



# UNDERSTANDING SISTER CITIES

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FROM: [www.sistercities.org.nz](http://www.sistercities.org.nz)

Curriculum Levels: 3-5

- Social Sciences,
  - Identify, Culture and Organisation
  - The Economic World
  - Social Inquiry
- English
  - listening, reading, viewing, speaking writing and presenting
  - using and developing research skills

## TEACHER INTRODUCTION

In this first of two social sciences units we introduce students to the people-to-people concept of Sister Cities and the aim of fostering international understanding and friendship. Japan is the country with whom we have the most Sister City relationships. This provides students with an ideal opportunity to begin learning about the geography, culture, and people of Japan and making contact with Japanese classrooms.

## THINKING ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

- Have students think about the good friends and relations they have in different cities and towns around New Zealand. Consider and report back on the following:
  - how often do they meet up face-to-face?
  - how do they communicate with each other and how often does this take place?
- Discuss and list the benefits of keeping up good *people-to-people* friendships through regular communication. Do any students have or have had a penpal relationship with a student in other countries? Brainstorm ideas as to how these relationships can be of great benefit. Why do they think it is important to learn about different cultures in other countries of the world?

## INTRODUCING SISTER CITIES

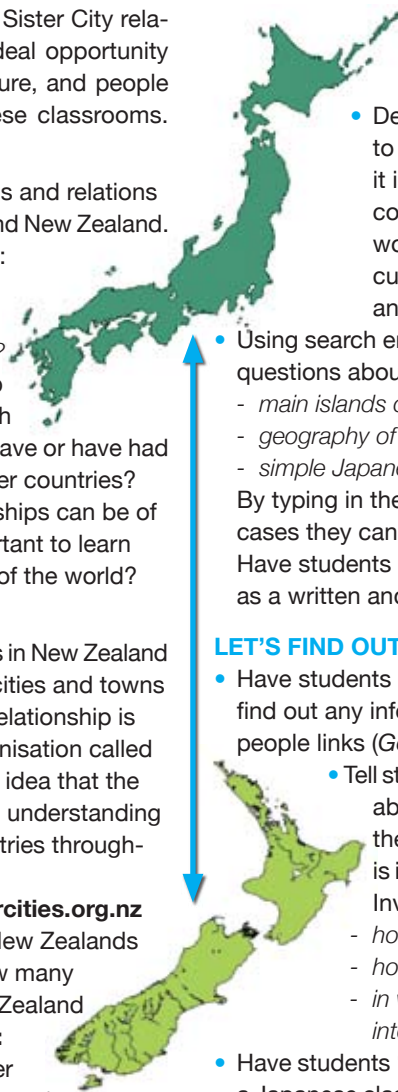
- Are the students aware that cities and towns in New Zealand have friendships and close relations with cities and towns throughout the world? Tell them that this relationship is called 'Sister Cities', promoted by an organisation called **Sister Cities New Zealand**. Introduce the idea that the Sister City concept is all about developing understanding and friendship between peoples and countries throughout the world.
- In groups, have students visit: [www.sistercities.org.nz](http://www.sistercities.org.nz) > mouse over Our Sister Cities, > Select New Zealand's Sister Cities. Scroll down the list. With how many different countries of the world does New Zealand have sister city relationships? **Atlas Skills:** Students locate these countries. What other information can be found? **eg** bordering countries, seas, height above sea level ...

## REAL-LIFE SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR LEVELS 3-5

- If you have people who have emigrated from any of these countries in your district, ask if they would be prepared to talk to the class about their country, culture and language.

## NEW ZEALAND AND JAPAN – A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

- Tell students that Japan is the country that has the most Sister City relationships with New Zealand. Speculate on possible reasons for this, **eg** New Zealand is a very popular destination for Japanese tourists.
- Download the Japan – New Zealand Sister Cities pdf at: [www.teachingonline.org/japan.pdf](http://www.teachingonline.org/japan.pdf)



Have students locate the Japan – New Zealand Sister City that is closest to their school.

- Develop the idea that if students were going to visit Japan on holiday, why do they think it is important to know something about the country they are visiting and a few simple words of greeting and thanks? What is their current knowledge about Japan? Brainstorm and list for future reference.
- Using search engine Google, have students type in simple questions about Japan they would like answered, **eg**
  - main islands of Japan
  - main cities of Japan
  - geography of Japan
  - languages of Japan
  - simple Japanese phrases
  - Japanese money
 By typing in the name of the Japanese sister city, in most cases they can find out (in English) tourist information. Have students organise and present their information as a written and illustrated project for a class wall display.

## LET'S FIND OUT MORE

- Have students check their council website first to try and find out any information about city-to-city and people-to-people links (*Google council name*).
  - Tell students that the best way of finding out about Sister City relationships is to contact their local city or district council. Find out who is in charge of the local Sister City programme. Invite them to visit the class and talk about
    - how the relationship started
    - how do both cities keep this relationship going
    - in what ways do the people from each city interact with each other?
- Have students 'make a start' by making email contact with a Japanese classroom. Use the 'safe site' [www.epals.com](http://www.epals.com) > click on **Find classrooms now** > select **Japan** from the map.