

日本の小学生生活

The Lives of Japanese Elementary School Students

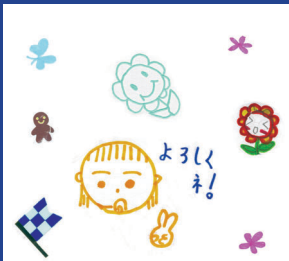
Hi, Nice to Meet You, We're Grade 6 Class 1 of Sakura Elementary School

▶▶▶ <http://www.tjf.or.jp/takarabako/index.htm>



Four pages of *Takarabako* will be devoted to introducing and providing a wide variety of resources and information, mainly about the lives and culture of Japanese young people. Three pages will present various ideas and teaching plans for using these materials in the classroom. This issue features "The Lives of Japanese Elementary School Students," a photo resource that will be available on the TJF website starting in April 2005.

はじめまして
サクラしょうがっこう
6ねん1くみです



What is Grade 6 Class 1 like?

■ **Our class:** Our class of 28 students is made up of 14 boys and 14 girls. We try hard to cooperate with each other in everything we do. This way, we come up with a lot of good ideas. It's a very fun class where both boys and girls get along really well.

■ **Our teacher:** Our teacher is a woman. She was our homeroom teacher for 5th grade, too. Our teacher talks a lot and her pet phrase is "... *desho?*" ("Don't you think so?"). We have lots of fun in our classes thanks to our chatty teacher.

■ **Our school:** There are about 500 students at our school. The school field is not very big but it has four large ginkgo trees, the hallmark of our school. There is also an animal shed where we keep chickens, rabbits, and pigeons. Our school was founded about fifty years ago. Even though the school field is small and the school building is old, we love this school because we have a lot of fun with our friends here. Also, we're really attached to the school since we've been coming here for six years.

■ **Our town:** Our town is in the middle of Tokyo. Even though it's in a large city, the town we live in is a quiet residential area. You can buy anything you need at our big supermarket and convenience stores. Shopping is very convenient in our town.

Taken from a letter written by the students. The letter will be posted in its entirety on our website in both Japanese and English.



New TJF Website Corner starts in April 2005!!

"Lives of Japanese Elementary School Students"

This resource is a message from Japanese elementary school students to their peers who are studying Japanese overseas. It is our hope that this resource will allow elementary students overseas to become more familiar with their peers in Japan.

Choose from a wealth of resources!

- ❖ A Day with Kentaro (An old resource renewed)
18 photos with captions
- ❖ A Day in Grade 6 Class 1, Sakura Elementary School
22 photos with captions
Letters from Grade 6 Class 1
Group messages
Messages from 17 students from Grade 6 Class 1
Data on Grade 6 Class 1
- ❖ Supplementary Information on Japanese Elementary School Life/Teachers' Manual
(will start in 2006)

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Guess what they're doing! A day in Grade 6 Class 1



1. Changing our shoes

"My uwabaki have gotten too small!"

These are the shoe lockers where we keep our shoes. When we get to school, we take off our *sotogutsu* (street shoes) and put on our *uwabaki* (indoor shoes). So as to help keep the school clean, we don't wear our street shoes indoors.

2. Raising our hands in class

"Pick me!"

In class, we raise our hands when we know the answer to the teacher's questions. We stand up and answer the teacher when she calls on us.

3. Jumping rope in the school field

"Go!" "Get in!"

We are playing double-dutch in the school field during recess. Double-dutch is a game where two people turn two ropes, and other people jump over the ropes, one by one. Because it's really hard, the ropes get tangled easily and we can only get about two or three jumps in at one go.

Breaks between classes are usually ten minutes long. The break between the second and third periods is recess, and lasts twenty minutes. During this break everybody

goes out to the school field to play soccer, basketball, jump rope, or use the playground equipment.

4. Serving lunch

"Be careful, it's hot." "It looks yummy."

Certified cooks make our lunches in the school kitchen. Students on lunch duty are in charge of serving. They put on white smocks and white bonnets. Every week, one *han* (working group) made up of five or six students takes turn on lunch duty. The lunch duty students bring the lunch trucks to the classroom and serve the rest of us as we line up with our trays.

