

## TGT (Teams Games Tournament) Cooperative Learning Model in Kanji Courses to Improve Japanese Vocabulary Mastery

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### Abstract

*Mastering kanji is a challenge for anyone studying the Japanese language. Due to its intricate nature, many students perceive kanji as an intimidating topic. The students' struggle with comprehending kanji directly impacts their ability to understand words written in kanji. Consequently, kids lack comprehension of the reading (dokkai) due to the abundance of kanji words inside it. To tackle this issue, it is necessary to develop a pedagogical paradigm that promotes cooperation among students, enabling them to effectively overcome challenges related to kanji. The TGT (Teams Games Tournament) model is a collaborative learning model that incorporates groups consisting of 3 to 5 individuals. The research aims to investigate the extent of your proficiency in mastering the JLPT N4 kanji vocabulary prior to utilizing the TGT (Teams Game Tournament) model. What is your proficiency in learning the JLPT N4 kanji vocabulary like after utilizing the TGT (Teams Games Tournament) approach? What is the students' response to studying kanji using the TGT (Teams Games Tournament) model? The research methodology employed is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The research focused on a population of 3rd semester students, consisting of a total of 22 individuals. The data gathering methods employed in this study involved the utilization of questionnaires and interviews conducted using Google Form. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique employs descriptive statistics to assess pretest and posttest scores. The findings of this study demonstrated a notable improvement in students' proficiency of JLPT N4 kanji vocabulary*

*after the implementation of the TGT (Teams Game Tournament) cooperative learning paradigm.*

***Keywords: Cooperative Model; Japanese Language; Kanji; TGT (Teams Games Tournament); Vocabulary***

## INTRODUCTION

Japanese is a distinctive and captivating foreign language. The use of four distinct types of letters in learning makes it both unique and intriguing. The characters included in this set are hiragana, katakana, kanji, and romaji. Rose (2019) also affirmed that the Japanese language employs four distinct sorts of letter characters: hiragana, katakana, kanji, and romaji. Due to the presence of these four distinct sorts of letters in Japanese, a significant number of individuals perceive the language as being challenging to acquire.

A major challenge in acquiring proficiency in Japanese lies in the inclusion of kanji characters. Japanese language learners frequently encounter difficulties with these kanji characters. This phenomenon arises due to the abundant presence of writing sequences in kanji. Kanji characters are written in an order that starts with 1 stroke and can go up to more than 20 strokes. Many individuals perceive kanji as a complex topic. According to Firmansyah & Rahmawati (2018), kanji poses challenges for anyone learning the Japanese language. Mastering Kanji poses a significant difficulty in the process of acquiring proficiency in the Japanese language (Zimmerman & Mcmeekin, 2020). Kanji is considered the most arduous character among the several sorts of characters studied in Japanese (Rasiban, 2018). Kim (2018) asserts that learning kanji poses the greatest challenge for Japanese language learners who are not familiar with kanji. Based on this statement, it can be inferred that kanji is a challenging obstacle for Indonesian learners of the Japanese language. Indonesian students, due to their familiarity with the

alphabet, face numerous challenges when studying kanji. Specifically designed for novice Japanese language learners. According to Paxton (2019), early learners with a background in alphabets face challenges when it comes to kanji. As a consequence of the numerous intricacies associated with acquiring kanji, students often find themselves deficient in their kanji proficiency. Particularly, the comprehension of kanji-based terminology by students. Acquiring a strong vocabulary is crucial for pupils to comprehend reading materials or phrases that incorporate kanji.

According to Hasnine & Wu (2021), vocabulary is an essential aspect of language development as it is necessary to possess a substantial level of proficiency in order to engage in reading, writing, and communication. According to Zahedi & Abdi (2012), it refers to the fundamental ability to use a language. Language relies on vocabulary as its fundamental basis. Language utilizes labels to represent objects, activities, and ideas, which would otherwise lack the ability to effectively communicate the intended meaning without human intervention. Dilek & Yürük (2013) emphasize that the significance of vocabulary acquisition in foreign language instruction is undeniable. Proficiency in vocabulary is crucial for pupils to comprehend reading materials or phrases that incorporate kanji.

