

# Voices

With this issue, we begin a regular column introducing the “voices” of the *TJF Newsletter* readers. We hope readers will write letters, responding to articles printed in the *Newsletter* and reflecting on their day-to-day endeavors in teaching Japanese, which we can share with all our readers. Especially welcome are your accounts of how you have used such *Newsletter* articles as “A Day in the Life” and “Meeting People” in the classroom. Here we introduce the voices of two teachers in Australia. We also look forward to more letters from readers in other parts of the world.

## Photographs Are an Indispensable Teaching Aid



**Kazumi Ichikawa-Frost**  
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 Guiding principle: To strengthen student's problem-solving skills through learning Japanese

I very much agree with the article “Communication That Can't Be Achieved in Words” in your *Newsletter* No. 20 feature “Why Photographs Now?” For the fifth to seventh graders I am now teaching, photographs are indispensable teaching tools. For our module on “Family Life,” for example, in order to set the mood for studying the “family,” I show the photograph from “A Day with Kentarō” (<http://www.tjf.or.jp/eng/de/deindex.htm>) showing the family standing in the entrance way of the house. I point out each member of the family—“おとうさん,” “おかあさん,” “おとと,” etc.—identifying them one by one in Japanese. This allows a vivid beginning of learning, in Japanese, without using English, about the topic, appealing to their visual senses. Since my students are elementary school age, they can easily identify with Kentarō-kun. Showing them photographs of the family of a student nearly their own age arouses their interest, and I can then progress to the module on “Family Life.” Also, one of the photographs in “A Day with Kentarō” shows him sitting down to the evening meal with his family in the *kotatsu*. This is a good photograph for teaching sentences while introducing something about Japanese culture as well. Here is an actual example of an exchange in class:

なにをしていますか。



たべています。

Teacher: どこでたべていますか。  
 (Pointing the *kotatsu* while talking about it.)

Students: They are sitting on the floor!/ Are they in the bed?/ It looks like a bed.

Teacher: そうだね。ゆかにすわっているね。でも、これはベッドじゃないです。テーブルです。どうして、ふとんがありますか。

Students: さむいから?

Teacher: そうです。これはこたつです。なかにヒーターがあって、すわるときに、なかに、あしをいれます。(Show with gestures) どうですか。

Students: あたたかいです! いいですねえ!

## What is the Sound of *Shito-shito* and *Zāzā*?



**Elizabeth Foxover**  
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 Guiding principle:  
 To start by providing an interesting topic to which students can relate.

I use the *TJF Newsletter* in a number of ways. The recent information on the weather is particularly useful. Soon I am beginning a unit for Grade 10 on “Seasons and Festivals.” I will probably begin by placing the onomatopoeia words for rain on the board and ask whether they can guess the meaning. The simple information about umbrellas and so on is always interesting. You would be surprised by the things students find fascinating! I encourage the students to read as much as possible about Japan.

My senior students, in fact all of my students, are always interested in simply looking at the photographs to see what people their own age in Japan are doing. The grade 11s and 12s like to borrow the newsletter to take home and read on their own time. I am visiting Japan in September for 12 days with a group of 13 students. They are greatly looking forward to experiencing Japan firsthand.

We invite readers to contribute their “Voices” to the *TJF Newsletter*. We hope to hear your responses to Newsletter articles, learn about your ideas for using articles in the *Newsletter* as teaching aids in the classroom, and hear the reactions of your students. To those whose contributions are published in the *Newsletter*, we will send copies of “The Way We Are” and the most recent edition of “Opening the Minds and Hearts of Your Japanese-language Students to Culture.”

Please send e-mail to: [forum@tjf.or.jp](mailto:forum@tjf.or.jp) giving the subject-line: “Voices.”