



Feature:

What's on the Minds of Japanese High School Students Today

Since 1997, the Japan Forum has held the Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students Photograph Contest annually, open to high school students in Japan.

The contest was organized as a way for Japanese students to describe, through photographs and in words, their daily lives and thoughts to their peers in other countries.

In preparing their entries to the contest, the participants are prompted to take a fresh look at their family and friends, to reexamine themselves through the discoveries they thus make, and on that basis to create and send a message to high school students overseas. Featuring selections from the entries to this year's contest, this issue of *The Japan Forum Newsletter* presents messages in two categories: messages to peers in other countries from the high school students who took the photographs and comments by the subjects of the photographs about their happiest, saddest, most irritating or most troubling recent experience.

We hope these brief glimpses of what occupies the minds of Japanese high school students will help readers identify with them as they strive to keep positive and get ahead while coping with interpersonal relations, apprehensions about the future, and other concerns common to high school students around the world.



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The People Around Me

Accepting the Advice of Others

Probably the saddest thing is misunderstanding among friends. Somebody advised me: "You have to change yourself if you want to be able to get along with others." When I rebelled, saying that I didn't want to get along with anyone if I had to change myself, I was told, "then it is you who will be the biggest loser." I was really depressed, thinking that maybe there is no one who will accept me just as I am and still like me. But then—maybe I am pretty pitiful—I can't even accept the advice I get, and just reject everything. **【Hayashi Asako】**

Studying art



📷 Noto Meiko 📧 Hayashi Asako

In the cafeteria after school



📷 Yamamoto Kentarō 📧 Hara Hirofumi

My Girlfriend's Present

The greatest thing that's happened lately is the calendar my girlfriend gave me for my birthday present. Usually, the calendars you get are for the following year, but this one was a calendar of this year, with details of where we went and what we did each day so far. Reading through and remembering our good times was heartwarming and nostalgic.

My birthday this year was the first time I spent with my girlfriend. I felt an indescribable happiness and enjoyed it much more than ever before: It was so special I thought I might leak a tear or two. Just imagining that our relationship would ever go sour and come to an end scares me. She is the person I really don't want to lose right now.

【Hara Hirofumi】

Words Are Important

It always makes you feel good when somebody thanks you for something. I feel especially happy when someone tells me, "Thank you for always listening seriously to what I say." A simple, careless remark can sometimes hurt deeply, but an equally simple, unassuming expression of thanks can fill you with confidence and energy. Words are important. Among friends, of course it's important to know that we understand even what we don't actually say, but what you don't actually put into words, you won't completely understand. **【Uzawa Maya】**

With her dog



📷 Takeuchi Yuriko 📧 Uzawa Maya

The author is given at the end of each message. The photographer and name of the subject are identified under each photograph.

📷 : photographer 📧 : name of the subject

Finding It Hard to Get Along with My Parents

Recently, no matter what my parents say to me, I fly off the handle. It wasn't like this at all before, so I can't understand what has happened to me. Being like this is really awful. Maybe I'm taking out on my parents the stress I've been under lately. As usual, I'm probably the cause of my own difficulties, so I am going to try to do better from now on.

【Ogata Hiromi】

Helping out at the family's *rāmen* shop



📷 Onodera Yūko 📖 Ogata Hiromi

Sending an e-mail (on her cell phone)



📷 Masagaki Aika 📖 Sugawara Haruka

Encounter with Death

The saddest thing that happened to me lately was the death of my third-year junior high school homeroom teacher due to illness. All I could remember was the way she was always smiling, and I could not feel her death was real at all, so I was even laughing with my friends until just before the funeral. Then, when I actually saw her, lying there, tears poured down my cheeks and my mind went completely blank.

That was the first time a person close to me had died, and it really made me think about death—the terrible feeling of helplessness and frustration. Human beings die one day. Yet the days keep on coming and going. So, I began to think that I can't waste even a single second. I must live my life to the fullest. My teacher showed us that until the end of her life. It's so sad, but it's reality as well. Maybe because of this sadness I feel I can go on living. I feel full of gratitude to my teacher.

【Sugawara Haruka】

Snack in the classroom after school



📷 Kondō Yumiko 📖 Tsutsumi Yuka

The Importance of Communication

One of the realities of Japanese cities these days is that most people don't know who lives even two or three doors down from them. With things like the Internet becoming more widely used, I think it will get even easier for people to get things done without leaving their homes. With that kind of lifestyle, how can people learn to communicate with each other as human beings or appreciate the preciousness of life? I'm really worried that there'll be more and more people with fewer and fewer opportunities to interact with others, and therefore with little appreciation of other people's suffering. I'd like to communicate a lot more with the people around me. 【Tsutsumi Yuka】

On My Mind

Practicing the saxophone



© Mizoguchi Yūko S Kikuta Sayaka

We Are What We Make Ourselves

I think we have to work at developing individual character. Those who can't do that simply go along with trends or copy what others are doing. Even if you've been just going with the flow, once you discover something you like or you can really get into, your own personality will start to shine. **【Mizoguchi Yūko】**