When studying Japanese, it is essential to understand that kanji and vocabulary are interconnected and cannot be treated as distinct entities. Insufficient proficiency in Kanji will inevitably impact your command of terminology. Consequently, students are unable to comprehend complex texts written in kanji due to their lack of understanding of the characters, or conversely, they are able to comprehend the characters. Nevertheless, they lack comprehension of the vocabulary's significance. Consequently, students

fail to comprehend the kanji pronunciations present in Japanese words or texts. Similarly, students enrolled in the Japanese literature study program at Pakuan University also experienced this. A significant number of pupils fail the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) because they struggle to understand the kanji vocabulary. In addition, during lecture activities, students often encounter difficulties in comprehending Japanese reading materials due to their limited knowledge of kanji vocabulary. For instance, in the dokkai (reading comprehension) course, students encounter challenges when they encounter kanji characters without furigana (hiragana letters) in the reading material. This lack of furigana greatly hinders their understanding. Consequently, students are unable to comprehend the significance of the text presented in the reading material (dokkai). Consequently, the scores for the dokkai (reading comprehension) questions are generally lower in comparison to other types of questions.

In light of these issues, scholars have sought to employ the TGT (Teams Games Tournament) cooperative learning model as a means of teaching kanji. The TGT cooperative model was employed to facilitate the acquisition of kanji. In this study, the process of learning kanji was integrated with group games involving three students.

The cooperative method is a pedagogical approach that fosters collaboration among participants, specifically students, in the learning process. Within this pedagogical framework, students are mandated to collaborate with one another, so mitigating any disparities between intellectually gifted individuals and those who possess lesser aptitude. As to Alexander and Pono (2019), the cooperative learning model refers to a collaborative activity or learning approach where groups collaborate to assist one another in problem-solving. Cooperative learning, as described by Hariyanto (2014), is an educational approach where students collaborate in

small groups to achieve shared objectives by actively assisting and interacting with one another. Cooperative learning facilitates collaborative engagement among students as they engage in structured tasks together (Hasanah, 2021). In reference to the cooperative learning paradigm, Rusman (2018) further mentioned that it encourages students to engage actively and constructively with one another in group settings. Within this collaborative learning framework, educators facilitate the sharing of their own ideas in a supportive environment, aligning with the principles of constructivism. Within this cooperative approach, there are various forms of learning, including the TGT (Teams Games Tournament) format.

The TGT (Teams-Games-Tournaments) cooperative learning paradigm is designed to facilitate collaborative problem-solving among students by encouraging mutual assistance and teamwork. Mamanda & Sumantri (2018) state that TGT is a cooperative learning approach that involves academic tournaments through quizzes. In this model, students compete as representatives of their team against members of other teams that have similar academic ability. The TGT method is a cooperative learning model that is simple to implement. It ensures active participation of all students, regardless of their status, and encourages students to act as peer tutors. Additionally, it incorporates elements of play and reinforcement (Suwarno, 2019; Rahmawati, 2018; Gayatri, 2009; Darmawati, 2016). According to Rusman (2018), in TGT, students participate in a game where they assign scores to another team based on their own team's performance.

According to the experts' interpretation of the TGT model, it can be inferred that the TGT cooperative learning model is a method that utilizes tournaments or games within a group setting comprising students of varying abilities, thereby fostering collaboration among these students. The implementation of the TGT cooperative learning model serves as a viable

option to enhance student learning outcomes, facilitated by the utilization of suitable media (Mamanda & Sumantri, 2018).

The preceding research that serves as the foundation for this study is the work of Widhiastuti and Fachrurrozie (2014). In her study, Widhiastuti concentrated on enhancing the engagement and cognitive capacity of accounting students. Additional studies examining the TGT cooperative learning paradigm encompass the work of Susanti & Suryadi (2020). Their research specifically investigates the utilization of Karuta vocabulary games in the context of social studies themes. A study conducted by Mamanda and Sumantri (2018) explored the TGT type cooperative learning model. They applied this model to the teaching of PKN (Citizenship Education), using information cards during the learning process to enhance learning outcomes in PKN subjects. Subsequently, a study was conducted by Syarani (2019) on the TGT cooperative model for learning kanji. Syarani's research specifically aimed to enhance the kanji proficiency of intermediate level students by the implementation of a drill model that incorporated multiple choice questions in each chapter.

