The 2013-2014 JETAADC

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Okaeri

Returnee Handbook



Editor:
Christine Skodon

Dear JET Alumni,

Welcome to Washington, DC! Your decision to participate in the JET Program was no doubt an important one, just as your decision to come back to the United States and our nation's capital. For that, JETAADC welcomes you whether you came back in September 2012 or 2002…or even earlier!

I hope that our organization can serve as part of your new community and life here. Whether it's volunteering at the National Cherry Blossom Festival in April, attending one of our JET Talks events, becoming a JET Application Reviewer in December, or joining one of our monthly networking events, there are a number of ways to connect or reconnect to the Japanese community through JETAADC.

As we all can attest, moving to a new place is often a daunting and confusing task. When I think back to my arrival in Japan, the one document I continually referred back to was the Hyogo AJET Wiki page. It was easy to access, I could print what I wanted, and I could tell when it was last updated. This is exactly what the JETAADC Returnee Handbook, *Okaeri*, intends to do. This Returnee Handbook is meant to be a living document (…um, like the Constitution) that will be updated over time to consistently provide you with the most recent information available.

Please enjoy *Okaeri*, using the resources from within our network and beyond, and if you have new information to offer, get in touch with the editors to make sure that we're staying current.

Sincerely,

Leigh Ann Mastrini
President, JETAADC

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About JETAADC

The Washington, DC chapter of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program Alumni Association is one of 19 chapters in the United States that represents and promotes the interests of former JET Program participants.

JETAADC is a non-profit organization founded in 1990, which currently operates under the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). Having a network of people with shared abroad experiences can be not only comforting while you make your transition back to the US, but also beneficial as the association can present you with numerous career and volunteer opportunities.

Objectives

- To provide a forum for JET alumni in the Washington, DC area through regular meetings, social events, community outreach projects, and email updates through Google Groups
- To assist JETAA members who move into the Washington, DC area
- To support career development of the region's JET alumni
- To support the Embassy of Japan in promoting, recruiting and preparing new participants for the JET Program
- To foster interaction among JET alumni and Washington's Japanese community and organizations
- To liaise with other Japan-related organizations working to promote greater understanding of Japan in the Washington, DC area and of Washington, DC in Japan.

Activities

- Networking events and other business related activities
- Career and Graduate School Forum and other post-JET development opportunities
- Bonenkai, trivia nights, book club, baseball games, Nihongo Dake dinners, and other social activities
- Outreach/Volunteer Activities
- Cross Cultural Activities such as participation in Sakura Matsuri
- Information provision through our newsletter, blog, website, and email list.

JETAA Websites and mailing lists

- JETAADC website: www.jetaadc.org
- JETAADC Google Group: http://groups.google.com/group/jetaadc
  To join, visit: http://groups.google.com/group/jetaadc/subscribe
- JETAA USA: www.jetaausa.com
- JETWIT (A site for the JET alumni freelance and professional community): jetwit.com
- JETAA international website: www.jetalumni.org
- Facebook page: JETAADC

The Nation's Capital

You've arrived in the US and of all the places you could be residing in, you've chosen the greater Washington, DC area. Good idea. So, what can you expect to find and experience?

JETAADC actually covers a wider area than you may realize! We have members in Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and even some in Pennsylvania and other locations. Unfortunately, we don't have enough room to discuss every corner of the JETAADC territory. So, we've decided to talk about Washington, DC in greater detail (since it's in the acronym).

Whether you live in the city, just outside, often make trips into the city, or only visit occasionally, the following articles by fellow JETAADC members discuss what to see and expect during your time in the nation's capital. You'll find useful information from the best way to pay for the metro to one of the most common questions people who work in DC are asked.



Navigating Washington, DC

Allison Ball and Seth Herron

The District of Columbia is laid out in four quadrants, with the U.S. Capitol building at the center. This is Capitol Hill's only real function of late. You will likely spend most of your commercial and social life in the Northwest quadrant. Most of DC's well-known attractions are also in NW, including the National Mall. Don't be confused; the only shopping you'll do there is at the Smithsonian gift shop.

Getting around DC using public transportation is relatively easy. The subway ("the metro") has 5 lines—red, orange, blue, green, and yellow. Trains run until midnight Sunday through Thursday, and until around 3 a.m. on weekends. If you plan on riding the metro, you'll save money by buying a rechargeable SmarTrip card at any station with a SmarTrip dispenser (many as of July 1, 2012; all by Sept 1) or at most CVS stores. While you could likely set your watch to the train schedules in Japan, the DC metro is not as spot-on. Be patient.

The subway is also supplemented by a system of metro buses; you can pay for these with the SmarTrip card as well. Check out www.wmata.com for trip planners, maps, and more information. The DC Circulator bus is also a great option; its route hits many destinations across town.

Taxis are available, but beware; most don't (yet) take credit cards. The ubiquitous red Capital Bikeshare bikes are also useful to get around. Once you purchase a daily, monthly, or yearly pass, they're free to use for 30 minutes, after which an hourly rate kicks in. Note: hours-long bike trips (on the great trails leading out to Mt. Vernon, up the C&O canal, etc) can set you back a hefty amount. Try one of the larger rental shops for that.

Describing neighborhoods in Washington can be quite subjective. Here's our sense of some:

Foggy Bottom caters mostly to GW students, and is also home to the State Department, DC's only Trader Joe's, a Whole Foods, a weekly farmer's market, the Kennedy Center, and the infamous Watergate complex.

Georgetown is a wealthy, quaint community along the Potomac River and at the mouth of the historic C&O Canal. It's unreachable by metro, but is walkable from Foggy Bottom and accessible by the Circulator. Georgetown boasts a bustling main shopping drag on M street, just south of the neighborhood's namesake campus.

The fountain at the center of **Dupont Circle** marks the middle of a trendy neighborhood filled with bars, restaurants, and coffee shops. There's a farmers market on weekends and a vibrant LGBT community.

The **Adams Morgan/Woodley Park** area is home to the National Zoo as well as the nation's capital's best dive bars.

U Street, and its surrounding neighborhoods, including Columbia Heights, is full of hipsters and more bars, clubs, and restaurants. The area has gentrified in recent years, and continues to.

Chinatown has shopping, restaurants, nightlife, and the Verizon Center, home to the Washington Capitals and Wizards. If you look hard you can also find a handful of Chinese people and restaurants.

Capitol Hill and **Eastern Market**, located mostly in the SW quadrant, are home to many a Hill staffer, and here again there are a number of bars and restaurants. The Southwest Waterfront is a redevelopment area located due south where there are markets, restaurants, and outdoor activities.

H Street Northeast is an area that has been said to be "up and coming" for years now, and it boasts some interesting bars that people talk about incessantly. A streetcar is currently being built to make the neighborhood more accessible from the downtown area.

Many who work in DC choose to live outside of the District—in neighborhoods like Friendship Heights and Bethesda in **Maryland**, and areas just over the border into **Virginia** like Arlington and Alexandria. These are more suburban environments, yet all still accessible by metro.

There are a number of parks, squares, and other interesting things to stumble upon in nearly every one of these neighborhoods. So, you should take advantage of blending in—no longer being a gaijin—and explore our nation's capital!

Working and Living in Washington, DC

Brian Wiehr

Welcome to Washington! You've made a great decision to join many fellow JET alumni in one of America's most interesting and dynamic cities! Whether you are returning to the area or new in town, DC is a great place for a recent returnee to land - with job opportunities in both education and international affairs, an active network of JETs and other young professionals, and more events and activities than you can imagine.

Newcomers to DC quickly discover that one of the first questions they are asked upon meeting new people is, "Who do you work for?" In a city where the federal government is the major employer and politics are always discussed at dinner parties, this is not only a quick way of figuring out on which side of the aisle a new acquaintance stands, but also an inevitable conversation starter. Don't let this question scare you if you've come to town without a job, however. Use it as an opportunity to let others tell you about their work, something people really like to do in this town, and for good reason. Many of them are working for interesting causes they truly believe in. Share with them your passion and you may spark a connection for years to come. DC's job scene is all about connections and if you are looking for work you'll likely need to leverage yours to get your foot in the door. Brush up that elevator speech, connect on LinkedIn, and schedule some informational interviews and hopefully you'll have an answer to the work questions in no time!

It's important to note that not everyone in DC works on the Hill. The area is home to countless non-profits, associations, think tanks, educational institutions, consulting firms, contractors, international organizations, and law firms. Within them there are entry-level positions in program and project management, IT, and other roles. Think about all of the skills you gained from your experience in Japan and make a case to employers on how those skills will benefit them.

While work is a major reason many move to DC, there is also life outside of the 9-to-5. DC is big on happy hours (networking!) and has a decent nightlife. Washingtonians also take their weekend brunches seriously, so make reservations in advance! There is no excuse to be bored in DC and between Living Social and the Thursday Express, you can find endless unique activities to do, restaurants to try, and concerts to attend. If all that fun starts to break the bank, head to the Mall for free museums, monuments, and memorials. Another advantage to life in the DC area is that many employers close for federal holidays, which means free 3-day weekends almost every month - a perfect opportunity to get out of town and explore the surrounding areas. Skiing in West Virginia, a Broadway show in New York, historic sites in Virginia and beaches on the Eastern Shore are all just a few hours away.

Survey Summary – The Nation's Capital

JETs recommend…

- Attend (or volunteer for!) the National Cherry Blossom Festival
- Don't take the museums, government sites and monuments that are in our backyard for granted (many are free too!)
- Visit the JICC and attend their (mainly free) events
- Work as a JET application processor
- Get outside DC—Baltimore, the beach, hiking, etc.
- Bonsai gardens at the National Arboretum
- The monuments after dark
- The modern wing of the National Gallery of Art
- Attend the rotating exhibits at museums
- Visit Great Falls
- Visit nearby Virginia wineries
- Mount Vernon on Sunday afternoons
- Go overnight to the Shenandoah Valley
- Washington, DC offers many events – do some research and pick what interests you most

The Job Search

At some point in each person's life, one has to find a job. Finishing JET requires a next step. If it's entering work, be prepared to have a tough, but winnable battle ahead of you. In the Washington, DC area, there are many government agencies, businesses, non-profits, etc. that are looking for new talent. That's the good news. The not so good news is that the area is also incredibly competitive. The articles below discuss ways to get ahead in the employment race.



Finding Your Way – Jobs

Joanna Blatchly

Be patient. That is the single best piece of advice I received when I returned from Japan. Finding a job in any economy can be difficult, and we are still in a "recession". Landing a job may take months. Don't get discouraged. Enjoy your time back in America. Below is a list of things that may help you find a job, network, make friends, or keep you busy. They are tips, organizations, and ideas. Just know, you are not the first, nor will you be the last former JET looking for a job. There are thousands of us out there, many of whom have been right where you are.

- Travel. (I know you just got back, but you have the time now...who knows when you'll have the chance again!)

- Visit family and friends.

- Do something you've always wanted to do...short term, or follow a passion you've been cultivating.

- Join JETAADC. (And come to the events! It's a great opportunity to network!)

- Volunteer.

- Reach out to friends from college. See what they're up to!

- Join a DC "Social League" (Kickball, Frisbee, Softball, etc).

- Keep your LinkedIn page updated! Employers use it…make sure it's up to date.

The JET Experience and Finding a Job

Jennifer Murawski

Although the favorite JET maxim "everyone's situation is different" still holds true when it comes to post-Japan employment, there are some strategies that may help you to use your recent experiences and skills to connect into jobs, both with obvious and unexpected ties to your time on JET. I have been working in higher education since my return from Japan, starting as an assistant at a major research university with strong Asia connections then as a K-12 outreach coordinator and undergraduate student advisor. In my work, I deal with people from many fields and backgrounds that are looking to connect to Asia, and some advice I share with them is below.

