

Online Information

The Mystery at Mount Fuji

Fascinating Facts

Japan

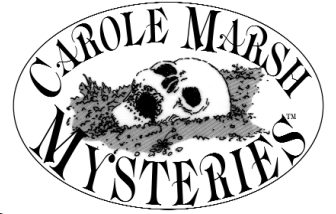
- Japan is an archipelago, a collection of islands, that contains more than 4,000 islands!
- There are about 200 volcanoes in Japan!
- On average, Japanese live 4 years longer than Americans do!
- The national flag is called the *Hinomaru*. It is white with one red circle in its center that represents the rising sun.
- Japan has an average of 1500 earthquakes every year!
- Miso, a soup made from soybean paste and dissolved in seaweed stock, is sometimes served for breakfast!
- The emperor of Japan is the only reigning emperor in the world!
- You should never stick your chopsticks straight up and down in your food, especially your rice, because this is a symbol used only at funerals!
- Tokyo, Japan's largest city, has a population of about 33 million people, over 4 times the population of New York City!
- Japan is the first country to develop a robot that looks and acts like a human!



Fact

or

Fiction



The Mystery at Mount Fuji

Write Fact or Fiction next to each sentence below.

- _____ 1. The Chinese named Japan Nihon.
- _____ 2. Japanese writing goes left to right like American handwriting.
- _____ 3. In Japan, people say "San" after a person's name instead of Mr. or Mrs.
- _____ 4. Professor Kato praised Taro and Mitsuko's talents because people in Japan like to brag about their families.
- _____ 5. The *samurai* carried two swords because one was dull and the other was sharp.
- _____ 6. The Japanese women working in the beauty parlor were excited to cut Mimi and Christina's hair.
- _____ 7. Sumo players are recognized by their unique hairstyle.
- _____ 8. The place where the sumo players lived and trained was called a stable because the players like to ride horses.
- _____ 9. A sleeping volcano is a volcano that has not shot up gas and lava in a very long time.
- _____ 10. The grand champion sumo player rewarded Christina and Grant with gifts for helping him solve the mystery.

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Online Book Club

The Mystery at Mount Fuji

Talk About It!

1. Does Japan seem like an exotic country to you? What country or countries might seem "exotic" to Japanese children?
2. Why is Christina so interested in Japanese culture?
3. After reading this book, would you say that Japanese kids are like American kids in a lot of ways? What are some ways they are similar, and what are some ways they are different?
4. Why do you think a samurai sword is a very strong symbol in Japanese culture?
5. Sumo players are very popular in Japan. Can you think of some American athletes who get the same kind of admiration and attention?
6. Do you find the Japanese alphabet interesting? Do you think it would be hard to learn? Why or why not?
7. Do you know why Japan has so many earthquakes?
8. The children were offered some different types of food in Japan, like a lunch of cold rice, fish, and vegetables. Are you willing to try new foods when you visit new places?
9. What did you learn about Japan that you did not know before?
10. Would you like to visit Japan? If so, what would you like to see and do there?



Online Book Club

The Mystery at Mount Fuji

Bring It To Life!

1. Using the Katakana Alphabet in the back of the book, write your name in Katakana. First, find similar sounds in Katakana that closely match the sounds in your name. Then find the Katakana character that goes with the sound. Write the characters down. You can draw these on card stock, color them, cut them out, and string them on black cord to wear around your neck.
2. Make origami paper toys. Just about any kind of paper of any size can be used as long as it is easy to fold. Origami paper can often be purchased toy or craft stores. Search the Internet to find websites with instructions on how to fold the paper and make some cool items!
3. Make a koinobori banner from either paper or cloth. Take a long rectangular piece of plain paper or cloth and fold it lengthwise. Sew, glue, or tape the side. Paint a big round eye and some scales on the koinobori like in the image at the upper right. Add some fun streamers. It can be hung from a pole in front of the house on May 5th or any day you want to have some fun!
4. Try making your own Japanese clothes. Get a bathrobe—the bigger the better—and then get a long wide scarf and wrap it around you. You may need a friend to help you. Make sure the bathrobe and belt fit closely to the body. Hold a fan. Put on some flip-flops and try walking around holding the fan. How do you feel? (Very comfortable, probably!)
5. Try using chopsticks. Follow the instructions that Taro gives Grant in the book. If you don't have a pair of chopsticks, you can practice by using two pencils or sticks, but don't put them in your mouth. The next time you go to a Chinese or Japanese restaurant, ask for a pair of chopsticks and test your new skill!

