

Unit 10

Best Buys for Tourists:

Pearl from Japan

I. Pre-Reading

1. Have you ever heard this saying “Cast pearls before swine”? Do you know its meaning?
2. Do you like pearls or diamonds? Which one is more expensive?
3. Do you know where pearls come from?

There is an American song which contains the line “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend.” Although the line is intended to be quite funny in the song, foreign tourists in Japan may be excused for thinking that pearls really are far too expensive and rare for the vast majority of people to buy, the famous Mikimoto cultured



pearls have long proved a great attraction to buyers all over the world. Renowned for their radiance, purity and quality, these pearls are exquisite to the eye.

The story of Kokichi Mikimoto, who lived from 1858 to 1954, is the story of one man’s determination to create perfection in the form of perfect pearl. In 1888, he began farming *akoyagai*, mother-of-pearl oysters. After numerous unsuccessful attempts, he finally cultivated his first half-pearl in 1893 and achieved the first completely round pearl eight years later. He then established a production farm and later extended in cultivation of pearls to the Philippines

Luck and patience are very important in pearl farming. First, tiny shellfish are raised and left in a tank until they are one centimeter in size. They are then immersed in the sea in baskets. As soon as the shells open naturally, a minute piece of *akoya*

shell is inserted, forming the nucleus of the pearl. The *akoyagai* are washed ten times a year and harvested after two years. From every hundred shells, there are only about five very good pearls—though, fortunately, another twenty or so are reasonable in quality. The pearls from more than half the shells, however, are worthless. Regrettably, this is why cultured pearls cost so much money.

Mikimoto pearls have an extremely beautiful, lustrous milky-white appearance and are on sale in all major department stores in Japan. The Mikimoto company, however, also imports pearls from around the world—white lip pearls from Australia and Burma, black lip pearls from Tahiti, freshwater pearls from China, and pink pearls from Mexico and the Caribbean—to help to create beautiful pieces of jewelry.

When you buy Mikimoto pearls, a Mikimoto specialist will often be on hand to advise you on ways of taking care of them and keeping them brilliant and radiant “forever”.

II. Working with Vocabulary

A. Focus on the meaning

Work with a partner. Try to guess the meaning of the words in **bold** type in the following sentences and see if your partner agrees.

1. Her **lustrous** black hair shone in the sun. It looked almost like marble which had been highly polished.
2. The **vast majority** of people wanted peace. Only a small handful actually wanted a war.
3. There is a punctuation error in the following sentence: “If you want to buy pearls you should go to Japan.” To correct, **insert** a comma after the word “pearls”.
4. She has such a lovely face that it has a powerful **radiance** when she smiles. It is almost like being in the sun!
5. What a **minute** piece of jade! I can hardly see it without a magnifying glass!
6. Mrs. Lee **immersed** John’s shirt in hot water and washed it thoroughly.
7. These fifty tapes will form the **nucleus** of the new tape library. Later, lots of other will be added, but the present tapes will always be the most important part of the library.

8. Dr. Sun Yat Sen is **renowned** for laying the foundations of modern China earlier this century. In fact, he is known throughout the world as the father of the modern China.
9. Do we have to use coal? Is there no **alternative** source of energy such as oil or gas?
10. The framers are already gathering the rice corp. Soon it will have been **harvested** and stored safely for the winter.

B. Focus on the definitions

Now complete each blank in the following definitions with the most appropriate word from those shown in the **bold** in the previous sentences.(A)

1. If someone is _____ for a particular quality or skill, they are famous and widely known for it.
2. An _____ is something that can be used or done instead of something else.
3. When you describe a pearl as _____, you are referring to its bright and shiny surface.
4. To put something or someone completely in water or another liquid is to _____.
5. A _____ amount of something is an extremely small amount.
6. When you _____ a key into a lock, you put it inside the lock.
7. The _____ of a pearl is the central part or core of it.
8. When we want to refer to the brightness of something, we use the word _____.
9. If farmers _____ their crops, they gather them in.
10. A phrase which means "most" is "the vast _____".

