Volume 4 of *Japanese Now* is basically a reader introducing the student to both ancient and modern Japan. It consists of seventeen lessons that present a brief history of Japan through events that have characterized each of its major historical periods. These include political, social, and economic changes that have ultimately shaped the Japan of today.

Volumes 1 and 2 emphasized the development of listening and speaking skills, while Volume 3 gave priority to skills in reading at the same time that it provided more opportunity for practice in conversation. Volume 4 concentrates further on reading comprehension with its reading selections, utilizing the structures and vocabulary already learned together with new words, phrases, and structures. Numerous vocabulary words for passive learning are also introduced, some of which may become active vocabulary through repetition and repeated use.

The reading material has been carefully written to correlate with the material in the previous volumes; thus students should have little difficulty understanding this new material. In the beginning, the lessons are short, but they gradually become longer, as do the vocabulary lists, which should be used as references. The lessons are informative and should give the students a good general historical and cultural background of Japan that will enable the student better to understand and appreciate the Japan of today and its people as well as its language and culture.

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