

Kumamoto New JET Orientation 2009



Orientation Resource Book:

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- PA E-mail: kumamotopa@gmail.com
- International Exchange Office: 096-333-2157
- Prefectural Board of Education: 096-333-2685

- KumAJET Website: www.kumajet.com/
- AJET Peer Support Group: 0120-43-7725 (8pm-7am)
- CLAIR JET Line: 03-5213-1729 (9am-6pm)

Kumamoto Orientation Schedule

Wednesday
August 12th

Day 1: General Information, Demonstrations

13:00-13:30	Check-in (6 th Floor Main Hall)
13:30-13:50	Opening Remarks
13:50-14:20	Keynote Speech
14:20-14:50	Test
14:50-15:00	Break
15:00-15:20	Safety Presentation
15:20-15:40	Kumamoto AJET Time
15:40-16:00	PA Talk
16:00-16:45	Team Teaching Demonstration
16:45-17:00	Closing/Explanation of Castle Tours

17:00-18:30	Following orientation, students from Kumamoto Kita Senior High School will conduct English tours of Kumamoto Castle.
19:00-21:00	Beer Garden Party at Kumamoto Hanshin

Thursday
August 13th

Day 2: Workshops, Area Meetings

09:00-09:20	Check-in (4 th Floor Room 3)
09:20-09:40	International Exchange Office & Kumamoto Pref. BOE remarks
09:40-10:30	Workshop 1: Driving
10:40-11:30	Workshop 2: JHS and SHS Teaching
11:40-12:30	Workshop 3: Elective
12:30-13:50	Lunch
13:50-14:40	Workshop 4: Elective
14:50-15:40	Workshop 5: Elective
15:50-16:10	Q & A Session
16:20-16:50	Area Meetings
16:50-17:00	Closing

Friday
August 14th

Day 3: Japanese Classes

09:00-09:30	Check-in (4 th Floor Room 3)
09:30-10:30	Lesson 1
10:45-11:45	Lesson 2
11:45-13:00	Lunch
13:00-14:00	Lesson 3
14:15-15:15	Lesson 4
15:15-15:30	Closing/Pictures

Workshops

	4 th Floor Room 3	4 th Floor Room 1	4 th Floor Room 2
(W1) 9:40-10:30	Driving		
(W2) 10:40-11:30	Teaching Junior High	Teaching Senior High	
(W3) 11:40-12:30	Office Culture/Etiquette	Learning Japanese	JTE Relations
(W4) 13:50-14:40	Health	Life as a Rural JET	Setting up Home
(W5) 14:50-15:40	Finance	Teaching Elementary	Classroom Management

Note on Workshops:

(W1) All new JETs will participate in the Driving Workshop.

(W2) Please attend either the Teaching Junior High or Teaching Senior High workshop based on your placement.

(W3-5) Please choose one elective workshop for each workshop hour.

Driving: Get essential information about driving in Japan. Learn the rules of the road and what to do in case of an accident.

Teaching Junior High: Learn what and how to teach junior high schools students. Get lesson ideas, motivational techniques and methods for assessing student performance.

Teaching Senior High: Learn what and how to teach junior high schools students. Get lesson ideas, motivational techniques and methods for assessing student performance.

Office Culture/Etiquette: Learn what you need to meet, greet and be accepted by your co-workers.

Learning Japanese: Get advice on how to effectively learn and study Japanese.

JTE Relations: Learn how to build and maintain your relationship with the Japanese teachers you work with.

Health: Get advice on a variety of health topics, including physical, mental, sexual and spiritual health.

Life as a Rural JET: Find out how to make the most of living in the country. Learn how to adapt your teaching style, shop, cope in the hot summer and cold winter and manage your free time.

Setting up Home: Get information on how to dispose of your trash, defend your home from bugs and keep your home cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Finance: Tips on how to watch your yen, interpret your bills, budget and send money home.

Teaching Elementary: Get advice on how and what to teach elementary school students.

Classroom Management: Learn necessary tips for classroom and behavioral management.

RE-ENTRY PERMITS

IMMIGRATION OFFICE DIRECTIONS

Kumamoto City

096 362 1721

Here are the directions to the Kumamoto City Immigration Office (入国管理事務所 *nyukoku kanri jimusho*) where all the fun re-entry permit business takes place. Keep in mind that if you are lost, few Japanese people will know where this office is, as they have likely never visited it before. Therefore don't get frustrated if people don't seem to be able to give you directions. If you get lost call the PAs or ask a cab driver where the *Daini Goudou Chousha* building is.

BRING: Passport, Foreign Registration Card, ¥6000 or ¥3000 depending on which permit you decide to apply for. Your supervisor or someone who speaks Japanese may be handy to bring along, but most people can get by on their own using English.

BY TRAM or BUS (from downtown):

Get on the tram or bus in downtown Kumamoto heading for 健軍 *Kengun* (buses bound for 県庁 *Kenchou* or 水前寺公園 *Suizenji Park* will also work). You ride through 通町筋 *Torichousuji* (Parco Ball) and 水道町 *Suidouchou* and over the river away from the castle. Get off at the first stop across the bridge – 九本時交差点 *Kuhonji Kosaten* on the busline and the tramline.

Once you get off the tram or bus, you will notice a major intersection in front of you. From the bus stop, walk toward the intersection and turn left. From the tram stop, go to the right from the pedestrian overpass.

After turning off of Densha Douri (streetcar line), the first landmark you will see is an outdoor store called Sherpas on your left. This sign is blue and written in English. This tells you that you are going the right way! Keep walking past the NTT Hospital (on left), a school, and a fire station (on right).

After the fire station, walk a few more blocks to the next large intersection (the road opens up and veers off to the right. There is a tiny park and a blue building on the far corner). At this intersection, turn right and start up the slight hill. The immigration office is on the 4th floor of the large white building on your right. This building is called the *Daini Goudou Chousha* 第2合同庁舎. The main entrance is off of the parking lot.

It should be about a 15-20 minute walk from the tram or bus stop to the immigration office.

DRIVING (from downtown):

On Densha Douri (streetcar line), drive away from the castle. After passing the Parco on your right and crossing the bridge over the river, turn LEFT at the first large intersection (there is a small stoplight immediately across the bridge, but you want the bigger intersection with the pedestrian walkway and signs for the Kyushu

Expressway/Kumamoto IC). Continue straight past the NTT hospital (on left) and the fire station (on right). Get in the right turn lane and turn right at the next large intersection (with signs for the Prefectural Theater). After you make the right turn and start up the small hill, immediately signal and turn into the parking lot of the large white building on your right. This building is called the *Daini Goudou Chousha* 第2合同庁舎. The immigration office is on the 4th floor of this building.

AT THE OFFICE: Go to the 4th floor for the immigration office. Fill out a form (in English) to apply for the permit. We recommend you apply for the Multiple Re-entry Permit, which is valid for the remainder of your visa (3 years for new JETs) and costs ¥6000. The Single Re-entry Permit costs ¥3000 and is valid for only one trip out of the country. The person behind the desk will give you another form and take your passport. They will tell you to go and pay for some stamps at a window downstairs on the 2nd floor. After buying the stamps, go back to the initial office and trade the stamps for your newly stamped passport. If you paid for a multiple permit, check to make sure it says Multiple Re-entry Permit before leaving.

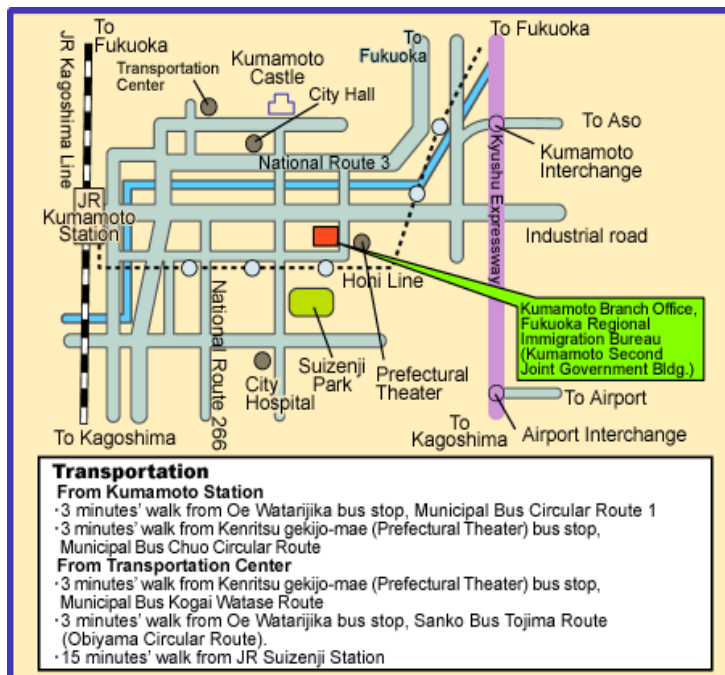
You can download and fill out the application form in advance here (pdf and excel format): www.moj.go.jp/ONLINE/IMMIGRATION/16-5.html

TIME FRAME: The whole process should take about 30-45 minutes. It can take longer or shorter depending on the day. The immigration office takes applications Monday – Friday from 9:00 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 16:00.

NOTE: A re-entry permit is necessary if you leave and re-enter Japan during your period of stay. If you leave Japan without obtaining a re-entry permit, the Status of Residence on your visa will automatically be forfeited and you will not be allowed to re-enter Japan. Please be sure to get this re-entry permit as soon as possible in case you have to return home for some emergency. In such an event the last thing you want to think about is your re-entry permit.

Remember that you should get special leave to apply for this permit, but be sure to find out what day is best with your *tantousha* before you take off on the journey.

Questions? Give us a ring at the International Exchange Office or the Prefectural Board of Education, or send an email to kumamotopa@gmail.com



Microsoft Word Menus

ファイル (File)

新規作成 (new document)
開く (open)
閉じる (close document)
上書き保存 (save)
名前を付けて保存 (save with new name)
Web ページとして保存 (save as web page)
検索 (search for file)
版の管理 (file management)
ブラウザでプレビュー (browser preview)
ページ設定 (page settings)
印刷プレビュー (print preview)
印刷 (print)
送信 (send)
プロパティ (properties)
終了 (close Word)

挿入 (insert)

改ページ (new page)
ページ番号 (page numbers)
日付と時刻 (date and time)
定型句 (set phrases)
フィールド (field)
コメント (comment)
番号 (number)
参照 (reference)*
図 (picture, image)**
図表 (diagram)
ファイル (file)
オブジェクト (object)
ブックマーク (book mark)
ハイパーリンク (hyperlink)

罫線 (lines)

罫線を引く (draw line)
挿入 (insert)
削除 (delete)
選択 (choose)
セルの結合 (combine cells)
セルの分割 (divide cells)
表の分割 (divide chart)
表のオートフォーマット (auto format chart)
自動調整 (auto adjust)

編集 (Edit)

元に戻す (back)
繰り返す (repeat)
切り取り (cut)
コピー (copy)
Office クリップボード (view clipboard)
貼り付け (paste)
形式を選択して貼り付け (choose format to paste)
ハイパーリンクとして貼り付け (paste as hyperlink)
すべて選択 (select all)
検索 (search in document)
置換 (replace)
ジャンプ (jump)
再変換 (re-select characters)

書式 (format)

フォント (font)
段落 (paragraph)
箇条書きと段落番号 (bullets)
段組み (columns)
ドロップキャップ (drop capital letter)
縦書きと横書き (vertical/horizontal text)
文字種の変換 (change text type)
拡張書式 (extended format list)
背景 (background)
テーマ (theme)
オートフォーマット (auto format)
スタイルと書式 (style and format)
書式の詳細設定 (format settings)

罫線 (lines, cont.)

タイトル行の繰り返す (repeat title line)
変換 (transform)
並べ替え (change order)
計算式 (calculation format)
表のグリッド線を表示しない (don't show grid)
線種とページ罫線と網かけの設定 (line settings)
表のプロパティ (chart properties)

表示 (View)

下書き (view as document)
Web レイアウト (view as web page)
印刷レイアウト (view print layout)
アウトライン (outline)
作業ウィンドウ (work window)
ツールバー (view tool bar)
ルーラー (view ruler)
段落記号 (view paragraph marks)
グリッド線 (view grid)
見出しマップ (view map)
ヘッダーとフッター (view header & footer)
脚注 (view footnotes)
変更履歴 (view history)
全画面表示 (view doc in full screen)
ズーム (zoom)

ツール (tools)

文章校正 (spell check)
表記ゆれチェック (punctuation check)
その他の校正ツール (other checks)***
文字カウント (character count)
音声 (voice)
文書の比較と反映 (review document)
オンライングループ作業 (create online group)
葉書と差し込み印刷 (print postcards)
web 上のツール (web tools)
アートコレクトのオプション (auto correct)
ユーザー設定 (user settings)
オプション (options)

*脚注 (footnote)

図表番号 (chart number)
相互参照 (cross reference)
索引と目次 (index & table of contents)

**クリップアート (clipart)

ファイルから (image from file)
スキャナまたはカメラから (from scanner or camera)
組織図 (organizational flow chart)
新しい描画オブジェクト (new drawing)
オートシェイプ (auto shape)
ワードアート (word art)
グラフ (graph)

***言語の選択 (select language)

翻訳 (translate)
類義語辞典 (thesaurus)
ハイフネーション (hyphenation)

Internet Explorer Menus

ファイル (file)	編集 (edit)	表示 (view)
新規作成 (new) <ul style="list-style-type: none">— ウィンドウ (window)— メッセージ (message)— 投稿 (letter to outlook)— 連絡先 (contact)— インターネット通話 (internet conversation)	切り取り (cut) コピー (copy) 貼り付け (paste) すべて選択 (select all) このページの検索 (search page)	ツールバー (toolbar) <ul style="list-style-type: none">— 標準のボタン (standard buttons)— アドレスバー (address bar) ステータスバー (status bar) エクスプローラバー (Explorer bar) 移動 (move) <ul style="list-style-type: none">— 前に戻る (back)— 次に進む (forward)— ホームページ (homepage)
開く (open) Microsoft Word で編集 (edit with Word) 上書き保存 (save) 名前を付けて保存 (save with new name) ページ設定 (page settings) 印刷 (print) 印刷プレビュー (print preview) 送信 (send) <ul style="list-style-type: none">— ページを電子メールで (page by email)— リンクを電子メールで (link by email)— ショットカットをデスクトップへ (shortcut to desktop) インポートおよびエクスポート (export or import) プロパティ (properties) オフライン作業 (work off line) 閉じる (close)		中止 (cancel) 最新の情報に更新 (refresh) 文字のサイズ (text size) <ul style="list-style-type: none">— 最大 (biggest)— 大 (big)— 中 (medium)— 小 (small)— 最小 (smallest) エンコード (encode) ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none">— 自動選択 (automatic)— 日本語 (自動選択) (automatic Japanese)— 日本語 (シフト JIS) (Japanese)— その他 (other)
お気に入り (my favorites) お気に入りに追加 (add) お気に入りの整理 (organize)		ソース (source) プライバシーレポート (privacy report) 全画面表示 (view with whole screen)

At the bottom of your screen you should see “A 般” To write in Japanese, click on the A and select the top choice, “ひらがな”.

To return to writing in English, select the bottom choice, “半角英数”. There may be buttons on your keyboard that also change the fonts. Play with the keys to find out what yours does.

¹ When Japanese text in emails is unreadable, go to encode and select automatic. If that does not fix it, click on automatic Japanese or Japanese.

All About SAFETY!

It'll be fun, really.

Emergency Numbers:

119 - Emergency

110 - Ambulance



Personal Safety –

Japan is a very safe country. The occurrence of crime and violent crime is famously low and most enjoy a feeling of security and safety during their stay in Japan. However, crime does exist so please remember to do simple things like locking your doors on your home and car, avoid walking alone at night, and generally be aware of your surroundings. Lock windows and doors. Do not neglect your personal items while in public.

Self Defense –

Knife and Gun restrictions-

With the exception of any type of switchblade, any knife with an overall length of no more than 15 cm (about 5.9 in), with a blade length of no more than 6 cm, is legal to carry. Knives must be concealed and should not be easily available. The Japanese Guns and Knives Control Law forbids knives being used as defensive weapons, but is relatively tolerant toward knives which can be opened using a single hand. With the exception of katanas, any swords are regarded as offensive weapons. The weapons law begins by stating "No-one shall possess a fire-arm or fire-arms or a sword or swords", and very few exceptions are allowed. However, if they have artistic value, possession is legal as long as the sword is registered. Violations of the law come with a sentence of up to one year in prison and a fine of ¥300,000.

Other Safety Items

You may carry an alarm buzzer. Available at the police station and hardware stores for approximately 1000yen.

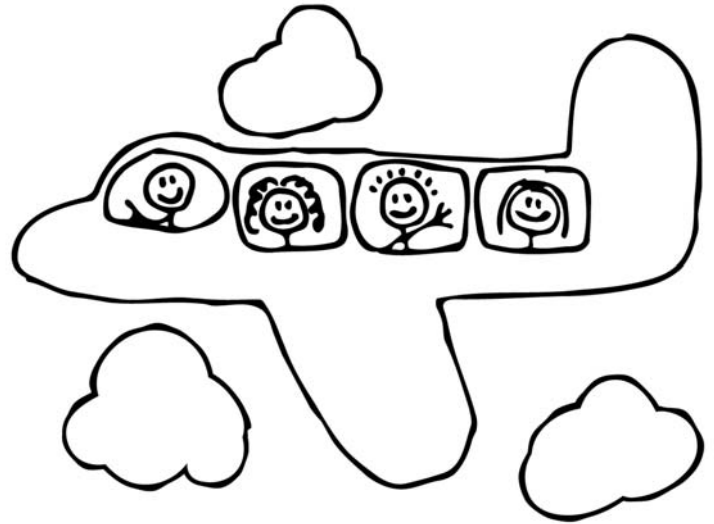


What to do in cases of Stalking or Harassment –

1. Notify your BOE and Tanshōsha of the situation
2. Notify local police if necessary
3. Document EVERYTHING, take photos, make notes, save letters or emails or phone messages to give to assist police in an investigation if necessary.

Travel Safety –

If you plan to be away from the city in which you are contracted for more than three days, **EVEN IF YOU STAY IN JAPAN**, please complete your Travel Information Request forms well in advance. This may seem like a hassle but it is in everyone's best interest! If an emergency occurred where you are contracted, **OR** in the location where you are traveling to, and there is no record of where you are it will be very difficult for anyone to help you.



REGISTER WITH YOUR CONSULATE OR EMBASSY.



Please Note:

Non-Japanese citizens have a right to one phone call if arrested. However, that one call may only be made to your consulate/embassy – no where else. Therefore, please register with your respective embassy.

Embassy of **Ireland** in Tokyo
Ireland House 2-10-7, Kojimachi,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 102-0083
03-3263-0695
www.embassy-avenue.jp/ireland/study/index.html

British Consulate-General in Osaka
Epson Osaka Building 19F
3-5-1 Bakuro-machi, Chuo-ku, Osaka
541-0059
06-6120-5600
ukinjapan.fco.gov.uk/en/

Canadian Embassy in Tokyo
3-38 Akasaka, 7-chome, Minato-ku
Tokyo, 107-8503
03-5412-6254
www.japan.gc.ca

Embassy of **Jamaica** in Tokyo
Toranomom Yatsuka Building 2F
1-11, Atago 1 chome, Minato-ku
Tokyo, 105-0002
03-3435-1861

www.jamaicaemb.jp/index.html

New Zealand Consulate
Japan Rail Kyushu 6F, Hakata-eki-mae
3-25-21
Hakata-ku, Fukuoka-shi, Fukuoka-ken
812-8566
092-474-2279
www.nzembassy.com/home.cfm?c=17

American Consulate Fukuoka
2-5-26 Ohori, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka-shi,
810-0052
092-751-9331
japan.usembassy.gov/fukuoka/wwwhmain.html

Singapore Embassy in Tokyo
5-12-3, Roppongi,
Minato-ku, Tokyo
106-0032
03-3586-9111
www.mfa.gov.sg/tokyo/

Emergency Safety -

Disaster Preparedness Checklist for Foreigners in Japan

Japan is the most seismically active piece of real estate in the world. The Tokyo metropolitan area experiences regular tremors of varying intensities and the probability that a severe and damaging earthquake will occur is high. The consequences of such a quake will vary greatly depending upon the time of day and year that the quake occurs, and no one can predict with any certainty what conditions will be like immediately following an intensive shock.

It is prudent that everyone be prepared to fend for themselves in the immediate aftermath of a big earthquake.



Though a bit distracting in parts ("Avoid being caught up in such a panic and try to keep your head," "Day Three: Residents, companies and the government will work together to rebuild the community," "Pack cloth tape... for the arrangement of the baggage"), most of the Tokyo Metropolitan Governments bilingual Earthquake Survival Manual is very useful.

You can read the full Earthquake Survival Manual online at www.seikatubunka.metro.tokyo.jp/index3files/survivalmanual.pdf. For easier reading, we suggest you download the entire three meg PDF file, or print it out.

Please note that these warnings, when accurate, may just give you a couple of seconds advance notice. Preparation is of the utmost importance. The JMA started providing earthquake early warnings through several means such as TV and radio on 1 October 2007. For more details please go to:

www.jma.go.jp/jma/en/Activities/eew.html (ENGLISH) or,
www.seisvol.kishou.go.jp/eq/EEW/kaisetsu/index.html (JAPANESE)

Essential Supplies (Store enough for three-five days)

- ▶ Water (four liters/one gallon per person per day. Change water every three to five months)
- ▶ Food (canned or pre-cooked, requiring no heat or water. Consider special dietary needs, infants, pets)
- ▶ Flashlight with spare batteries and bulbs
- ▶ Radio (battery operated with spare batteries)
- ▶ Large plastic trash bags (for trash, waste, water protection, ground cloth, temporary blanket)
- ▶ Hand soap and/or disinfecting hand cleaner gel that does not require water
- ▶ Feminine hygiene supplies, infant supplies, toilet paper
- ▶ Essential medications as required; glasses if you normally wear contacts
- ▶ Paper plates, cups, plastic utensils, cooking foil and plastic wrap (wrapped around plates so that they were re-usable) and paper towels
- ▶ First Aid kit with instructions
- ▶ Yen in small bills (ATMs may not work after a disaster), with coins and phone cards for public phones.
- ▶ Place emergency supplies and your telephone in places where they are less likely to be knocked over or buried by falling objects (on the floor under a strong table is a good choice).



Essential Planning Before a Disaster

- ▶ Draw a floor plan of your home showing the location of exit windows and doors, utility cut off points, emergency supplies, food, tools, etc. Share it with baby-sitters and guests.
- ▶ Establish reunion sites with alternate sites for when the family is not at home, e.g., local shelter, neighbor's house, park, school.
- ▶ Learn or establish disaster policy/planning at your children's school
- ▶ Know your neighbors and make them aware of the number of people living in your home.
- ▶ Learn where the nearest designated shelter for your neighborhood is.
- ▶ Photocopy passports and other important documents. Store copies away from home (for example, at work).

- ▶ Learn how to contact the police, fire and rescue services in Japanese. Be able to provide your address in Japanese.

Essential Steps Immediately After a Disaster

- ▶ Check your immediate surroundings for fire, gas leaks, broken glass and other hazards.
- ▶ Open doors and/or windows to avoid being locked in if there are after-shocks.
- ▶ Contact one friend or relative in the U.S., and ask them to inform other parties of your situation.
- ▶ Monitor local TV and radio for evacuation information (If available in your area, for English info, listen to AFN 810AM).



Keeping in Touch: NTT's 171 Disaster Line

The 171 Emergency Line is a voice message board service provided by NTT that is available when a disaster such as an earthquake or volcanic eruption occurs. If regular phone service is interrupted in the disaster-stricken area, this service can help keep in touch with family members and friends.

To utilize the service, U.S. citizens can simply dial 171 and then follow the instructions to record or listen to messages. To record a voice message, users dial 171, then 1 followed by their phone number. Concerned family and friends in Japan can hear the message by dialing 171, followed by 2 and the phone number. For detailed information on using the voice system, please visit the NTT webpage. Unfortunately, while detailed instructions in English exist on the website, the actual voice prompts are in Japanese only. **Please note that the site lists days during which the public can practice using the service.**

The voice-based messaging service is currently limited to domestic contacts. However, U.S. citizens can leave messages for family members overseas using NTT's Web 171 service. To post an Internet message, users need to go to the Web 171 site and enter their message and phone number. Messages can be viewed by typing in the phone number on the site. The site is currently closed, but will be opened in the event of an emergency. Web 171 also is in Japanese only. NTT has stated that it has no plans to offer this service in English. U.S. citizens interested in using either service, particularly those individuals with a limited knowledge of Japanese language, are thus strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the detailed English instructions on NTT's website. Printing these and keeping them close to the family's emergency kit may also be a good idea.

Evacuations-

Evacuations will likely occur after an earthquake when fires are spreading or buildings are in danger of being destroyed by landslides, etc. City police and fire authorities will issue evacuation advice. Americans, as well as others affected by the disaster, will need to seek assistance from the Japanese authorities.

To prepare, take a walking pre-survey of the designated place of evacuation nearest your home and office. Also be familiar with the location of the ward office and the telephone number of the Disaster Relief Headquarters for your ward. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government has maps of evacuation points. You should phone your ward office and ask which evacuation points are nearest your home and office. Try to get detailed maps (with landmarks/street names in kanji as well) of those locations.

Even if your building is standing after the quake and you are not asked to evacuate, the evacuation points will have fresh water, food and medical supplies.



OTHER HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Sexual Crime Help Line: 0120-834-381

Kumamoto police interpretation centre (emergency only); M-F 9:30am – 6:15pm: 0963-810-110, extension 4764

Association of Medical Doctors Abroad: Find a medical professional who speaks your language – TEL: 03-5285-8088

The JETLINE: 03-5213-1729 M-F 8am-5pm

AJET Peer Support Group - 8PM to 7AM - 0120 43 7725

An anonymous listening and referral service, by JETs for JETs

Cars and Motorcycles

Cars and Motorcycles

Having a car is definitely recommended for rural JETs. Living in the city might provide enough public transportation for your needs, but of course a car can be very convenient if you want to do some exploring outside of the city. So, weigh your options. This section mainly covers information for cars, since they are the preferred option for rural JETs. If you really want motorcycle info only, check this website out: www.thejapanfaq.com/bikerfaq-menkyo.html

To drive a car or a motorcycle, a driver's license is required. If you own one, you must have it registered and pay certain taxes. Motorcycles whose engine displacement is 125 cc or less are called scooters, or gentsuki, and cars whose engine displacement is 660 cc or less are called light cars, or kei-jidosha (*Kei cars* or *yellow plates*). Scooters and Kei cars are much smaller than their standard equivalents.

I. Owning a car or a motorcycle

A. **To buy or not to buy:** Renting/leasing a car is an option. It may be beneficial if you're only staying a year and don't want to hassle with taxes. Also, in case you get involved in a car accident you will probably find that you are very lucky to be leasing/renting a car as apposed to owning a car. And of course for those of you who don't want the hassle of dealing with insurances, taxes, "shaken" (more on this later) and reparations and such, leasing/renting is definitely your best option. Another advantage of leasing/renting is the fact that you don't have to pay a large sum of money for "shaken" and your car at once. For a rental/lease car is usually paid by means of monthly installments.



However, few places rent/lease cars and (provided that you don't end up in a car crash or so) owning a car is probably more money wise if you're thinking of sticking around for more than a year.

Renting/leasing a Kei car will cost about 15,000 yen to 35,000 yen a month (depending on the kind of car). This is including insurance, and can include reparations*, *shaken** and taxes* (*= ask your dealer about this). It usually costs a little more for *white plates*. Buying a car here in Japan, you will be looking at about 80,000 yen to 150,000 for a kei car (yellow plate) before taxes.

Go to your BOE for help finding dealers in your area, and always ask your tantosha to come with you when you deal with important business like buying a car or getting your license. They know best about the details and know more Japanese than you. Also if you are presented as a friend of a Japanese co-worker, then you can be more confident that the car dealership will be honest and reliable. ("Who you know" is very important in Japan). The most popular car dealer for long-term rental/lease cars amongst Kumamoto ALTs is Muraoka san in Yatsushiro.

KURUMA NO MURAOKA:

Muraoka san

Tel: 096-539-0852

Fax: 096-539-0804

If you decide that you only want to rent a car occasionally for road trips and such you could try these companies:

SHORT TERM RENTAL CARS

Nissan Rental Car (Kumamoto Airport)	0120-00-4123
Nippon Rental Car (Kumamoto Airport)	096-232-5680
Toyota Rental Car (Kumamoto)	096-371-0100

Some of you may have a business car that your BOE owns and lets you use. However, make sure you can use it for personal trips (this is often not the case), especially before you go off-roading.

B. **What to buy:** In certain cases you may find that your predecessor left a car for you that you can either take for free or buy off your predecessor for a (relatively) small amount of money. This is likely the best deal for those of you who want to have a car right away and don't want to pay a lot of money. However, the majority of you do have to buy a car (or rent/lease one of course).

If you would like to buy a car you can also check:

1. The notice board at the international center (between the Kotsu center and Kumamoto castle) or any Kumamoto web email groups/notice boards, Kumamoto yahoo group for people selling cars. These cars will definitely be cheaper.
2. The web for good car deals. One recommended site is: www.carciao.com
3. Monthly car magazines. Available in most convenience stores.

Larger cars (or *white plates*) are safer and roomier, but navigating back roads can get tricky in big vehicles. Speed limits are generally extremely slow in Japan, so a fast car isn't necessary either and might actually be dangerous if you are not able to control yourself!

Kei cars are light and small, but can't carry much weight. This makes road trips a slow affair (but then again you might even have that feeling even if you drive a white plate). However, they are easily maneuverable and save money (gas, highway charges, taxes). In most cases Kei cars serve you well enough (even in the mountains and through harsh winters).

Air-conditioning is a must for summer and for demisting in winter. A heater for winter is non negotiable! Snow tires and maybe 4WD are needed if you are in a mountainous area.

Most cars are automatic. Make sure the tires are good.

Motorcycles are rare amongst the JETs. Check around to see if/where you can get a used one. Scooters can be quite useful in the city and near-by rural areas.

They're pretty slow but good for short trips. A used one shouldn't go for more than 100,000 yen and all the generic costs are low. Scooter stores are everywhere, just ask your students. For info on bikes also check out:

www.thejapanfaq.com/bikerfaq-menkyo.html

As you would in any country, before you buy, try and get someone who is mechanically minded to check it over for you and get a few comparative quotes. Also, try and test drive.

C. **Prices and taxes:** Try not to buy something just because it is cheap. It's worth waiting for your next paycheck rather than paying the cost of a run-down car over the course of your stay. In general, to save money, go with a used Kei car.

New cars will cost at least 1,000,000 yen and may not be worth your money if you're only staying for a few years. Used cars in the JET community will generally cost you from 100,000 to 200,000 yen, EVEN IF THE CAR ITSELF IS FREE! Keep in mind that taxes alone can cost over 100,000 yen, so always ask when the last time maintenance and taxes were performed or paid.

"Shaken" is the main tax to be aware of: it will last for two years on cars and will likely cost over 100,000 yen each time you take care of it (please see the "Costs of Owning..." section (II)).

D. **Procedures for buying/ensuring parking:** when buying a car or motorcycle at a dealer (new or used), the procedures mentioned below will be completed by the dealer. However, when buying a vehicle through other means (as in through a friend or previous JET), 1 and 2 must be completed.

1. **Parking Certification, Shako-Shomei**

When buying an automobile (new or used) a parking certificate must be submitted to your local police station. If your house or apartment does not have parking space, a parking space will have to be rented. The rental of such a space can vary, from cheap rural prices of 2,000/month to 100,000/month. Some parking spaces are found through real-estate agents (fudosan), others are rented directly from the owners. If it's from the fudosan, except for the guarantor, most of the other terms for flat hunting apply.

If you live in a rural area where parking is not a problem, it may not be necessary to rent anything.

Kumamoto City has a variety of short term parking areas. Only some are 24 hours. Either you get a ticket and pay when you return, or the tires are locked and you enter your number bay into a vending machine to check the cost.

The cheapest (24 hour) parking spots in the city are:

1. パースト (about a 2 - 5 min walk away from the entrance of Kamitori / Shimotori. The parking lot is situated along route 3, very close to the big intersection where route 3 and densha dori cross. It is a big yellowish building).
NOTE: There is also another パースト (near the Kotsu Center), but this one is more expensive (although still cheap).

2. ぱーくすりー (PARK THREE, yep, this time written in ひらがな instead of カタカナ) The second cheapest parking in the city and it is situated right beside パースト.

3. パースト (Near the Kotsu Center, and recognizable from a distance by the big P-sign).

NOTE: In パースト the costs for parking can depend on the floor you park at.* Parking on the first floor is more expensive than when you park on the roof.

* = sometimes parking is priced the same for each floor (usually after 19:00 (07:00 PM) and that's when it gets really cheap/less expensive to park in this parking).

2. **Vehicle Registration, Sharyo-Toroku**

Motorcycles and automobiles must be registered. The vehicle registration certificate, Sharyo-toroku-sho, should be kept inside the vehicle at all times. If your name or address changes, your vehicle is out of service, or you leave the country for good, the following offices must be notified:

- For motorcycles whose engine displacement is 125 cc or less:
The City Hall Citizen's Tax Section (counter #22 on the 2nd floor), a general branch office or a civic center.
- For motorcycles whose engine displacement is between 126 cc and 250 cc:
Kumamoto Light Automobile Association, Kumamoto-ken Kei-jidosha Kyokai
(熊本県軽自動車協会)
Address: 4-14-16 Higashi-machi, Kumamoto-shi
(4-14-16 東町熊本市)
Tel: 096-369-7920
- For light cars whose engine displacement is 660 cc or less:
Light Motor Vehicle Inspection Organization, Kei-jidosha Kensa Kyokai
(軽自動車検査協会)
Address: 4-14-5 Higashi-machi, Kumamoto-shi
(4-14-5 東町熊本市)
Tel: 096-369-5979
- For motorcycles whose engine displacement is over 250 cc and automobiles whose engine displacement is over 660 cc:
Kumamoto Office of the Land Transport Bureau, Kumamoto Riku-un Shikyoku
(熊本陸運支局)
Address: 4-8 Higashi-machi, Kumamoto-shi
(4-8 東町熊本市)
Tel: 096-369-3189



II. Costs of owning a car or motorcycle

- Plus 5%: The price of the vehicle in addition to a 5% consumption tax and an acquisition tax
- Yearly tax (April/May): An automobile tax, jidosha-zei (自動車税), or light automobile tax, Kei jidosha (軽自動車) must be paid every year.
 - * Standard automobiles: 29,500 yen (under 1,000 cc) – 111,000 yen (over 6,000 cc)
 - * Light mobiles: 7,200 yen
 - * Motorcycles: 1,000 yen (50 cc) – 4,000 yen (over 250 cc)
- Weight tax, juryo-zei (重量税)
 - * New standard automobiles (good for 3 years): 37,800 yen – 75,600 yen according to weight
 - * Used standard automobiles (good for 2 years): 2/3 of the weight tax of a new automobile
 - * New light automobiles (good for 3 years): 13,200 yen
 - * Used light automobiles (good for 2 years): 8,800 yen
 - * Motorcycles: the weigh tax is based on engine displacement
- Compulsory Insurance, Jibaiseki Hoken (自賠責保険)
 - * Standard automobiles (good for 3 years): 37,650 yen
 - * Standard automobiles (good for 2 years): 27,600 yen
 - * There is also a fixed fee imposed on cargo vehicles, compact cars, and motorbikes.