The distinction between this study and prior research is in the methodology employed. This study aims to enhance proficiency in kanji-based vocabulary in order to improve proficiency in JLPT N4 Japanese vocabulary. In addition, this research distinguishes itself from past studies by presenting individual cases for each therapy. Specifically, a heterogeneous group comprising of 3 participants with diverse capacities is created. The author presents a table like a crossword puzzle, consisting of questions that prompt the search for kanji pairs in a sequential manner, both horizontally and vertically. In another approach, the author employs kanji cards, with each card dedicated to a single character. During the kanji card therapy, each group is provided with a kanji card and instructed to identify as many pairs

of kanji on the card as they can, thereby expanding their Japanese vocabulary. During each therapy, regardless of whether a kanji table or kanji cards are used, each group is allotted 15 minutes to search for as many vocabulary terms as they can on the table or cards.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a mixed methodology, specifically integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The research instruments utilized in this design consist of a pretest, treatment, posttest, questionnaire, and interview. The pretest and posttest consist of JLPT N4 kanji vocabulary questions. The therapy involves kanji learning through the implementation of the TGT cooperative learning approach. Questionnaires and interviews were administered to students who served as experimental groups. The questionnaire is presented as a circular scale, while the interview consists of questions delivered with the questionnaire through Google Form. The research was conducted on a population and sample of 22 students enrolled in the third semester of the Japanese literature study program at Pakuan University. The author of this study did not incorporate a control group, hence only one class was utilized as the experimental group. The data analysis method use descriptive statistics to assess the outcomes of both the pretest and posttest.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The research was carried out between mid-September and the end of November 2023, encompassing 8 treatments, a pretest, and a posttest. The acquired results from the pretest and posttest are as follows:

**Table 1. Score of Pretest and Posttest**

No	Respondent	Pretest	Posttest	Average
1	NF	44	65	54.5
2	MA	48	78	63
3	DP	78	90	84
4	IM	62	87	74.5
5	RE	50	79	64.5
6	KA	50	73	61.5
7	NV	86	94	90
8	FK	80	96	88
9	GR	94	99	96.5
10	VD	56	79	67.5
11	AG	74	87	80.5
12	AR	76	91	83.5
13	PM	80	89	84.5
14	NA	84	90	87
15	SA	86	92	89
16	GS	80	88	84
17	RY	50	73	61.5
18	LA	80	92	86
19	MS	68	83	75.5
20	KR	70	87	78.5
21	IS	54	69	61.5
22	HF	64	71	67.5
Average Score		68.8	84	76.5

The materials utilized in the course of the 8 treatments are as follows:

1. The first and second treatments utilize the starch table. The kanji utilized in treatment 1 are derived from kanji units 25 and 26 of the Minna no Nihongo kanji series 2. The illustration is shown in the table 2.

Determine the appropriate kanji pairs for the following questions.



Create a straight line by moving the pen or pencil horizontally from the left side to the right side, or vertically from the top to the bottom. Required minimum of 20 kanji vocabulary.

**Table 2. List of kanji vocabulary**

注	車	道	階	活	作	登	場	所
文	家	具	段	動	文	山	形	親
学	族	合	全	物	語	本	大	切
部	長	世	界	研	修	小	川	田
品	期	話	有	料	理	鳥	肉	中
質	問	題	名	金	出	発	感	心」
帽	収	集	銀	座	席	表	情	化
子	供	中	行	事	実	記	入	学

2. Treatments 3 and 4 employ starch cards. During this instructional session, students are provided with cards that include the kanji characters from units 28 and 29. These kanji cards are created using the maximum number of jukugo pairs from units 27 and 28 of the kanji. During the learning process, a group consisting of three individuals with different skills is allotted a time frame of 15 minutes to identify the correct kanji pairs using the kanji cards provided by the teacher. Every group should search for as many pairs of kanji as they can, and the group that finds the highest number will be declared the winner.

3. During the 5th and 6th treatment, pupils are provided with an additional kanji table, specifically the kanji table from units 29 and 30. Both Unit 29 and Unit 30 cover a total of 13 kanji each. The procedure in

this therapy is identical to that of the 1st and 2nd treatments, which involves the utilization of a starch table.

4. For the 7th and 8th sessions, students were once again provided with kanji cards from units 31 and 32. This treatment used the same approach as the 4th and 5th treatments, involving the presentation of cases in the form of kanji cards. Units 31 and 32 of the Kanji course cover a total of 13 kanji each.

