

JET Program 2010

SURVIVAL GUIDE



Miami

Name:

JET ID:

Emergency Contact (US):

Contracting Organization:

Supervisor's name and phone number:

PA Name and phone number:

Work Address:

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This guide was written and compiled for JETs departing through the Miami Japanese consulate. Many thanks to Florida JET alumni who provided stories and advice from their own experiences. Thanks also to those who provided other consulates' survival guides, upon which this collection is heavily based. Remember, every situation is different. This guide is for your convenience, but it is your responsibility to seek out information that is accurate and correct for your situation.

Finally, a special thanks to David Namisato, whose visual representations of the JET experience capture situations that words can't quite express. For more on David's works, please see:

<http://www.lifeaftertheboe.com/>, <http://www.omoideboe.com/>, <http://www.namisato.org/>



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Before You Leave

In the midst of packing and saying your goodbyes, there are some details you want to make sure you do not forget. Refer to this guide as you make your final To-Do lists and leave proxies in place that can take care of any legal and financial issues that might arise while you are away.

Adapted from "2010 JETAASE Survival Handbook"

Legal/Financial Obligations:

- Grant Power of Attorney
- Pay bills
- Collect W2 forms; needed tax forms
- Create a will
- Cancel or divert magazine subscriptions and catalogs
- Set up online payment for student loans
- Arrange supplemental medical insurance, if appropriate
- Inform banks/credit card companies that you will be making international transactions for the next 1+ years.

Important Documents and Money:

- Your passport with visa
- 2 photocopies of your passport (1 to keep with you, 1 to keep with family or friends back home)
- Contract from contracting organization (if received); any addresses and contact information from contracting organization
- State driver's license (note: if issued less than 1 year beforehand, bring either older versions of driver's licenses or a statement from your DMV attesting to your license history).
- International driver's license (recommended: AAA; only valid for 1 year)
- List of emergency phone numbers; keep in carry-on
- General Information Handbook
- \$2000-\$3000 on hand; ATM transactions provide the best exchange rate, but traveler's checks work well too. Most international ATMs are found in major Japanese cities, but are rarely found in small towns. ATMs that can take foreign cards can be found in most post offices.
- Bring funds in a variety of sources; do not rely entirely on credit/debit cards in case your card or pin is rejected. Note that not all rural banks can or will accept traveler's checks.

Self-introduction Materials:

- Things that introduce your town: maps, pictures, famous items, post cards, etc...
- Things that introduce your family: pictures, examples of your heritage or traditions, etc...
- Things that introduce you: college paraphernalia, items that you use for hobbies, etc...
- General interest items: pictures and trinkets from everyday sights – school buses, fire trucks, trees,

Before you leave, pick up a few small trinkets for other folks you may meet like new neighbors and friends. Try not to go overboard and waste valuable packing space.

-Dolly Sanborn, ALT 1999-2001, Okayama

animals, houses, furniture, cars, fashions, magazines, billboards, train tickets, money, music, etc...

➤ Prizes (if you decide to do this): stamps, erasers, stickers, pencils, flag pins, coins, flashcards, etc...

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



Dear New JETS,
Don't be 'that' guy, okay?

And have a wonderful time in Japan.

Bring a compact English↔Japanese dictionary or phrase book that also has kanji in it. There have been so many times that I butchered a word or tried to explain something and my new Japanese friends had no idea I what I was talking about. A tiny blank notebook would help too. You hear so many words that you'll want to write them down, especially in restaurants.

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Packing Tips

Deciding what to bring and what to leave behind is difficult. Make numerous lists and keep paring them down. What do you need? Now what do you actually need, etc... Make sure you don't pack TOO light though – bring some favorites for homesick days and to show your students and coworkers.

Adapted from "2010 Washington, DC JET Program Survival Guide"

DO BRING: Memories

Pictures of your family, friends, hometown, pets, house, car, neighborhood, favorite place, favorite food, favorite memories – like the time you met David Hasselhoff, your semester in Spain, graduation or prom.

Not only will these pictures make you smile on a rainy day, they will be very helpful when introducing your life/country to your students & friends! If you don't have pics of the aforementioned items, take some. Make a video or a scrapbook, get creative! It's a good chance to do some emotional packing and say "Ciao" to familiar faces & places.

DO NOT BRING: Your personal library

Love reading? Many JETs do! Don't worry about toting heavy books overseas. There will probably be an organized book swap amongst your local JET community. Also, amazon.com and amazon.co.jp are quick and have good deals.

DO BRING: Your talents and hobbies

Your sheet music, your ballet slippers, samples of your driftwood carvings, your lucky knitting needles or your favorite lab goggles and graphing calculator. Your students & friends will be interested in your hobbies & abilities. Staying connected to these activities will be enjoyable & stress relieving!

DO NOT BRING: A lifetime supply of anything

No need to panic about products. Japan has all the usual items – shampoo, bubblegum, post-its, make-up, etc.

Anyone with conditions or features that require specific products (e.g. for sensitive skin, for African-American or curly hair, specialized topical creams, etc...) should bring or ship several months to a year's supply of these products, as they will most likely not be available (or will only be in larger cities for a higher price).

-Abby MacBain, 2004-2006, Aomori

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



What did your predecessor leave behind in the closet?

Colors, flavors and packaging may be different from the norm, but there are often pictures to help you figure out what goes where!

DO BRING: Exceptions to the product rule

Brand name products you can't live without, of course. Also, most Japanese toothpastes do not contain fluoride, and most Japanese deodorants aren't very strong. You may want to B.Y.O.T. and B.Y.O.D.! In times of desperation, there's always the mail!

Clothing Tips

Note: your first few months will be extremely hot and humid (especially in Tokyo). Be sure you have clothing that is light and cool, particularly as many buildings (especially schools) do not have air conditioning.

Adapted from "2010 Washington, DC JET Program Survival Guide"

Pack for the Climate

- **Summer** - Tokyo and most of Japan are super hot during the summer (35 - 40°C / 90 - 100°F). Schools are probably not air conditioned.
- **Winter** - Most of Japan is super cold during the winter. Nowhere is centrally heated. Instead, weird little stoves are used to heat the schools. You will be cold. *It is worth shipping out winter clothes.*
- **Rainy Season** - There is a rainy season in June / July. You will want a water proof jacket, and maybe rain pants, but don't bring an umbrella. They are insanely cheap here, and available everywhere.
- **ASK YOUR PREDECESSOR ABOUT THE CLIMATE!** It will really help to define what you should pack

School Clothes

- **Formal Wear** - You will need a suit for formal occasions. You are expected to wear one for most JET conferences, and for some school functions, such as graduations.
- **Suitable office attire** – you don't need to wear a suit to school every day, but you should probably make an effort to look smart.
- **Don't bring anything wildly inappropriate** - Short skirts, plunging necklines and Pimp Daddy prints will certainly get you noticed, but for all the wrong reasons.
- **Gym kit** - For afternoon sports. You will probably be able to buy t-shirts to fit out here (with some fantastic slogans on them), but you may struggle to get pants long enough.
- **Don't forget clean gym shoes!** Many schools ask teachers to have clean gym shoes for use in the gym. You might want to bring along an extra pair for this.
- **Working with kids?** Hard wearing clothes may be useful for elementary school or kindergarten visits. Many people choose to wear tracksuit or shorts and t-shirt as opposed to more formal school clothes.
- **School Shoes** - Most people wear trainers or sandals (Maybe leave the fluffy slippers at home). It will make your life a whole lot easier if they are slip on.
- **Bicycling?** You will probably have to cycle to school, so ladies, you may want to consider this when deciding what skirts to pack!
- **ASK YOUR PREDECESSOR** – He/She will know best what to wear.
- **In general, it's better to look professional by Japanese standards and as a result gain trust from your colleagues.**
- **Also, see what other teachers wear, and dress accordingly (although don't wear track suits just because the gym teacher does)**

For elementary schools, slippers won't cut it. You'll kill yourself at *nawatobi* (jump rope) or dodgeball. So get a pair of indoor athletic shoes and leave them at your school or truck them in your bag. I ended up cleaning off a pair of indoor soccer shoes that I had brought and carried them to all the elementary schools.

-John McGee, ALT 2004-2005, Nagano

Tokyo and After

- **The One Bag Rule** -You're only allowed to bring ONE large piece of baggage (suitcase or rucksack) and ONE regulation size carry-on to Tokyo Orientation (and a laptop computer, but you will have to hold it on your lap with your carry-on). Prepare for this by packing one your bags beforehand for Tokyo, so you don't have to repack at Narita.
- Also consider packing an **empty bag** to use as your regulation size carry-on in Tokyo. You'll need it for the 11lbs of paper you'll get at orientation.
- **Be prepared to be separated from your other luggage** – You may not see the bags you ship from Narita for a few days AFTER orientation is over. Plan for this and pack an extra set of clothes or two in your one Tokyo Bag.
- **Hotel?** - You may not be able to move into your apartment as soon as you arrive after orientation. Often people are put up in hotels for a few days while your apartment is made ready for you. Pack some everyday items (shorts, t-shirts, party clothes etc) at the top of your bag that you can get to easily. It saves you packing and repacking at your board of education!
- **Reread pg 19 of the GIH for more information!**

Finding and Buying Clothes in Japan

- **Women** - There are shops in larger cities that you may recognize from home, though sizes may be smaller than you are used to. Gap goes up to around a Gap size 10, and Eddie Bauer only carries the petite range. Next has a pretty good selection, in a pretty good range of sizes. Apparently women's clothes go up to around a Japanese size 15 (US 14 / UK 16 / Eur 44), though I have yet to see much evidence of this. The main problem that you are likely to face is length, or cut (clothes are generally cut narrower in the shoulders, arms, bust etc).
- **Men** - Men's clothes are less problematic. Pants generally go up to around a 38" waist, and a reasonable length. It may be difficult to find shirts in larger sizes though.
- Most things you will need are available out here. However, bear in mind your level of Japanese language ability; if there is anything you are likely to have to ask for or about, you need to consider whether or not you have the skills, patience, or mime ability to achieve this (I refer specifically to items such as computers or over the counter medication, though I'm sure you can think of others.)
- Japanese shoes, like Japanese clothes, are generally pretty small. Women's shoes go up to 24.5cm (about a US 7, UK 6, Au 8 or Eur 38). You probably won't have too much trouble getting shoes like trainers, as men's shoes go up to about 28 (US 10.5, UK 10, Eur 44), but you will need to supply your own pretty pointy toe shoes! Remember, you will save yourself a whole lot of hassle if your shoes are slip on!
- **ASK YOUR PREDECESSOR** – It's likely that they know the good places to get clothes near your placement

Staying Warm on the Cheap

Staying warm is always a concern for JETs from Florida going to a cold place. First, meditate on the phrase, "*gaman shite.*" Endure. You will hear it a thousand times, and it is wisdom. If the locals can walk in the snow in a mini skirt and manage to write 8th grade *kanji* in near-freezing classrooms, you can survive some cold days too. Remember that your body generates heat. Keep moving: walk, run, jump, slide, play.

Next, trap that heat close to you. Meditate on the word "layers". You hear it a lot, but frankly for a Floridian, this means adding a windbreaker to your t-shirt...we just don't get it. You don't necessarily need fancy materials to stay warm. Just add more of the materials you already have. On the coldest days in my *Shōwa* Era junior high school, I would appear in three pairs of socks, a pair of leggings, sweat pants, and then khakis. On top, I had a tank top, a t-shirt, a long sleeve t-shirt, and a button up twill. Then I'd add a sweater or fleece, and an outer nylon jacket. I was toasty.

Check out nylon work-out wear at local discount department stores. This is great, as un-bulky under layers that don't inhibit movement. And guys, you can buy ladies spandex leggings for a few bucks and they are super warm. It's an old backpacking secret. Plus, they're under your pants! No one will see them. If you fit in Japanese sizes, go to the stores that supply the working folk. They have lots of layering and outerwear options that you can experiment with for a few yen each. Even if you don't think you'll fit, go try. Have you seen some of those sumo-sized construction workers?

-John McGee, ALT 2004-2005, Nagano

Work Attire

I didn't know what I would be required to wear to work so I brought pants, button up shirts and modest skirts. I arrived in my town of Koza-cho and was told I could wear sweats, jogging suits and sneakers. I even got away with wearing HUGE turtle slippers around one school in the winter time! When you are introduced to the principal(s) at your school(s), ask what is appropriate for you to wear. If you are a CIR just be prepared to be in business suits and looking your finest.

I once went to school in my pajamas to help demonstrate what a Halloween costume could be. I have to say that was a very relaxed day for me!

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Japanese fashions tend to be more modest than Western styles. For the working environment, women should be cautious of necklines falling far below the collarbone, form-fitting shirts and dresses, and skirts above the knee.

-Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)

Packing Lists

- **Tokyo**
 - 2 – 3 days worth of smart business attire. Think suits.
 - Party / casual clothes
 - Pen and paper
 - Pain killers (for any hangovers)!
 - You may find it useful to have an extra bag, as you will be bombarded with so much paper it isn't funny.
- **School**
 - Few days of business attire, including 1-2 suits
 - School Slippers (aka Sandals)
- **Everyday Wear**
 - Casual summer clothes (ship winter stuff later)
- **Shoes**
 - Sandals
 - Sneakers
 - Winter boots
 - Indoor shoes (see School Slippers)
- **Sports Wear**
 - Gym Kit - You may be able to get this out here, though obtaining larger sizes may be difficult.
 - Swimsuit
 - Surf/Ski / Snowboard gear (depends on climate). You may want to bring your own gear.
 - Second hand shops generally carry a lot of ski / snowboard gear, so can be useful if you're not too picky
- **Underwear**
 - Women
 - Bras - Japanese bras are in strange sizes, and probably a different shape than you are used to. Tights / stockings / hose – available, but may not be long enough
 - Men
 - Vests - you might want to consider wearing a vest under your shirt. While they may make you feel like your granddad, they will keep you warm in winter, help disguise where you're sweating in summer, and help to camouflage any unsightly body hair.
 - Underwear
 - Undershirt – Helps with those hot, sweaty days in the classroom
 - Socks without holes - Socks out here are so cheap however – you can buy them in the 100¥ shop
- **Winter Clothes (Recommended to ship to your Japanese Address separately or buy in Japan/online)**
 - Thick sweaters
 - Thermals
 - Thick tights
 - Winter coat
 - Winter boots
 - Hat, scarf and gloves
 - Something warm to sleep in
 - Ski or snowboard gear
 - ASK YOUR PREDECESSOR!



