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Hyogo's Top Ten
Teaching: Total Physical Reaction

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September Features

- 5 English Sensei Success: Total Physical Response
- 7 Hyogo's Top 10

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 Hello! Message from the Editor | 17 Review: Summer Sonic |
| 3 Hello! Message from the PR | 19 Photo Spread: Summer Sonic |
| 4 Kicchiri Kitchen: Miso Stir Fry | 21 Current Events: Japanese Sanctions & Russian Security |
| 9 Review: USJ Harry Potter World | 23 The Refuge: The Durants II |
| 11 Everything I learned: 5 Movies | 25 WATN: Why Are You Here |
| 13 Preview: Her Name in Blood | 27 Calendar |
| 15 Travel: Kinosaki Onsen | |

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All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, musings, poetry, prose, and any ideas to improve the Hyogo Times for the betterment of the Hyogo JET community. Submit by the 15th of each month to hyogotimespublications@gmail.com

Message from the Editor: hello!

September is here and I can finally stop Alice Cooper's "School's Out" that's been playing on repeat on my iTunes since mid-June. Indeed school is no longer out for summer and with summer's end comes an end to trainings, orientations, and more unfortunately, vacations. I take it all the new Hyogo JETs survived Yashiro and probably were glad to have the opportunity to meet new people, gain useful information, and most importantly, eat fruit again. I know the Kobe JETs kept the sensei spirit alive by holding another very successful summer school topped off with a delicious Costco pizza party. Also many of you may have experienced your first time in the classroom with a number of open high school visits occurring over the past few weeks.

Although those endeavors are now finished, the heat remains coupled with the pressure of giving welcome speeches and introductory lessons (or often "How was your summer?" lessons for the veterans among us). Hopefully you have had time to acclimate not only to the weather, but to your neighborhood and school while simultaneously meeting new friends and future travel partners. There have been many opportunities to meet other JETs since last month during HAJET's Summer Sonic get together and Welcome Party, as well as Kobe JETs' Welcome BBQ and the AJET Block 6 Hawaiian Lu'au. If you have missed out, don't worry! There are plenty of other events on the way including [AJET Block 6 Welcome Picnic](#) and the [HAJET Book Club](#) on September 13 and 21, respectively. Read more about them in the [PR](#) message written by Erika.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's take a step back to discuss what really matters this

month: meeting your students! Prepare yourself to be overwhelmed with constant cries from your students of *かわいい* (cute) or *かっこいい* (cool) and a handful of inappropriate words or gestures - we all know bad ones are the first everyone tries to learn in a new language. Yet looking past those surface comments, there exists an opportunity for both you and your students to have meaningful conversations and cultural exchange. Greet your students in the morning, find them at lunch, or watch them play in their clubs, if you are feeling especially confident join them! There's a much larger experience waiting outside of the classroom.

As for this month's issue, enjoy our regular sections including our [travel review](#) brought back this month by Brittany, who shares the fun waiting to be had in Kinosaki. Universal Studios Japan's newest summer addition, Harry Potter World, is also given a full [review](#) by Claire and Louie Bertenshaw joins our contributing staff with an article on [Total Physical Response teaching](#). Finally, meet a few new JETs who share [why](#) they decided to join the program.

Remember, when you are standing in front of your classes for the first time this month sweating due to the temperature and your nerves, take a breath, think back to your trainings, and believe in yourself. As a friend once said, "What's right is what's left if you do everything else wrong."

Sean

hello!

message from the PR

A New Term Begins

Hey there, Hyogo!

It's hard to believe that it is September already - our departing friends have left Japan to start new chapters of their lives and the new ALTs have arrived and are (hopefully!) settling into their new lives. With the new term beginning, it is easy to get caught up in a whirlwind of lesson planning, new projects, and school activities - but don't forget to save some time for adventures outside of work!

Want to travel? Start planning early. Ask your supervisor for a school calendar and find your midterm and final exams, national holidays, and any other days for potential vacations. Check out Peach and other budget travel options for cheap tickets (pro tip: sign up for Peach's emails to take advantage of their airfare sales!).

Staying closer to home? It can be easy to overlook your city and nearby areas in favor of popular travel destinations, but saving time to explore your placement can be incredibly rewarding. Ask teachers about their favorite spots or check for maps at city offices or tourism associations (my town has an English map with local points of interests and walking courses... though it did take me six months to discover it!). Go for a walk, wander around, or just get lost - you never know who you can meet or what hidden gems you can find tucked away in your area.



Hopefully that is enough to tide you over until next month's issue!

Until then,

Erika

Question for the Prefectural Representatives? Contact us at: hyogo.pr@hyogo.ajet.net

Feeling social? The new HA-JET PR team is working hard to plan fun events throughout Hyogo and beyond, and Block 6 rep Ashlie has you covered for events with our neighboring prefectures. If you enjoyed the Welcome Party and want more time with fellow ALTs (or, if you couldn't make it), check out some of the upcoming HA-JET and Block 6 events: meet JETs in neighboring prefectures at the Block 6 Welcome Picnic in Kyoto, discuss Anthony Doerr's *All the Light We Cannot See* at the HA-JET Book Club, and take on the Yoshino river's rapids in the Shikoku Rafting Trip. As always, keep updated on upcoming events with the HA-JET calendar. If you have any questions or ideas for future events, contact us at hyogo.pr@hyogo.ajet.net.

If you're more interested in cultural events, you're spoilt for choice. Kyoto has numerous festivals in September, Himeji hosts the dangerous and dazzling Nada Fighting Festival (*Kenka Matsuri*), and you can taste local specialty akashiyaki at Akashi's Manpuku Food Fair.

Simple Miso Stir-Fry

kicchiri kitchen



Ingredients

- >> 150g thinly sliced pork
- >> 4-5 leaves Chinese napa cabbage (from a quarter of a cabbage)
- >> 100g shimeji mushrooms (about 1/2 a large packet)
- >> 1 tbsp sesame oil
- >> a pinch each of salt & pepper
- >> 2 tbsp miso - awase (mixed) works best, but you could also use white miso for a sweeter taste
- >> 2 tbsp mirin - if you don't have mirin, you can substitute it with cooking sake with a pinch of sugar

Experiment with your favourite vegetables or meat. Don't be afraid to tweak the sauce either - if you like it sweeter add a pinch of sugar, if it's too sweet substitute some of the mirin with water.

Miso is a key ingredient in Japanese cooking but I was too scared to cook with it for a long time, mainly because I had no idea how! I stumbled upon this recipe when exploring the popular Japanese cooking site Cookpad last year and it started my love affair with miso. It's a super easy stir-fry with a Japanese twist. I hope you enjoy it and it inspires you to experiment more with Japanese ingredients too.

Step One

Cut the napa cabbage (and meat if needed) into bite sized-pieces and cut the roots off the shimeji mushrooms. Mix the miso and mirin in a small bowl.

Step Two

Heat the sesame oil in a pan and add the meat. Fry on medium heat.

Step Three

Once the meat cooks, add the shimeji mushrooms and the salt and pepper. Fry for around one minute.

Step Four

Add the white hard part of the cabbage and fry for another minute or until it starts to soften.

Step Five

Add the leaves. When they start to wilt add the miso sauce from step one. Stir through the meat and vegetables and turn off the heat. Serve with rice.

Serves 1-2

Variations

- >> Add some thinly chopped carrot sticks for extra color
- >> Go vegetarian by substituting pork with other types of mushrooms - I like eringi and shiitake
- >> Make a mushroom and renkon (lotus root) stir-fry: peel the lotus root and cut into thin slices. Add after the mushrooms have cooked to retain their crunchy texture.