What I'm Really Into These Days

Right now, what I am crazy about is a music-and-dance game called "Dance Dance Revolution." This is a computer game in which you dance according to what is shown on the screen. If you fall out of step, the "game-over" sign comes up very quickly. It's a lot of fun and good exercise as well. **【Tōgei Eri】**

Assignment for art class



© Tōgei Eri S Ashimine Ryōko

Worries Are Part of Life

I want my high school life to be the kind I can look back on after I grow up and remember all the good times I had. Although I have lots of problems and worries—about the future, about my friendships, about my lovelife—I think a life full of different experiences is more fun than just living a bland existence without anything happening at all, good or bad. **【Itō Miki】**

Refresh with a drink



© Itō Miki S Tanimoto Sachiko

What Hobby I Choose Is Up to Me

People think I'm strange when I tell them I like anime cartoons. They think I'm too old for that. But I think it is they who don't understand. Don't you think it's up to me to choose my own hobby? How can they tell me "You've picked the wrong hobby"? **【Sugihara Kenji】**

Heading off to his club meeting



© Sugihara Kenji S Satō Tetsurō

With his catch in hand



© Hirono Ken'ichi S Tsuchida Yōichi

Worried About the Environment

What troubles me lately is the changes I see in fishing areas. I've been fishing black bass since about four years ago, and I see more trash and shore-retaining construction projects that aren't really needed. The water is getting more and more polluted. I can't imagine what's in the heads of people who leave their garbage behind. If people keep on being that careless, we will not be able to fish very much longer. I never ever leave my trash behind. If every single person would change their attitude, the seashore would be a cleaner, tidier place. We are the ones who have to keep it clean so we can go on fishing. **【Tsuchida Yōichi】**

The Future of the Earth

Human beings are feeding off on the earth just like parasites and their population seems bound to increase until they exhaust all the earth's resources. These problems are the symbol and reflection of foolhardy human egoism completely oblivious of the way nature works. If we keep living this way, the earth will certainly perish, and in the not-so-distant future.

If we are told to go back to primitive lifestyles in order to protect natural environment, there is no way we can manage it, no matter how hard we try. What we need to do now is learn how to co-exist with nature. There must be a way to help both humans and nature. I bet I could find a way. I am still 17 years old, so I have the potential to do anything! **【Ono Mikiko】**

Her computer is a part of her life



© Yamamoto Naomi S Ono Mikiko

My Future

Singing at the school festival



© Iwasaki Tomoko S Ōta Kumi

I Want to be a Public Health Nurse

I really think I have been very lucky. I love and respect my family and they have given me plenty of love. I can do pretty much anything I want to do in my life. I guess I knew it before, but recently I realized from watching TV that there are an awful lot of people in the world who do not enjoy life like I do. There are children who don't have much longer to live, and children who give up what they want to do to support their families. I decided I can't just go on enjoying life for myself.

I want to be a public health nurse. I will join the Japan Overseas Cooperation Association and work to help the children suffering from disease. I hope I can share my happiness with them. **【Iwasaki Tomoko】**

Dreams for Children

What I dream about changes day to day, but now I think I want to have a job that will give “dreams to children.” The number of children is dwindling in Japan now, so the number of such jobs are also declining, but I myself have been lucky to have been brought up by adults who showed me what to think and dream about. When I become an adult I, too, will be able to give children dreams.

【Igarashi Yoshimi】

At the baseball tournament



© Igarashi Yoshimi S Onda Ayumi

My Future

I hope to become a designer or a singer—not a big-time professional singer, but the kind who sings occasionally in small theaters and clubs. If I am a designer, I want to make clothes that are simple and modern. I love art, so I want to be able to spend my time drawing and creating things. I also think it would be great to have a job in which I can use the three languages I know (Japanese, English and Korean).

【Han Yūjun】

Is Getting a Job Right Away All That Important?

The unemployment situation is very bad in Japan, and many university graduates are finding it difficult to find jobs. The number of young people who make a living as *furitā* (part-time casual workers) is rapidly growing.

At a CD shop



© Sueoka Miki S Nishi Junko

I don't think it's bad to be a *furitā*, if you take responsibility for yourself and have confidence in the way you live. I don't necessarily reject the conventional way of thinking of my parents' generation: that it's important to get a permanent job and settle down. But nowadays there is nothing to guarantee that “if you just get a permanent job and work hard you will be happy,” as was once the case. I can't be convinced that it's worthwhile giving up all my dreams just to get a stable life. I don't know whether this just goes to show that I don't know how tough the world really is, or that values are just undergoing big changes from the time our parents were young.

【Sueoka Miki】

With her younger brother



© Tatebe Onka S Han Yūjun

Me working on my laptop computer. I'm into computers. I do consulting work by computer. I'm really interested in artificial intelligence. My dream for the future is to do research.

【Matthew Haddox】



This is me playing the flute in the family room. I love playing the flute in my pajamas in this room. Dream: To play the flute on the moon!

【Venessa Lynn Maltin】



Letters from Abroad

We received letters from students of Marist Sisters' College in Sydney, Australia, who saw *The Way We Are 1998*,* the collection of photographs from the 1998 contest. At the bottom are some of the photographs sent by students of Lick-Wilmerding High School, who took them after they saw *The Way We Are* booklet in their Japanese-language class.

