

Understanding the News in Japanese

Understanding the news in Japanese can be challenging so here are some tips to get you started, followed by suggestions for particular programmes and websites.

- Make a decision NOT to watch bilingual or satellite TV for e.g. one day a week. There are too many temptations in Japan with easy access to satellite and cable.
- Record a news program on video or DVD so that you can review as many times as you wish with a language helper or by yourself.
- Before watching the news in Japanese watch in your own language or read the newspaper in English or on computer so that you have an idea about what topics are going to come up. If you do this you are beginning to develop the important strategy of predicting what kind of language you are going to meet and so are better prepared for coping with it.
- Choose news content that you are interested in. If Japanese politics doesn't interest you then choose a world news programme or sports news or whatever.

1. NHK Educational Sign language news

These news programmes are broadcast at various different times throughout the day on the NHK Educational channel. (Try, for example **NHK手話(しゅわ)ニュース845** at 8:45 pm each weekday night. They are excellent for language learners since the news is presented slowly and clearly. Speakers also make distinct pauses between phrases which help the listener process the material before the next input. The spoken word appears in written form on the screen as well as with sign language, so this can be a good way to practice reading as well as aural skills.

2. Use news websites

If you enjoy **the internet**, find a suitable Japanese news website especially if there is one where you can listen and watch videos as well as read. You can often download news podcasts as well. Here are a few sites for online news.

<http://headlines.yahoo.co.jp/>

<http://dailynews.yahoo.co.jp/fc/world/index.html>

<http://news.www.infoseek.co.jp/>

<http://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/>

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/index.htm>