

# ENGLISH AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (EES)

## Purpose of Elementary School English Education

Practically speaking, the reason ALTs and elementary school teachers teach English at elementary schools is to get the kids excited about learning English. If the students had fun in class, used English to do so, and are excited for the next lesson, then you can say “Mission Accomplished.” However, the Ministry of Education does have a list of formally stated goals for EES. These are:

1. Become aware of:
  - A. One’s Speech: Develop a consciousness of the words coming out of your mouth. Notice how your pronunciation and diction differ from that of others.
  - B. The Importance of Communication: Experience the sensation of not being able to communicate your ideas easily.
  - C. Differences in Culture/Thought: Realize that things are different outside of Japan, and that these differences are not “weird” but just “different,” and that different is OK.
  - D. The Joy of Speaking Foreign Languages: Attain the motivation to continue English study through high school by getting a taste of how fun it can be to speak a foreign language.
2. Become familiar with:
  - A. The Rhythm and Sound of English: English, unlike Japanese, is a stress-timed language; whereas syllables are spoken at an even tempo in Japanese, we tend to stress certain important words and syllables in an English sentence and speed through the ones we don’t stress.
  - B. Basic phrases of English: What are “the basic phrases of English?” The Ministry of Education thought about this one for a while, and the textbook it promotes, *Eigo Note/Hi, Friends*, has a curriculum that is a good guideline. I like ~, I have~, Do you like~?, Do you have~?, How are you?, My name is ~. What time is it?, What’s this?, How many?, Good job! etc.

Do you have to think carefully about all of these things when you plan your lessons? No, but when you see your students struggle with pronunciation or mix up words, don’t get upset. *Mastering* English phrases and words is NOT one of the goals; *Struggling* is.

**These** are the goals **you** should be focusing on: Be energetic and engaging; look like you are having fun; when it is appropriate, use music, chants, and drum sounds to make students pay attention to rhythm, and enlist the help of the home room teacher to help explain things!

## Daily Flow

Every ALT's schedule will be slightly different, but they all have the same basic flow. Here is some advice about how to maximize your time spent each day and to make a good impression on your co-workers right from the start.

1. Arriving: Make sure you are on time. Be bright and confident when you say “*Ohayo-gozaimasu*” to everyone. In Japanese culture, a lot is judged about your character based on your greetings, just as the strength of your handshake is in the West.
2. Faculty meetings: Occasionally there are changes in the schedule that are announced here, but other than that there is rarely anything of relevance to you in these meetings. At the least, be respectful and do work that is quite while pretending to listen.
3. Free time: Most likely you will have a number of free periods. Use them wisely. Use the 10 minute break time before each period to confirm which class you are going to next and inform the HRT of anything you'll need. Example: The kids need to put all their desks and chairs in the back of the room, or bring scissors to class.
4. Class time: Make sure you know when it begins and ends. Write yourself a note on your lesson plan or even on the chalkboard before you forget. Some of my HRTs know to give me “the signal” when there is only 10 minutes left in class.
5. Lunch: You will most likely get your lunch from the faculty room, but eat it in one of the classrooms. Try to help with preparing it if you can (wash your hands first!). Be upbeat when eating lunch with the kids, and if they don't ask you questions, ask them!
6. Recess: Spend time with the kids! Don't be “too cool” for games of tag and hide-and-go-seek. **Bring some athletic clothes which you can change into for recess**; wearing sweaty clothes for the rest of the day is not fun.
7. Cleaning time: While some schools have only the students clean, other schools push the teachers to participate as well, so be assertive and ask a teacher where is a good place to clean and put your best effort into doing it.
8. Leaving: Make sure to say “*Osaki-ni-shitsu rei shimasu.*” because you are probably leaving before anyone else. If it looks like the principal isn't busy and the door to his/her office is open, pop your head in to say goodbye. BROWNIE POINTS!

If there are club activities that day, ask if you can join in! Make sure, though, that the other teachers know what your reasons for participating are: if you join the team ‘formally,’ they might expect you to come every practice. It's OK to value your free time after school and choose not to participate in club activities; there are many other ways you can reach out to the community, like going to cheer the team at a school baseball game.