*To obtain copies of *The Way We Are*, send inquiries to forum@tjf.or.jp. One copy is ¥1,000 plus postage.

To Ohashi,

You are really into computers, aren't you? I love computers as well. We used to have access to the Internet but we stopped it because all I did was look up sports! It didn't take me by surprise that Japanese guys enjoy computers because that's common down here in Australia as well. Do you just use the Net or do you enjoy playing games as well? What do you search for on the Internet? Sports? Movies? I enjoy looking at sports, especially rugby league!

Well, I'm happy that you are doing what you love most and I hope you do become a system engineer when you are older. Do guys in Japan usually go into the computer and technology field for work or are you just unique?

Best wishes & Merry Christmas from the down under!

Arda より

To Naoki Shibano,

I find it interesting that you enjoy hard rock music and you play the electric guitar. I like all types of music including hard rock. Have you heard of the American bands "Korn" and "Marilyn Manson"? I like their music! I only enjoy listening to music. I don't like to play instruments at all. When I was younger, I used to play the piano, but I quit because I hated it so much.

Good luck in your studies. I hope you will be able to become a teacher. At the rate of your study, I'm pretty sure you will be a teacher. Don't forget to relax from time to time and don't stress out too much! Bye,

From Chantele

To Masami,

I think that it's really great that you want to own your own boutique and make your own clothes. From the picture that you have sent, I can tell that you are very much into the fashion business and you seem very good at it. I also like fashion and shopping very much. I go shopping every week and I have to buy something every time I go. I hope that one day I can get to buy your clothes here in Australia.

From Cathy

Dear ひろよ ころご

How is school in Japan? Very hard? In Australia school is okay. Not too bad. You said you are preparing for your university entrance exams. がんばってね!! I hope that you get the marks that you want. Never give up and you can do it!! I really agree with your quote "Don't rush. Just do what can be done today." That is true. I have a quote for you: "I'll think about it tomorrow, because tomorrow is another day."

From Vanessa

Family roomにフルーツを置いて
いるところです。床には family
roomに pajamaを着て
フルーツを置く
のが"大女子"です。



Sometimes when I'm bored I pull silly faces. This time I laughed so hard my sides hurt. Future: I want to become a scientist and win the Nobel Prize.

【Alison Sumiko】

ときどき、とてもつまらないとき、
おかしなかおをしています。
おなかかいたいくなるほど
わらいました。

The Way We Are

アルバイトとお手^て伝^だい: Part-time Work and Helping at Home

📷:Photographer

Washing the car



きょうは
今日は
ワックスぬる?

Keisuke talks cars—one of his favorite topics—as he helps his father wash the family car.

"Are we gonna wax it this time?"

📷 Katō Takanori, Hyōgo prefecture

Hamburger shop



いらっしゃいませ!

Asami works part-time at a hamburger shop three or four days a week after school. Her wage is ¥750 an hour.

"May I help you?"

📷 Ōsawa Megumi, Nagano prefecture

Tolling the temple bell



せ~の

Hideaki's family maintains a Buddhist temple. His job is to ring the temple bell at six o'clock every evening. "Ready and . . ."

📷 Sakai Akiko, Gifu prefecture

At the convenience store where she works, Eri is always smiling and takes special care to be thoughtful of customers. "Okay, now it's all clean!"

📷 Yamamoto Mitsue, Osaka prefecture

Convenience store



きれいになった、なった!

Yuka helps make New Year's *shimenawa*.
Every year, her grandmother makes
over 300 of the decorative ropes
to sell and give to neighbors.
"Grandma's hands move like magic."
© Morita Hitomi, Hiroshima prefecture



おばあちゃんの手、
まほう
魔法の手みたい!

Making *shimenawa* (ceremonial straw rope)

冷蔵庫に
おかずになるもの、
なにかあったかな。



Cooking dinner

Big brother Jun'ichi preparing the evening meal.
Our parents both work, so Jun'ichi and I fend for
ourselves, taking turns at cooking and other chores.
"I hope there's something
in the fridge to go with this."
© Wataki Maiko, Osaka prefecture

はい、
おまちとおさま
でした。

Curry restaurant



Shino is working towards her high school diploma by
correspondence course and has classes on Saturdays only.
On weekdays she works at a curry restaurant.
"There you go!"
© Saeki Naotoshi, Tokyo

Toshiya (left) has a part-time job delivering newspapers.
Bitter cold and icy roads make it hard work in the snowy months.
"Be careful! It's slippery here!"
© Fukushi Takayoshi, Aomori prefecture



すべるから、
きをつけてるよ。

Newspaper delivery

Sakura scrubs the bathtub after dinner.
Keeping the family bath clean is her job.
"This bathtub gets dirty even if I scrub it every day."
© Kumagai Noriko, Miyagi prefecture

Cleaning the bath



まいにちあら
毎日洗っても、
お風呂
お風呂つけてっこう
よご
汚れるんだよね。

A Day in the Life

高校生のクラブ活動 Kōkōsei no Kurabu Katsudō Club Activities of High School Students

A Day in the Life introduces aspects of the cultural backdrop of daily life in Japan by focusing on topics that are often talked about, are considered essential to the culture, or otherwise loom large in the lives of Japanese. Part of the aim of this feature is to encourage readers to consider culture itself from a broad perspective, recognizing, for example, that any given culture, whether Japan's or your own, includes diversity; that different cultures have similarities as well as differences; that cultures evolve with the changing times; and that, while human behavior may be manifested in different ways, at the fundamental level there is a great deal about us that is universal.