Helen Yuan

4

Actions Louder than Words: Using TPR in the Classroom

As ALTs, we are regularly tasked with bringing native English and “fun” activities into the classroom. But how does one necessarily combine solid language teaching in a spirited environment that engages even your most apathetic students? Granted, there is no silver bullet, but I’ve found Total Physical Response (TPR) to be very effective in my classroom here in Japan. Below I share a bit about TPR and provide some resources and ideas. You might find it useful in your classroom, too!

So, what is TPR?

For those unfamiliar, TPR is a method aimed at promoting language proficiency by removing the pressure for students to speak, and focusing on their listening skills – allowing them to first comprehend the language through actions before expecting them to vocally produce it.

This method was conceived in the 1970s by Dr. James Asher, a psychologist who suggested that adult language learning should mirror that of childrens’ language learning. As young children, we are spoken to with very simple language (“give mommy a kiss!”), and are praised when we respond to these requests. We spend these formative years in a state of looking, pointing, and babbling. No one expects us to produce speech. TPR suggests we apply these same methods for language learners of all ages. That is, deemphasize speech until enough comprehensible language has been acquired by the learner and they can demonstrate understanding in other ways. So, TPR suggests we teach students using basic language coupled with a physical gesture that emulates the word. Let’s use “run” as an example. The teacher says “class,

run!” and the students run in place. The action demonstrates understanding, much the same way we know a two year old understands “run after the ball!” when he sprints for it.

How does it work?

TPR is best for beginners or limited-ability students. So, I decided to try it with my 1-nensei students last April, and was pleased with the results. Most of my students were “genki” during TPR and had no issue exaggerating their responses, even my lowest students. Granted, I was rehashing words they have learned before, but was now tying them to an action to build muscle memory. After quizzing each student twice, and completing two full rounds (100 minutes) of TPR, the average score for my 321 1-nensei students was about 92%. As I mentioned, they have already learned some of these words, but some students were ecstatic to see that 100% mark and sticker on their test. If anything, I hope I am slowly building their confidence so they approach English with a better attitude.

How do I start?

If you want to give TPR a whirl, there are many resources on the internet that can help you get started. Here are a few tips that I think will help guide you as you prepare for your lesson. I use the acronym SMART:

Start simple: Ten to twelve target vocabulary words per lesson. At first, you will need to explain that students are to listen, then perform actions on your command. I recommend having this clarified in Japanese so students know what to expect.

Model: Demonstrate the action you want students to

perform for each word. Try to make it as silly as possible. Be sure to use it consistently!

Ask: Confer with the JTE to find your lowest-ability student in class. This is your “barometer”. If he or she can perform the actions, with limited hesitation, then odds are the rest of your class comprehends.

React: Praise students when they get it right! Use slow, yet natural English throughout your lesson. Choose your “rockstar” students to demonstrate if you wish.

Test: I always give out a half-page quiz after each lesson – usually less than 10 questions. ONLY test what you have covered. Include matching, multiple choice, translation, or fun logic questions: “can you run on the wall?”

As you add words, you will need to vary your style. Students will get bored if they are constantly “running, standing, and sitting” for fifty minutes. Introduce adjectives like “slowly, quickly, angrily, etc.” and create novel commands: “run slowly and sit on the chair angrily”. Students will usually giggle at the absurdity of your requests. This is a true sign that they are “getting it!” The more outrageous your commands, the better. Remember to keep it SMART and make it fun. TPR is very flexible and the strength of the class will determine your speed. Always go back and cover words that students struggle with, and be sure to sprinkle them into future lessons.

What are my resources?

Sadly, this short article barely does justice to TPR. While there are no dedicated TPR textbooks, countless teacher-made resources, worksheets, and ideas can be found online. Of course, realia – objects from real life used in classroom instruction – are also a great asset with TPR.

So bring in some oversized sunglasses, weird hats, and make English-learning unique and upbeat! Here are few resources to check out if you want to try out TPR (by no means extensive):

>> TPR World (www.tpr-world.com) links you to a lot of the central researchers on TPR. There are some resources and teacher materials, but also a lot more on theory.

>> Fluency Through TPR Storytelling by Blaine Ray and Contee Seely offers a step-by-step guide to putting TPR to use in the first few months in your classroom. It is clear, concise, and easy to read. I found this most useful!

>> Of course, YouTube is a veritable goldmine for teachers showcasing their TPR skills.

Hopefully I’ve given you a brief, yet informative primer on TPR and its application. If it’s something you would be interested in trying, go for it! It’s likely many of your JTEs know this method too. So ask them for some input. Lastly, TPR does not have to be an “exclusive” model. It can easily be used as a quick escape from the routine lesson... even ten minutes at the beginning of class can totally change the tone and energize your kids for English! Give it a shot and Ganbatte! (Bonus points if you can think of a TPR action for that!)

Louie Bertenshaw

Hyogo's Top Ten

Ten essential experiences to have in the prefecture we call home.

Affectionately known as the bellybutton of Japan, Hyogo is a treasure trove of fun and adventure. Thanks to an expansive train network, several ferry ports, innumerable bus routes and its own airport, Hyogo is a very accessible prefecture - which is ideal because there is just so much to enjoy! When you first received your JET placement you, like me, may have had little to no knowledge of the prefecture and gone straight to [Wikitravel](#) for help to be more than a little underwhelmed. Next, every backpacker's best friend, the *Lonely Planet*: just a few short pages covering little more than Kobe and Himeji castle...what is this huge-but-seemingly-empty prefecture we have moved to?! I'll tell you what; it is Japan's best kept secret.

Often described as Japan in miniature, Hyogo has snow-covered mountains in winter, beautiful beaches in summer, flowers galore in springtime and sensationally vivid autumnal leaves. In short, it is a delight in every season and has cosmopolitan cities, fascinating culture and unbeatable cuisine to boot! The question really is where to start. Well, here is the answer, or rather, ten of them!

1. Steak

It's simple word association: I say Kobe, you say steak. If you are in Hyogo it'd be rude not to sample its finest cuisine. Everyone should try this luxurious succulent steak once; head to [Wakkoqu](#) for the full experience or [Wanto](#) for a budget-friendly burger option.



2. Himeji Castle

Perhaps Japan's most famous castle, this UNESCO-listed building has come out of its box after several years of restoration works to restore it to its original grandeur. Although spectacular at any time of year (and even impressive under scaffolding), in cherry blossom season it is quintessential Japan.



and more sequins and feathers than ever seen before on one stage!

6. Koshien Stadium

You cannot visit Hyogo and not see a baseball game at the famous Koshien stadium. Book ahead to see the Hanshin Tigers play at home and join in on all the chants with some of Japan's most die-hard fans, or in summer watch the [high school baseball tournament](#) - it's free!



10. Kobe Night View

The urban sprawl from Kobe to Osaka may be grey and unrelenting by day, but by night it is lit up like a [Christmas tree](#) and one of Japan's top three night views. See for yourself from either [Mount Rokko](#) or [Kobe Port Tower](#).

Whilst you may not be able to turn to Wikitravel or the *Lonely Planet* for many Hyogo travel ideas, the [Hyogo Times](#), [Hyogo AJET](#) and [JapanTravel.com](#) are great resources of information for events and things to do in your area. Though the best way is simply to step out your front door and look for yourself; you'll be amazed at what you can discover in Hyogo.

Charlotte Griffiths

This is an adapted version of the article originally posted on [JapanTravel](#) on 15 July 2014.