When the clothing starts changing for the oncoming season, start stocking up! I bought many hats and gloves from UNIQLO for cheap. Your schools will probably be cold too and only have the kerosene heaters in the middle of the room. Make sure you get thick sweaters or lined sweatpants so you stay nice and warm.

-Zina Bovd. ALT 2002-2004 Wakavama

You'll be surprised what you'll miss... and what you won't. While this can be an excellent practice in austerity, bring a few comforts of home. Leave anything big or bulky, such as electronics, at home and buy new or used in Japan (although you may want to bring your own computer).

Foods:

- Fruits and vegetables are generally far more expensive in Japan, but if you work with the seasons you may be able to get good quality crops for less money. Farming communities may also have road-side markets that tend to be very affordable.
- Make a list of your favorite foods (such as cereal or candy) and beg family or friends to periodically send them to you every few months. Not only will these be great comfort foods for when you're feeling homesick, but your coworkers, and students will also find them interesting.

Hobbies:

- Some hobbies such as sewing or watching movies can travel relatively easily. Others, such as playing musical instruments, can be much harder. Hobbies in general are quite popular in Japan and so it is possible to find communities (and stores serving those communities) for just about any pastime. Supplies may be more expensive, but it will likely still be cheaper than shipping costs for a large item (especially if it's valuable and could be damaged in transit)

Electronics:

- Electricity in Japan is 100V, 50 Hz, so most American products will work (voltage is 110V). However, for some sensitive electronics it would be better to get a converter. Non-grounded, non-polarized (prongs are the same size) American products plugs will fit into a Japanese outlet, but a grounded 3-prong plug will definitely need an adapter. A polarized two-prong plug may need an adapter.
- In general, Japanese electronics may be a little more expensive than American counterparts, but the quality is excellent. For less expensive products, try a used electronics store.
- JETs may want to bring a laptop from home or special order one so that they have a standard, English keyboard (Japanese keyboards have some differences). Apple products are comparable to those in the U.S., and prices are similar as well.

Check out pawn shops (Recycle Shops) for used furniture; the stuff can be decent and cheap. 100 Yen shops are great for dishes, towels, tools, utensils, etc. And, of course, think of it as a chance to find out what you don't need. You'd be surprised what you can live without.

-John McGee, ALT 2004-2005, Nagano

➤ Printers are affordable and work fine with American-made laptops. Cooking products like rice cookers and microwaves are often better made with more features than American versions.

➤ Certain items like Japanese ↔ English translators, hair dryers, dehumidifiers, and cameras are readily available and are excellent quality

Toiletries:

- Most Japanese toothpastes probably do not have fluoride in them (although Aquafresh is readily available), and so many JETs order theirs from abroad or have them shipped over. Similarly, many find that Japanese deodorants are weak and prefer to bring some from overseas.
- Tampons may be hard to find, and there are not as many options for sanitary napkins as in the U.S. Some foreigner men have complained that

Eat as much of your favorite foods as you can before you leave! If you have favorites you have to have, there are internet grocery stores that will ship foods you know from home without breaking your bank account.

If you are vegetarian or don't eat things for religious reasons tell your contracting organization again and again so they can help you find what you need. Other than that, explore and research the Japanese cuisine! Let your tummy experience all the goodness!

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato

Japanese condoms do not fit very well.

- Shampoo, soaps, face wash, mouthwash, non-prescription topical solutions, lotions, and similar items are readily available and, in some cases, are the same brands as in the U.S. Those with specific brand preferences or hair/skin sensitivity may want to bring a month's supply of their usual products until they adjust to Japanese equivalents.
- Contact lens solution is available, but may be expensive
- Hair dye is available, but the solution is formulated for thick, black hair. It may react differently on any other type of hair (some find it weaker, some find it much stronger)
- Cosmetics are comparable to those available in the U.S., although in general the colors are geared towards Asian skin types. Larger department stores may carry international brands.

Medications:

- To bring more than a 1 month amount of a prescription medication with you, you will need to apply for a *yakkan shomei* certificate. A *yakkan shomei* is also required for bringing a more than 2 months' supply of contact lenses or non-prescription medicine (such as eye drops or aspirin), 4 months' supply of vitamins, or 24 pieces of an external use, OTC product such as toothpaste.
- Medications and toiletries can also be mailed to Japan as long as they meet the above specifications for avoiding a *yakkan shomei*.
- If a drug is readily available in Japan, it may be easier to bring a prescription writ to a Japanese doctor and ask for him/her to write a new one in Japanese. The specific ingredients can have subtle variations, though, so anyone with sensitivity to changes in their medication should bring their own until able to confer with a doctor to see if it is wise to switch.
- Medications for colds, fevers, bug bites, etc... are readily available, but sometimes they look different from what you might be used to. For example, a standard cold treatment might involve multiple pills and powders in individual pouches that must be taken in various combinations. They tend to be very effective, but some prefer to bring their own.

Teaching Supplies:

- Pictures, mementos, items that represent your background or history, etc... are excellent props to bring with you for your self-introduction lesson. For day-to-day teaching supplies, though, it is better to buy those in Japan.

Books:

- Many bookstores have a small English section, and some (such as Kinokuniya) have Japanese learning textbooks in English. Many AJET communities also offer book exchange



日本の夏 :

What's the fun of having 100M ADSL, a 3G mobile phone, or a 52" plasma TV when you don't have air conditioning?

The 100 yen shops are awesome for lesson supplies. STICKERS will get your elementary school kids to love you and remember you! Another thing that I purchased from the 100 yen store was BINGO cards. Those BINGO cards saved me, helped my students to learn some of their numbers, and made the class fun. I also gave out prizes of *shitajiki* or "pencil boards" of characters from anime that was on TV at the time.

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Note: *Omiyage* (oh-mee-yah-gay) おみやげ are presents given to coworkers upon entering a new work environment or returning from a vacation. There's a heavy sense of social obligation attached to *omiyage*, but, as a foreigner, many of those social mores may not apply to you. Still, it's a great way to greet your coworkers and to share a part of your country and culture with them.

Omiyage Etiquette Tips

- Don't stress
- Bring some small, inexpensive gifts that you can distribute to your friends, neighbors and office mates when you arrive in Japan or after going on a trip that happens during regular work hours
- Avoid giving gifts in sets of four or nine; these numbers are unlucky
- Giving a gift later in return for a gift is considered the height of etiquette. Return gifts should be small and not more expensive than the gift received.
- When you are invited to someone's house, bring a small gift
- Don't be surprised if someone doesn't open your gift in front of you. But also don't be afraid to encourage someone to open it either!
- Try to wrap your gift in something; giving it in a bag is fine (extra points if the bag is from a famous store)
- The day after being hosted by someone, call them on the phone to thank them
- On Valentine's Day, only women give men gifts. Men can (and should) return the favor on "White Day" (March 14)
- Never bring a sick person a potted plant; the sickness is thought to "take root." When buying pre-made bouquets, make sure they aren't meant for graves!

-Mark Frey, ALT 2002-2006, Kumamoto
JETAANC Alumni-led Orientation 2010

- Good colors for wrapping: Brown, maroon, blue, purple, grey, and green
- Bad Colors: Black & White, Silver & White, and Yellow & White (associated with funerals).
- Celebratory colors: Red & White (particularly for weddings)

-Wendy Lo, ALT 2002-2005, Toyama

Hierarchy:

➤ When giving *omiyage* to coworkers or honored members of your town/city, it is a good idea to have some element of variance depending upon rank. Your principal, for example, should have a nicer present than the gym teacher.

➤ General teachers: one, shared item; English teachers: individual gifts; Supervisors: similar to English teachers' gifts, slightly nicer (e.g. a mug rather than a keychain); Vice-principals: something that can be showed off in an office - a nice pen, a framed picture; Principals: Same as vice-principals but better (e.g. picture book from your town, special coffee); City officials: same as teachers or principals, depending upon rank (mayor's be similar to or better than principals').

Snacks:

➤ This is the most common type of *omiyage*. Foods such as cookies, crackers, candy, dried fruit, and the like are very common. These are usually individually wrapped in Japan, and if possible it would be good to try to find something that is the same.

➤ If you send your *omiyage* in your shipped bag then there's a good chance that anything meltable (like chocolate) will be ruined by the time you arrive. Make sure whatever you bring can withstand heat and humidity.

Souvenirs:

➤ Anything representative of your town, university, or your cultural/familial background is a great idea for a gift, such as in the form of foods, keychains, mugs, pens, picture frames and the like.

Because I lived in Jacksonville, I felt Jacksonville Jaguar items would hit the spot, and so they did. To my honorable superintendent, I gave him a Jaguars sun visor. To the vice-superintendent and others, I gave items that said 'Florida,' like key chains and so on. Also, to some of the ladies that worked in the office, I gave them scarves that had English or musical notes on them.

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Gift Giving in Japan

Gifts are often given to recognize the importance of a relationship and to facilitate introductions. Relationships can be at work, in your neighborhood or apartment building, and in the community. This gesture is not considered to be a form of bribery. Souvenirs are a much-appreciated recognition that, while you were away having a good time overseas or elsewhere in Japan, others worked hard to hold down the fort. You will find your desk at times overflowing with sweet bean paste buns or crackers.

When invited to someone's home, it is a good idea to bring something, pastries or a bottle of wine/liquor are usually best, although these need not be from your home country. Also, *omiyage* given as a gift, especially when meeting your co-workers for the first time, does not have to be given right away. This is important because it means you do not need to bring a lot of *omiyage* with you to Tokyo. You can either send it on from the airport or mail it from home before you depart. This also gives you time to figure out who is who in the office hierarchy and determine whether or not liquor is a good gift for everyone.

Wrap the gift before giving it; you can buy wrapping paper in Japan. Do not expect the recipient to open the gift in front of you, especially if it is wrapped. While some people may prefer a —public presentation and giving everyone present a gift, you may also give *omiyage* in a one to one setting. When presenting the gift, you can say:

- **Ki ni iru to ii desu kedo...** I hope you like it
- **Chisai mono desu ga...** It is a small thing...
- (Or the more formal) **sasayaka na mono desu ga...** It is a small thing...

When receiving a gift, a simple *domo arigato gozaimasu* ("Thank you very much.") is fine.

This is always an area of concerns for JETs, so if you are worried you are just like the rest of us. Do not worry! The Japanese are a very understanding people. They will never look down on a gift that you've brought. Pick something that you think they could appreciate, something that says something about the US or your hometown, but do not fret. Whatever you choose will be appreciated.

-2010 JETAA-SE Survival Handbook

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



On Valentine's Day, Brandon-sensei came to the shocking realization that he wasn't as popular as he had initially thought.

I found loose-leaf tea to be the best gift in situations where I really didn't know the receiver. It also packed very lightly. My second favorite gift to give was a calendar of Florida because it shows scenes from my home and it packs nicely. I have also known people who made jewelry or gave pens as presents.

-Alissa Restivo, ALT 1999-2001, Shizuoka

Bring American flag T-shirts! These are great *omiyage*, and are in high demand in Japan. They're especially great gifts for the school secretaries, *Kocho-senseis*, and JTEs or anyone else who is going to be important in a new JET's life. I even had one extra that I gave out as gift for the *enkai* grab bag.

-Nancy Kolde, ALT 2001-2004, Fukuoka

Omiyage does not need to be expensive! Contact your local Senator or Representative and Chamber of Commerce to request free goodies, stock up on freebies given out on holidays and events, buy a dollar's worth of one cent stamps, stock up on stickers, etc. Visit dollar stores and souvenir shops before you leave and fill your basket with all the things that you never imagined yourself buying!

-2010 Washington, DC JET Program Survival Guide

Weather and Emergencies

There are certain natural disasters every JET is certain to face in some capacity. These do not have to be catastrophic, and Japan is very well equipped to handle all of these, but you should nonetheless become aware of meeting areas and proper emergency procedures.

Life After the B.O.E. Weather: (tenki 天気)

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)



Seriously, your status update can wait.

➤ The weather maps you will see on TV will largely resemble ones you are used to seeing in the U.S. If you learn the characters for your prefecture, you'll be able to read what the temperature will be.

➤ Japan uses Celsius instead of Fahrenheit. As a quick conversion to Fahrenheit, take the Celsius temperature, double it, then add thirty. For example, 10° C is approximately 50° F → (10 x 2)+30=50. This is harder to do with negative numbers.

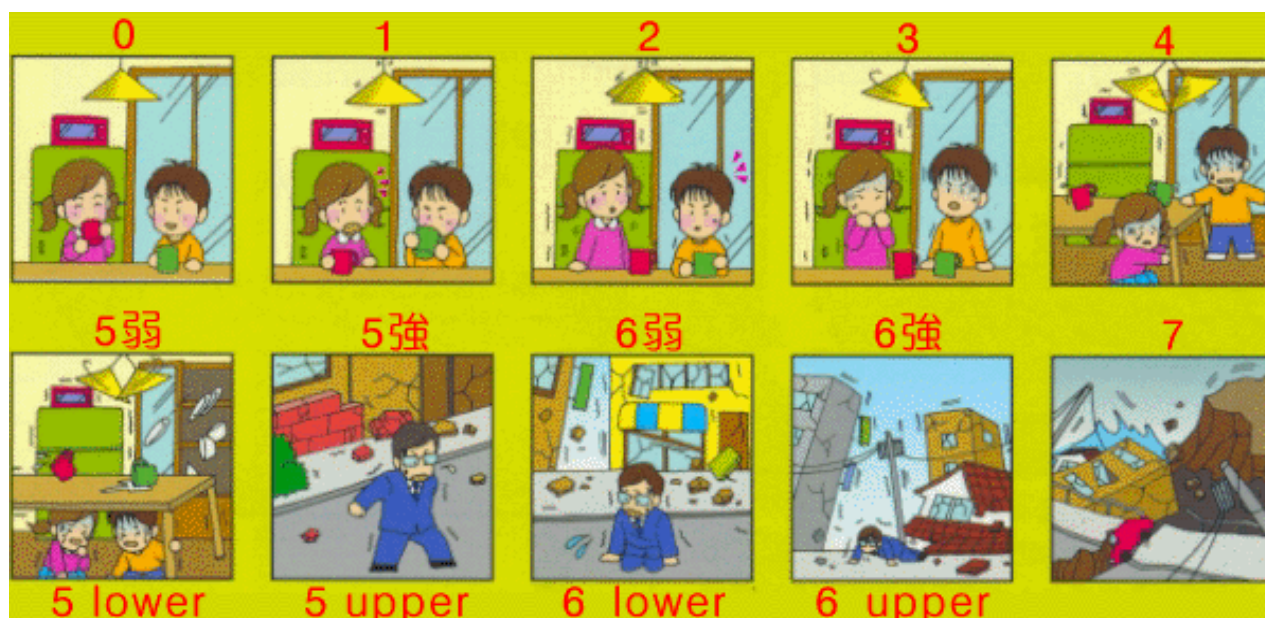
➤ The Japan Meteorological Agency has an English webpage where you can keep track of weather patterns, tsunami warnings, earthquakes, and typhoons:

<http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html>

Earthquakes: (jishin 地震)

- Prepare an earthquake kit soon after arrival. This should include: a supply of water for both drinking and washing (refresh every 6 months), a flashlight and batteries, a radio, first aid kit, dried or non-perishable foods; ask your supervisor where an emergency meeting location is
- Secure items like bookshelves and wardrobes to the walls. Be careful of placing anything heavy high off the ground without securing it. During an earthquake, avoid stairs, glass, and heavy pieces of furniture. Once an earthquake has subsided, immediately turn off your gas valve.
- Japan's method of rating earthquakes is called *shindo* 震度 and it is based upon how the earthquake feels and the level of damage. The levels range from 0-7 with upper and lower levels for 5 and 6 (so there is a total of 10 levels). Look at what is shaking around you to determine the level. Avoid beaches and watch for landslides.

