

# Japan Now: October 2024

*Japan Now* is the email newsletter of the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage

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Do you like to read books?

「読書の秋」, literally translating to “**autumn of reading**,” is a phrase that is often used during this season, when the weather is perfect for immersing yourself in reading books. As some of you may know, Japanese is written both vertically and horizontally, and we would like to talk a little about the direction of writing today.

### Vertical Writing

The Japanese writing system consists of three main scripts: Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji. Our first script used for writing was kanji, which were adopted from China, from which Hiragana and Katakana were then created. In countries where kanji characters are used,



including Japan, there is a long-standing custom of writing and reading texts vertically.

### The Direction of vertical writing: Right to Left

Although we can only speculate, one of the leading theories as to why vertical writing is read from top-to-bottom then right-to left is that people commonly used to write on scrolls. A right-handed person would naturally hold the scroll with his left hand and unfurl it with his right hand, and so if the writing is written from right to left, it can be read smoothly.

Japan has both horizontal and vertical writing systems. In the past, horizontal writing was read from right to left, following the vertical writing style, but during the Edo and Meiji periods when the Japanese were exposed to Western languages, the left-to-right horizontal writing style was born.



**Formerly horizontal writing was also  
right-to-left**

*esla saw gnitirw latnozish ybennus?*  
*ifel-ot-thgir*



### When to Use Vertical or Horizontal Writing?

Because the Japanese writing system was originally vertical, vertical writing is seen as more traditional and is particularly common in novels and other literary works (publishing companies will reformat any novels written horizontally before they are published!). On the other hand, horizontal writing is seen as modern, so most school textbooks (except those about the Japanese language), websites, text messages, informal handwritten notes are written horizontally.

One of the three Japanese scripts, Katakana, is used for writing words that come from other languages, such as country names. Many overseas travel books that use a lot of katakana are published in horizontal writing, so they can be read without stress.

Domestic travel books sometimes use vertical writing, which is thought to make it “easy to create a calm atmosphere” and to “give a sense of Japanese taste.”



There is no “absolute” rule for using vertical or horizontal writing, but it seems that what fits best depends on how the writing is to be consumed.

## Celebrating 55 Years of Friendship: Chitose Delegation Visits Anchorage



The Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage had the distinct honor of welcoming a delegation from Chitose, Japan, as they visited to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Sister City relationship between Chitose and Anchorage. This milestone celebration underscored the deep and enduring ties that have been cultivated over the decades between our two cities.



Upon their arrival, the Chitose delegation was warmly received by members of the local Japanese community,



the Anchorage Assembly, and the Sister Cities Commission. Throughout the week, they engaged in a variety of events across the city and surrounding regions, where they met with members of the Anchorage community, fostering partnerships, and strengthening connections that bridge Japan and Alaska.



Our office had the opportunity to host a lunch co-sponsored by the Sister Cities Commission at the iconic Simon and Seafort's restaurant on August 28th. This gathering provided the Chitose delegation with a unique opportunity to engage with prominent local representatives who are active in Anchorage's international community. Among the distinguished speakers were Head Consul Hamada from our office, Mayor Ryuichi Yokota of Chitose, Mayor Suzanne LaFrance of Anchorage, and Representative Andrew Gray. Their words of friendship and cooperation echoed the shared values and aspirations that have been the foundation of this enduring relationship.

The Consular Office of Japan was proud to play a role in welcoming the Chitose delegation and contributing to the success of their visit to Alaska. This celebration not only honored the past 55 years of friendship but also set the stage for continued collaboration and exchange between Chitose and Anchorage in the years to come.



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**2024 JET Application Now Open!**

The JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program is a Japanese-government sponsored program that hires people to go and work at local schools, boards of education, or municipal government offices throughout Japan.

Every year, successful applicants fill one of two positions in the thousands of openings across every prefecture in Japan. ALTs, Assistant Language Teachers, are hired to assist with language education at a school or schools ranging from Pre-K to 12th grade. CIRs, Coordinators of International Relations, work in larger government facilities or administrative offices and organize cultural events, translate, and interpret. CIRs are expected to be highly proficient in both English and Japanese, but for ALTs, Japanese proficiency is not required (though it helps!)

Any US citizen that holds a Bachelor's Degree on or before June 27th, 2025 is welcome to apply!

For more information about eligibility, visit [JET Program USA website](#).

**Apply Now**



# LIVE AND WORK IN JAPAN

**APPLICATIONS OPEN**  
**UNTIL NOV. 15, 2024**  
AT 11:59 PM HAWAII-ALEUTIAN STANDARD TIME

## Questions?

Contact us on Facebook or reach out at:

 [jet-ak@se.mofa.go.jp](mailto:jet-ak@se.mofa.go.jp)  (907)-562-8424

## WHERE TO APPLY

Apply online at  
<https://www.jetapplication.com/>

For up-to-date information about  
the JET Program, visit  
<https://jetprogramusa.org/>

2025 JAPAN EXCHANGE AND TEACHING PROGRAM USA



## Interview with a JET Participant

In August, six new Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program participants from Alaska left for Japan to start their new lives and assist in English education at schools in Japan. We had the pleasure of interviewing Brent Pav, who has been placed at a high school teaching IB English in Yamanashi Prefecture.



[Read Full Interview](#)

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