

All About...

The History of Sport in Japan



Sport around the World

Did you know that some sports come from certain countries in the world?

Hole Taso is a sport played in India.



Curling is a sport from Scotland.



Hurling is a popular sport in Ireland.



In Malaysia, bola is a popular sport.



Today, we are going to look at sports from a country called Japan.

Where Is Japan?

Japan is in Asia.



Sumo

Sumo wrestling is one of Japan's most well-known sports.

In Japan, sumo wrestlers are called 'rikishi'. This means 'strength' and 'warrior'.



Sumo

Sumo wrestling takes place in a ring. The aim of wrestling is to make sure that no part of the body apart from your feet touches the ground. If this happens, or if a player steps outside the ring, they lose.

Players aren't allowed to pull the other person's hair, touch their eyes or hit them with a clenched fist. They are allowed to slap each other though!

Unlike other types of wrestling, players aren't matched on how tall or heavy they are.



"The Sumo Grand Championship" by The White House @ Flickr is licensed under [CCBY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

Kendo

The word 'kendo' means 'way of the sword' in Japanese.

The aim of kendo is to score points by hitting the other players in certain areas. Kendo is quite a noisy sport because to score a point, a player also has to shout (called a 'kiai') and stomp their feet at the same time as the hit.



Kendo

The sticks used in kendo are called 'shinai' and players are called 'kendoka'.

In a kendo tournament, there are three judges who give points. Players can lose points if they step outside the playing area.

An important part of kendo is showing respect for the other kendoka.



Judo

Judo is a Japanese martial art. A martial art is a sport where people fight or defend themselves. Judo means ‘the gentle way’.

Judo is played on a special mat called a ‘tatami’. People who play judo are called ‘judokas’. They wear a special uniform called a ‘gi’, which is tied with a belt round the waist.



Judo

The aim of judo is to score points by throwing the other person to the ground or by managing to hold them still for some time. If you throw the other person to the ground (which is called 'ippon'), you win that round straight away.

Rules of judo include:

- no kicking or punching;
- no touching the other player's face;
- no hurting the other player on purpose.



Yabusame

Yabusame (said ‘yah-boo-sam-ay’) is archery (bows and arrows) on horseback. It is based on a time when battles were fought by Japanese warriors.

In Yabusame, a player gallops on a horse along a track. As they do so, they try to hit three wooden targets using their bow and arrow. They then have to stop their horse before the end of the track.



Yabusame

Because the player has to use both hands for the bow and arrow, they have to control the horse using only their knees, which is very tricky. As they fire their arrows, they also have to shout 'in-yo, in-yo' which means 'darkness and light.'

Yabusame is often played near Shinto places of worship. Shinto is the main religion in Japan.



Aikido

Aikido (said 'eye-kee-do') is a martial art. It is all about defending yourself instead of attacking.

Unlike some other martial arts, Aikido isn't a competition with points. People practise Aikido in order to become stronger, more flexible and calmer. Aikido is a group of Japanese words which when put together can mean 'the way of harmony with nature'.



Aikido

Aikido sometimes looks almost as if people are dancing as they turn, spin and step.

Aikido takes place in a room or hall called a dojo. An important rule of Aikido is to bow before entering the dojo.



"Aikido Impact" by Hoang P @Flickr is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Karate

Like Judo and Aikido, Karate is a martial art. You can tell how good at karate a person is by the colour of their belt.

People who do karate are called 'karateka'. Karate involves different kinds of strikes, including kicks and hits using elbows and knees. There are also moves called blocks which can be used to protect a player from attack.



Karate

Karateka are given points for hitting the other player and get more points if they perform a move well. At the end of a fight, the player with the most points wins.

As a person gets better at karate, they can earn different coloured belts. Beginners wear white belts, while the best karateka wear black belts. It can take seven years to get a black belt.

