

# EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED – JAPAN LAID BARE

## a guide to managing expectations

### A. Aims of this Workshop

- To introduce some of the realities of Japan, JET and your job.
- To help you understand what is expected of YOU.
- To provide coping strategies for when the expectation doesn't meet the reality.

### B. What are YOUR Expectations?

#### >> TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ <<

1. **Japan** is a beautiful country and has amazing technology.
2. Your privacy is equal to what it was in your home country.
3. You will learn the Japanese language easily now that you live here.
4. Everyone is really friendly and will respect you for being a native English speaker.
5. Everyone has heard of the **JET Programme** and respects your status as an ALT.
6. You will be told all that you need to know about your **job** by your supervisor & school.
7. You will be busy at school most of the time.
8. You are paid more than some teachers for doing less work.
9. Most Japanese Teachers of English have excellent English skills.
10. Students are hardworking and motivated.

#### >> WHEN REALITY BITES <<

1. Explore your area; join local activity groups; layer up in winter and get deodorant sent out in summer.
2. Don't feel pressured to share everything about yourself.
3. Make Japanese a priority from the start and learn from your surroundings.
4. Be friendly and approachable, it will be reciprocated.
5. Remember your status as a JET ALT – go that little bit extra and be rewarded.
6. Be proactive and ask questions! Don't wait to be told, JTEs are really busy.
7. Use free time to plan activities, set short and long term goals, study Japanese.
8. Be sensitive to part-time teachers and office politics.
9. Help the JTEs improve their English skills – we are not just here for the kids!
10. Remember discipline practices are different to your home country  
– remember Japanese logic differs from Western logic.

### C. What is Expected of YOU?

- Can be difficult to find out due to different styles of communication:  
WESTERN : Frankness = Virtue  
JAPANESE : Frankness = Insensitivity (Peter Collins)

- Advice for building relationships:

*Basic codes of conduct:* Be on time, dress appropriately, respect and don't mock the commitment based culture, try and take nenkyu outside of school terms, make an effort, keep an open mind, know when to ask questions and when to keep quiet.

*Negative Energy* – think about the consequences of releasing it.  
Suggest and Request, Never Demand!

### D. What do you expect of YOURSELF?

- Culture shock: Expect it to happen to you
- Personal performance: "Don't lower your expectations to meet your performance. Raise your level of performance to meet your expectations. Expect the best of yourself, and then do what is necessary to make it a reality." (Ralph Marston)



# TEN THINGS TO REMEMBER

## :: ONE ::

Make time for yourself – you are not a real teacher and you are not expected to put in the overtime hours...

## :: TWO ::

...but you will be happier if you get involved with everything, and volunteers are always appreciated in school and after school.

## :: THREE ::

Don't feel pressured to accept all social invitations, but remember they can be a good opportunity to build relationships outside of school; think about whether a refusal will cut ties.

## :: FOUR ::

Be humble – Japanese respect humble people. Use your mistakes to better yourself – anything can be a learning experience if you want it to be.

## :: FIVE ::

Be ready for a variety of academic abilities at your school, and a variety of approaches to discipline.

## :: SIX ::

Keep a work related journal, keep the names of people, important dates, interesting situations, heartfelt English to make you smile.

## :: SEVEN ::

Show respect for difference but don't be afraid to behave in a non-Japanese way – that is what you are here for.

## :: EIGHT ::

Have no shame. Don't feel embarrassed about speaking Japanese, dancing in front of your students, joining in local events – your energy and enthusiasm will be rewarded.

## :: NINE ::

You are not just here to teach English to students – you are here to share your culture with anyone willing to listen, to improve JTE's English abilities, and through the people you meet, to build lasting bridges between two very different cultures.

## :: TEN ::

Expect the best and the best will come to you! Gambatte!

## USEFUL CONTACTS

CLAIR JETLINE (9am-5:45pm, M-F): call 03-3591-5489

AJET Peer Support Group (8pm-7am, every night): call 0120-437-752

website: <http://ajet.net/psg>

JET Programme website [www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org)