E. Voluntary Insurance, Nin-I Hoken (任意保険)

Compulsory insurance coverage is limited in Japan. Causing an accident can be very expensive (and depending on the consequences they can even lead to imprisonment!!! So, please drive safely!!!) and so all drivers are expected to be covered by voluntary insurance.

F. Vehicle Inspection, Shaken (車検)

Automobiles and motorcycles whose engine displacement is at or above 250 cc must periodically receive a vehicle inspection at a dealer or a repair shop (if you purchase a new car, the first inspection must be done after the first 3 years. In other cases, inspection must be done every 2 years). At the time of inspection, (C) and (D) above must be paid in addition to the inspection fee and any necessary repairs.

It takes about a week for the garage to finish the check up. This is the price you pay if nothing is wrong with the car. The costs again vary according to the size of the car, but basically you'll be paying 120,000 – 160,000 yen or so for a smaller car, and more for a larger. Also, when the car is very old, it has an official value of zero and you may actually have to pay someone to take it off your hands!

In general the costs for owning and operating a car are quite high, due to the above-mentioned insurances, tax, mandatory inspections, but also expenses such as parking costs in cities and (expensive) toll highways can make it really expensive. A liter of fuel/gasoline costs roughly about 110 yen/liter.

Road tolls:

All expressways are toll roads. Kei cars are the cheapest. It can be very expensive over a long distance, but if you carpool with a couple of friends, it will cut the costs. Two examples of toll fees are 1,000 yen to travel from Kumamoto to Yatsushiro in a K car and 4,000 yen to Miyazaki.

III. Paperwork and insurance

Name change: costs between 500 yen and 20,000 yen. There is some paperwork to fill in to prove that you are the new car owner. If you buy from a dealership, they should do this for you.

An international driver's license must be obtained from the country in which you obtained your license (see next page)

As mentioned before, there are two insurance programs, one is the mandatory insurance (自賠責保険), which just covers the car, and the optional insurance (任意保険) covers injuries/damages you may get/cause. You can decide the extras, theft, vandalism, disaster damage, lost wages, etc. Getting it would be a good idea, if the person driving that Mercedes you just knocked decides to have a heart attack, you'd be in trouble. The costs vary according to your age, if your family also drives it, how many offences you may have had, if the car has airbag, etc.



IV. Getting an International Driver's License:

Hopefully you already bought one in your home country before leaving for Japan. Because if the dates of your international driver's license and your alien registration card don't line up you risk a day in a Japanese jail, because you may be suspected of forgery.

However, you need one if you have a driver's license and you want to drive in Japan. You also need an international driver's license if you get a Japanese driver's license and want to drive in other countries.

An international driver's license is good for exactly one year from the day you purchase it. However, if you leave Japan for 3 consecutive months, the clock starts again.

Note, that Japan recognizes only international driving permits, which are based on the Geneva Convention of 1949. Some countries, such as France, Germany, and Switzerland, however, issue international driving permits, which are based on different conventions. The permits issued by those countries are not valid in Japan. Instead, people with a French, German or Swiss driver's license can drive in Japan for up to one year with an official Japanese translation of their driving licenses.

In case you don't have an international driver's license yet and you do want to drive in Japan you might want to try and get an international driver's license in Japan.

Place: Kumamoto Prefectural Driver's License Center (熊本免許センター)

Reception hours: weekdays (except national holidays)

8:30 AM – 11 AM and 1 PM – 4 PM

Fee: 2,650 yen

Necessary Documents: Driver's license, 1 passport photo (best taken at the Driver's License center, for they are quite strict on the size for these pictures. They need to be 5 cm x 4 cm exactly), inkan (if you have one), passport and alien registration card.

V. Some basic rules of the road

- A. Drive on the left: self-explanatory
- B. Also, keep left if driving slowly (when cars take over they will usually pass you on the right hand side)
- C. Not an official rule, but you will find that people will sometimes turn on their left blinkers although there is no road/exit/etc. coming up. This means something like: "Please pass, because I am driving slower." (see: International and Japanese road signs used in Japan (see: appendix 6) to check when it's OK to actually take over)
- D. Don't make left turns on red lights. Maybe you could do this at home, but it's illegal in Japan.
- E. Pedestrians have the right of way. This includes people crossing the street even if it's green for you to drive. Always wait for pedestrians before pulling a right turn: there is always someone ready to bust across a busy intersection on their bike at the last moment!
- F. Legal Blood Alcohol Level: ZERO. Oh yes, they are very serious. Police do random Breathalyzer tests even on rural roads! And there is absolutely ZERO TOLERANCE when it comes to drinking and driving.

Severe penalties such as imprisonment (for life if you run someone over while drunk driving!) with hard labor or fine, as well as suspension or cancellation of your driver's license (for drunk driving a minimum suspension of your license of six years will be enforced to, again, if you cause an accident or run someone over, a lifelong cancellation of your driver's license) will be enforced. For more information see: www.sira.or.jp/english/foreigner/lifein/transport/trans_4.html

Also, remember that you represent your country, that you get paid by the Japanese government out of tax money! JETs are public workers and very visible. And besides this, if you are lucky enough not to be put in prison you will at least be fired and sent home. SO, DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!!!

If you have got your car and you must necessarily get home with it take a *daiko* taxi (there are two drivers and one drives your car with you in it).

G. Drive slowly!!!!

H. Drive slowly!!!!

I. OBEY THE SPEED LIMITS AT ALL TIMES!!!! (Got it?) I know it's so annoying that the speed limits are so ridiculously low that speeding is almost a natural reaction. And especially when you see Japanese drivers doing twenty kilometers or so over the speed limit you will even start to think that it is allowed, but it is not!

When my friend first got here my supervisor drove me around for the first month or so. She used to always do at least twenty-five, sometimes thirty-five over the speed limit. And even if we would drive pass a police patrol. And the thing was (police might react different from place to place), in this case the (rural area police, although it's not said that they are always more lenient) police did not pull us over. And so when my friend asked her supervisor how that worked, she told her that you could easily do 25 km/h or so over the speed limit without being caught. Later I heard a similar story from someone else (although this time it was said to be OK to do 20 km/h over the speed limit). And because of the fact that we were not stopped by the police and because I actually did see a lot of Japanese people speed I started to believe this story.

So when my friend finally got her own car she would always speed with an average of 20 - 25 km/h over the speed limit.

Until that one day in February that she was caught by the police. They pulled her over and from that day on a very serious procedure started against me. The process took from February until early August (a little over half a year).

So, what happens if you are being caught speeding?

* You will have to answer a lot of questions (Japanese people can usually answer these questions on the side of the road, but since we are foreigners with a different driver's license system they will ask you to follow the police to the nearest police station). At the station you have to answer a list of questions.

* A week or so later they will make you come back to the office for an eight hours long interrogation.

* Furthermore they will take pictures of you while you point at the speed limit signs and they will also take pictures of you pointing at the spot where the radar camera was positioned.

* After this some police officers will visit your school to check out whether you provided the correct information about your job.

* They will then take pictures of you with your car and they will make you fill out more documents and

papers.

* Depending on the amount of speeding you will then get a first bill, followed up by an informative letter. This letter informs you about the fact that you will lose your driver's license for 30 days unless you pass a certain test. Japanese people can choose whether or not they want to do this test (some people choose not to do this test since it is very expensive), but foreigners have to take this test (so it's mandatory).

* For this test you have to go to the Driver's License Center (免許センター), where you have to study all day long (from 08:00 AM – 04:30 PM). After these lessons you take a written test and only if you pass you can use your driver's license again from the day after the test. However, if you don't pass the test your driver's license will be suspended for 30 days and you will have lost a lot of money. It is important that you find someone who can give you a ride to the Driver's License Center (and back). Preferably someone who has perfect Japanese and enough English to help you with the test. Do not underestimate the level of English required to do so, for this is all pretty technical English and your average Japanese friend/acquaintance/colleague will likely have problems with this level of English. On the other hand, if they have the knowledge to pass this exam for you, don't worry about their English too much and have them do your test for you☺

* After this day (yet another *nenkyuu*/年休/paid leave you have to offer) you will receive another letter. This time it's your invitation to appear in court.

* Another paid leave down the drain and a very horrific day at a Japanese Prosecutors office later and it still isn't over yet!

* After this you will receive another bill that you have to pay within a week or a penalty such as imprisonment or hard labor will await you.

* In the end of the story you will have lost any amount between 10,000 – 200,000 yen (that's right, about US \$ 2,000 for a speeding ticket!)

* SO.... DON'T SPEED!!!

* NOTE: for those of you who are like me it is really cheaper to buy a radar detector (you can buy these for 4,000 – 40,000 yen). If you come from a country such as Germany... GOOD LUCK trying to obey the Japanese speed limits!

OK, so what are the speed limits in Japan? Here we go:

Side streets are: 30 km/h

Hills and urban areas have speed limits of 40-50 km/h

Highways: 80-100 km/h

On roads without speed limit signs you can do 60 km/h. However, please keep an eye out for signs (speed limits are also written on the road sometimes!), because speeding tickets are costly!

J. Seatbelts: for front seats only? You may have noticed that people don't wear them in the back seat. It's always a good idea to, but technically only the driver and front passenger have to. And you will even find that seat belts in the back seat will be missing.

Children under six must use child safety seats.

Again, I could tell you a long story why you should always wear your seat belt. But actually the reason

that I am still able to tell you the story says enough. I'm still alive after a very nasty accident, thanks to the fact that I wore my seatbelt. So, don't do it for the police, wear your seatbelt for your own safety!

- K. Illegal parking: within 10 meters of railroad crossing area. Within 5 meters of any intersection, corner, or pedestrian crossing. Around a steel slope, tunnel, or top of slope. Within 3 meters of an entrance of a parking lot or garage. Within 5 meters of hydrants or road construction.
- L. In case of accidents: take care of the injured. Contact police by dialing 119 (that's right **119!** *Not 911*). Tell them: time, place, injuries, address, name and phone number (same as home country). Also advise your supervisor immediately (and/or your JTE in case your supervisor doesn't speak English that well). Afterwards, contact insurance company etc. (Although this will probably be taken care of by your supervisor).

Last November I got involved in a car accident. Beforehand you will always think that this won't happen to you, but hopefully after reading this you will realize that it can always happen. Also, this will hopefully help you to better understand what to do in case of an accident.

One night I was driving back home after an ALT meeting in Kosa. I was driving alone, it was dark and I was tired. As I was driving on this winding road the car in front of me suddenly stopped. However, I did not notice this until the very last moment, because he stopped just behind a curve.

There was a car behind me and so if I would break too hard that car would probably crash into me from behind. But if I would not hit the breaks hard I would crash into that stopped car in front of me. There was another option... I moved over to the lane on the right side of the road and I thought that I could safely pass the car in front of me in order to drive further. However, just when I switched to the other lane a car came speeding in my direction and it was going that fast that I had no choice but to drive off the road.

As soon as I was off the road I found myself being on a slope leading into a brook. My car rolled over a couple of times and I ended up with my car in the water.

Fortunately I was wearing my seatbelt when this happened and so I survived without any injuries. However, I had to get out of the car as soon as possible, since the water level in my car was rising. I was sane enough to immediately grab my cell phone and made an attempt to get out of my car. At first I couldn't open the door on the passenger's side (I could not use the door on the driver's side, because the car landed on that side). After a second try I was able to lift up the door and free myself.

I right away called my JTE (Japanese Teacher of English), because I did not speak enough Japanese to tell my supervisor (who only speaks Japanese) what happened and my JTE was the first person I could think of with good enough English and excellent Japanese. My JTE told me that she would call up my supervisor.

At that moment some Japanese people came running towards me. These were people who worked in the office near the place where the accident happened and they came to rescue/help me. They took me inside, gave me a towel and a cup of coffee and they called the police.

When the police arrived I had to make a statement about what happened and a short interrogation followed. I had no idea what was going on and so I called Scott (Prefectural Advisor at the time). Not before long my supervisor arrived upon the scene.

It became clear to me that I was very lucky that I (1) survived this all, and (2) there were no other cars involved in the crash. If I would have crashed into one of the other cars it would have been my fault and so I would have probably lost my driver's license, had to pay an absurd amount of money or maybe even ended up doing some time in a Japanese jail.

Now, my supervisor could take me back home and we could work everything out on the next day.

On the next day we first had to go back to my car (which was still in the brook). In Japan you are responsible for your own car after a car crash. This means that when, in this case, your car ends up in the water, you are the one responsible for getting it out of the water and taking it to a garage or something.

In this case I was very fortunate again. I namely leased a car and so Muraoka-san came and took care of this. Fortunately I was also well insured and so I never paid anything for this. I also got a new car in the same week (without paying an extra amount for the inconvenience or so) and after a visit to the hospital I was all set to make my comeback to the Japanese roads.

Lessons from this experience:

- *Do wear your seatbelt at all times;*
- *Car accidents will cost you a lot of money if you drive your own car instead of leasing/renting a car;*
- *Having the right insurance (see: insurance) will make everything a lot easier when you get involved in a crash;*
- *At all times try to avoid hitting another car!*
- *Keep your distance while driving;*
- *Don't speed;*
- *It's better not to drive when you are tired;*
- *Take your cell phone with you everywhere you go and make sure that you have the number of at least one person that speaks both Japanese and English;*
- *Sometimes Japanese people can do crazy things while driving (like suddenly stopping in the middle of the road), so be extra alert and careful when driving a car;*
- *When there is a white or yellow line in the middle of the road it is illegal to take over. In certain cases you are allowed to take over, as long as you manage to stay on your side of this line. But crossing this line is prohibited in all cases!*
- *Be flexible and always be polite to everyone and you will find that Japanese people may be the nicest people in the world.*



M. Just say yes to helmets! I'm talking motorcycles, where they are mandatory... (you might look a bit silly if you wear a helmet in your car) but whatever floats your boat.

N. Traffic violations: One you may not be aware of is that it's illegal to talk on your cell phone while driving. For minor traffic violations, you will get a blue "Violation Ticket" and a fine. You must pay the fine in seven days as designated on the ticket at a bank or other financial institution.

In Japan they work with a point (点) system. A minor violation such as "forgetting" to stop at a stop sign,

not wearing your seatbelt or talking on your cell while driving may result in getting a fine with a 1 – 4 points reduction on your driver's license.

More serious violations, such as speeding can result in 4 – 15 points (or more for repeated violations).

And drunk driving can result in as many as 25 points.

When the amount of points is higher the penalty will also be more serious.

- O. Maps: Most maps are in Japanese. Learn kanji or get romaji ones at convenient stores.
- P. Any questions? Ask JAF. Otherwise known as the Japanese Automobile Federation. They sell guides about Japanese traffic laws in the following languages: English, Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Persian, and Portuguese. All at the price of 1000 yen each ([/www.jaf.or.jp/e/index.htm](http://www.jaf.or.jp/e/index.htm)).

VI. Japanese Driver's License:

If you stay over a year you will need one. More precisely: As soon as your international driver's license runs out you cannot drive in Japan unless you have a Japanese driver's license.

Although some people do pass the test for their Japanese driver's license on their first try, a lot of people have to take multiple exams before they pass. So start on time.

On the other hand, the written test is typically not very difficult for most people and consists of 10 True or False questions. To pass, a minimum score of 7 out of 10 is required. The written test is available in English. Remember that in Japan × (batsu) means NO or FALSE and ○ (maru) means YES or TRUE.

The test could be written or touch screen computer based. After you take the test you will be provided your results anywhere from 1 to 2 hours later. You will not be told which questions you answered wrong and will only be told your score. If you fail you will need to return on another day to take the test again.

- A. **Where to get one:** When driving a car or motorcycle, you must have your driver's license with you at all times. Japanese driving tests as well as matters relating to driver's licenses are handled here:
Kumamoto Prefectural Driver's License Center, Kumamoto-ken Unten Menkyo Center
2655 Oaza Karakawa, Kikuyou-machi, Kikuchi-gun
Phone: 096-233-0116
Reception hours: Weekdays 9am-11am (except holidays)
- B. **Changing License:** You can change to only a Japanese automobile driver's license.
- C. **Requirements for change:**
 - (1) You must own a valid foreign driver's license.
 - (2) You must have stayed in the country where you received your driver's license for at least 3 months.
- D. **To change to a Japanese driver's license:** If (1) or (2) applies to you, you only have to take the aptitude test. Everyone else must take the aptitude, knowledge, and practical driving test.
 - (1) A person who has owned a Japanese driver's license in the past.
 - (2) A person whose driver's license is from one of the following countries:
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K.
People from the U.S., South Africa, China and Brazil are required to take both a written and road test.

Some other countries only have to do a written test.

If you receive a traffic infringement while you are driving on your international driving permit, it is the general understanding that you pay the fine and can then forget about it. The truth is, the police record this infringement against your name and once you pass your driving test when converting to a Japanese license, you may be told that your new license is automatically suspended for up to 2 years.

A minor traffic offence may lead to a big problem in the future if you do not obtain a Japanese license early. This includes simple parking tickets.

E. **Necessary documents:**

- * foreign registration card or certificate on registered matters (issued within 6 months)
- * All foreign driver's licenses you own and certificate of the issued date (if the issued date is not shown on your driver's license)
- * Official translation of the foreign driver's license issued by Japanese embassies, consulates abroad, foreign embassies, consulates in Japan, or JAF
- * All passports you own
- * An official document to show the period of stay in the country where he or she received their driver's license for at least 3 months
- * international driver's license
- * two photos (3 cm x 2.4 cm). Note that these pictures will not be used on your driver's license. An extra third picture will be taken for that at the driver's license center. Also, it is best to take these pictures at the driver's license center, for they are quite strict about these pictures.
- * inkan

F. **Fee:** 4,150 yen

G. **Bring a Japanese speaker.** If you cannot speak Japanese, please bring along someone to interpret for you.

Note: very silly, but true: if you wear the wrong shoes during a test you will fail the test. Proper outdoor shoes will be OK. However, slippers are not accepted.

VII. Acquiring a driver's license in Kumamoto

A. **Acquiring a driver's license**

- (1) Enter into a designated driving school or
 - (2) Take the aptitude test, the traffic rule test, and a practical driving test directly at Kumamoto Driver's License Center
- * If you graduate from a designated driving school, you don't have to take a practical driving test

B. **Qualifications of taking a driving test**

- (1) Large-sized Automobiles (trucks): Application for a large-sized automobile license may be done two years after receiving a standard automobile license.
- (2) Standard Automobiles, large-sized motorcycles (over 401 cc): for people who are 18 years old or

older

(3) Standard motorcycle licenses (under 400 cc), Scooter (engine displacement of 50 cc or less): for people who are 16 years old or older.

C. **Driving test overview**

The aptitude test and the traffic rule test can be taken in Japanese, English and Chinese language.

An English language book entitled “Rules of the Road” issued by JAF (www.jaf.or.jp/e/index.htm) and “Book of the traffic rule test” issued by Chubu Nippon driver school (tel: 052-832-2161, www.e-chubu.jp/school/index.html) are useful for learning driving rules.

D. **Taking the driving test**

In case of taking the driving test directly at Kumamoto Prefectural Driver’s License Center

(1) Standard Automobiles (including light automobiles)

* A scooter may also be ridden with a standard automobile license

* You need to get a learner’s permit before a driver’s license

* Reception hours: weekdays 8:30AM-9:00AM (except national holidays)

* Necessary documents: certificate on registered matters, 2 photos (3 cm x 2.4 cm), pencils, an eraser, a pen, and an inkan.

(2) Motorcycles (Large-sized motorcycles and standard motorcycles)

* A scooter may also be ridden with a standard motorcycles license

* Types of motorcycles:

large-sized motorcycles (over 400 cc)

standard motorcycles (126 cc – 399 cc)

small-sized motorcycles (51 cc – 125 cc)

scooters (under 50 cc)

* Reception hours: weekdays 8:30AM – 9:00AM (except national holidays)

A practical driving test is held on only Tuesdays and Thursdays.

* Necessary documents: certificate on registered matters, 2 photos (3 cm x 2.4 cm), pencils, an eraser, a pen, inkan

* To take a scooter driver’s license, just 1 photo is required

* Dress appropriately to drive a motorcycle

(3) Large-sized Automobiles

* Reception hours: weekdays 8:30AM – 9:00AM (except national holidays)

* Necessary documents: certificate on registered matters, 2 photos (3 cm x 2.4 cm), pencils, an eraser, a pen, inkan

(4) If your driver’s license is not renewed during the renewal period:

* Your driver’s license may be renewed if you take an aptitude test and a traffic rule lecture within 6 months of the expiration date

* If you cannot take an aptitude test within 6 months of the expiration date for overseas travel, disasters and any other reasons, you must complete certain procedures within a month of being able to take the test. If your driver’s license has been invalid for less than 3 years, you must take an aptitude test to renew it.

* If your large-sized automobile or standard automobile driver’s license has been invalid for 6 months to

1 year, you must take an aptitude test to get a learner's permit.

* Reception hours: weekdays 1:00PM – 1:30PM (except national holidays)

* Necessary documents: certificate on registered matters, 2 photos (3 cm x 2.4 cm), pencils, an eraser, a pen, inkan

* Please ask Kumamoto Prefectural Driver's License Center for details in advance.

VIII. Renewing a driver's license

- A. Renewal: a driver's license must be renewed periodically
- B. Background check: when renewed, you may be checked if you have caused any traffic accidents or broken any traffic rules while your driver's license is valid
- C. Validation period dependent on violations: if you have not caused any traffic accidents or broken any traffic rules while your driver's license is valid, you will receive a new license valid for 5 years. In the event that you have been in an accident or violated any traffic laws, you will be given a new license valid for 3 years.
- D. Renewal periode: within 1 month before and after the expiration date
- E. Reception hours: weekdays 8:30AM – 9:30AM and 1PM – 2PM (except national holidays)
- F. Fee for drivers: 2,950 yen
For drivers with a one time traffic record: 3,300 yen
For drivers with a two time traffic record or the first time renewal: 3,950 yen
- G. Necessary documents: renewal notification postcard (mailed to your home), driver's license, inkan.

IX. Reissuing a driver's license

- A. Reissue: if a driver's license is lost or damaged, it must be reissued
- B. Reception hours: weekdays 8:30AM – 11:00AM and 1 PM – 04:00 PM (except national holidays)
- C. Fee: 3,350 yen
- D. Necessary documents:
 - (1) if lost: a report issued by your local police station, 1 photo (3 cm x 2.4 cm.), inkan
 - (2) If damaged: driver's license, 1 photo (3 cm x 2.4 cm.), inkan.
- For those of you who do not pass the Japanese driver's license test (this only applies for those of you staying for a second year) or are just not willing to spend all your money on driving a car... Bicycles are still a very popular means of transportation too, if not the most common form of transport in Japan. They are cheap and easy to use. Only have to brave the elements.

X. Seating:

In Japan, there is a general seating order in cars, for formal situations. The back seats are considered better than the front seat, and the seat just behind the driver is considered the best, i.e. for the most important/senior/respected guest of honor.

XI. Motor sports:

HSR Kyushu

Ozu Town, Phone: 096 – 293 1370

You can go off-road motor biking at this facility. You get 3 hours of biking for your money.

You have a choice of bikes – the Honda CRM80 and the Honda XR100. Instruction is available but in Japanese only. Gloves, coats, trousers, etc. can all be rented. Non-members fork out an initial 3,000 yen (course fee) and a further 7,000 yen for bike and all equipment hire.

Directions: Take a train to Higo Otsu Station. From here you can take a taxi for the remaining 5 km. 9AM – 4.30PM on weekends and public holidays (reservations required).

Exciting Sports Land Yatsushiro

The course has an 800m lap and has steep inclines. Phone: 096 – 546 0174

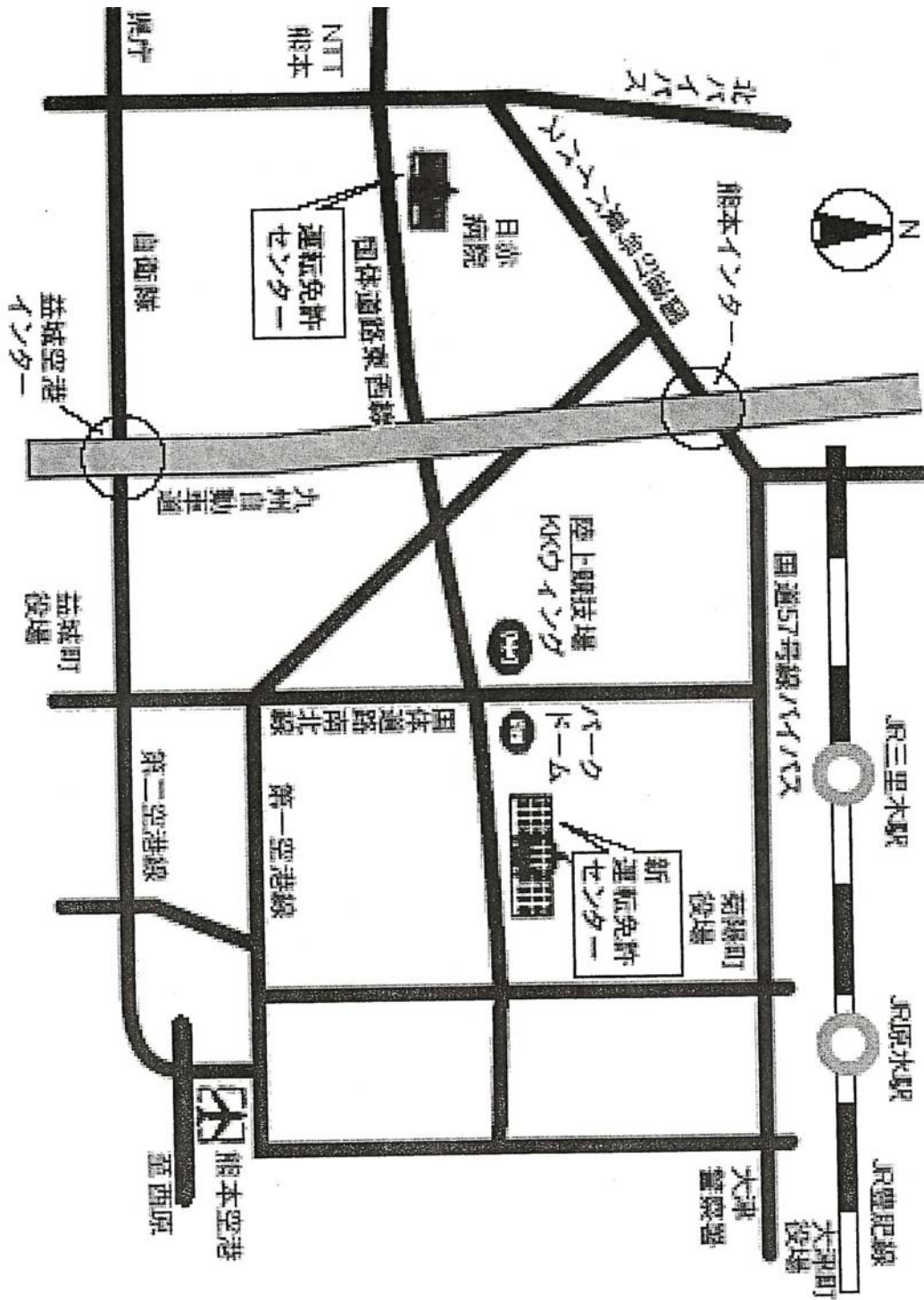
Liberal Kamabuta

This is in Seiwa (Yamato-cho). Course usage is 1,500 yen a day. Phone: 096 – 782 2207

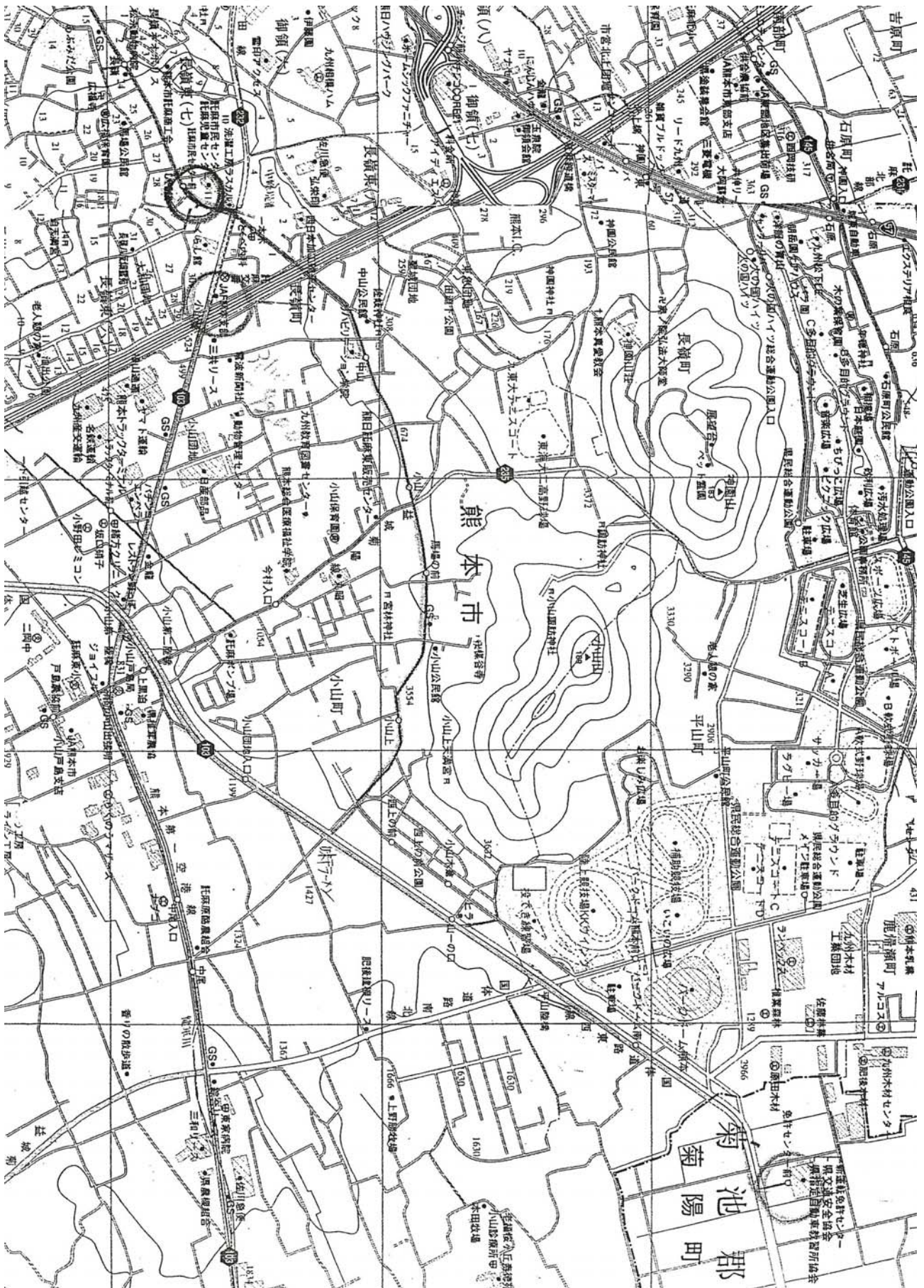
Fukkakematsu Campground off-road course

This is in Soyo (Yamato-cho). It costs 1,000 yen per day to use the course

Appendix 1: Directions to the Driver's License Center



Appendix 2: Area map of the Driver's License Center



Appendix 3: Procedures for Transferring Your Foreign Driver's License

Procedures For Transferring Your Foreign Driver's License

Your Foreign Driver's License can only be transferred to a Class 1 Japanese Driver's License.

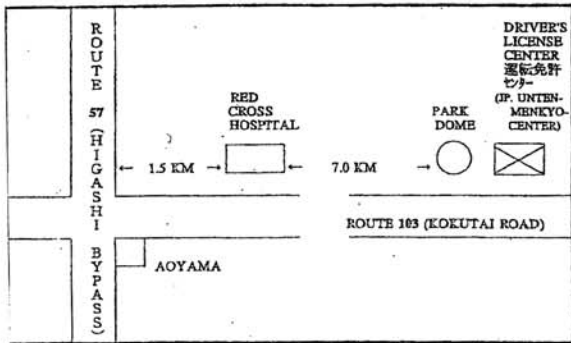
The conditions for application for one are as follows:

- ① You must possess a valid foreign driver's license.
- ② After having obtained your foreign driver's license, you must have resided in the country that issued the license for at least three (3) months.

※ If you fall under (A) or (B), you only need to take an aptitude test.
 ※ If you fall under neither (A) nor (B), you must take an aptitude test, a knowledge test and a practical driving test.

- (A) A person who has an expired Japanese driver's license that is equivalent to your foreign one.
- (B) A person whose driver's license is from one of the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Luxemburg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K.



- 1 Office hours : Applications will be accepted between 10:30A.M. and 11:00A.M (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays)
 ※ Please make a reservation in advance by calling the number below. Tel: 096-233-0116

- 2 Office location :
 - ① The Kumamoto Prefectural Police Driver's License Center is located at 2655 Karakawa, Kikuyo-machi, Kikuchi-gun.

- 3 Necessary documents :
 - ① An official document certifying your residence in Kumamoto Prefecture.
 - Japanese citizens will need a Resident Card indicating their legal residence.
 - Non-Japanese citizens will need an Alien Registration Card
 - Non-Japanese citizens will need a Foreigner's Registration Certificate (外国人登録証明書 (F. TOROKU GENPYO KISANNO SAIMENYO)) issued within the past 6 months. That can be obtained at your public office.
 - ② Your foreign driver's license. (Please bring your current driver's license, old license (if you have one) and any other such official document(s) that can corroborate the date of first issue.
 - ③ A translation of your foreign driver's license. The translation must be made by the government office that issued the license, by a consular agency, or by JAF: (1-1, Nagaminchigashi 8-chome, Kumamoto city Tel: 096-380-9200)

- ④ Passports. (Please bring your current passport, expired passport (if you have one) and any other such document(s) that can corroborate the length of time you stayed in the foreign country after you obtained a driver's license there.)
- ⑤ International Driving License (if you have one).
- ⑥ 2 Photographs (3cm x 2.4 cm). There is an automatic photo-booth available at the Driver's License Center.
- ⑦ Inkan (seal).
- ⑧ Fees.
 - Application fee :

Moped (not exceeding 50cc displacement)	¥1,650
Motorcycle	¥3,300
Ordinary, Class 1	¥2,400
Other	¥3,300
 - Issuance fee : ¥1,750 for any one item; however, when more than one item is applied for, there is a charge of ¥200 for each additional item.

- 4 If you do not speak Japanese, you should be accompanied by someone who can interpret for you.