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## Class Flow

Achieving a smooth transition from class to class, and within each class from activity to activity, can be difficult at times. Here is just one of many ways you might structure your class to achieve a nice flow from lesson to lesson, activity to activity.

1. Greetings: Some classes will start with a certain student, the *nicchoku-san*, saying “Stand up! Attention! Bow!” in Japanese. Try to teach them how to say it in English! After that, take time to say “Hello! How are you?” to everyone. In later classes, when everyone is accustomed to your style of greeting, try greeting some students individually and encourage the HRT to do the same. For the upper grade levels, take time to teach them the days of the week, weather words, etc. so you can ask things like “How’s the weather?” “What day is today?” every class.
2. Review: Ask everyone about what you studied last class. If there is a game you can play/song you can sing to review, do so. Since there might be a few weeks between each class, don’t expect the kids to remember everything perfectly.
3. Introduction of New Material: If your Japanese is good enough, try to ask the kids some questions that will lead into the day’s new material. For example, if you are going to study foods, ask everyone what their favorite food is first. Then proceed with explaining the goal of the lesson (e.g. to be able to say your favorite food in English). Introduce the new words with interesting picture cards, using a little bit of dramatic flair. Ask the kids if they already know what the word is, first; you’ll be surprised at what they already know! When practicing new words, try to keep the pace fast and fun so kids don’t get bored. Try to quickly move into a game where repetition and pronunciation practice are built into the structure.
4. Game time: Be careful of the time when doing games; you don’t want to start another round of the game 1 minute before the class ends, nor do you want to finish the game with 10 minutes in the class to spare. **Have back up plans** if you finish with extra time, or if the game you try doesn’t work out so well.
5. Wrap-up: Ask everyone if they remember what the goal of today’s class was. Also, ask if everyone had fun! If you know what the kids are going to do next time (you should), give them a little preview and maybe drop some hints about the fun games you’ll play (“We’re going to play the ~ game again!” “Yeah!”) Then it’s time to say “See you!”

If you do not visit certain classes regularly, then you might not want to spend too much time reviewing material and instead focus on achieving the goal you have for that day. Having something the kids can keep, like a picture they drew in class or a sticker they won from a game, can help the kids remember the day’s fun.

## Curriculum

In most schools, 5th and 6th grade follow the Eigo Note/Hi Friends curriculum, but the lower grades do not have a specified curriculum. Check with your predecessor and your school if they haven't already created a curriculum for the lower grades. If you can receive your predecessor's curriculum, it is up to you whether to follow it or not, but use it to make sure you don't teach the kids the same thing twice.

English in grades 1-4 primarily focuses on basic vocabulary, while grades 5-6 introduce more complex phrases. Here is an idea of some of the things you might teach your students over the year:

Grade	Vocabulary	Phrases
1	numbers #1-10, colors, animals, feelings, class room commands, food, fruits	My name is ...
2	days of week, weather, classroom objects, actions, places, clothing, #10-20	Nice to meet you. I like --.
3	months, actions, school subjects, letters, country names, places, jobs, #30-100	I like --, Do you like --?
4		Do you have --? I wanna* --.
5		How many --? Do you like --?
6		I don't like --. When is your birthday? Where do you want to go?

\* I cheat and use "I wanna--." as both "I want to --," and "I want a --."

Don't be worry if there is some repetition in the material from grade to grade; if you teach the students "I like \_\_\_\_," in 2nd grade, they will probably have forgotten it by the time they reach the 3rd grade. Using the same stack of fruit and vegetable cards every class, though, can quickly tire the kids out.

Technically, for 1st-4th grade, you aren't required to teach "English" every class. Try having a class where you explain things about your home country and show lots of pictures! The HRT might want to make this into a project where the students prepare interview questions and write reports.

## Note on Hi, Friends!

To comply with the Ministry of Education's new requirement that 35 hours of English be taught each year at the 5th and 6th grade level, many schools have adopted a textbook called Eigo Note, or the new, updated edition, Hi, Friends! Other textbooks exist, but since the Ministry of Education promotes the latter two, you will probably be using one of them in your schools.