5. Cleaning

"Floor mopping makes me tired." "Let's hurry up and get it over with."

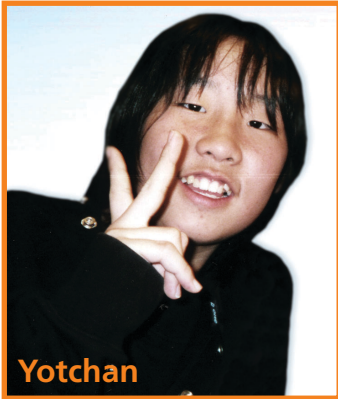
After lunch, we take about twenty minutes and do the cleaning up together. We move all the desks to the back of the classroom, sweep the floor and wipe it with mop cloths (*zokin*). We also clean the blackboard and wipe the desks.

We clean our classrooms and the hallways in front of our classrooms starting in 1st grade. The 5th and 6th graders also clean the special classrooms. Grade 6 Class 1 is in charge of cleaning the science room.

22 photos and captions (Japanese and English) of daily activities, classes, events, and students having fun are posted on our website. The captions were written by students in Grade 6 Class 1 and edited by TJF.



Now, let's take a look at a message from Yotchan, a student in Grade 6 Class 1



Yotchan



Message from Yotchan

わたしの あだ名は よっちゃんです。好きな ことは バスケです。かがいクラブ¹にも はいっています。しゅみは まんが、ざっしを よむことで、ざっしは JUNON²というのが すきです。それと、ともだちと ケイタイで メールを することと、おんがくを きくのも だいすきです。好きな グループは オレンジレンジ³です。じぶんの すきな おんがくを きくと、きもちが らくに なります。

My nickname is Yotchan. I like basketball. I am in the extracurricular basketball club.¹ My hobby is reading manga and magazines, especially the magazine *Junon*.² Also, I love sending messages on my cell phone back and forth with my friends, and listening to music. I like the music group Orange Range.³ Listening to music I like is very comforting.

Notes

- *1 At this elementary school, extracurricular club activities in mini-basketball, soccer, baseball, badminton, and brass band have practice two to three times a week with the cooperation of community members who serve as club instructors.
- *2 A monthly magazine published by Shufu-To-Seikatsusha that mainly focuses on celebrity interviews.
- *3 An all-male, six-member rock band that made its debut in 2003.



A day in the life of Yotchan



Playing tag on the roof

"I'm gonna get you!" "Run!"

We are playing *kori oni* (freeze tag) during recess. In *kori oni*, whoever loses in *janken* (rock, paper, scissors) becomes "it." If you are tagged by "it" you have to freeze in place until someone else comes to tag you. If everyone is "frozen," the person who is "it" wins.



Kendama (cup and ball)

"Oops!" "Come on, ball. Get on there!"

After lunch, we have a twenty-minute recess. During that time, we play *kendama* together. We like competing with each other.



Audio messages (Japanese) and its script (Japanese and English translation) from 17 students and the teacher are available on our website, complete with notes. Includes the Grade 6 Class 1 song.

Even more information!

Grade 6 Class 1 Data: What We Eat for Breakfast

(Multiple responses)

Responses		Male	Female
パン・トースト	Bread/toast	8	12
ごはんと みそしる	Rice and miso soup	3	1
ごはんか パンの どちらか	Rice or bread	2	0
やさい・サラダ	Vegetables/salad	2	3
たまごりょうり	Eggs	2	2
ヨーグルト	Yogurt	0	2
ハム・ソーセージ	Ham/sausage	1	1
ぎゅうにゅう	Milk	1	0
くだもの	Fruit	0	1
ピザ	Pizza	0	1

Supplementary Information

Elementary School System

In the Japanese school system, children who have turned six years old start elementary school in April. School attendance is compulsory for all for six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. There are both public and private schools and tuition for public elementary and junior high schools is free.

