

Before leaving Japan:

- Get yen or travelers checks
 - You may need to pay certain costs upfront (apartment, cell phone, travel expenses), so try to budget accordingly.
 - Make sure you have enough to last you until your first pay day.
 - Around \$2,000 is best, though more is always better.
 - 7-11 accepts foreign bank cards. Call up your bank before leaving to understand rates and alert them that you are going abroad.
- Make a copy of your passport (signature page and visa). Keep in a separate bag.
- Spare passport photos.
- International Driver's License (if you wish to drive).
- Gifts for co-workers: chocolates, key chains, books.
 - Best are things that represent where you're from and can't be found in Japan.

The basics:

- Electric, gas, water**
 - These will be turned off once your predecessor leaves. Generally, your supervisor will help you set them up your first day, if they haven't already set them up for you.
- Inkan (signature seal)**
 - Your school or town should provide you with one. This will be your signature in Japan (as most places will not accept your actual signature)
- Foreigner Registration Card (*gaikokujin touroku shoumeisho*)**
 - Starting this summer, new laws regarding the Foreigner Registration Card are in place.
 - These cards should be given out in addition to entry visas when new long term residents are first processed through customs at one of Japan's international airports.
 - However, if you do not receive the card after your flight, you will need to ask someone from your school or BoE to take you to the regional immigration office to apply for a new card.
 - You should have your card on you at all times! If you ever lose your card, or do not have one, you will need to carry your passport around, or a copy of your passport along with a copy of your visa.
- Bank**
 - Most towns have a local bank, which will be close to you. Your school or town may suggest this one, but keep in mind things such as your ATM shutting down early, or your card not working outside your town.
 - If your BOE insist on using a certain bank, use it, but get a separate account for easier access.
 - Shinsei offers both online banking and free banking. If you have access to a 7-11 ATM, this is the best option to go with.
 - Citibank exists in Japan. If you have Citibank, consider contacting them before you leave Japan to see your options.
 - Opening a Japan Post bank account is also convenient if you are planning on traveling around Japan. You can access your money at any Japan post ATM machine.
 - ATMs are **not** 24/7 in Japan. With the exception of certain banks, your card may or may not work on holidays, weekends, or weekday nights. Please be aware of this when choosing a bank.

Cell Phone

- Try to get a cell phone ASAP (within the first or second week). It's the best way to keep up with all the new JETs you'll meet!
- You may not be able to buy a cell phone until you have your foreigners card, or a credit card. Have someone call ahead to confirm for you.

General notes:

- Make sure to get out and do things. Try to join your prefecture's Facebook group / Yahoo! group / mailing list.
- Get your predecessor's contact information. Don't be afraid to ask them for the best places to eat, shop, or visit. They'll be more than happy to explain everything.
- Study Japanese! In the summer you will have a lot of down time. Take it as an opportunity to learn Japanese.
 - CLAIR offers free Japanese classes. Look into those.
 - Most towns offer free or low-cost Japanese classes. Look into them at your local city hall (*shiyakusho*) or community center (*kouminkan*)
 - They also offer many cultural activities (flower arranging, tea ceremonies, etc.)
- The last thing a lot of JETs think about after their first few weeks are planning lessons. Try to meet the teacher's you'll be working with and get familiar with the teaching materials.
- Don't be afraid to ask your teachers or your schools for help! They're there to help you and answer your questions.
- Establish with your boss some simple things:
 - What time should you arrive for work
 - What attire is OK for work
 - Expected responsibilities
 - If you can start or join a school club
- Don't wait for people to come to you. If you have questions – ask!
- If you have food allergies, make sure that your school knows these.
- Most importantly, **every situation is different.**