

Life as a Second-Year ALT

—the hardest part is over. Now make the most of your life in Japan.

● Issues facing most Second-Year ALTs

- Job satisfaction.
- Other JET friends and co-workers may have left.
- Extended time away from home.
- Future plans: grad-school, career, long-distance relationship, etc.

● Solutions at school: you have been building relationships, trust, and support. Now cash in on them.

- Re-use last year's lessons when possible. Hone them to perfection based on previous feedback.
- New students in April? These students are all yours from the start this time; use this to your advantage.
- Had a grand idea shot down early last year? Maybe this is the time to re-think it and try again.
- Make a point to attempt a new project with your students this year.
- Get to know the new teachers in other departments; you will be surprised how many speak English.
- Check the schedule of school concerts, games, and competitions.

● Solutions at home: you're staying another year, so settle in a bit.

- Sell or throw out the junk you bought from your predecessor if it's not to your taste.
- Spend a little money to be comfortable this year. Redecorate and buy a good kerosene heater!
- Have a nice wine and cheese party. It will force you to create a better atmosphere to live in.
- High speed internet is absolutely vital. It is your link to the world, and business matters back home.

● Solutions in the community: stay engaged by getting more involved.

- Reconsider buying a car if you haven't already. Explore things you can't reach by train or bike.
- Friends' leaving is sad, but it creates space to meet new friends and a new range of experiences.
- Replace lost gaijin friends with some Japanese friends; they will introduce a whole new world.
- Take up a new Japanese hobby, or sign up for the JLPT to get serious about language studies.
- Check the local Bunka Center and attend festivals, concerts, etc.

● Towards the future: don't forget about your life outside and after JET.

- If you haven't been home in the first year, make plans to visit this winter.
- Maintaining long-distance relationships is difficult for two years. Plan a visit in Japan.
- Getting serious about grad-school or career? Find ways to boost experience while still in Japan:
- Participation at JET Conferences, JET advisor, A-JET, volunteer work in the community, etc.
- Make an exit plan so you don't drift and squander precious resources immediately following JET.

● Conclusion and Advice: —carpe diem!

- The significant difference between your first and second years is that you are no longer in a temporary living situation. So lay down a few roots and deepen your experience of living abroad.
- This may be your last year, so don't procrastinate any longer. Get involved and take action.
- Make an effort to maintain job and life satisfaction. Don't leave Japan burned out and bitter.

Your First Year

Questionnaire

- Why did you enter the JET Programme?
- Have you reached that goal?
 - ✧ If yes, have you found a new goal?
 - ✧ If no, has your goal possibly changed?
- Are you struggling at your school?
 - ✧ If yes, what is the biggest challenge?
 - ✧ If no, are you bored? Or are you challenging yourself?
- Have you tried any special projects at your school?
 - ✧ If yes, were they successful? Or were they discouraged by your school or particular situation?
- Do you feel isolated at your school?
 - ✧ Do you fraternize with the English staff?
 - ✧ Do you fraternize outside the English staff?
 - ✧ Do you attend any student ballgames, concerts, etc.?
- Is your home a comfortable environment?
 - ✧ In summer?
 - ✧ In winter?
- Are you bored or isolated when you are not at school or traveling?
- Do you have Japanese friends?
- Do you have plans for life after JET?
 - ✧ If yes, what aspects of life and work here are relevant to those future plans?
- Are you in a long distance relationship (or soon to be in one with a returning JET)?
 - ✧ If yes, have you spent time together outside your home country?
- Are you considering re-contracting a third year? Or staying in Japan after your second year?
- Are you reasonably content with your first year accomplishments and experiences as a whole?