



Mythological Creatures Field Guide

Free classroom resources

Japanese Yōkai

Five classroom posters, A3

In this file

Poster	Colour	Black and white
Kitsune	3	8
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- These posters are A3. To print one on A4, choose "Fit to page" in your print settings.
- The QR code on each poster opens mythologicalcreatures.net/resources.

Kitsune

Say it **kit-SOO-neh** Japanese 狐

A magical fox that can change its shape, from old stories and shrines in Japan.

“Come and sleep” is “Sousou-ne” in old Japanese. A 1,200-year-old story says this is how the fox got its name.

Nine tails belong to the mightiest fox spirits in old stories.

Where it comes from:
About 1,200 years ago
Book: The Tale of Genji
About 900 years ago
Story: The nine-tailed fox
About 170 years ago
Print: Kitarō’s fox fire
Today
Place: Fushimi Inari, Kyoto

In the fox-village tale, a man found out his wife was a fox. He still asked her to come back. Would you?

Kitsune is a Japanese word. You can find it in many old books. It’s about 200 years old. This is how we picture it.

Danger: Magic: Power: Speed: Size: Spooky:

Follow the fox-fire to find out more

From the book: Mythological Creatures Field Guide: Japanese Yōkai

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Kitsune

Oni

Say it **OH-nee** Japanese 鬼

A huge horned demon with an iron club, from old stories and festivals in Japan.

Roasted soybeans are thrown at Setsubun each February, as families shout “Oni wa soto! Demons out! Real courage can impress an Oni so much that it walks away.”

Where it comes from:
About 1,200 years ago
Book: Japan’s strange tales
About 600 years ago
Small: the oni of Mount Ōe
In the 1800s
Carving: Oni dodging beans
Today
Place: Sensoji, Tokyo

Families throw beans to chase Oni away, yet Oni guard a temple gate. Why might people want an Oni on their side?

Oni have no horns and tiger skin because demons were said to come from the north-east, the “tiger” direction. Here it is, brought to life.

Danger: Magic: Power: Speed: Size: Spooky:

Follow the beans to find out more

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Oni

Tengu

Say it **TEN-go** Japanese 天狗

A winged spirit and master sword-fighter, from the sacred mountains of Japan.

The Tengu king taught a boy called Yoshitsune the sword-fight on Mount Kurama, by moonlight. Sudden mountain winds are still called “Tengu wind”.

Where it comes from:
About 1,300 years ago
Book: the Chronicles of Japan
About 730 years ago
Small: proud monks as Tengu
In the 1800s
Carving: a Tengu with a fan
Today
Place: Mount Kurama, Kyoto

Old pictures show Tengu with a beard, never one a long red nose. Why might a creature change over hundreds of years?

Later artists gave Tengu red noses and long beaks. We kept the older book too. This is how we picture it.

Danger: Magic: Power: Speed: Size: Spooky:

Follow the wind to find out more

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Tengu

Kappa

Say it **KAH-pah** Japanese 河童

A river spirit with a dish of water on its head, from the rivers and ponds of Japan.

Beet to a Kappa and it must bow back. The water spills from its head dish, and it loses its power.

Cucumber relish. Kappa love cucumbers, so cucumber sushi is called “kappamaki”.

Where it comes from:
About 1,300 years ago
Book: the Chronicles of Japan
About 250 years ago
Print: Sakai’s picture book
About 200 years ago
Breeze: Kappa on a cucumber
Today
Place: Kappa-buchi, Tōno

Warning signs about Kappa still stand by Japanese rivers. Why might a scary story keep children safer than a rule?

Tales from other places give the Kappa a blue-green face, but a 1910 book of Tōno tales says “There’s Kappa we red-faced. This is how we picture it.”

Danger: Magic: Power: Speed: Size: Spooky:

Follow the ripples to find out more

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Kappa

Rokurokubi

Say it **roh-koo-roh-KOO-bee** Japanese ろくろ首

A person whose neck stretches long at night, from ghost stories told by candlelight in Japan.

By day, Rokurokubi look like anyone else. At night their necks stretch out long, often while they sleep.

Lump all is on their menu. They stretch their necks to drink it from lanterns.

Where it comes from:
About 250 years ago
Print: Sakai’s picture book
Over 200 years ago
Drawn: neck tricks in old Tokyo
About 120 years ago
Book: Hearn’s ghost stories
Today
Place: a Yūbai statue street

Many Rokurokubi don’t know their necks stretch at night. Should we fear them, or feel sorry for them?

Some stories give the Rokurokubi a stretching neck to others. Its head floats free of its body. This is how we picture it.

Danger: Magic: Power: Speed: Size: Spooky:

Follow the neck to find out more

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Rokurokubi



This page is blank on purpose: it is the back of the cover.