### Kanji Ability before the Use of TGT (Teams Games Tournament)

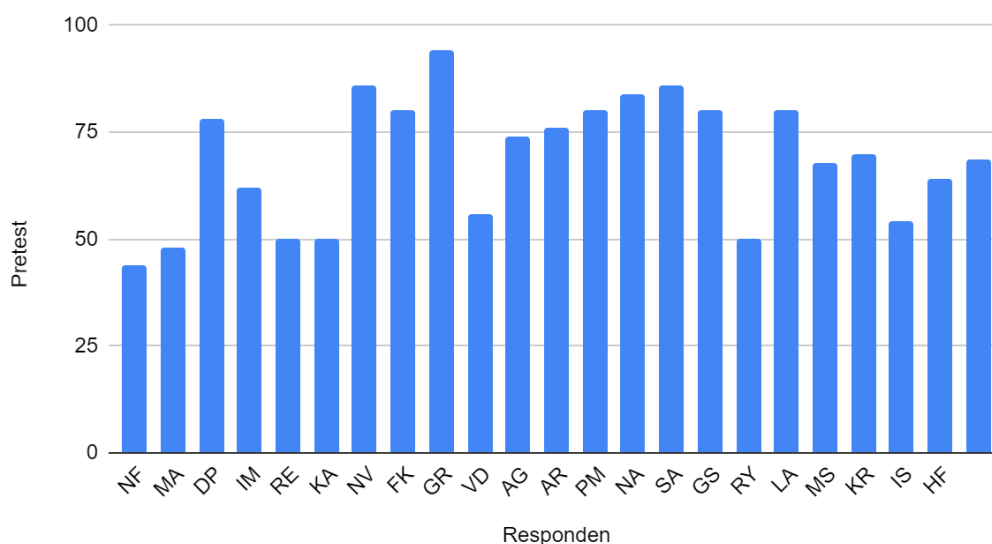


Figure 1. Pretest score

Based on the pretest results depicted in the figure 1, it can be inferred that the proficiency in mastering the JLPT N4 kanji vocabulary prior to implementing the TGT cooperative model falls within the adequate range, as indicated by an average pretest score of 68.8. The students achieved a minimum score of 44 and a maximum score of 94. Prior to using the TGT cooperative learning paradigm, a significant number of students had confusion when confronted with JLPT N4 questions, particularly in the

reading comprehension (Dokkai) section. The reason for this is a deficiency in the command of Japanese vocabulary that encompasses kanji, leading to students' inability to comprehend the substance and significance of the reading in the JLPT N4 questions. Proficiency in language is crucial for comprehending the significance of written text. According to Dilek & Yürük (2013), it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of vocabulary acquisition in foreign language instruction. According to the viewpoints expressed by Dilek and Yuruk, it may be inferred by the author that vocabulary holds significant importance in the process of acquiring a foreign language, specifically in the context of learning Japanese kanji.