If your Japanese is at a higher level, you might find it useful to attend one of the national or regional job fairs such as the **Boston Career Forum** (http://www.careerforum.net/event/bos/?lang=E) or work with an agency like **TOP** (http://www.top-us.com/) that seeks candidates for bilingual Japanese-English positions around the U.S. You may also want to look into companies that are owned by Japanese conglomerates – ask around or contact your nearby **Japan-America Society** (http://www.us-japan.org) to see if they have corporate members with Japan ties. This may also be helpful if you have a Japanese spouse looking for U.S. employment.

Many JET returnees find that they enjoyed teaching more than expected, and they may be looking for opportunities in education, whether as a K-12 teacher, staff at a nonprofit organization, or even working at libraries where you have the chance to influence the public's perception. If location is flexible, consider looking for any of these characteristics:

- Location in an area where Japanese is taught in public/private K-12 schools – if your Japanese is relatively good, you may want to be certified in foreign language education, or you may want to teach at a district where international studies is a part of the curriculum.
- Nearby museums, foundations, libraries, or other organizations with ties to Japan or Asia – you may be able to find internships or other opportunities while enrolled in school.
- Presence of well-known grants in the region, such as U.S. Department of Education National Resource Centers (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsnrc/index.html), National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (http://www.nctasia.org) sites, or endowments that promote Japan/Asia activities or support graduate students via scholarships/fellowships in a large variety of majors and professional school programs.
- More than a few faculty who work on Asia in some way – this will mean more conferences, lectures, and events that will allow you to network.

For any line of work, your JET experience can be a great way to reference the skills you developed overseas, even those not related to education. My first job interview after returning was at a hospital, where I highlighted my ability to deal with sudden schedule changes, staff and clients from different cultural or language backgrounds,

unexpected occurrences, and taking responsibility for my own work. Even for careers with no obvious connection to Japan, being one of the few employees with international experiences can be a huge boost to your resume, and you might mention in your cover letter that your work overseas has given you a skill set that you want to take full advantage of at the position advertised.

Avoid Dread – General Job Searching Tips

Christine Skodon

It's a tough situation many people are facing – finding employment. Job seekers from entry-level to high-level management are having a hard time getting jobs and keeping them in the current economic climate. It is very easy to get depressed while job-hunting (trust me I know!) but very important that you do not let it overtake you. A positive attitude does wonders for how you approach job hunting and how you come off to potential employers.

There is a lot of information on job searching out there – the information below, JET publications (do not throw out all those handbooks you've been given!), and your university's resources are all excellent and reliable places to start learning.

Where to start?

First, get organized and create a plan! What do you want to do? What is attainable with your current experience and skill set? One of the biggest hurdles in job searching is not knowing what you want! This can lead to an aimlessness that can hinder a successful job search. Try to discover what you really enjoy doing and/or are really interested in. Then, research what is available for you and how to approach it. Utilize connections, books (I'm fond of *What Color is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles), online resources, etc. to find companies in your industry, job titles used for your level, possible plans of attack, etc. If there are a few industries you are interested in, that's ok. Research and apply for jobs in all of them.

While you are researching and applying you may find that getting the job you really want is taking longer than expected. Do not panic. Having **a** job, and therefore an income, can be more important than having **the** job. There are some options while you continue to apply for jobs.

- Get a temporary or part time job.
- Join a temp agency (if you are interested in a certain type of position, e.g. IT, do some research and find a temp agency specifically geared towards it).
- Intern.
- Volunteer with an organization/industry you are interested in.

All of these activities a) give you more experience, b) let you utilize and create skills, c) provide connections, d) allow you to experiment in a specific industry/field, and most importantly, e) can lead to something more permanent. You can also use the time to gain attainable skills that will help you land a job, such as language or computer skills.

Networking

Now for a very important topic – making and utilizing connections. Your success at obtaining a job is not wholly dependent on your great skills and wonderful experience. Who you know is a vital part of job searches and in the current job market

this fact seems to hold more and more weight. Networking is key! Networking does not mean you'll meet someone at a happy hour, chat about your similarities, and they'll offer you a job (although anything is possible!). Networking is about utilizing the knowledge of others to help you navigate through industries and learn about opportunities. It is an excellent way to get an informational interview, a name of someone you can contact in a company you're interested in, ideas for where to look for openings in your industry, advice about where/how to start in your field, simple encouragement and much more.

Of course in this day and age, making connections in not all about meeting up with people face to face! The power of connecting online is an important key to networking (and a great way for those who aren't as comfortable with happy hours, etc. to successfully network). Today, LinkedIn is used for everything from new graduates perusing entry-level job openings to major companies choosing new CEOs. A basic account is free on LinkedIn and upgraded accounts with more options are available for small amounts. Take the time to learn how to set up and work LinkedIn and please note that there are more elements/functions to it than are obvious at first.

Suggestions for utilizing LinkedIn to the fullest include:

- Choose a "Professional Headline" that covers as many bases as possible.
- Post a professional picture.
- Keep your resume up to date.
- Create a summary/story about what you have accomplished – think in terms of results not responsibilities and how you can help people (responsible tooting of your own horn encouraged).
- Join 15+ groups and have 125+ contacts.
- Be found! Throw questions out or answer them in your groups, start and join discussions, send articles and opportunities, etc.
- Remember this is not the same type of social network as Facebook and Twitter – always stay professional.

Don't know where to start? Join the JETAADC group and your college alumni group and connect to friends and people you already know in your fields of interest. Then expand out. Of course, LinkedIn, while currently the most used networking site, is not the only online option. Networking is a great way to find about other such sites that will be useful to you.

Whether networking in person or online, the most important thing is to stay in touch with those you've connected with and to keep moving forward! Every so often check in with that person who gave you a name of a friend in the industry you're interested in. Maybe they have another contact or excellent tidbit of advice. Also, connect with that friend you were told about. If that person then gives you a name, connect with that new person, etc. And of course, in the world of networking return favors by helping those who you can!

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a meeting in which you request general advice about an industry or career rather than seeking a specific job. Informational interviews

are a way for you to gain knowledge. They are about learning, not selling yourself – that part of the job search comes later. When asking for an informational interview, make sure you indicate your connection with that person – whether you met at a networking event, know a friend of his/her who suggested you make contact, or you received his/her name from a specific alumni or other group. Always remember, you are asking for a favor! Be polite and clear in your invitation. Ask for a specific amount of his/her time and offer to meet him/her at work or a coffee shop/other informal setting, as is best for him/her.

These interviews are an amazing source of information if you prepare properly. Think about what you want to know – about a specific position, about the specific organization, about the industry in general, ideas where to find job listings, what specific skills you need in the industry, hints on what is most important to succeed at a specific task or in general, etc. You are the interviewer and you want your interviewee to talk about him/herself! Have a ready-made list of questions you want to cover in order of what is most important to you. Each person will want to ask different questions, but here are a few to start thinking about:

- How did you get into this work?
- What is a typical day like?
- What are the frustrations? What are the rewards?
- What type of education/skill set is necessary for the position I'm interested in?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- Do you belong to any professional organizations? Should I join now?
- Do you see my international experience as beneficial in this type of organization? If so, how?
- What is the potential for the industry? What will growth be centered on?
- What are the typical job titles in the field?
- How much flexibility do you have regarding dress, working hours, vacation time, and place of residence?
- If you were starting again, would you do anything differently?
- How would you advise I go about looking for an entry-level job?
- What is your biggest impact in your position? What is the company's biggest impact?
- If you were hiring someone at this time, what would be the most critical factors in making your selection?

At the actual interview, make sure you are dressed appropriately – there are dressing tips in the Interview section below. If you are meeting him/her at a coffee shop, you don't need a suit, but remember to stay polished and modest. Also, be prudent about time. If you asked for 20 minutes, do not go over unless s/he indicates it's okay. Bring a copy of your resume, but do not have giving it over be the goal of the interview! S/he may ask for one, or you can politely ask him/her if s/he is interested. At the end, ask him/her if they have any suggestions for others you can talk to. Afterwards, make sure you send a thank you note!

Resumes

Your resume is a way for a potential employer to quickly see the education, experience, and skills that you have to offer. Its purpose is to convince them to learn

more about you. A resume answers the questions "Have you?", "Can you?", and "Will you?" It allows a potential employer to know who is a good candidate for the position.

Everyone has different suggestions for resumes, but there are certain things that stay the same! This is a brief description of your experience and abilities – it should be one page. If you need to fiddle with fonts and margins to make this work, do so within reason and make sure you save/send it as a pdf so the formatting does not get changed. Also, the style of your resume should be the same throughout the document. Feel free to incorporate bold or italics to catch the eye of the reader.

It is important to use the correct types of words in your resume. If the reader is sorting through hundreds of resumes, there is a chance that they will take 30 seconds/resume, focusing on the first word of each bullet point, so make sure you use action verbs and do not keep using the same ones! You can easily find lists of good resume action verbs online. Also, when appropriate, try to incorporate items from the job description into your resume. Do research and learn what language is used in the industry – keywords are very important. In fact, some larger employers use a computer program to identify the best candidates by searching out keywords in resumes that match the organization's requirements. A resume should focus on what you have accomplished so use specifics and as many numbers as possible. Many JETs will list language skills. Be accurate with your level. If a job is dependent on language skills they will test you in your interview. Japanese, as well as many European languages, have an examination system. State the test you passed as your language level. Or, if you did not take something like the JLPT, take a look at the Foreign Service language level descriptions. However you describe your language level, be very wary of the term fluent!

While it may be easier to create a single, awesome resume and send it out every time you apply, it is more effective to "cater" your resume to each specific job. How do you do this? Create a "master resume". This is not something to send out to potential employers, it is a way for you to save time but still individualize your resumes to different jobs. In your master resume, you keep a standard format but you do not worry about space. List all your jobs and experiences and, using your action verbs and numbers wherever you can, describe what they entailed with bullet points (or whatever format you've chosen). Be thorough. When you go to apply, think about what is most relevant to the job. Copy and paste the most related jobs/experiences from your master resume in a new document. Choose the bullet point descriptions that best fit the job description specifics – a general rule is 2-5 bullet points/job in your application resume. If you need to change an action verb here and there to avoid repetition or include a key word, do so. Then, edit and proofread multiple times. In the end you'll have a resume worthy of being sent out for a specific job.

The types of information included in a resume are fairly universal –identification information, educational background, experiences, skills, etc. You can arrange this information in different ways, however. A chronological resume lists your jobs, internships, volunteer work, etc, in a time line and is great for people who do not have a lot of experience or experience that is not too varied. A functional resume focuses more on areas of expertise and defines your skills in reference to a specific area. It's good for people who have a more extensive or diverse work history or who may want to come back to a field they have "taken a break" from. Below is a resume template reworked

from a University of Chicago Career Advancement Services and Resources pdf.

YOUR NAME
Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number
youremail@whateveremail.com

EDUCATION
Institution, City, State
Degree, (expected) Month Year
GPA: X.XX/4.00
[Note: Include GPA, class rank, or any other exceptional academic honor that might inform employers of your scholastic achievements.]