外免切替留訳文申請書 (申請書類授受確認) (Application Form for Japanese Translation and Confirmation of Transfer of Submitted Documents)

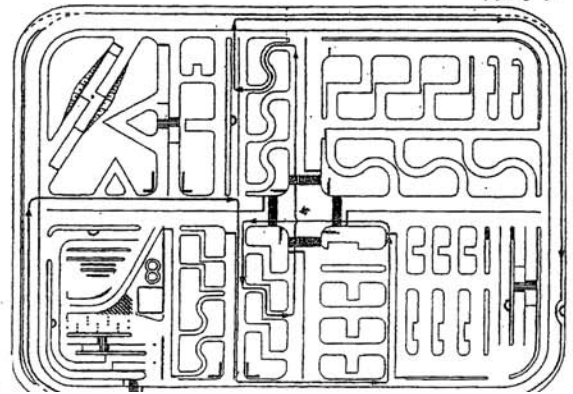
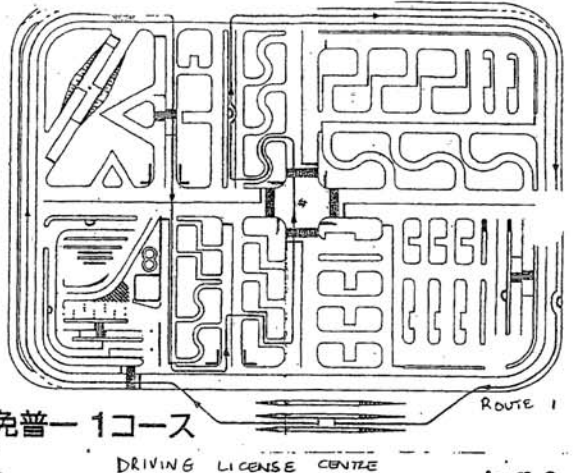
申請者の方へ (For applicants):
 お手紙ですが、以下の太字部分に必要事項をご記入ください。なお、窓口にて翻訳文等をお受け取りになる場合は、「申請書類及び留訳文・住所情報等の授受確認」欄に受取場所のご署名をお願いします。
 Please fill in all the necessary items in block letters within heavy-line frame below.

受付日: 15年 月 日	受付窓口: 熊本支店	受付者: (印)
受付方法: 1. 窓口 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 郵送 <input type="checkbox"/> 現金書留 <input type="checkbox"/> 一般郵便 <input type="checkbox"/> 簡易書留 <input type="checkbox"/> 普通郵便 <input type="checkbox"/>		
送達方法: 1. 窓口 (引換日: 月 日) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 郵送 (現金書留 <input type="checkbox"/> 普通郵便 <input type="checkbox"/> 簡易書留 <input type="checkbox"/> その他 (宅急便) <input type="checkbox"/>		
申請者氏名 Applicant's name		
運転免許取得国 Issuing Country of Your License		
申請者送達先 (日本国内) Applicant's address in Japan	住所: (Address)	TEL: (自宅・会社・携帯) (Home / Office / Mobile)
代理人 Substantio	氏名: (Name) 住所: (Address) TEL: (自宅・会社・携帯) (Home / Office / Mobile)	(申請者との関係: Relationship between Applicant and Substantio)

運転免許について
 以下の各質問にお答えください。(Please answer the following inquiries concerning your driver's license.)
 従外で運転免許を取得後、連続して3ヶ月以上現地に滞在しましたか。
 Have you stayed in the issuing country for at least 3 months since you had obtained your current license? Yes No

交付日 (Date of issue)	年(Y) 月(M) 日(D) ・ 記載なし (No description)		
有効期限 (Expiration date)	年(Y) 月(M) 日(D) ・ 記載なし (No description)		
申請書類及び留訳文・送達情報等の授受確認 (Confirmation of transfer documents between Applicant and JAF)			
書類名	書類名	申請者確認 Signatures of Applicant	受付者確認 Signatures of JAF Staff
1. 運転免許証写し	6. 日本語による翻訳文 Japanese Translation		
2. 郵送料金 (預かり金額) 円	7. 領収書・つり換 (円) Receipt・Change		
3. 送送料 (290円)	8. 運転免許センターでの 外免留訳の案内 Information of Providing Overseas DL		
4. 外個人照像送付・ 外個人照像送付券・住民票	(B. 運転免許証原本送付) Original Driver's License		
5. 運転免許証原本預かり	※ 項目「1~5」までは申請者より送付済み、「6~8」は JAFからお送りする書類。なお原則として、項目「5及び 8」は送付要付時には発生しない。		

* 送付情報のナンバーをご記入頂きますと、前方より翻訳文送付時に、ご連絡いたします。



Appendix 5: Cars and motorbikes at a glance

Big car vs little car		
	K car	Full size
Car tax	5%	5%
Name Change (paid once)	Y6000-Y20000	Y5000-Y20000
Luxury car tax (paid annually)	Y4000	Y30000-Y50000
Shaken: (Prices vary, ask around)	Y80000-Y100000 Paid every 2 years despite of age of car.	Y120000-Y170000 Paid every 2 years, until car is 10 years old, then every year .
Gasoline	Economical	moderate
Toll Fees	Cheaper	Full price
Insurance: Paid annually/monthly. Quotes in monthly increments. Most expensive for those under 26 and those without driving experience in Japan.	Y4000-Y7000	Y6500-Y10000
Parking space	Can be up to Y15000 per month. Depends on location.	

Bikes				
	50-125 cc	126-250cc	251-400cc	>400cc
Tax	5%	5%	5%	5%
Name change	Y5000	Y15000	Y15000	Y15000
Luxury car tax	Y1000	Y2400	Y4000	Y4000+
Shaken	n/a	Y50000-Y75000 for 2 years		
Parking permit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gasoline	Economical	Moderate	moderate	guzzler
Toll fees	n/a	Cheaper (same as k cars or less)		
Insurance	Prices vary a lot depending on age, experience in japan and coverage limits			
Gross weight tax	n/a	n/a	Y5000/2 years	Y5000/2 years ?
Parking place	Ranging from free (most likely) to Y10000 per month			

Teaching Junior High

Geoffrey High – Yatsushiro Board of Education – gknightmagic@hotmail.com

Class Time

In Junior High School, lessons will be fairly standardized. The students have a textbook that they have to follow and your JTE has materials they need to cover. There is always room for customization, but a standard class will play out something like this:

2 to 5 min: Greetings (Aisatsu/挨拶)

- Good morning/Good afternoon everyone! How are you?
- What day is it today? What is today's date?
- How is the weather?

5 to 10 min: Warm-up

Be prepared to ask the students questions based on recent and previous grammar points. This may either be led by you or the JTE.

5 to 15 min: Reading from the textbook

3 to 5 min: New word practice (usually with flashcards)

3 to 5 min: Introduce the new grammar point of the day

This could involve any number of methods of introduction such as the JTE introducing it, example sentences, or a skit between you and the JTE.

5 to 10 min: Teaching the new grammar point:

The JTE will explain the grammar point and the students take notes. Walk around and check that the students are working, or move to the back of the class.

10 to 20 min: Writing Practice or Activity:

This is where the greatest amount of flexibility will come into play. This time can be anything from worksheets to interactive games. It depends on you and your JTE. This is a great way to use your own talents and skills to make educational games.

2 min: Wrapping up class (Aisatsu/挨拶):

Goodbye everyone! See you next time!

List of things to have

- **Pictures** of your country, city, family, friends, pets, interesting things you've done. They will want to get to know you and know about you. Though be ready to answer how tall you are and how much you weigh in metric. Bonus points if you know your blood type.
- **Useful props** such as a foam ball, microphone, pictures of celebrities, fake cell phones, etc.
- **Colourful writing** materials such as markers, pens and highlighters. These aren't for during class so much as before and after. Correcting homework and tests, posters, game preparation, etc.
- **Prizes** are always good, even in junior high they love getting stickers, pencils, funny erasers from the 100-yen store, etc. Even better if you can get stuff that is *obviously* from your country by being covered in the flag, or depicting landmarks.
- **Notebook** to keep notes on classes. Keeping notes is an easy way to keep track of what you've done with each class. That way you can avoid repeating a game or activity for a group that didn't respond well. Or you can know what games a class loves. This way you can keep it fresh.
- **Mailbox** where the kids can write you messages or questions for you to answer.

Activity Ideas

Warm-Ups

Row and Column Game: All students stand up at the beginning of the game. You ask any question they know how to answer (check what grammar points have been covered so far, they are listed in the contents of your textbooks). Students raise their hands to answer. After the student gives a correct answer you ask them "Row or Column?" and either the row or the column they are sitting in sits down. Play until the whole class is sitting again. *HINT:* The students who are left standing at the end are probably slower students and they will probably be self-conscious that they are standing alone. Ask them easier questions and encourage them so they aren't alienated.

Syllable Game: Write a word and have the students try to guess how many syllables it contains.

Shiritori: The last letter of one word becomes the first letter of the next word. If you have a lot of free game time one class I like to combine this into a group event by letting them work in groups for a short time. For a scoring method a group begins reciting all the words they wrote. If another group wrote that word, no one gets a point. If no other group has that word then they get a point. It's a competition to write the most 'original' words. Scoring this way takes a lot of time though, so be warned.

Eg.	RUN	NO W	WHIT E
	NO W	W IN	ELEPHANT
	WHIT E	MGHT	TODAY

Interview Game: Need music, a ball and a microphone. Play the music and have the students pass the objects around. Once the music stops, the kid with the mic asks the kid with ball a question, who then has to answer.

Opposites: This is for use with other games. You say a word/phrase and the student says the opposite.

Answer and Question (Reverse Warm-Up): You give the students the answer and they have to ask you the appropriate question. Give a more 'open' answer for advanced students.

Eg. "I'm 12." – "How old are you?" / "Yes, I do." – "Do you like(want/have/play/etc) _____?"

20 Questions: Think of an object and tell the students if it is an animal or a thing. The class then has twenty questions to figure out what it is. Keep track of the number of questions on the board for visual help.

****HINT:** Students like repetition and routine, pick a few games that work really well for you and use them again and again in rotation. Also, if there is something unique that can be your "signature" game or song or greeting, especially if it has to do with your home country or your hobbies, use it in class on a regular basis.

Vocabulary

Karuta: The students join up into groups of 3 to 5 with a number of small cards containing pictures, words or phrases laid out in the middle. You say the word/sentence/grammar point, and students must hit or grab the corresponding card.

Hammer Game: The students divide into 2 teams. The first person on each team then holds a soft fake or inflatable hammer, sword or bat. The pair then alternates calling out vocabulary words until one person forgets or repeats. The winner then pops the loser with the fake hammer. Both players then go to the back of the line.

Text Scavenger Hunt: At end of a chapter or semester, students are given words to look for or questions to find the answer for in the book.

Newspaper Scavenger Hunt: Copy an article out of an English newspaper and have the students search it for words appearing in the article, like "yellow" or "Saturday."

Castle Game: Have the students break off into groups. Draw a quick multi leveled temple on the board for each team, with a space for writing divided by lines. You can have them discuss a Castle name while you draw this. Then have the first

representative from each group come up and grab a piece of chalk. Then give them a word in either English or Japanese and they have to race to spell it out. Fastest team gets to erase a level of an opposing team's castle. Then the next representative from each group comes up and you go again. Last Castle standing wins.

Reading

Chanting: Instead of just reading, read to a beat. This is good at eliminating katakana English as it's hard to keep up using all those extra syllables. If you are really talented you can set the reading to music or to a familiar song.

Fill in the Blank: Leave holes in the reading for the students to fill in.

Dictation: Have the kids write down what you say. Feel free to make it funny.

Relay Game: Using a baton or something, the rows race against each other. Have each student read a sentence or part of the passage and then pass the baton to the next person who reads his/her part. This can be done in small groups, as a whole class in time trials, divided into two teams, boys vs. girls, etc.

Grammar Point

Bingo: Give the students a list of key sentences or verbs to be conjugated, they fill out the sheet as they see fit and off you go.

Cartoon: Copy a newspaper comic, manga, comic book or cartoon page with the text bubbles blanked out. Have the students write their own stories based on the pictures. Try a mix of famous Japanese manga and some of your favorites from home. Another mix is to go back and forth between action heavy and visual gag strips.

Gokiburi (cockroach): Print off a few pictures of animals and post them on the board "in order". Students start as cockroaches, find a partner and janken. The winner either asks the question or takes charge in the mini dialogue. Once done, the winner moves up the animal chain. If they lose, they get bumped down. Have them do appropriate gestures for the animal they currently are.

Eg. Cockroach – Snake – Rabbit – Monkey – Lion – Human

Puzzle Game: Come up with 12 questions covering a grammar point. Write the questions on a piece of paper with markings on the back, and then cut the paper into odd shaped pieces. The teams must put the puzzles together and answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper. Quickest team wins.

Pass the Parcel: Prepare slips of paper with instructions, tasks, sentence to complete, etc. Take a gift and wrap it in layers of newspaper like an onion. In between each layer put one of the questions or tasks. Have them pass the parcel to music. When it

stops the person holding the parcel unwraps a layer and answers the question, or follows the instructions on the slip of paper. The last person gets the gift!

Scrambled Sentence: Take a sentence(or multiple sentences) and divide it up into individual words and mix them up. Each group has to put the scrambled sentences together. A variation is to have everyone "go to sleep", where they put their heads down on their desk. Mix up the word order, write one on the board and have row 1 "wake up" and memorize it. Then they go to sleep, you write the next word down and have row 2 memorize it. Once all the words are done, the groups race to complete the sentence first.

Sentence Jumble: This is a more complicated version of Scrambled Sentence for advanced or older students. Here give them a jumbled list of all kinds of words needed to make complete sentences. Then see how many they can come up with.

Go Fish: This game requires multiple sets of cards with different sports, food, colours, school subjects, etc. Students try to make pairs by asking one other student for the card they need. If the other student has the card, they give it up. If not they say, "Go fish.", and the original student draws a card from the middle pile (if there are enough cards to make one). The person with the most pairs set aside at the end of the game wins. This works great for : "Do you ____?" "Can you ____?" "Will you ____" etc.)

Outside of Class:

List of Things to Have (Part II)

- Mug or cup, tea-bags, small snacks for yourself, water thermos
- Japanese study materials, book, laptop
- Towel, fan, tissues, hand-warmers as needed

A Typical Day at Junior High

Be a bit early: It gives a good impression and you may need to be there for the meeting

Aisatsu(挨拶): Greet everyone when you arrive

Classes: Sometimes you may have no classes, or five classes, but usually you have two or three.

Class schedule: Usually schools release the next week's schedule on Thursday or Friday. You may or may not receive it, so ask what classes you're going to and prepare accordingly. If you have a large school then be prepared for the occasional surprise class! A JTE may mention they want you to come to a class that morning, or even five minutes before the period starts.

No class: You'll need to keep yourself occupied. Sometimes you'll get test or homework marking, or sometimes they'll ask you to prepare something special. If you're not asked to do something, take this time to study Japanese, prepare an English bulletin board, play with the kids, or get involved with activities. You could surf the net and check e-mails, but constructive is much better. How would you feel if you were working all day and one of your co-workers just goofed off?

Grading: There may be papers and tests to grade or books to check.

English bulletin board: Some schools have an English board which you will be asked to decorate. Try and put up something new every month with pictures and easy information about your culture, holidays, festivals, other foreign countries, or anything related to English and English speakers.

Eg. A Halloween board, a Christmas board, an English-Speaking Countries of the World board, a board celebrating Canadian holidays, etc. Add a question box and post the answers. Try contests, add drawings, get creative!

School Lunch: If you decide to eat school lunch, it will be provided and you'll pay monthly. It's cheap and good (usually). Monthly schedules of what will be served are in classrooms and teachers' rooms. You can choose to eat with the teachers or the students, but it's advisable to eat with the kids. Draw up a personal schedule that lets you eat with all the classes and give it to the teachers. Remember to inform your tantousha (担当者) or office ladies well in advance if you'll be gone so you don't get charged for that day. If you have any special dietary concerns, address those at the beginning. If you bring your own lunch, don't bring anything the kids aren't allowed to eat, like coke, candy, etc.

Hiruyasumi(昼休み): Lunch break is usually about half an hour. This is the time you can hang out with the kids, do an English club, etc.

Soji(掃除): Schools here have this instead of janitorial services. Every day after lunch break comes 15 minutes of cleaning. You should participate, so grab a broom and clean with the students - pick a place and join in, it's a great way to get to know the kids.

Snacks: There may be coffee or tea and a snack box filled with goodies in the teachers' room. You can probably have some of this (check with your tantousha), but be sure to bring in some snacks to contribute if you do.

Your desk: Depending on how often you are at a particular school, you may have your own. Try to make it comfortable and keep useful things in it, but keep it neat as well, someone else may use it when you aren't there.

School computer: There may be a school computer with internet access and a printer that you can use, but don't spend all your time there. Feel free to use it to prepare

materials for class, but keep the personal use of the internet and printer to a minimum. Don't download on the school computer.

Weather: The teachers' room generally has heat and ac, but the rest of the school does not. In the summer you will sweat, so bring a towel and fan. In the winter, it will be freezing, so you may want hand warmers and extra layers. Be aware!

An Overview of the School Year

Opening and Closing ceremonies: There are opening and closing ceremonies at the beginning and end of each school term. You will likely be required to give a short speech in English and Japanese in September, so get writing. Dress business for the ceremony, then you can revert to business casual for the rest of the day and term, but be aware that it will probably be really hot. This will switch and be cold when the winter ceremonies come about. There will also be a special opening ceremony in April when the students return from spring break and start the new school year. Also the new 1st graders arrive (you probably won't have to speak at that one). The special farewell ceremony comes in March when the 3rd graders graduate. Again you won't be expected to make a speech then.

Enkais(宴会): You will likely be invited to a few of these over the year. There will probably be a welcome enkai shortly after school starts, a holiday one around the end of first term in December, another welcome one when some of the teachers change schools at the beginning of the year in April, and an end of term one in summer. Your school may have more or less. The cost is usually around 4000-6000 and generally includes nomihodai (飲み放題 – all you can drink). It's a great opportunity to bond with the teachers, but don't feel pressured to go. I recommend going to the first one at least. When you arrive, there may be food and beer already at the table, but don't dig in until after "kampai". This is a party starting "cheers" that will come after a short welcome speech. This is also a good time to mingle and try to chat with as many teachers as possible. Usually there is a nijikai, or second party, which can get pretty fun and wild as everyone's inhibitions melt away, but don't feel pressured to go to that either.

Undokai(運動会): Sports festival! Held either in September or May, the students participate in a lot of races, march, perform group dances, and have club activity demonstrations. The teachers and students will spend a lot of time practicing, maybe even canceling classes to go outside and drill. Undokai is on a Saturday or Sunday, and the teachers will be there all day. You ought to go for at least a little while, and if you go for the whole day you should get daikyu(代休 a.k.a. furikaekyu 振替休) or time off for working on a weekend. Whether you go or not, be sure to check when the teachers are taking their daikyu, so you don't show up to school when nobody's there. Rules for

taking daikyu are as follows. If you were scheduled to go to the school on that day off then you get the day off like everyone else. If however you were previously scheduled to spend that weekday at another school, speak to your tantousha, as you should be able to use that day any time within 30 days of the undoukai.

Recitation Contest(Eigo Anshou Taikai 英語暗礁大会): In the fall, the students will recite a short passage from one of the textbooks for a city, or gun-wide contest. You will likely need to help coach the students in pronunciation, inflection, and even gestures. Practice may be after school or even during lunch. You might also be able to go to the contest and cheer your students on.

Bunkasai(文化祭): Cultural festival, usually held in November. This is when the students show off artwork, crafts, singing, and skits. There may also be visiting performances by bands or dancers. You may even be asked to participate, especially if you play an instrument or have a similar talent, but even if you don't participate you should go, as it's often an entertaining show.

Tests: There are various periods throughout the year when most of the students are taking tests and there may be very few classes. There are usually some in December and some in the spring, and other scattered times. During these periods though the class load lightens up, you may be called on to grade.

JET End of Year: In July there are a lot of end-of-year enkais and events for the JET programme. Be prepared to party!

General Tips for Junior High

Dress code: Standard dress differs from school to school, so start out in business attire and see what the other teachers wear from day to day. A list of some things that will be inappropriate across the board: tank tops, sleeveless tops, shorts, very short skirts, graphic and logo tees, etc. Use common sense!

Notes: keep notes on the classes you've gone to and what you've done. It's helpful to know what you've tried, especially if you have several schools and a lot of classes, so you can trace progress and avoid unnecessary repeats. Also, it's good to note what activities have worked and which haven't.

Be proactive: Don't feel hurt or insulted if you don't go to class a lot. Your teachers are busy or may not know how to ask for your help. Make up some activities and show them to your JTE, get involved with the kids, practice your Japanese, talk to the other teachers, or even go to cooking class. Get involved!

Be prepared for anything: You may need to do a whole class on a moment's notice, so have some activities and maybe some prizes prepared.

List of Resources

Planet Eigo

This giant book of games is an invaluable source of games and activities, especially when you are stuck for time. The older version is called "Team Taught Pizza" and is similarly helpful.

<http://www.mes-english.com/>

This website has been my favorite source for flashcards for three years. This site has free flashcards, game cards, and activities available for printing. Most of the content is for younger kids but there is plenty of stuff for junior high.

<http://www.genkienglish.net/>

Some of you may have heard of this site by now, as it's an excellent source for games and flashcards, and is often mentioned in the Tokyo Orientation. You need to register and pay for some of this site's content, but the game and activity ideas section is huge.

<http://www.esl-kids.com/index.html>

This site is another good source of flashcards and activities.

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/>

This site has flashcards and activities, also an extensive list of website resources.

<http://www.edochan.com/teaching/monkeys.htm>

This site was put together by former JETs, an excellent source of activities for junior high.

Your fellow ALTs

Don't forget to ask around for ideas for class, or to talk to someone if you're feeling confused or frustrated. We're all in this program together!

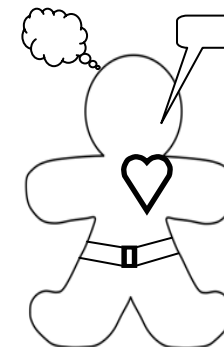
Contact Me if you still have questions or need help!

Geoffrey: Yatsushiro Board of Education.

gknightmagic@hotmail.com

shs teaching workshop (Belkis L. Cabrera)

There is an accompanying CD for this workshop.



SAMPLE LESSON 1 (no textbook): THE GINGERBREAD MAN

Subject	Overview	Materials	ALT/JTE Activities	Student Activities	Notes:
Oral Communication or English 1 (no textbook)	The Gingerbread Man Activity is a fun way to have students practice introductory phrases and structures. It is a wonderful opening lesson or can simply serve as a review. Great for visual learners!	♥ Gingerbread Men Drawings ♥ Over-sized Gingerbread Men ♥ Markers	1) ALT briefly introduces the "gingerbread man" (folklore, tradition, and popular culture). 2) ALT/JTE complete their gingerbread man (using over-sized samples)... a) Discuss possible new vocabulary: I have no <u>siblings</u> . I hate <u>household chores</u> . b) The face should reflect how they are feeling.	3) After or simultaneously with the ALT/JTE, students will create their own responses (length of response and diction varies depending on level). 4) Students share their responses as a dialogue: Hello... left foot, right foot, left hand, heart, belt/stomach, right hand, thought... (choose the order that makes most sense to you -- not necessary to share all parts).	If time allows... Students can "hunt" for certain aspects/responses. For example, go around the room and find someone who hates what you love or find someone who loves what you hate, or find someone who would like to visit the same place as you, etc. This activity can be extended by including the gingerbread man's story 😊

Extras:

<http://www.theppk.com/recipes/dbrecipes/index.php?RecipeID=196>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/stories/folktale/gingerbreadman/story/>

<http://www.folktale.net/GBman.html>

recipe with pictures of "punk" gingerbread men
easy version of the children's story with graphics
dramatic ending (full version)

GINGERBREAD MAN

I think that

_____.

Hello, my name is

_____.

I love _____

_____.

I want _____

_____.

I have _____

_____.

I hate _____

_____.

I was born in _____.

I am from _____.

I live in _____.

I have visited _____.

I would like to visit _____

someday!

shs teaching workshop (Belkis L. Cabrera)

There is an accompanying CD for this workshop.



SAMPLE LESSON 2 (w/ textbook STEP: Oral Communication I): CHORES

Subject	Overview	Materials	ALT/JTE Activities	Student Activities	Notes:
Oral Communication (textbook)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Over-sized Chores Sheets ♥ Over-sized "Yakety Yak" Lyrics ♥ Over-sized Comprehension Questions ♥ Markers ♥ Copies of Worksheets & Lyrics for Students ♥ Radio 	1) ALT offers brief intro. to 1950s America. 2) Distribute "Yakety Yak" lyrics with blanks (word choice depends on student level). 3a) Play song "Yakety Yak" -- singing along is encouraged 😊 4) Review lyrics (check answers), identifying "chores" and song's overall significance. 5) Play song again. 6a) Distribute "Yakety-Yak" Comprehension Questions Sheet and complete.	3b) Students listen to song and complete the lyrics using the correct word(s). 6b) Students respond in complete sentences -- stickers for brave volunteers!	If time allows... Distribute "cards" (always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, seldom, never) Play the Chores Row Game. (see CD) WARNING: The original "Yakety Yak" by The Coasters says, "Let's see the dust fly with that broom" rather than, "And sweep the dust out with that broom".

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Extras:

<http://life.familyeducation.com/allowance/jobs-and-chores/34438.html>

articles on chores and allowances

Household Chores

©1958 (Renewed)
JERRY LEIBER
AND MIKE STOLLER

Yakety Yak わいわいがやがや

Take out the papers and the _____
Or you don't get no spending _____
If you don't scrub that kitchen floor
You ain't gonna rock and roll no more
Yakety yak (don't _____ back)

新聞紙とごみを運び出しとくれ。
やらないと、小遣いはなしだよ。
台所の床を磨かないと、
ロックンロールはもうやれないよ。
わいわいがやがや (口答えはするな)

Just finish _____ up your room
And sweep the dust out with that broom
Get all that garbage out of sight
Or you don't go out Friday night
Yakety yak (don't _____ back)

さっさとお部屋の掃除を終えて、
ほうきでほこりを掃き出して、
ごみを全部運び出せ。
やらないと、金曜の夜は外出なしだよ。
わいわいがやがや (口答えはするな)

You just put on your coat and hat
And walk yourself to the _____
And when you finish doing that
Bring in the dog and put out the cat
Yakety yak (don't _____ back)

ちよいとコートをはおって帽子をかぶり、
コインランドリーまで行っとくれ。
それが終われば、
犬は中、ネコは外へ出しとくれ。
わいわいがやがや (口答えはするな)

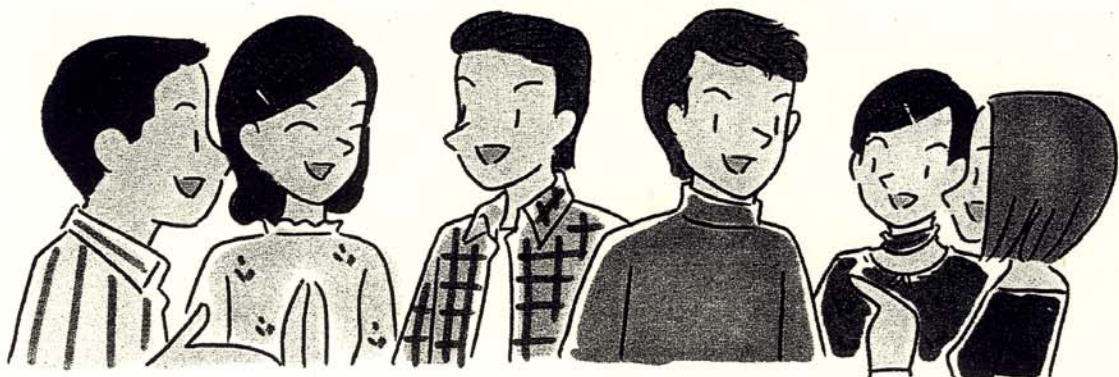
Don't you give me no dirty _____
Your father's hip; he knows what cooks
Just tell your hoodlum friend outside
You ain't got time to take a _____
Yakety yak (don't _____ back)

変な顔で私を見ないでおくれ。
父ちゃんは情報通で、何でも知ってるよ。
外の不良仲間に行ってやれ、
車を乗り回す暇などないんだ、と。
わいわいがやがや (口答えはするな)

(Repeat and fade:)
Yakety yak, Yakety yak

(繰り返し、フェードアウト)
わいわいがやがや (口答えはするな)

- □ papers 「新聞紙」 □ scrub / skrʌb / 「(床など) をこする」 □ ain't gonna = aren't going to (俗語) □ laundromat / lɔ:ndrəmət / 「コインランドリー」 □ give 人 dirty looks 「(人に) 怒った[いやな]顔をする」 □ hip 「情報に通じている」 (形容詞) □ what cooks 「何が起きているか」 (口語) □ ain't got = haven't got = don't have (俗語)



comprehension questions for “yakety yak”:



1) Who is the speaker? / Who is speaking?

2) Who is the audience? / Who is he speaking to?

3) What will happen if the child/teenager does not **take out the trash**?



Culture Note: What is “spending cash”?

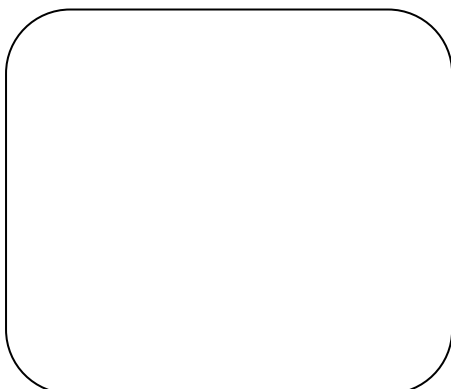
Do you have an "allowance"? When do you get "spending cash"? What do you have to do to get it?

4) What does the child/teenager have to do **BEFORE** he goes to the laundromat?

5) What does he have to do **AFTER** he goes to the laundromat?



6) What do you think is a “dirty look”? Draw a “dirty look” below.



Japanese Office Culture: The Short Version

1. Say hello when you enter the room and goodbye when you leave
2. Bow to everyone, and when people bow to you, return the favor.
3. Be punctual.
4. Don't directly criticize anyone or flatly refuse anything.
5. Be sensitive to the needs and desires of others, since they are often too polite to directly express them.
6. Respect the official beginnings and endings of functions. Don't eat until "*itadakimasu*" and don't drink until the *kanpai*.
7. Ask your principal, vice principal, and supervisors for permission to do projects at school or take vacations
8. If someone feels your absence when you take a trip, bring back *omiyage*.
9. Don't pour your own drink at parties, and make sure those next to you have something to drink themselves.
10. Express gratitude for everything!

The Short Short Version:

1. Use common sense.
2. Be considerate of others.
3. Copy what others are doing.

Japanese Office Culture

Introduction

So now you're a Japanese schoolteacher. For me, working in the office is as interesting as working with the kids, and sometimes it's just as challenging. Americans know that Japanese businessmen are different, but they can't quite explain why. You'll be learning firsthand in a fairly forgiving environment. If you have designs on international business, this experience will be invaluable. Even if you don't learn any Japanese during your stay, you can use this experience in the future.

My philosophy about ALTs in the office is that we're the ones who decided to move to their country, so we should play by their rules. Most people recognize we're ignorant of their culture, but since all their other co-workers are Japanese, they're used to their own etiquette and will subconsciously expect us to follow it, too. So the more you fit in, the more smoothly things will go. However, for better or worse people try to avoid conflict and direct criticism as much as possible, so some of you won't be told what's expected of you, and you won't be corrected if you do something wrong. You must learn by watching everyone else. Just about everything I'll mention in this talk is something I've messed up before. Try to not to get too stressed about it. Your good looks and charm will take you far. Good intentions will carry you the rest of the way. Being generous and good-hearted is more important than mastering reflexive memorized politeness. But the Japanese see their etiquette as the way to express a good heart, so you should still try to get the hang of it.

With apologies to those from other countries, I'm an American so I'll be comparing Japan to that country throughout this presentation.

Aisatsu

The Japanese emphasize doing things "the right way." This starts with greetings, or *aisatsu* (挨拶). In Japan, you give someone a first impression of your character, especially how you treat other people, by the way you greet him. It's stressed to the students constantly, so by the time they become teachers, they're masters at it. Last year's junior high school election speeches were about who could encourage us to do the best *aisatsu*, and the student council's goal this year is to create a school that does great *aisatsu*.

The exchange of business cards is a good model for how to meet someone. In Japanese culture, your card, or *meishi* (名詞), is a symbol for your name, which is a symbol of you. Names are very important, so do your best to remember them, especially those of your coworkers and students. When someone gives you his card, receive it with two hands, bow, read the card (you can make a comment about how interesting the name is, or ask about the kanji on it), and bow for good measure. If you have your own card, you can then give it yourself. Card exchange is often at the end of an introduction so you won't have to worry *too* long about what to do with it, but the important thing is to continue to visibly show your respect for the card. Continue holding the card while talking, or if you need to put it away, you can place it in your breast pocket perhaps, or in a specialty card-holder. Sticking it right in your wallet or visibly putting it in your front or back pocket is not as good. If you have your own card, of course, you can just mirror what the other person does with yours!

You'll be bowing all the time. Greeting someone, or apologizing for something, or saying thank you, is always cause for bowing. Whenever someone bows to you, bow in return. The answer to "How deeply do I need to bow?" is "If he's your social superior, bow as deeply as he does or more."

The best phrase to use when you're finishing a self-introduction is "*Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*" This means, "Please be kind to me." It's nice to ask this from someone rather than just expecting it from him, right? "*Yoroshiku onegaishimasu*" is also used to soften actual requests, so use it and be aware of it yourself.

Try to go to all your schools just to do *aisatsu* four times a year. The first time you've probably done already: making the rounds to all your schools to introduce yourself. If you're 2nd year or later, do it at the end of summer vacation, when you're home from your travels. The second time is after winter break, in order to give greetings for the New Year. The third time is in the last week of March, or as close to that as your schedule permits, to give greetings for the end of the year and to say goodbye to teachers who are being transferred. The fourth time is in the first week of April, or soon after that, to greet new teachers and introduce yourself to them. (The 1st and 2nd are a tad early since new teachers are moving their things then.)

You'll be expected to make a self-introduction during the morning meeting on your first day at each school this fall, and also on the first day of the new term in the spring.

Aisatsu does not just apply to the first meeting: it also refers to the greetings you give in daily life. When you arrive at work in the morning, you should say “*Ohayou gozaimasu!*” to everyone you see on the way to the staff room. When you enter, you’ll say “*Ohayou gozaimasu!*” to everyone again, and on the way to your seat, you should also say it to everyone you pass by on the way. If you want to be really correct, go around and say it to every person specifically on your way around the room.

If you are going out to a club sport, the post office, the Board of Education, or lunch, you should announce it to everyone in the staff room when you’re at the door. When you come back, say “*Konnichi wa!*” to everyone. There are two set phrases for the end of the day. If you’re leaving before other people (and you almost certainly will be), you can say “*O-saki ni shitsurei shimasu,*” or “please excuse me for leaving before you. Or you can say “*Otsukaresama deshita!*” This literally means “Your exhaustion is honorable” but more figuratively means “You worked hard today!” “*Otsukaresama deshita!*” is a truly all-purpose polite phrase which you can use after almost any activity. You can respond to a person who’s leaving, “*Otsukaresama deshita!*” or “*Shitsurei shimasu!*” (“No, excuse me!”) Failure to do these *aisatsu* at the beginning and end of the day make you look sneaky. These rules also apply to any rooms you visit, from another school’s staff room to the barber shop.

Kids are not allowed to enter the staff room without permission. When they come to the door, they must state their name and reason for entering, then ask a teacher for permission to come inside. Most often they are there for one of three things: getting one of the room keys which are right inside the door, seeing a specific teacher, or dropping off something on a teacher’s desk. Even if you don’t know Japanese, if you’re the only person in the room, you can figure out what the student wants eventually.

