

Walk in Rice Fields of Art

Original by Emma Taggart on September 27, 2017
This version is simplified.

Before you read. Have you heard about (or seen) the Rice Paddy Art like the pictures here? Work with a partner. What do you know about them? What do you want to know?



1 Work with a partner. Talk about what you understand. Help your partner understand anything you don't understand.

In the early 90s, the village of Inakadate, Aomori Prefecture, decided on an unusual way to boost tourism: large rice paddy art. Now, they use several different kinds of rice. Each is a different color. Over a thousand local volunteers come together each year to help plant the rice. Over time, the designs have gotten more complex. The rice paddy art now draws in hundreds of thousands of tourists every year.



Every April, they have a meeting (conference). People decide on the design for the next year. When the theme is set, the village officials make basic designs (mockups). They do this digitally, using computers. Local art teachers refine the drawings. They make better, more exact

drawings. Markers are then placed in the fields. This makes a map for each drawing. Then the planting begins. This process can take up to three months.

Each 15,000-square-meter mural often celebrates local heritage and folklore. This year's designs showed the legend of *Yamata no Orochi* (the eight-forked serpent) facing off against the Shinto god of sea and storms, *Susanno*.





2 Watch the village's Vice Mayor explain the process:

Go to: <https://tinyurl.com/AomoriRiceArt>

Click the gear logo. Change the speed to .75 or .50.

Watch it 2 times. 1st time – listen to the Japanese explanation.

2nd time – Turn the sound off. Read the English.

How many colors of rice are used? _____

What are the steps?

- *conference*
-
-
-
-

3 Think of a tourist place/event in your area. Choose one that is not as popular as it could be/ should be.

You are a travel industry professional. What could you do to make it more popular? Discuss with your partner. Then explain your idea to another pair.

Services or things to help tourists at the place/event:

Ways to increase publicity/visitors:

Youtube Link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=o2_Li7tntE4

Source: https://mymodernmet.com/japanese-rice-paddy-art/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=atlasobscura

- 350 words
- video: approx. 310 words

Answer key:

Seven types/colors of rice

Steps (wording will vary):

- Conference to decide designs
- make mockup design
- are teachers make detailed drawings
- put markers in the field
- planting
- It takes 3 months until the rice is ready

3 Your ideas (ideas will vary. Possibilities:)

- Rinnoji Temple (zen temple)
 - Ideas: offer meditation training in other languages.
Offer tours in other languages
- Yamadera Temple (temple with 1000 steps to the top)
 - Race to the top. (invite TV stations to cover it)

Publicity/PR: Facebook page, list on Trip Advisor, etc., combine with an onsen stay package, make a youtube video,