EXPERIENCE *[Note: If doing a chronological resume list most recent first; if doing a functional resume use 2+ headers of specific types of experience, e.g. Education Experience, and list jobs underneath appropriately]*
Organization, City, State
Title, start Month Year – end Month Year *[Note: you can bold your title or your organization – whichever is more relevant/important and switch which is on top, but be consistent and keep the location with the organization]*
* Describe your experience, skills, etc. in bullet form
[Note: Include bulleted description above. Start with action verbs describing your skills and include details that will help employers understand your accomplishments, skills, knowledge, personal characteristics, and experience level. Include quantity, frequency, or impact of your work whenever possible. Consider answering the following questions to help you write more effective bullet points but do not use sub-bullets in the resume; longer descriptions may lend themselves to using sentence fragment/paragraph style instead of bullets:
What did you do? What were the results of your work?
What were your accomplishments?
How did you help the organization? What impact did your tasks have on your colleagues, your department, or the organization as a whole?
What did you learn? What skills/knowledge did you enhance?
How does this experience relate to your internship/employment goal?]

ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY SERVICE or LEADERSHIP *[Examples of descriptive headings]*
Title, Organization, City, State, Dates
[Note: This section can be formatted exactly like your experience section or you can omit a description. If this section's experience is more relevant to the type of work you're pursuing, consider putting it above experience.]

SKILLS
[Note: List computer, language, and any other technical skills you possess. Other types of skills (e.g., communication skills, organizational skills) should not be listed, but rather incorporated into your descriptions above.]

Cover Letters

If a resume is a way to let a potential employer know what you have done, a cover letter is a way to let them know what you can do for them. A cover letter is an advertisement. It should explain why you are a great applicant. How do you fit the company? How do you fit the position? How are you unique? Represent your accomplishments, professionalism, individuality, and passion in relation to the job to answer these questions. Tell a story, giving an example of your greatest success and how it relates to the job you are applying for.

Remember, your cover letter is often the writing sample a potential employer uses to judge your writing skills. Take the time to be thoughtful about what you write and edit carefully! Watch the number of times you use "I . . ." to start sentences. Avoid generalizations. Write formally but naturally – stilted prose is not the way to get an interview. Also, it is better to use the active tense and avoid –ing endings when possible. It is of utmost importance that you are very careful if you are copying and pasting. Do not address the letter to a different company than the one you mention in the body!

Even though some copy and pasting may occur, make sure you do not send out generic cover letters. Each cover letter you use should be written for the specific job application. If you want to create a "master cover letter" similar to your "master resume" to save time, do so by having a list of specific examples of when you accomplished x. Think about what is often required in the types of positions you are applying for when deciding what stories to have on hand. When the time comes to apply, wisely choose which example from your master cover letter best fits with the job (but be prepared to write something completely new if nothing from your master cover letter is the right fit).

Below is a cover letter template reworked from a University of Chicago Career Advancement Services and Resources pdf.

Your street address
City, state and zip code
Phone number
Email address

Date

Mr./Ms./Dr./Prof. first and last name of person
Position or title
Name of organization
Street address of organization
City, state and zip code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Prof. last name of addressee:

First Paragraph:

- Give the person a reason to read on. Give an overview establishing your qualifications, interests, and cite the position.
- Do not start with "My name is…"
- What's important to mention? In general, experience in the field if you have it.
- If someone recommended that you write to a specific person, start with his/her name; for example, "Mark Smith recommended…"
- Mention the reason for writing to that organization if the reason is compelling.
- Do not say that you are the ideal candidate if you cannot prove it.

Second (and Occasionally Third) Paragraph:

- Elaborate on your qualifications in the context of the position—you can mention relevant jobs, courses, etc. Keep in mind the job description.
- Stress what skills and attributes you have to offer. Identify those parts of your experience (paid and unpaid) that will be of interest to the employer. This can be done in either one or two paragraphs.

Final Paragraph:

- What's the next step? Here's where you thank the person. "Thank you, in advance, for your consideration" and similar alternatives are fine.
- You can request an interview. There are many different ways (of varying levels of assertiveness) to handle this, but they will not make an appreciable difference as to the outcome.
- If appropriate, you can tell the reader you will follow up. If you will be visiting that city, indicate the dates you will be there.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Interviews

Interviews are often the last stop before getting a job. It involves you answering the questions of one or more interviewees who work directly with the organization. You've advertised yourself on paper, but now you need to be able to sell yourself face to face.

Presence is important. Smile, be friendly, and use eye contact. Do not do anything wild with hair, make-up, perfume/cologne, etc. Your clothing should be professional and polished regardless if you are applying for a grocery shelf stacker position or a CEO position. It is always better to be overdressed than underdressed. For most jobs, a suit and tie is best for men. For women a suit, skirt/pant and jacket, or conservative business-style dress can all be appropriate. Although it sounds strange, footwear is important too – don't wear scuffed or casual shoes and do not wear sandals. Even if you know the organization has a relaxed attire atmosphere for employees, remember you are not an employee yet!

Preparing for an interview is key. Do research on the company. Become familiar with the job description so you can refer back to it directly when answering questions. Know yourself! What are your key selling points and be prepared with specific examples. Think about leadership, teamwork, interpersonal/communication skills, analytical/quantitative skills, and your accomplishments and abilities. Also prepare 3-4 questions for the interviewer. These should be things you cannot just easily find. For example, "What's your typical day like?", "What is your favorite part about working here?", "I'd like to know about the work environment of the company/team", etc.

Don't forget to practice. Practicing in front of a mirror lets you master eye contact and realize what you do with your body (avoid wild hand gestures or touching your face/hair). Practicing with a friend lets you get feedback on the quality of your answers and possible unprofessional verbal habits (avoid using hmms and umms and don't start your answer the same way every time).

Next, perform at your interview. You are building rapport with the interviewer and selling yourself, so drive the interview. Speak the truth. Be articulate and concise. It is very important to answer the questions you are asked. Even if you get stumped you can recover by giving yourself a bit of time with a, "That's a great question. I hadn't thought of it before. Let me think for a second." Do not answer with, "I don't know." It is common for the interviewer to ask if you have any questions – you do! You will have already prepared a few questions, but don't expect to ask all of them, two is more realistic. Many jobs do not require references with your resume and cover letter, but even so have a sheet of paper with you at your interview with three references. Interviewers often ask for them at the end of an interview. Lastly, make sure you get everyone's business cards.

Finally, after the interview, send a thank you note. An email is fine, especially if you are pressed on time, but a handwritten note is also nice. Make sure you send a thank you to everyone who interviewed you. Additional interviews are sometimes required. Just repeat the steps above for each interview.

Here are a few common questions you can expect at an interview (additional common interview questions can be easily found online):

Traditional questions
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are your three biggest professional weaknesses?

Behavioral questions
- Tell me a time you worked through a team conflict.
- When have you come up with a creative solution?
- How did you respond to _____ scenario?

References

Employers often ask for a list of references. These should be professional references of people who have worked with you closely and know you well. Include the name, title, organization, address, phone number, and email of each reference. Make sure you ask someone if s/he is comfortable with being used as a reference. S/he will be helping you get a job, which is a big responsibility!

As JETs, it can take a little extra work to get a reference from a co-worker in Japan. Make sure someone who knows you, your skills, and your experiences is the one drafting the letter, even if your principal wants to be the one to sign it. Be very clear what you want – format, focus, and content. "Boasting" about talent, skills, accomplishments, etc. is not the norm in Japan, so carefully explain what you'd like him/her to cover. You can even give him/her a list of selling points that are important to explicate for the specific job. Provide a sample for him/her, or direct them to the Manual for Contracting Organizations the school receives. Offer to help any way you can, e.g. you may be asked to edit.

Should you take the job?

With the difficult job market these days, you may just want to say "yes" to the first thing you are offered. However, make sure you think carefully about the different aspects of the job. Salary and benefits are important and DC and its surrounding areas are expensive to live in! Fully understand the job's responsibilities and working conditions. Think about job security. What about advancement opportunities or useful training you may receive? And, most importantly, consider if you will be ecstatic, happy, fine, apathetic, or miserable as a result of the job. After thinking about all these things, decide if you will accept the job or politely decline.

Remember . . .

It is never a simple task to get a job. It requires a lot of hard work and endurance on your part. When you feel the pressure, remember that there are plenty of people out there to help you! Friends and family, the JETAADC community, and your university alumni association are a few of the places where you can find support and advice. Above all, don't give up. People rarely get the first job, or even one of the first fifty jobs they apply to. But, they do get a job. You can do it!!!

Survey Summary – The Job Search

First jobs of returning JETs are often . . .

- A temp in the JET Office at the Japanese Embassy
- A teacher or tutor
- An internship
- A job that utilized a skill originally fostered as a hobby
- A job at your school while completing graduate work
- A local Japan society or organization
- An hourly wage job

    - ✧ The vast majority of people who filled out the survey are no longer in the same position and/or company/organization. They held their first job for a couple of months to four years.
    - ✧ The current jobs of people who filled out the survey are greatly varied! Some examples include: education – higher, international, administration, etc., law, international development, marketing, consulting, government – agriculture, foreign affairs, etc., medicine, pharmaceuticals, human rights, business development, clean energy, data analyst, and communications.

Current salaries of returned JETs who completed the survey are . . .

- 36% significantly more
- 11% somewhat more
- 14% about the same
- 7% somewhat less
- 18% significantly less

Having a JET experience helps one enter work through . . .

- Language skills
- Having international experience, being globally aware, and able to integrate into different societies
- The ability to relate to international people and understand things from a different perspective, and exposure to new viewpoints
- Being able to interact with students and teachers
- A strong background in presentations and public speaking
- Professional communication and interpersonal skills
- Cultivated writing and editing skills
- Experience with confusing/difficult situations and people
- Developed leadership and teamwork skills
- Important JET attributes
    - ➢ Patience
    - ➢ Confidence
    - ➢ Self-motivation and independence
    - ➢ Diligence
    - ➢ Organization

  - Flexibility and adaptability
- The development of your passion and focusing career interest, for example
  - Education and/or teaching
  - International relations
  - Linguistics and language
- Professional experience (especially straight out of college) and connections

Ways to talk about JET in job application materials . . .

- Creative ways you learned to approach and adapt to _____
- Challenges faced and how you overcame them/found solutions
- Explain when you took initiative
- Share how you grew and when you were singled out as an excellent employee
- Emphasize training received (e.g. seminars, workshops, orientations, etc.)
- Use specifics: number of classes/week, lessons/day, children/class, etc.
- Skills gained and developed: language, flexibility, adaptability, team work, communication, interpersonal relations, etc.
- Focus on international experience, global worldview, thriving in and sharing different cultures, and working with people from a variety of backgrounds
- Don't forget to describe the non-classroom parts of your job – conferences, adult classes taught or tutoring, etc.
- Don't sell yourself short and at the same time don't exaggerate/outright lie
- Pull the parts of your JET experience that have the most relation to what it is you seek and put them in the forefront → Build a narrative: Tell a story how all your past experience leads to the job you are applying for

Suggestions for networking in the area . . .

- Don't wait! Make connections as soon as possible
- Places/ways to connect
  - Social networking and email
  - Meetup groups
  - Volunteer
  - JETAA resources, events, and members
  - JICC events
  - JASW events
  - The Embassy of Japan
  - Alumni network of your undergraduate and/or graduate schools
  - Go beyond JET connections – there are many networking events, public lectures, conferences, etc. for various fields held in the DC area (definitely focus on the free ones, they are just as useful as some expensive groups)
  - Join listservs related to the professions you're interested in
- Informational interviews/coffee discussions are incredibly useful
- Learn to sell yourself efficiently and recognize appropriate approaches for different settings
- Don't limit yourself – somebody who works in an industry you aren't interested in could be the best friend of the boss of the organization you're dying to work for!
- Don't be afraid to ask for help!!!

Graduate School

Your parents and friends might have told you, "In this economy, there's no better time to go back to school!" You humor them with a faint smile while you Google what "GMAT" stands for.

Graduate school is a rewarding but challenging undertaking, and the application process is no exception. The good news is you're surrounded by a number of excellent programs in the DMV! Several DC JET alums have offered to share their advice on preparing for graduate studies, and we hope that you will find their tips of the trade useful.