At the junior high, you’ll enter a classroom together with your teacher. If it’s time for class, and you can’t see your teacher in the staff room, go to the class yourself to be safe – he might have forgotten you. At elementary school, the homeroom teacher will already be in the classroom, and he will dispatch one or two students to the staff room to ask you to come to their class. The students will ask for permission to enter at the door, then come up to you and ask you to come with them, provided they aren’t too nervous. It’s not unusual for elementary school classes to begin 5 or even 10 minutes late because the homeroom teacher is taking care of other things.

Just about everything, from classes to meetings to games, has an official beginning and end. Students begin and end class. They stand together, and the representative says “From now, 3rd period/English class is beginning,” to which all respond “*Hajimemasu*” or “We begin.” At the end, they do the same thing: “3rd period/English class is finishing” and “*Owarimasu*.” Meetings and lunch are the same way. No one can begin eating until everyone says “*Itadakimasu*” in response to the representative, and no one can go to recess until everyone says “*Gochisousama deshita*.”

Call everyone who works at the school “*sensei*,” including the lunch coordinator, the nurse, the counselor, and the administrative assistant. Most people will respectfully call you “*sensei*” themselves. A few may call you “*-san*,” like you’re a layman...but then, if you don’t have certification then you *are* a layman.

Teachers refer to each other by last name, even when talking to each other, with the suffix *-sensei* rather than *-san* because *sensei* is a higher level title. The word for “you” is rarely used in formal conversation. So even when you are talking to Mr. Tanaka, say “*Tanaka-sensei*” rather than “you” and “*Tanaka-sensei no*” rather than “your.” Just calling someone “*sensei*” is okay, too, especially if you can’t remember her name.

The only person in the office referred to by first name will, in fact, be you. This seems to be an ALT tradition. At first I thought it was confusion because Asians, unlike Westerners, say their family name first and their first name second (Yao Ming, for instance, is from the Yao family). For example, my *inkan* says “James.” Some Japanese say it’s because Western first names are easier for everyone to remember. Perhaps it’s because Japanese people are taught that Westerners refer to each other by their first names, doing the same for you is what’s most socially appropriate. I’m used to it myself, but if you don’t like it, you can request a change. After I discussed this with people, some started calling me “Mr. Smyth”!

Everyone at school is supposed to give a genki “*Konnichi wa!*” to every guest he sees. You’ll have to work on your reflexes so that when a guest comes to the staff room and says “*Konnichi wa*” you can spin your chair around and give it right back to him!

During work hours, there should always be someone in the staff room to take calls and

welcome guests. This is called *rusuban* (留守番). It seems like schools and workplaces do not even have answering machines. Usually the administrative assistant does this, but once in a while it'll end up being you! If you find yourself alone in the staff room, do your best if anything comes up! I was especially nervous about answering the phone, so I didn't do it for several months, but luckily most people who call are asking for a specific teacher. If the phone rings, someone will run over and get it.

Conversation

A safe default when starting a conversation, especially when asking a question or asking for a favor, is to be really apologetic about taking up someone's time. Try to avoid cutting into people's conversations, and have a sense of when a teacher looks too busy to talk to you at the time. "*Sumimasen*" or "excuse me" is a common conversation starter and finisher here.

In Japan, indirect communication is important. In a conversation, the onus is on the listener to understand what's being said, as people will try to imply things in delicate ways...unless someone is overweight. That's discussed freely. The teachers you're working with will be hesitant to criticize you, so if you want their opinion of how you're doing, find an indirect way to get it – asking about a particular method rather than whether or not your strategy worked last period, for instance. This goes for your criticism, too. Don't criticize one of your teachers directly, and be *very* careful about criticizing a school or the Board of Education. Questioning higher levels of the Japanese system, like the absolute importance of test scores in admissions to high schools and colleges or the structure of said exams, is more acceptable since that's basically outside everyone's control.

People very rarely say "no" to requests. In fact, the only thing they directly refuse is compliments. Instead, you'll hear "*chotto...*" which is like "It's a little...uh..." or something like it.

Typical small talk is about food, weather, your family, whether you've adjusted to living in Japan yet, and the like. You'll get tired of people asking whether you cook or own food or not, but it's their way of being polite. Politics and religion are the "third rail" in America, but here people are apathetic about politics and curious about Western religion.

Some teachers will want to speak English with you, and I highly encourage you do so because you'll have plenty of chances to practice Japanese with others, but speak *slowly* because the tempo you use with fellow native speakers can almost never be followed. Even people who can read and write are inexperienced speakers. There are tons of words loaned from English in the language, so if a word isn't understood, try pronouncing words in a more "Japanese" way, following their syllabary.

There are lots of single teachers, so only ask about kids after marriage is established. Many married people don't wear wedding rings.

Miscellaneous

Personal space is still important in Japan, even if you don't have much, so encroach on someone else's desk territory, touch his things, pickup his pencil without permission, or touch him on the shoulder spontaneously. Pointing with one finger, especially at a person, is also a *faux pas*. If you must point, do so with your entire hand.

If you need to give someone money, especially a large amount of money, it's more polite to put it inside an envelope than to hand it off palm to palm. Pass money with both hands. If you need change, say that when you hand off the envelope. If you are handing someone multiple bills, flip through the bills while counting in front of them. (You'll see how it's done from shopkeepers.) It's also polite to have all the bills facing the same direction. If there is a change bucket, putting coins in it is more appropriate than handing them off.

Most people brush their teeth at the office sink or at their desks after lunch. (I do it, too.) I've heard of teachers clipping their nails in the office. I've seen teachers sleep at their desks before. This is more acceptable in Japan, I think, because some people work so late that they really are living at the office. Some have Herculean amounts of work. Others are too shy to venture outside the office. If you live near your school, swing by the parking lot on weekends or when you get home for the night. It will never fail to surprise you.

At my schools, students aren't supposed to talk during cleaning time after lunch. One person has even said about my junior high school, "I knew it was a great school because when I went there, the students were cleaning without a word!" Other ALTs say there

is lots of socializing during their cleaning time, though.

Sometimes when you ask a teacher about a third person, he'll use long, strange Japanese verbs you haven't heard before. This is a convention of polite Japanese, which hinges on social status and the distinction between those who are *uchi* (内), or "inside" a company, and *soto* (外), or "outside" it. (Verbs of giving and receiving also depend on these two things.) *Keigo* (敬語) is polite speech. *Sonkeigo* (尊敬語) is used when talking to a superior/outsider about a superior/outsider's actions. *Kenjougo* (謙讓語) is used when talking to a superior/outsider about your own actions (or those of an insider). (See how the *kanji* gets more and more complicated?) It is used when talking to people who have social status, such as adults, rather than people who don't, like the students.

Socially, Japan is more like 1950s America than current America, so having a significant other sleep over at your house, among other things, is unusual. Teachers do make passes on each other after they've been drinking.

Dress Code

The students are always dressed in uniform. It's truly strange to see them wearing anything else. In that spirit, dress similarly to the other people in your office. You'll be dressing like an adult now, not a college student. As a man, I brought dress pants, polo shirts, long-sleeved buttoned down shirts, and ties from home, and that's gotten me through summer and winter. (Because of "Cool Biz," a campaign to save energy by cutting down on air conditioning, even salarymen wear short-sleeved shirts in the summers.) Graduation and opening ceremonies require more formal clothes. Other ALTs, especially at elementary schools, wear exercise clothes. P.E. and some elementary school teachers do that, too, so it's not a problem, and on picnic and sports days, that's what's most appropriate. I very rarely see adults wearing shorts.

Have a set of inside shoes/sandals and a set of outside shoes, and if you'll be in the gym a lot get some "gym shoes" you only use there. (Otherwise, wear your inside shoes in the gym). The many sets of free slippers next to the door are for guests, so you shouldn't be using them all day and wearing them out.

Tattoos are a symbol of the *yakuza*, or mafia, so don't let anyone see yours.

Participation in School Events

The most formal events of the year are the opening ceremony in April and graduation in March. The answer to “Can I give a speech/sing a song at one of those ceremonies?” is “No.” They are very formal, and the content was determined by the fathers of Japan long ago.

Many of you will be asked, however, about playing a role in Sports Day or Culture Festival. I was asked to run the 1500 and teach the kids salsa steps, but usually ALTs do less stressful things like taking part in a relay. I wasn’t asked to do anything for Culture Festival, even though I wanted to, but at the *enkai* afterwards people said “You should have done something!” so I’ll probably ask the music teacher about it this fall. If you’re asked to do something outside your comfort zone, don’t reject it out of hand: you came here for things like that, right?

Any time there’s an all-school function, be it choir practice or school elections or a morning student meeting, you should tag along. There is a row of seats along the side for teachers.

Weddings are tricky. One of my teachers got married last year. (Somehow he only needed one vacation day to prepare for the ceremony.) He had a lot of friends and not enough space, so he invited his homeroom class, the principals and teachers but not the other staff, like the librarian, the nurse, and me. I asked during a meeting that he wasn’t attending, “So, um, everyone’s talking about going, but I haven’t heard anything...so am I going? I mean, it’s OK if I’m not, I just want to make sure...” There was a pause. Then my vice principal asked my supervisor, “Um, could you please explain to him later?” She never did. So, if you find yourself in this kind of situation, just don’t ask. If you are invited to a wedding, you’ll have to chip in around 3 man yen for a gift.

Office Politics

In Japan, all the teachers work in the same office, and out of class that’s where they are to be found. The principal, nurse, and librarian have their own offices in addition to staff room desks, but that’s for entertaining visitors as much as anything. You’ll have a desk of your own, and people will always be able to see what you’re doing.

The principal, or *kouchou sensei* (校長先生), is technically the head of the school, and

the vice principal, or *kyoutou sensei* (教頭先生), the head teacher. Both were teachers at one point, as the *sensei* in their name implies, who passed enough tests and built up enough relationships to move to the next level. In practice they're like the CEO and COO in the old corporate model. The principal's duties are more diplomatic and ceremonial, so you'll often see him outside gardening, and he gives speeches before all major events. The assistant principal handles the day-to-day operation of the school, and he knows the technical details. You need to ask both of them for permission before you do anything major, such as leading a charity campaign, giving candy to the students, or taking vacation time.

The third in command is called the *kyoumu sensei* (教務先生). He is a teacher, and on top of that he is responsible for the school's schedule. He sits next to the principal and vice principal in the office, and you can go to him with questions about the schedule and various activities.

In addition to your supervisor (*tantousha* 担当者) at the Board of Education, you will have a supervisor at each of your schools, with the one at your "main school" being your lead supervisor. Your supervisor will be an English teacher, or at the elementaries the person in charge of English education at the school, but not necessarily someone with fluent English. You are just one of his responsibilities. You must also ask your supervisors for permission to take vacation time if your absence will affect them.

Hierarchy among teachers is determined by age, not subject matter: the Japanese teacher, the P.E. teacher, and the shop teacher are equals. Some of the teachers are *tannin* 担任, or homeroom teachers. Perhaps the biggest determinant in how much work you'll have is whether your English teachers are also homeroom teachers, who have to read students' diaries every week, do state paperwork for each student, have regular conferences with parents, and so on. Elementary school teachers without homerooms become resource teachers for specific subjects like math and science. Teachers are also supervisors for club sports, with varying amounts of involvement and experience in the sport itself: the students run their own practices much of the time. From junior high school, these clubs practice until sunset and on Saturdays and Sundays, too. All in all, Japanese teachers have far more responsibilities than American teachers do.

There is also a Parent-Teacher Association, and in Japanese it's called, well, the "PTA."

Because the teachers have so many responsibilities, it can seem like the parents are less involved in school than they would normally be, but I think it varies from city to city just like in my country. Many parents may be helping out with sports and other activities, but they won't necessarily introduce themselves to you. It's more like a Board of Directors than a group involved in day-to-day life. Like the school, it has a president, or *kaichou* (会長), and a vice president, or *fukukaichou* (副会長), as well as a treasurer and a secretary.

Japan is part of the Confucian cultural zone, and that means seniority is very important. It is associated with wisdom and temperance. Teachers are listed in the staff register in order of age. Your principal and vice principal are always referred to by their titles rather than their names. Younger teachers owe older teachers deference and service, both at work and at staff parties. Even students must refer to those in higher grades as *senpai* and to themselves as *kohai*, and this respectful relationship continues throughout their lives.

Seniority is so important that staff members are frequently moved from school to school so no one acquires too much seniority. Your contract is with either your high school or your local board of education, but everyone else is under the prefecture's board of education, or *kenchou* (県庁). The state board can move them wherever they like, even to city hall. Teachers typically cannot stay in a school for more than seven years; the average term for a principal or vice principal is two years. Some of your teachers, especially those who majored in something besides education in college, haven't yet passed the notoriously difficult teacher's license examination, so they're technically temps. They have to re-apply for work every year, and they're shuffled from one school to another. 60 is the mandatory retirement age. Many teachers are out of work while they still have energy left, but on the plus side, it's easier for young teachers to break into the business than it would be elsewhere.

Besides the teachers, there is a very busy administrative assistant, or *jimu sensei* 事務先生, a school nurse, a librarian (who may or may not have multiple schools), and sometimes a counselor. Notably absent are groundskeepers, food staff (at many schools), and technical staff. The students clean up for themselves so no janitors are needed. The town has its own food center, where school lunches are made and shipped en masse to all the homerooms. The students serve lunch to each other and return the dirty dishes afterward. However, the head of the town's food staff will often have

a desk at one school or another. The administrative assistant is responsible for solving technical problems, particularly with computers, but since he's not a trained electrician or plumber, outside help is often called in through the Board of Education. If you understand computers, you can probably help a lot of your co-workers. Everyone, particularly the principal, helps with the garden. Or else no one does anything with the garden.

Staff changes are announced on the last day of school in March. Teachers have a week to put their affairs in order, and then they move to their new schools. A few days after they arrive, staff responsibilities, including for homerooms are decided, and a few days after that school begins again. So the two-week spring break you see on your schedule is the most important time of year for the other teachers. Especially the single teachers.

You're on the bottom of the food chain, and it has little to do with being a foreigner. You are more often than not the youngest teacher at your school; you have the shortest tenure and the fewest responsibilities, and odds on you don't have a teacher's license, either. If you do have a "home school" where you spend the majority of your time, you're more likely to be considered a permanent part of the staff there and to receive invitations to parties and the staff leisure trip in February. If you have multiple schools, you'll be seen as "part time" staff at many of them since they don't see you as much. So it helps to be humble.

People will mistakenly call you by your predecessor's name for months, even years afterward. People get lumped together, so the impressions you make reflect on all foreigners. Even if foreigners do certain things, like drunk driving, at a low rate, their rate is higher than usual Japanese people so they're more dangerous as a group.

People are usually talking about you even if you don't realize it. Sometimes complaints go up to the BOE, not to you, to avoid conflict. Teachers will rarely critique your classes, so you have to be a good monitor yourself of what works and what doesn't.

Meetings

You will probably be asked to come to school before your work hours technically begin in order to participate in the Morning Meeting at 8:15 or 8:20. This is part of doing

things “the right way,” and it shouldn’t be a big deal. For me, it’s great listening practice, and it’s a chance to find out what’s really happening at school.

After the official beginning, the *kyoumu* teacher goes over the schedule for the day and for the rest of the week. He and the other teachers are free to make announcements if they like. The teachers discuss various activities, and then they talk about problems at school. Finally, the vice principal and then the principal can say what they please, and then the meeting is closed.

The Japanese used in meetings is more formal than conversational Japanese. There is no *Kumamoto-ben*. For example, during meetings, “today” is not *kyou* (今日), it’s *honjitsu* (本日).

The schedule for the day, week, and month is written on the large blackboard behind the principal, and everything is discussed in the morning meeting, so your supervisor may forget that you can’t understand Japanese and hence don’t understand what’s happening at school. If you’re lost during the meetings, it’s best to ask your supervisor about each day’s activities so you don’t find yourself abandoned in the staff room later.

As for meeting etiquette, you can drink tea, but you shouldn’t eat. Eye contact with the person who’s speaking is unnecessary.. You can even do other paperwork if it’s not obvious. Silence is used as a tool in meetings, most often to express consent (“Is that OK?” “...” “Okay, great!) or to move on (“Any other questions?” “.....” “Well then, *kyoutou sensei*, do you have anything to add?”) Meetings have a certain rhythm, so unless your Japanese is fluent, it’s better to ask your supervisor about something after the meeting than to ask during the meeting itself.

Teachers talk about the “juicy stuff,” like problems at school, bad students, and the like during these meetings, but they’ll be reluctant to talk to you about any of these things later. Even if you feel it’d help you understand a student, it’s officially not your business. What you do hear is private. “Saving face” is a priority here, as in China, and when students get in trouble, schools will go to some distance to keep it quiet.

There are also meetings on some afternoons, often called *kenshuu* (研修), to discuss certain topics in detail. You can talk to your supervisor about whether you’ll attend

them or not. These meetings sometimes go past your contracted hours, but leaving in the middle of a meeting is impolite. I always attend them for my “home school” if I’m there at the time (more Japanese practice), but when there’s such a meeting at a school I’m “visiting,” I’ll head back to my home school early.

Another important kind of meeting is a research class, or *kenkyuu* (研究), which happens every month or two. All the teachers will watch one of their brethren teach a class, and afterwards they’ll have a meeting to critique it. Teachers do vast amounts of preparation for these classes. It’s a fun way to see how other subjects are taught here. And eventually, you’ll have one of your team-teaching classes researched yourself.

Kairan and Handouts

Kairan (回覧) are announcements and bulletins that are passed around, typically in order of seniority, for everyone to see. These can include the city newspaper, bulletins for cultural events in the city, reports from the board of education, invitations to educational meetings outside your town or even your prefecture, and also invitations to staff parties, be they *enkai* (宴会) or *uchiage* (打ち上げ) or *kondankai* (懇談会). If you see something that says “19:00” and “4000 円,” it’s probably for a staff party. Most *kairan* don’t apply to you, but asking what they say is a good way to study and start conversation. If there are multiple copies of a bulletin, you can take one. After you read a *kairan*, make a mark like other teachers have done and give it to the next person. The administrative assistant and principals get it last. In responses to *enkai* invitations, O means “Yes, attending” and X means “No, not attending.”

Many handouts go right to your desk. Some may not be given to you, particularly if it’s not your home school or you can’t read Japanese. If you want to get more of the handouts, ask your supervisor. Reading the stuff that comes across your desk is the most work-safe way to study Japanese.

Your Contract

Simply put, don’t complain about your contract because it’s amazing. Your working hours are shorter. Your base pay is the same as the other young teachers’, even including their biannual bonus. Many of you will have your taxes and even your rent subsidized. You have more vacation time as well as much more freedom to use vacation time: there are no substitute teachers here. If one of the resource teachers

can't cover a class, the kids will do work by themselves. It's much, much easier to take vacation time when school is out than when it's in session. Unlike the other teachers, your sick days are independent from your vacation days. You only have to work 20 days in a month: after that, you get *chouseibi* (調整日), or free vacation days. No one else, not even ALTs in other prefectures (or even some Kumamoto cities!) gets this.

Teachers typically don't know your working hours are shorter, and besides that, it's quite uncommon to leave right at the closing bell in this country. People work until the job is finished more than working until the clock runs out. At many work places, there's a closing bell at 5:00 and then a "real" closing bell at 5:15. My home school even has a soft ball at 10:00 PM and futons at school so teachers can sleep there if necessary. So if you leave right at 4:00 every day, it'll be noticed. How to get around this? You could simply leave later than you're supposed to, and as you get in the spirit of Japan this will seem more and more normal. You can look really busy and say you're leaving to handle some particular errand like visiting the post office or going to the Board of Education

It's impolite to ask about payment here, but people will ask anyway, and your salary is on the public record since you're a state employee. I always tell people that ALTs can't choose their locations in any way, shape, or form, though they can express their preferences, so it's most fair to guarantee a base salary so that teachers in big cities like Osaka can cover their living expenses. And I go all-out to try to earn the money.

Computer, Printer, and Fax

There are usually multiple copying machines, with one for nice single copies and one for mass copies for all the students. The biggest difference is what kind of paper and ink they use. Learn how both machines work so that you don't have to ask the administrative assistant to make copies for you every time. Faxes, even 1-pagers, are usually sent along with a cover sheet explaining what's in the fax.

Color printing costs money, so use it only when you *need* something to be in color. Otherwise get used to changing printouts to black and white: that option is in the same place in Japanese printer setup.

People don't like conflict here, so no one will tell you if you're hogging a machine. You just have to be aware of it. If you're going to use a computer for a very long period of

time, try one of the less-used ones. Use the office phone for work-related calls, your cell phone for personal calls, and be conscious of how your voice carries inside the staff room. Using the office computer for personal reasons, especially during work hours, is looked down upon here as much as anywhere else.

There is a PA system (*housou* 放送) for calling any individual classroom or the entire school. I've never used it myself, but if an elementary class is late in getting you, the administrative assistant might use it.

Most technology words are borrowed from English, so even if things are hard to read, you can talk your way through most matters.

Food

People here are crazy about food, and there are more conventions around it than we have in America. One is that people generally don't eat while doing something else. You shouldn't eat while standing or while walking somewhere. Even if you're at a sports game, people will make fun of you for doing this. Also, you shouldn't eat breakfast at the office – you look unprepared.

At elementary and junior high, you'll be expected to eat the same school lunch as everyone else. You can bring your own lunch every day if you really want to, as some teachers do, but you'll have to work it out with your lunch center. On school days without school lunch, you can buy the same *bentou* (弁当) as everyone else, or you can bring your own homemade lunch, which will be a big hit because people are curious about what foreigners eat. Since everyone eats the same thing so often, if you have any allergies, you should inform the teachers in charge of ordering and serving food.

Often the administrative assistant will give you tea or coffee, especially at a school where you're more of a visitor. Say thank you or "*itadakimasu*" for anything you receive. You should still wash your own cup when you finish.

Often parents will bring gifts for teachers, particularly produce if you're in a farming town. It's nice to ask where a gift comes from. If the giver is in the room when you are eating something, say "*itadakimasu*" to him before eating it, and then say it's delicious right after. If the school lunch chef visits your school, it's nice to compliment his work, too. There is often a staff "stash" with small snacks you can eat. If you

take food out of there, you should put food in, as well. Leftovers from school lunch often end up in the refrigerator or on the table. As one of the few teachers living by himself, you can usually take these home. Try to take the milk home only if there are excessive amounts, or the expiration date is a week away, since other teachers use it for their coffee.

If you're eating with the kids, try to eat everything on your plate because they're expected to do the same thing, and try not to let them off easy by taking things they don't like. If there's extra food in the class canisters, you can usually take some, but wait for the kids to have a go at it first. They need the calories, and they're supposed to finish everything according to the *mottainai* or "don't waste" philosophy. On fried chicken days and the like, kids will play rock-paper-scissors to decide who gets the extra pieces of chicken.

If you're eating with the students, don't start until everyone says "*Itadakimasu.*" Set your chopsticks down sideways across your plate so that they don't point at anyone in particular. To do so is a challenge. Don't leave your chopsticks sticking out of your food. This is a funeral custom.

Enkais

If you like parties, this is where you can really shine. Not all your schools will invite you to their functions, but your "home school" typically will, and those who are invited usually attend. Parties are held at least once a month. It's a great way to get to know your co-workers, and over alcohol people more often say what they really think. Legitimate excuses for missing *enkai*, and in general, are (1) family, (2) religion, and (3) a prior commitment, including travel. Punctuality is a sign of trustworthiness here, so don't make promises you can't keep; if you're going to come, come on time; if you're going to be late, call it advance and say so. Backing out at the last minute is the worst possible thing you can do, since the dinners are ordered in advance and they'll have to pay your share anyway.

Japanese parties are always the same. First, there's a big dinner at a nice restaurant where you can eat and drink more than you usually would in a week (and you'll pay more, too). After the first party, or *ichijikai* (一次会), there are successive optional smaller parties at pubs, karaoke bars, snack joints, and the like (*nijikai* 二次会, *sanjikai* 三次会....get it?)

If you're young and/or male, people will expect you to drink and assume you can stick it out for every event, and what's more, they'll really want you to do that because partying with a foreigner is special for them. If you don't drink, let everyone know as soon as possible so you aren't dashing their hopes, and be sure to raise your hand for receiving oolong tea, *uron cha* (烏龍茶), the standard non-alcoholic party drink, before the *kanpai*. If you're planning to go home early, have a reason and tell people at the beginning so it doesn't feel like you've only felt truly pressured to drink a couple times.

Ironically, since everyone is supposed to be relaxing, seniority plays a big role at *enkai*, and people keep score on how you behave. The best rule of thumb is to read the atmosphere and do what everyone else is doing. Because it's more relaxed, hierarchy isn't as powerful during an *enkai*, so people will make objections to superiors about school policy and the like that they wouldn't do in the office. Also, people talk about sex more freely after drinking, and chances are they'll ask you really awkward questions some day. If you're adept, you can often dodge them by diverting the conversation topic – remember, you're jousting with drunk people. Sticking up one pinkie means “girlfriend,” and if someone flashes one at you, they're coming in for that line of questioning.

First of all, don't drink until the toast (*kanpai*)! This goes for all the parties, not just the first one. Second, remember to wipe your hands with the towel provided to you, but you can save that for after the *kanpai* or when everyone else is doing it. Maybe you've seen the traditional Japanese way of sitting, *seiza* (正座), in which you kneel down and sit on your feet. It can be painful, but it's difficult for Japanese people too, so most people typically only do it until after the *kanpai*. On the plus side, it's an easy way to reach everything on the table. You can practice it a little each *enkai*.

When you first enter a room, check for a person collecting money. This is the *otouban* (お当番). He is in charge of paying for everyone, usually beforehand since it's a set course with all-you-can drink premium. He also usually sits closest to the door so he can order drinks during the party. In a small restaurant, you can call for more drinks with a “*sumimasen!*” If you have your own room, there is typically a telephone by the door for calling the desk and making orders. If someone near you needs a drink, tell the *otouban*. But during your time here you'll end up ordering the drinks yourself much of the time, so it's best to get used to it.

If it's a party for you, and all your parties in August and September will be, you have to make another self-introduction. Keep it short because everyone wants to drink. A paragraph or two is enough.

Food is most often served family style. Turn your chopsticks backwards when reaching into a community bowl so you won't introduce your germs, at least until someone says you don't have to do that. Make sure everyone can get a share. It's customary in Asia to leave a little bit of food on each common plate, just in case someone really needs it – but once the plates pile up and you need space, someone can take care of the last part.

Seating for the big dinner is decided by lottery. When the rice comes out, the meal is almost over – typically only the dessert follows. The teachers responsible for opening and closing toasts are decided by seniority. If you're asked to do a closing cheer, try to bring in something fun from your home country, like “hip hip hooray!” or a traditional South African song. Introduce the cheer, then have everyone do it together.

At some point during the *enkai*, conversation will turn to how great you are, so be ready to refuse their compliments or turn it around by returning compliments. It's hard to return compliments for how well you use chopsticks, so just be grateful for that.

Moving between tables is allowed. Like at other parties, be sensitive about people who are all alone. If you go somewhere, bring your cup in case someone wants to pour you a drink. Formally, you shouldn't eat food from someone else's place, but it does happen, especially at the very end.

Ironically considering how much the kids have to eat at lunch, there are often tragic amounts of leftovers afterward. Once in a while you can box it up and take it home – it depends on the crowd. Many consider this a *faux pas*, but others will say you can do it, or they'll even do it for you.

As nervous as you may be, people are more nervous of talking to *you*. You're going to become very accustomed to meeting Japanese strangers, but they only meet a couple foreigners a year at most, and the prospect of speaking English can cause huge stress for some people and make them shut down.

At karaoke, try not to hog the mike. Doing 2 songs in a row is rare, 3 especially rare. At a good party, things rotate among everyone. You can choose one or two strictly personal favorites to show your chops, but lean toward songs everyone knows. People get more into it that way and sing along more. Try to remember songs that have been played or mentioned at school. The Beatles and The Carpenters are safe. At some parties, people will pick songs for you to sing, so it's good to get a handle on what's hip among Japanese. For example, the most popular Billy Joel song here is "Honesty," which I'd never heard before but which people have chosen for me to sing more than once. You'll also make a huge impression if you can sing a Japanese song. If someone is having trouble singing a song, try to help them out by singing along. Don't let the fun die!

Since you're a schoolteacher, coming to school smelling of smoke or alcohol, or still drunk, is really inappropriate. People will know even if they don't say anything. And if you've been out somewhere, your clothes are going to smell like beer and smoke whether you know it or not.

Japanese Drinking Rules

This is a drinking culture. In the US, there are drinking parties and classy parties, but here alcohol is pervasive and parents get drunk in front of their kids. That said, alcohol is meant to facilitate social interaction, not prevent it, so getting too drunk to communicate, stay awake, or keep all your food in your stomach is a mark against you. By the way, in Japanese the word "sake" refers to all alcoholic beverages

Now for the basics of Japanese drinking, which I have figured out little by little and at great cost. Young people and women are expected to look after their superiors' drinks. No one should have an empty glass, so while talking, keep an eye on this. If someone's glass becoming empty, ask him what he'd like next, and then pour it or order it or find someone who can do these things. Beer is also referred to as *nama* (生), which means "raw" or more "fresh," during parties.

A person cannot decide when a drink is poured for him: he depends on others. When it is being poured, however, the person receiving the drink determines how much he wants to have. He lifts the glass, even lightly pushing upward against the bottle, when he's had enough, and he can say "*Hai!*" or "*Arigatou!*" as well. So whether you're

pouring a drink or receiving one, keep this in mind.

Hot drinks poured in shot glasses have their own special rules, so be careful about ordering them. The most famous of these drinks is *nihonshu* (日本酒), rice wine, “sake” to us English speakers. Namely, you cannot pour your own glass. You must let someone else pour it for you, and once the glass has been poured, you must drink it all, so in a sense you’re entrusting your life to your drinking partners.

Shouchu (焼酎) hails from Kyushu, and so it’s quite popular around here. It’s like vodka or brandy, but it’s usually watered down. Sometimes you’ll pour right into a person’s glass, but usually you’ll prepare the drink yourself with the three-piece “shouchu set,” which includes alcohol, water, and ice. Ask whether the person wants ice, because the drink can be served hot or cold. Also, ask how much of the cup, on a scale of 1 to 10, should be alcohol. If you’re not sure, go with 5. If you know a certain teacher likes *shouchu*, chances are good he’ll want some about halfway through the party.

Some people will come to you, bottle in hand, raring to drink with you cup for cup. Some people will even take your empty cup, ask you to fill it for them, drink it for you, then give it to you and fill it up for you to drink in turn. The nice thing about this country is that most people have low tolerance, so they won’t keep it going for long. If you’re concerned drinking too much, remember it’s a social thing, so the appearance of drinking with someone is much more important than the amount you drink. No one ever asks how many cups you cleared. Don’t touch your cup if no one else is looking at it. And if someone wants to pour beer into your cup, but your cup is already full, it’s okay: accept the little that can fit, then drink from that.

At the end of the party, people talk to each other about how they’re getting home. You know the usual suspects: taxi, *daikou* (代行), carpooling, or having family pick you up. This is partially to prevent drunk driving. Even the police don’t know you drunk drove home, if any of your teachers know, you’ll lose a lot of respect. On top of that, if someone is caught drunk driving, anyone who encouraged him to drink is also legally responsible, which causes legal problems for everyone else. Here in Japan, after one sip of the *kanpai*, you’re legally drunk.

Omiyage

Westerners have been exchanging gifts since The Iliad, so *omiyage* shouldn't seem all that unusual, but sadly we're out of practice. The point of *omiyage* is to show that someone's in your thoughts. For now, you should concern yourself with welcome presents to your home schools, your host family, and your Board of Education. You'll find that the incoming teachers at your schools in April will bring *omiyage* themselves. Your dictionary probably says *omiyage* means "souvenir," which Westerners interpret as a keepsake from a shop, but here in Japan people almost exclusively give food. If you've already brought something else from your home country, though, don't cry! Give it anyway! It will still be appreciated, as the plates I brought from America are still displayed in my elementary school staff rooms.

After the first month, *omiyage* refers to local food you bring back to the office after traveling. The more gifts you buy, the merrier, but in terms of obligation, if a school or group is going to feel your absence, you should get something for them. Know how many people are in the office and get enough for everyone. In Japan, especially, there are shops everywhere selling individually packaged goods.

You can give freely to teachers, but you have to ask your principal and vice principal for permission to give things to the students. I brought pennies when I first came, but my supervisor forbade me from giving money to students. I brought Tootsie Rolls when I returned from Christmas vacation, and those were acceptable at four of my five schools.

New Year's Cards

Sending New Year's Cards, or *nengajou* (年賀状), is a Japanese custom, and you can make a big impression if you participate, as well. You can buy basic cards at the post office or nicer cards at Hallmark (which then require cheaper postcard stamps from the post office). You can send them to your schools, your Board of Education, your host family, your teachers, and other people with whom you had regular contact this year. If you want to write in the Japanese, it's best to copy from a sample because the locations of the sending address and the return address, along the contents of the message itself, are determined by tradition. Otherwise, sending cards in the style of your own country would be an exciting departure itself! *Nengajou* are specially delivered by the post office on January 1st, so when you've completed your cards, you can drop them off any time in December.

Don't send cards to anyone whose parents or grandparents have died in the last year. For those people, the New Year's celebration is a solemn one. But since you probably don't know about deaths in the family, being new to everything, a simple "gomen" with condolences will suffice. If you get a card from someone you didn't receive from, no problem. That person, seeing your card, will write another one to be sent to you a couple days later.

Try not to relax too much after you've gotten the hang of things. You can always make a mistake, especially when you're complacent. Try to express gratitude for everything, because you are given so much every day! Have fun!

JTE RELATIONS

First Impressions

On your first day in any school you should familiarise yourself with the key staff members. Those placed higher-up, such as the principal and vice-principal, may not speak any English so you would be well advised to memorise a simple introduction in Japanese. The following should be sufficient. If in any doubt, ask your supervisor for advice or assistance with pronunciation.

- Bow: Back straight, hands at sides for men and in front for women; the lower the bow, the more polite.
- Say: Hajimemashite (“Pleased to meet you.”)
- Say: Your name + desu (“My name is”)
- Say: Dozo yoroshiku onegai shimasu. (“I’m looking forward to working with you.”)
- Bow again



Be prepared to say this to the principal (kocho sensei), vice-principal (kyoto sensei), possibly the office superintendent (jimuchō) and any people you are introduced to. Your new colleagues will appreciate any effort you make to speak Japanese, especially if they are not confident in your language.

However, if you forget the introduction you memorised, do not worry. A smile and a pleasant manner will work just as well. Many staff members in your new workplace may feel shy and insecure about talking to you straight away. If you have any cookies or other edible gift from your home country you could ask your supervisor how to go about distributing them and this could help break the ice. It can take time to establish friendly relations with your workmates and this is sometimes a surprise for ALTs who are not used to Japanese styles of communication. Be patient and always try to be friendly and approachable.

First impressions endure in Japan so remember that you are laying important groundwork for the year ahead.



Maintaining a Good Rapport

Your relationship with your Contracting Organisation is at the core of the JET Programme and it is important that you develop a good, trusting relationship with those you work with. Your Contracting Organisation is the place that you have a contract with, so building their trust will not only help in the smooth running of your everyday worklife, it could also prove to have other benefits. If you ever have a problem or are in an emergency, you will find that the kind of extra support or sympathy you receive from your colleagues could depend on the little things you do in the workplace every day. The following are some things you should bear in mind when you are at work:

- **Be punctual.** Find out when you are expected to be at work and arrange to arrive a little earlier.

- Dress appropriately. Appearance matters in Japan, so try to ascertain what kind of dress is expected of you. **If in doubt, dress more conservatively** than you would back home. You would probably be better off waiting a while and getting an idea of what goes before wearing anything too casual or unconventional.

