

## ***What to Expect In Your First Few Weeks Before Leaving for Japan:***

### Consider:

- Asking your predecessor:
  - Is Internet already installed in your apartment or can the process be started before you arrive?
  - How many teachers will there be in your school(s)? (For souvenirs.)
  - If you plan on using an Apple product at school (macbook, ipad, etc.), ask your predecessor if they can take a screenshot of their network settings. This will save you a lot of time troubleshooting.
  - About cell phone company recommendations and procedures.
  - Can they make a map of the local area for you? Nearest grocery store, train station, how to get to school, etc.
- Learning some Japanese (basic hiragana & katakana, self-introductions, etc.).
- Getting an International Driver's License (if you wish to drive). Talk to your pred about pros/cons of driving in the area and if you are buying their car.
- Looking up and "friending" JETs living in your area through Facebook (social networks), most JETs have Facebook groups based on prefecture.
- Checking out the Surviving in Japan ([www.survivingnjapan.com](http://www.survivingnjapan.com)) for great advice.

### Do:

- Make sure you have enough money (min. \$1000 but \$2,000 recommended) to last you until your first payday.
  - You may need to pay certain costs upfront (apartment, cell phone, travel expenses, etc.) so budget accordingly.
- Have copies of your passport signature and visa pages.
- Bring food you can't live without if you expect to be very rural.
- Practice video chatting (skype, google hangout) with technologically-challenged parents.
- Get photos for your self-introduction: family, friends, pets, your home/car, favorite food, etc.
  - Have a version of it on your phone. It really helps with conversations early on when you don't know any Japanese.

## **In Your First Few Weeks:**

### Consider:

- Joining the students during their club activities.
- Studying Japanese (CLAIR books, JLPT, personal tutor, classes).
- Downloading useful apps to your phone:
  - A Japanese-English dictionary that doesn't rely on internet access.
  - Hyperdia (how to get around by train including schedules & prices)

Do:

- Make sure you ask your JTE or supervisor how to use appliances in your apartment and how to pay your bills.
- Read through the lesson plans left by your predecessor and familiarize yourself with the English levels of your students and their textbooks.
- Get post office delivery details like where to pick up your packages.
- Visit hyaku-en shops (dollar stores) first before heading to a department store for your apartment needs.
- Establish with your boss:
  - What time you should arrive for work.
  - What attire is appropriate for work. NOTE: First day wear a full business suit. Overdress at first before you know how everyone else dresses.
  - Expected responsibilities.
  - Food allergies you may have.
- Ask your JTE for a seating chart for the staffroom so you can learn your co-worker's names.

**General Advice and Suggestions:**

- If you don't speak Japanese, remember that your body language and actions will be speaking for you.
- Be on time!
- Be pro-active.
- Stay (at least a little) late once a week.
- Prepare your introductory lesson and materials.
- During your summer downtime, visit all of the schools you'll be teaching at if you can.
- Keep a running list of the words and phrases you learn every day.
- Never travel without your immigration ID.
- If you're having a problem with something at home or elsewhere and can't find the words to describe it, take photos to show your JTE.
- Keep some emergency food at work for those days when you have to stay late or don't have time to grab lunch during the day.
- Volunteer
- Get out and do things!