Finding Your Way – Graduate School

Joanna Blatchly

Not sure if grad school is for you? Here are some recommended tips and sites to help you through those first few months.

TIPS

Visit as many grad school fairs as you can. It's a great way to see what is out there, and give you a chance to talk to people who represent the schools.

Sign up for their emails. Schools love adding people to their listservs. You'll find some helpful information every now and again too!

Look overseas. US schools are very expensive, but European universities are much less expensive! And many of them are actively looking for "International"/US students.

Talk to your friends. See what they are studying, and ask for their advice. You can never have too much advice from the people that know you best!

LINKS

http://www.apsia.org/ - The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs

- Provides a list of top graduate programs in International Relations.
- Hosts Graduate School Fairs around the world, with representatives from many of the most prestigious domestic and international universities.

http://www.idealist.org/info/GradFairs

- Hosts Grad School fairs around the country.

The DC Area and Graduate School

Elizabeth Slupski

I would like to start with two caveats to remember about the DC area and graduate school. The first is that, as you may know, DC is a competitive area, particularly as it relates to securing a paid position/job placement. There may be many applicants for the same positions who have advanced degrees and may end up getting a job over someone with a BS/BA and some experience abroad. A decision to attend graduate school should not be based solely on one's frustration with obtaining a paid position in DC. Yes, a degree may end up helping you in securing a job. But, it is not the only means. You have to want to pursue your field further and enjoy your topic if you are truly to succeed in your degree program. This leads me to my second caveat: obtaining an advanced degree is time (and money) consuming. Obtaining your degree and succeeding becomes easier (and more enjoyable) if you are committed to your program/subject.

Research the field before you consider graduate school

My research on graduate schools started before I returned to the USA (it even started before I left for Japan). This was because I had an idea of the type of field (international education) I wanted to enter as I was preparing to depart for the land of the rising sun and JET fit within that framework. Before I left for Japan, I talked with professionals in my field to get an idea of what sort of qualifications were required for a career. As it turned out, many suggested that I either go abroad to strengthen my international experience or attend graduate school before looking for a job. Previously, many professionals "fell into" the field by accident while now more and more professionals are intentionally entering it. Now, it is becoming increasingly common for entry-level positions to prefer or even require an advanced degree.

Researching and deciding on a school

I spent part of my second year on JET researching different universities throughout the USA that offered the type of program I was looking for. I did briefly consider attending a university abroad, but decided that if I wanted to work in the US, it was probably best to attend university here. I found a website which listed many of the universities throughout the country that offered the degree I was looking for. I looked at the program websites for over 80 programs and made a list of what each program offered. After narrowing down my list, I came up with my top choices and applied to those schools. I ended up deciding between two programs that were comparable in many aspects. What tipped one program slightly above the other was its location in DC and opportunities for internships and networking.

Advice for Picking a School/Financing Your Education

- If possible, I would recommend visiting your top schools and/or talking with professors and students in the program. You may find out that you either hate or love a school based on your visit (and it is much better – both financially and emotionally – to figure this out while on a trip to the university rather than while attending it!).

- Some schools have deadlines, and if you miss them, you will have to wait until the next application cycle. Other schools have rolling admissions, but may require some documents (like FASFA) to be in by a certain deadline to be considered for competitive graduate assistant positions or scholarships.
- Most universities offer educational discounts to employees. So, if you don't mind working in higher education for a couple of years, consider applying for a full-time job at your university of choice.

Going from Japan to Law School

Christy Fisher

So, you want to go from Japan to law school? That's a big leap! As most law schools will tell you during your first week, the goal of law school is to get you "thinking like a lawyer." It's a big cultural shift, and if you've been thinking in Japanese for the last couple of years, it may be even more of a leap for you than for the average law student. From one culture shock to another, but gambatte! If you can persevere, you can make it through law school. Here are some tips from a law school grad & some things I wish I would have known while I was still in Japan:

1. **Be vigilant and organized.**

Applying to law schools involves getting together a huge dossier of application materials: essays, reference letters, lists of past and present employment, and your LSAT scores. Most of these things must be sent to the LSAC (Law School Admissions Council http://www.lsac.org/) or the law schools to which you'll be applying. Do as much of the legwork as possible to collect these items either before you leave the U.S. or if you're there on a vacation (e.g., talk to professors letting them know you'll be applying to law school and giving them a list of accomplishments in their class – you can later email them the same list as a "reminder" when you actually ask for the recommendation). Coordinating this from Japan can be a bit of a hassle.

Most law schools have rolling admissions, which means the sooner you apply, the more likely you are to get a place. Just think – how many places do you think your dream law school has for Japanese speakers? Missed deadlines also often mean you'll have to wait to the next admissions cycle. So stay well ahead of your deadlines, because if you are physically sending things from Japan, it will take you longer than mailing from within the U.S.

And P.S. – if you do go to law school, make sure you keep copies of all your application materials. You'll need a lot of the same information when applying for admission to the bar.

2. **The LSAT**

Being in Japan makes it difficult to take the LSATs. You likely won't be able to take a test preparation course in person; you'll have to travel to Tokyo to take the exam (right now it's only offered at Temple University in Tokyo), and it may not be offered as often or at the same time as it is in the U.S. During my final year on JET, the LSAT and the JLPT were offered on the same day, so I had to make the difficult choice between those two exams. Plus, even though all my materials for the LSAT said it was scheduled for Saturday, the exam was actually held on Sunday for the Japanese location – so please, please read your exam information carefully!

There are a variety of online and printed test preparation materials, which, in my opinion, are just as effective as the in-person test prep courses. You must, however, devote the time to studying and keep yourself on schedule, despite all the fun Japanese

distractions around you. Your LSAT score plays an important role in law school admissions.

3. **Which law school to attend?**

Deciding where to go to law school can be difficult if you are in Japan and unable to visit campuses or talk to alumni. But where you go to law school will have a significant impact on the career connections that you make and where you will practice law in the future, so take the time to do some research on the law schools. The U.S. News & World Reports rankings are given a great deal of attention and, unfortunately, the legal profession often espouses a bit of snobbery. I'd be lying if I didn't say that I think your law school's ranking makes a difference in your future employment options. But those rankings also examine other aspects of law schools like legal specialties and clinical programs. Make sure to check those rankings out, too, especially if you know you want to practice, say, international law, health law, or another specialized area. You should also check out the percentage of students that are employed after graduation.

If you are in Japan while trying to decide which law school to attend, I would strongly encourage you to contact the admissions office, explain your situation, and ask to speak with an alumnus. Ask if there are any alums in Japan! Making that connection before law school can be invaluable in helping you make the right decision and the information you get from alums who have already gone through the 3 years of law school can be priceless. Moreover, you might be able to establish a relationship that will help you after law school.

Finally, consider mid-year admissions. They aren't offered at all law schools, but it may give you the time to settle back into the US after your JET experience.

4. **Financing your legal education:**

Law school is expensive and there are not the same sorts of scholarships available for law school as there are for undergraduate programs because people generally assume that you'll be making big bucks after graduation. It's not unheard of for people to graduate with six figures of debt. So it definitely makes sense to set aside the dream of being a lawyer for a moment and figure out if it is financially worth it for you to attend law school. Could you accomplish your goals without 3 more years of extremely expensive education? If so, maybe consider a different career path. If not, think about how you will finance your legal education. Some jobs, after a few years of service, might contribute towards your tuition, if your legal skills will be useful in the workplace. Others, like military attorney positions or JAGs, might pay for law school altogether if you commit to service afterwards. And although they might be scarce, there may be scholarships available, particularly for those interested in a public service career.

One of the greatest benefits to being in DC, however, is the wide variety of law schools in the District: Georgetown, American, George Washington, Catholic, Howard, and University of DC. Including Virginia and Maryland, the number of law schools increase. Each offers a core legal education with different programs. Many have night classes that are just as good as the day classes. If you think it's a good fit for you, it may be worth it to work during the day and take night classes. Even if you don't want to take night classes or work full-time, DC has a lot of wonderful institutions that offer

part-time employment. You may want to consider working part time with one of these, but only after your first year of law school.

5. **You got in! What now?**

Congratulations! You got into law school. What do you do now that you're in Japan and waiting to go to law school in the U.S.? I'd say break out those books and start reading. Law school classes often require readings of up to 100 pages a night and I think it's a good idea to at least prepare yourself for that. You might want to read novels because, in all likelihood, you won't have time for that during your first year. Reading legal stories, from Gideon's Trumpet to the latest John Grisham, might give you some food for thought. Also, start reading legal blogs, or blawgs, to acquaint yourself with some of the most current issues in the law. *Above the Law* is a legal tabloid and covers the gossipy side of legal practice, while *Scotusblog* and *Slate* do a good job of covering current Supreme Court arguments. Other blogs, like *Volokh Conspiracy* are written by legal professors and give some insight into questions you might face in class. Even Supreme Court opinions are available online. Give them a read – you'll be doing a lot more of that in the years to come! Finally, if you have the chance before you start law school, try sitting through a few trials in your local courthouse. They are open to the public and it's a good chance to get a sense of how quickly things go in the courtroom. Everything you learn in law school might get turned on its head in the courtroom and it will give you a good sense of perspective heading into class.

Good luck!

Studying in Japan can be Affordable

Christine Skodon

Tuition, fees, and living costs are an important part of one's decision in pursuing further education. Whether you are applying to graduate school, planning to conduct summer research or study abroad while already enrolled, or wanting to gain skill development or additional knowledge without obtaining another degree, you must figure out a monetary plan of attack. Even though the cost of continuing education is steep, there are several ways to receive financial help. Many former JETs are interested in advancing their education abroad, often specifically in Japan.

Grants, fellowships, scholarships, rewards, etc. for programs in Japan exist through universities, the U.S. government, the Japanese government, foundations, and organizations. While there are various programs, it can be somewhat daunting to research them. In general, utilizing resources from your undergraduate institution or your graduate school if currently enrolled can be good starting points. For Japan related programs, ask for suggestions, contacts, and advice in the JETAA community.

Additionally, some resources are provided below:

General

Japanese Government Monbukagakusho (MEXT) Scholarships
http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/toj/toj0302e.html

CULCON Exchanges and Fellowship Lists
http://culcon.jusfc.gov/resources/exchanges-and-fellowship

Fullbright Program
http://eca.state.gov/fulbright

JET Alumni-Specific Programs

DC Monbukagakusho (MEXT) Research Scholarship (for DC, VA, or MD residents)
http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JET/mext-scholarship.html

Monterey Institute of International Studies Scholarship
http://www.miis.edu/admissions/financialaid/scholarships/jet/node/29493

JET Alumni Recommendations

Rotary Peace Fellowships
https://www.rotary.org/en/peace-fellowships

Mansfield Fellowship Program
http://mansfieldfdn.org/program/exchanges/fellowships/

National Science Foundation Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes for U.S. Graduate Students (EASPSI)
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5284&org=SBE

JET Alumni Recommendations for Programs of Special Interest in the US

The Association for Asian Studies Grants, Fellowships, and Prizes (lists grants, etc. for study in the US and study in Japan)
http://www.asian-studies.org/grants/main.htm

Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Graduate Fellowship Program
http://www.rangelprogram.org/?contentid=0

Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship
http://woodrow.org/fellowships/pickering/

Survey Summary – Graduate School

- ✧ Of the people who filled out the survey, the majority (but not overwhelmingly so) went to or is going to graduate school.
- ✧ What was studied is greatly varied. Some examples include: environmental policy, communication, culture and technology, international development, public affairs, public policy, MBA, English, humanities, law, diplomacy, international education policy, education policy, medicine, French cultural studies, anthropology, and international affairs.