Image from: <http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/kishou/jma-magazine/0305/kai.gif>



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Tsunamis: (tsunami 津波)

- Not all earthquakes produce tsunamis, and not all tsunamis are necessarily large or destructive. Nonetheless, as soon as an earthquake occurs, listen on the TV or radio (or ask a coworker or supervisor) to see if there is a tsunami warning. As Japan is an island nation, it can be hit by tsunamis even when earthquakes occur far away. Most coastal towns have walls and breakers to impede tsunamis, but seaside areas should still be avoided during and after earthquakes.



- Very often tsunamis are preceded by drawback, where the water on the shore very suddenly pulls back. This is a sign that a tsunami is imminent and the area should be vacated immediately. As drawbacks do not always occur with tsunamis, though, JETs should pay careful attention to announcements and sirens.
- Tsunamis are most commonly created by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, but occasionally landslides and underwater explosions can cause them as well. Those caused by earthquakes can reach shore from anywhere within minutes to hours of the earthquake's occurrence.

Typhoons: (taifuu 台風)

- Nearly 30 typhoons develop in the Pacific every year. Of these, several may hit the southern islands and a few will spread across the entirety of Japan.
- Typhoons develop between May and December and typically strike Japan between June and October. In Japan, typhoons are known by number rather than by a specific name.
- The Japan Meteorological Agency has a scale of 4 levels in categorizing severe storms:
 - Tropical Depression <61 km/h ; <33 kt
 - Tropical Storm 62 - 88 km/h ; 35-48 kt
 - Severe Tropical Storm 89-117 km/h ; 48-62 kt
 - Typhoon >118 km/h ; >64 kt

Typhoons and extreme weather

Word of advice to those who live on the coast: always ask about the weather. I made a HUGE mistake by not asking one time. My Japanese skills were rudimentary and I hardly ever watched the news. Only when I went to the BOE did I find out about a typhoon was just hours from hitting our area. The weather was already turning nasty outside and the ocean already looked angry. As I left the town hall for the day, the torrential rain met me full force. I figured I could ride my bike and be home in no time. WRONG! The winds were WICKED. They pushed against my bike. They threatened me with injury if I dared defied them. I had to walk and walked I did...until I hit the bridge.

Let me paint you a picture of this scenario. My town of Koza (now known as Kushimoto) was a tiny fishing village of 5000 people before it merged with the town next door. It was cut in HALF by this river that flowed from the mountains to the ocean. When I got on that bridge that would take me 20 seconds to cross on my bike the down sweep of wind from the mountains pummeled me, pressing me into the railing. I fought not to become one with it. It took me 5 scary minutes to baby-step across that bridge eyes tightly shut with that howling wind biting at me and the pouring rain getting worse and worse.






Man, I was scared - rushing river below me, angry ocean to the right, forceful winds ripping at my clothes and bags... and railing only slightly waist-high! I was terrified. I opened my eyes every couple of seconds to see how much closer I was to getting off that potential death trap. I really needed someone to drive me home that day but didn't think that the winds and rain would be so bad and didn't think to ask for a ride. I finally got off the bridge and thanked God for all the buildings blocking, protecting and shielding me from the horrid weather. I scrambled into my third floor apartment, slammed the door shut and melted to the floor. SAFE!!! I SURVIVED!! That hurricane drenched me to my very core and I vowed to never be in that predicament ever again. I hope I can help save some of you from my crazy experience so, please, please learn from my lesson! If it looks kind of wild outside due to weather ask someone for a ride home. Safety first!!

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Volcanoes: (kazan 火山)

- 10% of the world's active volcanoes are in Japan, but this does not mean eruptions are regular and imminent. Most can be scaled without fear of danger. Ask your supervisor if there is any risk.
- The Japan Meteorological Agency has a scale of 5 levels in determining whether or not a volcano is at risk of explosion.

Image from: <http://www.seisvol.kishou.go.jp/tokyo/STOCK/kaisetsu/English/level.html>

Abbreviated Term	Target area	Levels & Keyword		Explanation		
				Expected volcanic activity	Action to be taken by inhabitants ¹	Action to be taken by climbers ¹
Warning	Residential areas	Level 5 Evacuate		Eruption that may cause serious damage in residential areas, or imminent eruption.	Evacuate from the danger zones. (Target areas and evacuation measures are determined in line with current volcanic activity.)	
		Level 4 Prepare to evacuate		Possibility or increasing possibility of eruption that may cause serious damage in residential areas.	Prepare to evacuate from alert areas. Let disabled persons evacuate. (Target areas and evacuation measures are determined in line with current volcanic activity.)	
Near-crater Warning	Non-residential areas near the crater	Level 3 Do not approach the volcano		Eruption or possibility of eruption that may severely affect places near residential areas (threat to life is possible in these areas).	Stand by, paying attention to changes in volcanic activity. Let disabled persons prepare to evacuate in line with current volcanic activity.	Refrain from entering the danger zone. (Target areas are determined in line with current volcanic activity.)
	Around the crater	Level 2 Do not approach the crater		Eruption or possibility of eruption that may affect areas near the crater (threat to life is possible in these areas).	Stay as usual.	Refrain from approaching the crater. (Target areas around the crater are determined in line with current volcanic activity.)
Forecast	Inside the crater	Level 1 Normal		Calm: Volcanic ash emissions or other related phenomena may occur in the crater (threat to life is possible in these areas).		No restrictions. (In some cases, it may be necessary to refrain from approaching the crater.)

Others:

- Landslides: Generally the result of heavy rains and/or an earthquake, landslides are common in mountainous and coastal regions. Care should be taken walking and driving in these areas.
- Tornadoes: Japan rarely has tornadoes and damage is usually slight.
- Blizzards: Snowfall is common even in southern, mountainous regions, but severe blizzards are relegated more to the northern areas. Avoid driving and walking in white-out conditions if possible. As many northern areas do not fully clear ice and snow in the winter, JETs should ask for advice in adapting to such snowy conditions.

School Life

In general, elementary and middle schools are run by the town's board of education, whereas special needs and high schools are administered by the prefectural board of education. CIRs may also be asked to teach in schools, including nursery and kindergarten schools. JETs may also be asked or required to participate with community English clubs.

Student Life:

- In general, classes are Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm or thereabouts. Occasionally there will be weekend festivals or sports days, which JETs are often asked (sometimes required, with compensated time) to participate in.
- Students are responsible for cleaning the school every day. The students rotate chores to take care of sweeping hallways, cleaning chalkboards, and straightening the rooms.
- Students' schools and homerooms are an important part of their identities. Uniforms are distinct among the various schools, as are the styles. Sometimes students also have color-coordinated shoes and shoe laces to indicate their year in the school and which homeroom they belong to. Homeroom teachers have the most sway over their class and students' behavior.
- After school culture and sports clubs are a very important part of school life. Unless they have part-time jobs or go to cram schools, most students join a club. JETs are not required to be involved, but may be asked to take on an English club or to help with a club that suits their own interests. This is often the best time to speak to a student casually without classroom pressure.

In all the guides, it talked about "indoor slippers." I understood that one must take off their shoes before entering the schools (and other random buildings/places) in Japan. Before I left I went to the store and purchased some really nice bedroom slippers to use as my indoor slippers at my school.

I was laughing my first day when I realized that indoor slippers just meant indoor shoes and are not really slippers at all. I think my Japanese coworkers found this funny as well.

-Minda Phinney, ALT 2001-2002, Nagasaki

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



The students you thought you were getting.



The students you actually got.

Elementary: (*shougakkou* 小学校) grades 1-6, ages 6-12

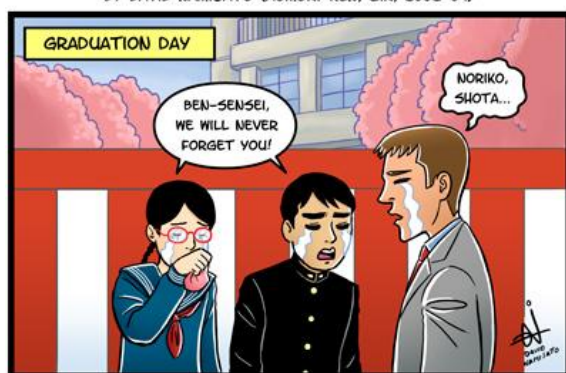
- Children are split into classes with around 20-40 students and a single teacher for all topics. Elementary school teachers might not speak English.
- Elementary school students generally do not wear uniforms unless attending a private school.
- JETs assigned to elementary schools often play a lot of games and are asked to focus on basic, introductory English, such as colors, greetings, basic questions, and foods. Dress for an elementary school JET is usually more casual.
- JETs may visit classes 1 or more times a week, but will likely have multiple schools and will visit different classes on different days

Try to get lots of rest before you teach elementary school – they require LOTs of attention and energy from you. Some helpful items in case of “emergencies”: a ball, a stopwatch, and lots of stickers. The students love interactive lessons. Remember, have fun and use your experiences to make each class better than the last.

-Danielle Jones, ALT 2003-2005, Shimane

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR. 2002-04)



They grow up so quickly.

Middle: (*chuugakkou* 中学校) grades 1-3, ages 13-15

- Students often attend a middle school in their town, but at this stage some are already taking entrance exams to go to more advanced schools
- Uniforms are usually mandatory; in general girls wear skirts and tops with sailor colors and boys wear suits with stiff collars. Sometimes they wear suits with blazers, but these are more typical with high schools. There is usually a summer and winter uniform.
- Classes are taught by different teachers specializing in a certain subject. JETs will work with an English teacher and will probably be more involved with increasing students' vocabulary, grammar skills, and fluidity of speech. Many middle school students participate with speech contests, which JETs are often asked to judge or help coach for.

High: (*kougakkou* 高等学校) grades 1-3, ages 16-18

- High schools require passing an entrance examination, but if they do not have a sufficient number of applicants in a given year then even those who did not pass the test may enter.
- Uniforms are usually mandatory; in general girls wear blazers and skirts and boys wear blazers and trousers. Sometimes they wear the sailor-type uniforms more

customary for middle school students. There is usually a summer and winter uniform.

- High-level schools are usually preparing their students for college entrance exams or to go to a trade or internship school or company. There is often little flexibility with these classes, as students are preparing for entrance examinations. However, students usually communicate at a more advanced level. By comparison, JETs assigned to low-level schools may have more freedom for activities, but may need to adjust lessons to a lower level of comprehension.

Remember that, despite all the stereotypes of a “Japanese student,” these are children and young adults going through the same things children and young adults go through around the world – family issues, first loves, hormones, learning difficulties, and discovering who they are. You are a part of that.

-Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

Classes:

- Students generally do not move to different classrooms. A single class (or homeroom) takes all of their classes together at the same time in the same room, with teachers going to that room to teach (except for classes requiring a special room, such as gym, music, and home economics).
- Many students, including elementary, go to cram schools after their regular school day is over. Cram schools involve more intense tutoring on specific subjects. Cram schools are particularly important for high school level students studying for college entrance exams.
- Classroom duties and involvement will vary depending upon the type of school and the needs of the students/teachers. Some JETs may be asked to work solely with pronunciation and conversation practice, whereas others may be asked to take leadership of the entire class. In most cases the JETs can work with their teachers to determine what the ideal level of involvement will be.

Your first couple of weeks or even month, especially if you are on a school rotation, just expect to do your self introduction over and over again. Take visual aids of your hometown, a map or a picture of your family with you just to show your audience.

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Calendar:

- While some have only 2 terms, most schools abide by a 3-term school year:
 - *April*: Beginning of the school year. Opening year celebration with greeting to new teachers. New JETs may give self-introductions to incoming student classes.
 - *July*: First term ends; summer vacation begins
 - *September*: Second term begins; new JETs visit schools and give self-introduction lessons; new JETs may also give introductory speech at assemblies.
 - *December*: Second term ends; end of year parties with teachers, BOE, parent associations
 - *January*: Third term begins.
 - *March*: Third term ends. Graduation celebrations, some teachers rotate to different schools.
- There are cultural, sports, and school spirit-themed festivals that take place throughout the year. Students often spend weeks preparing. Normally these take place during weekends so that friends and family may attend. Depending upon your role with the school, you may be asked or required to attend these festivals. There are usually make-up days off in the following week.

I was an ALT in the early '90s. I had asked my students to submit questions about American things they wanted to learn more about. One of the questions I received was: "I would like to learn more about the erection of Bill Clinton."

I feel certain she meant "election." I didn't know at the time that I could have responded to the question as stated!

-Amy Palmer, ALT 1992-1994, Shizuoka

Time off:

Be wary of any child who looks as if they are playing James Bond; holding two fingers in a gun-like position. *Kancho* is a popular prank where a kid takes his or her two index fingers and basically gives you a colonoscopy using his trusty desert eagle.