3. Shukugawa Cherry Blossom Viewing

Every prefecture has its top cherry blossom spot and Hyogo is no exception. Shukugawa is a long river running the length of Nishinomiya city. A pleasant stroll year-round, its banks really come to life in April when over 2000 sakura trees bloom into perfect pink clouds. Expect to see lots of happy picnics and romantic dates.



7. Naruto whirlpools

Between Hyogo's Awaji island and Shikoku is Japan's fastest strait. Admire the impressive Naruto whirlpools from the bridge between the islands, or brave a dramatic boat ride which will make you think of krakens lurking beneath the water...

8. Takeda Castle Ruins

Hiking is great fun, it's even better if it takes you to striking castle ruins seemingly suspended above the Earth. Intrigued? Get up early for the best chance of walking above the clouds on [Japan's Machu Picchu](#).



4. Kinosaki Onsen Town

Hyogo's northern coast has beautiful beaches and the even more relaxing traditional onsen town of Kinosaki. Head here to luxuriate in traditional Japanese **b a t h s**, rejuvenating in all the hot mineral-rich water you could desire, and to stay in a Japanese guesthouse. Make sure to read the travel review in this month's issue. If you don't have enough time to go north, Arima is another lovely onsen town just outside of Kobe.



5. Takarazuka Revue

Prepare to be wowed by the incredible triple-threat performers at [Takarazuka Revue](#). The all-female troupes train for years in singing, dancing and acting - and it certainly shows. They will bedazzle you with talent

Owls, Wizards, and Wands - Oh My! Harry Potter World at USJ

A magical village of wizarding wonders has opened at Universal Studios Japan this summer! If you've been harboring childhood fantasies of Butterbeer, magic wands, or singing toads, read on to learn more about making the most of your magical journey!

The Harry Potter World at USJ is significantly smaller than its Orlando counterpart, but remains a must for any diehard. In Japan you can take a short, but exciting stroll down the center of Hogsmeade. Throughout the small park you'll see giant wooden barrels attached to small stalls selling Butterbeer! This nonalcoholic drink is very sweet and comes in two varieties - regular and iced. The iced version tends to be a bit more enjoyable as the melting ice helps to water down the sugary taste. Both kinds are topped with marshmallow-like foam.

Just past Hogwarts Station, you'll find the Three Broomsticks and the Hog's Head. Note that the Three Broomsticks is the only place to buy hot food in Harry Potter World. It's set up like a giant cafeteria. First you wait in line to get in, then you wait in line to order food, then you are escorted to available seats. Food options are western including fish and chips, roasted chicken, and a kids menu. The Hog's Head is in the same building and only serves takeaway drinks including real beer.

Just next to the Three Broomsticks is your favorite confectionary, Honeydukes. You'll find all your favorites - Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans, Chocolate Frogs (complete with collectible Wizard Cards), Tooth-Splintering Strong Mints, and much more! Fair warning, prices are exorbitant - 1,800¥ for a box of Every Flavour Beans, 1,200¥ for a Chocolate Frog.

Next door to Honeydukes is Zonko's Joke Shop. You'll enter via the front entrance of Honeydukes. Zonko's is a treat to wander through; Fred and George would approve of the décor. The product line is limited to Fanged Frisbees, Sneakoscopes, Pygmy Puffs (the

stuffed version), and Extendable Ears.

As expected, the packaging at Honeydukes and Zonko's perfectly matches the designs seen in the movies. Note that the joint stores have a long queue that starts forming immediately once the park opens. You may wait over an hour to enter the store. Once inside, you'll shuffle through both locations before following the line to registers.

Unlike the books, this version of Hogsmeade has its own Olivander's Wand Shop. The interior of the store is a near perfect replica from your imagination, with dusty wand boxes stuffed into every corner. You can purchase character wands or find the appropriate wood type for your birthday or personality. You can also visit an attraction attached to the shop, if you don't mind waiting in line. Visitors are ushered through a secret passageway and introduced to Olivander himself! Olivander puts on a perfect, bilingual performance as he helps a young audience member find the perfect wand!

Other familiar shops exist around Hogsmeade including Dervish and Bangs, Gladrag's Wizardwear (get your own robe!), and the Owl Post. You can catch some shade under the covered picnic area where you might spot a live owl and its trainer. If you're looking for refreshments, visit one of the drink stalls and grab some water or a bottle of delicious pumpkin juice (it tastes like mulled wine, without the wine).

As you turn the corner towards Hogwarts Castle, you'll notice a small stage. Here, the Hogwarts choir serenades the crowd with a performance every hour (times may vary in the fall). Additionally, students from the Durmstrang Institute and Beauxbatons Academy of Magic will dance and greet guests in preparation for the Triwizard Tournament.

The crowning glory of Harry Potter World is, of course, Hogwarts Castle. The

castle is the home of the main ride attraction, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey. Hop onboard your Firebolt and fly around the castle with Harry and 4K resolution technology. This digitally enhanced experience takes visitors across the Quidditch Field, into the Forbidden Forest, and several other landmark locations. Hopefully you don't come across any dementors! This ride moves at pleasant pace but does include sharp turns, simulated falling, and a few upside-down moments. Motion sickness is possible.

The queue begins outside of Hogwarts and winds through the greenhouse. Inside, you'll stash your bags in a locker (it's okay to bring your phone inside for pictures if you have deep pockets). The line then winds through Hogwarts with plenty of entertainment along the way - talking

paintings, Dumbledore's office, the Gryffindor Common Room, and several other points of interest.

At the exit of the Forbidden Journey is Filch's Emporium. This is the main souvenir shop in the park and the only place that sells

individually wrapped omiyage-style treats. As the day goes on, a multi-hour line will form outside the shop so buy your omiyage early!

The only other ride inside Harry Potter World is the Flight of the Hippogriff. This mini-rollercoaster ride lasts for less than ten seconds and you could probably play chess with the person next to you as the ride is in motion. Enjoy strolling around Hagrid's Hut as you wait.

Personal Experience: I had a blast! The park is small and could easily be covered in three hours or less, if there were no crowds. The lines for Honeydukes and Filch's Emporium are no joke, although I think Honeydukes and

Zonko's are worth the wait. In the late afternoon, I did see a street cart selling Chocolate Frogs and other candies, but the variety was limited. Be sure to visit the bathrooms which are hilariously decorated in various shades of fake

mold and include a soundtrack of Moaning Myrtle. The Forbidden Journey is pretty cool and though the line is long, walking through the different sets enhances the experience. Tip: it is possible to sneak to the head of the line if you ask an attendant for the "singles' line". You'll be led through the castle down a plane boring hallway,

skipping the statues and scenery, but your wait will be much shorter.

Most importantly, plan ahead! I visited Harry Potter World on a Monday during summer vacation. We took the first train of the day to USJ, arriving at 7:00 a.m. We waited in line for tickets, which started selling at 7:30 a.m. Then we waited in line to enter the park; the gates open at 8:30 a.m. (attractions open at 9:00 a.m.). We ran straight from the park entrance to Harry Potter World and got in just in time. Once Harry Potter World reaches capacity, visitors are given admission tickets and cannot enter until later in the day. Our friends arrived at USJ at 9:00 a.m. and could not enter until 5:00 p.m.!

Fun fact: All of the performing wizards and witches are western actors. If you're a foreigner of western descent and you show up in costume, some guests might think you're part of the performance and ask to take pictures with you!

Claire Bronchuk



Welcome!



Hogsmeade Village



Olivander's Wands



Zonko's Jokes



Hogwarts Castle



Enjoying Butterbeer

Five Movies You Should Watch This Month

Still trying to finish those *Fistful of Fun* books from last month's recommendation list? Don't worry if you haven't, we won't pile on any more literary works on your September to-do list. Instead we offer you a break in the form of five relevant films that every JET should watch this month. If you are hesitant to believe film can provide the same visceral feelings or life lessons that a good book does, don't take my word for it, take Audrey Hepburn's, "Everything I learned I learned from the movies."