Factors in deciding what/where to study for graduate school include . . .

- What you love to do
- Scholarships
- Versatility of the location and/or flexibility of the program
- The strength of the school and program
- Pursue or advance a specific career
- Encouragement by current employers
- Faculty's research
- Filling "gaps" in education or experience
- Dual-program or interdisciplinary program availability

Reasons people applied to graduate school . . .

- A degree that can be used in a number of different ways
- Better job opportunities and growth
- Gain and improve skills and knowledge that can be used in the workplace
- Expanded professional network
- Certification
- More time to decide on a professional career
- Understand the theory behind your interests while gaining practical experience
- To be able to make a difference for people
- Gain knowledge
- Interact with a group of like-minded peers

The most important things actually gained from graduate school . . .

- A business perspective
- Networking with alumni and an enlarged network of academics and referees
- Beginning of a writing portfolio in your area
- Certification and/or license
- A degree invaluable for job consideration
- New understanding
- Research experience
- The opening of doors
- Ability to apply for Fellowships

When thinking about graduate school, keep in mind . . .

- Cost vs. benefit; how debt will affect you after graduation
- Time, effort, and cost to apply
- A realistic financial plan for everyday living and possible unexpected events
- Is it necessary? How will you use it? Will you use it at all?
- What kind of career you want it to lead to
- Don't go until you know exactly what you want to study and why – don't do it because you don't know what else to do
- Take the time to find the program best for you and what you want to study and do afterwards
- Only apply to something you are truly interested in
- Network to find out about potential programs, ways to earn money, and advice
- Have patience and be diligent with exams required for application
- Know you have to focus on building professional experiences while attending

Survey Summary – Transition



The hardest part about leaving Japan for JETs is…

- Leaving very important things behind!
  - Friends and coworkers
  - Students
  - Japanese language, culture, and lifestyle
  - Specific places/things you grew accustomed to/grew to love
  - Food – Where's the Ramen?
  - The sense of adventure
  - The job
- No longer having something "new" to learn everyday
- Keeping up your language skills
- Knowing it isn't necessarily easy to come back and dwelling on that fact
- Entering the "unknown" next phase of your life

The hardest part about coming back was…

- Finding a job!!! (there is a definite consensus on this)
- Reverse culture shock
- Learning how to incorporate the Japanese lifestyle into your American life
- Adjusting to living in a completely new area, or one that you'd been away from
- Realizing not everyone wants to hear about JET
- Trying to get friends and family to understand that you changed through your experience
- Connecting your experience in Japan to your new life and career
- Being in a new location without an established support system/friend network (Please note JETAADC is a ready support system/friend network!)

JETs' advice…

- Take advantage of the opportunities Washington, DC has to offer – cultural, historical, educational, career, personal, etc.
- Connect with and get involved in JETAADC!
- Start meeting people and making friends as fast as you can
  - Meetup is a good place to meet people outside of work
  - Make some friends who have also experienced living overseas
- Take the good with the bad—Japan does some things better than the US, and the US does some things better than Japan
- Network, join societies and groups, and get on some listservs
- Save money—live with roommates
- Research places to live before you move
- Avoid getting into a "rut" and if you do, push, push, push yourself to get out quickly
- Be willing to think outside the box—even if you want Japan to be a part of your career, establish yourself in the US first

Reverse Culture Shock

You're home! You can traipse through the house in your shoes, talk on your phone on the train, and enjoy the comfort of central heating. So why doesn't it feel so great?

For some of us, returning home was accompanied by a sense of elation; for others, leaving Japan was bittersweet. For all of us, though, coming back to the US-of-A came with its own set of challenges and difficulties. We knew that moving to Japan would be a cultural adjustment, but we didn't expect to feel lost in our own country!

The following articles from DC JET alums hit on some crucial post-JET culture shock moments that many of us have gone through. We hope that you'll gain a better understanding of reverse culture shock in what follows, and more importantly, rest assured that it's not something you're going through alone.



Where's My Toothpick?

P. Sean Bramble

It won't happen on your first day back, but it will happen at some point. You will have just finished a lovely meal of something you haven't had since before you left for Japan, and suddenly the thought will strike you: *Why can't I get a good toothpick in my own country?* Then you'll realize that all of those neat little things that the Japanese make to take the harsh edge off of life, not to mention the brilliant friendships you formed and the unique experiences you enjoyed, are all now far, far away. And the loss of your old way of life will hit you like it never hurt before.

Meanwhile, what's uncomfortably nearer is the direct rudeness. The lack of public transportation. The thoughtlessness. The quizzical looks when you speak to someone and you belatedly realize that you were speaking Japanese. You could accept being a fish out of water in Japan, but why should you be feeling the same way in your home country?

Reverse culture shock is the same as culture shock; it's still the feeling that *things aren't supposed to be this way*. What's changed, however, is the reaction of the people around you. When you were in Japan, you could talk with a friend on the phone, or at a coffee shop, and you could either unload about your day or just marvel about Japan. And you knew that your friend was right there with you through every turn in the conversation.

Now, however, you've returned to where everyone speaks your language – yet there is no one with whom you can share your experience. The problem is that you've changed and your old world has changed, and both of you are slow to pick up on that fact. The person who returned bearing your passport is not the same one as the one who departed with it. (Notify Homeland Security!) Even the people who look at you with secret envy still cannot really understand what you've done, simply because they've never experienced that kind of life for themselves. What can you do?

Whatever advice you might receive upon your return, there are only two bits that I think have universal applicability:

1) Carefully sort through your options for your next step. Remember that the process that led you to Japan took many months before you actually arrived. Particularly in tough economic times, your next step may be unclear; your dream for now may frustratingly become a dream deferred. Just remember that patience was one of the skills you refined while in Japan.

2) You lit a flame inside you upon your arrival in Japan. Keep it burning. Whether it be through continued language or martial arts study, or appreciating Japanese culture, or whatever it was that moved you about Japan while you were there – preserve it, grow it, and develop it. You will regret it if it goes out; if you keep it going, it will warm you for many more days to come.

Every Situation is Different

Smitha Prasadh

"Every situation is different" isn't quite behind you yet.

I didn't know if I should begin with that bombshell, or with a more traditional reverse culture shock rundown. But the above is important to realize: there's no singular, defined experience you'll have when you return. It's not over yet!

Also, brace yourself: there's a bit of a roller coaster ahead. What makes this more intense than the culture shock you may have experienced when starting JET is that in many cases, you're *going home,* to a place you know pretty well. Sometimes these moments of reverse culture shock will hit you when you least expect it, when you think you'll feel settled and at home instead.

Think of reverse culture shock as a disconnect between the actual and the perceived: what home is and how you had viewed it, and—most importantly— who you were when you started JET and who you have become. Stepping out of your home culture while in Japan taught you about yourself and your cultural identity. Now it's time to reflect on all this again, and to think about your emotions, thoughts, actions, and values that have shifted unexpectedly but indelibly. You can pinpoint and anticipate some of them, but others will make themselves known to you only after your return.

The process of readjustment is basically the same as with initial culture shock:

disengaging from the place you're leaving,

euphoria once you arrive in the new place,

hostility once the perceived-actual disconnect hits you,

and **reconciliation** as you begin to settle in.

It's that 3rd step that's the hardest to deal with, especially if you dropped roots in Japan. *Why is this happening? Why do these things not feel right anymore?* Sometimes, these feelings even become strong enough within some people that they resemble symptoms of depression. If you're prone to that, or even if you aren't, be aware of yourself, and don't hesitate to reach out to get help getting through any rough points.

The biggest thing that many returnees benefit from or wish for is surprisingly simple: *somebody to talk to.* If you feel lonely or frustrated, reach out to the JET community, via a JETAA chapter or online. There's such comfort and power in the phrase, "I know how you feel." Even if you're isolated geographically, you are not alone.

It's not all bad, obviously—it's just important to be realistic about what's coming. But throughout, do stay positive, keep an open mind, and go with the flow. You're wrapping up an incredible, life-changing adventure, and are moving on to a new one! Just know that there may be moments of irritation and frustration, but no matter where

you are, keep moving forward. It's easier said than done, but think warmly on the past without dwelling on it.

I would strongly urge you to document your experiences. If you're still in Japan as you read this, take photos of *everything* you can, even the mundane things like items at the grocery stores, signs, and so on. Once you get back, consider keeping up a diary or personal chronicle for yourself, to help process your readjustment.

The greatest thing about returning is that the second phase of your identity as a JET participant begins. You can embrace all the good things about your time in Japan, and share them with everyone you encounter (you'll be bubbling over with "when I was in Japan…" stories for months, if not years). Just as we were agents of grassroots internationalization in Japan, we're now grassroots Japanese ambassadors, and can share the real Japan with our friends, family, and acquaintances. More importantly, ideally we all have a more nuanced and open-minded view of the world, and can move forward with heightened awareness of our greater human family. Embrace that—it's an amazing gift.

And above all, I hope you have a wonderful time. *Otsukaresama!*

Here are some resources about reverse culture shock if you'd like to learn more:

Print Resources

· *Burn Up or Splash Down: Surviving the Culture Shock of Re-entry* by Marion Knell. Authentic (2007)

· *The Art of Coming Home* by Craig Storti. Intercultural Press (2001).
- A comprehensive guide to re-entry shock.

· *Cross Cultural Re-entry: A Book of Readings* by Clyde Austin. Abilene Christian University Press (1986).

· *Homeward Bound: A Spouse's Guide to Repatriation* by Robin Pascoe. Expatriate Press Limited (2000).

· *Re-entry: Making the Transition from Missions to Life at Home* by Peter Jordan. YWAM Publishing (1992).
- Missionary literature can be a good place to look for re-entry shock information.

· *Strangers at Home: Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land* by Carolyn D. Smith. Aletheia (1996).

· *So you're coming home* by Black and Gregersen. Global Business Pub (1999)

· *The adventure of working abroad* by Joyce Osland. Jossey-Bass (1995)

Online Resources

· The After JET Guide published by CLAIR is a great place to start. It includes several professors' articles as well as reflections of former Jets. http://jetprogramme.org/documents/pubs/2011_After_JET_Guide.pdf

· The study abroad office of your alma matter may be another good place to start. Materials geared toward students returning from study abroad may be applicable to returning JETs as well.

· Robin Pascoe features many books, a number of them her own, for expatriates and repatriates on her website: www.expatexpert.com/

· JET and Beyond, a National AJET publication, is available on their website at ajet.net/ajetdownloads/ajet-forms-info/

· The University of the Pacific's "Online Cultural Training Resource." This guide features modules and extensive advice on how to prepare for and handle your return home. www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/

- Middlebury College has an extensive list of websites, books, articles, and dvds. http://www.middlebury.edu/international/sa/returning/reentry_resources

- Check the Center for Global Education's Study Abroad Student Handbook. www.studentsabroad.com/handbook/reverse-culture-shock.php?country=general

Survey Summary – Reverse Culture Shock

Reverse culture shock hit you when you…

- Got strange looks when biking everywhere
- Dressed like you were going out on the town in Tokyo
- Didn't fit in like before
- Were able to understand almost every conversation around you

How JETs have dealt with reverse culture shock…

- Through reflection
  - Remember the feelings that come with reverse culture shock are natural but there may be some people who don't realize this – understand these facts and accept them
  - Understand some things can't be changed about your home culture and maybe shouldn't be – don't focus on the bad
- With the help of friends
  - Talk about things with other JETs and/or friends in the US who know about Japanese culture, etc. and reminisce
  - Stay in touch with the friends made while on JET (fellow JET members and Japanese friends)
  - Spend time with family and rekindle old friendships
  - Make new friends who have also been abroad
- By getting involved
  - Share Japanese culture with others
  - Utilize the Japanese culture, food, activities, etc. in the area
  - Travel
  - Keep up your daily routine as much as possible, e.g. running, conversation classes, etc.
  - Set and move forward to new goals

Staying Connected with Japan

We've all agonized over the lack of authentic ramen, mourned the loss of karaoke with nomihoudai, and scoffed at how the DC 4th of July fireworks pale in comparison to our village's Natsu Matsuri.