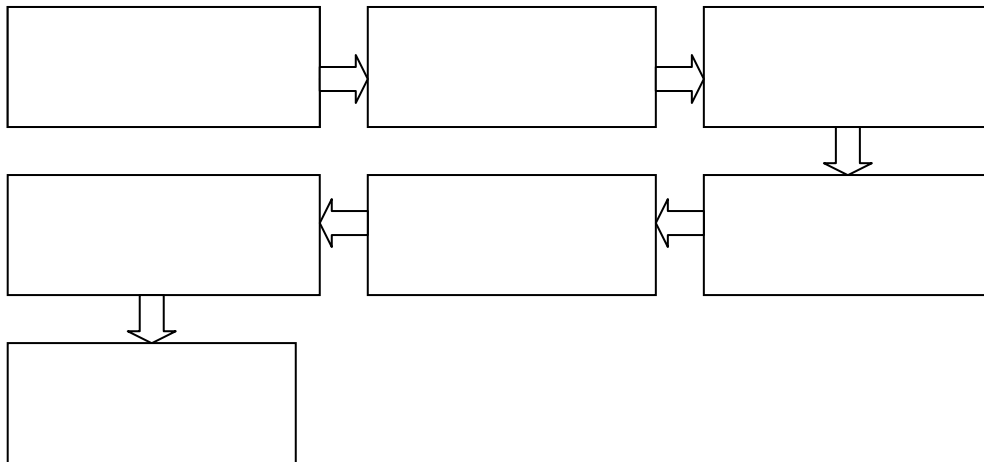
III. Understanding the Reading

A. Understanding the process of the pearl production

Put the following processes in the production of cultured pearls in the correct order in the following diagram. (Try not to look at reading again.)

- tiny pieces of akoya shell put inside
- collected after two years
- tiny shellfish raised

- shellfish washed 10 times a year
- immersed in sea
- left in a tank until 1cm in size
- shells open naturally



B. Comprehension Questions

Now read the text carefully and write questions for the following answers.

1. They are the famous Mikimoto pearls.

2. Their radiance, purity, and quality.

3. It is about his determination to produce the perfect pearl.

4. in 1901.

5. A tiny piece of *akoya* shell.

6. Only about five.

She left her job as a clerk and began to raise chicken on her father's farm.

4. **cultured** 1. showing good education, manner and an interest in the arts
 2. grown or produced by people

The first cultured half-pearl appeared in 1893. Previously, all pearls had been formed naturally, without any interference or help from man.

5. **reasonable** 1. quite good, not too bad
 2. sensible and fair (use about someone's behavior)

I think the suit is of reasonable quality. The cloth is pretty good, and the jacket has been well-tailored.

6. **extend** 1. continue for a period of time
 2. make (something) bigger or longer

Mikimoto decided to open another pearl farm outside Japan and so he extended his cultivation of pearls to the Philippines.

B. Word Form:

1. **Nouns.** Some common nouns endings are **-sion**, **-tion**, **-ation**, and **-t**. Look at this list of verbs and nouns. Notice how the nouns are related to the verbs.

verb	noun	verb	noun
divide	division	populate	population
introduce	introduction	complicate	complication
explore	exploration	Inform	information
produce	production	prevent	prevention
attract	attraction	fly	flight

Choose the best verb and noun from the list to complete each sentence.

1. The Sear Tower, one of the tallest buildings in the world, _____ many

tourists to go shopping.

2. Japan has greatly increased its _____ of cars. More cars are made in Japan now than ever before.
3. The _____ of the world is increasing every year. In the year 2010, there will be at least 10 billion people on the earth.
4. When people in North America _____ themselves to you for the first time, they usually say, "Nice to meet you" and shake your hand.
5. After World War II, Germany was divided into two separate countries. However, this _____ did not last. In 1990 the two Germanys united as one country.

2. Parts of Speech

The word "minute" has many parts of speech and meanings. Study the followings.

1. minute (n. C) = one of sixty parts that a hour is divided into

E.g. The pizza will then take about twenty minutes to cook.

2. minutes (n.pl) = the written records of the things that are discussed or decided at the meeting

E.g. Mr. Pongpun'd been reading the minutes of the last meeting.

3. minute (v.) = make a written records

E.g. You don't need to minute that.

4. minute in some expressions:

- wait a minute or just a minute = used when you want to stop someone to do something; hang on

E.g. Wait a minute, boys and girls, there is something wrong here.

- at any minute or any minute now = used to emphasize that something is likely to happen very soon

E.g. Mr. Sanit ought to be back any minute.

- a last minute action = the action is done at latest time possible.

E.g. The location has been changed at the last minute.

- **the next minute as expression such as “one minute he was there, the next he was gone.” = used to emphasize that something happens suddenly, especially when it is different from what was happening before.**

E.g. The next minute my father came in.

- **something happens the minute something else happens used to emphasize that something happens immediately after the other thing**

E.g. The minute you do this, you will lose control.

5. **minute (adj.) = very small**

E.g. Only a minute amount of sugar is needed in my coffee.
