners. As the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire once said, students are not empty piggy banks into which knowledge is to be deposited like money by teachers acting like bankers. Each learner is a person who acts with initiative and socially.

■ **Be sure to acknowledge the thoughts and opinions of others, not only your own**

Of the situations described in this book, there are some with multiple answers, and others with no answer. There may be times when opinions and reactions vary greatly after reading the material and thinking about it. There may be times when conflict emerges between those who agree and those who disagree. However, that is a normal and common outcome in society. It is for that reason that we must learn to communicate our own opinions in an easy-to-understand manner, listen carefully to the opinions of others, acknowledge them, and then begin to find common ground from there. What is required to do this is dialog. Do not be afraid of dialog with people with different opinions, or try to avoid it. When a different opinion is offered, acknowledge that the opinion exists, acknowledge that the person has a different opinion from you, and then think together on what you can do about it using democratic methods.

■ Start with your own preferences and interests and turn your attention to the wider world

This book contains numerous different topics. Some may fit your interests perfectly, while others may not be of interest to you as much. You may have trouble motivating yourself to read topics that do not interest you. In that case, try to think of those topics as they relate to you. We want you to imagine that the situations described in the book are situations that happened to you as you learn. Think of how the topics could connect with you. Imagine what it would be like if you were involved, or your family, even if it is fiction. You are likely to discover something new.

How to Use this Text Created for Diverse Learners

We created this book in the hope that it would be used by many different people in many different ways. There may be those who study the book alone, and those who study it with others in the classroom. While it is fine to study the book alone, we recommend that you invite a friend to read it together, think about it, and discuss it together. You are likely to realize many more things than you would when alone.

This book may be used in Japanese language schools or university courses on Japanese in Japan, or in Japanese classes in countries other than Japan. There may also be times when Japanese students learn from the book together with students from other countries. You are likely to realize and discover many things when speaking about the book with others in the classroom.

However, the more you discuss with other people, the more people you will find who have different opinions than you do. Sometimes it might not be fun to talk with people with different opinions. But if you only speak with people who have the same opinion as you, you will not learn anything new. Therefore, it is important to proactively engage in dialog with people who have different opinions. When engaging in dialog, keep the following points in mind while communicating.

- Carefully listen to the other person's opinion until they are done speaking.
- Show interest in what they say, such as looking at them while listening, nodding, and speaking short phrases to show you understand.
- Do not immediately disagree with the other person's opinion.
- Check that you understand them and ask questions if you have them.
- Point out what parts each of you agree with and what parts you disagree with.
- When you disagree, think about why.
- Explain your own opinion in a way that is easy to understand.
- Explain the reasons why you think that way.

The dialog described in this book is neither arguing nor debating. The point of dialog is not to win or lose, or decide who is better, it is to deepen your mutual understanding of how each other thinks.

Also, there are many topics covered in this book, and there are topics that you do not really feel like discussing. Consider how you would say that to the others who are with you when that happens.

We will give an example, so let us consider it together. For example, someone in the class has said that they do not really want to talk about religion. What should you do? This is a problem for everyone who is there, not just the teacher, not just the students, and certainly not just that person. So what should the others who are there do when an opinion like that is expressed? Each person should consider the question, and discuss with each other to find a solution. That is what it means to practice democracy. One approach might be to change the planned topic to a different one. Another approach might be for that person to leave or do something else while you are talking about religion. But some may be of the opinion that they should participate because it's part of the class. There is no single answer. The important thing is to first acknowledge that that person does not want to talk about religion, and then discuss through dialog how to solve that problem in a peaceful and democratic way with the other people who are present. The word "acknowledge" does not mean to accept what they say unconditionally. It is important to acknowledge and then discuss with everyone.

Furthermore, we want everyone learning in that place to take the initiative to participate in the dialog to prevent the classroom discussion from going beyond a discussion and becoming a fight, and to prevent the proactive learning from becoming forced learning or rote learning. The place where you engage in dialog is a type of society. We ask that everyone present in that place work to create and develop that place.

We ask teachers to free themselves from the relationship of learner versus teacher, as we wrote under Six Points to Connecting the Philosophy with Use, and understand that the role of the teacher in the class is that of a facilitator. Then participate in the society of that place of learning on an equal footing with the learners, and learn together with them.

This book is designed to develop that skill. If you follow this approach, then both the learners and teachers no longer have to be afraid of the sort of "trouble" that might occur in a normal class. Because, if such trouble were to occur, it is actually a valuable opportunity. Consider that trouble to be a practical problem in actual society that cannot be found in textbooks, put the textbook aside, and discuss the real problem before you together. And we ask that you further engage in dialog to find a solution through the democratic methods that you have learned from this book.

How to Use Each Lesson

Now we will explain the flow of each lesson, or how you should learn the content of each lesson and in what order. While each lesson is slightly different, the basic flow is the same, so we hope that this gives you a general picture.