Chances are you're looking for a way to maintain your ties with the culture and the friends you made in Japan while you start your new life in DC. Below, some former JETs offer suggestions on how to stay connected with Japan, and in the "Directory" we provide some resources on cultural (and culinary!) opportunities in the area. We'll see you at the next Sakura Matsuri!



Anecdotal Advice for a 'Nihon Ga Koishii Antidote'

Brian Keefer

When arriving in your home country after finishing the JET Program, it is inevitable that one goes through periods of feeling disconnected from his/her previous Japanese life. We have all undoubtedly made personal growth and enjoyed our grass-root experiences in Japan, but continuing our simple "inaka" lifestyle in America is often an impractical goal. Instead of trying to directly transplant our JET life to DC, it is better to make use of the resources in DC.

Volunteer for Japanese-related activities

While there are many ways to get involved in the local Japanese community, the one that I have done with the most success is to help plan the annual *Sakura Matsuri*. It is a five-month commitment every year, but it is worth it to play ambassador of Japanese culture. For another example, there is a program offered by the Japan-America Society of Washington, DC (JASWDC) in which you can help teach interested elementary students about Japanese society. Also, there is a taiko troupe called Nendaiko that practices at Ekoji Temple in Fairfax. I often find things as simple as taiko are an effective way to satisfy your "natsukashii" urges.

Stay connected/meet people

In today's world of social networking, it should be easy to keep in touch. However, most Japanese still prefer Mixi to Facebook and emailing is hard to keep up. Luckily, DC is a melting pot of many cultures and there are many ways for us to meet new people who share our same interests and experiences. There are many Meetups in DC that allow one to meet such people, two of which are *The Washington Japanese Language Nomikai Group* and *The Metropolitan Japanese + English Language Community*. I have found that these groups are especially helpful in maintaining your language abilities.

Experience Japanese culture in DC

There are innumerous means to reliving Japanese culture here in DC. If you tried your hand at Japanese cooking or just enjoyed the cuisine in general, DC has many culinary resources available. For your specific cooking needs, go to Maruichi in Rockville or Hana Japanese Market in the U Street Corridor. For your general Asian ingredients, simply go to one of many Korean/Chinese grocery stores such as H-Mart, Assi, Great Wall Market, etc. They're fantastic.

If continuing to learn Japanese is a priority for you, there are classes offered by the JASWDC from beginning conversation to Japanese history – taught in Japanese! There are even Japanese calligraphy classes offered at a small studio downtown. Another, less social way is to add the *TV Japan* channel onto your cable TV package. There are also regular Japanese movie showings hosted by the Japan Information and Culture Center downtown.

The most important thing is to customize your experience so that you stay in-touch with what matters to you. For me it's to volunteer-teach English to foreigners at the local library.

Creating a Connection

Jennifer Murawski

Recent JET returnees, especially those living outside of major cities, often have a tough time finding ways to connect to Japan if their area doesn't have an obvious Japanese community or active JET alumni, or if their own post-JET employment work schedule means they are not easily available on evenings or weekends. However, there exist a variety of opportunities for every schedule that can be sought out or created to fit your needs in almost every community!

Volunteer and Social Opportunities

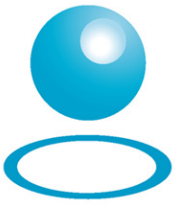
Many large cities in the US have a **Japan America Society** (www.us-japan.org), and your local branch will often be the first step towards hearing about Japan-related activities and public events where you can meet a local community with similar interests. Membership fees are very low (especially for students), but even if you aren't sure you want to register, you can follow the local Facebook group or ask to join their email list to keep up with local news. Many JASP offices also look for unpaid interns, which can be a good way to stay busy if it's taking longer than expected to find a job or if you want to network with local businesses and residents outside your normal social circles.

Public libraries are also often eager to work with community members to host or promote international activities for children or adults at their branches. Some returning JETs have worked to create Japanese language Meetups or English conversation clubs for foreign residents at their local branches, or offered to run a booth at a library event to teach a Japanese cultural activity such as origami, games, calligraphy, or other simple and low-cost activities. Did you bring back Japanese clothing or toys/games? Did you learn how to make a fun project from your elementary school students? Many branches have summer programs for children where they look for community members to teach activities, or programs on weekends to introduce children to other countries/cultures. Some successful programs I have run include Tanabata festivals, New Year's celebrations, and art activities. If you want some ideas for what to offer, I worked with my local library to make a free PDF book of activities suitable for kids: www.tinyurl.com/asia123book.

Weekend Excursions

If you find yourself missing Japan, consider a short trip to a nearby city to attend events where you can keep up with culture and film. Museums often host Asia-related exhibitions that have public lectures or film screenings and interesting speakers. Besides DC, you might take a ride to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New Jersey, or New York City to attend great festivals or events, and the local JET alumni in those areas often have Facebook groups where they can suggest cheap accommodations or offer couch-surfing. **JETAANY** (http://jetaany.org) is a fantastic source of information with event calendars and email newsletters packed with activities that you may want to plan a trip around. **Japan Society** (http://www.japansociety.org) also has newsletters and Facebook pages that advertise film festivals and art events, often featuring films that won't see wide release around the U.S.

Here are some organizations that are great for staying connected to Japan:



Japan Information and Culture Center
www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JICC/index.html

The Japan Information and Culture Center (JICC) is a part of the Public Affairs Section of the Embassy of Japan in Washington, DC The JICC's goal is to promote better understanding of Japan and Japanese culture by providing a wide range of information and events to the American public. The JICC provides a variety of services to residents of the Washington DC Metro Area:

- Japan-related exhibits and events
- D.C. Metro Area Events, the go-to resource to find out about all the upcoming Japan-related events in the area
- Japan Now, the Embassy of Japan's free monthly e-newsletter
- School Program and educational resources
- Japan-related item and video loan
- Free Japan-related publications
- Inquiry Assistance on general Japan-related topics
- An extensive directory of Japanese-related organizations and businesses http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JICC/dc-links.html



Japan-America Society of Washington, DC
www.jaswdc.org

The Japan-America Society of Washington, DC is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, nonpartisan educational and cultural organization for individuals and corporations with an interest in Japan and US-Japan relations. Founded in 1957, the Society promotes greater understanding and networking between Americans and Japanese through its many cultural, public affairs, and educational programs. Serving the six million residents of the Nation's Capital region, the Society also sponsors programs of national significance, including the Japan Bowl®, the Sakura Matsuri, and the Annual Dinner.

Meetup

www.meetup.com

Meetup is the world's largest network of local groups. Meetup makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up face-to-face. More than 9,000 groups get together in local communities each day, each one with the goal of improving themselves or their communities. Meetup's mission is to revitalize local community and help people around the world self-organize. Meetup believes that people can change their personal world, or the whole world, by organizing themselves into groups that are powerful enough to make a difference.

The DC area is one of the most active communities on meetup.com. Among the over 5,000 groups to choose from are several to help you meet others who share an interest in Japan or want to practice their language skills. Go to the JET-in-DC Directory for some Japanese language Meetup groups. Accounts at meetup.com are free, and you can search for groups matching your interests and start getting out and meeting new people.



JET Ambassadors Program

jetambassador@jetaadc.org

Inspired by former Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki, JET Ambassadors is a volunteer-based program that brings former JETs to DC area schools to share their experiences from Japan through interactive self-designed presentations. The program aims to educate younger generations about Japan and raise international awareness throughout the community, as well as give former JETs the chance to reconnect with their own experiences. The focus of most presentations is "life in a Japanese school", but presenters are often given some flexibility in terms of topics.

The goal is to hold presentations in all interested schools in the DC area, including Baltimore, Annapolis and the Eastern Shore, Richmond and other points south, and even West Virginia. There are also opportunities for Saturday library visits. If you are interested, please click on the link below and answer a few quick questions:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1nrPhACYkWGNSEEUE2mxD-rdDemB2n6C4BhmTcotumlo/viewform

Survey Summary – Staying Connected with Japan

How JETs have stayed connected to Japan . . .

- By staying in contact with friends, co-workers, and students – technology is great
- Keeping up Japanese hobbies, language, activities, etc. that were started in Japan
- Continuing involvement with the JET program
  - Processing applications
  - Helping at orientation events
  - Joining or volunteering at JETAADC activities
- Attending Japanese-related events in the area
- Pursuing new Japanese hobbies
- Involving yourself with Japanese people here – casually or at work/school
- Reading Japanese newspapers, books, etc. and watching Japanese TV
- Visiting Japan and/or helping friends/family/co-workers who are visiting Japan with itineraries and ideas
- Volunteering for a Japan-related non-profit or working a Japan-related job

Suggestions for locally found Japanese things . . .

- HMart, Hana Market, Maruichi – for Japanese groceries
- Ekoji Temple – especially for the Obon and Tanabata festivals
- National Cherry Blossom Festival
- Spaworld in Centreville – Korean spa similar to an onsen
- Recommended restaurants: Hakuba, Tono Sushi, Izakaya Seki, Maneki Neko, Kushi, Toki Underground, Hina Sushi, Hinata Sushi, Temari Café, Satsuma, Tachibana, Kyoto Sushi
- Recommended Karaoke: Muzette, Café Muse
- JASW events (join the listserv)
- Freer and Sackler Galleries
- JICC
- Check out the Japanese food scene in New York

Japan-In-DC Directory

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Japan-In-DC Directory

Japanese-Related Organizations and General Information

Government and Other Organizations

Embassy of Japan in the USA
2520 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-238-6700 (switchboard)
202-238-6773 (JET office)
www.us.emb-japan.go.jp
jetprogram@ws.mofa.go.jp

Embassy of the USA in Japan
1-10-5 Akasaka
Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8420
Japan
+81-3-3224-5000
OR
Unit 9800 Box 300
APO AP 96303-0300
japan.usembassy.gov
email contact through website

Department of State
Office of Japanese Affairs
EAP/J-Room 4206
2201 C St, NW
Washington, DC 20520
202-647-2913/3152
www.state.gov
email contact through website

Japan-America Society of Washington
1819 L St, NW
Level B2
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-2210
www.jaswdc.org
jaswdc@us-japan.org
Sponsors corporate, institutional, public affairs, education and cultural programs, including annual Sakura Matsuri, and Moon-Viewing parties. Library with around 1500 titles. Japanese language classes are available.

Japan Commerce Association of Washington, DC
c/o JASWDC
JCAW Foundation
202-463-3947
www.jcaw.org
office@jcaw.org

Japan Information and Culture Center
1150 18th St, NW
Suite 100
Washington, DC 20036
202-238-6900
www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc
jicc@ws.mofa.go.jp
Sponsors special events and films on Japan. Has resources and information on Japanese culture. JICC is a division of the Embassy of Japan.

Asia Society, Washington Center
Whittemore House
1526 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-ASIA (2742)
asiasociety.org/centers/washington-dc
asiadc@asiasociety.org
Sponsors lectures, films and seminars related to Asian culture.