-Aaron Newman, ALT 2006-2007, Miyagi

- You may be required to attend school or go in to the BOE even when the students have vacation days or when school has been cancelled for snow or typhoons. Ask your supervisor whether or not you will be required to come in to school or the BOE during these days.
- Ask your supervisor and review your contract to see how many vacation days (*nenkyuu* 年休) you have every year. It is greatly preferred that you take vacation days during periods of time when the students are on break or when you do not have lessons planned. Always confirm vacation dates with your supervisor and receive official approval before making reservations.
- JETs are allotted sick leave days (*byoukikyuuuka* 病気休暇) in their contracts, but in some situations it is difficult to take those days. There can be strong social

pressure to use vacation days instead of sick leave. Some places are fine with JETs taking sick leave, but some will only allow it in extreme circumstances. Speak with your supervisor or Prefectural Advisor if you feel you are being treated unfairly.

- JETs may also be allotted leave for special circumstances – such as maternal and paternal leave, bereavement leave, and marital leave.

ALT and Teaching-CIR Types:

- *Base:* This type of ALT teaches only at or primarily at 1 school. Usually based out of a school possibly with occasional visits to other school. Most common with high schools.
- *Rotation:* This type of JET (both ALTs and some CIRs) typically goes to multiple schools on a set schedule. For some schools it may be on a weekly basis and for others it is monthly or by term. More common with Municipal JETs, as they will likely be based out of a BOE.
- *One-shot:* Most common with large cities or towns with few JETs. This type of JET will visit schools on a sporadic basis (once every month, term or year) and may have several schools. Likely based out of a BOE or prefectural office.

Student and Teacher Attitudes:

- Most students and teachers are excited to meet you and curious where you're from. Some (especially students) may ask questions or make remarks that range from embarrassing to inappropriate to insulting. The desire is usually to get your attention and to impress you, not to be offensive. Try to keep this in mind if you're surprised at what they say.
- JETs usually have better pay, more vacation days, less education, and far fewer obligations than standard teachers. This can cause resentment amongst some teachers, but most accept the situation and are happy to get to know you.
- Personal socialization usually takes place outside the workplace. Teachers you have barely spoken with at school may actually become very friendly elsewhere, especially at parties.
- Homeroom teachers can play a parent-like role. They visit students' homes, punish bad behavior, and are involved in any serious non-school trouble the student may become involved with.

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR, 2002-04)



**Ah, school rules.
Did they ever make sense?**

Do bring any and all ideas for lessons that are coming up. Some JTEs may nix them because it could be time consuming or the resources just not available. Be flexible and relaxed. Remember that this is team-teaching. It should not just be you week in and week out teaching the students, but rather you and the JTE should be working side by side to help your students be the best English speakers, readers and writers possible.

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakavama

Be proactive in joining the team teaching. Use your creativity and any resources at your disposal to come up with lesson plans and join all of the activities you can at school. You'll hear this a lot, but work satisfaction depends on you; you get what you put in.

-Aaron Newman, ALT 2002-2004, Miyagi

For Assistant Language Teachers

Chances are you've never worked in a setting quite like this. Some days you'll find that you're a valued member of the staff, that your ideas are listened to and implemented, and that you're making a positive difference in your students' and coworkers' lives. Other days, you'll feel underutilized, ignored, and a wasted resource. Talk to fellow JETs, talk with your teachers, and try to be patient. It can take time to build up trust between a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) and a new ALT. If you still feel underused, try to find other ways to connect with your students and achieve the goals you have set out for yourself.

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)



There's always going to be someone who'll tell you how much better your predecessor was.

I worked with almost eight JTEs (Japanese Teacher of English) throughout my two years in Japan. You will find that each teacher may request different tasks from you. Many wanted me to read the text and have the students listen and repeat after me. I was also able to make listening exams, do projects about American holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, and perform a show and tell about my life in Japan. The main thing you have to remember when working with JTEs is that they want their students to succeed in English so they can use it effectively.

JTEs will have a plan for each class lesson, will leave it to you to create, or will want to have a planning session before the class or after school the school day is finished. Be prepared for this and go with the flow. No one teacher is going to things like their co-workers.

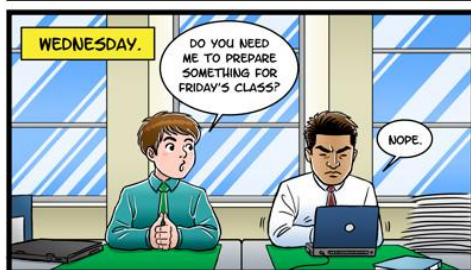
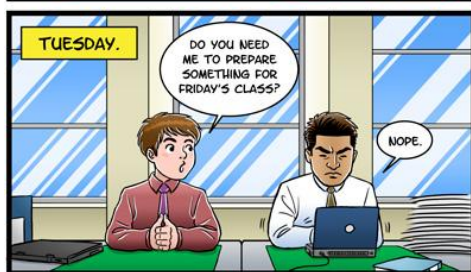
-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Adapted from "2010 Washington, DC JET Program Survival Guide"

ISSUE	DON'T	DO
Your teacher is not helping you in the classroom.	Show your frustration in front of the class.	Carry on with your lesson and include the teacher in the class as much as possible.
The principal sits in on some of your classes.	Get nervous and paranoid.	Continue teaching the class as usual. (He or she is most likely just curious)
You finish your lesson plan and there's still time remaining till the end of class.	Expect the teacher to take over.	Play a game or review again what you taught in the day's lesson
You have one or several students disrupting the class.	Scold or bring too much attention to them.	Focus your attention on those that are well-behaved and paying attention to your lesson
You ask a student what is intended to be a harmless question, e.g. "What is your name?" and the child bursts into tears.	Try to understand why the student is crying or try to console him/her too much	Move on -- let the child sit back down and ask the same question to the next student

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR, 2002-04)

**Always be prepared.****Sample Lesson Plan by Julie Dair From: Japan Foundation and Language Center Pedagogy Workshop 1997****Presentation: students are listening and watching.**

- Give a variety of examples (rather than explanations in Japanese). Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) will usually do this before you come to class.
- Show meaning through a range of contexts/situations likely to be encountered (realistic).
- Show students what they will be able to do at the end of the lesson.
- Use students' ability to guess (this makes it more interactive and fun).

Input: students are mostly listening.

- Give abundant input.
- Give contextualized input.

Output: students are speaking and listening.

- Give contextualized accuracy-oriented practices (choral repetition, drills). JTE and you will correct any mistakes.
- Give opportunities to let the students express their own meaning (activities). Use peer correction more from this point.
- Give opportunities to interact among students (games).
- Make an information gap (interviews, games).

Make sure students are ready for REAL WORLD TASK.

- Real World Task: students are speaking.
- Students express their own meaning.
- Students interact among themselves.
- Students interact spontaneously.
- Student role-play within situations/contexts likely to be encountered.
- An information gap may exist (motivates students to "solve a problem.")
- There is minimal teacher talk, corrections, or explanations.

General Checkpoints

- Make sure the purpose of each activity is clear to the students.
- Check the students' comprehension before proceeding to the next stage.
- Maximize the use of English in instruction.
- Correct errors in an appropriate way.

How to Make Lessons Interactive by Kent Yocum

- You forget 9 out of 10 things. So teach everything ten times. Read it, speak it, think it, hear it, feel it, taste it, see it, smell it, and do it over again, and again.
- Hands-on Activities. Do not just stand there, stupid. Remember that professor who just read lecture notes? It sucked! It will suck for your kids if you do the same. Make their bodies and body parts move, not just their mouths and brains.
- Entrance Exams. Take one so you know what the "skills" are. The Japanese teachers focus on teaching their students the test skills. If you know what they are, figure out a great fun way to teach and reinforce those skills.
- Games in the Classroom. There is nothing wrong with playing games as a method of teaching, but if the game is just fun and with no educational value, then it is probably a waste of time and the teacher will not want you in the classroom. Sometimes, you do need to have fun for fun's sake.

For Coordinators of International Relations

As a CIR, your office may ask you to interpret at courtesy calls, receptions, meetings, or as a group guide-interpreter. Make sure your office understands if you have not had formal training and that they should not expect a professional-caliber performance. Your lack of experience should not keep you from interpreting, though. Practice and prepare to make your interpreting skills as professional as possible.

Types of Interpreting

Adapted from "2010 JETAASE Survival Handbook"

- Consecutive
- Simultaneous
- Whispering

Practice and Preparation

- Shadowing
- Reading
- Building vocabulary
- Note-taking
- Research

Tips for Interpreting

- Be calm and do not rush.
- Do not bring a dictionary to an assignment.
- Bring a note pad and pen.
- Be neutral. You are an interpreting machine.
- Do not allow the speakers to address you directly.
- Ask for clarification when you do not understand.
- Use a consistent level of Japanese.
- Look for patterns in speech.
- Know the titles of those you represent.
- Eat beforehand.
- Know your limitations.
- If interpreting a speech, see if they have a copy prepared beforehand.

Translating

- Written translation requires a lot of research. It is not as simple as substituting one word for another. Many times there are set phrases that you may not be aware of that you must find. Also, you must remember that some Japanese phrases do not translate well into English. In times like these, you must maintain a translation that is consistent with the author's original intent and write in eloquent English. Translating may be difficult at first, but it is something that improves "on the job," and you will find it getting easier and easier.

Helpful Hints When Translating

- When you receive an assignment, make sure it is approved by your supervisor. Many CIRs get too many assignments at once from different people, and letting your supervisor know what you are doing can help avoid this situation.
- Try to ask people to give you a sufficient amount of time to complete an assignment. The time will depend on the length and level of difficulty of the task, but many CIRs ask for two weeks as a general rule.
- Look for similar translations done previously.
- Do not be afraid to cut up long Japanese sentences.
- Ask for technical terms in advance, if possible.
- Ask for clarification when necessary.
- Keep the English natural.

Proofreading

- Get a copy of the Japanese original.
- Use a colored pen. (If you are afraid you will hurt the person's feelings, use a pencil.)
- Make sure the language and flow of the translation is consistent.

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)



**At the Japanese Ministry of
Reinterpreting Foreign Festivals and Holidays.**
-外国祝日解釈省-

Sometimes you will be asked to proofread others' translations, including those done by professional translators. Occasionally they may need rewriting. In this case there are two things you can do, tactfully ask the translator to rewrite it, or do it yourself. This is up to you and your supervisor to decide.

-2010 JETAASE Survival Handbook

Daily Life as a JET/Community Involvement

Don't intimidate yourself out of the opportunity of a lifetime. Seek out chances to try new things. Ask teachers and neighbors about festivals and culture classes. Find language partners to practice your Japanese skills with. Join your students in a club you've never tried before. Don't just wait to be invited to something – go anyway, or host an event of your own and invite your coworkers and neighbors to come!

Adapted from "2010 Washington, DC JET Program Survival Guide"

Activities at School:

- **Pen Pal Exchange with an American School-** Match up those shy Japanese students up with an American students and have them write letters to each other about their culture, holidays, favorite foods etc.
- **Join/teach a club-** Get involved with the students outside of the classroom by going to their sports practices and games, visiting their club activities, and coaching their club teams.
- **Decorate a Board in the Classroom-** Make a board that displays your culture, interests, popular slang etc.
- **Mailbox-** Create a mailbox so the students can write letters to you. This will give students who are shy or not strong English speakers the opportunity to communicate with you.
- **Cultural Lesson-** Have the students celebrate a holiday that represents your culture/heritage.

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO



**Don't worry if you get lost.
Everyone else knows where you live.**

Tips for the remote JET:

I was an ALT for 2 years on Yoron Island, the southernmost island in Kagoshima-ken, the prefecture just north of Okinawa. The island is 5 km long, 5 km wide, population of 5,000+, 1 stop light, 1 main supermarket. It is a sleepy, agricultural island with sugar cane crops as far as the eye can see (as long as you don't look past 5km!). The natives have much darker skin than mainland Japanese, their faces are rounder, and their language is completely different to Japanese, and is not a written language. There was never a day when I didn't ask which language they were speaking- they would speak Yorongu to the locals, Japanese to the transplants. The confusion eventually motivated me to make a trilingual dictionary. Yoron is subtropical and encircled in a beautiful coral reef. No one spoke English and I didn't speak any Japanese.

It is a beautiful place, but how in the world did I survive? I filled my time up with everything I could to avoid getting bored. I did *Kyokushin karate*, a brutal, full-contact sport but it kept me in shape. I love the ocean, so I did night spear fishing with my landlord at least once a week. I joined a dancing drum troupe my second year, finally realizing that was where the young people were hiding. Each January through March, I helped my landlord's family cut sugar cane – backbreaking work! The rest of the year I drove the tractor, fed the cows, planted rice and cut it, and even helped deliver a calf! So where does it list this in our job duties?! I must have skipped that page. The take home is that if you are going to live on a rock in the middle of the ocean, or in the middle of a rice paddy half way up a mountain, fill your time with anything and everything. You'll go insane anyway, but at least you'll be the most cultured JET around!

–Erik Poast, ALT 1996-1999, Kagoshima

There is no telling what you can do to just be a part of the community. Find a tiny restaurant and frequent the place. When a school has an event, go to it. I went to my students' *taiko* events, was literally snatched off the streets to go to the local preschool and watch the kiddies release baby sea-turtles into the sea when the 5 o'clock song played throughout the city... I even got to name a mountain! Be available and be open to assist Japanese neighbors when they ask for help. Check out the local festivals that occur throughout the year, too. Go for it, do it, enjoy it!

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

Activities Outside of School:

➤ **Community**

- **Learn to play an instrument-** Take lessons and learn to play a traditional Japanese instrument. This is a great way to improve your language skills and vocabulary while learning about Japanese culture and history.
- **Celebrate Festivals and Holidays-** Take part in the festivals in your community. You can find out about community festivals from teachers, students, neighbors, grocery store clerk, local or regional magazine/newsletters etc.
- **Attend/Teach Classes in Your Town-** Ask the people in your community or look for flyers about classes offered in your town. You can also volunteer to teach adult language classes. There will probably be local people who will want to take lessons from you and you could exchange English lessons for Japanese lessons.
- **Play/Watch Sports -** There is no better way to understand the Japanese competitive spirit than to be a part of the crowd at a sporting event or better yet, join in the fun and play a sport. This is a great way to get exercise, learn Japanese culture, and meet people in your town.

- **Volunteer at the Community Centers in Your Town-** Lend a hand while getting to know the kind-hearted people in your town. You can learn about social issues in your town as you give back to those in need in your community.
- **Eating and Drinking-** Get out of your apartment and patronize your local establishments with a smile and an open mind. You never know who you'll meet.