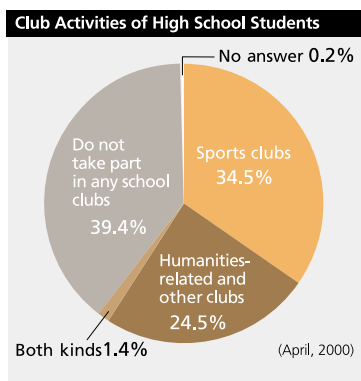
Beginning with the previous issue, the newsletter will be printed in full-color and two-color issues alternately. In the full-color issues, **A Day in the Life** will continue to look at the lives of Japanese people in general, while in the two-color issues (with feature articles) it will focus on topics essential to understanding the daily lives of Japanese school students.

Whenever Japanese junior high and high school students are called upon to introduce themselves, they invariably mention the school sport or activity clubs to which they belong. School club activities start as a part of formal curriculum from fifth and sixth grades of elementary school. In junior high schools there are two types of club activities—those that are part of the formal curriculum and are compulsory, and extracurricular clubs which are optional. The latter are more active in high schools. One survey* shows that more than sixty percent of high school students in Japan take part in a school club of some type. The clubs provide opportunities for students to enjoy their hobbies, improve particular skills, and discipline themselves in the process. For many students, clubs are even more important as a way to get to know students in different classes or grades and forge lasting friendships. In this issue, **A Day in the Life** looks at high school club activities—how they are organized, what they mean to the students, and so on—as depicted in photographs and captions submitted to the TJF's Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students Photograph Contest.

*『中学生・高校生の日常生活に関する調査』[Survey on the Daily Lives of Junior High and High School Students], Japan Youth Research Institute, 2000.

School Clubs in Overview

Japanese high schools typically offer students a variety of sports, humanities-related, science-related and arts clubs. According to the survey mentioned above, 34.5 percent of high school students join sports clubs, 24.5 percent humanities-related and other clubs, and 1.4 percent both kinds, while 39.4 percent do not take part in any school clubs.



Source: Japan Youth Research Institute

In order to fulfill specific educational policies or create a distinctive school image, some schools emphasize particular kinds of clubs. For example, some schools seek to strengthen their athletics clubs by attracting suitably talented students from all over the

country under a recommendation-based enrollment system. Of course, there are also many students who prefer to pursue interests outside school rather than join a school club, as well as schools where club activities in general are not very popular.

At most schools, clubs are classified as extracurricular activities. Essentially they are managed by the students themselves, led by a club president supported by other club officers such as vice-president and manager. Normally club presidents are students in the higher grades. Guidance is usually given by members of the school teaching staff acting as supervisors or coaches, and sometimes by ex-members—third-year students or graduates who visit their old clubs for practice. Clubs also include representatives from the teaching staff who act as advisors, act as liaisons between the club and the school authorities, and supervise the club's other external affairs.

School clubs vary widely in size. While some have only a few students, others, such as sports clubs that have achieved national renown, can attract over a hundred members at a time.



The swimming club at my school boasts a tradition that includes several Olympic swimmers. The club has about twenty members, all of whom entered the school by special recommendation with swimming as their main aim.

Jun'ichi

The type of school I attend is called a *shingakukō* (for high-achiever, university-bound students). It's really difficult to keep up with your studies and also practice a sport at this kind of school, so hardly anybody joins the sports clubs.

Saori



I don't belong to any activity club, so after school my boyfriend and I often go walking in the park or just hang around school.

Saki



A Chance to Absorb Yourself in Something


In another survey*, respondents were asked what they felt were the most rewarding times at school. The second most common response, after “when spending time with close friends” (53.1%), was “when involved in student council, club or other group activities” (16.1%). When the same question was put to American and Chinese high school students, although the most common response was the same as for Japanese students, in both cases the second most common response was “when tak-

ing lessons that I like,” with “student council, club activities, etc.” ranking third or lower. These results suggest that for Japanese high school students club activities play a particularly important role in school life.

*『スポーツと健康に関する調査：日・米・中国高校生比較』[Survey on Sports and Health: A Comparison of Japanese, American and Chinese High School Students], Japan Youth Research Institute, 1996.


There are a lot of students who are really devoted to club and extra-curricular activities to try to improve themselves.
Mayuko

All that training is exhausting, but I love baseball. I started playing baseball in elementary school and I plan to keep playing as long as I can. **Masashi**

Every one of her creations is based on a sketch. Here, she's agonizing over one of her sketches in an effort to improve on it.

