

What to ask your ALT predecessor

Could you please...

- Tell me about the JTEs I will be working with and the principal and vice-principal.
- Make a list of the classes that the ALT will be team teaching, with the number of students, year in school and the general level of English. Identify for each class what lessons / grammar points / topics have already been covered with these students from April (start of the school year) until July.
- Put together a class schedule and vacation request forms.
- Leave copies of successful (and unsuccessful) lesson plans, games, ideas and materials (in a chronologically organized fashion, if possible). Identify what was most successful and what didn't work.

If you are taking over their apartment, ask them for...

- ALT apartment address in Japanese (kanji) and English
- Map of the ALT apartment area with routes to school and important locations identified
- How to set up the internet account
- How the utilities are paid
- Monthly expenses
- Schedule of trash pick-up (what trash can be put out on what days)
- What furniture /appliances in the apartment are owned by the school /local board of education, and what is not.
- A list of recommended things to buy when you first arrive
- Directions for how to use and maintain unfamiliar appliances in the home

Omiyage Tips and Recommendations

Even if you need a lot of omiyage, it doesn't *have* to break the bank or be a stressful hassle. The general rules are to bring back something unique to the place you visited/your home, and need to be individually packaged.

- **No chocolate.** It will melt. When you arrive temperatures will be in the 80s and the humidity will be pushing 100%. Food is great to bring back when you travel for the winter holidays.
- If you are a high school ALT assigned to one or two schools you may want to bring omiyage to share with the entire staff of the schools. The best for these omiyage are something edible or drinkable. They must be individually wrapped (think fun size or stuff packaged for give away at Halloween).

Gift Ideas:

- Instant drink mixes (single serving) – Starbucks Via, Crystal Light, apple cider, hot chocolate, or flavored teas.
- For your students candy can be a good choice, like Sour Patch Kids, Skittles, or Gummy Worms. Check with your predecessor if you're allowed to give out candy!
- For your team-teachers, principals, and vice-principals:
 - Nice pen in a box.
 - Small hand lotion or soaps from a store like L'Occitane, Crabtree and Evelyn. You can usually find small (travel size) lotions for around \$8. The women love brand names.
 - Small packages of fancy Sahara nut snacks
 - Wine or alcohol is a good idea, but heavy. If you can find small bottles of American or local alcohol or wine that would be appreciated.

How to give Omiyage:

- For principals, vice-principals, and the teachers you will be working with, hand it to them personally.
- For the entire office, you can leave them out in the kitchen or another local area with a note.
- Individually given omiyage are often gift-wrapped. If you want to do this, you can get all the necessary supplies at the local 100yen store.