For most of the lessons in this book, you learn through several activities that follow the flow described below. Some lessons will call on you to look for, gather, and compare materials rather than just think. Some lessons also involve writing or compiling, rather than simply discussing. The “Develop” sections contained within parentheses () below are optional. You may choose whether to do them or not. Decide according to your motivation or the time you have available to study.

Review your own knowledge and values -> read the materials -> think -> discuss -> deepen or widen your studies -> (optional: develop your learning) -> reflect on what you learned -> evaluate your own learning.

Each of these activities is carried out with different numbers of people. You may have to think on your own, or in pairs or groups. The number of people can also be gradually increased until finally, you discuss with the whole class. The icon next to each activity denotes the number of people for that activity. The icon shows whether the activity is for individuals, pairs, groups, or the whole class. Group size should be decided according to the actual number of people present in the class. You may also flexibly choose each activity, such as skipping activities for certain numbers of people depending on the size of your class or the amount of time you have. The word “discuss” is used to describe many of the activities. It is up to you to decide how you will actually discuss the topic depending on your situation.

Accordingly, each activity is marked by the size and type, so you may refer to that information when selecting or arranging activities.

This book emphasizes dialog, but we feel that it is fine for there to be many different attitudes about dialog among the participants. We cannot say that you need to speak a lot, or that it is bad if you are quiet. Quietly listening to what others have to say is also an important aspect of dialog. There may even be times when you wish to step away from the dialog and think for yourself. Therefore, let us respect the right to leave as much as we respect the right to participate.

【この課ですること】 [What we do in this lesson]

First, the activities for the current lesson are explained. This is similar to the goal of the lesson. Each lesson contains four to six instructions. There are also two types of instructions. One explains how you are meant to read the materials, whether it is a newspaper article, poster, or diagram. The other type explains what you should do from the standpoint of education for democratic citizenship, as explained many times so far. These two types of instructions are also denoted using icons: "Text" and "EDC" (education for democratic citizenship).

【〇〇する前に】 [Before you do ____]

Next, you must review the knowledge and values within you. Recall your own knowledge and experiences as you answer some simple questions. You may be required to do this alone, or in pairs or groups. You may also have to read some simple materials or research something.

【〇〇を読もう】 [Read ____]

Next, you read the main material for the lesson. In some cases, you may be asked to read text similar to a newspaper article. You may be asked to look at pictures or read a poster or flyer. You may be asked to look at a graph or table, or to read a variety of materials together. For example, some newspaper articles contain pictures and graphs alongside the text. So, you may be asked to read composite media. You may also be asked to read two or more materials to compare them later.

【考えよう】 [Think]

This is the step you do after reading. You may be asked to carefully think about what you read, or to research other information while referring to what you read. There will of course be times when you research after thinking, and then think about what you researched. You may be required to do this alone, or in pairs or groups.

【話し合おう】 [Discuss]

This step is contained within the [Think] section. In this step, you share and discuss what you thought or researched on your own in pairs or groups. Then, you think about the issue more with others. The format for sharing may be giving presentations or World Café type discussions. The special website contains some hints for this step, so choose the information that works for you. One option when you read and discuss a specific issue that needs to be solved is to discuss a way to find a solution to that issue and then actually act on it. For example, that may involve submitting your opinions or proposal to the city hall or a company, or spreading awareness of the issue by submitting a letter to the editor of a newspaper.

【より深く考えよう、より広く考えよう】 [Think deeper and wider]

Each lesson has a step where you either think more deeply or more widely. Some lessons may contain both. While both of these activities are similar, “Think deeper” involves “thinking of a specific example of the topic”, while “Think wider” involves “stepping away from the specific example and thinking in generalities or thinking of other examples”.

【発展】 [Develop]

While not all lessons include this step, we have provided this step for you to further develop your learning if you want to do more research or thinking on the topic. It is not absolutely required that you do this step. You need only do it if you want to. Materials for the step are available on the special website (<https://www.bonjinsha.com/wp/edc>).

【振り返ろう】 [Reflect]

Here you reflect back on all of the activities for the lesson, including what you thought about, what you discovered, and how your thinking changed. Also, properly confirm in your own words what it is that you learned from the lesson. There are many ways to reflect on the lesson, such as answering questions or writing notes.

【自分の学びを評価しよう】 [Evaluate your learning]

After summarizing and reflecting on the lesson, evaluate yourself. Use the scale to check how much you were able to learn. Also review what you did well, acceptably, not so well, and poorly. Work on things you did well proactively in the next lesson. If there is anything that you unfortunately could not do well, take a moment to reflect on why that was. Then, work harder and try to do better in the next lesson.

Good work for reading up until this point.

We have reached the end of the Preface. Please read the Message from the Authors on the following page.