There is no rule that you have to use Hi, Friends! However, the HRTs will probably be using it while you are not at school, so make sure it is OK to stray from the text before you do so. As

long as you consult with the HRTs, you are free to do the chapters in whatever order you like and to use whatever games and activities you like in class, even if they aren't part of the textbook's recommended activities.

\*\*Many HRTs have not been trained how to use Hi, Friends. Make sure you know the text well and communicate with the HRTs about how you plan to do class with/without the text. Since the HRTs also teach English classes while you are not there, asking them how their last class went and what they did is important. Giving them recommendations about what to do for the classes while you are away is good too.

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## Common Activities and Games

There are a myriad of games you can play in your elementary school classes, and countless variations for even the most commonly used activities. Consult the resources section for more game ideas, or try your hand at coming up with games from scratch!

### Warm-up Activities and Short Games

- 1. Janken Game:** Let the kids listen to a short dialogue with you and the HRT. (e.g. "How are you?" "I'm happy."). Have everyone repeat it a couple times, then start a timer (2-3 minutes). Students do the same dialogue with their classmates and afterwards play janken (rock-paper-scissors). You can use props to facilitate the exchange, like having the kids make name cards which they give away if they lose janken, or by having tiny picture cards (Students holding the card "happy" reply "I'm happy;" student holding the "hungry" card reply "I'm hungry."). Many variations are possible.
- 2. Mystery person game:** Similar to the above janken game, though janken is not used. Before you can play, the students must know a song/dance you can use for a *batsu game* (punishment game). Any song or chant with ridiculous dance moves/gestures is fine. Tell the students that the HRT is going to pick a "mystery person." If they don't do the dialogue with that mystery person within the time-limit, they must do the *batsu game*. Set the timer so that it is difficult to talk with everyone during the time-limit. Pick multiple mystery people if you want to make it easier. After time is up, dramatically reveal who the mystery person is and make the students who did not talk to that person do the *batsu game* with you.
- 3. Key word game:** Have the students make pairs (groups of 3 or 4 are OK). Have students face each other and place an eraser directly in between them. Present the "keyword" by showing the appropriate picture card. If you want to make it easy, say what the keyword is as well. If the students should already know the word well, make sure none of them say it out loud when you show them the picture card. Next, start babbling in English, or saying random vocabulary words. When the students hear you say the keyword, they must grab eraser before their partner does.

4. **Missing game:** Place a number of picture cards on the board and practice how to say them. Tell everyone to close their eyes (or “go to sleep”). Remove one or two picture cards from the board, and rearrange the rest. Have everyone open their eyes. Students must try to figure out which word went missing, and then raise their hand and answer in English. It is up to you whether or not to be strict in judging their pronunciation. Some words the students will REALLY struggle to remember, so after a half minute tell them it’s OK to answer in Japanese.
5. **Simon Says:** You should know this game. It can be a little difficult to explain for the first time; try to ask the HRT for help. When the kids get good at it, add more gestures and try to fake them out by saying one gesture and doing another.

### **Long Games (\*games difficult to explain the first time)**

1. **Karuta games:** This is any game where the students must listen to English words and then slap the corresponding picture card. Traditionally, this game is played in small groups with cards that are placed on the ground/desks and grabbed individually with your hands, but you can also play with your larger picture cards. If you want to do the latter, split the class into two teams, have them line up according to team, and give the first kid in each line a rolled up piece of newspaper (or fly swatter). When they hear you say one of the vocabulary words, they must run from a set starting point and slap the corresponding picture card on the board. Please be considerate of the other things that might be on the board and of the other furniture in the classroom. Use common sense.
2. **Typhoon games:** This is any game where you ask the students questions and then have the team which answered correctly select a ‘mystery curtain’ to open. Behind each curtain may be points for their team or a “typhoon” (or bomb, monster, etc.), which wipes out their points. “Mystery curtains” may be cards with point values written on the back which you put on the board, or simply a grid with numbers/letters and a corresponding list which the teacher uses to interpret what each space means. Lots of variation is possible, like bombs that can be used on other teams or items to save your points from attack.
3. **Yamanote-sen game:** Arrange the picture cards on the board in a circle. Have the students clap their hands (or if you have an electronic keyboard, use the beat/metronome feature) and practice saying the words together on every other beat ( X - hat - X - shirt - X - pants - ...). Next, split the class into teams. Each team takes turns trying to say the words along with the beat without messing up. The team that can go the longest without making mistakes or getting off beat is the winner. I find this game works best with the upper grade levels, and even then you’ll probably have to do a great deal of practice.