No recommended film list this month would be complete without honoring the memory of Robin Williams, an actor who engrained himself in the minds of our generation and our parents' generation by starring in countless films and television shows like *Aladdin*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Good Morning Vietnam*, and *Mork and Mindy*. It was impossible to choose just one film starring Robin Williams as an inspirational teacher and mentor this month, and if I'm being fully honest I would tell everyone to take a day and watch all of his films (although you might need an entire weekend). As a result, you're stuck with both *Dead Poets Society* and *Good Will Hunting*.

Dead Poets Society, directed by Peter Weir, 1989
I guarantee when you hear "O Captain! my captain!" Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society* comes to mind, rather than the original poem by Walt Whitman written for the then recently deceased Abraham Lincoln. Such was the dynamic power Williams had on his audience. At Welton Academy a group of students are introduced to a world perspective different from their current "do what is expected of you" existence by a new teacher, John Keating (Williams). It is a lifestyle we have all heard as we've grown older, yet still struggle to pursue ourselves. A life where one

finds their voice, follows their heart and dreams, and seizes the day. Keating's views appear so genuine it is easy to imagine Williams holding the same beliefs off the camera. Keating's influence and impact on his students is something we can all strive for during our time in the classroom.

Good Will Hunting, directed by Gus Van Sant, 1997
If you're looking for another model mentor look no further than Williams in Gus Van Sant's *Good Will Hunting*. Switching to the role of therapist, Williams works with lead character, Will Hunting (Matt Damon), a typical laborer, yet math genius, who finds himself in and out of trouble and struggling to sustain personal relationships. Williams's character, Dr. Sean Maguire, eventually meets Hunting and the two develop a mutually beneficial relationship, opening up to one another and helping each other combat their inner demons. The fact that Williams won an Oscar for Best Supporting Role should be reason enough to drag this classic off the DVD shelf, but if it's not, it was also nominated for Best Picture and won another Oscar for Best Original Screenplay.

It's a shame that many of the greats who inspired us all through their work have gone too soon - Ledger, Hoffman, Gandolfini, and now Williams - but the beauty of film is that it allows us to keep their memory alive. Sometimes it happens with screams, other times with laughs or perhaps even cries, and maybe even all three in

the same film. This is the power these people have, the ability to make those watching feel something visceral, feel something that is often lacking in the typical day-to-day.

The Family Game (家族ゲーム) directed by Yoshimitsu Morita, 1983

I first watched this movie at my university as part of my Modern Japanese History class. The film is an inside glimpse into a modern, yet dysfunctional, Japanese family and primarily focuses on the pressure junior high school student Shigeyuki faces to do well on a high school entrance exam. In order to ensure his success, the family hires a private tutor. The tutor, Yoshimoto, in addition to helping the son prepare for the exam, helps shine a light on the negative effects modernity has on familial relations and effective communication. Specifically, it is a portrayal of how detrimental attempts to be the ideal salaryman, housewife, and student in Japan can be.

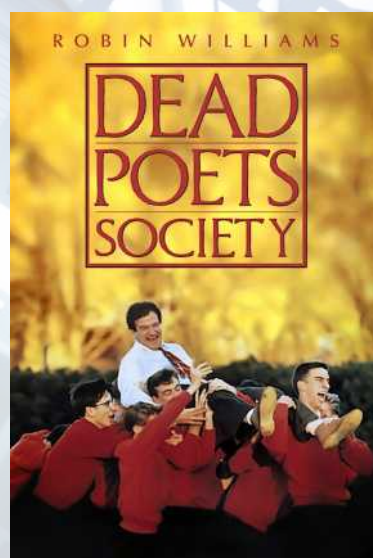
Half Nelson directed by Ryan Fleck, 2006

The overarching theme of these films, as you have probably guessed by now, relate to either a teacher/student experience or share an aspect of Japanese culture. Although not exactly pertinent to our situation here on JET, *Half Nelson* is simply a great movie who stars everyone's favorite indie-mainstream man crush, Ryan Gosling (and whose entire soundtrack is scored by Broken

Social Scene!). Gosling plays Dan Dunne a history teacher who attempts to empower his students, predominately minorities in an inner city school, by teaching about relevant issues in relevant ways rather than sticking to the school's curriculum. Unfortunately, Dunne is also a drug addict who is seemingly trapped by the same social circumstances that surround his students and one student in particular, Drey - a member of the girls' basketball team Dunne coaches and a witness to one of Dunne's highs. It is a haunting contrast to the lives we think mentors lead and the ones they actually do.

When Marnie Was There (思い出のマーニー) directed by Hiromasa Yonebayashi, 2014

When Marnie Was There is the last production released by Studio Ghibli before their announced hiatus on August 3. It follows the story of a middle school student, Anna, who suffers both from asthma and depression. As a result, she struggles to make friends and leads an unhappy solitary life. She is sent to a village in northern Hokkaido during the summer and befriends another girl, Marnie, at a house that is supposedly abandoned. When it appears Anna's interactions with Marnie have been all an illusion she attempts to find the truth with help from another younger girl, Sayaka. Depicting issues of depression, abuse, friendship, and love, *When Marnie Was There* reveals how truly important relationships are and how eternal they can be. The film is still in theaters here in Japan, find showing near you [here](#).



Sean Mulvihill

The Writing is on the Wall: Her Name in Blood

Quiet, reserved, shy, these are words foreigners often use to describe the typical Japanese person. Anyone who has tried to coax a group of students into volunteering for a question or has been the target of disapproved glances for speaking too loudly on the train knows this. However, music has and always will be a platform where individuals



can offer stark contrasts to stereotypes. J-rock and more specifically the subgenre of Japanese metal/hardcore are perfect examples of this. Unlike, J-pop and its popular expression of Japanese かわいい (cute) culture, Japanese metal and hardcore bands often take the こわい (scary) route.

Simply take the band **Her Name in Blood**, or HNIB for short, whose name alone conjures up images of children chanting "Bloody Mary" in a bathroom waiting to see blood run down walls and a ghostly face appear in a mirror. HNIB formed in 2003, but the name was not acquired until 2007 and may have been influenced by the punk song by the same name released in 2004. The act includes five members from Tokyo. Ikepy leads with vocals, T.J. and Daiki are on guitar, Makoto plays bass, and Umebo tackles the drums. Although they have existed for nearly eleven years, it took HNIB 7 years to release their first full studio album, *Decadence*, with Keep and Walk Records. Since then their popularity within the metal/hardcore scene has steadily grown and attracted another boost with the release of their EP, *The Beast*, in 2013. *The Beast* was enough to catch the attention of Triplevision Entertainment, which works with many indie, post-hardcore, rock, and screamo bands including American favorites Stick To Your Guns and Woe, Is Me and worked with HNIB to release their self-titled LP in April earlier this year.

The hardcore genre, an umbrella term that has a plethora of subgenres, is often known for its fast instrumental pace, back and forth head rocking, and rowdy and reckless dancing. HNIB falls under this umbrella with vocalist Ikepy using a deep harsh scream throughout his songs and is sometimes joined by his bandmates who use softer vocals during a

chorus, as heard in the song "Halo." Although screaming tends to be difficult to understand, HNIB's lyrics are packed with so much English that it should make the ALT in all of us proud. One of the most crucial aspects of any metal/hardcore song is the breakdown where the vocals are suspended to allow the guitars and the drums to create a heavy and slow feel before the music picks up again and the crowd unleashes a fury of elbows, fists, and kicks. HNIB's songs provide their fans with plenty of breakdown opportunities sometimes having two or three in one song. Lastly, in songs like "Gasoline," HNIB pays homage to their metal influence by periodically taking large swathes of time to allow for seemingly endless guitar solos.