### Kanji Ability after the Use of TGT Model

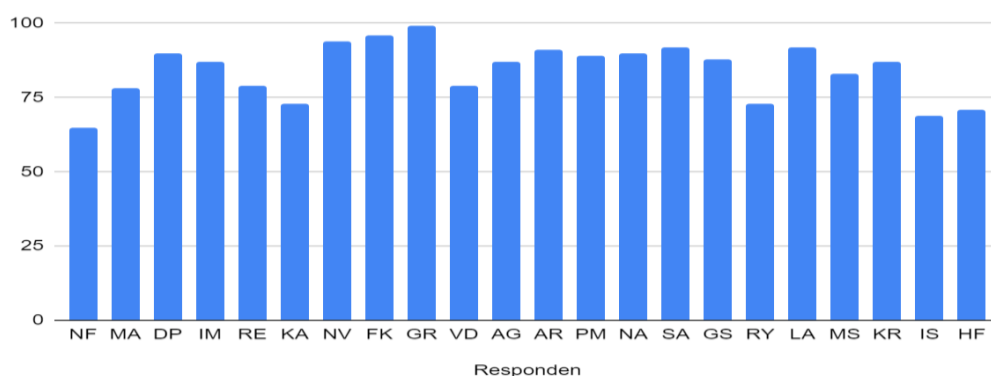
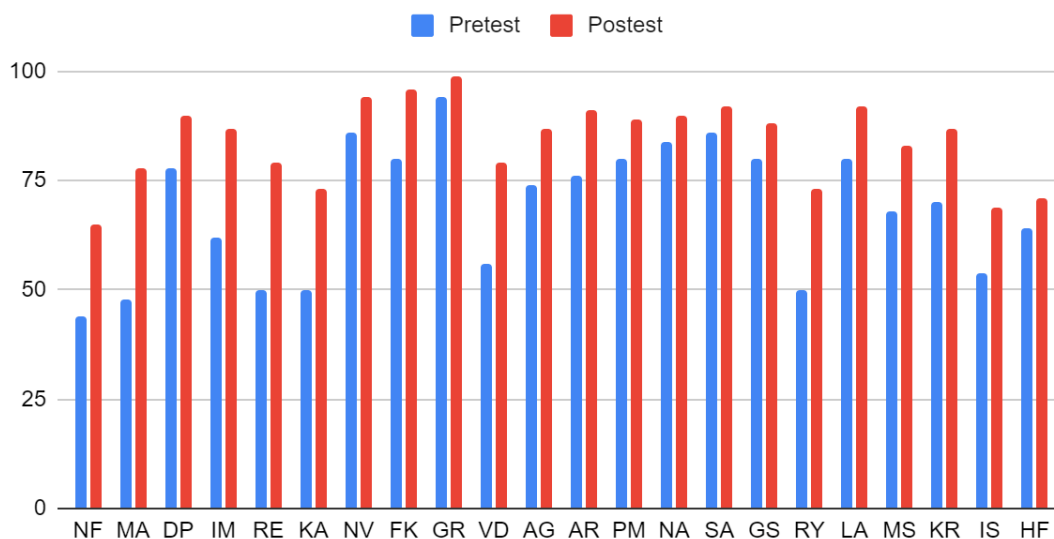


Figure 2. Posttest score

### Comparison on Kanji Ability before and after the Use of TGT Model



**Figure 3. Vocabulary mastery before and after the use of TGT model**

According to the figure 3, the author may conclude that the proficiency in kanji vocabulary among students participating in the Japanese literature study program at Pakuan University has improved both before and after implementing the TGT cooperative model. The superiority of the red graph over the blue graph is evident when comparing the pretest and posttest data. This is evidenced by the substantial increase in the average pretest and posttest scores achieved by students. Prior to implementing the TGT cooperative learning paradigm, the average student score was 68.8, which fell inside the adequate range. Nevertheless, the implementation of the TGT cooperative learning model resulted in a noteworthy improvement in the average student score, specifically rising to 84. This score falls within the B category, nearing the A category. From the observed rise in value, the author can deduce that the implementation of the TGT cooperative learning paradigm is efficacious in enhancing proficiency in JLPT N4 vocabulary. The author posits that the implementation of the TGT (Teams-Games-Tournaments) cooperative learning model can effectively enhance students'

enthusiasm towards the learning process. According to Alexander & Pono (2019), the cooperative learning model is a method where groups collaborate to collectively solve problems, as per their hypothesis. Based on this viewpoint, the author can deduce that the utilization of the cooperative learning model enables every student to enhance their skills indirectly by being placed in a group comprising of peers with varied talents.

### Opinion of the Students on the Use of TGT Model

Penggunaan model Pembelajaran TGT (Team Games Tournament) pada pembelajaran kanji dapat meningkatkan kemampuan kosakata JLPT N4 bahasa Jepang.