4. **Fruits Basket:** Students sit in a circle with one student in the center. There is one less chair than the total number of students. Each student is given a card representing the vocab (usually I limit it to four different words so there aren't too few of each group). The student in the center says a word, and those with the corresponding cards get up and race to switch chairs while the student in the center tries to find a place of their own. Whoever is left standing at the end without a chair moves to the center and calls a new word. If the student says "color basket" (or fruit basket or whatever) then ALL students must stand and switch places.

Variations: You can instruct the students in the circle to ask "What do you like?" to which the center student responds "I like...strawberry" or something similar. Other variations include "How are you?" "I'm \_\_\_\_"; "What do you have?" "I have a *shirt*"; My favorite is where the student in the center asks students in the circle individually "Do you like ---?" until they get a "Yes, I do."

5. **Shopping games:**

1. **Blackjack:** Split the class into teams of about 4 or 5 students. Print LOTS of picture cards that represent what the students will buy. Place the cards on the board, and write the 'price' of each item on the chalkboard behind the card. Tell the students they have a set budget; they are trying to get as close to \$0 without going over. Have each group take turns announcing things they would like to buy using the phrase you have taught them ("~ please." "Can I have ~?" "I want a ~." "I'd like ~." etc.) and dramatically reveal the price of the item they have selected. The team that get's closest to 0 without going over budget wins.
2. **\*Haggle game:** You need lots of play money, or something that you can use in place of it (poker chips). Pick some students to be the sellers; the rest of the class are shoppers. Give the sellers small picture cards that represent the things they sell. Shoppers ask the sellers for things to buy ("Do you have ~?" "~ please.") and the sellers announce their price ("Six dollars."). The shoppers and sellers can haggle ("Six? No no no. Four dollars!"). Give the shoppers a list of things they have to buy, or announce that you've selected a secret card which, if bought, means instant victory. The winner among the sellers is the one with the most money when time is up.
6. **\*Rearrange game:** You need multiple sets of big picture cards, one for each team. Lay the cards out on the floor. Teams must listen to the words you say, take the appropriate cards, and arrange them in the order you said them once you say "Ok...GO!" For example, if you do this with colors, you would say "Red...green...blue...yellow...OK GO!" Each group would arrange their red, green, blue, and yellow cards in a pre-determined place and, when done, raise their hands for you to check. As you proceed, use more and more words so it becomes more difficult to remember all of it.



- 7. Gesture game:** This is like charades. Split the class into teams. Take a representative from each team and show them the picture card of the thing they have to act out (animal, job profession, sport, action, etc.). Tell them to go back to their groups. When you say “GO,” the representatives try to act out the word without speaking until someone from their team raises their hand. Ask the HRT to call out which student raised their hand first; if that student can say the correct word in English, their team gets a point. Tell everyone they are not supposed to watch what the other groups are doing. Repeat as necessary, making sure each kid gets a chance to be the person who gestures.