Since May, Her Name In Blood has been roaming Japan during their Return of the Beast Tour and although they played at Summer Sonic, they only participated in Tokyo. Fortunately, one of their last three shows of the tour includes the Kansai area in our neighboring Osaka prefecture. For only 2,500円 you can watch HNIB play at



Club Drop in Shinsaibashi on September 20. Check out their [homepage](#) for more information about the band and their tour dates. If you are a little concerned about the music genre, think of it more as an opportunity to witness a side of Japan that is unique and seldom seen. My advice, bring earplugs to prevent hearing damage, but I can't promise they'll block the nightmares.

Sean Mulvihill

images courtesy of fazzzz via flickr

The Seven Baths of Kinosaki Onsen

For over 1,400 years, hot springs in the northern part of Hyogo have served the needs of bathers. Today, the town of Kinosaki is a charming traditional Japanese village. Walking along the river is breathtaking, especially at night when the streetlights are turned on. You can see (and join!) many people strolling in yukata as they travel from onsen to onsen.

Transportation

From Ono, we took three different train lines to Himeji, then a limited express train up to Takeno Beach. We had to rush after taking a little too long gorging ourselves on breakfast and just barely made it. Due to this, the non-reserved car was already packed with bodies. My companions opted to purchase reserved seats to rest their weary feet, but the combination of my preference for standing, frugality, and sheer stubbornness found me standing behind two of my friends.

Trains were the best way to travel between Takeno, Toyooka, and Kinosaki. They are relatively inexpensive and quick. The four of us who stayed in Kinosaki also made use of the bus to Toyooka as we moseyed into the station just as the hourly train was departing. It took much longer and was more expensive. Evidently, it is not a popular method of transportation: We were the only souls on the bus (it's debatable whether the driver possessed one or not).

Taxis should be avoided at all cost. They are outrageously expensive.

Our final day found our large group fractioned. The Osaka resident took a direct bus back. There were also buses available for Sannomiya. My trio decided to take the lengthy but cheap route and made a detour in Kyoto prefecture.

Where to Stay

If you have a friend living in the area willing to take your cheap self in, this is the most economical option. The next best choice for those on a budget is a hotel in Toyooka. If you prefer the more cultural experience, however, there

are many options for ryokan in Kinosaki. Four of us stayed at the cheapest one, Mitsuwa. Included was an entry pass to all of the onsen and a large Japanese style breakfast. We were also able to rent yukata.

What to Eat

At Takeno Beach, there is a small restaurant at which you can eat. The cashier was confused by our payment, the food was only so-so, several orders were screwed up (one friend's food wasn't even made until we asked about it), and some of the people there seemed to enjoy gossiping about us in Japanese right in front of us. I would not recommend.

For dinner our first night, we went to a Chinese restaurant in Toyooka called Rakutomonoki. It was delicious! Definitely check it out if you visit Tajima and get the chance to stop by.



After about 5 p.m., most restaurants close in Kinosaki. This presented a challenge, as we had not started searching for a meal until 5:30 p.m. Fortunately, one restaurant near the station was still open. The menu was decorated with cute sticker versions of the food. I had curry, which was only okay, but most of my friends really enjoyed their generously-portioned crab meals.

The next day before leaving, we stopped at Café Sorella, where a friend we'd made works. I had chocolate toast (a highly nutritional lunch), which was thick and delicious. Juri, our friend, was extremely hospitable and spoke with us at length about being ALTs and her study abroad experience in California.

The Onsen

Altogether, there are seven public bath houses in Kinosaki. Each boasts a unique benefit for their patrons and rumor says there is an extra benefit for those who manage to visit all seven.

- **Yanagiyu** is the smallest bath with the most scorching water (and the least interesting for me). The locker room is small, and there were at least two bugs I spotted (one in my locker). A child decided the best way to rectify this would be to urinate on the floor. Twice. The bath itself has a homey, wood-cabin atmosphere.

- **Mandarayu's** locker rooms here were the same size as Yanagiyu's. There is one small bath inside and a bamboo tub (rotenburo) outside.

- **Kounoyu**, a favorite of families, is very close to the ropeway and has a large bath inside with several decent rotenburo outside. There are many rocks as décor.

- **Jizoyu** has a large hot bath as well as a smaller bath, evidently for children if the colorful paintings near are any indication. I found the outside architecture lovely, while the rock pillar stone garden inside was unimpressive.

- **Ichinoyu** was, fittingly, our first stop. There are several hot baths inside and an artificial cave area outside.

- **Satonoyu** is the most popular onsen in Kinosaki, perhaps largely because of its convenient location. They also have a free sealding footbath outside, where we met a friendly Japanese man, his adorable granddaughter, and his daughter Juri. We also competed to see who could stand their feet in the water the longest. I won both times, but at the expense of my feet reddening considerably (yay?). There are two floors with a great variety of options, including a cold bath and a cold sauna (highly recommended for impromptu dance parties and drying off).



- **Goshonoyu** was the favorite of most of our group. There were strong jets well positioned for a back in one of the hot baths, and the outside area was gorgeous. The waterfall was a nice touch as well. (I should point out here that Satonoyu had jets and a waterfall as well).

Last Minute Points

- >> Make sure to drink milk after soaking!
- >> You should bring your own towel. If you stay at a ryokan, they will provide one.
- >> Rinse off before getting in a bath.
- >> Don't be a creeper.

In short, Kinosaki is a wonderful spot to spend a three day weekend anytime of year, even during the summer months.

Brittany Teodorski

This is Your Brain on Summer Sonic

Glastonbury, The U.K.'s biggest music festival, held in the Vale of Avalon since 1970 will this year attract 175,000 visitors to over 100 stages on 1,200 acres of land. It is, however, bracing itself for the arrival of so called 'super rats' - rats immune to conventional poisons such as diphacinone and chlorophacinone and growing to over 2 feet in length. Matt Phillips, from Urban Pest Control told the Daily Star, a British tabloid: "If you show rats a food source they will flock to be near that food. So with festivals, rats will come in off [sic] the fields to the campsites."



Giant Rat Facts

>> Giant rats, the size of cows or even bigger (gorillas, bears and big apes similar to gorillas) could one day fill a 'significant chunk' (0-100%) of Earth's rapidly emptying eco-space.

>> The terrifying scenario could become a reality as super-adaptable rats take advantage of larger mammals becoming extinct (such as gorillas), an expert predicts.

Summer Sonic 2014 was my first foray into the societal petri dish that is the weekend outdoor music festival. A world where rats the size of giant rats roam indiscriminately and bands whose members write songs that don't acknowledge the exponential but entirely avoidable growth of indigenous rodents to near gorilla sized proportions play impassively to inebriated rat deniers.

Sat in an unfamiliar Kobe bar on a sticky Friday night with the smoldering embers of my planned budgetary

constraints flickering in my ears, I ambled into the rear end of a conversation which revealed that, yes, The Pixies would be playing not but 24 hours later, and yes, less than an hour's trip from the 豚まん bamboo steamer that is my not quite downtown but close enough downtown apartment building.

After loosely considering the facts and still in the midst of a four beer fuzz, I decided to head to the closest コンビニ and buy a ticket for Saturdays show, spending almost all of my monthly food budget in the process and condemning myself to at least three weeks of homemade tuna mayonnaise onigiri fashioned into gorilla sized giant rat shapes in the process.