Japan and Virginia Society
901 East Byrd St
West Tower, 18th Floor
Richmond, VA 23218
804-545-5666
www.japan-virginia.org
japanvirginasociety@yesvirginia.org

Japan-In-DC Directory

Japanese-American Citizens League
1828 L St, NW
Suite 802
Washington, DC 20036
202-223-1240
www.jacl-dc.org
dc@jacl.org

Japan-America Student Conference
1150 18th St, NW
Suite LL2
Washington, DC 20036
202-289-9088
www.iscdc.org/jasc/
info@iscdc.org
Education and cultural exchange program for university students from the US and Japan.

MARJIS/University of Maryland
The International Center for Transcultural Education
Mid-Atlantic Region Japan in the Schools
3104 Benjamin Building
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-3595
intleducenter.umd.edu/netscape/marjis index.htm
marjis@glue.umd.edu
Provides Japan-related teaching resources to schools in the mid-Atlantic region.

US-Japan Business Council
1615 H St, NW
Washington, DC 20062
202-463-5772
www.usjbc.org
email contact through website

Meridian International Center
1630 Crescent Place, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-667-6800
www.meridian.org
info@meridian.org
Sponsors education and cultural activities, forums, concerts, art exhibitions and seminars for resident diplomats, etc.

Sasaka Peace Foundation
1819 L St, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
202-296-6694
www.spfusa.org
info@spfusa.org
Library holds books, periodicals, documents and movies on Japan.

The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation
1401 New York Ave, NW
Suite 740
Washington, DC 20005
202-347-1994
www.mansfieldfdn.org
email through website

Useful Websites

Facts/Statistics on Japan

CIA World Factbook, Japan
www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook.geos/ja.html

Web Japan
web-japan.org

Foreign Press Center/Japan, Facts and Figures of Japan
fpcj.jp/en/useful/facts

Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
www.stat.go.jp/english/

JET-related Websites

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
www.mofa.go.jp

Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications
www.soumu.go.jp/english

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology
www.mext.go.jp/english

Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET)
ajet.net

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)
www.clair.or.jp/e/

JET Programme
www.jetprogramme.org

JET Alumni Association International
www.jetalumni.org

JETAA USA
www.jetaausa.com

JETAA DC
www.jetaadc.org

Religion

American Zen College
16815 Germantown Road
Germantown, MD 20874
301-428-0665

Ekoji Buddhist Temple
6500 Lakehaven Lane
Fairfax Station, VA 22039
703-239-0500
www.ekoji.org

Ka Shin Zendo Genzo-ji
Takoma Park Presbyterian Church
310 Tulip Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912
www.washingtonzen.org
kashinzendo@gmail.com

Currency Exchange

Travelex Currency Exchange
1800 K St, NW 202-872-1428
Union Station 202-371-9220
Columbia Mall 410-715-7405
BWI Airport, Pier C 410-850-4760
BWI Airport, Pier E 410-684-2221
www.travelex.com

American Express Travel
1501 K St, NW #100 202-457-1300

Educational Resources

Language Instruction

Please note that in addition to the list below, most colleges in the area offer Japanese courses.

Japan-America Society of Washington
1819 L St, NW
Level B2
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-2210
www.jaswdc.org

Berlitz Language Center Tysons Corner
2070 Chain Bridge Road
Suite 140
Vienna, VA 22182
703-883-0626
www.berlitz.us

Berlitz Language Center Rockville
11300 Rockville Pike
Suite 911
Rockville, MD 20852
301-770-7550
www.berlitz.us

Berlitz Language Center Washington, DC
1 Thomas Circle
Suite 105
Washington, DC 20005
202-775-5863
www.berlitz.us

Berlitz Language Center Stafford
239 Garrisonville Road
Suite 201
Stafford, VA 22554
540-628-2544
www.berlitz.us

Berlitz Language Center Odenton
1413 Annapolis Road
Suite 200
Odenton, MD 21113
410-672-3410
www.berlitz.us

Fairfax County Adult Education ACE Language Classes
703-658-2727
www.fcps.edu/is/ace/language.shtml

USDA Graduate School
1-888-744-GRAD
graduateschool.edu

Four Seasons Japanese Center Children's Classes
4900 Auburn Ave
Suite 211
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-986-4942
jcfourseasons.com

Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
3001 North Beauregard St
Alexandria, VA 22331
www.nvcc.edu

International Center for Language Studies, Inc.
1133 15th St, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202-639-8800
www.icls.com

Meetup Language Groups

The Metropolitan Japanese + English Language Community
www.meetup.com/mj-elc/

The Washington Japanese Language Nomikai Group
www.meetup.com/japanese-98/

Fredericksburg Japanese Meetup
www.meetup.com/Fredericksburg-Japanese-Meetup/

Annapolis Area Japanese Meet-up
www.meetup.com/Japanese-Annapolis-Meetup/

BAJAM: Baltimore Area Japanese Meetup
www.meetup.com/bajam444/

Libraries

American Institute of Architects Library
1735 New York Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-626-7300
www.aia.org
Includes titles on Japanese architecture

Bender Library
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-885-3232
www.american.edu/library/index.cfm
Several hundred titles related to Japanese culture

Japan-America Society of Washington
1819 L St, NW
Level B2
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-2210
www.jaswdc.org
Around 1500 titles, by appointment only

Lauinger Library
Georgetown University
37th and O St, NW
Washington, DC 20057
202-687-7452
www.library.georgetown.edu/libaries/lauinger
Several thousand titles related to Japan

Library of Congress
Asian Division, Japan Section
101 Independence Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20540
202-707-5426/3766
www.loc.gov/rr/asian

Gelman Library
George Washington University
2130 H St, NW
Washington, DC 20052
202-994-6558
library.gwu.edu*Over 1,000 titles on Japan*

Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art Library
Smithsonian Institute
1050 Independence Ave, SW
Room 2058, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20560
202-633-0477
www.asia.si.edu/research/library.asp
Over 80,000 volumes, half in Asian languages

John K. Mullen Library
Catholic University of America
620 Michigan Ave, NE
Washington DC 20064
202-319-5070
libraries.cua.edu
Several hundred titles related to Japan

Far Eastern Law Division
The Law Library of Congress
James Madison Building
101 Independence Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20540
202-707-5079
www.loc.gov/law

McKeldin Library
University of Maryland
College Park Campus
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-0800
www.lib.umd/mckeldin
Approximately 30,000 volumes related to Japan

MARJiS Program
Resource Center
International Center for the Study of Education Policy and Human Values
College of Education, University of Maryland
Room 3104, Benjamin Building
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-7350/3595
intleducenter.umd.edu

National Arboretum Library
3501 New York Ave, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-245-2726
usna.usda.go

Bookstores

Ginza
1717 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-332-7000
www.ginzaonline.com/home.cfm

Arthur M. Sackler Shop
1050 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 30560
202-633-1000
asia.si.edu

Kramer Books
1517 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-387-1400
kramers.com

Teaching for Change
Busboys and Poets Bookstore
2021 14th St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-387-7638
www.bbpbooks.teachingforchange.org

Tempo Bookstore
4905 Wisconsin Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-363-6683
www.tempobookdistributors.com

Japan-In-DC Directory

Newspapers

Asahi Shimbun
www.asahi.com/english/

The Japan News
www.the-japan-news.com

The Hokkaido Shimbun
www.hokkaido-np.co.jp
in Japanese

Kyodo News
english.kyodonews.jp

Chunichi Shimbun
www.chunichi.co.jp
in Japanese

Jiji Press
jen.jiji.com

The Japan Times
www.japantimes.co.jp

Mainichi Shimbun
mdn.mainchi.jp
in Japanese

Nihon Keizai Shimbun
www.nikkei.com
in Japanese

Sankei Shinbun
Sankei.jp.msn.com
in Japanese

Japan Today
www.japantoday.com

News on Japan
www.newsonjapan.com

Yomiuri Shinbun
www.yomiuri.co.jp/
in Japanese

Nishi Nippon Shinbun
nishinippon.co.jp
in Japanese

Magazines, Publications, etc.

Discuss Japan
Japan Foreign Policy Forum
www.japanpolicyforum.jp/en/

Nipponia
web-japan.org/nipponia/

The Journal of Japanese Studies
depts.washington.edu/jjs

Monumenta Nipponica
monumenta.cc.sophia.ac.jp

Television

Some Japanese-language programming is available in this area on Cable channels

Fuji TV Network, Inc.
www.fujitv.co.jp/en/

NHK (Japan Broadcasting)
www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld

NTV (Nippon Television Network)
www.ntv.co.jp/english/

TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting System)
www.tbs.co.jp/eng

TV Asahi
www.tv-asahi.co.jp

TV Tokyo 12
www.tv-tokyo.co.jp/

Japan-In-DC Directory

Art Collections, Museums

Anderson House of the Society of Cincinnati
2118 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-785-2040
www.hereditary.us/cin_anderson.htm
Collection of Japanese and Chinese arts.

Hendricks Art Collections, Ltd.
5207 Crown St
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-229-5100
www.hendricksartcollection.com
Exhibitions and sales of modern Japanese prints.

Textile Museum
2320 S St, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-667-0441
www.textilemuseum.org
Worldwide collection of textiles.

Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art Smithsonian Institute
1050 Independence Ave, SW (Sackler)
Jefferson Dr and 12th ST, SW (Freer)
Washington, DC 20560
202-357-2700
www.asia.si.edu
Collection of Asian art.

Shogun Gallery
703-883-3988
www.shogungallery.com
Extensive collection of Japanese wood block prints. Exhibit locations vary.

Walters Art Gallery
600 North Charles St
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-547-9000
www.thewalters.org
Extensive collection of Japanese works of art.

Festivals

National Cherry Blossom Festival – April
National Cherry Blossom Festival Administration
1250 H St, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005
Festival Hotline: 877-44BLOOM
www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org
2014 dates: March 20 – April 13

Bon Odori Festival – July/August
Ekoji Buddhist Temple
6500 Lakehaven Lane
Fairfax Station, VA 22039
703-239-0500
www.ekoji.org
2014 date: TBA

Mochitsuki – December
*Held at North Bethesda Middle School
Japanese-American Citizens League
1828 L St, NW
Suite 802
Washington, DC 20036
202-223-1240
www.jacl-dc.org
Celebration featuring rice pounding to make mochi.
2013 date: December 14

Japan-In-DC Directory

Hobbies

Bonsai, Gardens

Brookside Gardens
1800 Glenallen Avenue
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-962-1400
www.montgomeryparks.org/brookside
Grounds include a Japanese pavilion and garden

Maymont
2201 Shields Lake Ct
Richmond, VA 23220
804-358-7166
www.maymont.org
A 100-acre American estate including a large Japanese garden

Hillwood Museum and Gardens
4155 Linnean Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-686-8500
www.hillwoodmuseum.org
Grounds include a Japanese garden

Richmond Bonsai Society
www.richmondbonsaisociety.org

US National Arboretum – Bonsai Pavilion
National Bonsai Collection
3501 New York Ave, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-245-2726
www.usna.usda.gov
Japanese garden and bonsai collection

National Bonsai and Penjing Museum
Arbor House, US National Arboretum
3501 New York Ave, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-396-3510
www.bonsai-nbf.org
www.usna.usda.gov/gardens/collections/bonsai.html
Part of the National Arboretum

Wolf Trap Nursery
9439 Leesburg Pike
Vienna, VA 22182
703-759-4244
www.wolftrapnursery.com

Potomac Bonsai Association
www.ptomacbonsai.com

Crafts

Torpedo Factory Art Center
Torpedo Factory
105 N Union St
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-838-4565
www.torpedofactory.org

Pyramid Atlantic, Inc.
8230 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-608-9101
www.pyramidatlanticartcenter.org
Center for the paper arts: classes, lectures and exhibitions