20 responses

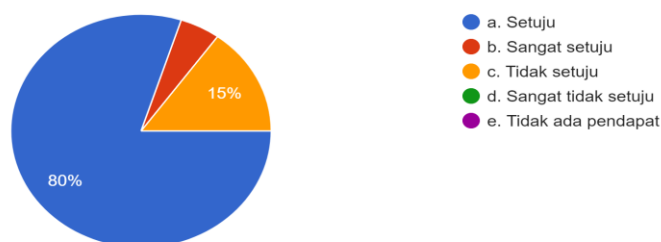


Figure 4. Response of the students

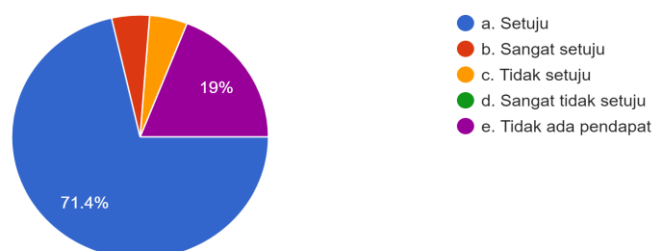
Table 3. Opinion of the students

Choices of Questionnaire	Results of Responses
Agree	16
Very agree	1
Disagree	3
Very Disagree	0
Neutral	0

The survey results on the implementation of the TGT cooperative learning paradigm in kanji classes indicate that 80% of students responded with

agreement, 5% responded with strong agreement, and 15% responded with disagreement. Based on the questionnaire answers, it can be inferred that implementing the TGT cooperative learning paradigm in the kanji course enhances proficiency in mastering the JLPT N4 vocabulary. This is evident from the students' scores, as the average score prior to implementing the TGT model was in the sufficient range (68.8), but after implementing the TGT cooperative model, the mastery of JLPT N4 kanji vocabulary by students in the Japanese study program at Pakuan University showed a significant improvement, reaching the good range (84). Based on the obtained results, it can be inferred that the implementation of the TGT cooperative learning paradigm has the potential to enhance proficiency in JLPT N4 kanji knowledge. The use of the TGT cooperative learning paradigm in the Japanese Literature study program at Pakuan University has resulted in a significant improvement in students' proficiency in Japanese vocabulary, particularly with kanji. As students' Japanese vocabulary proficiency improved, their capacity to tackle and comprehend JLPT N4 questions in the *mojigoi* category (which encompasses vocabulary and kanji) also grew. In addition to this, enhancing vocabulary proficiency is crucial not only for the vocabulary mastery segment, but also for comprehending the meaning of the reading questions found in the JLPT N4 exam.

Pada Pembelajaran Kanji menggunakan Model TGT dengan jumlah anggota 3 mahasiswa yang memiliki kemampuan beragam, mampu memecahkan masalah dari soal yang diberikan pengajar.  
21 responses



**Figure 4. Students opinion**

**Table 4. Students opinion**

<b>Choices of Questionnaire</b>	<b>Response results</b>
Agree	15
Very Agree	1
Disagree	1
Very disagree	0
Neutral	4

According to the questionnaire results, the author can infer that implementing the TGT cooperative model can effectively address issues in the kanji learning process. During the process of solving practice questions, students have the opportunity to engage in group discussions. This learning strategy can alleviate the workload for students with lower aptitude as it enables students with higher aptitude to elucidate concepts to their peers with lower aptitude. During the learning process of this methodology, each case provided by the teacher must be collaboratively solved to determine the appropriate solution. This aligns with Suwarno's (2019) theory that the cooperative learning model is easily implementable and engages all students, regardless of their status. It involves students acting as peer tutors and incorporates elements of play and reinforcement. According to this theory, the author can deduce that employing the TGT cooperative model can foster collaboration among students in groups, irrespective of their varying talents. These students can effectively collaborate to resolve problems or address scenarios presented in the course. Kanji refers to the vocabulary that consists of kanji characters.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Given the problem formulation in this research, the author can draw

the following conclusions: The pupils' proficiency in mastering Japanese vocabulary written in kanji falls within the sufficient range, as indicated by the average score of 68.8 earned by the students. Using the TGT cooperative learning methodology has resulted in a commendable achievement in mastering Japanese language written in kanji, with an average score of 84. The TGT cooperative learning paradigm has been found to significantly enhance the mastery of Japanese language written in kanji. Evidence of improvement in students' vocabulary knowledge may be observed from the increase in scores, rising from the previous average of 68.8 to 84 after implementing the cooperative model. The TGT cooperative learning paradigm fosters collaboration among students of varying abilities, enabling them to collectively address learning challenges alongside their peers.

The TGT cooperative paradigm is not limited to kanji (vocabulary) study; it may also be effectively utilized in other Japanese language courses, such as dokkai. For instance, every group is assigned a set of sentences arranged in a random order. Subsequently, each group is tasked with organizing these lines into a coherent and well-structured reading passage.

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