Long Sentences

Being from England, I've always been dubious as regards the benefits of the traditional British festival experience; two to three days of sanitary capitulation and a more than sixty percent chance that your tent, its contents and possibly even you will be stolen during the night by a stocky, trainee carpet fitter called Lee whilst you stand in a slightly larger tent a mile away listening to Croatian techno surrounded by giant rats the size of gorillas, but with my attitude placed firmly on the outside of caring I placed a trembling hand on the counter and handed over the money.

Myself and two other JETs, let's call them Louis Bertenshaw V and Sean Mulvihill for the sake of argument, rendezvoused slightly outside the festival site amid an intoxicating fug of hot dogs, hastily applied sunscreen, untrammelled optimism and the latent fear that giant rats the size of apes had overtaken the festival site and were running wild. Less than four hours later (twenty five minutes to be exact) we were there. After a



minor skirmish applying the obligatory wristband that signifies access and turning my right hand into a moderately useful aubergine in the process, we were in.

Obscuring a lack of proper pre-planning and overall content deficiencies with spurious facts

Upon entry we were each handed a complimentary bin bag and let loose. After an inauspicious opening involving some Koreans in tight Robin Thicke-esque outfits, driving rain and an almost complete embargo on doing any kind of anything (no smoking, no drinking, no photos, no climbing), things started to heat up. One of the joys of going to a festival that elevates it above a mere gig is the sense of discovery; splintering off from the pack and stumbling upon some band, someone, something that has been an essential part of someone else's life for some time but up to that point completely unbeknownst to you.



Over the course of the weekend (I managed to repeat Friday nights debacle and bought a ticket for Sunday too) many discoveries were made and in no discernable order here are seven of them:

>> Old Italian men masquerading as Swedes whilst adopting pseudo Transylvanian accents are tons of fun and you should listen to them - Ghost

>> Eating lipstick whilst drinking Diet Coke and jogging is usually less nauseating than listening to KawaiiJ-Pop but not when it's being relayed through giant aircraft hangar sized speakers that make the walls shake and there are midgets on the stage (or are they children?) - Kyary Pamyu Pamyu



>> Padding out your set, and subsequently getting the biggest response, with someone else's material ten minutes into an hour long show is not a good sign. I was frowning then and I still am now - Avril Lavigne

>> Don't buy bottles of liquor with names like Gibleys, Lancelot, Gypsy Sunrise or David Copperfield.

>> Azealea Banks sounds great anyway but somehow sounds even better when dressed like a de-masked luchador, has gold paint running down her face, and there's mud everywhere.

>> Although very curious animals, rats are also shy, and prefer to run away than confront a potential threat.

>> Without companionship rats tend to become lonely and depressed.

Scott Patterson

Summer Sonic 2014, August 16(sat) Open 9:00am/Start 11:00am, August 17(sun) Open 9:00am/Start 11:00am. 1DAY TICKET 13,000¥ (incl.tax), 2DAY TICKET 25,000¥ (incl.tax), Osaka Loop Line Sakurajima station.

Images: Matthieu Auby / Caruba / Paul Stevenson / Scott Patterson / Scott Patterson / Scott Patterson

photo
spread

Summer Sonic



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<< Avril Lavigne - Louis Bertenshaw V >> << The Pixies - SM >>
<< Ghost - LB V >> << Indoor Stadium - LB V >> << Ghost - SP >>

Thawing Relations Under Fire: Japanese Sanctions and Russian Security Drills

Things were looking up for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, President Vladimir Putin, and their respective countries due to improving economic ties and as a possible solution to their territorial disputes seemed to be at its closest in recent memory. However, events in August brought Japan's rapprochement to a halt and in some cases reversed previous gains.

Most of us are aware that on July 17, Ukrainian rebels **shot down** a Malaysian Airlines passenger plane resulting in worldwide condemnation toward both the rebels and Russia. Russia has been attacked for supporting the rebels and not using its influence to quell the violence in Eastern Ukraine. As a result, the majority of the Western Powers have enacted stiff sanctions on Russia hoping to influence Putin to help decrease hostilities in its neighboring country.

Last month Japan joined its Western allies when it established its own sanctions on the Russian government. Yet the decision was not as easy to come to as it was for Japan's American and European Union partners. Since becoming Prime Minister again in 2012, Abe has met with Putin five times focusing primarily on economic issues, territorial disputes, and a peace treaty that would officially end World War II between the two nations.

Time and time again since the Fukushima disaster and the moratorium on Japan's nuclear reactors, Abe has sought to secure and strengthen ties with resource rich nations, Russia included. Japan especially does not want to

miss out on Russia's ongoing natural gas development. Of course, any missed opportunity by Japan means a potential gain for nations that do not toe the Western line, e.g., China (back in May the two countries signed \$400-billion dollar deal where Russia will supply a substantial part of China's energy needs with its abundant natural gas).

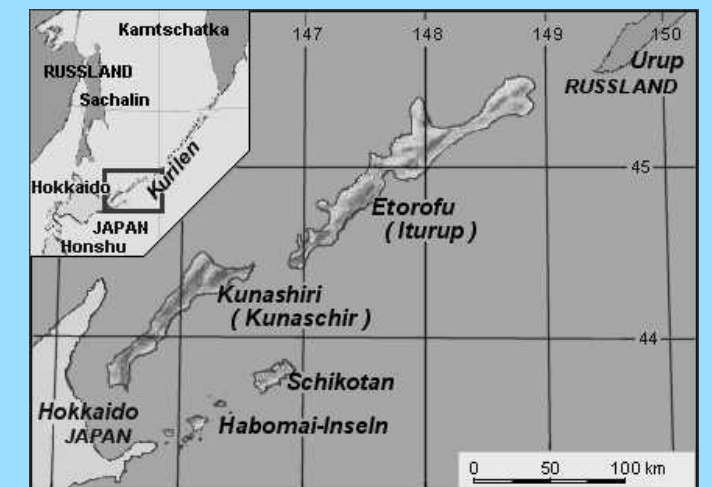


Japan also is concerned with territorial disputes. Similar to the hotly contested Senkaku-Diaoyu islands that are claimed by both Japan and China, Japan and Russia dispute ownership over islands north of Hokkaido known as the Northern Territories in Japan and as part of the Kuril Islands in Russia. This disagreement is the primary reason the two countries have not signed a peace treaty ending World War II. To give some historical context, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945, its invasion of Manchuria and of the Northern Territories followed. However, invasion of the Northern Territories did not begin until August 18; three days after Emperor

Hirohito accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered. In 1952 the United States, Japan, and 47 other nations signed the Treaty of San Francisco, which defined peace terms after the war. The Soviet Union withheld its signature stating a disagreement on the sovereignty of the aforementioned islands as a major factor.

Throughout his visits, it appeared Abe's government was making significant headway in resolving the islet dispute. Yet after sanctions were approved by the Diet, the Russian government cancelled a Deputy Foreign Minister meeting scheduled for the end of August. A meeting between both nations' Foreign Ministers scheduled for April has been postponed indefinitely as well. The meetings were specifically meant to discuss the Northern Territories/Kuril Islands issue. Too make matter worse, the Russian government decided to hold military drills on the islands, which, similar to former President Dmitry Medvedev's 2010 visit to the islands, were viewed as "totally unacceptable" by the Japanese government. Most likely the recent events will also influence Putin to cancel his fall visit to Japan. His decision to retaliate against the sanctions and visa restrictions by barring some Japanese citizens from Russia further illustrates the deteriorating relationship.