- Greet people in the mornings. When the staff arrive in the morning you will hear a loud chorus of **Ohayo gozaimasu (Good morning)** in the office. Lose your inhibitions and shout it out when you yourself arrive in the office.



- Ask for permission to do anything, especially at first. **Showing yourself to be “dependent” on those above you in Japan is the ultimate compliment** to them and will go a long way in acquiring their trust.

- If you have something to say, make sure you say it to the appropriate person, that is the person immediately above you, your supervisor. **Going above someone’s head**, even if it is to approach someone in a better position to help you, **is considered an insult to those in charge.**

- **Show interest in your work** and accept any offers that come your way. Your colleagues will be impressed by your openness and willingness to learn and be part of the team.

- **Offer to do menial tasks.** They may not be within your responsibility, but have to be done and your help will be appreciated.

- Study Japanese and show a **willingness to learn about Japanese culture.** Your efforts will be appreciated and your colleagues are likely to be more open to accepting you as someone who is trying to become part of the school environment.

- Enjoy being with your students. **Showing a genuine interest** in them will not only endear yourself to them, it will also impress the other teachers, who will be happy to see you care about the school.



- When going on a business trip or taking holiday, it is customary to bring back a present (omiyage) for the staff members to share.

- **Do not lose your temper or become too emotional during work hours.** This kind of behaviour is considered to be childish and could result in serious damage to the perception your workmates have of you.

- **Smile and be yourself.** This will automatically make you more approachable.

Lesson Feedback Form

Please help me improve today's lesson:

1) **Was the content too difficult for the kids?** (please circle one)

生徒にはレッスンは難しかったのでしょうか。

1	2	3	4	5
(too easy)		(about right)		(too hard)
(簡単だった)		(ちょうどよかった)		(難しかった)

2) **How appropriate/relevant was the material?**

レッスンの内容は役に立ちましたか。

1	2	3	4	5
(not appropriate)				(very appropriate)
(あまり役に立たなかった)				(とても役に立った)

3) **How was the warmup activity?**

1	2	3	4	5
(not appropriate)				(very appropriate)
(あまり役に立たなかった)				(とても役に立った)

4) **How was the main class activity?**

1	2	3	4	5
(not appropriate)				(very appropriate)
(あまり役に立たなかった)				(とても役に立った)

5) **How can we make class better next time?**

Any other comments:

Physical Fitness

Staying physically active is important anywhere in the world, especially Japan!



adjustment easier.

Physical activity keeps endorphins flowing in your brain, which reduces the effects of stress you WILL face at school and in daily life. When you are healthy, you are more alert and can perform better in both work and social situations. Physical exercise helps prevent you from getting sick, reduces the chance of feeling lonely or down, and makes your

Listen to Your Body

Your body will physically manifest how well you are coping here. If you inadvertently start losing or gaining weight quickly, chances are that something is not right. If you are tired all the time and don't have much energy, chances are you may not be getting enough sleep or not drinking enough water, or your blood sugar may be low. If you are craving carbohydrates, your blood sugar might be low or you might be a bit glum. Carbs help your body produce Tryptophan, which can cheer you up and help you relax. If you are craving food from home, don't feel guilty. If you choose to indulge, you'll be surprised how much it might improve your general state of mind.

Exercise Options

Here are some options for getting the physical exercise your body needs;

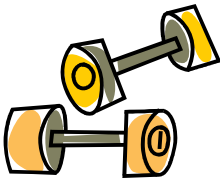
- **Join a gym** - Many towns have gyms nearby which range in price (5000-30000 per month) and quality. Swimming, weight training, aerobics class, cardio machines, etc. See the next page.
- **Get involved in a sports club at school** – Schools have club teams in sports of all types. Joining them one could help you stay active, as well as make connections with your students. Ask your fellow teachers if you can join a club they sponsor. But be careful and selective with what you commit to in the beginning. - some clubs may expect you to come everyday without fail like the students.
- **Join a community club, dojo or team** – Almost any sport and martial art under the sun is available somewhere in Kumamoto. It's just a matter of finding them. If there is something you really want to do, take initiative by asking colleagues, friends, host families and other ALTs.
- **Run, walk or bike outside** – the cheapest and perhaps easiest ways to stay fit. There are many walking paths that go around town with beautiful scenery. But in the winter months and the rainy season, these options can become much less desirable!
- **Find outdoor adventure activities** – Kumamoto has hiking, kayaking, swimming,

whitewater rafting, diving, rock climbing, and much more. In the winter, skiing and snowboarding options are not too far away. Ask around or consult a tourist guide book.

- **HASH** – This is an orienteering game! First, you spend a few hours walking or running along a “trail” left by a person called a HARE. The object of the game is to catch the HARE before you get to the end of the course. After that, everyone has a big party! Last year, one was organized by Kagoshima and JETs were welcome from all around Kyushu. There even used to be a HASH club in Kumamoto, you could start your own if you’d like. More information on this will be on the Kumamoto Yahoo Group and www.kumajet.com, so be on the lookout.
- **Japanese cultural activities** – Some traditional Japanese activities provide a great workout in addition to letting you experience Japanese culture! Classic examples are taiko drumming and Japanese fan dancing.
- **Workout at home** – Teach yourself Yoga, Pilates, or something similar in the privacy of your own home. Tae Bo, Buns of Steele, and other home workout videos can likely be attained from other ALTs or ordered new on the Internet. Resistance bands, weights and dumbbells up to 20 kilos can be purchased at sports stores in Kumamoto and Yastushiro.

Gyms in Kumamoto City

- **Prefectural Gym** (*kenritsu taiikukan*) – located on Route 1 near Kami-kumamoto station and Homyoji Temple. The gym is pay-as-you-go, so there is no monthly charge. Each use costs 370Yen. Facilities include pool, weight room, cardio equipment, basketball, badminton, volleyball.
- **Aqua Dome** – located south-west of the city center and accessible by bus directly from the Kotsu Center Bus Terminal. It is “about 400Yen” each time you enter, good for two hours. There is a gym on the second floor with weight machines, free weights, treadmills, bikes, and an aerobics room.
- **Konami Sports Club** – located on the 3rd floor of Daiei department store on the Densha Dori. The gym has a monthly membership fee. (approximately 7200Yen for unlimited use. Konami offers a pool, sauna, cardio machines (including elliptical), a weight room, and aerobics and kickboxing classes. TEL: 0120-919-537
- **Renaissance Kumamoto** – located across from the Immigration Office near the Prefectural Theater. This gym charges a monthly membership fee (similar to Konami). There are cardio machines, weight machines and free weights,



aerobics classes, pool, sauna and more. TEL: 096-363-1006

- **Kumamoto Terrsa Fitness Club** – Located in Suizenji behind the Prefectural Offices. The Terrsa charges a monthly membership fee. There are treadmills, bikes, a pool, and some weights. TEL: 096-387-2554
- **YMCA** – There are several branches of YMCA facilities around the city and prefecture. The main center is behind Kumamoto Castle in Shinmachi. The YMCA charges a monthly membership fee. Most YMCA branches have at least a pool and some also have weight and cardio facilities.



In addition to these, there are many other options around the Prefecture. Even some of the smallest towns have a municipal gym or at least a town recreation center with a pool. Ask your Gun Rep, ALTs in your area, or your Japanese colleagues and friends to find a facility near you.

PLEASE NOTE:

Gyms in Japan are essentially the same as sports clubs in our home countries. There are, however, a few major differences.

Most Japanese gyms are often smaller than their western counterparts. With less physical space, there are often fewer machines and fewer options.

Most Japanese exercisers lift weights to increase strength or muscle mass. As a result, the free weights and weight machines at many Japanese gyms are relatively light. (Dumbbells over 25 kilos - about 50 lbs - are hard to find, for example.)

Proper shoe etiquette. A pair of sneakers designated for indoor use only is required and shoes must not be worn at all in the locker room.

If you join a new gym, you may be required to keep detailed records of your progress, especially at the beginning. Among other things, you may have to measure and record your weight, blood pressure, and percent body fat before and after each workout.

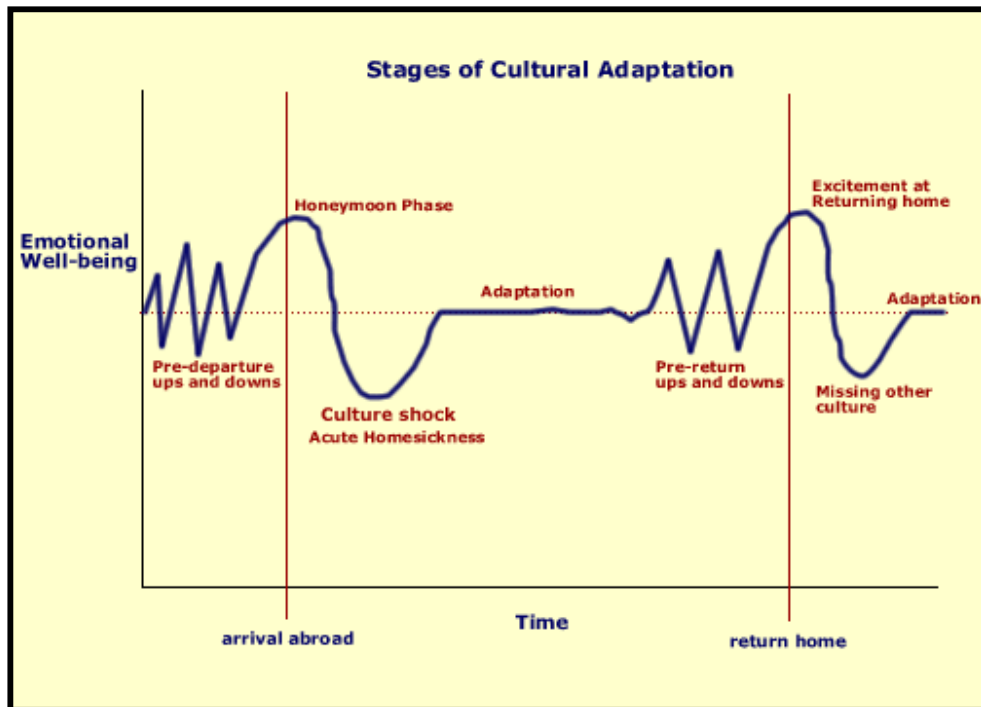
If you want to swim in the indoor pool, you are usually required to wear goggles and a head cap.



Culture Shock



An alien in a strange land



A fish out of water

Honeymoon Phase – “Everything is wonderful.” (first few weeks)

Negotiation Phase – “This sucks, I wanna go home.” (first month)

Adjustment Phase – “Ok, I can get this.” (usually 6 – 12 months)

Reverse Culture Shock – “When I was in Japan...” (re-entry shock)

Culture Shock is a cycle of ups and downs in your attitude and feelings toward the new host culture. Almost everyone will experience culture shock to some degree during their stay in Japan! It is perfectly normal even those who have lived in Japan for 10 or 20 years still report occasionally feeling a culture shock low period. Everyone has their own depth and time for experiencing culture shock. Culture shock is not depression!

Recognizing culture shock as it occurs is an important step toward dealing with it. Ignoring or dismissing culture shock will not make it go away! Having culture shock does NOT mean that you are doing anything wrong or even that you are overall unhappy, it is a natural reaction to living in a culture other than that which you are most familiar.

Symptoms of Culture Shock:

- Free-floating anxiety (you are feeling nervous or edgy and do not know why. It feels like something is bugging you, but you can't figure out what)
- Lack of self-confidence
- Loss of initiative and spontaneity
- Excessive anger over small problems and minor frustrations, especially in areas of culture difference
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Strong need to be with people of your own cultural background or nationality
- Excessive amount of time sleeping or reading or doing introverted activities that do not involve exposure to the foreign environment
- Moodswings



How To Deal With Culture Shock:

Give it time!

- Take care of your physical health by eating well, staying active, exercising, taking vitamins, etc.
- Try relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, meditation, yoga or writing.
- Set goals and reward yourself when you meet them.
- Write down why you came to Japan and what you want to accomplish this year. Refer to it when you feel frustrated.
- Develop your network of friends more, but don't cut yourself off from the Japanese community that you live in.
- Take up a new hobby or revive an old one.
- Learn to laugh at yourself and the many unexpected or ridiculous situations you may find yourself in! Realize that pointing fingers and blaming, depletes energy and wastes time.
- Be thankful for what you have. There are millions without enough to eat. So get a grip. At least you're getting paid.
- If a lot of your troubles are coming from the inability to speak Japanese, buckle down and study. Get some study partners lined-up where you exchange English for Japanese.

5 Things That I Love To Do / That Make Me Who I Am:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

As you learn more about your new community you can add things to the list that you especially enjoy about life in Japan. Remembering those things will also help you grow to feel more at home in your new home!



If You Just Can't Shake It:

One of the best ways for handling the stresses and problems you will encounter in Japan is by talking about them. Aside from you friends and family at home and in Japan, the JET Programme has a lot of support systems. .

There are situations where the do-it-yourself techniques will no longer suffice. If symptoms of stress or trauma are severe or persist for an extended period, you may wish to contact a trained mental health professional. Kumamoto Prefecture does not have any mental health services in English, but there are both English-speaking counselors (psychotherapists) and clinical psychologists in Fukuoka. For more information or for a referral, please contact your Prefectural Advisors.

AJET Peer Support Group	TEL:
The JETLINE: 03-5213-1729 M-F 8am-5pm	
CLAIR JET LINE	TEL: 03-3591-5489 (9am to 5:45pm)
Tokyo English Life Line	TEL: 03-5774-0992 (9am to 11pm)
<u>Prefectural Advisors</u>	TEL: 090-7447-7391(Zane)
	080-3952-9345 (Scott)
	080-1764-1896 (Suzy)
	EMAIL: kumamotopa@gmail.com

AJET Peer Support Group - 8PM to 7AM - 0120 43 7725
An anonymous listening and referral service, by JETs for JETs

General Hospitals

NOTE: General Hospitals (*byouin*) in Japan are not necessarily only for emergencies and major illnesses. You may find that your Japanese colleagues got to hospitals for colds, headaches, or even general sluggishness. Visiting the hospital is similar to visiting a family doctor in your home country.

Hospitals in Kumamoto City (with English-speaking doctors and/or staff members)

Jikei Hospital

6-1-27 Shimasaki, Kumamoto-shi 860-0073
TEL: 096-355-6131 FAX: 092-359-8221

Kokuritsu Kumamoto Hospital (Kumamoto National Hospital)

1-5 Ninomaru, Kumamoto-shi 860-0008
TEL: 096-353-6501 FAX: 096-323-7601

Kumamoto Chiiki-iryō Center (Medical Association Hospital)

5-16-10 Honjo, Kumamoto-shi 860-0811
TEL: 096-363-3311 FAX: 096-362-0222

Kumamoto Chuo Hospital (Kumamoto Central Hospital)

96-35 Tamukae Taino-shima, Kumamoto-shi 862-0965
TEL: 096-370-3111 FAX: 096-370-4017

Kumamoto Sekijuji Hospital (Kumamoto Red Cross Hospital)

2-1-1 Nagamine-machi-minami, Kumamoto-shi 862-0932
TEL: 096-384-2111 FAX: 096-384-3939

Kumamoto Shimin Hospital (Kumamoto Municipal Citizens' Hospital)

1-1-60 Koto, Kumamoto-shi 862-0909
TEL: 096-365-1711 FAX: 096-365-1712

Kumamoto Daigaku Hospital (Kumamoto University Hospital)

1-1-1 Honjo, Kumamoto-shi 860-0811
TEL: 096-344-2111

NTT Kyushu Hospital

1-17-27 Shinyashiki, Kumamoto-shi 862-0975
TEL: 096-364-6000 FAX: 096-362-5204

Saiseikai Kumamoto Hospital

5-3-1 Chikami, Kumamoto-shi 861-4193
TEL: 096-351-8000 FAX: 096-326-3045



For recommended hospitals outside of Kumamoto City, please contact your Gun Representative, Prefectural Advisors, Supervisor, or someone at your school.

Optometrists

Eye exams in general are similar to your home country. You will usually be shown a series of “C’s” rotated in different directions, and you will have to say or point whether it is up, down, left, or right. There is also the “which lens is better” fitting for lenses.

Ideta Eye Hospital

1-35 Gofuku-machi, Kumamoto-shi 860-0035

TEL: 096-325-5222 FAX: 096-311-5512

Ideta Eye Hospital is a prestigious eye hospital located near the Gofukumachi tram stop in Kumamoto City. Dr. Ideta speaks English and most other doctors and some nurses speak limited English. A full eye exam is provided, including checks for eye disorders (glaucoma, cataracts, etc.) It can take a long time - sometimes up to 4 hours – so bring a book! Contact lenses can usually be provided the same day as your exam. Walk-ins are welcome.

Hatch 8

Located at the entrance of Kamitori on the ground floor (next to NOVA) in Kumamoto City, Hatch 8 provides basic eye exams and can have glasses ready in an hour. There are three packages to choose from and all include frames, lenses, case, cleaning cloth, and fitting. No one speaks English, but the process is fairly easy and simple.

Flower Contacts

This shop specializes in contact lenses. It is located on the north (toward Densha Dori) end of Kumamoto City’s Shimotori. It is on the 2nd floor near McDonald’s. One of the nurses speaks very good English

In addition, there are *many* other optometrists to choose from located on and just off of the Kamitori and Shimotori in Kumamoto City. For an English-speaking eye doctor in your area, please ask your supervisor, someone at your school, your Gun rep, or your PA.

Dentists

Dental care in Japan can be slightly different than what we are used to at home. Most procedures are done by dental technicians and the dentist is more of a supervisor. Also, it is common to be asked to return for multiple check-ups after a more major procedure.

70% of most dental treatments are covered by the Japanese national insurance so don’t forget your insurance card (hokencho). The remaining 30% is generally NOT covered by the supplementary JET insurance. A normal visit to the dentist will cost around 2000¥, depending on what you have done.

Hamasaka Dental Clinic

Dr. HAMASAKA, Noboru (Joe). Hamasaka Bldg, 2nd floor, 3-1-43 Ooe, Kumamoto City 862-0971

TEL: 096-372-3311 FAX: 096-372-7078 Office hours: 9am-6pm Monday-Friday, 9am-1pm Saturday

Dr. Noboru Hamasaka received part (if not all) of his dental training in the U.S. so he is familiar with North American terminology and procedures. He shares the clinic with his father who is also a dentist. The clinic is located on the same corner as the Immigration Office (follow those directions).

Pearl Dental Clinic

Dr. MAEDA. Located beside Book-Off at the end of the tram line in Kengun Machi. Visit this address for times, phone numbers and a map: <http://www2s.biglobe.ne.jp/~kdc8020/dental/pers/41-50/050-04.htm>

The clerical staff does not speak English, but Dr. Maeda’s English is pretty good. The equipment and techniques at the clinic seem quite up to date. They have a ‘kid’s room’ that has stuffed animals and the like. The office also is a Wi-Fi hotspot if you bring your wireless ethernet-equipped laptop or PDA

Takagi Dental Clinic

Located on Kamitori in downtown Kumamoto City. If you are walking away from the *densha dori* (tram line), the practice is on the right about half way down the covered arcade. It’s a little hard to find on the 2nd floor, up a stairway between two shops. The sign says Takagi (高木) and dentist (歯科医院) in kanji.

The dentist is female and speaks good English. She is recommended by many Kumamoto City ALTs.

Dermatologists

Dermatology is similar to home but with less variety. You can expect the usual questions and less of a plethora of drugs and more of a holistic approach. The cost of the treatments and medicine is extremely cheap.

Fujiki Hifuka Hospital

藤木皮膚科病院

Kumamoto-shi, Gofuku 1-21

English speaking Dermatologist: Misae (female doctor) and Takahiro Fujiki

Kokuritsu Kumamoto Byoin (General Hospital)

国立熊本病院

Kumamoto-shi, Ninomaru 1-5

English speaking Dermatologist: Yoshihiro Maekawa

Makino Hifuka lin

牧野皮膚科医院

Kumamoto-shi, Izumi 1-1-87

English speaking Dermatologist: Ryoza Makino

Nishinohon Byoin

西日本病院

Kumamoto-shi, Hattanda 3-20-1

English speaking Dermatologist: Shinji Yamamoto

O lin

黄医院

Kumamoto-shi, Shin-machi 1-7-26

English speaking Dermatologist: Nobuyuki Kikuchi

Uemura Hinyokika Hifuka lin

上村泌尿器科皮膚科医院

Kumamoto-shi, Shinyashiki 3-9-4

English speaking Dermatologist: Chikashi Uemura

There are other English-speaking dermatologists outside of Kumamoto City Please ask your supervisor, someone at your school, your Gun rep, or your PA.

Sexual Health

Some attitudes about sex and sexuality are different in Japan than in our home countries. As with most places in the world, the most important to things are to be informed and be careful!

CONTRACEPTIVES

Condoms

Japanese condoms for men tend to be smaller than their western counterparts. You can also buy them at Don Quixote in Shimotori. Some JETs get Western-sized condoms sent from home or order them on the Internet (try www.comdomania.com or www.fbcusa.com). The female condom is sold under the name "MyFemy".

Birth Control Pills

Birth control pills are available in Japan but they may be difficult to find. They are not very common or popular with Japanese women. You can get birth control pills at Fukuda Women's Hospital in Kumamoto city. Private hospitals and clinics can distribute the pill or order them on the Internet (try www.birthcpills.com , www.drugstore.com). You can import one month's supply at a time and you need to include a prescription from the doctor.

The Morning-After Pill

In Japan the "Morning After Pill" is officially only given in emergencies as it is viewed by many Japanese doctors as unsafe. In Japanese, it is called 'kei kou shinin yaku' or in katakana 'moruningu afuta piru'. It must be taken within 72 hours after the incident. It is not covered by national insurance and you cannot get it at a pharmacy without a prescription. Fukuda Women's Hospital is the only place in Kumamoto willing to administer this pill.

TESTING

HIV/AIDS and other STD Tests

HIV/AIDS and other STD tests are available for free at Public Health Centers (*hokenjo*). The central *hokenjo* is in downtown Kumamoto City but there are branch centers in other areas. The tests are anonymous. You need to return to the center in person a week after the test to get your results. Gynecologists and General Practitioners can also do the tests if asked but they may cost more.

Gynecologists

Fukuda Women's Hospital is the best place in Kumamoto for women's health-related concerns. It is located near the central post office and the Kotsu Center in central Kumamoto. The clinic is open weekdays 9:00 - 6:00 and Saturday 9:00 - 6:00. There are English speaking doctors (Dr. Yamamoto and Dr. Obaru) who are used to working with foreigners. The phone number is 322-2995.

Pregnancy and Pregnancy Tests

The home pregnancy test called "Clear Blue" is available at pharmacists (chemists) for about 500 Yen. It is reportedly quite accurate and comes with English instructions.

If you decide to have a baby in Japan, you need to register the pregnancy at your city/town/village office within the first month. You will be given a mother and child information booklet and the Tokyo Childbirth Education Association (see the JET Diary) has information about pregnancy and childbirth in Japan.

Abortion

Abortion seems to be the most common way of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy in Japan.

It is not covered by insurance and cannot be done after the second trimester. Fukuda Hospital in Kumamoto City is able to do abortions. While abortion is still a big decision for women and their partners to make, there is often minimal counseling offered at the clinic.

**For more information on any of these topics, please contact the
Prefectural Advisors.
All inquiries are confidential!**

HIV Testing at Kumamoto City Public Health Center

This is a description of the HIV test given at the Kumamoto City Public Health Center (*Kumamoto-shi Hokenjo*), and is intended as a reference for non-Japanese speakers who go in for testing.

The test is simple and free. It takes about 15 minutes and involves filling out a simple form and giving a blood sample (8cc).

As you enter the building (on the 2nd floor) there will be a telephone on your right. The number to dial for HIV testing is 230. Once they answer just say *HIV kensa*, and they will understand. You will be asked to either go down to room 11 on the first floor or to wait a few minutes (if the room is in use), in which case they will probably ask you to sit and wait on the benches in the lobby and will come up and get you when it is time. Or, there may be an attendant there when you enter the building and they will probably call for you and accompany you down to the room. Either way, the entrance and reception area of the building are very quiet and there aren't many people around. So you shouldn't worry about privacy being a problem, or about somebody hearing you when you use the phone.

Once you enter the room, the receptionist will fill out a simple form. The form includes the date, a place to write a number which matches the number on the vile that the blood sample will be put in, a place for you to write your age, and a place for you to put a nickname that you will use when you come back to get the results. The nickname can be anything (your initials, a pet's name, a number, etc.). Once you have given this information you will be asked what you would like to be tested for. You can be tested for HIV (simply HIV, or *HIV uirusu*), Chlamydia (*kuramijia*), and Syphilis (*байдoku*). A single blood sample can be used to test for all three.

The receptionist will then take your blood. When the receptionist has finished taking your blood he/she will tell you that you can come back in for the results once a week has gone by. You do not need an appointment.

*There is an incubation period of 8 weeks for the HIV virus, 6 weeks for Chlamydia and 4 weeks for Syphilis. (It actually might be 4 weeks for Chlamydia and 6 weeks for Syphilis.) This means that it may take up to 8 weeks from the possible exposure date for the HIV Virus to appear in your blood. So you should not go in for a test until it has been 8 weeks since the possible exposure date.

More HIV/AIDS Testing Info (Nov/Dec 2004)

Unfortunately or fortunately depending on how you look at it, there have been other people in your situation before who have left anonymous records of their experiences, so I will pass on what they have said.

There are actually five clinics in Kumamoto city that do HIV testing. The most centrally located is the Kumamoto City Public Health Center. This facility also has the best hours – weekdays from 9-12 and 1-5. (The other clinics are outposts of the main clinic, one each in the north, south, east, and west sections of the city and are only open one morning per week.) The name of the central clinic in Japanese is *Kumamoto-shi Hokenjo* and it's written 熊本市保健所 in kanji. The phone number is 096-364-3185 and the

address is 1-13-16 Kuhonji. Kuhonji is the section of Kumamoto City just across the Shirakawa River from downtown. The clinic is one the corner of Ginza street and the first small road along the east bank of the river.

Here are the directions... The best tram stop is Suidocho (under the giant Coca Cola sign in downtown). Starting from here or anywhere in downtown Kumamoto (Starbucks/Parco waterball), walk along the densha dori away from the castle toward the Shirakawa River. Cross the bridge over the river and immediately turn right onto the first small road. Go to the second bridge (called Ginza-bashi; it's green and blue) and the clinic will be on the left-hand side of the near corner (it is a white building). The main entrance is off of Ginza Street. There is a mess of wheelchair ramps leading up to the door so it's pretty obvious.

The examination is free. You are not required to give your name at the exam and there is no appointment necessary. You will have to give a 3ml blood sample for the examination.

The results are available after one week. You will not be able to receive them any other way than in person. The clinic will only give results in an interview. It will not be transferred to any third party or conveyed via phone or letter. You will most likely have to take a day or partial day of leave from your school to come into the city for the results. It is recommended that nenkyu/daikyu not byokyu be used in order to take time off.

You likely already know this, but you often have to wait at least 8 weeks after a possible infection before an HIV test, due to the incubation period of the virus. If you get back negative results, it is still recommended to get a follow-up exam three months later for verification.

Because the language barrier might make it difficult to receive the kind of counseling that goes along with HIV tests in other countries, you might consider calling the Japan HIV/AIDS line. It operates on Saturdays from 11:00-14:00 at (03) 5259-0256 (Tokyo#) and (0720) 43-4105 (Osaka#). They provide a safe, non-judgmental place to discuss any concerns you might have. They have trained telephone counselors who provide emotional support (pre and post HIV testing) as well as counseling, info, and referrals.

And just to give you a better idea of what will likely happen, here is a description of the process by another JET who has been through it before:

When you go in, there is an attendant sitting near the door who, if you just write down or give the most basic request in English (or Japanese), will phone downstairs for you and (probably) accompany you to the testing room (room 11 on the first floor). The day of the test, I went in and the testing guy asked me a few questions in Japanese, which I didn't really understand, but he got across that I should come back in a minimum of one week for the results. They apparently do testing for a couple other STDs, but I am not sure which, since it was all in Japanese and I wanted to get the whole thing over with with as little confusion as possible. The HIV test was indeed free. They ask you to write a "password" on a sheet of paper which you should bring back with you when you come to get your results. The guy stuck me with a needle, which I didn't even feel, and took a sample of my blood, assigning it a number which was also on my "password" sheet. The whole ordeal took about 15 minutes.

When I returned a week later, I showed the attendant the password form, and she immediately directed me downstairs to the testing room. A woman came in this time, and I handed her the form. I speak little Japanese, and she spoke little English, so to avoid confusion, I drew a plus sign and a frowny face, and then a minus sign and a happy face, on a piece of paper which made the explanation process as simple as possible. She pointed to the happy face, and then said that everything was "daijoubu" and smiled, showing me the results in Japanese, matching the number on my password paper to the number on the results. Getting the results actually took about 5 minutes total.

GO NATIVE!



Shiso (beefsteak plant)

Promotes restful sleep; helps with insomnia, allergies, food poisoning, and diarrhea; strengthens the immune system.

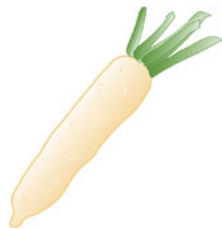


Wrap around boiled asparagus and stir fry.



Umeboshi (pickled plum):

High in antibacterial content and citric acid, fights fatigue; aids absorption of carbohydrates and fats; helps with flu, food poisoning, and hangover; appetite stimulant; prevents hemorrhoids; stimulates liver function.



Daikon (Japanese radish):

Rich in calcium and vitamin C. excellent for colds and flu; promotes digestion of carbohydrates; prevents heartburn, skin problems, nasal inflammation.



Cut in thick slices, boil and eat with miso.



Renkon (lotus root):

Rich in vitamin C, promotes sexual health and longevity, healthy skin; helps with stomach and bowel trouble, menopause; increases mental and physical stamina



Peel, boil in water with a little vinegar then add to soups salads, stir fry or deep fry to make chips.



Yama-imo (mountain yam):

Aids in the absorption of carbohydrates and other nutrients; helps with frequent urination, weak stomach and asthma; increases stamina and blood circulation



Eat with meat. Careful to wash your skin after peeling, they may cause irritation.



Gobo (burdock root):

High in fiber, prevents bowel cancer, constipation, arteriosclerosis, diabetes, and urinary infections; removes toxic waste



Rub off the rough outer layer with a hard sponge, and add to soups or stir fry.



Daizu/Edamame (soybeans)

High in protein, iron and calcium memory enhancer; lowers cholesterol; may reduce risk of Alzheimer's Disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and arteriosclerosis.



Eat plain with salt and beer.



Tofu (soy curd)

Helps absorption of Vitamin E; promotes youthful complexion; brain stimulant' prevents arteriosclerosis and bowel trouble.



Squeeze out excess water, cook and mix into anything! Salads, soups, meats, pastas, stir fry.



Konnyaku (devil's tongue jelly):

High in dietary fibre helps with constipation, diabetes, stomachaches, and waste discharge; cleanses the system.



Cut in cubes, boil until brown and add to soups or salads.



Azuki beans (red beans):

Vitamin B1Improves sexual health and vitality; increases alertness; helps with water retention, swelling, and asthma.



Add sugar (sweetened azuki is called anko) and add to pancakes, toast, cakes.



Shiitake mushrooms:

Anti-carcinogenic agents, no calories. Rich in vitamins B & D. prevents arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure, phlegm, and cancer; useful in weight control.



Try grilling with vegetables or meat. Add to soups, salads.



Nira (garlic chives):

Immune booster; helps with colds, flu, and poor circulation; corrects body temperature; combats diarrhea and constipation



Add to egg or meat dishes, salads, soups, the possibilities are endless.



Wakame (seaweed):

High in iodine, potassium and many vitamins and minerals prevents hardening of the arteries, sinusitis, diabetes, weight problems and goiter, cleanses blood and fights anemia.



Add it to a soup or stir fry.



Komezu (rice vinegar):

Antiseptic and antibacterial properties prevents skin problems, stomach trouble and fatigue.



Use it as a salad dressing or sauce. Use it to prevent oxidation of vegetables or fruits.



Konbu (kelp):

High in iodine and potassium. Helps prevent liver problems, hair loss, gum disease, heartburn, and high blood pressure



Stir fry it with vegetables or add it to a soup.



Genmai (unpolished brown rice):

High in dietary fiber, and vitamins B1 and E, stimulates metabolism, and sexual and mental health; fights aging and fatigue.



Soba (buckwheat noodles):

Rich in vitamin P and B1 lowers blood pressure; helps with constipation and arteriosclerosis; improves digestion and circulation; strengthens capillaries and vessels.



Add to a salad.



Miso:

High in vitamins E, A, and C reduces harmful toxins; hangovers and high blood pressure, aids in nicotine and alcohol removal.



Eat this plain with crackers. Make into a salad dressings or sauce. Mix with mashed potatoes.

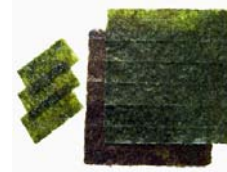


Natto (fermented soy beans):

High in vitamin B2 prevents stroke; promotes sexual potency; helps with heart problems and degenerative brain disorders.



Add this to pizza.



Nori (dried seaweed):

High in iron, vitamins and B1 and C, and calcium protection against cancer; prevents hair loss, constipation, mental fatigue, irritability, and anemia.



Eat this plain, or wrap something in it like cheese, rice, tomatoes, pretzels. Crumble in salads.



Kinako (soybean flour):

Lowers cholesterol, the risk of osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, and kidney disease.



Mix this in milk, ice cream, on mochi, pancakes, bananas, apples or toast. It has the taste of peanut flour so you can substitute it for a peanut butter taste.



Sesame seeds:

Contains calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, vitamin B1, zinc and dietary fiber. Lowers cholesterol, prevents high blood pressure and protects the liver.



Mix this in stir fry, shakes, or toasted in salads and fruit salads. You can add this to practically anything.



Ocha (green tea):

Reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and inhibits free radicals (cancer), dental caries, and kidney stones



Drink this like a shot and it may go down easier. Try not to add sugar.

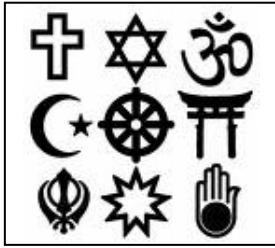


Anchovies:

Reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and lowers cholesterol. Good source of Vitamin D and E and omega-3 fatty acid.



You'll see these dried and mixed with beans, nuts, etc. They are surprisingly good.



Spiritual Health

Here is a list of places of worship that is by no means comprehensive. Please ask English speakers in your area for more information.



Christian Churches (Protestant)

You can also try Christian site <http://www.jetchristianfellowship.com>.

Ozu Christian Church, Ozu Town

Sunday 10:00am - Japanese service with simultaneous English translation; tea and coffee, lunch after

Contact: Cassandra Sandoval, cassandrasandoval@gmail.com

Directions: from Higo-Ozu station, go two short blocks west and turn right. The church will be on the left.

Kumamoto Lutheran Church, downtown Kumamoto City

5:00pm – English Bible Study; 6:00pm - Non-denominational English Worship Service; tea and fellowship after.

Contact: John Haynes, kumamotoengserve@hotmail.com

Directions: from Route 3 in downtown Kumamoto, the church is the third building north of Densha Dori (the tram line) on the left-hand side.