Kitsune

Say it **kit-SOO-neh**

Japanese 狐

A magical fox that can change its shape,
from old stories and shrines in Japan.



‘Come and sleep’ is
‘kitsu-ne’ in old Japanese. A
1,200-year-old story says
this is how the fox got its
name.

Nine tails belong to the
mightiest fox spirits in old
stories.

Where it comes from:

About 1,200 years ago

Book: the fox-wife tale

About 900 years ago

Story: the nine-tailed fox

About 170 years ago

Print: Hiroshige’s fox fires

Today

Place: Fushimi Inari, Kyoto

**In the fox-wife tale, a man
found out his wife was a
fox. He still asked her to
come back. Would you?**



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‘Kitsune’ is Japanese for ‘fox’

Nine tails first appear in Chinese writing. Japanese prints from about
200 years ago show nine-tailed foxes too. This is how we picture it.



Danger



Magic



Power



Speed



Size



Spooky



**Follow the fox-fire
to find out more**



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Oni

Say it **OH-nee**

Japanese 鬼

A huge horned demon with an iron club,
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Roasted soybeans are thrown at Setsubun each February, as families shout 'Oni wa soto': 'Demons out'.

Real courage can impress an Oni so much that it walks away.

Where it comes from:

About 1,200 years ago

Book: Japan's strange tales

About 650 years ago

Scroll: the oni of Mount Ōe

In the 1800s

Carving: Oni dodging beans

Today

Place: Sensō-ji, Tokyo

Families throw beans to chase Oni away, yet two Oni guard a temple gate. Why might people want an Oni on their side?



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'Oni' may come from a word meaning 'hidden'

Oni have ox horns and tiger skins because demons were said to come from the north-east, the 'ox-tiger' direction. Here it is, brought to life.



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Tengu

Say it **TEN-goo**

Japanese 天狗

A winged spirit and master sword-fighter,
from the sacred mountains of Japan.

The Tengu king taught a boy called Yoshitsune to sword-fight on Mount Kurama, by moonlight.

Sudden mountain winds are still called 'Tengu wind'.

Where it comes from:

About 1,300 years ago

Book: the Chronicles of Japan

About 730 years ago

Scroll: proud monks as Tengu

In the 1800s

Carving: a Tengu with a fan

Today

Place: Mount Kurama, Kyoto

Old pictures show Tengu with a beak, newer ones a long red nose. Why might a creature change over hundreds of years?



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'Tengu' means 'heavenly dog'

Later artists gave Tengu red faces and long noses. We kept the older beak too. This is how we picture it.



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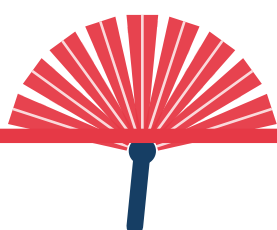
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Kappa

Say it **KAH-pah**

Japanese 河童

A river spirit with a dish of water on its head,
from the rivers and ponds of Japan.

Bow to a Kappa and it must bow back. The water spills from its head dish, and it loses its power.

Cucumber rolls. Kappa love cucumbers, so cucumber sushi is called 'kappamaki'.

Where it comes from:

About 1,300 years ago

Book: the Chronicles of Japan

About 250 years ago

Print: Sekien's picture book

About 200 years ago

Bronze: Kappa on a cucumber

Today

Place: Kappa-buchi, Tōno

Warning signs about Kappa still stand by Japanese rivers. Why might a scary story keep children safer than a rule?



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'Kappa' means 'river child'

Tales from other places give the Kappa a blue-green face, but a 1910 book of Tōno tales says Tōno's Kappa are red-faced. This is how we picture it.



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to find out more**



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Rokurokubi

Say it **roh-koo-roh-KOO-bee**

Japanese ろくろ首

A person whose neck stretches long at night,
from ghost stories told by candlelight in Japan.



By day, Rokurokubi look like anyone else. At night their necks stretch out long, often while they sleep.

Lamp oil is on their menu. They stretch their necks to drink it from lanterns.

Where it comes from:

About 250 years ago

Print: Sekien's picture book

Over 200 years ago

Show: neck tricks in old Tokyo

About 120 years ago

Book: Hearn's ghost stories

Today

Place: a Yōkai statue street

Many Rokurokubi don't know their necks stretch at night. Should we fear them, or feel sorry for them?



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'Kubi' is neck; 'rokuro' is a potter's wheel

Some stories give the Rokurokubi a stretching neck; in others, its head floats free of its body. This is how we picture it.



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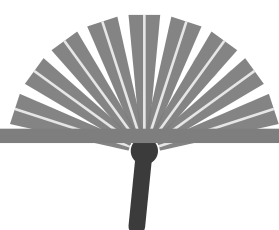
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Show: neck tricks in old Tokyo

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Place: a Yōkai statue street

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