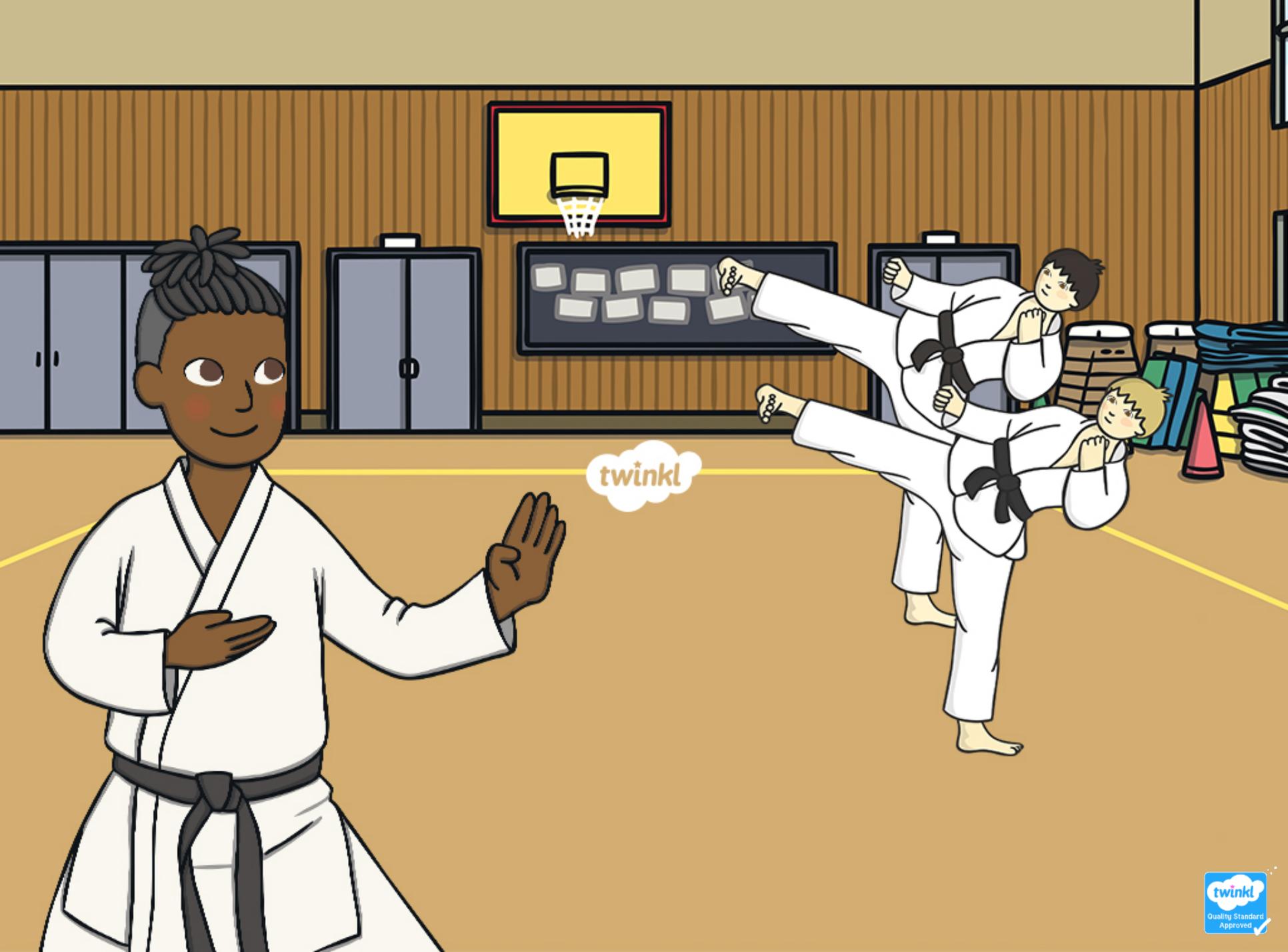


Sports in Japan

**Talk About
It**

Which Japanese sports would you like to try and why?

Other sports from around the world are played in Japan. Baseball, football, golf and tennis are popular. In 2019, Japan hosted the Rugby Union World Cup and this has meant rugby is growing in popularity.



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