Photo: Yamaguchi Yuko




A Place to Build Relationships

While the atmosphere of Japanese school clubs varies from club to club, there persists a traditional image, particularly in strict sports clubs, of *senpai* (upper-grade students)* lording it over their *kohai* (lower-grade students)*. In clubs that keep such old-fashioned ways, first-year students often have a long initiation period of basic training, performing menial tasks such as gathering up balls and generally learning the ropes. These days, however, this “rank” style of social interaction is dying out, and school

clubs are becoming more relaxed places for making friends with students from other grades and meeting people who will offer various kinds of advice and guidance. Clubs also provide opportunities for students to learn about social interaction in general, such as by allowing them to develop interpersonal ties through group activities; through tasks such as teaching others and planning courses of action from a broad perspective; and through experiences such as training camps and inter-school matches.

The teacher who coaches the swim team of our school is famous for having coached many champions in the past. Under his devoted guidance, the swimmers learn not only how to swim better but also what it means to be a strong person.
Jun'ichi



What made me the happiest was that all of us received prizes in the photo contest. Though we sometimes have conflicts and troubles in our club activities, at times like this everyone is really happy. **Jun'ichi**

I have a lot of respect for a senior member of our photography club. She is cheerful, kind, and vivacious.
Suzuko




Photo: Murata Asami



In the locker room after training. With the conversation bouncing along, everyone has such a good time they forget how exhausted they are from practice.

I have a friend who belongs to a basketball club. The trials of club activity have helped to develop her character, and I think it also enabled her to make friends with students in other classes. **Saori**




Photo: Shima Akiko



My friend is a long-distance runner in our school's track and field club. Famished after all the training, she stops by a noodle shop on the way home for her favorite, *miso rāmen*.**

***先輩** (*senpai*): Someone in a higher academic level or more advanced/superior position than you in a given discipline or pursuit. Someone who entered the school, university, or place of employment before you did. This term is widely used in clubs and other areas of Japanese junior high and high school life. The term *senpai* is used to mean seniors in general, but it is also used to refer to individuals with the person's name—usually their surname but sometimes their first name—plus “*senpai*,” as in “*Tamura-senpai*” or “*Yuki-senpai*.” The corresponding word for students/people in lower grades/positions is *kohai* (後はい), though this is not used in conjunction with surnames or other names to refer to those people.

** *miso rāmen*: *Rāmen* is noodles made of wheat flour, eaten in a hot broth with meat and vegetables. *Rāmen* with *miso* in the broth is *miso rāmen*. One serving costs about ¥600.

Links to Society at Large

In many fields of school club activity, national competitions, and concerts, performances and other events are held to allow clubs to compete with one another or present the results of their training or studies. Sport clubs focus on practice matches and official inter-school matches. While the system of official matches varies from sport to sport, in most cases the third-year students retire after an important match or tournament, making way for the next round of matches featuring new and promoted club members. (Note that the Japanese school year begins in spring—in

April—so this is usually when clubs take in new members.) Sport clubs also play intra-club matches as red and white teams, as well as matches against alumni teams. The national “inter-high” tournaments in sports such as baseball (see the column below), soccer and rugby are televised and enjoy considerable popularity among the general public. Most schools also hold an annual *bunkasai* or school festival as another important occasion for school clubs, particularly performance and humanities and arts-related clubs, to show their talents to a wider audience.

Photo: Aarai Keisuke



She's in her kendo gear, preparing for a practice match with students from another school. Putting on her helmet, she concentrates on the match.

Photo: Soejima Sachi



My friend belongs to the calligraphy club. Wearing traditional *hakama* and *kimono*, she executed a work of calligraphy before an audience at *bunkasai*.

Club Practice Times and Content

At most schools, club activities are held after school. Each club determines which days of the week it will hold practice or training sessions. Most clubs practice for two or three hours after school, though a few opt for morning sessions (called *asa-ren*). In sports and athletics clubs, practice matches and official matches are held on weekends and holidays. During summer vacation, some clubs hold training camps (about a week long) or other intensive practice/activity sessions. Training camps may consist of overnight stays at the school or trips to summer

retreats or other facilities equipped for the particular club's activities.

Some high school students devote almost all their non-class time to club activities. In many cases, especially among junior high and high school students in sports and athletic clubs, club practice time can seriously encroach on the time they need to study. Some see this situation as a good opportunity for students to learn how to use time wisely, coordinating their club and study schedules for best results in both.

All-Japan High School Baseball Championship Tournament

The national baseball tournament contested by high schools with baseball clubs throughout Japan is sponsored by the national daily newspaper, *Asahi shimbun*. Finals are held at the Kōshien Baseball Stadium in Hyōgo prefecture in August. Since its inception in 1915, and despite suspension during the Pacific War, the tournament has grown year after year and now enjoys immense popularity as a national annual event. Qualifying matches are held in each prefecture—in 2000 a total of 4,119 schools competed in the 82nd tournament—after which the top 49 schools (one from each pre-

fecture plus an extra one each from Tokyo and Hokkaido, which have two qualifying districts) vie for the championship at Kōshien stadium. Even making it to the finals is a great honor, and it is not uncommon for competing schools and their local communities to turn out at the stadium in several busloads to cheer their teams. Many professional baseball players in Japan are scouted from high school teams that played at Kōshien. (Another national high school baseball tournament, sponsored by the national daily, *Mainichi shimbun*, is held at Kōshien in the spring.)