➤ **JET Activities**

- **Prefecture /AJET events-** Get to know your fellow JETs by taking part in one of the many events offered throughout the year.
- **Volunteer in Japan or Internationally-** Join a volunteering expedition in Japan, or internationally, with groups who are lending to help others. Not only is this a great way to meet other JETs across Japan, but you can get some great international volunteer experience and teach your students about the importance of helping others.

Things to Try in Japan:

1. Commit to learning a Japanese fine art or a martial art.
2. Sit *zazen* at a Buddhist monastery when it's open to the public. If you're lucky the monks might invite you to stay for lunch.
3. Learn something new every day.
4. Surprise your students by breaking stereotypes while they learn more deeply about your culture.

-Dolly Sanborn, ALT 1999-2001, Okayama

My Most Important Piece of Advice:

Go to Japan with a sense of humor. Don't take anyone, anything, or any situation too seriously. Be patient and laugh at the mishaps. Here's an example of my first few days in Nagasaki-shi: I was dropped off at my apartment by a woman English teacher, Oka. Upon arrival I realized the school had given me the wrong address; therefore, the box I shipped ahead of time was lost. When I tried to explain the situation, Oka didn't appear to really understand. It was pretty late when she left me in an apartment with no telephone, no food, and no map of Nagasaki. I had no idea of where I was or what I was doing. The next day I wandered around in a downpour before going to a local 7-11 type store and picking up some food and going home. That night the man in charge of the West High School JETs was supposed to pick me up at 6 for dinner at his parents' house. I was ready and waiting. By 6:45 I knew something wasn't right, so I went downstairs and called the other JET at the same H.S. using a payphone. She answered and told me that everyone was looking for me and that they believed I was not home. Eventually they all found me. The man in charge had been at the wrong apartment the whole time. Though he kept trying to blame everything on me, I just laughed. Every little mishap I had, I just tried to laugh it off. Oh, and about a month later the post man delivered my box. Of course he pointed out the wrong address, but I was just grateful to get my belongings and thanked him over and over again.

-Minda Phinney, ALT 2001-2002, Nagasaki

Money Matters

Of course, ESID (Every Situation Is Different), so every budget will be different. The following is an anecdotal account of some JETs' budgets just to give you an idea. This information was compiled by Trey Hoffman in June 2005. (Exchange rate updated in 2010 to \$1=¥90)

Adapted from "2010 JETAASE Survival Handbook"

Sample Monthly Budget

Item	Expense - ¥	Expense - \$	Balance - ¥	Balance - \$	Comment
Salary			JPY 260,000	\$2,888.89	After taxes and health insurance.
Rent, Utilities					
Rent	JPY 70,000	\$777.78	JPY 190,000	\$2,111.11	Varies depending on location.
Gas	JPY 7,000	\$77.78	JPY 183,000	\$2,033.33	Used for hot water and cooking.
Electricity	JPY 12,000	\$133.33	JPY 171,000	\$1,900.00	Used for heating/ cooling and electronics.
Phone	JPY 6,000	\$66.67	JPY 165,000	\$1,833.33	For land line only.
Cell Phone	JPY 8,000	\$88.89	JPY 157,000	\$1,744.44	
Regular Monthly Expenses					
Groceries	JPY 20,000	\$222.22	JPY 137,000	\$1,522.22	Based on \$50 per week.
Weekly Allowance	JPY 20,000	\$222.22	JPY 117,000	\$1,300.00	Includes lunches and transportation.
Weekend Allowance	JPY 60,000	\$666.67	JPY 57,000	\$633.33	Weekends can be expensive: eating out, trains, etc. add up.
Other Possible Expenses					
Student Loan	JPY 20,000	\$222.22	JPY 37,000	\$411.11	
Savings	JPY 20,000	\$222.22	JPY 17,000	\$188.89	
Remaining Balance			JPY 17,000	\$188.89	Vacation fund or unexpected dental/medical expenses
Exchange Rate \$1= JPY 90					

Filing U.S. taxes in Japan:

Even though you will not need to worry about filing your 2010 taxes until 2011, in order to qualify for Foreign Earned Tax Exemption, you need to file certain paperwork in a certain order. Speak with other U.S. JETs in your area, consult with tax officials, or look for online Tax Guides.

Documents Needed:

- **8822** Change of Address [file as soon as possible]
- **4868** Application for Extension of Time to File [file by June 15]
- **Foreign Earned Income Statement** [file with Form 1040]
- **2555-ez** Foreign Earned Income Exclusion [file with Form 1040]
- **W-2** Employers Income Statement [file with Form 1040]

-Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

Links:

Kumamoto US JETs' Tax FAQ and guides:

<http://kumamotopa.pbworks.com/US-Tax-FAQ>

The US Embassy in Japan's Tax Page

<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/acs/tacs-7126b.html>

List of Tax Preparers in Japan

<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/acs/tacs-tax2.html>

Contact the IRS

<http://www.irs.gov/help/page/0,,id=133197,00.html>

The Federal Reserve Bank average annual exchange rate

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/Releases/g5a/Current/>

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Culture Shock

Culture Shock is a normal part of living abroad, although not every JET experiences culture shock symptoms. In many cases, it can take several weeks to months before culture shock strikes, and it can be cyclical. Adapted from "2010 Washington, DC JET Program Survival Guide"

What is Culture Shock?¹

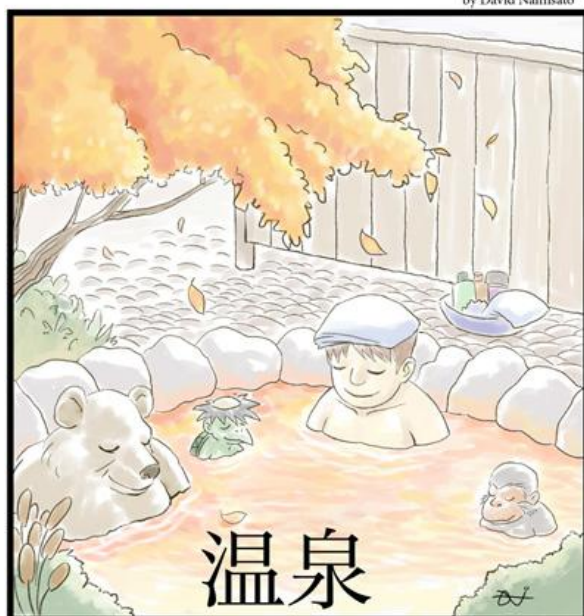
- Culture shock is the anxiety that results from moving to a completely new environment.
- It develops over time in response to increasing levels of uncertainty and stress.
- Stages of Culture Shock (stages 1-3 are both sequential and cyclical):
 - **1. Honeymoon phase** - During this period the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a romantic light as wonderful and new. For example, in moving to a new country, an individual might love the new foods, the pace of the life, the people's habits, the buildings etc...
 - **Crises or Culture Shock phase** – Within a few weeks to a month after arrival, minor issues become major annoyances, cultural differences become irritating, and you can find innumerable reasons to criticize the new culture. You often feel helpless, confused, like you are being treated like a child, and that you aren't able to "fit in."
 - **Adjustment, Reorientation, and Gradual Recovery phase** – A cyclical phase of adjusting and reorienting one's self to accept the new culture with a positive attitude. You begin to realize that often problems are due to the inability to understand, accept, and adapt to the new culture. Also, the challenge of trying to understand and overcome new cultural challenges that arise can be fun.

Just because you may become upset or angry doesn't mean you're a "bad foreigner" or a "bad JET." Understand your feelings for what they are – temporary expressions of your current situation. It's part of the acculturation process, which in and of itself can take years. Don't be hard on yourself or try to tell yourself what you "should" be feeling. Accept your emotions for what they are and find your own coping strategies.

-Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



Your supervisor hates you.
Your JTEs ignore you.
Your students don't respect you.
But the onsen makes all the badness go away.

- **Adaptation, Resolution, and Acculturation phase** – According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary *acculturation* means "cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; also: a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact." This phase usually causes substantial personal change by the creation of a bicultural identity in where you integrate new cultural aspects into your previous sense of self

- **Reverse Culture Shock phase** - Returning to one's home culture after growing accustomed to a new one can produce the same effects as described above. Having a bicultural identity may make it difficult at times to smoothly transition back into your home cultural ways of doing and being.

Setting your flat up to look like home can help to keep you from feeling too homesick when you're in your own zone. Plus, when Japanese people visit it gives them a different perspective of culture through your décor, and they will find it a lot more interesting than if you have it all Japanized.

-Aaron Newman, ALT 2006-2007, Miyagi

¹ Much of this information comes from the article *Cultural Shock and Adaptation* by Dr. Michael Winkelman of the Arizona State University Department of Anthropology.

You may not be aware of when you are experiencing culture shock. Some symptoms include:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| ○ Discontentment | ○ Loss of appetite | ○ Lethargy |
| ○ Impatience | ○ Physical/emotional discomfort | ○ Personality change |
| ○ Anger | ○ Homesickness | ○ Depression |
| ○ Sadness | ○ Preoccupation with health | ○ Tendency to cry |
| ○ Feeling incompetent | ○ Change in appearance or health | ○ Overly emotional |
| ○ Tenaciousness | ○ Lack of confidence | ○ Alcoholism |
| ○ Fight or flight response | ○ Obsessive behavior | ○ Substance dependence |
| ○ Melancholy | ○ Idealizing the homeland | ○ Lethargy |
| ○ Disorientation | | ○ Avoidance |
| ○ Weight gain/loss | | ○ Frustration |

How Do I Cope?

PRE-DEPARTURE

- Take the time before you depart to prepare for your new life as much as possible.
- Preparing to live abroad is much different than preparing to take a vacation, and significantly different than moving away to college.
- Your ability to lessen culture shock will depend on how well you prepare yourself before leaving.
- Take pictures of everyday things you see at home. These will help you both in class and on a day when you are really missing home.
- Pick one or two items to bring with you from home that remind you of happy times in your life.
- Make three lists:
 - Who am I? List the first 20 aspects of your identity that come to mind.
 - What do I expect? List a dozen expectations you have, and don't just limit them to Japan. Include how you expect to behave, and include your expectations for leaving Japan.
 - What are my goals? This is a tough one. Take your time and it will ground you like little else. Goals for many people are not traditional.
- **Cultural Checklist**
 - Study basics of modern Japanese culture on the net
 - Study your new region: local culture, sports, events, sister-cities, etc.
 - Make a "Before I leave Japan" to-do list (sights, events, food, goals)
 - Establish helpful links at home (US high school teachers, friends, family)
 - Establish a web-presence NOW and get your friends/family into it while you are here
 - Get friends/family to establish a web-presence for you! Set up a photo-sharing, etc. site.
- **Language Checklist**
 - Learn minimally hiragana & katakana
 - Research words related to your interests (hobbies, educational background, home, etc.)
 - Master basic greetings
 - Familiarize with numbers from 1-10,000 (useful for shopping)
 - Watch Japanese TV shows on youtube to grow accustomed to what the language sounds like and to learn new words and phrases.
 - Hit the CLAIR course books and CDs! (they are free to you!) Put the lessons on your iPod, learn Japanese on the go!
 - Check your library for downloadable MP3 lessons.
 - Pick up some cultural communication lessons from Japanese friends/language partners in your area. (Use a book if you can't find a person)

*Don't expect your kitchen to be huge or your stove to have an oven. Also, be prepared for a tiny refrigerator. Some JETs get regular sized ones, others do not.

*The sun is red in Japan and there is a rabbit that lives on the moon. Ask your students!

*Milk tastes different in Japan as it is pasteurized at a totally different temperature.

*In some homes you can hear the spiders walking across the floors! They are that big!

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

IN JAPAN

➤ Understand that...

- You will undoubtedly go through some form of culture shock and what you go through is normal.
- Rules of logic differ in every culture - the cultural behaviors of the Japanese make sense and are logical to them.
- Learning Japanese styles of relating, communicating, reasoning, managing, and negotiating will greatly enhance how well you can adapt to the new culture.
- It does take effort to overcome culture shock and really acculturate, but the end result far outweighs the efforts you have to make.

In Japan, they do things differently. What we think of as taboo is run of the mill for them: eating whale, sticking tiny sticks in their ear to clean out the wax, clipping toenails at their desk while you eat lunch... There will be a couple of things that make you raise an eyebrow or just be flabbergasted that they could do such a thing.

Just remember that you are the one out of your element and that they are perfectly comfortable in theirs. You may come to find that some of the things they do and you don't become great topics in conversation for you both to gain a better understanding of each other.

-Zina Boyd, ALT 2002-2004, Wakayama

➤ Immerse yourself in Japanese Culture

- Learn the Language: *Don't think this of this as an all or nothing goal. Have mini-goals.*
- Have a measurable goal for your language study. Example: Aim to pass the National Japanese Proficiency Exam
- Get a language tutor or sign up for CLAIR's language course.
- Have a regular study schedule and stick to it.
- Don't be afraid to put yourself in new situations where you will have to practice the language.
- Make friends and try to see every experience as a lesson in learning.
- Listen to TV, radio, and music to familiarize yourself with the sound of the language.

➤ Get involved in your community/find a hobby

- Ikebana
- Martial Arts
- Sado (tea ceremony)
- Cooking Classes
- Volunteer

➤ Job Satisfaction

- Develop daily ways to enjoy your lessons! (make jokes, games, contests for your students)
- Use your connections at home to develop international understanding (pen pals, video letters, etc)
- Connect with teachers using shared interests (try to move outside the English teachers only realm)
- Challenge yourself to improve and take pride in your work

➤ Socialize with the Japanese- cultivate relationships

- Attend social events like *enkais* at work
- Attend international events and share your culture
- *Eikaiwa* (teaching private English lessons/language exchange)

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



A JET MOMENT

Your supervisor giving you the wrong date and location for the office hanami picnic turns out to be a blessing in disguise.