Japan has often been in a tough spot when it comes to making decisions between its self-interest and the interests of its American and Western allies. As demonstrated by **their sanctions**, which are much more



lenient than its allies, the Japanese government tends to balance the two interests – showing support for its allies, while simultaneously attempting not to alienate potentially beneficial relationships. The last thing Japan and the West want, but which almost seems inevitable, are stronger, more resilient ties between Russia and China. Japan does not want to be left out in the cold economically and knows that it may eventually need Russian backing when it comes to the Senkaku-Diaoyu islands dispute. Ultimately, it would be a shame if the conflict in the West sent relationship building in the East back to square one, but such is the reality of a deeply interconnected, globalized world.

Sean Mulvihill

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Sources: 1 2 3 4 5

The Durants

This is a continuation of "The Durants" from Hyogo Times August 2014 issue

II. Evading the authorities was exhausting. On top of that, Gaia's first six months of pregnancy had been taxing. She oscillated rapidly between giddiness and terror. Vomiting was a twice-daily ordeal. Too many questions haunted her: Could a baby survive in this wasteland? Could they continue to dupe Zoran? Where were her parents? Gaia had last seen them and her twin sister, Mina, shortly before being hauled off by the government. She wondered how they were, and if her running away with Brion had affected them at all.

Later that day, Dr. Carlton would visit. Gaia was nervous, a small voice in the back of her head goading her into doubt. She was glad for Brion's support. He was a steadfast light in her life, always assuaging her fears.

The hours inched past until there was a brisk rap at their door. Brion answered, greeting the doctor.

"Alright, where's our lovely mother?" Dr. Carlton chirped as he stepped in.

Waddling slightly with added weight and aching feet, Gaia plopped herself in front of the physician. "Here!" She answered brightly, flashing a dazzling smile of jagged teeth.

Dr. Carlton performed the check-up as Brion watched, all discussing the town and where Zoran was currently snooping around. Six months ago, the doctor had insisted Gaia was merely a hallucination caused by a concussion. Unfortunately, the officer's thirst for finding the fugitives was not slaked by such a flimsy excuse. He continued hunting mercilessly, nearly recognizing Brion on both occasions he'd dared to visit town.

Clapping his hands together while rising, Dr. Carlton

remarked, "Well, everything seems to be developing nicely. Your little bundle should be here in about three months." Brion peered at his wife, knowing she'd be feeling both exuberance and anxiety. The emotions danced fiercely behind her large eyes. "Any questions before I leave?" The doctor continued as he turned to depart. Both shook their heads, beginning to wave their goodbyes.

"Before I forget..." the doctor trailed off before spinning on the spot and scanning. His gaze rested on the sword Drake had gifted Gaia. He took three large strides toward it and rested his thumb on the emerald in the hilt. "If there's ever an emergency, just press this and it'll connect you directly to the Sullivans."

The young couple squealed in delight. This kind of technology was commonplace in Taesh, but they hadn't expected to find it here. The emerald began blinking, prompting Dr. Carlton to depress the jewel. A flickering image of Drake appeared. Sweat was raining down the side of his face. "Doc, you gotta get here. They're sayin' an eruption's 'bouta go off." Drake glanced behind him, worry etched in deep creases on his forehead.

"I'll be right there." He pressed the emerald again and the transmission terminated. "Right. Use this if there's any trouble. I'll be back in two weeks."

The air was tense as the door slammed.

A week later, Brion was cooking a small lizard he'd found scurrying across their ceiling when he felt a tremor, then heard a wail. Gaia stumbled in, clutching her abdomen. "Something's wrong..." she whined through clenched teeth. There was a trail of fluid behind her. Horror flooded Brion's veins, all thoughts of lunch evaporating instantaneously.

A lump rose in his throat as he reached hesitantly for the sword's hilt. He steeled himself as his wife wailed and thrust his thumb into the jewel savagely. "I need Dr. Carlton right away, Drake!" Brion shouted hoarsely at the fuzzy image.

The sound of small footsteps greeted his ears. "Daddy's talkin' to tha sunman!" Three-year-old Oscar stumbled into view.

Gaia lit up. "Oscar!" she cooed, "I need your daddy. Could you tell him you're hungry, sweet one?"

The little boy grinned widely. "Sho', Guy!" He pitter-pattered away, leaving Brion with nostrils flared and Gaia panting and yelping.

An eternity passed before Drake appeared. "What's—"

"I think Gaia's in labor!" Brion squeaked.

The color fled from Drake's face. He stammered, "I-I... the d-doctor....Didya feel the eruption?"

"How the hell is that important?! My wife is giving birth to our child! Three months too early! Get the doctor here immediately!" Brion raged, his pupils dilating to pinpricks in his sky blue eyes.

"Brion, I know you and Gaia are scared. Doc can't help now. But before you start railin' me, I'll help you.

"Gaia just let the baby come. There's nothing we can do to stop it. Brion, grab a big tub and fill it with warm water. Put her in it. Grab a wet rag. Hold her hand. Give her water. Stay with her. This is how Oscar was born. I hafta deflect Zoran now. I'll send Doc when I can."

The transmission ended. Gaia groaned while lying in the warm water. Their child did not cry.

Dr. Carlton arrived in the morning to help, exhausted

as he was from treating burns. He found his patient seeping in a chilled pool bloodied by her still-attached placenta. Her husband held an oddly translucent hunk of flesh. Both had a despondent expression, with hollow eyes. The doctor swallowed nervously, fearing the worst until he saw shuddering breaths animate the infant.

"Let me see the baby," Dr. Carlton whispered. He checked the vital signs, his heart plummeting. It was a fragile thing, unlikely to survive their harsh environment for long. "It's very weak. I'll need to grab special equipment for its care. Until then, please handle it delicately." He couldn't bear to personify it with its imminent death. He took his leave quietly.

Brion held the baby hesitantly, shock filling him. Sobs drew his attention. "There's no way this child will live longer than me. There's no way it will live past tomorrow!" Gaia wept hysterically, clasping onto Brion's forearm. He pressed their eerily silent and transparent child into his chest and pulled away from his wife, squaring his shoulders, and began to care for their babe.

Brittany Teodorski

Why Are You Here?

Dylan Joseph Walsh NY, USA • Kato City • Yashiro SHS and Ono Kougyo •

Why are you here? I've always dreamed of moving abroad and had a lifelong interest in Japanese culture, food, and language. When I heard about the JET program, it sounded perfect. • **Why JET?** I was looking at many options to make it to Japan after graduating, but JET seemed the most secure and desirable. It was my plan A the entire time, and I feel enormously thankful and relieved to have been accepted! • **What are some of your first impressions?** How everything is smaller than in the states hit me right away - literally, in regards to some doorways in my own apartment. Another strange aspect to life here is being gawked at so much. It's truly an eerie feeling that I will have to get used to. • **What is one place you would like to visit?** I am dying to get acclimated and go explore the Hyogo triad of Osaka, Kobe, and Himeji. Beyond that, I want to go back to Tokyo as often as possible! • **One thing you are extremely nervous and/or excited about?** The winter. I was told repeatedly that they don't heat the school, and the classrooms are frigid! Other than that, I am thrilled to finally have a steady source of income, my own apartment, and vacation days! I can't wait to see how this year goes.