Activities for Japanese-language Class

The club activities of Japanese schools probably differ in many respects from those of your school. From a broader perspective, however, the phenomenon of young people pursuing such activities in order to practice special skills, make friends, and learn to interact with the society around them is common to all countries. We hope the information about Japanese school clubs provided here will prompt readers to think about clubs in various ways: why do club activities differ from country to country (if they do)? What possible alternatives to clubs are available to young people in your country? You could also explore this topic by discussing the kinds of extracurricular activities your students get passionate about, why they do, and what they get out of them.

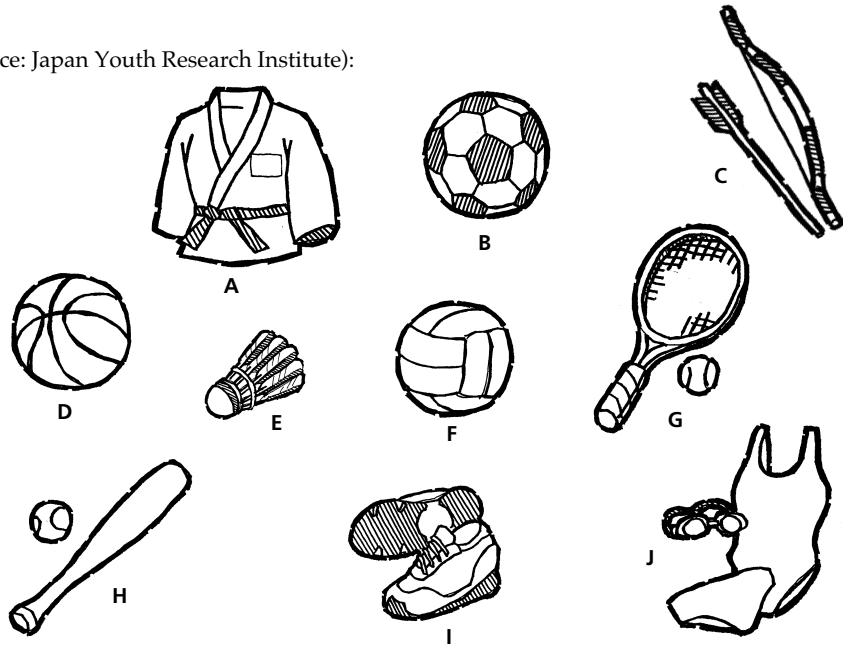
Activity 1:

Draw a line from each club name to the corresponding illustration.

(Objective: A warm-up activity to familiarize students with vocabulary they will need when talking about their own club activities.)

The ten most popular school club activities among Japanese high school students (source: Japan Youth Research Institute):

1. バレーボール .
2. バスケットボール .
3. テニス .
4. きゅうどう .
5. やきゅう* .
6. バドミントン .
7. サッカー .
8. りくじょう .
9. じゅうどう .
10. すいせい** .



* Hint: や means "field," きゅう means "ball"
 ** Hint: すい means "water"

Answers: 1. F (volleyball), 2. D (basketball), 3. G (tennis), 4. C (kyudo), 5. H (baseball), 6. E (badminton), 7. B (soccer), 8. I (track and field), 9. A (judo), 10. J (swimming)

Activity 2:

You have received a letter of self-introduction from a high school student at a sister school in Japan and are going to write a reply. Your letter may include information such as whether or not your school has club activities; whether or not you belong to any clubs and if so which one; what other things you are especially interested in if you are not in a school club and why.

(Objective: To gain an understanding of Japanese school clubs and to think and write about corresponding activities in one's own life.)

こんにちは。
 田村ゆきです。16才です。東高校の2年生です。
 クラブはバスケットボール部に入っています。先輩に教えてもらいながら、毎日2時間くらい練習します。練習はきびしいです。でも、バスケ*が大好きなので、毎日がんばっています。しゅらいはバスケの選手になりたいです。
 あなたは、何かクラブに入っていますか？あなたのことを教えてください。お返事を待っています。
 では、さようなら。

2000年8月3日
 田村ゆき

Hello. My name is Tamura Yuki. I am 16 years old and am a second-year student at Higashi High School.

I am a member of my school's basketball club. We practice for about two hours every day, with our *senpai* acting as coaches. The practices are pretty tough, but I stick with it every day because I really like basketball a lot. I hope to become a professional basketball player some day.

Do you belong to any school club? Please tell me something about yourself. I'm looking forward to your reply.

Bye for now.

Tamura Yuki
 3 August 2000

*バスケ: An abbreviation of バスケットボール.

Activity 3:

If you were to spend a year at a school in Japan...

- (a) 学校のクラブに入りますか？
 Would you join a school club?
- (b) どのクラブに入りますか？
 What club would you join?
- (c) どうしてそのクラブに入りますか？
 Why would you pick that club?

Compare your responses to those of your classmates. The class could then hold a vote to see which clubs are the most popular. (Note that, when counting the results of a vote, the tally can be kept using the kanji character 正 instead of 井.)