➤ **Take Care of your Physical and Mental Health**

- Aerobics classes (exercise) – your town might not have a gym, but your *kouminkan* (community center) may offer classes for about 500 yen
- Sports teams
- Eat properly
- Balance personal time and social activity

➤ **Maintain ties to friends & family/ American culture/ English-speaking world**

- Get involved with the JET community
- Join your local AJET association and attend events or parties
- Call other Florida JETs who departed with you. You are going through the same experiences so keep in touch!
- Tatami Timeshare – travel around Japan and stay with other JETs

➤ **Stay in touch with home**

- Email/snail mail
- Get home phone and an international phone card or an international calling plan
- Get a webcam and a microphone and utilize net-conferencing software. (Skype, et. al.)
- Bring pictures
- Keep a blog or journal your experiences to get your friends and family involved in your life
- Keep abreast of US news, subscribe to an English-edition Japanese newspaper (less expensive to read online news but having a paper every morning to bring to work can be nice. The English papers in Japan tend to have English corners that may give you ideas for English games.)
- Creature Comforts from home (resources)
- English Books and Magazines
 - See if your AJET has a book exchange
 - *Kinokuniya*/Large Japanese book stores – many large bookstores in cities have an English book selection. Expensive, but instant gratification.
 - Amazon.co.jp – You can search in English and get books shipped for free to your house if you spend more than 1500 yen
- U.S. Food Delivery
 - Foreign Buyers Club (www.fbcusa.com)
 - Tengu-organic and vegetarian (www.alishan-organic-center.com)
 - The Flying Pig (www.theflyingpig.com)

Other Resources:

- Groups Organizations
- Other JETs (especially your *senpai*)

A Few Random Snippets and Advice

1. Slugs like to use your bathroom as the staging point for their invasion. Have lots of salt on hand, or else you'll be stepping into a slimy mess every time you go take a bath.
2. Climbing Mt. Fuji with a head cold is a bad, bad, bad idea.
3. Climbing Mt. Fuji with the elderly is a good way to keep yourself motivated to get to the summit.
4. Having your washing machine be located outdoors sucks. Having to do your laundry in the winter snow with said washing machine really, really, really sucks.
5. *Fugu* is better raw than cooked. Of course, that's just my opinion.
6. Seeing your students' reaction when you let them try out root beer and/or licorice is highly amusing.
7. Make sure to ask how exactly the pipes to your kitchen sink are connected to the pipes in your bathroom. You'll never know when a typhoon will cause your dirty dishwater to be suddenly washed up into the shower floor.

-Noel Olanda, ALT 2005-2007, Shizuoka

Everyone is going to have bad days. When this happened to me I would call my English speaking friends in the city and vent. I would also go out and sit on my second floor porch and look at the scenery: beautiful mountains and an ocean...what more could I ask for?

-Minda Phinney, ALT 2001-2002 Nagasaki

- Prefectural Advisors (PA)- individuals appointed to act as a liaison between JETs and CLAIR
- JET Line (Run by JET Program Coordinators) (03-5213-1729), M-F, 9am-6pm.
- AJET peer support group-anonymous hotline/referral service, (0120-437-725), S-S, 8pm-7am.
- Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL) - anonymous phone counseling (03-5774-0992), S-S, 9am-11pm
- Family and friends who have lived abroad

➤ Online

- <http://jetprogramme.org/e/current/support.html>
- <http://www.telljp.com/>
- <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm>

➤ Books:

- Culture Shock, Japan by P. Sean Bramble (out in July 2008)
- Learning to Bow, Bruce Feiler
- Importing Diversity: Inside Japan's JET Program, David L. McConnell

➤ Remember to...

- Be aware of jet lag and avoid making judgments or important decisions during the first week in Japan.
- Develop a routine that works for you.
- Continually assess your assumptions and attitude. Do so while recalling cultural differences.
- Use a "Safe Haven" – an area or routine that gives you a respite when the stress becomes too much.
- Expect that the stress will become too much at some point.
- Keep a sense of humor, but not (overly) at host country's expense.
- Plan trips within Japan. Experience the culture.
- Clearly define your job priorities.
- Look for the positive.
- Not unduly criticize your own culture.
- Be flexible.

*When confronted with a Japanese toilet, simply face the plumbing and squat.

*The huge water bugs/roaches seem much cuter when you refer to them by their Japanese name: *gokiburi*. I have continued the practice in Florida.

-Amy Palmer, ALT 1992-1994, Shizuoka

RETURNING HOME

- It's never too early to prepare for your return home.
- You've changed immensely during your time in Japan. Prepare your family and friends for this by asking them to be patient with you through your ups and downs.
- Take out the three lists you wrote 1-5 years ago two months before you leave. Read them over and then write down who you are at this time; see if you accomplished your goals. If you have yet to complete some of your goals, you still have a bit of time to make them happen!
- Looking forward, write new lists for the next phase in your life, even if your plans are only ideas.

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO



The Lifer

Japanese Etiquette

The best way to learn Japanese etiquette is to observe and engage with your community. It is always polite to ask teachers, supervisors, students, and friends when you are unsure in a given situation. In fact, curiosity is an admired trait in Japan. Be curious and have fun! You will make mistakes, but that is okay. With respect, politeness and the best of intentions, your efforts will be greatly appreciated and rewarded.

Adapted from "JETAANC Alumni-Led Orientation 2010"

To Consider

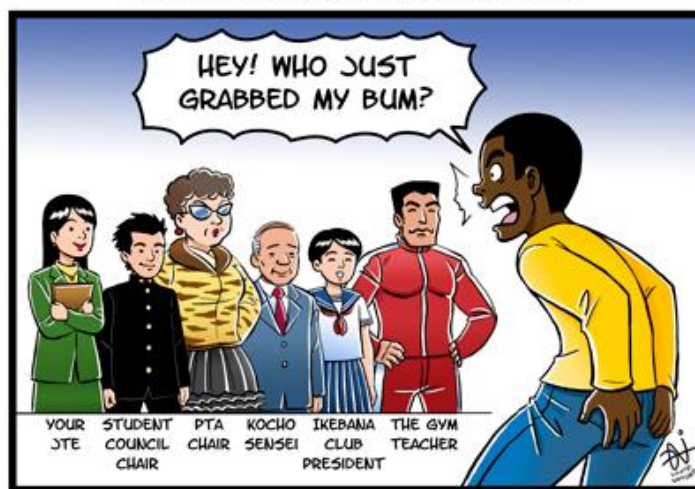
- *Honne* and *tatemae* are Japanese words that describe recognized social phenomena. The *honne/tatemae* divide is considered to be of paramount importance in Japanese culture.
 - *Honne* refers to a person's true feelings and desires. These may be contrary to what is expected by society or what is required according to one's position and circumstances, and they are often kept hidden, except with one's closest friends.
 - *Tatemae*, literally "façade," is the behaviour and opinions one displays in public. *Tatemae* is what is expected by society and required according to one's position and circumstances, and these may or may not match one's *honne*.
- *Deru kui wa utareru*
 - Literally: The nail that sticks out gets hammered down.
 - Meaning: The nonconformist will be pounded down. / Don't make waves.

Basic Customs

- **Be Punctual**
 - Punctuality is highly valued in Japan
 - Remember Japan's public transportation system records tardiness in seconds
 - Punctuality is particularly crucial in gaining respect at work
- **Greet Everyone**
 - Greet your students and colleagues whenever you get the chance. It is also a great way to build up your students' confidence
 - Always greet another person with energy and enthusiasm. A weak greeting will create a weak first impression
 - When walking, a greeting should be completed before passing someone
 - Before and after making a speech, Japanese bow to the leader and then to the audience; they may also bow to the Japanese flag upon climbing onto a stage
 - Physical contact during a greeting (and in general) may make some people feel uncomfortable
 - Always wish your co-workers "*otsukaresama deshita*," and "*osaki ni shitsurei shimasu*" when you leave for the day (extra points if you bow as you say it)
- **No Shoes Inside**
 - Always take shoes off in the *genkan* entrance-way before entering a building; extra points if you turn your shoes so that the tips face the door

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)



They all did.

(Just be glad your bum is all they grabbed.)

- Shoes or slippers should never be worn on *tatami* mats
- Avoid “holey” socks
- Use “toilet slippers” inside the bathroom
- When someone visits, it's polite for the host to turn their shoes around so that the tips face the door

➤ **Dress Code**

- Your first week (or when in doubt), overdress. Then, see what everyone else is wearing and match it!
- Bare shoulders, low-cut tops or short skirts will make you the “talk of the town” (and not in a good way)
- You may want to have a spare tie/suit at work for “unexpected” ceremonies
- Make up your own mind about hair styles, jewelry and piercings at school, but you will always win respect by following the school’s code
- If possible, don’t wear perfume or cologne in school

➤ **Chain of Command/Office Etiquette**

- Use proper channels when you need to get time off or have some sort of request or grievance
- Be open and approachable
- When making a request (and in general), an explicit acknowledgement of the other’s feelings or position will go far in smoothing relations (and getting what you want!)
- Any show of anger, no matter how well justified, is considered immature and will cause people to lose respect and sympathy for you
- Don’t refer to your Japanese colleagues by their first names, unless directed otherwise – always use their last name and *sensei*
- Try not to put your colleagues or friends “on the spot”; when in doubt, use a “go between” or speak in private. Don’t point out your JTE’s mistakes or otherwise embarrass a teacher in class
- Don’t sit on desks or use your feet to move things (including desk drawers)
- Don’t eat snacks in front of students
- You should join in the *soji* cleaning period with enthusiasm. Note that at many schools students are not allowed to talk during *soji*.
- If you notice you’re the only one not doing anything, ask how you can help!
- When in the work place the next day, it’s considered impolite to mention anything that happened at an *enkai* or *nomikai* the night before

➤ **Chopstick Use**

- Do not stick your chopsticks so they stand up in your food, especially your rice;
- Never pass food chopstick to chopstick. Always pass food onto another plate
- Do not point at others with your chopsticks and don’t hover your chopsticks indecisively over food; get in and out!
- Don’t lick or suck on your chopsticks; don’t pick up food by skewering it; and don’t use your chopsticks to move dishes
- Don’t get annoyed if people praise your chopstick skills excessively. Praising someone is a common conversation starter; treat it as such!

➤ **Eating**

- Wait for the “*itadakimasu*” before starting to eat; join in and say it too!
- Pick up the dish when eating miso soup or rice
- Slurping noodles and soup is considered good manners
- Do not eat on public transportation or while walking
- Pouring any sauce on your rice will elicit some strange looks; scooping *natto* onto it will win you shocked looks of admiration
- It’s always polite to say how delicious the food is as soon as you taste it. Use the word “*mai-u*” for laughs (“*umai*” famously reversed by a popular comedian)

Organizing a poker game at a small local bar is a great way both to get to know your fellow JETs better and also interact with the locals, but make sure to learn the rules and adhere to good poker edict (extremely important).

-Aaron Newman, ALT 2006-

- Don't take more rice than you can eat; try to eat every kernel. When eating sushi, don't pour out more soy sauce than you need. Make a special effort to eat all of your food when in front of students as a good example
- It's always polite to offer to pay when someone picks up your tab; note that there is no tipping in Japan
- Cover your mouth while using a toothpick
- Be sure to say "*gochisosama deshita*" when you're finished eating

➤ **Drinking**

- Wait for the "*kampai*" before starting to eat or drink
- Never pour your own drink. If your cup is empty, pour for someone else and they will quickly top off your glass. Offer to fill any empty glass you see
- Hold your cup with both hands when someone is pouring your drink
- "Make the rounds" and try to talk to as many people as possible. To win extra points, pour a drink for your supervisors and/or the most senior members there
- Try to go to as many official *enkai* banquets as possible. They are crucial to becoming "part of the team," and will make things much easier at work. They are also a tried-and-true way to make friends and present new ideas to your JTEs!
- If you are finished drinking, leave your glass full
- Tea is a perfectly acceptable substitute for alcohol
- Though your co-workers may act crazy, you may want to monitor your own behavior. Even if people don't talk about it the next day, they do remember

➤ **Bathing (*onsen* and *ofuro*)**

- Always wash thoroughly before entering the bath; the bath is for soaking only
- Don't drain the water when you're finished soaking
- Some *onsen* have policies that people with tattoos cannot use the facilities
- Traditionally, many *onsen* were mixed sex and there are still a few like this left. In this situation, it's perfectly acceptable for ladies to wrap their small white towel around them in and out of the water. Men may use their "modesty towel" to partially cover themselves when getting in and out of the bath, then once in the water, place it on their head! Men often do this in same-sex baths as well.

➤ **Business Cards (*meishi*)**

- Always give and receive *meishi* with both hands and turned around so that text is readable for recipient
- Look at the *meishi* you receive and really read it over
- Don't handle the *meishi* carelessly or write on it in the presence of the person who has given it to you

➤ **Miscellaneous**

- Always wrap money (an envelope is fine) or use a "cash

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)



Your supervisor vomiting in a urinal during an *enkai* is 'forgotten' the next day.



You vomiting in a urinal during an *enkai* will be talked about FOREVER.

Never put *meishi* in your back pocket; it's like sitting on someone's face!

-Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

tray” when handing it to someone

- In a room, unless it’s “free seating,” the guest is seated furthest from and facing the entrance. Everyone else is seated according to hierarchy
- When not kneeling in *seiza*, Japanese men sit cross-legged and women sit with both legs to one side. If in doubt, start in the *seiza* position and you will likely be told to relax after the *kampai*
- A *kimono*, *yukata* or other traditional Japanese clothes are always layered left over right (right over left is reserved for the dead!)
- Japanese love to show appreciation. If someone did something nice for you last time you saw them, say “*Kono aida wa arigatou gozaimashita*” (“thanks for the other day”) next time you see them.
- If possible, don’t blow your nose in public. Never use your handkerchief to blow your nose (that’s for drying your hands!)
- Use *-san*, *-sensei* or the person’s title after another person’s name, but never after your own. When describing your job, never say you are a “*sensei*”; use the humble “*kyoushi*” (instructor) instead
- Instead of saying “thank you” to a compliment, Japanese say “*lie*” or otherwise dispute its validity
- Never write someone’s name in red ink, since obituaries are traditionally written in red ink. To write someone’s name in red signals either cutting them out of your life, or that they have died
- Use an open-face hand, fingers together, to point instead of your finger
- Japanese might make comments about your appearance. In almost all cases they are paying you a compliment (even if it sounds strange); treat it as such.
- As in America, sexual harassment is not okay in Japan and should not be tolerated.
- Japanese will do almost anything to avoid saying “no.” As a result, if you sense even the smallest hesitation, difficulty or ambiguous response, consider it to be a solid “no” and move on. Follow up later with a “go between” if you are unsure
- Japanese generally consider silence to be a deeper form of communication than speaking

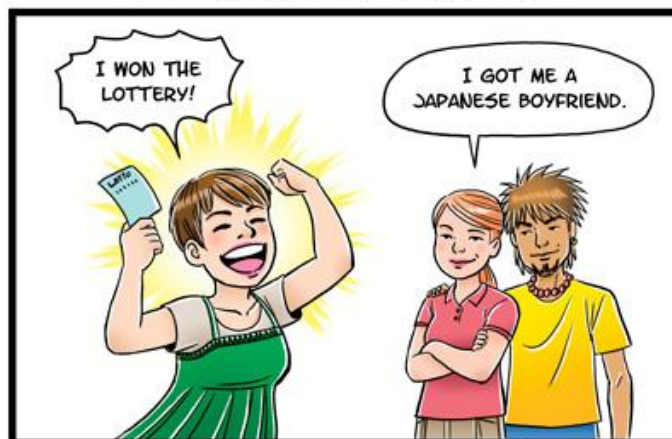
For more tips on Japanese etiquette, visit
<http://www.sumimasen.wordpress.com>

There is a reason American football never caught on in Japan: an average of 60 lbs. weight difference between Westerners and Asians. If you wish to no longer be friends with your new found Japanese amigos then have them come out for a little weekend pigskin.