National Capital Area Chapter of the Sumi-e Society of America
Chesterbrook Taiwanese Presbytarian Church
2036 Westmoreland St
Falls Church, VA 22043
OR
Potomac Community Center
11315 Falls Rd
Potomac, MD 20854
www.sumienationalcapitalarea.org
Puts on exhibits and offers workshops

Chin Hamaya Culture Center
109 A Post Office Road
Waldorf, MD 20602
301-653-4758
chinhamaya@yahoo.com
www.chinhamaya.org

Origami USA
www.origamiusa.org

Dance Instruction

Onoe-ryu Japanese Dance
Ms. Yukiko Orlandella
13445 Point Pleasant Drive
Chantilly, VA 20151
703-631-2163
www.onoedance.com

Chin Hamaya Culture Center
109 A Post Office Road
Waldorf, MD 20602
301-653-4758
chinhamay@yahoo.com
www.chinhamaya.org

Film

AFI Silver Theater and Cultural Institute
8633 Colesville Road
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-495-6700
www.afi.com/silver
Japanese feature films shown periodically

Japan Information and Culture Center
1150 18th St, NW
Suite 100
Washington, DC 20036
202-238-6900
www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc
Free film screenings twice a month

Japan Society of New York
333 East 47th St
New York, NY 10017
212-832-1155
www.japansociety.org
Monthly film screening

Go

NOVA Go Club
www.novagoclub.org

American Go Association
www.usgo.org

Ikebana

Sogetsu USA
Washington DC Metro Area Branch
www.sogetsuwashingtondc.org

Ikebana International, Washington, DC
703-594-6499
www.ikebanainternational.org

Japan-In-DC Directory

Karaoke

Café Japone
2032 P St, NW
Washington, DC
202-223-1573
www.japonedc.com

Muzette
2305 18th St, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-758-2971
www.muzette.com

Café Muse
7356B Little River Turnpike
Annandale, VA 22003
703-658-9351
www.cafemusekaraoke.com

Color Music Studio
2403 University Boulevard W
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-962-3560

Kimono, Textiles

Textile Museum
2320 S St, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-667-0441
www.textilemuseum.org

Martial Arts

Aikido of Arlington
1305 North Jackson St
Arlington, VA 22201
202-484-3784
www.aikidoofarlington.com
Training in the Iwama School of Aikido

Aikido Shobukan Dojo
421 Butternut St, NW
Washington, DC 20012
202-829-4202
www.aikido-shobukan.org
Aikido Schools of Ueshiba

Aikido of Northern Virginia
4201 Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
703-599-4460
www.aikido-nova.org

Capital Aikikai
923 Sligo Ave
Silver Spring, MD
240-242-5179
www.capitalaikikai.org

DC Aikido
2639 Connecticut Ave, NW
Suite C-104
Washington, DC 20008
202-629-2560
www.dcaikido.com

Shotokan Karate Center
3238 Old Pickett Road
Fairfax, VA 22031
703-277-9554
www.skcnova.com

Washington Karate Academy (Uechi-ryu)
Northwest Sport and Health Club
4001 Brandywine St, NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-537-6124
www.wkadojo.com

Capital Area Budokai
25 S Quake Lane
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-339-3191
www.capitalareabudokai.org

Miyako Kyudojo
Hyattsville, MD
301-588-8396; 301-649-4990
users.erols.com/henrawie/kyudo.html
www.shambhala.org/centers/washingtondc/programs/kyudo.html

Shotokan Karate of America
Washington, DC:
www.ska.org
www.gwu.edu/~ska/
University of Virginia, Charlottesville:
https://atuva.student.virginia.edu/organization/shotokankarateclub/about

Shidogakuin Washington DC Kendo Dojo (Washinkan)
Practice locations vary
shidogakuin.com
kendodc.com

Koryo Traditional Martial Arts Center (Kendo)
10960-F Three Chopt Road
Richmond, VA 23233
804-527-1059
www.koryomartialarts.org/

Music

Chin Hamaya Culture Center
109 A Post Office Road
Waldorf, MD 20602
301-653-4758
chinhamaya@yahoo.com
www.chinhamaya.org

Ryukyukoko Matsuri Daiko
Katsuko Kudaka Lee
12638 English Orchard Court
Silver Spring, MD 20906
240-462-1780
katsuko717@yahoo.com
Taiko and Okinawa-style taiko drumming

Washington Toho Koto Society
kotosociety@gmail.com
www.kotosociety.org

Mark H Rooney Taiko
markh@markhrooney.com
www.markhrooney.com
Taiko workshops and classes offered in Takoma Park, MD

Nendaiko
Fairfax, VA
www.nendaiko.org

Tea Ceremony

Chado Urasenke Tankokai Washington DC Association
P.O.Box 138
McLean, VA 22101
tankokaidc.org
Instruction in tea ceremony and demonstrations

Japan-In-DC Directory

Food

Please note there are many more Japanese restaurants/restaurants that serve Japanese food that are not listed below, especially outside of the capital. To find additional restaurants near you, please utilize the internet and apps!

Grocery Stores

AC Oriental Mart
13623 Old Annapolis Rd
Bowie, MD 20720
301-262-5740

Hana Market
2004 17th St, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-939-8853

Hinata
4947 St Elmo Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-656-1009

Ichiban
867 South Lynnhaven Rd
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
757-427-6800

Jung Hah Market
13310 Warwick Blvd
Newport News, VA 23602
757-872-8781

Lotte Plaza
Multiple Maryland and Virginia locations
www.lotteplaza.com

Maruichi
1047 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301-545-0101

H Mart
Multiple Maryland and Virginia locations
www.hmart.com/index.asp

Super H Mart
10780 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-273-0570
www.hmart.com/index.asp

Restaurants

Aji-Nippon
6937 Arlington Rd
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-654-0213

Akasaka
514 South Van Dorn St
Alexandria, VA 22304
703-751-3133
www.akasakasushi.com

Akasaka Japanese Sushi and Steak House
10788 Sudley Manor Dr
Manassas, VA 20109
703-361-0111
www.akasakava.com/

Aoba Restaurant
20921 Davenport Dr
#110
Sterling, VA 20165
703-430-1234
www.aobasushi.net/

Japan-In-DC Directory

Benihana
21089 Dulles Town Circle
Dulles, VA 20166
703-421-0888
OR
7935 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-652-5391
www.benihana.com

Blue Ocean
9440 Main St
Fairfax, VA 22031
703-425-7555
www.izakayablueocean.com

Bonsai Grill
553 S 23rd St
Arlington, VA 22202
703-553-7723
www.crystalbonsaisushi.com/

Café Asia
1720 I St, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-659-2696
OR
1550 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22209
703-741-0870
www.cafeasia.com

Cafe Japone
2032 P St, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-223-1573
www.japonedc.com

Daikaya Ramen (1st floor)
Daikaya Izakaya (2nd floor)
705 6th St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-589-1600
www.daikaya.com

Hama Sushi
2415-B2 Centreville Rd
Herndon, VA 20171
703-713-0088
www.hama-sushi.com

Hakuba
706 Center Point Way
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
301-947-1283
www.hakubakentlands.com

Hinode
134 Congressional Lane
Rockville, MD 20852
301-816-2190
OR
4914 Hampden Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-654-0908
OR
50 Carroll Creek Way
Suite 130
Frederick, MD 21701
301-620-2943
www.hinoderestaurant.com/

Hokkaido Seafood Buffet
5900 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
703-845-0888
www.hokkaidova.com

Ichiban
1650 General Booth Boulevard
#104
Virginia Beach, VA 23454
757-721-6688

Ichiban Sushi House
211 King St
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-683-2232
www.ichibanalexandria.com

Japan-In-DC Directory

Izakaya Seki
1117 V St, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-588-5841
www.sekidc.com/

Kanpai Restaurant
1401 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22209
703-527-8400
www.kanpai-sushi.com

Kaz Sushi Bistro
1915 I St, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-530-5500
www.kazsushibistro.com/

Kotobuki
4822 MacArthur Blvd, NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-281-6679
www.kotobukiusa.com

Kushi
465 K St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-682-3123
www.eatkushi.com

Kyoto
3676 King St
Alexandria VA 22302
703-379-8060

Makoto
4822 MacArthur Blvd, NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-298-6866
www.makotorestaurantdc.com

Manekineko
238 West Broad St
Falls Church, VA 22046
703-534-8666
www.mneko.com/home

Matsutake/BoRu
4121 Wilson Blvd
#102
Arlington, VA 22203
703-351-8787
OR
516 Fort Evans Rd, NE
Leesburg, VA 20176
703-777-8917
www.borurestaurants.com

Matsutake
13049 Worldgate Dr
Herndon, VA 20170
703-787-3700
www.matsutakesushibar.com

Matuba
4918 Cordell Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-652-7449
www.matuba-sushi.com

Minato Sushi Bar
1013 N Charles St
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-332-0332
www.minatosushibar.com/

Miyagi
6719 Curran St
McLean VA 22101
703-893-0116

Momotaro Sushi
2803 W Cary St
Richmond, VA 23221
804-355-0060

Momoyama
231 2nd St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-737-0397

Murasaki
4620 Wisconsin Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-966-0023
www.murasakidc.com/

Japan-In-DC Directory

Niwano-Hana
887 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301-294-0553
www.niwanohana.com

Oya
777 9th St, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-393-1400
www.oyadc.com

Perry's
1811 Columbia Rd, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-234-6218
www.perrysadamsmorgan.com

Raku
1900 Q St, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-265-7528
OR
7240 Woodmont Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-718-8680
www.rakuasiandining.com/

Ren's Ramen
11403 Amherst Ave
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-693-0806
www.rens-ramen.com/

Sakana
2026 P St, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-887-0900

Sakuramen
2441 18th St, NW
Washington, DC
202-656-5285
www.sakuramen.info

Sakura Steakhouse
Multiple Maryland and Virginia locations
www.sakurasteakhouse.com

Satsuma
8003 Norfolk Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-652-1400
www.satsumajp.com

Sticky Rice
1224 H St, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-397-7655
www.stickyricedc.com

Sushi Ko
5455 Wisconsin Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-961-1644
www.sushikorestaurants.com

Sushi Ninja
1331D Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301-309-0043

Sushi Taro
1503 17th St, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-462-8999
www.sushitaro.com

Sushi-Zen
2457 N Harrison St
Arlington, VA 22207
703-534-6000
www.sushizen.com

Tachibana
6715 Lowell Ave
McLean, VA 22101
703-847-1771
www.tachibana.us/sushi/

Tako Grill
7756 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-652-7030
www.takogrill.com

Japan-In-DC Directory

Tanpopo Ramen House
4316 Markham St
Annandale, VA 22003
202-270-3043
www.tanpoporamenhouse.com

Temari Café
1043 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
301-340-7720

Toki Underground
1234 H St, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-388-3086
www.tokiunderground.com

Tono Sushi
2605 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-332-7300
www.tonosushi.com

Yama
328 Maple Ave West
Vienna, VA 22180
703-242-7703
www.sushiyamava.com/

Yama Sushi
4725-G Dorsey Hall Dr
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-997-3688
www.yamasushimd.com

Yamazato
6303 Little River Turnpike
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-914-8877
www.yamazato.net

Yoko
2946-J Chain Bridge Rd
Oakton, Va 22124
703-255-6644
www.yokosushi1.com

Yosaku
4712 Wisconsin Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-363-4453
www.yosakusushi.com

Yuzu
7345 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-656-5234
www.yuzubethesda.com

Woomi Garden
2423 Hickerson Dr
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-933-0100
www.woomigarden.com

Takeout

Hinata Sushi
4947 Saint Elmo Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-656-1009

Kanpai Sushi
7307 MacArthur Blvd
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-320-4676
www.kanpaisushi.com