(Objective: To simulate moving from one's own culture into a different culture and choosing a course of action based on an understanding of that culture.)

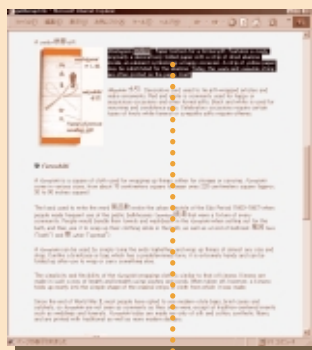
TJF News

Review

From June to August 2000

TJF Homepage—What's New?

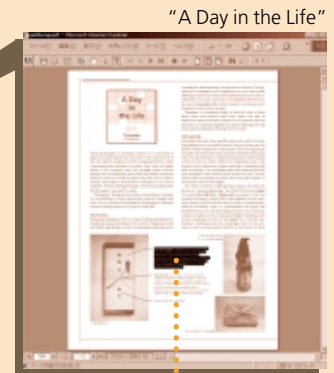
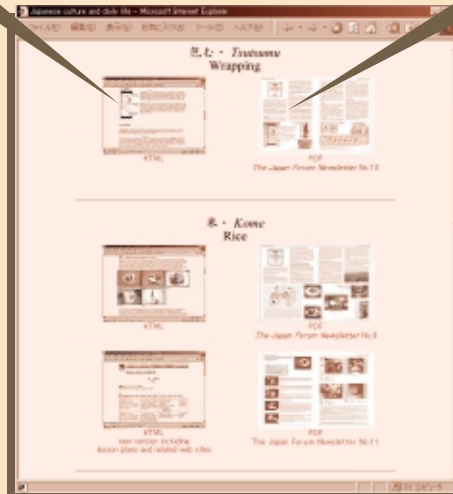
The "Japanese Culture and Daily Life" Site is better and more useful now!



Copy & paste!

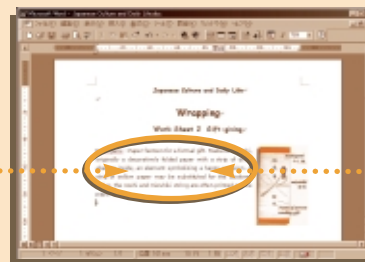
Japanese Culture and Daily Life

<http://www.tjf.or.jp/eng/ge/geindex.htm>



PDF

Copy & paste!



Your work sheet
(an example using MS Word)

The "A Day in the Life" series published in *The Japan Forum Newsletter* is now available in digital form for more convenient access and use in making worksheets and teaching resources. The latest update adds to the Japanese Culture and Daily Life page six new titles (New Year's Card, O-Bon Holiday, Seasonal Foods, Crossing Years, Enjoying the Cherry Blossoms, and Be Colorful!). The "A Day in the Life" pages (from *Newsletter* No. 9, from 2 to 4 pages) are available in both PDF and HTML format. Depending on the computer equipment you have, you can print the PDF files as they are or cut and paste text data from them as needed for worksheets or other purposes. While the original newsletters were printed in two colors, for the HTML-format pages now available, we have added the original color photos wherever possible. These full-color resources will help teachers create materials of higher quality.



Personal Digital Assistant

For Those Who Attend ACTFL This Year!

An annual convention of American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for this year is to take place in Boston from November 17 to 19. At the convention each year the Japan Forum holds a session on cultural understanding and Japanese-language education. This year, the TJF will present a new event, "Japanese Evening," in collaboration with other Japanese-language related organizations and individuals. The TJF hopes the event will provide an opportunity to expand Japanese-language teachers' network. In order to encourage participation of language learners, the TJF will invite to its annual session high school students in Boston to take part in a model class to be held there. The "Japanese Evening" event will also include a joint performance of drums by Japanese and American junior high school students. Tickets will be available at the General Membership Meeting and the booth of National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT).

2000 ACTFL Convention in Boston

Japanese Evening—Japanese Students Taiko Performance

○ Time and Date:

19:30 - 20:30 p.m. Saturday, November 18, 2000

○ Place:

Republic B Room, Sheraton Hotel, Boston

○ Organizer:

National Council of Japanese Language Teachers, The Japan Forum, The Japan Foundation Language Center, Consulate-General of Japan, Boston

○ Supporter:

ACTFL, Kinokuniya Company Ltd., JP Trading Inc., Kodansha International Ltd. and others

○ Participants: Approximately 200 persons

○ Participation Fee: Free

○ Program

19:30 Opening

Snacks & soft drinks provided

19:45 Performance on Japanese drums by the Nosaka Warabe Taiko group*

20:00 Joint performance of drums by Japanese and American junior high school students**

20:10 Gathering

20:25 Closing

* Nosaka Warabe Taiko Group: A Japanese children's drum performance group from Chiba prefecture, Japan, consisting of 17 Japanese junior high school students.

** Students of the Lincoln School, a local private school located near Boston, will join in the performance.

StarFestival Curriculum Package —News from U.S.