-Aaron Newman, ALT 2006-2007, Miyagi

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BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR, 2002-04)



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Traveling in Japan

Planning

Adapted from "2010 JETAASE Survival Handbook"

- For checking train schedules <http://www.hyperdia.com/cgi-english/> and <http://www.jorudan.co.jp/english/norikae/>

Lodging

- Welcome Inn Reservation Center <http://www.itcj.or.jp/> is a really good service that has a database of affordable *ryokan* (Japanese style inn) and hotels throughout Japan. Their daily rates do not exceed ¥8,000/single for two thirds of the year (there may be holiday times where the price is slightly higher). They have information, including pictures of each property. They will also make the reservations for you, which is great if you do not speak much Japanese.
- One of the benefits of AJET membership is the **Tatami Timeshare**. Tatami Timeshare is a database of JETs across Japan that are willing to host traveling JETs. You can search by geography, gender, number of people the JET can host, smoking preferences, etc. Tatami Timeshare is typically free, but a dinner out or small gift would be appreciated.

Transportation

- There are a number of ways to travel around Japan,

Your visa with JET allows you to enter and leave Japan **1 time**. If you plan to travel in and out of the country, you will need a reentry permit. These are simple to get and typically only cost about 6,000 yen for a multiple reentry permit. Be sure you get one soon after arriving in case you're suddenly called home but still want to return!

—Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

including bullet train, train, bus, plane, and ferry/ship. The **Japan Rail Pass** is available to tourists, but it cannot be used by JETs on a working visa. However, there are a number of rail discounts that may be available. *Seishun Juhachikippu* (youthful 18 ticket) is a ticket for five days of unlimited travel on certain JR lines. This discounted fair is offered during school breaks, and any age traveler may use it. Private trains that operate regionally may have other discounted ticket options. Learning Japanese and communicating with colleagues and friends can give you insights into these discounts.

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



JET + Winter Vacation = Thailand

You don't need to be psychic to know that.

Travel around Asia:

It was summer after my first year. I was watching a common genre on Japanese TV: sending a celeb on a wild trip. This one sent a guy to Nepal to hike to Everest Base Camp. My Japanese wasn't good so I couldn't understand half of what they said, but a picture's worth a thousand words. I made my mind up on the spot to do the same thing. Sure enough, in early November I was hiking up by myself the same grueling, high altitude trail with temperatures dropping to -30C at night. A week later I reached base camp, and then I took an hour to survey the Khumbu glacier as well as all the formidable peaks you only read about. I am not a spiritual person, yet that was as close to enlightenment as I'll ever get.

So what's the take home? TRAVEL. Every moment you get, go exploring. Certainly go around Japan, but take advantage of being so close to so many interesting countries. I did at least 2 trips to Asia each year. I was on JET for 3 years, so I had more chances than a shorter stay. But whether you renew or not, take advantage!

—Erik Poast, ALT 1996-1999, Kagoshima

Utilities and Accounts

Adapted from Pacific Northwest JETAA "The Ultimate 'Unofficial' JET Survival Guide" 2010

*Your first few days will likely be a bit of a blur, but the most important thing you need to get taken off right away is applying for your Alien Registration Card. Verify that all information is correct, or else you could have complications setting up anything else. Keep your passport on you at all times until receiving your card (about 7-10 days later). Once you receive your Alien Registration Card, keep it on you **at all times**. Even if you go for a run or cross the street to the convenience store, have your card with you.*

Alien Registration Card

- Your supervisor should help you with this. Make sure you have Japanese yen on you by this point, as you will need to purchase passport pictures for your card.
- Verify that all information is correct both on your application and when receiving your card.
- Until you receive your card, have your passport on you at all times – no exceptions.
- Upon receiving your card, keep it on your person every time you leave your house. Even if it is to go for a run or just to cross the street to a convenience store, **you must always have your card on you**.

Hanko/inkan

- A *hanko* is a name stamp, likely created with your name in *katakana* or in Roman characters. You may be required to use your *hanko* to sign in every morning at the office, to sign for deliveries, for significant documents or purchases (such as a car; your *hanko* must be officially registered for this).
- Your contracting organization may have already ordered a *hanko* for you, in which case you may have to pay them back.

Banking Information

- To open an account you will fill in an application and show your Alien Registration Card (some will be able to open your account using only your passport and the document stating that your Alien Registration Card has been applied for).
- ATMs may or may not have an English menu. Be aware that many ATMs close around 9 pm.
- Japan is very much a cash-based society. Credit cards are often accepted at major department stores, but typically not at a lot of smaller stores and restaurants (especially in the countryside). There are no personal checks; payment for things like reservations usually takes place at ATMs in the form of a bank transfer from one account to another.
- The largest bank in Japan is actually the post office. As post office bank accounts are accessible all around Japan, it may be useful to have an account with a post office bank instead of or in addition to your regular bank account.
- To access your account, you will be given a debit card and/or a bank book. The bank book takes the place of monthly statements. Simply insert the book to a page with blank entries into an ATM and it will record all of your account activity.
- International ATMs in Japan: <http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/jsp/SearchPage.jsp>

Utilities

- Your supervisor should help you with setting up accounts with the gas, water, electric, and phone bills and to be certain that they are in your name. You can either have these automatically paid through your bank account or receive the bills by mail. Most can be paid for at convenience stores.

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



Remember, as cool as the kotatsu was, central heating is better.

Internet

- Speak with other JETs in the area to see what is available and ask your supervisor to help you set up internet. Yahoo BB is one of the most popular cable internet systems, as it can be used for a cheap VOIP service as well. Because everything is area specific it's best to let your supervisor or friends help you out with this one. Prices are comparable with the U.S.
- Many U.S. JETs use Yahoo BB or Skype to call home, as prices can be very cheap.

Cellphones

- Speak with other JETs in your area, particularly to your predecessor. Every JET has his or her favorite brand, but what is most important is to see which phone company has the best reception in your area.
- You will need to have your alien registration card and passport, your residential address in Japan, and possibly your *hanko* as well.
- If you do not want to enter into a contract, you might consider a card where you buy minutes as you go (via prepaid minutes cards, direct withdrawals from your bank account, or pay by credit card); may require an initial fee plus cost of phone
- Some phones can be set to be in English, but not all can.

Garbage

- Getting rid of trash is a little more challenging in Japan than here. There is a lot more recycling involved, so here are the basic things that you need to separate:
 - Burnable (food, packaging, other burnable stuff not from the below bits)
 - Non-burnable (including recyclables)
 - Metal
 - Ceramic
 - Glass
 - Bottles
 - Plastic Bottles/cans
- Different towns and cities have different rules for trash separation and disposal. Some allow any type of trash to be thrown away on any day, but there are different colored bags for each category. Others use only one type of bag, but there are specific days in which standard or recyclable trash can be put out in a predesignated place. Proper trash bags can be found in grocery stores, but be sure to use these and not a standard white or black bag.
- You may be required to put the date or some sort of identifier on your bags. Check with your supervisor for details on trash disposal. *Note: neglecting to correctly separate your trash could result in your trash being returned to your door with the requirement that you personally open and resort it.*
- You're usually not allowed to put trash out the night before, as cats, crows, etc. will get at it otherwise.
- Collections for non-burnable trash are usually only once a week or once a month. Large items such as bikes, appliances etc. have to be pre-registered with the authorities and put out on a pre-designated day with a disposal sticker. Ask your supervisor early on about how this works in your town. There will be reference materials available from the city or town hall near you.

Post Offices

- Post offices in Japan are extremely efficient, and provide a range of postal services including the shipping of post cards, letters, parcels and registered mail.
- Small post offices are open Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 17:00 and are closed on weekends and national holidays. Larger offices are opened on weekdays until 19:00 and maybe also be open on Saturdays and Sundays. Mailboxes are red.
- The postal symbol looks like a red T with a red line over the top (or in white with a red background).
- With the exception of major roads, Japanese streets are not named. Instead, cities and towns are subdivided into areas, sub-areas and blocks.
- If addresses are written in Japanese, they start with the postal code, followed by the prefecture, city and sub-area(s), and end with the recipient's name. If addresses are written in English, they start with the recipient's name and end with the prefecture and postal code
- Like all Japanese texts, addresses can also be written in vertical columns and are read from right to left.



Law and Order

Adapted from Pacific Northwest JETAA "The Ultimate 'Unofficial' JET Survival Guide" 2010

While Japan's rights and rules can, in many ways, resemble those you may be used to in the U.S., they are not necessarily the same. Be aware of your rights and responsibilities. In short, police powers in Japan are far greater than the west. You still have rights, but they are comparatively diminished thanks to the burden of proof being on you. The following notes were written by a JET alumnus, but it is in every JET's best interests to research these points independently.

Some Basics:

- **Japan uses civil, rather than common law.** That means that the accused are tried according to the letter of the written law rather than using statutes/precedents from previous cases. There is no trial by jury, your fate is decided by 1-3 judges dependent on the nature of the case. Judges are in the majority men, but there are female judges in Japan. This system is changing, with a 4th layperson judge being used like a hybrid juror/judge on an experimental basis to make the system more transparent.
- **Police in Japan are nowhere near as hamstrung as their counterparts in the west with regards to due process and warrant requirements.** They have almost unlimited search and stop powers. These days in the name of law enforcement and preventing terrorism they can, without needing an opposed warrant, conduct a full search of your vehicle, workplace or house. Personal searches are limited to frisks without a warrant. However, if requested, judges rarely question warrants.
- **There are some laws, such as the NHK TV license payment law, in which case there are no technical penalties for breaking them.** However, you are representatives of your country and your state, so it is expected that you will obey the law and be courteous when needed. Good manners cost nothing!

Presenting Identification:

- **You have to have your alien registration card or passport on you at all times according to the law.** If you can't or won't produce it, penalties can range from a reprimand (probable) to a max of 6 months in jail under charges of obstruction of justice, followed by deportation at your own expense for violating Japanese law (very unlikely) It's not all bad news though.
- **The only people that you are legally obliged to cooperate with on this are police officers and "officials designated by the ministry of justice,"** such as immigration/customs officials at ports of entry. Hotel clerks, shopkeepers, librarians, stadia personnel etc do not fall into this category. Furthermore they cannot refuse you service for non-compliance unless company policy is shown to dictate ALL customers (including Japanese) must show ID.
- **If a hotel's policy states that everyone, including Japanese, must show identification, it falls under the "management reserves the right to refuse service" rule that exists and you will have to show your Alien Registration Card.** Accommodations law in Japan states a hotel can ONLY refuse a customer service if they are seen to be carrying an infectious disease, are drunk and disorderly, all rooms are full OR you pose a risk to the public at large.
- **If a police officer/ designated official asks you for passport/alien registration card, they are legally bound to show their ID FIRST if asked.** Note: this is not applicable in an arrest situation. However, if a policeman stops you in the street and asks you for your identification without providing you with his/hers

Life After the B.O.E. BY DAVID NAMISATO



Having lived in Japan for 2 years, Josh had forgotten that we don't do the "communal naked thing" in Canada.

upon request, you have no obligation to cooperate. By asking for their name and number you make them aware that their actions will be reported if necessary, thereby eliminating the possibility they can treat you badly and have it be no danger to their career.

- **Police are not legally obliged to present you with ID if they are in their place of work, as this is taken as proof enough.** This is why police officers may sometimes ask you to accompany them back to the *koban* (police box). Just show your ID and be polite, and you'll find everything will be just fine. An innocent person has nothing to hide.

Safety in Japan

Japan is, in general, a very safe country. There are low reported rates of attacks, break-ins, killings, etc... However, that does not mean that it does not happen, and having a low reported crime rate is not the same thing as having a low rate of crime. Most JETs never have any problems with the law or with being the victim of a crime, but it does happen. Moreover, foreigners are easy targets both as victims and as scapegoats. Take care not to fall into a false sense of security. Use the same level of common sense and self-preservation that you use in the U.S.

- Recognize that you are an outsider, a teacher, and a government employee. There is a much higher expectation that you will abide by Japanese rules.
- You may bear a degree of culpability for others' actions. Be certain that you and anyone you associate with comply with Japanese law, particularly in terms of drinking and driving or taking any form of illegal substance.
- Always lock your house and car. Just because your neighbors might not doesn't mean you shouldn't.
- Be aware that, as a foreigner, there is always a spotlight on you. This doesn't mean you can never make mistakes, but it means that if you publicly do, everyone will know.
- You are being entrusted with your town's children. This is a huge responsibility and privilege. You are expected to be a role model. There is no presumed separation between work life and social life. If you get into trouble privately, it could have repercussions for your work.

-Abby MacBain, ALT 2004-2006, Aomori

Filing Complaints/If in trouble

➤ **If you have complaints, they can be made in writing to the public relations section of prefectural police headquarters, and they will then be submitted to the Ministry of Justice.** We stress again, please act at all times in a manner that befits you as a representative of your country. Stay out of trouble. We've selected you for this program because we believe in you.

➤ **The rights of the accused are practically non-existent.** Simply put the "burden of proof" always falls on the suspect, not the prosecution. In other words, suspects are guilty until proven innocent. *Especially* foreigners. Even in the press, if someone is accused of a crime (with or without proof) the honorific "san" is dropped and they are hereafter referred to as "*yogisha*" or "suspect" until cleared.