Patty Park GA, USA • Kobe • Ibukidai JHS

• **Why are you here?** I studied abroad in Japan two years ago and had such an amazing time! I traveled around the country and went on tons of adventures, saw many beautiful sights, and made wonderful friends. Even though I was here for a year, I regretted not seeing the entire country, so I wanted to come back and see the rest of it. • **Why JET?** I heard about JET from friends who had participated in the program and they always spoke highly of it. I did some research later on and I felt like JET was the most organized organization related to teaching English in Japan, so I decided to apply! • **First impressions?** I love it! I'm constantly reminded of how wonderful and beautiful life is whenever I see the ocean, the fields, the mountains, and skies here. I especially love being in Kobe since the community here is so warm and

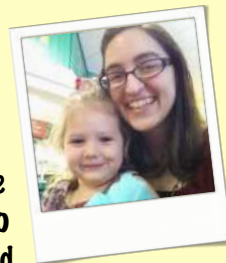


welcoming. I've only been here for a month, but the friends I've made so far are already like family and the teachers at my school take great care of me. I can't put into words how grateful I am. I really feel like I've won the jackpot! • **One place you would like to visit?** Hokkaido! I heard that the scenery is great and the food is even better! • **Extremely nervous and/or excited about?** I am extremely nervous and excited to meet my students! I've been worrying whether they will like me or not these days. In any case, I will work hard to continuously improve my relationship with my students and I hope they will grow to love English more!

Rachel "Rackle" Beaman Brisbane, Australia • Akashi • Akashi-Nishi SHS.



• **Why are you here?** I found out about the JET programme when I was about 15 years old. I was going through a bit of an anime craze (since reduced to a healthy level of interest) so I wanted to travel to the home of my obsession and get paid for it too. I also came for a holiday and really fell in love with the place which cemented my desire to come and work here. I love the people, the food, the hustle and bustle of it all and it is something completely different. I don't like to stay in the same place for too long and JET seemed like a fun change. 7 years later I finished my degree and applied immediately and now here I am living the dream. • **Why JET?** Well apart from being the first website to show up on Google that also didn't look like a scam, I liked its history and the fact that it had ties to the government, something that I thought would translate well on a resume when I got back. Additionally I'm a teacher by trade, so I figured a job like this would stop my skills from getting rusty while I was away. • **First impressions?** Ugh, I thought I'd get to leave this humidity in Brisbane. Ugh, no aircon, but at least I have two fans and a big balcony. Ooooooh does that have Hello Kitty on it? I want 60. This isn't what I thought I ordered. Oh well, it still tastes good. Thank the Lord above for Google translate. God I hate that Frozen movie. • **One place to visit?** Okinawa. • **Extremely nervous and/or excited about?** I was really worried about my Australian humour not translating properly. Us Aussies are notoriously dry and can sometimes come off cruel even when that is usually never what we intend. That being said my fears



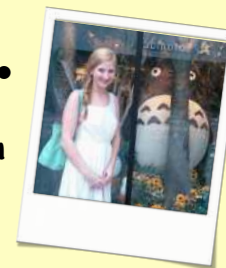
were unfounded; I had them laughing first day in. I think I'm excited about everything, but mostly I just can't wait to meet my students.

Rosalind Scoular MO, USA • Ono • Ono JHS

• **Why are you here?** I came to Japan to continue learning about Japanese culture and traditions, improve my Japanese language skills, and create cross-cultural ties. • **Why JET?** I chose JET because I want to do more than teach English; I want to build relationships and foster cross-cultural understanding of American and Japanese culture in my JET location and when I return home to the United States. • **First Impressions?** One of my first impressions is the care Japanese society puts into preserving history, culture, and the environment. • **One place to visit?** I would like to visit Himeji Castle. • **Extremely nervous and/or excited about?** I am very excited to have the opportunity to travel within Japan and learn more about different regions of the country.

Skye Shields Tasmania, Australia • Sanda • Arima SHS

• **Why are you here?** I visited Japan on my graduation trip, after studying rice for two years. On that trip I fell in love with the country and decided I had to come back, but when I did, it should be to live rather than just another holiday. • **Why JET?** JET was actually the only programme I applied for to get to Japan. Thank goodness I got in! I enjoyed tutoring at the international college I was at, so I knew that teaching English would be a good way to live in Japan, even though I am a scientist. I was also interested in the cultural exchange part of the programme. There seemed to be a lot to give to and a lot to get out of JET. • **First impressions?** I've never been to Japan in summer before. So when we first arrived in Tokyo, I was amazed that summer could be green, in Australia everything would have been dead and brown. Now that I am at my school I have realised why people say the best part of being a JET is the students. Mine are a noisy bunch, but my first impression is they are just wonderful. • **One place to visit?** If I had to pick just one, it would be Himeji Castle. But really, everywhere, I'd especially like to visit the JETs I befriended from Tokyo Orientation, who are now scattered across Japan. • **Extremely nervous and/or excited about?** I am nervous about the fact that I cannot currently speak Japanese. But, I am excited that by the end of my JET experience I could be somewhat capable with the language.



Thomas O'Brien WA, USA • Kobe • JHS

• **Why are you here?** I am here to help students learn the English language as an ALT and broaden their knowledge of both the language and the culture from my home country, the United States of America. • **Why JET?** I first learned about JET from my cousin who participated in JET back in the early 2000s and currently lives in Morioka teaching English at a small university. When I visited him back in 2009, he told me JET was one way to return to Japan. I enjoyed my time in high school visiting Japan and decided after graduating from college that I would apply for JET. During college, I found I really wanted to teach mathematics. With this path, I can live in Japan for up to 5 years and gain teaching experience in the process. • **First impressions?** My first impressions are very positive. It's only been a few weeks and already I have met many people both from the ALT community and even some from the local community where I live. I have already joined a local soccer team and I look forward to seeing more of my community and the city. • **One place to visit?** I would like to venture north and northwest and explore the parts of Japan I have not visited. Also places like Sapporo further north. I also want to travel to Australia and New Zealand. • **Extremely nervous and/or excited about?** I am extremely excited to dive further into the Japanese language and improve my language skills so I can communicate with everyone I meet. This will allow me to explore not only Kobe but other parts of Japan where English is not as common.



Whitney Pitman USA • Kobe • Suma Tomogaoka SHS

• **Why are you here?** I am here to teach English at Suma Tomogaoka High School and explore the culture and language of Japan • **Why JET?** JET allowed me to explore my passion of working with kids and my curiosity of the Japanese culture and language. • **First impressions?** I have been to Japan before, but never Kobe. I am overwhelmed at how clean the city is, how nice everyone is and the amazing food I've had the privilege of trying! • **One place to visit?** I want to visit Big Buddha in Nara and lots of onsens. • **Extremely nervous and/or excited about?** I am nervous to teach, but also excited to meet all the students.



calendar

september

Outside Hyogo

Awaji

Hanshin

Kobe

AJET Events

Tajima

Tamba

Harima

sunday

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday

1

2

3

4

5

6

Block 6 Relay for Life (Ashiya)

Diamante Giyaman Exhibition

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

Block 6 Relay for Life (Ashiya)

Kinoshita Circus

Block 6 Welcome Picnic (Kyoto)

Diamante Giyaman Exhibition

14

15

Ako Antique Market

16

17

18

19

20

Akashi Manpuku Food Fair

Diamante Giyaman Exhibition

Kinoshita Circus

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

HAJET Book Club

Minatogawa Craft Market

Kinoshita Circus

28

29

30

all
month

Setouchi Shimanowa (Hiroshima-ken, Ehime-ken)

Himeji Castle Boat Tour

NHK Taiga Drama Exhibition: Kanbei Kuroda

Otomate x Osamu Tezuka Special Exhibition

Awaji Flower & Plant Tropical Garden (ends 2the 28th)

Trout Fishing in Arima Hot Springs

Takarazuka Revue 100th Anniversary Exhibition (ends the 28th)

Hop On, Hop Off Bus Launch

Kinoshita Circus

29



on to the next step...