Most elementary schools operate on a trimester system. The first trimester extends from April to July, the second from September to December, and the third January to March. There is an approximately 40-day summer vacation between the first and second trimesters, an approximately 2-week winter vacation between the second and third trimesters, and an approximately 10-day spring vacation between the third and first trimesters. There are some differences from one region of the country to another.

There is a set timetable for each day of the week, and Saturdays and Sundays are holidays.

Elementary School Classes

In elementary school, each child belongs to a class with a designated classroom. Except for subjects like physical education, music, art, science that require special facilities, children in the same class generally study most of their subjects in the same classroom. The personalities and aptitude/compatibility of individual students are taken into account when deciding the membership of each class. The maximum number of students per class is 40. Grade 6 Class 1 of Sakura Elementary School has 28 students.

When there is more than one class per grade, it is standard practice for the membership of the classes to be shuffled every two years. The classes are commonly called *ichi-kumi*, *ni-kumi*, and so on. At Sakura Elementary School, there are three classes in the sixth grade.

Elementary School Classrooms

In a classroom, there is usually a blackboard at the front and back, and rows of desks and chairs. The seating order is fixed, and is usually changed on a regular basis. Though the setup varies from class to class, the classroom has a bulletin board for posting announcements

and displaying students' work, lockers for storing their bags and other items, and cleaning equipment. It is equipped with speakers for the school's broadcasting system, and some classrooms also have heaters and air conditioners, a television, as well as video equipment.

Elementary School Subjects

The subjects to be taught in elementary school in Japan are stipulated in the School Education Law. In the first and second grades, instruction is provided in Japanese language, arithmetic, life skills (*seikatsu*; a class that combines science and social studies), music, art (drawing and crafts), physical education, ethics (*dotoku*), and special activities (*tokubetsu katsudo*, such as homeroom activities, etc.). In the third and fourth grades, *seikatsu* is replaced by science and social studies, and *sogoteki na gakushu* (integrated studies) is added to the curriculum. In the fifth and sixth grades, there is additional instruction in home economics (cooking, sewing, etc.). Schools may also offer instruction in subject-matter they consider necessary even if it is not included in the Guidelines for the Course of Study.

Grade 6 Class 1 Weekly Class Schedule

	月	火	水	木	金
8 : 15	じ どう どう こう び 児 童 登 校 日				
8 : 25	げつ ようちようかい 月曜朝会				
8 : 30	しよくいんちようかい 職員朝会	しよくいんちようかい 職員朝会	しよくいんちようかい 職員朝会	しよくいんちようかい 職員朝会	しよくいんちようかい 職員朝会
8 : 45	こくご 国語	か てい 家庭	こくご 国語	こくご 国語	おんがく 音楽
9 : 30	しゃかい 社会	こくご 国語	こくご 国語	こくご 国語	たいいく 体育
9 : 35	さんずう 算数	か てい 家庭	しゃかい 社会	こくご 国語	たいいく 体育
10 : 20	なかやす 中休み		なかやす 中休み	なかやす 中休み	
10 : 40	ずこう 図工	さんずう 算数	りか 理科	さんずう 算数	りか 理科
11 : 25	ずこう 図工	か てい 家庭	おんがく 音楽	さんずう 算数	りか 理科
11 : 30	ずこう 図工	か てい 家庭	こくご 国語	か てい 家庭	りか 理科
12 : 15	きゅうしよく 給食		きゅうしよく 給食	きゅうしよく 給食	
12 : 55	ひるやす 昼休み		ひるやす 昼休み	ひるやす 昼休み	
1 : 15	せいそう 清掃		さんずう 算数	せいそう 清掃	
1 : 35	か てい 家庭	こくご 国語	りか 理科	げこう 下校	
2 : 20	いんかい 委員会		どうとく 道徳	そうこう 総合	
2 : 25	いんかい 委員会		どうとく 道徳	2 : 35	
(3 : 10)	くらぶ クラブ				
3 : 25	げこう 下校		げこう 下校		
3 : 45	げこう 下校		げこう 下校		

Survey results containing information on Grade 6 Class 1 and group messages written by students are posted on the website. Plenty of supplementary information will be also provided.