Miyuki Christian Fellowship, southern Kumamoto City

10:30am - Bilingual (English/Japanese) Worship Service; coffee/tea served before and lunch after.

Contact: Craig Roberts 096-334-3966 craig@mtwo.com Directions: (just south of Higashi Bypass on Heisei Odori, Right just after the Yamazaki Convenience store. look for the green sign with black letters in Japanese)

When there is a critical mass of English speaking people, fellowship in English is also held at other times, such as Sunday afternoon. Space is available for any kind of gathering, including staying over night.

Takamori Christ Church, Nishihara Village

Service begins at 10 am

Phone 0967-62-0214

<http://takamorichurch.sakura.ne.jp/>



Christian Churches (Catholic)

Tedori Church

Uedorimachi Kumamoto-city Kumamoto

(next to Nikko Hotel on densha dori)

TEL 096-352-3030

Saturday 6pm (in Japanese)

Sunday 9am, 11:30pm (in Japanese)

First Sunday of every month, 11:30 - International Mass

Minamata church

Sakuraimachi Minamata-city Kumamoto

TEL 0966-62-4286

1st & 3rd Sunday 3:00 PM (in English?)

Tetori Catholic Church, downtown Kumamoto City

English Mass (I do not know the time or if it is still being held) There is an English-speaking priest at the Tedori Church on densha dori, I have no doubt if you called him, he could give you information on all of the Catholic services in Kumamoto (including those at Catholic High Schools, etc.)

Other:

Kumamoto Baha'i Community



Everyone is welcome to attend the following events: Pancake Breakfast and Garden Party the 2nd Saturday of every month at 10 am.

Devotionals every Saturday at 9:30 to 10am

Games Night 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month from 6pm.

Luana Hirahara

email: hirahara@rainbow.plala.or.jp

phone #096-235-6165

Islam



The Kumamoto International Foundation may have more current information about Islamic places of worship. Please call the Kumamoto International Foundation at (0)96 359-2020. You can also try <http://islamcenter.or.jp/eng/index.html>.

Here is a Kumamoto Islamic prayer schedule:

<http://islamcenter.or.jp/salat%20timetable/Kumamototimetable.htm>

This shop provides Halal meat:

http://shop.azhar.jp/ihf/mise/index.html?bread_reset=1

Zazen



Zazen is a meditative discipline performed to calm the body and mind and experience insight into the nature of existence. While the term originally referred to a sitting practice, it is now commonly used to refer to practices in any posture—try it at your desk. Alternatively, visit any of the locations listed below. It is recommended that you learn the basics of Zazen before showing up, or take a Japanese speaker to the lecture given at the temple before you start to avoid being beaten on your shoulders with a stick during the session <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/>

Zen Buddhism:

If you want to practice Zen Meditation in Kumamoto-ken, the following are foreigner friendly places.

Rinzai Zen

Kumamoto Ningen Zen Doujo, 798-1 Miyoshi, Koushi-shi

Sitting meditation every morning at 5:30am

Sitting meditation and reading every Tuesday 7:30pm

Also overnight, and retreats on a regular basis.

The youth and middle aged practice days are especially good introductions.

Phone 096-242-0263 (in Japanese) or email horik@kumagaku.ac.jp (in English)

This is the main practice hall in Kumamoto-ken, however there are also places in Kumamoto City, Uto, Yatsushiro, Aso with meditation at various times.

Soto Zen

Shogoji Temple, 2034 Hanjaku, Kikuchi-shi, 861-1672

Sitting meditation on 2nd Sunday each month, at 9am and 1pm

It is located above Hougi village, past Ryumon Dam, in Kikuchi, and is very difficult to find, but well worth it.

There is also a summer retreat and winter intensive practice.

www.shogoji.com Phone 090-3730-7128

Jokokuji Temple

2-20-35 Takahira, Kumamoto-shi 860-0085

Sitting meditation, each Thursday night at 8pm

A small temple located in a northern suburb of Kumamoto City, near Route 3

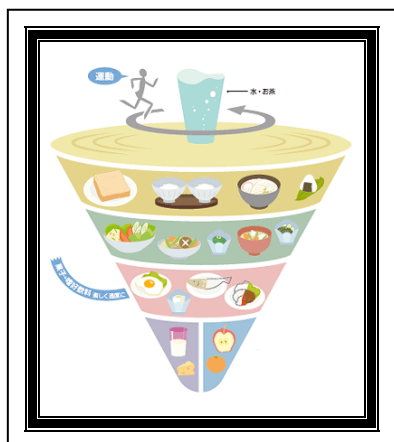
Phone 096-344-7603

Daijizenji Temple

Sitting meditation on the 3rd Sunday each month, at 10am

Located in Kawashiri, just south of Kumamoto City on route 3

Weight Gain



Japanese have the least obesity, longest lifespan and a worldwide claim to fame for having healthy diets. It's no surprise that celebrities are hiring Japanese chefs to prepare foods in their homes. That being said, in general, foreign men usually lose weight and foreign women usually gain weight in Japan. You may see in everyday life people scarfing down unhealthy foods and wonder how it is it possible that they don't gain weight. Part of it is genetics, part luck and part lifestyle. Let's not brood over circumstances that we can't change, and concentrate on what we can.

First of all, it is interesting to note that in the Japanese food pyramid (spinning top), dairy products are ranked with fruits. Both have lots of sugar. Japanese consume only 20 kilos of sugar per year, while Western countries consume over 3 times that amount. Another possible key to Japanese lower weight gain is the variety of food, with a typical Japanese consuming 100 varieties of food a week, compared with America's 30 and Europe's 45.

Kyushoku (School Lunch)



Overall school lunches are extremely healthy, being planned by nutritionists to ensure that the kids get the maximum amount of nutrition and variety. Local produce is often used and may include produce grown by the children themselves! When these meals were originally instituted, school lunch may have been the only meal that the kids would eat all day. Today's target of about 800-1,000 calories per meal is the result. Keeping this in mind, it may be necessary to get rid of some calories, depending on your individual caloric needs.

Advice for kyushoku eaters:

1. If possible try to pour some of the massive food portion to other teachers' bowls, before eating with the kids (or get rid of foods you can't or won't eat).
2. Perhaps limit drinking the whole milk (136 cal) or eating the bread (300 cal) or dessert (100-200 cal) to a few times per week, or foregoing it altogether.

10 Tips to Maintain Weight

1. Keep tabs on how much you're drinking on the weekends and throughout the week. At 200 to 300 calories per drink, those enkais can take all the calories for two whole days.
2. Eating breakfast is an important part to jumpstart your metabolism and the traditional Japanese fare is miso, fish, rice and vegetables, green tea. (I prefer oatmeal and berries, shakes or fruit and kinako.)
3. Know how many calories you need to consume each day. (Try www.caloriesperhour.com or www.calorieking.com).
4. It's ok to say "mo kekko desu", if you are full and people keep pushing. If you don't like it, don't eat it. Don't make yourself eat something just because it's there.
5. Park far away in parking lots and make yourself walk; it won't kill you to walk the extra few hundred feet.
6. Take the elevator part way down and the stairs the rest of the way.
7. Eat protein, nuts, eggs, chicken or tofu to feel full and eat less.
8. Eat slowly, chopsticks should help.
9. Try to avoid conbini's. They're so easy and tempting, but don't turn them into a bad habit.
10. Don't keep unhealthy snacks at home, if you get them as a gift, give some or most away! Gain friends, not weight ☺

Low Cal Drink Options



Sho-chu

2 oz (~59 ml) = 30 calories



Sake

2 oz (~59 ml) = 80 calories



Chu-Hi Zero

350 ml (~12 oz) = 175 calories

THRIVING IN RURAL JAPAN

"Where are all the neon lights, robotic toilets and stores open after 5pm?" I hear you ask. Your placement may not be the kind of Japan you were expecting, but you should count yourself lucky; with a little adjustment and a good attitude, rural Japan can easily be home to an incredible JET experience.



Getting Established

- **Get connected** (phone, internet, local/JET contacts) - start the Internet set-up process early
- **Build a social circle** - keep in contact with the people you meet at orientation – especially those in your *Gun* (local region).
- **Learn about your area** - Walk around, locate the nearest food store, public phone, train station, and other useful places. Take note of any restaurants and cafes at which you can relax and meet locals.
Photocopy pages and draw all over them to highlight train stations, school(s), Board of Education, shops and restaurants. Your village/town hall may have a poster-sized map.
- **Transport** - Whether or not you have a car, take note of the train timetable – both for the local area and for the route back to Kumamoto City. <http://www.hyperdia.com/>

Getting Out

- **Be positive** - People will definitely be interested in you. If you don't know your *kochou* from your *kanchou* (you will soon), then simply greet them with a smile. Displaying a positive attitude here makes a huge difference.
- **Accept opportunities** - One of the best things you can do in rural Japan is take up opportunities to get involved in what's going on in the local community. Even small villages will host fairly regular festivals. Ask your supervisor what's happening in the coming weeks.
- **Be comfortable in your home** - Take time to make your home more personal and it won't feel like you're just living in someone else's house.
- **Don't crowbar yourself into it** - If you find adjusting to rural life pretty tough, take a break. Go to the nearest city and enjoy such luxuries as department stores, cinemas and escalators (!)
- **Make an effort** - A crucial part of thriving in rural Japan is leaving your comfort bubble. Skype and other foreign friends are essential and come easily, but do remember to meet Japanese people and create opportunities to experience Japanese culture, too.



Bugs

They exist in the city too, but we see more of them in the countryside. There are a few things, both defensive and offensive, that you can do:

- **Keep your house clean** – don't leave unwashed dishes around, be sure to wash greasy pots/pans, keep food in sealed packages. Buy some plastic containers and clips from the local 100 yen shop.
- **Fix the insect screens on your windows** – You'll want to keep your windows open to air your house, but if you have an insect screen, make sure that it's sealed all the way around.
- **Use a *barusan*** – Set it down, light the fuse, and this will slowly fill your house with pesticidal gas, enough to kill any living thing in your house. The downside is that you must leave your house for at least 24 hours. Open doors to your storage areas (closets, cupboards) too, but hide away your clothes and plates/cutlery, etc. in storage boxes.
- **Get a bug spray** – any brand will do.
- **Know that some of them are good** – Yes, really. Centipedes eat cockroaches; spiders eat flies; frogs eat spiders. Although, if you have all of the above in your house at the same time I suggest moving.
- ***Mukade* (centipede)** – This is one insect that you should be aware of. The large, black centipede with a red head is poisonous, tough and very fast. If you attempt to kill one using traditional methods (heavy book/shoe/newspaper), you'll need to do it right first time. There is also a mukade spray (*mukade sachuuza*) but I've heard varied reports about whether it's effective or not.



Two more things...

- **City envy** – Don't let city envy get to you. It's easy to be initially disappointed that you're not living in close proximity to bars, department stores and general convenience, but rural Japan is in no way a less-Japanese experience, nor is it any less enjoyable.
- **Winter** – It may be hard to imagine in the middle of summer, but it gets extremely cold in winter here. You'll also receive your re-contracting papers around this time. Don't make a hasty decision based on how you feel at the time (numb, quite possibly). A kerosene (touyu) heater will go a long way to making those winter months more comfortable.



Useful Japanese

Do you have product/food? _____ *ga arimasu ka?*

I come from country. _____ *kara kimashita.*

Something for a _____ please. _____ *no kusuri o kudasai.*

burn – *yakedo*

hay fever - *kafunsho*

cut – *kiri kizu*

upset stomach – *i no mukatsuki*

fever – *netsu*

sunburn - *hiyake*

headache – *zutsu* (sun block – *hiyake dome*)

A bug bit me, so I need some medicine. *mushi ni sasareta node, kusuri wo kudasai.*

Useful Links

➤ Travel

- www.hyperdia.com/cgi-english - Japanese train timetables and prices in English
- www.gotjapan.com/living - Tips about daily life in Japan
- www.jnto.go.jp – Japan National Tourism Organisation
- www.skynetasia.co.jp – Cheap if you book in advance
- www.outdoorjapan.com - Info on outdoor activities, tourism etc.
- www.hostelworld.com – International hostel database
- www.no1-travel.com – English-speaking travel agency
- www.across-travel.com – Another English-speaking travel agency

➤ Shopping

- www.theflyingpig.com – Buy western food from Costco online
- www.fbcusa.com - Similar to above
- www.amazon.co.jp - Books, DVDs, CDs etc

➤ General Advice

- <http://www.gotjapan.com/living> - A lot of useful advice
- www.seekjapan.jp – More advice for foreigners living in Japan

➤ Cars and Driving

- www.goo-net.com – New and used cars
- www.goobike.com – New and used motorbikes
- www.jaf.or.jp/e/ - Japanese Auto Federation information

➤ Japanese Study

- <http://www.thejapanesepage.com>
- <http://rikaichan.mozdv.org> – Plugin for Firefox
- www.alljapaneseallthetime.com

SETTING UP HOME



Kyushu is very damp and hot. As a result, it is very important to keep your house as clean as possible. This is to prevent bugs and insects from coming into your house. There are some tips on what to use to clean your house, and what to use to keep bugs away (or to kill them). Furthermore, Japan has a very strict system for garbage separation. It is important to know what is to be separated if you do not want your garbage to be send back to you again. Also, to furnish your new house like a home, there are some great places where you can do your shopping. I hope the following information will help you to have an easy transition and a nice time in Kumamoto.

INTERNET /PHONE ACCESS

You'll probably want the World Wide Web as soon as possible to feel close to home. YahooBB is what most JETs use for internet and often for phone (YahooBB Phone). You can deal with account matters and English and they have wonderful long distance phone deals. For YahooBB account support in English call 03-6888-4943 from a mobile. Unfortunately you cannot apply over the phone. For English information on setting up your internet with YahooBB visit http://bbapply.com/faq/contact_ybb.html.

If you wish to speak to your family you might like to use a phone card or set up a special plan for for long distance calls. A list of country codes can be found in your JET Diary or online at <http://yahoo.ojaru.jp/bbphone.htm/#international>. You might also want to try SKPE. You can use your webcam to talk to your friends back home. It's like having a video conference, and it's free.

LOCAL PESTS

Cockroaches *gokiburi* ゴキブリ

Cockroaches are a very clean animal. When a human touches a cockroach, it immediately begins cleaning itself. Disgusting humans! Never-the-less, they do crawl over unsanitary matter and can spread germs in this way. Also, they can easily get out of control. As the saying goes, "Where there is one cockroach, indeed there are many." Keeping a clean house is a good thing in and of itself, but even the cleanest of homes are susceptible to these little friends. The most active season for cockroaches (and most bugs) is from late spring to the end of the summer.

Prevention/Extermination: As they are attracted by fat and foods, clean your kitchen with bleach (they do

not like the smell of bleach) and do not leave food out.

Ticks/ Mites *dani* ダニ

The word “dani” is a general word to refer to all ticks or mites, but the ones most likely to be a nuisance to you are the ones that live in your tatami and your bedding. Chances are you'll never see them. What will happen is you, the unsuspecting victim, will fall asleep in your futon and wake up with two small itchy insect bites. That's because dani like to bite twice. Two little bites next to each other are a sure sign of a dani infestation. Dani stay dormant in the cold weather, but flourish during the rainy season. It is an annual problem.

Prevention/Extermination: Clean your house frequently. If you have a tatami room vacuum it several times a week during the late spring and summer. Beat your futons outside, and dry your bedding in the sun, once a month at least. Once a week is better. If you sleep on the tatami, *shikibuton* (the sheet you sleep on) is where the most dani are so give it an extra good beating in the insect-killing sun. The best time to *hosu* (hang out your bedding) is early morning-3AM. Any later than that, moisture will get into the futon. There is also a useful contraption called a “futon dryer” you might want to try.

You can vacuum and then spray your tatami LIGHTLY with a mixture of lemon juice and alcohol. Leave it for 15 minutes, and then wipe it down with a slightly damp towel. Don't ever let your tatami get wet. It will mold. If you must, use a bug bomb. This will kill absolutely every living thing in your home. Cover all your dishes and furniture before you set it off. Wipe down the house after.

Centipedes *mukade* ムカデ 百足

You don't want to get a centipede bite. They are nasty, and if you do, you should go to a hospital. Centipedes are in the usual places outside: under your flower pot, crawling across your stairs, and sometimes they come indoors. Your shoes that you keep by the door are an ideal dark safe-feeling hiding spot of a centipede so you should check your shoes before putting them on.

Snakes *hebi* ヘビ 蛇

The *mamushi* is the most dangerous snake in Japan. It's 45-60cm/18-24” with a triangular head and gray-brown skin. If you get bit by a *mamushi*, you need to get the anti-venom as soon as possible. Call 119 for all emergencies in Japan. *Mamushi* bites can be fatal. If you see a *mamushi* report it to someone in the surrounding area. Snakes like to come out at night to soak up the heat from the cement after a sunny day. So pay attention to where you are stepping if you are walking down a trail. Also, if you are going for a hike, I suggest a snake stick and perhaps boots that protect your ankles.

Mosquitoes *ka* 力 蚊

Mosquitoes are the universal scourge of the earth. There are all sorts of breeds and bites, ranging from a barely itching bump to a pus filled balloon. And yes, they will probably invade your apartment. Make sure you have a bug screen and that you use it, otherwise you will be bled dry. A lot of you probably have probably heard of Japanese Encephalitis, a disease which affects the nervous system and causes swelling of the brain. You are more at risk in rice-farming and pig-farming rural areas as the mosquitoes breed in flooded rice fields and are transferred from infected pigs via mosquitoes. Still, it is rare. A vaccine is available, and is cheaper in Japan than overseas.

Prevention/Extermination: For products to prevent mosquitoes and other small unknown flying bugs, look for the word “虫除ナ” (mushi yoke). Those products are for specifically dealing with the flying bugs. 蚊取り線香 (katori sennkou) or anything 蚊取り (katori) are for mosquitoes only.

***We did not mention spiders (kumo 蜘蛛) and geckos (yamori ヤモリ) although you'll see plenty of them. They are absolutely harmless and are considered good luck and protectors of the home. They eat the other bugs and are actually on your side of the battle. Consider yourself lucky!**

CLEANING:

Terms For Cleansing Products:

<u>English</u>	<u>Kanji</u>	<u>Romaji</u>
Bleach	ブリーチ	huriichi
Bug poison	殺虫剤	sachuuuzai
Insecticide	虫除ナ	mushiyoke
Laundry Detergent	殺虫剤	senntakuzai
Fabric Softener	柔軟剤	jyuunanzai
Mold Cleaner	カビ取	kabitori

MOLD


As Kyushu is a wet hot environment from late spring to the end of summer and, your things are danger of getting moldy. Clean your washroom and bathroom every week to avoid bacteria and mold from growing. Vinegar and bleach can help fight mold. Bleach-based *kabi*-killers are toxic so wash off and be careful of the fumes. To your clothes from molding in your closet and drawers, use moisture suckers (or “dry pets”). Air out your closet and while you do, open the windows to let in fresh air. If you sleep on futon, fold it up everyday and put it away. Pat the walls down with a mixture of vinegar and water if they start to mold. Leave the top of your washing machine to air it out and prevent mold.

GARBAGE SEPERATION:

Japan is very strict on garbage separation, especially in Kumamoto. You want to do the separation properly so you do not get your garbage back at your door. Every city in Kumamoto has different policy on garbage separation, but it's generally the same. If you are not sure, ask your Japanese co-worker or friends before you throw something away.

There are several categories for garbage separation, but the four main ones are: burnable, paper, plastic, and bottles.

Burnable:


Burnable paper or anything that can be burned without toxic gas. Usually, a sign will be on the item to tell you if the item should be thrown away as burnable or plastic.  This is a sign for burnable garbage. Paper bags, or paper bags with strings, are also in burnable.

Kumamoto City does not separate kitchen waste from the burnable. However, this might be changed shortly. Double check with your supervisor to see if your city does separate kitchen waste. If your city does, you have to buy a special garbage bag for kitchen waste.


Paper:

Although generally, small paper bags and cake boxes are burnable, newspapers, magazines, books, and cardboard boxes should not be thrown away as burnable garbage. You have to separate them and tie them up with strings before you throw them away. They are to be recycled.

Plastic:

Foam trays for meat or fish are in plastic category, but rinse them first. Rinse all dirty plastic before recycling. Things with the sign  are plastics. Peel off the labels from plastic bottles and remove the caps. Throw them away as plastic garbage.

Pet Bottles, Tins, Cans, Glasses:

They are to be recycled, so separate them according to their kind. (By the way, pet bottles usually have  this sign on it.)Also, there are usually different boxes for you to separate this garbage, but it is different in different cities. Make sure you know how your city deals with these items before you throw them away.

Others:

Garbage like light bulbs, frying pans, old clothes, batteries, and electric items are special. Usually there are boxes which categorize them, but for bigger items, you might have to go to the garbage dealing center. In this case, there is a varying fee to throw them away. You can sell some items to the recycle center. Ask your supervisor.

SEASONS IN JAPAN:**Spring:**

Lovely weather. Start to pack and store all the winter clothes. Remember to put moisture suckers in your closet and change them a few times a season.

Summer:

Hot and humid. Lots of bugs. June to July is the rainy season, and moisture suckers are very important. It is also good to put out the bug poison in early June. Bug poison for cockroaches is most effective if you put it out during late May and early June. Bugs will come out during late spring. Open your windows everyday to let fresh air in. If you cannot stand the heat, do not be afraid to use air conditioner and fan., though they will hurt your electricity bill. You might need to clean the filter in air conditioner.

Fall:

Lovely weather. Less moisture in the air, bug free. Typhoon season is from August to October. If you are really worried about typhoons, save up to a week's food and water. Prepare batteries for flashlights and candles. Do not go to beach for fishing!!!

Winter:

Frigid. There are many choices for heating: air conditioner, kerosene heater, electric heater, ceramic heater, electric carpet/sheet, and kotatsu. If you are using a kerosene heater, do not close the window for the whole day. You need to open the window to let fresh air in to avoid poisoning yourself. Turn it off when you are away from the house and go to sleep. Do not hang clothes or anything burnable on top of the heater as these might cause fire. Nowadays, there is usually a time set for automatic turn off for all types of heaters. If you are going to sleep with your heater on, remember to set the timer so you do not have it on all night. A hand warmer (hokkaido) is a good choice when you are going out. It will last up to 6 or more hours.

SHOPPING**Shopping Cheap:**

Shopping cheap usually means shopping local. Shop at your local Farmer's Market and always buy what is in season. Buy your fish and meat straight from the neighborhood butcher. It's much cheaper than what's in the chain grocery stores. You can go to the recycle shop to find cheap used furniture, electronics, and

various household goods. You can also look outside on recycling day, and see if anyone is recycling something you might want. For cheap clothing there is **しまむら** Shimamura or UNICLO. The 100 Yen Shop has all the small daily necessities (toiletries, stationary, kitchenware, cleaning supplies). If you buy anything expensive such as a stove or console during your stay in Japan, you might be able to sell it to your replacement when you leave. Also, it is said that Korea has great shopping, and getting there via the Beetle from Fukuoka City is cheap.

Sale Kanji:

<u>English</u>	<u>Kanji</u>	<u>Romaji</u>
...% off	割引 waribiki
..... yen off	円引き	... biki
Half price	半額	hangaku

Internet:

Internet shopping in Japan is convenient. For those who can understand Japanese, Rakuten and Yahoo shopping has a large amount of private companies selling their stuff online. You can earn points and use them as cash. For those who have a limited understanding of Japanese, Amazon JP has an English page. With Amazon JP you can also save points and use them, and the best thing about it is you get free shipping if you buy over 1500 yen. Amazon JP does not only sell game software, CD, DVD, and books. They sell electronics, furniture, clothes, and FOOD! They sell fresh food: vegetables, fruits, and meat. If you need to furnish your home, you can buy furniture online, and it will be sent to your door and carried through your door. (If you don't want to shop online, a few stores are Two One Style, Sakoda, Mr. Max, and Mega.)

The Foreign Buyers' Club is great if you miss home and need a taste of it immediately. You can find a variety of western, Mexican, and Asian foods on the Foreign Buyers'. They can also ship things from the ware house in United States. If you cannot find the things they carry in Japan, You can order from their ware house, but it will take about a month to send to your home. www.fbcusa.com

IN CONCLUSION

As you are going to live here for as least a year, it is necessary to decorate your house with whatever you like and make it feel like home. Moreover, it is important to keep you house neat and tidy. This is to ensure that you will have good health. You will not want to be sick while you have so many experiences to be had in Japan. Shop, but do not over buy because you will have to get rid of what you buy before you leave. Finally, enjoy Japan, enjoy Kumamoto, and have fun!!

KUMAMOTO FINANCE

How to Survive the Month without Resorting to Eating Instant Ramen

Presented by:
Jonathan Waugh and Lauren Harvey

Budgeting

"It's clearly a budget. It's got a lot of numbers in it."
- President George W. Bush

Budgeting

If you are wise, you will budget. It is not that difficult to do, and it can save you from having to eat cup noodles until your next paycheck.

An easy way to budget is to set aside the money you want to save and the money you need for bills at the start. Then you divide the remainder of your paycheck by 4.5 (the rough number of weeks until your next paycheck). If you try not to spend more than you've allowed for each week, you should be okay. It also wouldn't hurt to keep a record of how much you spend and on what.

For some extra budgeting tips/help check the websites section below.

Keeping Track of Your Spending

Even though we earn a good wage for doing a fairly easy job, it is very easy to lose track of what you spend your money on unless you keep track of your spending.

For some examples of some spending tracking sheets see the extras section below.

Banking and Bills

"In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes."
- Benjamin Franklin

Banks

Japan has a plethora of banks. In addition to the big national banks, every prefecture has their own regional banks. The main ones in Kumamoto are *Higo Bank* and *Kumamoto Family Bank*. A lot of Kumamoto JETs have an account with Higo Bank, and their pay is usually paid directly into their bank accounts. Some JETs are paid in cash. Other JETs have JA accounts, especially in towns with no other banks. And others have bank accounts with Japan Post.

Opening a bank account in Japan is pretty much the same at every bank. You just go in, and ask to open a new bank account. You just need to remember to take the following few items with you:

- Inkan/hanko your personal seal/stamp that now acts as your only legal

- signature (so don't lose it!!)
- Alien Registration Card (that infamous little piece of ID that we have to take everywhere)
- Something official that shows your current address, like a bill or some other official paper (eg. Gaikokujin torokosho certificate from your town office - ¥300)
- Some money to give the account a starting balance
- Someone who speaks perfect formal Japanese (usually a native of these lands, unless of course your Japanese is beyond compare)

Although having a bank account with a regional bank is good for the local economy, it is not so great when travelling (as you will be charged a fee, and cards may not work in all banks). So, if you are the type of person who wants access to their money where ever they may be, then you should consider opening an extra account with the Japan Post Bank, whose ATMs are located in every post office throughout Japan (the only condition is that you can only have a maximum of ¥10 million in your account at any one time... Although for the majority of us, this will never be much of a problem.).

7-11 convenience stores also have ATMs that accept Higo Bank cards. Although the store is open 24 hours, the ATM can be used by Higo Bank account holders until 8pm everyday.

Note: The following is a list of Higo Bank ATMs located outside Kumamoto Prefecture.

Fukuoka

Fukuoka Branch

Daimyō 2-8-1, Chūō -ku,
Fukuoka City, Fukuoka, 〒810-0041
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Kitakyūshū Branch

Kome-machi, 1-2-26, Kokura Kita-ku,
Kitakyūshū City, Fukuoka, 〒802-0003
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Minami Hakata Branch

Hakata Eki Minami 3-6-38, Hakata-ku,
Fukuoka City, Fukuoka, 〒812-0016
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Ōmuta Branch

Chikumachi 5-1,
Ōmuta City, Fukuoka, 〒836-0841
Every day: 9:00~17:00

Kagoshima

Yamanokuchi-cho, Kagoshima City,
Kagoshima, 〒892-0844
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Nagasaki

Edo-machi 5-2, Nagasaki City,
Nagasaki, 〒850-0861
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Ōita

Chūō-machi 2-9-28, Ōita City,
Ōita, 〒870-0035
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Tōkyō

Kyōbashi 2-10-2, Chūō-ku,
Tōkyō, 〒104-0031
Weekdays: 8:45~17:00

Bills

Every month you WILL have bills to pay! It is important to keep track of what comes in the mail. Also learn your name in Japanese so that you can make sure you are paying for your bills and not your neighbour's bills! If you aren't sure of what something is, ask! Below is a list of some common bills to expect and how to pay them.

Common Bills – You can probably expect to pay the following:

- **Rent** (depends on your location)
- **Gas** (remember to turn it off when you're not using it!)
- **Electricity** (save money in the summer months by using fans instead of the AC, and in the winter by using blankets instead of relying on heaters)
- **Water**

- **Phone** (expect to pay for your landline each month even if you don't use it)
 - If you don't already have a landline, you will probably need help from your office to set it up, and it will be fairly expensive. It is a lot easier and cheaper to rent one, rather than buy one (unless you plan to live here a long time).
- **Cell phone/Mobile phone** (*keitai* – 4 major providers, best to shop around for a deal that suits your needs)
- **Internet** (the cost depends on the speed you want – YahooBB and JCN offer internet/cable TV packages)
- **NHK** (it is compulsory for you to pay this bill if you have a TV or a computer capable of receiving television signals.)

Setting up automatical withdrawals from your bank account for your bills is much easier than having to pay in person at the local convenience store each and every month.

And for those of you who drive:

- **Car insurance/other car payments** – owning a car in Japan is expensive! You will definitely need to get car insurance before you start driving! And you will need to pay a car tax in spring (about ¥40,000), and you will also need to pay *shakken* (¥100,000 or more) every two years or so. And you will need to pay to use the highways. See the driving workshop notes for more details.

Choosing to rent/lease a car will give you more peace of mind if the car breaks down, but the total cost of renting/leasing the car may end up working out to be just as expensive as buying a used car.

WARNING!!!

If you have an accident while doing something **ILLEGAL** (for example talking on your phone or while drunk), your insurance will be voided. And even if the accident was not your fault, you may be found as the one being at fault.

MAJOR WARNING!!!

DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!!! Unless you want to lose your job and be deported. Japan has absolutely **ZERO** tolerance for drunk driving. Even a small sip of beer still counts as having drunk.

A WARNING FOR EVERYONE!!!

DO NOT DRINK AND RIDE YOUR BICYCLE!!! In Japan, riding bicycle after drinking alcohol is considered the same as drinking and then driving a motor vehicle. If you are caught, you will be arrested and prosecuted.

Sending Money Home

You can send money to most countries through Japan Post's remittance service. You will need to ask for the *gaikoku yuubin kawase* or *kokusai soukin* forms. They are written in both English and Japanese. The normal method takes about a week and will cost about ¥700 for the first ¥100,000, and ¥1000 for anything over ¥100,000. A telegraphic transfer takes only 2-3 days but costs more.

For those of you who can't do that or don't want to, you can use **Go Lloyd's Overseas Remittance Service**. Go to the website (see the website section below) and sign yourself up. Then every time you want to send money home, go to your local bank and get one of the wonderful and (hopefully) cheerful staff to help you do a cash transfer (*furikomi* in Japanese) on the ATM. The money is transferred the next working day, but it will cost you ¥2000 per transaction (plus any handling fees the bank your sending the money to charges, and any relevant taxes).

Food, Drinking, and Entertainment

" Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy. "
- Benjamin Franklin

Parties

You will attend a lot of parties (*enkai* in Japanese) during your time in Japan. Some may be small, some may be big. Some you will have to pay for, some you won't. Just remember that you don't have to go to every single party that your school, workplace, or friends throw. Set a "Party Budget" and try to stick to it. Or you could set aside about ¥3000 a month for the big parties in December (Year-End Party, *Bonenkai*), March (Farewell Party,) and April (Welcome Party,).

Eating and Drinking

There is no tipping in Japan! If you are out with friends and want to pay the bill separately, just say *betsu betsu*. If you want to split the bill evenly, just say *warikan*.

Be warned that it is very common to split the bill evenly, no matter how much you ate (or didn't). The usual rule of thumb is that if you share the food, you share the bill.

Other useful things to look out for are *nomihoudai* (all you can drink) and *tabihoudai* (all you can eat).

Shopping

" Wal-mart... Do they like make walls there? "
- Paris Hilton

For Food

Even though little ol' Kumamoto has an amazing range of absolutely super and mouthwatering restaurants on offer, eating out can still be very expensive (especially if

you do it every day). However, cooking at home can be just as fun and tasty as eating out.

The majority of local supermarkets stock both Japanese and Western goods, and anything you can't get from them you can order from websites such as **The Flying Pig** and **Foreign Buyers Club**, or buy from food importers such as **Costcos** (the nearest one is in Fukuoka).

But for your run of the mill products, such as milk, coffee, tea, snacks, toilet paper, house wares, etc, you may want to try one of the local discount stores. The main stores in this department are **Don Kihoti** (commonly called **Donki**), **Mr Max**, and **Direx!**. Many stores have regular discounts on certain days and times. Visit all shops in your area occasionally to confirm it is still the best deal, especially if new shops open.

For Clothing

Shopping for clothing in Japan tends to be a problem for the larger framed and taller non-Japanese, especially for trousers and shoes. Japanese clothing sizes tend to be two sizes smaller than their Western counterparts (a European medium sizes would be an extra large here). A few shops specialize in selling clothing for the taller and larger framed people here (even the larger framed and taller Japanese have trouble buying clothes), although these tend to be a bit on the expensive side. A common

If you can't buy regular clothes or just don't want to pay ¥5,000 for a t-shirt then you can either A) try your luck at **Uniqlo** (simple designs and cheap!!), or B) buy clothing whenever you head abroad. The larger clothing at **Uniqlo** tends to fit the medium sized non-Japanese.

Point Cards

Once you find a shop you like, ask for a point card and stay loyal to that shop. Every shop in Japan seems to have their own membership schemes, and if you do all your food shopping, for example, at a single supermarket or discount store you will very soon have enough points to claim vouchers with. And it is not only the supermarkets and discount stores that have these cards, karaoke boxes have them, movie theatres have them, and even clothing stores have them.

Travel

"I travel not to go anywhere, but to go.
I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move."
- Robert Louis Stevenson

Domestic and International Travel

Travelling domestically in Japan is super easy. Not only is nearly every nook and cranny close to an airport, there are also very extensive rail and bus network (both publicly owned and privately owned). You can pretty much get to any where you want with little or no trouble, and the best bit is the majority (close to 99.9%) of public transport here is clean, safe, reliable, and on time!!

For those of you who want to drive everywhere, be prepared to pay a lot for petrol, road tolls, and parking. Unless you are traveling with a car full of people, it is often cheaper to take public transport. Before you head off, do some research to see just how much you would really save (or not) by using public transport.

And when it comes to hotels, Japan offers a wide selection to choose from. From luxurious penthouse suites in five-star internationally renowned hotels to the infamous love hotels. For those who care more about the health of their bank account than where they lay their head, try staying at a love hotel. After all, with their discreet service and very limited contact between hosts and guests, it can be surprisingly easy to get a room for five for under ¥10,000. For something in the middle of these two extremes, there are the plethora of business hotels. A single room for a night usually costs between ¥5,000 and ¥7,000. These are located in close to proximity to major train and bus stations, and the city centres. A good quality and popular business hotel chain is **Toyoko Inn** (and they have a point card and membership system, and they offer free breakfast).

Hostels and backpacker lodges are still relatively unheard of in Japan, although they are there if you look hard enough. The majority of these tend to be located in the main tourist centres of Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto.

