

A Guide to Universal Studios Japan for Non-Japanese Speakers



Not speaking the language of a country where you visit an amusement park or theme park is not normally a major issue. The rides involve visuals and physical experiences almost exclusively. But with Universal Studios things are a little different: the attractions attempt to create a whole little world for us to live in for a brief time, and to paint a full picture as if in a movie.

This is the case at Universal Studios Japan®, but generally speaking the Japanese language elements are not significant enough to prevent non-Japanese speakers from having great fun there.

Here's a breakdown of the Japanese language element on the different attractions, to help you make the most of your visit. Please note that rides aimed at young children are not covered - young kids don't go for the subtle explanations and context, so they will be more than happy with the amazing sights and thrills!

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™

Let's be honest, if you've made it all the way to USJ you're unlikely to miss out on the Harry

Potter area. It's worth visiting this part of the park simply for the crooked, snow-covered buildings leading up to the castle-like Hogwarts school, which is a hugely impressive building. The ride itself does have quite a lot of Japanese talking, but you can enjoy the special effects nevertheless.

Jurassic Park - The Ride®

Basically a classic log flume with dinosaurs - getting soaked is much more of a concern here than not being able to understand Japanese!

Evangelion XR Ride

Based on Japanese animation, there is inevitably quite a lot of Japanese being spoken out from speakers on this ride, which is one of the newer ones in the park. But the real draw is the effects, with virtual reality helmets being worn to give maximum authenticity. If you want to see the latest in VR, regardless of being able to understand everything, this is a good attraction.

Roller coasters: The Flying Dinosaur and Hollywood Dream

Pretty much no need for English. You know what you're going to get with roller coasters (which doesn't make them any less terrifying). Having said that, Hollywood Dream can be ridden backwards and The Flying Dinosaur has you looking face down at the park, seemingly flying like a Pteranodon, so they are not run-of-the-mill roller coasters. The only vocalisation involved will be everyone around you screaming, which needs no interpretation!

Terminator 2:3-D®

Probably one to avoid if you don't have much time. Around 15 minutes are taken up at the start (after the line) in a large gathering space where a performer tries to make people laugh in Japanese. Even those who speak the language seem to just want to get on with the main event. The main event is a big theater with a cinema screen, as well as actors performing (again in Japanese) in front of 3-D footage on the screen involving the original Terminator actors Arnold Schwarzenegger and Edward Furlong. This attraction is worthwhile if you love Terminator, or 3-D, or want to sit down for a while, but it's not the best for non-English speakers.

Attack on Titan: The Real

This is a fun attraction set in an auditorium, involving 3-D action (4-D if you count the physical effects, like shaking chairs) from the point of view of characters jumping across the rooftops of a historical city and slaying giants. They are speaking Japanese a lot of the time so something is lost there, but it's still an enjoyable experience. Perhaps for some people the main concern, more than being unable to understand the language, would be the violent element, with scenes of gushing blood being made even more real by water effects spraying

on the audience.

Godzilla: The Real 4-D

Similar to Attack on Titan, this ride is worth seeing for the special effects even if you can't understand some parts.

Jaws®

This whole ride is on a real boat floating through a set, with a performer at the front pretending to do a nice tour of a seaside town before shark-related hell breaks loose. The performer speaks a lot of Japanese, but the gist of what they're saying is obvious: "Welcome to our quaint little tour, oh no there's a shark!" The special effects are good and not too much is lost in translation.

Backdraft

Backdraft is one of the older attractions at USJ and it kind of shows. There's a good chunk of talking at the start, followed by a few explosions and bursts of fire. Unless you're a huge fan of the movie, this isn't the most thrilling part of the park, especially when the sizable Japanese talking element is taken into account.

The Amazing Adventures of Spiderman

Possibly the best attraction for special effects and very fun. There's a little Japanese but not enough to dissuade you from visiting this ride. The visuals while making a line are in English; there are newsroom sets with mock news posters, and funny quotations that are all in English.

Enjoy your visit!