CLICK. With one sweeping movement of a computer's mouse, a personal journey of self-discovery and cultural awareness begins in the CD-ROM created for *StarFestival*. *StarFestival* is a state-of-the-art multimedia curriculum developed by Dr. Miyagawa Shigeru of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In 2000-01, every elementary school in Boston will integrate this unique learning program, making *StarFestival* the first interactive learning program adopted by a major school system that targets cross-cultural learning about Japan.

Miyagawa Shigeru came to America when he was ten. *StarFestival*, which is about his own life, is a very personal look at Japan and what it means to go home again after a long absence. Seeking an answer to "Who am I?", "The Professor" (Miyagawa) returns to his homeland and carries a high-tech Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) to record the sites and sounds of Japan. While attending the *Tanabata* festival, "The Professor" is jostled by the crowd and loses his PDA. A new user (you) finds the damaged device lying on the street and starts an electronic field trip to a small Japanese town and the rediscovery of "The Professor's" Japanese roots and heritage.

George Takei, "Mr. Sulu" of the television series, *Star Trek*, states: "It is through the understanding of the personal histories and cultures of other people that we come to recognize the common bond we all share and begin the work of building the global community of the future; *StarFestival* does this with style and luminous humanity." The *StarFestival* program includes video, photos, notes on modern Japan and an original soundtrack. By clicking through the PDA, the user traces The Professor's trip to his hometown, Hiratsuka.

Dr. Michael Hartoonian, co-author of the National Social Studies Standards which are implemented by U.S. educators, observes: "*StarFestival* makes a dynamic connection between the complexities of content, as envisioned by the National

Standards, and students' engagements with meaningful and authentic narratives and intellectual mysteries."

The *StarFestival* CD-ROM, awarded "Best of Show" by MacWorld Exposition, is part of an extensive curriculum package. *When I Was a Boy* is an illustrated book about The Professor's childhood. *The Teacher's Guide*, developed by the Children's Museum of Boston, provides extensive lesson plans for K-12 geared to the educational national standards.

Educators throughout the United States have successfully piloted *StarFestival* at all grade levels. A high school teacher, Scott Clark of Hawaii, comments: "You know those times when you are teaching and everything just seems right? You are excited because you see your students completely engaged. The students that have not excelled surprise you by producing work that is expressive and creative. Those are the magical moments in teaching. I was able to experience that excitement with *StarFestival*. Not only did we learn more about Japan, but also we learned more about each other and ourselves."

See <http://www.starfestival.com> for a detailed description including purchasing information, demo of the CD-ROM, sample pages from the curriculum, and an online self-study program for language students.

Written by Miyagawa Shigeru

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The TJF Newsletter follows the practice of placing the Japanese surname first.

From the Editor

The Japan Forum operates programs for the promotion of cultural understanding and foreign language education in primary and secondary schools in the hope of deepening mutual understanding among young people, especially in the Asian-Pacific region. Among our programs to promote links between high schools in Japan and Japanese-language educational programs at secondary schools abroad, we are now developing a new teaching resource called the “Deai” (Encounter) project, hopefully to be available in October 2001, with the support of a grant from the U.S.-Japan Foundation. The resources consist of photograph panels, CD-ROMs, and text linked to the photographs, and the TJF website consisted of all the materials mentioned as well as lesson plans, reference materials, and worksheets.

This new resource is designed to give Japanese-language learners an opportunity to vicariously meet seven Japanese who are currently high school students and be introduced to their individual character and the distinctive cultural and social settings in which they actually live. Students can gain a better understanding of their peers in Japan by examining the photographs, captions, and supplementary text written by the subjects—personal profiles and messages. The texts are provided in Japanese and English.

As long as the objective of studying Japanese is to acquire the ability to communicate with speakers of Japanese, I believe it is natural and meaningful for students to learn Japanese language and culture in real situations centered around encounter with individuals who live in the country where the language is spoken. Students are more interested in what their peers are like in another country than in traditional customs and manners. This kind of encounter can be the first step in moving beyond stereotypes and monolithic images to show students overseas that

the faces of their Japanese peers are as individual and alive as their own.

Through the “Deai” resources, students can learn the Japanese they need to communicate with their peers in the photographs; as well as learn about each others’ personalities, life stories, hobbies, future plans and present worries, school life, life at home, ways they spend their free time, etc. Students will also learn about their peers’ lifestyles and their cultural or social background through their daily lives. This kind of encounter will enable students to cultivate a deeper understanding not only of Japanese culture but their own culture as well, as cultural understanding is virtually the same thing as understanding of humanity. It is individuals, with unique personalities of their own, that manifest culture in its concrete form.

Following this first step of vicarious encounter, students may move on to actual exchange with young Japanese via e-mail or even by enjoying the luxury of first-hand experience in Japan, where their cultural understanding will deepen even further. Equipping young people with language facility as well as a tolerant and broad perspective of cultures that are different from their own is absolutely necessary in order for them to deal with the challenges of coexistence among the world’s different languages and cultures in the twenty-first century.

In this issue we introduce the interests and concerns of high school students in Japan in three sections: our feature article, a Day in the Life, and the Way We Are. I hope you find them useful for discussion with your students, and we look forward to receiving your comments and thoughts on this and all TJF projects.

Nakano Kayoko
Program Director



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