For the uniquely Japanese experience you should stay at a *ryokan* (a traditional Japanese inn). The majority of ryokans are attached to or have a private *onsen* (Japanese-style hot springs) or *sentō* (public bath). They are also located in very scenic locales, offer sleeping in a *tatami* room (Japanese-style room), and will even throw in a traditional Japanese dinner and breakfast (if you are extra lucky). The only downside is that for a night in a better-than-average *ryokan*, you will be paying upwards of ¥10,000 a person.

And for those who don't want to spend a dime at all, then you can try networks such as Tatami Timeshare or Couch Surfing. These networks basically set you up with people who are willing to host you for a night or two for free. The only downside is that you won't know what you're getting until you arrive. Although be prepared to return the favour more than once.

Some hints on traveling cheaply:

- If you use public transport a lot, look for deals where you buy a multi-trip ticket, a bundle of tickets, or a one day ticket.
- Travelling during the peak seasons in Japan is very expensive as the price of everything from trains to hotels goes up quite a lot. The main peak seasons are any school holidays, the New Year holiday, Golden Week (end of April and start of May), and during the *Bon* festival (Japan's festival for the dead).
- Package deals are often cheaper than booking the tickets and hotel separately. Plus the hotels on offer are usually better than the cheaper business hotels.
- When you travel abroad, remember that you will need to get a re-entry permit

before you leave Japan (available from the Immigration Office in Kumamoto City - ¥3000 for a single re-entry permit, ¥6000 for a multiple re-entry permit). If you fail to do so, your work visa will be voided and you won't be able to work here anymore.

For more information, check the transportation section of your orientation packet.

Learning Japanese

"The only English words I saw in Japan were Sony and Mitsubishi."

- Bill Gullickson

By Yourself

Tackling Japanese by yourself, although not impossible, will be a sizable challenge. But if you are up for the challenge, the CLAIR Japanese Course is the cheapest option available for you. Although not always being entirely relevant to life in Kumamoto, the grammar points are explained clearly. Even though there are many other text books out there (available from **Amazon.co.jp** and major **book stores**), many of which may be better suited for you, few will be as cheap as this course.

Another "free" option is the language exchange option. Although being a great way to meet Japanese and practice your language skills, one of the biggest downside to this is that a good language exchange can easily go bad and end up being solely one sided (a free English lesson for your exchange partner).

With a Teacher

If you are wanting to really make an improvement in your Japanese or if you are just starting out, getting a good teacher is a must. Asking a co-worker or a friend to be your teacher is a really cheap option (**FREE!!**) although problems such as the irregularity of lessons, and your teachers understanding of and ability to explain the grammar will soon become major issues.

For a more regular lesson schedule and the best results, having a teacher qualified to teach Japanese as a second language is a must. The only problem is most of these teachers work in language schools, and those language schools usually cost money.

The **Kumamoto City International Centre** usually runs the cheapest group Japanese lessons in the prefecture (the last we hear, they were **FREE!!**), the **YMCA** also offers group lessons for about ¥10,000 a month, and **Japanese Language School HANA** (a privately owned Japanese language school recommended by many JETs and other non-Japanese living in Kumamoto City) offers both one-on-one and group lessons, conversation-only and regular course, and JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) preparatory course options, with each lesson costing between ¥1,400 and ¥3,200.

The only problem with the above lesson options are that they are all based in downtown Kumamoto City and depending on where in the prefecture you live, getting to your lesson may cost you a bit.

Miscellaneous

"Never mud wrestle with a pig,
because you'll both get dirty and the pig likes it."
- Anonymous

Useful Phrases

Are there any discounts?	Waribiki ga arimasuka?
How much is it?	Ikura desuka?
Do you have anything cheaper?	Motto yasui no ga arimasuka?
I would like the cheapest one, please.	Ichiban yasui no onegaishimasu.

Easy Tips on How to Save Money

1. Do your food shopping at night (after the dinner rush). Prices on boxed meals and other fresh food are usually cheaper.
2. Although the 100 Yen shops are amazing, and are full of cheap stuff. They are not always the cheapest way to go. Although for cheap and quick souvenirs to send home at Christmas, they are a godsend.
3. Keep track of how long you can talk on your keitai, and how many messages you send. It is easy to rack up a ¥10,000 plus bill just by messaging and talking.
4. Limit your eating out. Cheaper alternatives are to cook yourself, have pot luck dinners with friends, or cheapest of all, eat at a friends place (although doing this a lot is not recommended if you want to keep your friends)
5. If you have to provide your own lunch for school, make them yourself. Spending ¥500 on your lunch everyday doesn't sound a lot, but it all adds up.
6. Drink vending machines are everywhere and super convenient, as are convenient stores, but it is often cheaper to buy drinks in bulk from discount stores. They are often up to 50% cheaper this way as well.
7. Never take more money to a party or out drinking than you want to spend. It is very easy to go out for a drink with a friend and end up ¥40,000 poorer. It is also a good idea on such occasions to leave your ATM card at home.
8. Sharing taxi rides with multiple friends can save you a lot of money, no matter where you want to go. It's best to set a price limit or drop off point with the taxi driver before you get in. And if you live close enough, why not just walk?

25,371
毎度ご利用いただきありがとうございます

検針請求書

お客様番号 [Redacted] 様

今回 5月14日 指針 30.1m³
前回 4月13日 指針 26.3m³ 使用量 4.7m³

今回使用量	3.8m ³
①ガス料金	3,670円
②内ガス消費税	175円
繰越額	4,340円
リース金額	200円
分割金額	0円
その他売上	0円
途中入金	4,340円
③明細計	200円
④ご請求額 (①+③)	3,870円
⑥差引残高	3,870円

お支払い方法 銀行振替

ガス料金等口座振替のお知らせ

振替日	2021年 5月12日
振替金額	4,340円
次回振替日	2021年 6月 8日

お支払い便利な口座自動お支払い
もご利用になれます。

保安点検 (○は良、×は不良、-は点検不要)

容器	外観等の欠陥
<input type="checkbox"/> 設置場所 <input type="checkbox"/> 火気との距離 <input type="checkbox"/> 温度上昇防止 <input type="checkbox"/> 転倒落損傷防止	<input type="checkbox"/> 調整器 <input type="checkbox"/> 集合装置 <input type="checkbox"/> 供給管 <input type="checkbox"/> パipe・ガス栓
腐食防止	その他
<input type="checkbox"/> 容器・低部 <input type="checkbox"/> 集合装置 <input type="checkbox"/> 供給管 <input type="checkbox"/> ガス栓	<input type="checkbox"/> 危険標識の有無 <input type="checkbox"/> 火気施設距離 <input type="checkbox"/> 微少漏洩 <input type="checkbox"/> 上流圧力監視

(資) 前田米穀店 担当印
熊本市上熊本2丁目11-26
(TEL) 096-354-4858 担当: 002

Your Details

Billing Period for this Bill

Your Details

Amount Due

Billing Period for this Bill

Amount of Previous Bill

Billing Date of Previous Bill

Water Bill (Kumamoto City)

水道ご利用いただきありがとうございます

水道ご使用量のお知らせ

[Redacted] 様

水道のご使用状況をお知らせします。

水先番号 CD	水道料金コード	1	下水道コード	1	戸数	1
[Redacted]	020	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

今 検計日 21年 5月 5日

前回指針 (-)
メーター取替水量 (+)

今回ご使用量 12 m³

ご使用期間 3月 5日 ~ 今回検計日

前回ご使用量 10 m³ 前年同月ご使用量 12 m³

ご請求予定額		
年月分	21年 6月	21年 7月
使用水量	6 m ³	6 m ³
水道料金	1,459 円 (89)	1,459 円 (89)
下水道使用料	990 円 (47)	990 円 (47)
ご請求予定額	2,449 円 (116)	2,449 円 (116)

※カマコ内は消費税等相当額です。

通 信 欄

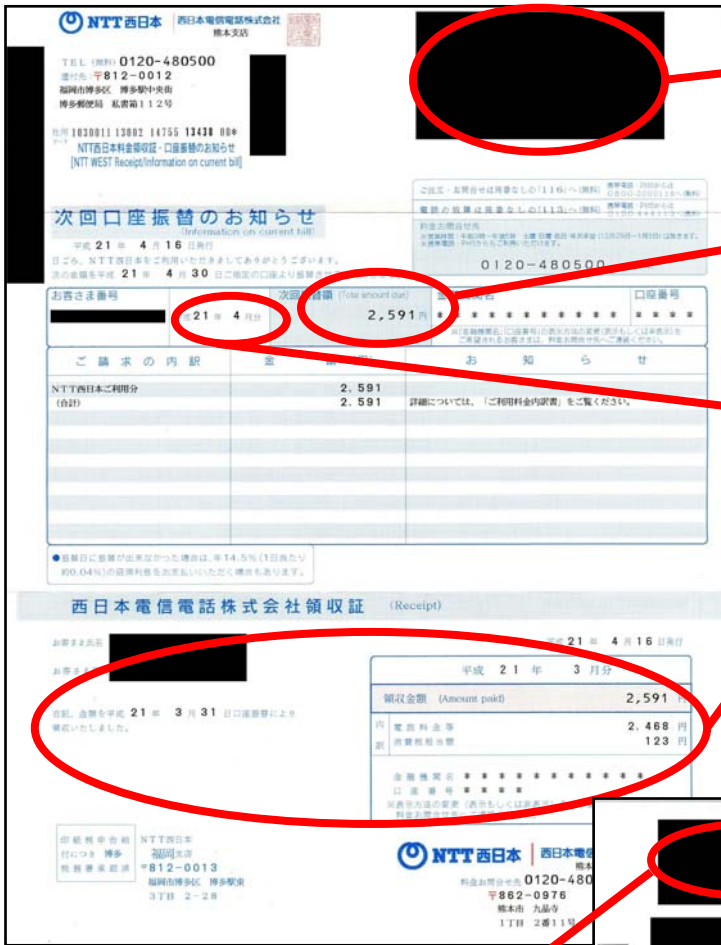
- 6月1日~7日は「水道週間」
みんなで水道の大切さを考えましょう。
- 第5回水道週間標語
「おいしいね この水未来に いつまでも」

このお知らせで集金することはありません。

料金課 TEL 096 361 5400
財)熊本市水道サービス公社 検針員 [Redacted]

熊本市上下水道局

Phone Bill (landline)



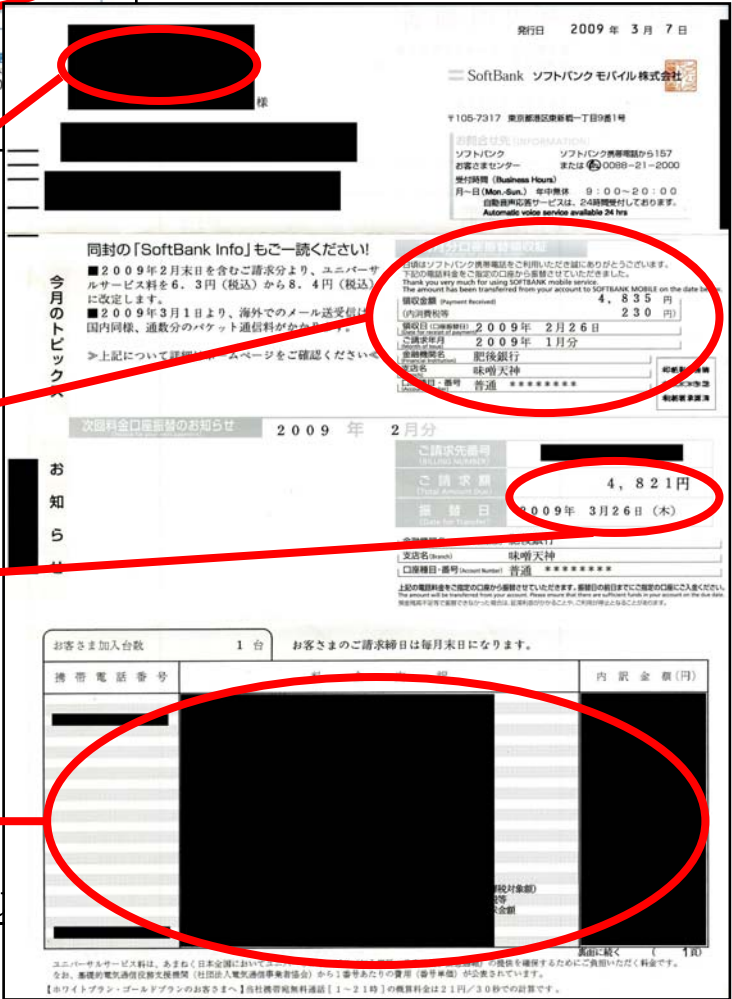
Your Details

Amount Due

Billing Period for this Bill

Receipt for Payment of Previous Bill

Cell Phone Bill (SoftBank)



Your Details

Receipt for Payment of Previous Bill

Amount Due

Billing Period for this Bill

Billing Details

Useful

"On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog."
- Peter Steiner

Sending Money Home

Go Lloyd's <http://www.golloyds.com/>
Need help sending money home? This is the website for you.

Budgeting Help

Sorted.org.nz <http://www.sorted.org.nz/>
Online budget calculators for everything from student loans to that dream trip overseas.

Expenseview.com <http://www.expenseview.com/>
Online budget tool to help you keep track of your spending.

Travel

Wikitravel <http://www.wikitravel.org/>
An online travel guide with information on over 19,010 destinations. Anyone and their dog can contribute to this, making it a very useful resource.

Lonely Planet <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>
The "concise" online version of the World famous guide books. Written by professional travelers, and so does not have as many of the more personal touches of Wikitravel. The online version also pales in comparison to the actual books (at least in the book Kumamoto gets a mention...), although both versions still focus rather heavily on Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto.

HYPERDIA-timetable <http://www.hyperdia.com/cgi-english/hyperWeb.cgi>
A train/plane/shinkansen route, time, and fare finder for Japan.

Japanese Train Route Finder by Jorudan Co., Ltd.
<http://www.jorudan.co.jp/english/norikae/e-norikayin.html>
Another, easier to understand train/plane/shinkansen route, time, and fare finder for Japan.

Couch Surfing <http://www.couchsurfing.com/>
Useful network connecting travelers with cheap/free accommodation and advice being offered by the locals in the places where they want to travel. All members have to register and are graded by the people that have previously hosted them, making it easier for you to decide whether or not to put someone up for a night or send them packing.

WWOOFing <http://www.woofjapan.com/main/>
Pay a sign up fee, then travel around the Japanese countryside, while working a few hours on a farm and receiving free accommodation and food

Shopping

Amazon Japan <http://www.amazon.co.jp/>

Same old Amazon, except everything is already in Japan! No need to wait for the mail from the USA.

Infinity Books Japan <http://www.infinitybooksjapan.com>

Better World Books <http://www.betterworld.com>

These are two online second-hand bookshops. They are much cheaper than Amazon and have a good range on offer. Both sites are in English. Payment is by credit card, furikomi (bank transfer) or possibly cash on delivery.

The Flying Pig <http://www.the flyingpig.com/>

Online shop for all your favourite gaijin foods. A very wide selection of imported foods and other things, all at very reasonable prices.

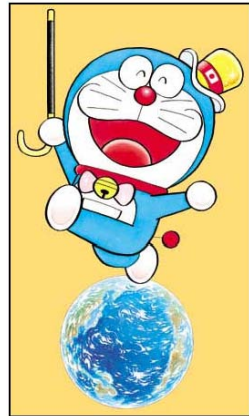
Foreign Buyer's Club <http://www.fbcusa.com/>

Another online grocery store specializing in all of our favourite and dearly missed foods from home.

Teaching Elementary

By: 99% Froilin Vispo
1% Carrie House

Welcome to Kumamoto and the JET Programme! Worried about teaching elementary? This workshop will give you a hint of what to expect and how to prepare yourself for the experience! Shogakko is sometimes exhausting but also exhilarating! More often than not you will be the primary teacher, not just an assistant, so while you may have more responsibilities you may feel more rewarded by your work!



Elementary English Education in Japan

Your official purpose according to MEXT

To promote open-mindedness towards other cultures, to promote a sense of identity, and to learn basic communication skills.

Your unofficial purpose

To give a glimpse of life outside of Japan, to encourage curiosity about foreign cultures and languages, and to have fun!



- English in elementary schools is ESID. The curriculum varies between schools and is dependent on the teacher who is responsible for English.
- English falls under “international studies.” In some prefectures students get to experience languages besides English! In Kumamoto many elementary students get one hour of “international studies” a month but others get a second hour.
- At least one of these classes is meant to include an ALT so your 45-minute class may be the only English they get that month, sometimes longer for the younger grades!

A Day at Elementary School

At the Teachers Office

- Some teachers will run away while others jump at the opportunity to English.
- Most teachers will apologize for their English skills even if they know the basics. Try to include all teachers in your activities, even if it is just the simple stuff.

In the Classroom

- Have a plan but be flexible. Be ready to shed an activity or fill up time.
- Sometimes you will need to be a performer but *always be a teacher*.
- Keep attention spans focused with frequent changes.
- Don't sweat it if stuff goes wrong.
- Keep a diary: what you taught, when, where, with who, what worked and what didn't, any other special details.

During Lunch

- Get your students to practice their English. Remember – this isn't a lesson!

- Practice your Japanese. Have a list of simple questions to ask your students about themselves.
- Enjoy quiet time if no one is talking.

Outside the Classroom

- Play games after lunch or after school, visit the school pet area.
- See if you can join classes in Japanese, calligraphy, art, music.
- See if you can visit clubs.
- Make bulletin boards.
- Prepare materials for other classes. You can never have enough flashcards!

Questions You Must Ask

1. *Your schedule*– What grades? What periods? Start/end times? Last-minute changes?
2. *Your students* – How many? Any with special needs: hearing devices, leg braces etc.?
3. *Your teachers* – Name? Who is your main contact person at this school?
4. *Their expectations of you*– Do they want a specific lesson? Do they want your lesson plan ahead of time? You may need to make a big-picture plan. Materials? Lunch with students?



Your Self Introduction



Remember what they say about first impressions? Ask fellow JETs, prepare and practice. Make this lesson: Visual – use maps, pictures, flags, money. Adaptable–for varying awareness and attention spans. Durable– you’ll probably be doing this lesson a few times. Portable– put your self-intro materials in its own container.

Self Intro Essentials

- pictures (family, pets, home, friends)
- self-pictures in school, celebrating holidays
- famous sites, monuments, celebrities
- money, coins to pass around
- flag and world map
- native animals, cuisine, popular sports



Sample Lesson Plan Structure

1. Greetings (5 min.)
2. Warm-up (5 min.) – song / game / review material from previous class
3. Vocabulary and Grammar Point (5-10 min.)
4. Activity (10-15 min.)
5. Recap/Farewell (5 min.)

Be creative and tweak the structure to fit the content. A 45-minute class goes fast unless you’re unprepared and no one is having fun! Cater to your audience!

Everyday Elementary Essentials

- CD (English and traditional songs)
- Stuffed animal
- Props (check you 100 yen store for large dice, fly swatters, microphones ect.)
- Timer
- Prizes (food/candy is not allowed!)

Kids: What To Expect

Grades 1 and 2: genki, touchy-feely, takes a long time to prepare, love to sing and dance, not too used to school just yet, crying-prone! Avoid activities that single students out. Keep it simple: focus on building vocabulary and *very easy* phrases. “My name is ____.” and “I like ____.” should be as complicated as it gets.



Grades 3 and 4: attention spans are longer, still genki and playful but bigger kids so watch out. They can handle bigger “chunks” for lessons.

Grades 5 and 6: boys and girls don’t mingle, worry about being ‘cool’, may shy away from singing and dancing. Phrases and simple conversations are OK. Use their interests to design lessons.

A Sample Day

- 8:15 – 8:45 Morning meeting
- 8:50 – 9:35 First period
- 9:45 – 10:30 Second period
- 10:30 – 10:50 Break
- 10:50 – 11:35 Third period
- 11:45 – 12:30 Fourth period
- 12:30 – 1:10 Lunch
- 1:10 – 1:30 Play time
- 1:30 – 1:45 Cleaning time
- 1:50 – 2:35 Fifth period
- 2:45 – 3:30 Sixth period

Classes are usually 45 minutes with 10-minute breaks. Always ask about schedule changes!

Tried and Tested Games

- Fruit basket
- Bingo
- Row game
- Hot potato
- Race games: retrieve, hit or write
- Karuta – individual vs. team



Questions they will ask ... often!

- How old/Birthday?

- Blood type?
- Family?
- Height? Weight?
- Favorites: sports, food, hobbies
- Girlfriend /boyfriend? How many?

Kids will be curious. Remember: your answer doesn't have to be the truth!

General Tips



- Dress appropriately. Wear clothes you can move in. It can get messy!
- Don't sweat small mistakes! Hooray for short attention spans!
- Be yourself, not your predecessor. Teach using your own strengths; find your own teaching style.
- Avoid using Japanese or katakana English.
- Children will be children so keep your cool.
- Use lots of non-verbal communication: face and hand gestures, visuals etc.
- Be consistent: say things the same way every time.
- Make materials tough! Use plastic sleeves or the laminator. Don't forget magnets!
- Have other activities ready in case of spare time or an activity doesn't work.
- Regular visits provide opportunities for review and continuity. They should still be fun though!
- Occasional visits should focus on fun, creating interest and internationalization, not about grammar points.
- Classroom discipline is not your responsibility. Ask the homeroom teacher for help. If you witness unusual disciplinary action, contact your prefectural advisor for advice.
- Although you are often the primary teacher at elementary school, you are still categorized as the assistant teacher. *For liability reasons, you should never be left alone in the classroom.*

Resources

- Practical Handbook for Elementary School English Activities, MEXT
- Team Taught Pizza, AJET
- Genkienglish.com
- Check out the Links under "Teaching" at kumajet.com and ask questions at the Forums. Your fellow JETs will be glad to help!



Flashcard Resources

- kues.educ.kumamoto-u.ac.jp/~fuzoku/EIKAIWA/ILLUSTRATIONS/illust.htm
- www.mes-english.com
- eslflashcards.com
- eslkidstuff.com

Kurokami 1 year Plan

英語活動年間計画 (案) 黒髪小学校 ※ALTと相談し入れ替え、変更

月	3年	4年	5年	6年
4月	あいさつ Greetings Hello, My name is __ Nice to meet you.	あいさつ Greetings What's your name?	あいさつ Greetings 会話 (自己紹介)	あいさつ Greetings 会話 (自己紹介)
5月	食べ物① Fruits-Vegetables (What's this?①)	食べ物② 好きですか② Foods Do you like ___?②	何曜日ですか The day of the Week (What day is it today?)	何時ですか What time is it now? ___ o'clock.
6月	動物園 Animals What's this?②	天気 (How's the wether)	何が好き① What ___ do you like?①	何が好き③ Do you like ___?④ What ___ do you like?③
7月	かぞえてみよう (数字) (How meny ___s are there?)	身の回りのもの What's this?③ It's ___.	何が好き② What ___ do you like?②	どちらが好き Which do you like?
9月	体であそぼう① Body parts①	体であそぼう② Body parts②	反対言葉① Opposite Meanings①	持っていますか② How many ___e do you have?
10月	ハロウィン(Halloween)	ハロウィン(Halloween)	ハロウィン(Halloween)	ハロウィン(Halloween)
11月	色① Colors① (What color is this?) 復習	色② Colors② (What color is this?) 復習	スポーツ 好きですか② Sports Do you like ___?③	身につけているもの I'm wearing ___ Put on/Take off
12月	クリスマス Enjoy Christmas①	クリスマス Enjoy Christmas②	クリスマス Enjoy Christmas③	クリスマス Enjoy Christmas④
1月	好きですか① Do you like ___?① Yes/No	気持ち② Feelings② (How do you feel?)	動いてみよう Walk, Jump, Stand up	道案内(方向)Directions Where is the ___? Please turn right
2月	気持ち① Feelings① (How are you?)	動き① Action①	持っていますか① Do you have ___? Yes/No	コミュニケーション (総合)
3月	1年間のまとめ	1年間のまとめ	1年間のまとめ	1年間のまとめ
※ 各学年で「絵本を読もう」(絵本購入) ※ ゲーム集作成 ※ 模擬授業 (講師依頼?) ※ 教材、フラッシュカード作成/購入 → 棚に整理 ※ チャレンジカード作成?				

※小学校英語活動 865 日の授業細案 すぐ使えるゲーム&イラスト集 (DVDつき) 購入してもらいました。

Form 3

LESSON PLANNING FORM					
PERIOD	CLASS	SUBJECT	TEACHER		
ACTIVITY			HRT	ALT	MIN.

carrie-san

平成20年4月16日

教職員課長 様

銭塘小学校 校長 柏居 眞理子

1 day plan From Random School

ALT(外国語指導助手)の派遣について (依頼)

このことについて、下記のとおりALT(外国語指導助手)の派遣をお願いします。

記

1 日時 平成20年4月22日(火) Tuesday, April 22

2 場所 銭塘小学校 Zandomo ES

3 講師 ALT ケーリー ハウス 先生

4 内容

Period 校時	時間	Grade 学年	内容
2	9:40~10:25	3	挨拶・数・ゲーム Greeting, Number, Game
3	10:50~11:35	5	挨拶・季節・ゲーム Greeting, Season, Game
4	11:45~12:30	4	挨拶・スポーツ・ゲーム Greeting, Sports, Game
給食	12:30~13:15	4	
Lunch 昼休み	13:15~13:45		
Cleaning 掃除	13:45~14:05		
5	14:10~15:30	6	挨拶・国の名前・ゲーム Greeting, Names of Countries, Game

5 その他 当日、給食費として210円いただきます。 Kyushoku ￥210 for a day.



I. A Few General Guidelines

- Look and act the part
- If you say it, do it
- Communicate what you want or you will get what you get
- Know your materials
- Know your teaching plan
- Frustration leads to escalation
- Start with respect, stay with respect
- Don't over extend your expectations
- KEEP CALM: bad body language can affect your classes

IV. What can you do in your own time?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

III. What can you do in the classroom?

1. Plan engaging, student-centred lessons
How? _____
2. Develop an incentive program?
How? _____
3. Use your incentive program continually.
4. Give clear and easy directions. Try to use as little Japanese as possible, and have your students repeat them back to you.

Notes: _____



IV. How can you become part of the school community?

- Talk with everyone, from the gardener to the principal, even if they don't speak any English!
- Be friendly and courteous to everyone
- Offer to help out around the school (e.g. with preparing the school lunches, with cleaning, etc.)
- Learn the Japanese names and kanji for the different places in the school and use them
- Learn your students' names
- Ask other teachers about the students that intrigue/annoy you
- Discuss how the lessons went with the JTE – evaluate, share, discuss
- Don't try to prove yourself on the first day
- BE YOURSELF!



V. Your Actions and their Consequences

- Bringing your own personal problems to the classroom

- If you are not confident or are unsure

- Planning lessons around your interests

- Failing to explain your instructions in a clear and easy manner

VI. Simple Ways to Improve Classroom Behaviour

1. Offer Incentives
 - Tickets/"Money"
 - Stickers
 - Points
 - Sweets/Candy: check with your school first



2. Games
 - Positive: _____

 - Negative: _____

3. Use of Music
 - Positive: _____

 - Negative: _____

4. Learn the students' names and use them in the class
5. Proximity
6. If a student's behaviour is really bad, talk to the student's home room teacher or, if the student is in a club, talk to the teacher in charge of the club.

Notes: _____

VII. Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I get my students to sit down?
- How do I get my students to be quiet when I am explaining something?
- How do I get my students to keep their shirts on in class?
- How can I motivate classes that don't talk, move, and/or look dead?
- What do I do with students who frequently call out an answer?
- What do I do with students who continuously talk?
- What do I do with students who never answer?
- What do I do with sleeping students?
- What do I do with students who finish work early?
- What do I do with teachers who don't control their classes?



Notes: _____

Useful discipline phrases in Japanese

Commands

Sit down	座って (ください)	suwatte (kudasai)
Stand up	立って (ください)	tatte (kudasai)
Listen carefully	ちゃんと聞いて (ください)	chanto kiite (kudasai)
Repeat after me	くりかえして (ください)	kurikaeshite (kudasai)
Once more	もう一回	mou ikkai
Be quiet!	しずかにして (ください)	shizukani shite (kudasai)
Look here	ほら！見て！	hora mite
Return to your ~	(せきに) 戻って	(seki ni) modotte
Get pen/paper	ペン・ペーパーを持って	pen/pe-pa wo motte
Hurry up	いそいで	isoide

General comments/ phrases

Too slow	おそい	osoi
Almost! Not quite!	おしい	oshii
Understand?	分かった?	wakatta?
Go for it	はい、どうぞ	hai, douzo
Too noisy	うるさい	urusai



Can you do it?	できる？	dekiru?
You can do it!	できるよ！	dekiruyo!
Could you do it?	できました？	dekimashita?
Finished?	終わった	owatta?
Did you finish?	終わりました？	owarimashita?
Say it loudly	大きい声を出して	ookii koe wo dashite
I can't hear you!	聞こえない	kikoenai

Simple Cooking ~ For Not-so-talented Cooks

I. Back of the Box Recipes

The following recipes are staples that will help you get through the year without having to rely on your local convenience store too much. They are quick, easy and usually quite cheap. Also, most of these recipes are intended to feed more than one person and will give you enough to last for a couple of meals or to feed a group of friends.

カレー Curry – So Simple, So Good

Curry is great because it is easy to make, easy to match to personal tastes, and difficult to get wrong. Curry mixes can be bought at any grocery store and at some convenience stores. If you look at the back of a curry box you'll see a list of ingredients something like this: 400g of meat, 3 medium sized onions, 1 medium sized carrot, 2 large potatoes...



The thing about curry, though, is that you can put ANYTHING in it. If you don't like onions, leave them out. If you are heavy on potatoes, pile them in. Feel free to mix and match your favorite vegetables; broccoli, cauliflower, kabocha (Japanese squash/pumpkin, very orange and very good), cabbage, corn, asparagus, mushrooms, any color of pepper, bean sprouts, etc. Also, feel free to use any type of meat you want, or just leave it out altogether. The back of the box instructions are quite easy, but also quite written in Japanese. Here is Scott's simple curry recipe.

(Start the rice in the rice cooker before you start cutting up the vegetables. That way both will finish about the same time.)

1. Cut up all the meat and vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Fry them in a pot with some oil.
2. Once the meat looks cooked, add the amount of water specified on the box (this is the only thing you'll need the box for). Look for the character for water 水 followed by either an ml amount or cup amount (カップ). 1400-1600ml (7-8 cups) is normal. Boil on medium heat for 15-20 minutes or until vegetables are soft, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the curry mix, stirring as you do so, and then bring to boil again on a low heat.

シチュー Stew – The “White” Curry

Stew is great for the same reasons curry is great: it's delicious, simple and flexible (just like gummy bears!). As with curry, feel free to add whatever ingredients you want. I highly recommend broccoli for stew. Also like curry, many people eat stew over rice or bread.

1. Cut up all the meat and vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Fry them in a pot with some oil.
2. Once the meat looks cooked, add the amount of water specified on the box (this is the only thing you'll need the box for). Look for the character for water 水 followed by either an ml amount or cup amount (カップ). 1400-1600ml (7-8 cups) is normal. Boil on medium heat for 15-20 minutes or until vegetables are soft, stirring occasionally.
3. Add in stew mix, keep flame on low heat.
4. Add milk (牛乳) as specified. Heat on low flame until stew thickens slightly.



麻婆豆腐 Mabodofu – The World of Tofu Awaits Your Arrival

One of my favorite tofu dishes. Mabodofu is also cheap and easy to make. Mabodofu is generally rather hot (in the spicy fashion), but comes in different levels of hot-ness. There isn't a lot of variety with this dish, but you can add onions, green peppers or ground beef as you wish.

(Get the rice ready!!)

1. In a fry pan heat 180ml of water and mabodofu RED mix on medium heat.
2. Add the tofu and continue on medium heat.
3. Turn off the flame. Mix the mabodofu WHITE mix with 2 tablespoons of water. Mix into contents in frying pan.
4. Heat again until it thickens slightly. Pour over rice and serve.



チャーハン “Chahan” Fried Rice – Faster Than a Speeding Bullet



Chahan is super quick to make. All you need is rice, an egg and some oil. It is also a great way to use up the last of the rice in the rice cooker. There are many different flavors and many possible add-in ingredients you can choose from.

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in fry pan and add egg.
2. Add two cups of cooked rice (doesn't need to be exact) and stir in with egg.
3. Add in Chahan mix and stir on medium heat for one minute.

お好み焼き Okonomiyaki – Japanese...Pancake??

Not exactly a pancake, but just as delicious, if not more so. Okonomiyaki is one of my most favorite things about Japan, and I strongly recommend trips to okonomiyaki shops if you ever venture up to Hiroshima or Osaka. Okonomiyaki is also a choose-your-own ingredients type of dish. In fact, *okonomiyaki* means “cook/fry according to tastes.” (I recommend cheese and pork.) Okonomiyaki is also cheap, easy to make and quite filling. You will need some eggs, a head of cabbage, okonomiyaki mix (some normal flour will also do) and the ingredients of your choice.

1. In a bowl mix 1 cup of okonomiyaki mix with 80ml of water (slightly less than half a cup).
2. Add in 200g of thinly cut cabbage and ingredients of choice. Add one egg and stir.
3. Add roughly half of mix into heated and slightly oiled fry pan. (Note: when using pork or other meats, it is common to lightly fry the pork in the frying pan before adding the mix or to put the meat on top of the mix after it is poured into pan.) It will look something like a large pancake.

4. Once the bottom side turns a light brown, flip the “pancake.”

By the way, all of the cool people flip it in the air instead of using a spatula.

5. Once the second side is light brown you are done. Take out of pan and add okonomiyaki sauce, mayonnaise, katsuobushi (the fish flake stuff), and aonori (green seaweed flakes) according to own tastes.



II. Rice Cookers

Rice cookers are probably the best invention ever, yes even better than the internet, the ice pillow and the original Nintendo game system. Even if you only plan on being in Japan one year, I strongly recommend you invest in a rice cooker. Rice cookers aren't just for cooking rice, there are many other dishes that can be made. Some have even been known to make cakes in their rice cookers!

My friend, “Simple Cooking Saleem,” has a few rice cooker tips recipes he'd like to pass on to you.

Tip # 1: When cooking rice, throw in a raw egg or two with a few minutes left on the timer. Once the timer goes off you'll have a nice fried egg on rice treat. Add seasoning as you wish.

Tip #2: To maximize use of your rice cooker's awesome power, wrap some vegetables in foil and put them on the rice cooker with the rice when there are about 5 minutes left. Cooking time will vary depending on the vegetable, so some may need more time. Also, add butter or seasoning to the vegetables before putting them in the foil.

Tip #3: Always find yourself confused on what to do as you walk through the fish section at the grocery store? Confuse no more! Grab a fish, cut it up, wrap it in foil and throw it in to

your rice cooker with 5-10 minutes left.

There are also some special rice add-ins you can get to change the flavor of your rice or make it a bit healthier.

Kibi (millet) – little yellow things that make your rice nice and healthy. Look for them in the rice section of your local store.

Mugi (barley/wheat) – mugi rice is delicious! It's a nice cheap addition for those who never add anything into their rice.

Soy beans (daizu) – Another healthy addition. Mix these in with your rice when you first put the rice in the cooker.

Mixes – there are several mixes of different ingredients like kibi and mugi which can be added to your rice. These will also be in the rice section of your local store. Just look for the stuff that looks like birdseed.

