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Sommario/riassunto	Japanese ranks as the sixth language of the world with more than 125 million speakers in the island state of Japan. Its genetic relation has been a topic of heated discussion, but Altaic and Austronesian languages appear to have contributed to the early formation of this language. It has a long written tradition, which goes back to texts from the eighth century AD. The modern writing system employs a mixture of Chinese characters and two sets of syllabary developed from the Chinese characters.