➤ **If they want, according to law the police have the ability to:**

- Hold you for a maximum of 3 days without charge for investigative purposes, which can be extended by a judge by 10 days up to 2 times. Total: 23 days.

- Deny you access to legal council during interrogation (to avoid "possibility of collusion"). You are entitled to limited representation and a translator, but they may or may not be competent or interested in your case.

- Deny you phone calls and communication (see above)

- Interrogate you for 3 sessions a day (morning, afternoon, evening)

- Session times are defined at maximum 4 hours, but that doesn't mean they can't try other non-interrogative tactics in the interim.

- Use confessions as evidence (REGARDLESS of whether they were extracted under duress or deception)

- Use any evidence as admissible in a court of law, regardless of the search legality. "Inadmissible" doesn't exist. For example in Japanese law, what is important is that "we found drugs in your house," not that "we broke into your house without warrant while you were incarcerated."

➤ **You have the "right" to remain silent, but the majority of judges will hold your silence against you.** They assume that, logically, an innocent person would cooperate with authorities.

Confessions:

➤ **A confession is key for Japanese law enforcement.** Police will often interrogate suspects (both foreign and Japanese) for long periods of time with threats, abuse, or offers of plea bargains ("tell us you're sorry/ you had no initial intent/ who's really behind it and we'll go easy on you"). There have been cases of foreign suspects who have signed documents they couldn't read they thought were release forms

that turned out to be "confessions."

- Ministry of Justice statistics indicate 90% of *indictments* are made with a confession, showing police rarely proceed without one in order to back up shaky cases. Often in murder cases here you will hear news reports that the arrested told police he or she "didn't intend to kill the victim"...guess where that came from.

Standard JET situations: (e.g. caught speeding)

- **Know the law about your obligations and theirs.** A facet of all criminal law is "*ignorantia juris non excusat*," Latin for "Ignorance does not excuse you judgment." This applies to you in Japan too. Nobody can possibly know every law, but knowing the ones pertaining to cycling, driving, working and residency are very important in your daily life and useful for backing up a dispute. Ask a supervisor or your PA for clarification about specifics.
- **If the police are being abusive to you, remain as outwardly calm as you can.** This is tough, as 95% of us would find it hard to stand up to a man with a gun that is yelling and threatening you with incarceration. Staying calm and polite helps everyone.
- **Make sure you get a name to hold them personally accountable, IF you think the situation will require it.** Try to do this right at the beginning when the situation is still relatively calm by showing your ID. If the police brush you off, look around. What is their car number/ license plate? What time is it? Are they on foot, on a bike? How many officers are they with? What do they look like? Police officers should be held accountable for their actions just like the rest of us, but threats of "I'll have your badge" never come true in the real world and make you look just as bad as them.
- **Ask yourself what the situation is: Am I in the wrong? Is he being heavy handed?** Be clear about this. If you were caught red handed and you have no defense, "making a stand" will get you nothing, regardless of your Japanese skills. Cooperate with the authorities.
- **Often, starting in English then changing to Japanese of any level, excellent or broken, will not make them go that much easier on you, but it may help to de-escalate the situation.** If the situation is minor, then roll with it and take the inevitable reprimand like an adult. If not minor, perhaps you should stick to a neutral "sorry, I don't understand" unless you are 100% sure what is being said...but trying to resolve things before it gets there is in everyone's best interests. If you are only 90% sure of what is being said, wait for a translator.
- **If it IS serious, it is HIGHLY advisable to say nothing except "I will not make any statements until I am given a professional translator and legal counsel,"** or something simple along those lines. It's a tough call, as cooperation is usually your best bet. Just be aware they really aren't bound by a lot of restrictions, but one of them IS professional conduct. You have the right to expect the same treatment a Japanese person would. It's worth remembering that despite the media hysteria about foreign crime and the general opinion that police treat foreigners unfairly, there are frequently cases where the police stop Japanese people in the same way. Remember to use your common sense and you will be just fine.
- **Bicycles in Japan fall under common traffic law.** This means that the same drink driving laws that apply to cars also apply to bicycles - a maximum of 3 years imprisonment and/or a 500,000 yen fine if caught. Bicycles are treated as 'light vehicles,' in the same category as anything else pedal-powered such as a rickshaw. However, the instant you get off your bicycle and start pushing it, none of these laws apply as you go from being a light vehicle to a pedestrian.

Some other rules to watch out for:

- **Not using your bike light after dusk** - Maximum 50,000 yen fine.
- **Not riding on the left hand side of the road** - Maximum 20,000 yen fine.
- **Disobeying traffic signs or lights (including stop/give way signs)** - Maximum 3 month imprisonment and/or a 50,000 yen fine.
- **Riding whilst using your keitai** - Maximum 3 month imprisonment and /or a 50,000 yen fine.

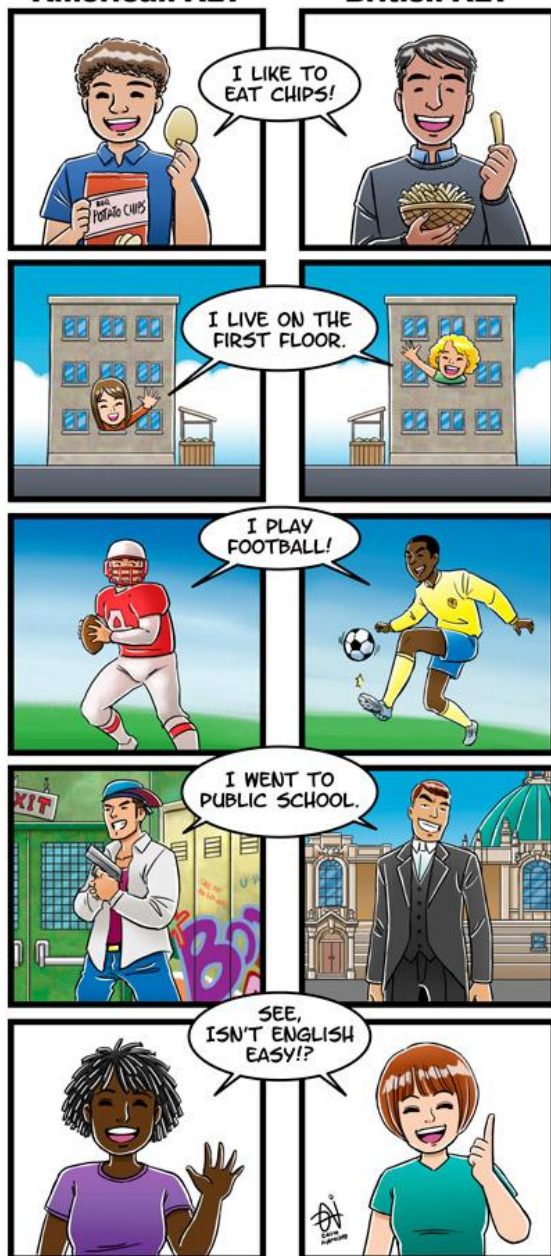
Useful Web Resources

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)

American ALT

British ALT



And we wonder why our students think English is confusing?

You'll find a number of resources that will be helpful to your time on the JET Program – sites for cooking, teaching, hobbies, learning Japanese, encountering culture shock, etc... Here is a sampling, selected from a variety of JET survival guides and other resources.

Especially for JETs

➤ **AJET** (the Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching) is an independent, self-supporting volunteer organization that promotes and supports exchange and teaching in Japan in cooperation with the JET Program. <http://www.ajet.net/>

➤ **Jetset Japan** is a comprehensive lifestyle and community website, exclusively serving the needs of the members of the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Program in Japan., the number one website for JET Program participants. <http://www.jetsetjapan.com/>

➤ **JETwit** is a site particularly geared for JET alumni. This is an excellent resource for information on Japan-related jobs, JETAA planned events, and current happenings in Japan. <http://www.jetwit.com>

➤ **JET Programme Links** page contains references to a number of different topics that are relevant for current JETs. <http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/links/index.html>

➤ **JETAA International** Predeparture Orientations (articles and lesson plans). http://www.jetalumni.org/1514/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14%3Apre-departure-orientations&catid=29%3Achapter-resources&Itemid=1

Teaching English

➤ **ELT News** is the web site for English Teachers in Japan. More commercial than Genki English, but it does have good resources. <http://www.eltnews.com/>

➤ **GenkiEnglish**. This site is a collection of games, songs and ideas for use by teachers of languages to children. <http://genkienglish.net/>

➤ **ABC Teach**. An online resource for children's education. <http://www.abcteach.com>

➤ **Lanternfish**. Jobs, Worksheets, and Flashcards for the ESL and TEFL Teacher. <http://www.bogglesworldesl.com>

➤ **Dave's ESL Café**. The Internet's meeting place for ESL + EFL teachers + students from around the world. <http://www.daveseslcafe.com>

➤ **ESL Flow**. Teaching with pictures, worksheets, and exercises. <http://www.eslflow.com>

➤ **HotChalk's Lesson Plans Page**. A collection of over 4,000 lesson plans from Preschool through High School and beyond, that were developed by Kyle Yamnitz, students and faculty at The University of Missouri, and more recently by the users of this website. <http://www.lessonplanspage.com>

➤ **Everything ESL**. Featuring more than 66 lesson plans, 45 teaching tips, 230 downloads, 830 discussion topics, and 90 classroom resource picks. <http://www.everythingsl.com>

Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO



General Interest Sites with Resources for Teaching English

- **National Geographic Kids.**
<http://www.kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>
- **National Geographic.**
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com>
- **PBS.** <http://www.pbs.org>
- **Discovery.** <http://www.discovery.com>
- **Penguin Publishers.** Offers 1-2 minute videos of four well-known Aesop's fables.
<http://us.penguinroup.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/aesop/index.html>

Living in Japan

- **At Home In Japan.** An on-line tutorial to help you becoming familiar with Japanese culture, even before you get there.
<http://athome.nealrc.org/index.html>
- **Bob & Angie's Cooking Site**
<http://www.bob->

an.com/recipe/English/index_e.html

- **Japan FAQ: Know Before You Go.** <http://www.thejapanfaq.com/>
- **Japan-Guide.com** delivers comprehensive, up to date information on traveling and living in Japan, first-hand from Japan. <http://www.japan-guide.com/>
- **Multilingual Guide to Living in Japan (developed by CLAIR)** <http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengo/index.html>
- **Tess's Japanese Kitchen.** A blog about learning how to cook Japanese foods. <http://1tess.wordpress.com/>
- **Tokyo Food Page** is a restaurant guide for Tokyo and a Japanese food guide for everyone.
<http://www.bento.com/tokyofood.html>
- **Washoku Guide.** Cooking tips and recipes from a Japanese kitchen.
http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/japanese_food_guide01.html

Japanese Language

- **The Kanji SITE** is aimed primarily at people who are studying for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, but has a great dictionary system for all students of kanji, and it does not require a Japanese character download! <http://www.kanjisite.com/>
- **Genki English.** The guys from Genki English offer you suggestions and advice on learning Japanese. Includes very useful key expressions, numbers, katakana & hiragana flash card games & more! Complete with sound bites. <http://genkienglish.net/genkijapan/menu.htm>
- **SPACE ALC** - Ignore all of the extra information and just use the small search panel at the top for a surprisingly comprehensive dictionary. <http://www.alc.co.jp/>
- **Jim Breen's WWWJDIC Japanese Dictionary Server** - A number of different functions but particularly useful for translating words in whole sentences and paragraphs at once.
<http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/cgi-bin/wwwjdic.cgi?1C>
- **www.jisho.org** An online Japanese <--> English dictionary with a database of thousands of example sentences for vocabulary / grammar. If you have a mobile device, the mobile version of their site works great as well.
- **Language and Cultural Study** <http://erin.ne.jp/> Interactive tool for studying vocab, kanji, situational Japanese, conversation practice
- **Kanji practice anime-style**, fun quizzes/kanji challenges- <http://anime-manga.jp>
- **The Kanji Site** – online flashcards for all levels – <http://www.kanjisite.com/>
- **LexiKan** – Downloadable flashcard program. Free demo available. <http://www.lexikan.com/>

- **Kana Flashcards** – <http://www.zompist.com/flash.html>
- **Firefox Rikaichan Extension** - <http://www.polarcloud.com/rikaichan/> If you download Firefox and install this extension, you can hover over any Japanese word/kanji and get an English translation.
- **Furigana Converter** - <http://aitech.ac.jp/~ckelly/i/furigana.html> This website allows you to paste URLs of websites (not all) written in Japanese and it will supply the furigana (phonetic rendering of kanji) above the characters for you. Good for improving your reading ability.
- **NJStar Japanese Word Processor** is nice because you can hover over what you've typed and check the English translation. Good for when you're not sure exactly if you spelled something correctly. <http://www.njstar.com/cms/njstar-japanese-word-processor>
- **Japanese Language Proficiency Test – Official Webpage** <http://www.jees.or.jp/jlpt/en/index.htm>
- **The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) Study Page** <http://www.jlptstudy.com/>
- **Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation's Business Japanese Proficiency Test (BJT)** <http://www.kanken.or.jp/bjt/english/index.html>
- **Japanesepod101** is a great resource for beginning and intermediate students of Japanese. You can listen to the broadcasts for free. For a reasonable fee, you get premium access which enables you to “consolidate, review and practice what you hear in [their] podcast lessons.” <http://www.japanesepod101.com>
- **Yomiuri Shinbun's Pera Pera Penguin**-short, easily managed lessons for many levels. <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/columns/0002/>
- **University of Oregon, Yamada Language Center Page**, <http://babel.uoregon.edu/>
- www.english.com Learning how to read English is just as important as learning how to read Japanese
- www.lifehacker.com A site full of helpful advice for getting things done, including learning languages

Life After the B.O.E.

by David Namisato



Which of these two do you remember more from your last hanami in Japan?

Or is everything just a haze?

Language Schools

- **Japanese Language School Database** - Searchable database of Japanese language schools accredited by the Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education. <http://www.aikgroup.co.jp/j-school/english/area/index.htm>
- **The Yamasa Institute** (Aichi, Hokkaido). This site also contains a number of links to resources about Japan and studying Japanese. <http://www.yamasa.org/index.html>
- **iSEIFU Japanese Language School** (Osaka). University with an IT emphasis that also runs a language school. <http://i-seifu.jp/language/en/tanki/index2.html>
- **Osaka YWCA College** http://osaka.ywca.or.jp/college_eng/
- **WAHAHA Language School in Fukuoka City** <http://www.wahahajapaneselanguage.com>