III. Noodles

The noodle world is also a fantastic one. There are so many to choose from: ramen, udon, somen, soba, and on and on.

ラーメン **Ramen**

You will see packs of instant ramen in any grocery store or convenience store. These do taste better than the instant ramen you may have had back home, but they aren't exactly gourmet meals though they are quite cheap and very easy to make. Boil water, add the noodles and wait until they soften. Then you just add the seasoning and you're done. Suggested add-ins: eggs (raw or boiled), moyashi (bean sprouts), thinly sliced pork.

うどん **Udon**

Udon is another easy and cheap noodle wonder. Single packs of udon along with frozen multiple packs of udon are sold at most grocery stores. Suggested add-ins: thinly sliced pork, boiled eggs, green onions.

そうめん **Somen**

Somen is great in the summer as it is often eaten cold. Somen noodles are boiled like other noodles, and then they are put in cold water to cool them down. The noodles are then momentarily dipped in a cool soup (see "soup base" below) before they are eaten. Cucumbers make great add-ins.

そば **Soba**

Soba is a year-round treat as it can be eaten hot or cold. Soba can be dipped momentarily into a soup like somen, or be cooked/heated in the soup base, like udon or ramen. Green onions and boiled eggs make great add-ins.

Soup Base

You can buy Tsuyu つゆ (seen at right) at any grocery store. This stuff is cheap, tasty, and can be used for just about any type of noodle. Tsuyu comes in different varieties, but it is generally concentrated, and will have instructions on the back for how much water should be added depending on the kind of noodle you're eating. Tsuyu makes a great dipping soup for Somen or soup base for Soba. I also suggest adding some wasabi to the tsuyu to spice things up a bit.



IV. More from the Tofu World

Tofu Burgers

Tofu burgers are incredible easy to make as well. The whole process only takes 10-15 minutes.

To get started you will need: tofu hamburger mix, 1 block, 300-350g, of *Momen* (木綿) tofu, a tablespoon or so of cooking oil. Make sure that you get *Momen* tofu! If you get the softer type of tofu (*kinu goshi*) the tofu won't stick to itself enough for you to make patties out of it.

1. Drain the tofu to get the water out. The package actually recommends that this be done in a microwave, but I'm too lazy for that. I just squeeze the tofu in my hands until I see a bit of water running out.

2. In a bowl combine the tofu and tofu mix powder. Stir until the powder is mixed in evenly. Make patties out of the tofu. You should have four patties.

3. Heat the oil in a frying pan and place the patties in the pan on medium heat. Once the side down turns a lovely light brown then flip them over and fry the other side.

4. Add toppings of your choice. I recommend avocado or red onion.



Nabe

While not part of the tofu world by definition, most varieties of nabe include tofu so I've included nabe here. Nabe is the best thing on earth in the winter. It will warm your heart and soul with its goodness...or at least make your forehead sweat. Nabe refers to an earthen pot that is used to boil tofu, vegetables, meat or whatever else someone decides to put in. Grocery stores sell nabe base soups. You simply add the soup to the nabe, turn on the flame and throw whatever you want in as the soup begins to boil.

My favorite nabe is kumichi nabe. I start off with the base soup and then add the following:

- pork or chicken
- tofu (normal and/or fried)
- nira (garlic chives)
- mushrooms (any kind)
- hakusai (Chinese cabbage)
- kimuchi
- any other greenery that catches my eye at the store

Public Transportation

Buses

Koutsuu Center (Main Terminal)(交通センター)

The Koutsuu Center opened in March 1969 and became the busiest bus terminal in Japan, with approximately 130,000 arrivals and departures each year. Above the Koutsuu Center is Daiso *hyakuen* (100yen) store and the Koutsuu Center Hotel above that. Beneath the Koutsuu Center is a shopping mall with restaurants.

There are 36 platforms arranged in color-coded areas; A (red) platforms 1-11, B (blue) platforms 12 -23, C (green) platforms 24 - 34, D (yellow) platforms 35 & 36. Eight platforms are for arrivals only. Buses often arrive at one platform, and then depart from a different platform. Arriving from out of town, it helps to remember your bus number, so you can find it again later.

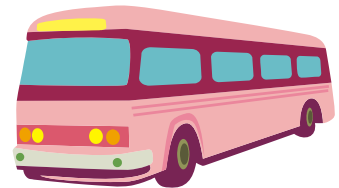
If you lose something on a bus contact the Koutsuu Center or the bus company.

Local Buses

Bus Companies:

There are four bus companies that operate in the city. They are:

- ◇ *Shiei basu* (City Bus 市営バス), usually green,
- ◇ *Kyushu sanko* (Sanko Bus 産交バス), usually blue and white, recently a colorful landscape,
- ◇ *Kumamoto dentetsu* (Kumaden 電鉄バス), white with a blue and a red stripe, recently yellow
- ◇ *Kumamoto basu* (熊本バス), usually red or red and white stripes.



Unless specified, the Chinese character above the bus's front window indicates the general direction and the number specifies the route. The destination is also often written in English.

Procedure

- 1 Board at the rear door. Take the numbered ticket from the dispensing machine.**
If you are using a prepaid card, insert the card into the scanner, instead.
The yellow covered seats are for the handicapped and the elderly.
- 2 When your upcoming stop is announced, press the button above your seat.**
The destination is also written on the left side of the electronic board.
This informs the driver that a passenger will get off at the next stop.
- 3 At your stop, match the number on your ticket with the number on the electronic board above the driver.** The corresponding number on the board will show your fare.
- 4 When disembarking at the front of the bus, place the exact fare amount and the numbered ticket into the fare machine.** A change machine near the fare machine can make change from 1000yen notes and coins. If you use a prepaid card insert the card in to the card scanner instead.

This procedure is also used on trams (streetcars 市電) and one-man (ワンマン) local trains.

Discounts

- ◇ **Prepaid card** (To 熊カード)(*ToKuma kaado*), bought from the driver, machines at the Koutsuu Center or bus offices, **saves about 10%**, more on the 5000yen card, and avoids looking for change. Available in 1000, 3000 and 5000 yen cards. Can be used on all local buses and trams.

- ◇ **One day passes** (一日フリー乗車券)(*ichi nichi furii joushaken*) are available from the driver or bus offices. Sanko bus has a 1200yen pass for use in the northern prefecture and a 700yen pass for places half an hour from Kumamoto City. Shiei bus offer two types, 500 yen which is for trams and buses in that same area and 1000 yen for all buses in the Kumamoto City area. They are great value for **longer or multiple trips by one company in a day**. eg. Going to Yamaga. **To use, scratch off the month and date of use and show to the driver when getting off.**

- ◇ Commuter passes (*teikiken*) are useful between two designated stops, but only if you travel that route frequently (probably more than eight single journeys per week). The tickets are for one month, two months or three months available from bus offices. Generally the *Tsukin teikiken* (for working people) offers a 40% discount. The price calculation is (one way journey x 60 x 0.6). The student commuter pass (*Tsugaku teikiken*) offers 50% discount (75% for elementary students). Also available for trams.

- ◇ There is also a commuter transfer pass (*Noritsugi-teikiken*) if you use more than one company to get to work. These are available from bus company offices. Can use on Shiei trams too.

- ◇ A Kumamoto castle bus one day pass (*Kumamoto-jo shuyu ichinichi joshaken*), delivers you to seven main attractions in the city for 300yen. Departing from platform 6 at Kotsu Center, two buses (called *Musashi* むさし & *Toryanse* とりゃんせ) look like green trams and the third bus has a castle picture (called *Shiromegurin* しろめぐりん). They are free for users of 500 yen and 1000 yen Shiei Bus one day passes.

- ◇ SunQ バス Pass allows three consecutive days travel. Some buses need to be reserved. There are two types, 10,000yen for all Kyushu (全九州) and 8000 yen (or 6000 yen with a ticket from outside Kyushu) for northern Kyushu (北部九州). Sanko Bus ph 096-325-0100 (in Japanese).

Kumamoto Airport Bus 熊本空港バス (Airport Limousine)

Departs Koutsuu Center, platform 6, 36 times each day, from 6:19 to 19:08, 50 minutes for ¥670 or 60 minutes from JR Kumamoto Station, still ¥670. Phone 096-354-6411

The 10:09, 12:09, 16:24 and 18:26 buses also continue to Takamori 高森, which costs ¥1000.

City Tour Bus (*Teikikankou Basu* 定期観光バス)

Departs form platform 7 at 9:10 and 13:50 on Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays only. It visits Kumamoto Castle and Suizenji Garden 2000yen, so not a good deal.

Highway Buses

Leave from Koutsuu Center, platforms 5 and 6. Weekday timetable as follows

<u>Destination</u>	<u>each day</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>+ Last</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>platform</u>	<u>Price</u>
<u>Kumamoto-ken</u>						
Amakusa 「天草」 (Hondo「本渡」)	22 buses	6:35	20:05	2hr30	7	¥2180 or ¥3800 round trip
Hitoyoshi 「人吉」	4 buses	6:30	17:20	1hr50	6	¥2300 or ¥4000 round trip
<u>Fukuoka-ken</u>						
Fukuoka 「福岡」 (some go to Fukuoka International Airport)	100 buses	4:35	22:00	2hr15	5	¥2000 or ¥3600 round trip
Kitakyushu 「北九州」 (the destination is Kokura 小倉)	9 buses	7:00	19:00	2hr50	5	¥3200 or ¥5500 round trip
<u>Miyazaki-ken</u>						
Miyazaki 「宮崎」	14 buses	7:10	20:00	3hrs	5	¥4500 or ¥8100 round trip
Nobeoka 「延岡」 (north coast of Miyazaki)	3 buses	9:10	17:10		5	¥3500 or ¥6300 round trip
			via Takachihou 高千穂			¥2300 or ¥4060 return trip
<u>Oita-ken</u>						
Oita 「大分」	10 buses	7:30	18:30	3hr40	6	¥2700 or ¥4800 return trip
				via Aso 阿蘇		¥1220 or ¥2100 return trip
Beppu 「別府」	5 buses	8:40	14:30		5	¥3850 sight seeing bus
<u>Nagasaki-ken</u>						
Nagasaki 「長崎」	9 buses	7:40	19:10	3hr15	5	¥3600 or ¥6480 return trip
Sasebo 「佐世保」	6 buses	7:10	19:00	3hrs	5	¥3200 or ¥5800 round trip
<u>Honshu</u>						
Nagoya 「名古屋」	1 bus	20:00		11hr30	5	¥11,500 or ¥20,700 round trip
Kyoto 京都	1 bus	21:00		11hrs	5	¥10,800 or ¥19,440 round trip
			via Osaka「大阪」			¥10,300 or ¥18,520 round trip
Kobe 「神戸」	1 bus	21:55		10hrs	5	¥9,800 or ¥17,640 round trip

Buy tickets from the machine near the ticket office, book Honshu buses at the ticket office (緑窓口) up to one month before departure. Book and arrive early in peak seasons (golden week, Obon). This is **often the cheapest (not comfortable) way to travel**.

Kumamoto Highway Bus Reservation Center (*kumamoto kousoku basu yoyaku sentaa*) is open from 9am to 6pm, ph.096-354-4845. The Kintetsu Bus Reservation Center (*kintetsu basu yoyaku sentaa*) is open from 9am to 6pm, ph.06-6772-1631.

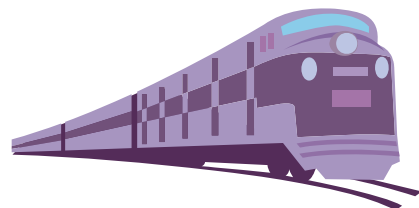
JR Redliner Buses

The Japan Railways buses (JR Redliner), which are bright red, usually operate from railway stations, not the Koutsuu Center. Discount vouchers are available (save 10%) from the driver.

Trams or Streetcars (Shiden 市電)

The green City Buses (*Shiei Basu*) and the trams are both operated by Kumamoto City local government. When riding trams use the same procedure as local buses. Discounts include Shiei Basu passes (one day pass, commuter pass). **Prepaid cards** can be used on all buses and trams. See details in the bus section above. Trams operate from approximately 6am to 11pm, every 5-10 minutes. The fare is ¥150 - ¥200 depending on the distance.

There are two lines, Line 2 and Line 3, running through central Kumamoto City; Line 2 from Tasakibashi 田崎橋(via JR Kumamoto Station 熊本駅前 and the city) to Kengun 健軍. Line 3 from JR Kami Kumamoto Station 上熊本駅前 also continues through the city to Kengun 健軍. The route number is displayed low on the front and rear of the trams. The destination is written in characters above the front and rear windows.



Trains

Japan Railways (JR) is the national rail network. From Kumamoto Station (*Kumamoto Eki* 熊本駅) there are the Kagoshima Line (south to Kagoshima and north to Hakata (Fukuoka), the Hoho Line (east to Aso and Oita) and the Misumi Line (south west to Misumi Port and a ferry to Amakusa). JR East Info line (in English) 03 3423 0111, good for planning journeys and bookings.

There are four main types of train.

- ◇ The Bullet Train (Super Express) (*Shinkansen* 新幹線) from Hakata (Fukuoka) goes north to Hiroshima, Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto, up to Tokyo. It is the fastest and runs on a separate track. The new Kyushu Shinkansen (Tsubame 800), opened in March 2004, runs from Shin-Yatsushiro to Kagoshima. It will extend north to Fukuoka (Hakata) by 2011.
- ◇ 特急 : Limited Express trains (*L-Tokkyuu* L特急) are the next fastest. These include the Relay Tsubame which relays passengers between Hakata and Shin-Yatsushiro, and the Ariake Express from Hakata to Kumamoto. They usually look faster than local trains.
- ◇ Rapid trains (*kaisokku* 快速). There are not that many in Kyushu, but common elsewhere.
- ◇ Local (ordinary) trains (*futsu* 普通) are the slowest and stop at nearly all stations. Buy tickets from the machine at the station. Use the diagram above the machine to calculate the fare.

Procedure – Local Trains (but not one-man trains, see buses)

- 1 Buy local train tickets from the ticket machines.** Look at the diagram above the machines and find your destination and fare. Insert money into the machine. Press the button indicating your destination or fare. Collect your ticket and change.
- 2 Before entering the platform, check the departure time and platform number for your train.** First identify your rail line/destination(in Chinese characters), then the time, then the platform (のりば). Each type of train is displayed in a different color (red is usually fast trains). This information is displayed on a board, an electronic board at major stations.
- 3 Insert your ticket into the automatic gate as you enter the platform.** Collect your ticket from the other end of the machine. In smaller stations, a station attendant will stamp your ticket instead. Move to the platform and board the train when it arrives.

4 Sit in a seat if one is available. Some seats may be reserved seating, but not common on local trains. A conductor may ask you to show your ticket, but not often on local trains.

5 Listen for your destination to be announced. Many trains also have an electronic display.

6 When reaching your destination, get off the train and head for the ticket gate. Insert your ticket into the gate, walk through. The machine will not return your ticket.

If your fare is insufficient, you can buy tickets en route from a conductor as they pass you. It is also acceptable to pay any difference at the destination (at the fare adjustment office/machine). A bicycle can be taken in off peak times if it is in a bicycle bag.

Express train tickets can be bought at the ticket office. Conductors do check tickets on board. Reserve seats can be indicated by the seat cover color. Often entire carriages are reserved (indicated on the outside of the carriage in Chinese characters), you pay more to sit in these seats. They are more likely to have electronic displays. Bullet Trains display all information in English.

Discounts 「割引」 (available at the ticket counter (*midori no madoguchi* 緑の窓口) at main stations)

◇ Youth 18 Tickets (*Seishun Juhachi Kippu* 「青春十八切符」): It is possible to travel from Kumamoto to Hokkaido in three days, for under 7000yen using this. It's a great way to visit out of the way places and meet lots of people. **This is the cheapest transport**, but not the fastest.

It costs ¥11500 for 5 separate days travel anywhere in Japan. The ticket can be shared by several people if they travel together. It is only valid on **local and rapid JR trains** and the JR ferry to Miyajima. Ticket can only be used in the holiday period it is purchased. The holiday periods are **1st March -10th April, 20th July – 10th September and 10th December – 20th January**. Tickets are purchased at stations from ten days before, until ten days prior to the end of each validity period.

◇ Commuter tickets (*Teikiken*), or *Tsukin-teikiken* for a working person. These are for frequent travel between two stations of your choice. They are available for 1, 3 and 6 months. Price is calculated depending on distance, ask at your local station.

◇ Ticket Book (*Kaisuken*) for regular travel between two stations. Usually valid for 3 months or until tickets are used. Offers a 10% discount.

◇ Two Trip (*Nimai Kippu*) and Four Trip (*Yonmai Kippu*) tickets provides two or four one way trips to the same destination and up to 40% discount. Probably only available for longer trips.

◇ **Nice Going Card**, for passengers aged between 19 and 29, costs 500yen and is valid for one year. This gives a 30% discount on the Tsubame Shinkansen to Kagoshima and 40% discount on other JR trains in Kyushu. It can only be used for journeys greater than 101km. **One of the better deals if traveling in Kyushu.**

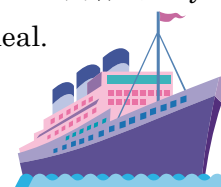
◇ There are a range of **excursion tickets** that provide a return ticket to your destination and then free use of local trains in that area for a limited time. Good if you are traveling to other parts of Japan, (outside Youth 18 ticket times).

Discount Ticket Shops buy tickets in bulk (eg. 50 Bullet Train tickets) and pass on a discount to customers. They also sell partially used rail passes. Here are two in Kumamoto City. Across the road from Tsuruya Department, Nishi Nihon Ticket is on the second floor above the bakery in Nikko Hotel. Another shop is just down the street before the Daily Store at Suidocho intersection.

Other Trains

There are also **Private railways** in Japan, some are quite scenic.

- ◇ Nishi Tetsu (西鉄) Railway operate from Fujisakigumae eki (藤崎宮前駅)(in Kumamoto City, keep walking past the end of Kamitori, cross the road and turn right) to Nishigoshi 西合志 (costs 340yen, 30 minutes). Buy tickets just like a local bus. Commuter tickets are also available. You can take an uncovered bicycle between 10am and 4:30pm if it is not raining.
- ◇ Hisatsu Orange Tetsudo, from Yatsushiro 八代 to Sendai 仙台 (costs 2550yen, taking 3 hours to travel 117km), is the former JR Kagoshima Line bought by a group of local municipalities. The one day pass (一日フリー乗車券)(ichi nichi furii joushaken)(2500yen) is a good deal and commuter tickets (Teikiken) are available. Great coastal scenery, in morning and evening.
- ◇ Kumagawa Tetsudo(球磨川鉄道) goes from Hitoyoshi 人吉 to Yunoma 湯前 (680yen, 40minutes, 25km). There are also one day passes (一日乗車券)(ichi nichi joushaken) (1000yen) and commuter tickets (Teikiken) available.
- ◇ Minami Aso, another privatized JR line, goes from Tateno 立野 to Takamori 高森 (470yen, 30minutes, 18 mountainous km). The 1000yen one day pass is not a good deal.



Ferries

Buses from Koutsuu Center, platform 21 go to Kumamoto Port. See

<http://kumanago.jp/access/ferry.html> for a complete list of ferries.

Bicycles can be taken on ferries for an extra fee.

Destinations	each day duration	First Last	person car price	Shipping company contact details
Kumamoto Port 熊本港	10	7:00	¥680	Kyushu Shosen 096-329-6111
Shimabara 島原, Nagasaki	60 minutes	19:10	¥2250	20% 40% discounts off-peak services
Kumamoto Port 熊本港	7	7:30	¥800	Kumamoto Ferry 096-311-4100
Shimabara 島原, Nagasaki	30 minutes	18:30	¥2420	www.kumamotoferry.co.jp
Kumamoto Port 熊本港	4	9:00	¥3000	Kumamoto Ferry 096-311-4100
Hondo 本渡, in Amakusa	65 minutes	18:00	no car	0969-22-1212 Hondo
Oniike 鬼池, Amakusa	?	6:30	¥360	Shimatetsu Ferry
Kochinotsu 口之津, Nagasaki	30 minutes	18:30	¥1430	0969-32-1727 Oiike
Tomioka 富岡, Amakusa	?	?	?	Reihoku-machi ferry
Mogi 茂木, Nagasaki-ken	70 minutes	?	yes	
Ushibuka 牛深, Amakusa	11	7:00	¥480	Sanwa Shosen 0969-72-3807
Kuranomoto 蔵之元, Kagoshima	30 min	19:00	¥1600	www.ezax.co.jp
Nagasu 長洲, Tamana	17	6:00	¥430	Ariake Ferry
Taira 田牧, Nagasaki-ken	40 minutes	20:00	¥1500	www.ariake-ferry.com

For northern residents who want to visit Shimabara, Mt Unsen volcano and Nagasaki

More ferries

- ◇ Pusan, Korea: Ferries from Fukuoka to Pusan, Korea include a slow ferry and a fast ferry. The fast ferry is a hydrofoil called the Beetle, operated by JR Kyushu (rail company). It operates up to five times daily. It costs 13000yen one way, 24000yen return (or 20000yen on a non holiday weekday). It is also possible to share a 6 coupon book (60000yen) with your friends, weekends are OK, but not April, August and December holidays. See the website below for more details, including bus connections and visas.
- ◇ Ferries to northern Japan, plenty of information available, see the websites below.
- ◇ Okinawa by Ferry, If you need to relax for a long time, there are ferries leaving from Kagoshima. However, you can often get a cheaper flight from Fukuoka, Kumamoto or Kagoshima.
 - Indirect ferries - calling at 4 islands - 27 hours - two companies and yes, you can get off and walk around at each island.

A-Line (also known as Oshima Line), see <http://www.aline-ferry.com/top.html> for timetable, has two ferries to Okinawa, each leaves Kagoshima every four days, from Kagoshima Shinko (new port), phone the ferries directly Akatsuki Ferry - 090 3026 0897, Naminoue Ferry - 090 3022 0912 and Marix Marine, see <http://www.marix-line.co.jp/>, runs two ferries on the days that A-Line doesn't. They also leave from Kagoshima Shinko (new port).

- Direct Ferry - 20 hours - one company, Ryukyu Kaian (also known as RKK Line), Runs 3 ferries/ month, but departs from the old port. Naha phone = 098072 2046
- Within Okinawa, try the overnight ferry from Naha to Miyako jima, or Naha to Ishigaki jima. Both are cheap and some continue to Taiwan. There are many smaller ferries.



Planes

Flying to Kyoto can be the same price as the bullet train (shinkansen) and cheaper if you are going further. Order your tickets early and look for discount tickets to save.

Discounts

Birthday flights are only 10,000yen each way to anywhere in Japan. They can be reserved up to 2 months before your birthday and you can take three friends for the same price. They must be taken within a week of your birthday. Available from ANA and JAL, must be specifically asked for.

Amakusa Airport (天草空港)(Amakusa Kuukou)

<u>Destination</u>	<u>each day</u>	<u>first / last flight</u>	<u>flight time</u>	<u>airlines</u>	<u>regular price</u>
Fukuoka	3	7:45 18:20	35 minutes	AMX	¥11,500
Kumamoto	1	11:55	20 minutes	AMX	¥7,100

Kumamoto Airport (熊本空港)(Kumamoto Kuukou)(Airport Code = KMJ)

The Kumamoto Airport bus from Koutsuu Center is available, see details above.

<u>Destination City (airport)</u>	<u>each day</u>	<u>flight time</u>	<u>first / last flight</u>	<u>airlines</u>
Tokyo 東京 (Haneda 羽田)	18 flights	95 min	08:00 20:40	SNA, JAL, ANA
Osaka 大阪 (Itami 伊丹)	8 flights	65 min	08:00 19:15	ANA, JEX (JAL)
Nagoya 名古屋 (Chubu 中部)	4 flights	75 min	10:00 20:00	JEX (JAL), ANA
Nagoya 名古屋 (Komaki 小牧)	2 flights	80 min	13:45 16:40	JAL
Okinawa 沖縄 (Naha 那覇)	1 flight	90 minutes	12:10	ANA
Amakusa 天草 (Hondo 本渡)	1 flight	20 minutes	15:20	AMX
Matsuyama 松山 in Shikoku	1 flight	55 minutes	12:40	AMX

Seoul ソウル in **South Korea** (Monday 17:40, Thursday 12:20 and Friday 12:20) 100min AAR

ALL FLIGHT TIMES ARE CURRENT UNTIL 31 AUGUST 2007, THEN SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

See Kumamoto Airport site <http://www.kmj-ab.co.jp/flight.html> for update

<u>Airline</u>	<u>phone</u>	<u>website</u>	
ANA	0120-029-222	www.ana.co.jp	All Nippon Airlines see www.ana.co.jp/eng/dms/fare/main.html for discounts (in English)
JAL	0120-255-971	www.jal.co.jp	Japan Airlines JEX Japan Express is a JAL subsidiary
SNA	0120-737-283	www.skynetasia.co.jp	Sky Net Asia
AMX	0968-34-1515	www.amx.co.jp	Amakusa Airlines, a local airline
AAR	096-312-8801	http://jp.flyasiana.com/Global/JP/en/index	Asiana Airlines, a Korean airline

Fukuoka International Airport (福岡国際空港)(Fukuoka Kokusai Kuukou)

This is the nearest international airport of any size, regular buses from Koutsuu Center, Kumamoto to Fukuoka Kuukou, see notes above. For cheaper flights, consider flying via Taiwan or Hong Kong. When flying from Tokyo, allow at least 2 hours to transfer from Haneda domestic airport to Narita international airport. Remember, you need a **re-entry permit** to return to Japan.

Multiple Reentry Permit

Get this as soon as possible, in case of emergency. It allows you to come back to Japan if you travel overseas. You may get special leave for this. The multiple reentry permit is ¥6000 and the single reentry permit is ¥3000. Both are valid for three years.

Go to the Kumamoto Immigration Office (*nyu koku kanri jimusho*) phone 0963621721, Located 15 minute walk from Denpokyokumae Tram Stop, past NTT Hospital. It is open from 9am to 12noon and 1pm to 4pm Monday to Friday..

The process takes about 45 minutes and is easy. The forms are in English too. You need your passport, foreign registration card, inkan and money. First go to the 5th floor and fill out the forms, then go to the 2nd floor and buy the tax stamps, return to the 5th floor and complete the process.

Cycling

Bicycles can be taken on trains and ferries, so why restrict yourself. There is a multilayer bicycle parking area, next to Shiaksho (town hall) on densha dori, very useful, can leave your bike for up to 3 days. Also consider the Kumagawa Cycling Road along the south bank of the Kuma River from Hitoyoshi to Yunomae.

Kumamoto-Yamaga Cycle Path (Route 330) is a 34km sealed bike path along an old railroad. The cycling is easy and takes 3 hours at a very leisurely pace. Foodpal and spas at Ueki, Miyabara and Yamaga along the way. From Kumamoto take the first left before Kami Kumamoto Station, the path follows the Iseri River, parallel to the railway line. In Yamaga, Yamaga Onsen in under Plaza5 and costs 150yen. The Yamaga cycling terminal has bike rental and accommodation (3000/night). Phone 0968 43 1136 and ask for Masako (she speaks English).

Hitch-hiking

Hitching is a great way to meet Japanese people from different walks of life. Japanese are often genuinely concerned about your welfare. The best place to stand is where the road leads to your destination, eg. a turn off to an expressway. Lots of traffic isn't always best, as people are more likely to pick you up when they think you are stranded. Japan is a relatively safe country where drivers are less worried about being robbed or attacked. You can usually trust the driver as well. However it is probably best for women not to hitch rides alone. Avoid hitching at night.

Read "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Japan" and "Hokkaido Highway Blues: Hitchhiking Japan" both by Will Ferguson (a previous JET in Amakusa) See www.japanvisitor.com/jt/hitch-hiking.html There was a "visit every prefecture in Kyushu hitch-hike" for JETs in spring, perhaps this year too?

Kumamoto Castle (*Kumamoto jou* 熊本城) & Hosokawa Gyobu-tei (Samurai Mansion)



Individual tickets cost 500yen (for the castle) and 300 yen (for the mansion), or save with a combined ticket for 680yen. If you are a resident of Kumamoto City (熊本市 *Kumamoto-shi*), use your alien registration card to get a one year combined pass (TO 城 Pass) for 1000yen, allowing unlimited visits to both locations for one year.

Accommodation – the itinerant options

What to do if you miss the last bus / train... and you are probably too late for a hotel...

In Kumamoto City try these...(although this applies to anywhere in Japan)

Option A – Phone a friend (in Kumamoto City) and stay at their place.

Option B – Sleeping out, don't do this in winter. Competition for sites under bridges and park benches could be fierce. NOT RECOMMENDED.

Option C – If you are totally broke and have no friends, try Gusto Skylark restaurant, 24hours, near the Koutsuu Center. Order a drinks bar (336yen) and sleep on a bench around the corner. NOT RECOMMENDED.

- Option D – All night spa. Fujisaki Hot Springs Tenbo-no-Yu is on the 11th floor of the Kumaden Building, above Fujisakigumae Station. The onsen is 600yen (2hrs). If you want to stay for the night, pay 1300yen for towel, gown and lounge chair. In the morning pay an additional late fee of 800yen. Males only, NOT RECOMMENDED.
- Option E – Internet Café. Look for large banners above the arcades. Get an internet both with an all night package and stay for the night. The two main ones are **Cybac** (off Shimotori) charges a membership fee, then about 2000yen for an 8 hour package. **Popeye Media Café** (on Kamitori) has no membership charge, pay 2000yen for 10hours, 1380yen on weekday nights, also has showers.
- Option F - Also see www.japanvisitor.com/ for more ideas or try a love hotel (look for bright lights over the river).

Accommodation – the planned options

- ◇ Backpackers offer cheap (as little as 1000yen/night off peak) and friendly accommodation. Usually you have a bunk in a dorm room shared by same gender travelers. It is a great way to meet other travelers, especially Japanese students. Look for pieces of paper or people with these at bus terminals and ferry terminals. Often advertised by word of mouth, try to get their phone number. Try to book ahead.
- ◇ Youth Hostels (ユースホステル) are more expensive (3500-4500yen) and often more rigid with curfews, but reliably clean and quiet. Youth Hostel members get a 1000yen discount, so bring your IYH card. Accommodation is usually same gender shared dorms, either bunk beds or tatami rooms. Usually there are no self-catering facilities, however many provide dinner or breakfast for an additional charge. Booking ahead is a must, as arriving unannounced may lead to refusal. Check in time is usually by 8pm (however you can go out again until 9 or 10pm). If you want dinner arrive before 6:30pm and make sure you order dinner when you book. Traditionally there is an evening meeting of guests, when the host often provides local information, although many hostels no longer do this. See www.jyh.or.jp/english/index.html
- ◇ Fisherman's Inns (Kaiin kaikan) offer a good deal. They are always by the sea and often in major ports. The information is only in Japanese, see the website in the list below if interested.
- ◇ Ryokans and Minshoku are traditional Japanese Inns, minshuku usually being smaller and simpler. The floor is tatami (reed mat) and futons are put out for sleeping. They are usually expensive, but include two good meals. Service is often very good. Arrive early and bath before dinner. Curfew is usually quite early.
- ◇ Business Hotels are cheap hotels for traveling business people. Expect to pay 4000yen or more per night. They are usually located near train stations. There are a number in Kumamoto City.
- ◇ Capsule Hotel cost 4000-5000yen per night, for a small capsule containing a bed, light, usually



a TV. They are usually for men only, although there is one for women in Fukuoka. Some have extensive baths or onsen attached. They essentially provide accommodation for businessmen.

- ✧ Love Hotels are noted for bright gaudy lighting on the outside. Arrival and departure are anonymous, so they can be a cheap late night accommodation option, even for two or more people. There are a number in Kumamoto, just look for any building with bright lights that is not a *pachinko* (game) parlour, over the Shirokawa River. There is no need to book.

Useful Websites

Trains, Planes and Automobiles:

www.hyperdia.com/ (Brilliant Train and Plane schedules in English)

jorudan.co.jp/english/ (another train and air timetable finder in English)

ekikara.jp/ (another train timetable finder in Japanese, but lots of graphics)

www.japanvisitor.com (Wealth of information on many topics (in English).

JR East Info line (in English) 03 3423 0111, good for planning journeys and bookings.)

desktoptetsu.at.infoseek.co.jp/freeticket.htm (Extensive list of travel discounts throughout Japan (in English))

www.kumamoto-if.or.jp/ (Kumamoto International Foundation (in English) see Vehicles section

www.city.kumamoto.kumamoto.jp (Kumamoto City Sightseeing, see transportation page)

Buses and Trams:

www.kyusanko.co.jp/sankobus (Sanko Bus (in Japanese) timetables, route info and some maps)

www.rs-kumamoto.com/data/city_trnst.htm (map of Shiei buses (in Japanese))

www.kotsu-kumamoto.jp/ (info for Shiei Bus and Trams (in Japanese))

Planes

ANA 0120-029-222 www.ana.co.jp; see www.ana.co.jp/eng/dms/fare/main.html for discounts (in English)

JAL 0120-255-971 www.jal.co.jp Japan Airlines (Japan Express is a JAL subsidiary)

SNA 0120-737-283 www.skynetasia.co.jp Sky Net Asia

AMX 0968-34-1515 www.amx.co.jp Amakusa Airlines, a local airline

AAR 096-312-8801 www.flyasiana.co.jp Asiana Airlines, a Korean airline

Travel

kumanago.jp/ (great for interesting sites in Kumamoto, maps (English))

www2.kumagaku.ac.jp/teacher/~masden/links.html (Kumamoto info and links)

Local Ferries

kumanago.jp/access/ferry.html for a complete list of local ferries.

ambl-ku.jp/english/E_lab/E_syozai.html how to get to Amakusa Marine Biology Labs

Ferries to northern Japan (all these sites are in English)

www.ease.com/~randyj/rjjapanf.htm

www.japan-guide.com/e/e627.html

gojapan.about.com/cs/transportship/

<http://www.seejapan.co.uk/> (international ferries)

Okinawa ferries

www.marix-line.co.jp/

Marix Line (in Japanese)

www.safirabu.com/

good for timetables in Okinawa (in Japanese)

www.port-of-hakata.or.jp/english/

for ferry contacts from Hakata (in English)

www.nahaport.jp/pro_us/p16.htm

for Naha contacts

www.wonder-okinawa.jp/006/english/

for nature in Okinawa (in English)

Korea (trains and ferry)

www.korail.com/

look for the English site link in top right corner

app.korail.go.kr/ROOT/main-top.top?lang=eng

Korean railways

www.jrbeetle.co.jp/english/index.html

fast ferry from Fukuoka to Pusan (in English)

Accommodation

www.jyh.or.jp/english/index.html

Japan Youth Hostels (in English)

www.minatonoyado.com/

Fisherman's Inns (in Japanese)

Tips for computer use in Japan

- ◇ If the computer insists on typing Japanese and you want to type English...Press the button on the top left of the keyboard, the one with funny symbols. If that doesn't work look for a very small icon with KANA written on it, often on the bottom right of the screen, click it with your mouse. There is probably another small icon with CAPS on it, this changes from capital letters to lower case, click with your mouse if required.
- ◇ If you don't understand a Japanese document or website, use babelfish to translate it. I know it is not perfect, but it may be enough to get the gist, and find out what you want to know.
babelfish.altavista.com/ translates text or websites from Japanese to English
- ◇ If your computer won't read kanji properly online, go to View 「表示」 (third from the left), and click on Encode 「エンコード」. Choose 「自動選択」. If that doesn't work, try the other options.