

Your First Month!

Week 1

- ✓ National health insurance
- ✓ Pension book
- ✓ Alien Registration Card
- ✓ Bank account
- ✓ *Hanko* (name stamp used in place of a signature)
- ✓ Re-entry permit
- ✓ Register with your embassy
- ✓ Cell phone
- ✓ Land line telephone
- ✓ Ask for/make a card with your school/home address in *kanji* and *romaji* (Roman Letters)
- ✓ Day and time you're expected to show up to work as well as proper work attire
- Practice your introduction



At Work

- ✓ **Introduce yourself to everyone** – August is usually a pretty relaxed time for most and it's a good time to get to know people around the office. If you're at one school, there will probably be students around and this is a great time to get to know them. Take advantage of this because students are considerably more social outside of the classroom than they are inside.
- ✓ **Know your contract** – All ALTs have similar contracts, but some vary depending on your school. It is *very* important that you know your contract. If you have questions about it, ask your supervisor. If your supervisor is unsure of anything, your Prefecture Advisor will be able to answer your questions.
- ✓ **Get a (translated) schedule**
- ✓ **Learn school rules and procedures** – Schools have a variety of different rules and it is important to learn them. Some schools have a casual dress code while others may be very strict. Learn the different procedures you may be required to do in and out of the classroom. Your predecessor should have filled you in on most of this information, but it never hurts to talk to your supervisor.
- ✓ **Look at the textbooks you'll be using, make your introduction lesson plan, discuss your role in the classroom with your JTEs** – Not all JTEs are the same and you will have different roles in the classroom with different JTEs. Speak to them about their expectations. If possible, sit in on classes to get an idea of their teaching methods.
- ✓ **Staff names and staff room layout** – Have someone translate this if it's not already done.
- ✓ **Learn the school hierarchy** – Know the important people in your office and how to address them. At first you will interact primarily with your supervisor, but later you will work with a variety of people. It's important to know their roles within the office.
- ✓ **Lesson planning** – You'll have a lot of time on your hands and this is a great time to utilize it for a few lesson plans.
- ✓ **Study Japanese** – This is something *everyone* should do, though the extent of which is up to you. If you're only going to stay a year, there's really no need to dive into grammar and kanji. It is recommended you at least learn *hiragana* and *katakana* as it will make your life much easier, especially if you want to order food.



At Home

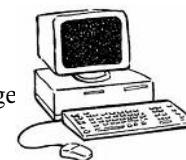
- ✓ **Explore your neighborhood** – Spend some time on the weekends getting lost. It's amazing the sights you can unearth in the most unexpected places.
- ✓ **Introduce yourself** – A quick introduction to your neighbors can build very strong relationships in the months ahead. While not all of your neighbors may speak English, they will often go out of their way to help if you need anything.



- ✓ **Learn the rules for trash disposal in your town** – Do you need to separate recyclables? Where do you leave your trash? Do you need special bags? How many times a week is the trash picked up? If your trash is not separated correctly and is placed in improper bags, it may not be collected.
- ✓ **Transportation** – Transportation availability varies from city to city. If you're driving a car, take care of all your insurance and other registration fees as soon as possible. If you'll use public transportation, learn the routes in your area. Unlike most countries where you pay a flat fee to board public transit, in Japan you pay by the distance traveled (like a taxi). To avoid constantly counting your money, pre-paid bus/train cards are the cheapest and most efficient options.
- ✓ **Appliances** – Almost all appliances (stoves, baths, showers) are heated with gas and their operation can be annoying, particularly hot water heaters. Ask about the various settings for hot water, particularly on the bath/shower as it is usually set to a lower temperature in summer.
- **Safety** – Japan is a land of typhoons and earthquakes. Keep extra water, food, flashlight, batteries, and candles on hand in case of an emergency. Also remember to lock your door and take the same precautions as you would if you were in your home country.

Useful links!

- ✓ <http://www.jetprogramme.org>
- ✓ <http://www.ajet.net/>
- ✓ <http://www.japan-guide.com>
- ✓ <http://amazon.co.jp> - English books, free shipping
- ✓ <http://www.fbcusa.com/public2/> - Food from home
- ✓ <http://homepage3.nifty.com/amdack/english/E-index.html> - Medical info page
- ✓ <http://www.bbapply.com> - Yahoo broadband service
- ✓ Cell phone companies:
 - AU <http://www.au.kddi.com/english/index.html>
 - NTT Docomo <http://www.nttdocomo.co.jp/english/index.html>
 - Softbank <http://mb.softbank.jp/mb/en>
- ✓ <http://www.wunderground.com/>
- ✓ <http://mes-english.com/> - free flashcards and worksheets
- ✓ <http://www.bogglesworldesl.com/> - more free worksheets and lesson plans
- ✓ <http://www.play-asia.com/> - Japan and North America video games, free shipping to Japan
- ✓ <http://www.skype.com> - Free phone calls over the Internet. All you need is a microphone or a headset. Without a doubt, this is the cheapest way to stay in contact with family and friends.



Useful phone numbers

- ✓ **JETLINE 03 3591 5489 (M-F 09:00 - 17:45)**
- ✓ **AJET Peer Support Group Hotline 0120 43 7725 (Daily 20:00 – 07:00)**
- ✓ **TELL: Tokyo English Life Line 03 5774 0992 (Daily 09:00 – 23:00)**
- **Emergency Interpretation Service (for medical instructions)**
03 5285 8181 (Daily 09:00 – 20:00)

Random Information:

- ✓ The best time to speak with teachers is late in the afternoon as they are often quite busy in the morning.
- ✓ It's possible to find a lot of discounted food at supermarkets after 18:00.
- ✓ Most people set up automatic bill payments each month to cover their expenses (electric, water, phone, etc.). However, if you do not want this option, you can easily pay your bills at convenient stores.
- ✓ **Remember to carry your Alien Registration Card AT ALL TIMES!** The police can stop you for no reason in Japan and if you do not have identification, you can end up in jail. Carry your passport until you receive your Alien Registration Card.
- ✓ Everyone knows you shouldn't drink and drive an automobile. In Japan, it is also illegal to drink and ride a bicycle.
- ✓ If you're not accustomed to humid climates, you'll soon become familiar with mold. Mold grows surprisingly fast here and has been known to grow in unexpected places such as contact lens cases.