## Songs

Genki English uses a lot of songs in its English curriculum (see “Resources” below), and Hi, Friends/Eigo Note have lots of chants a few songs in their CDs. Here are a few basic songs all ALTs should now:

- **Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes:** A classic. Look it up online if you don’t know all the lyrics/ forgot the melody. After you introduce it to the kids and sing it for a couple classes, see how much they learned by playing Simon Says with commands like “Simon says touch your...nose!”
- **ABC song:** Be careful! The Japanese version is a little different. “L-M-N-O-P” is “L-M-N <next stanza> O-P...” Make sure you listen to the CD before you do it in class so you know which version it is.
- **Numbers Song (a.k.a “10 steps” or “7 steps”):** 1,2,3,4,5,6,7...1,2,3,4,5,6,7...8,9,10!...8,9,10!... 1,2,3,4,5,6,7. Look up “seven steps” on Youtube to hear the melody. After the kids know the melody and words, erase some of the numbers and replace them with gestures e.g. everyone doesn’t say “Five” but instead does a karate chop!
- **Sunday, Monday, Tuesday...:** I am fairly confident that most of the kids learn this song in the lower grade levels in music class or something. If you need the song, it’s on Eigo Note 1 CD #57
- **Old Chants:** While some of the chants from the old 5th/6th grade textbook, Eigo Note, are pretty awkward, some of them are really catchy! Almost all of these chants got thrown out when the new Hi, Friends textbook came in, which is a shame. See if you can’t find some old Eigo Note CDs lying around and use these gems in some of your lower level classes:
  - **Eigo Note 2 CD#57: My Daily Routine!** My personal favorite. Kids learn the action words for the things they do everyday, which makes it perfect for coming up with cool dance moves. I usually teach this at the end of the year for all the lower grade levels and they go CRAZY! Get up, Get up, I get up! Study, study, I study!....
  - **Eigo Note 1 CD#34: Do you have a green cap?** Good for 3rd/4th grade after you have taught them words for clothes and the phrase “Do you have?” for a couple classes. There is clapping action in this song!
  - **Eigo Note 1 CD#42: What do you want?** Good for middle 2nd to 4th grade to teach “What do you want?” and “--please!” More clapping action!



# ENGLISH AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (EJHS)

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## Introduction to Junior High School English Education

Most likely, you will find that at junior high school, you have much less control over the classes. Whereas ideal team teaching with a JTE results in an even or near-even split of classroom activities and control, reality will be different. Sometimes your role may be nothing more than a tape-recorder, and sometimes the JTE may ask you to plan and run the entire class. Above all, be prepared for anything and keep a positive attitude!

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## A Typical Day at Junior High School

While every school will be a bit different, a typical work day will be something like this.

1. Arriving: I recommend arriving early to make a good impression. Before stepping into the staff room, put a big smile on your face and be prepared to say “Ohayo Gozaimasu!” in a bright and genki voice.
2. Morning meeting: Sometimes there will be a teacher meeting. These take place in the staff room with the teachers seated at their desks. I recommend listening in even though most of it won’t concern you. Occasionally, though, you’ll pick up some important information about what’s going on at school, or maybe some juicy tidbit about a student caught smoking.
3. Free periods: You will have some free periods during which you don’t have a scheduled class. Use these to plan the next class with your JTE, prepare a class activity, make materials for English Board, or study Japanese. Try to look busy even if you are dying of boredom. This will make a good impression on your coworkers.
4. Class time: You should receive a copy of your school’s weekly class schedule or know where in the staff room it is posted. If it’s not posted and you don’t get a copy, ASK! Note what periods the English classes are and mentally prepare yourself so you aren’t caught off guard by a JTE saying “Class now!”
5. Lunch: Some schools have you eat in the staff room, but most prefer you to eat with the students. This is a great chance to get to know the students as the atmosphere is very relaxed. If they’re too shy to talk to you, break the ice with some simple questions.
6. Lunch Break: While occasionally you may be asked to spend lunch break helping students prepare for English interviews or recitation contests, usually you’ll have this time free to do what you like.

7. **Cleaning time:** This is another great way to get to know your students. If you're not assigned a place to clean, go find somewhere to help out. Observe what everyone is doing and find a place to jump in.
8. **Leaving:** Before you leave, say "Osaki ni shitsurei shimasu" in your genki ALT voice. If the principal is in his/her (okay, his) office, stop by the door and say it to him as well.

At junior high school, many ALTs choose to participate in club activities. Some focus on just one, and your schools may prefer this, whereas others rotate to interact with as many students as possible. Find out what clubs interest you and ask if you can join. However, if you value your personal time and prefer to go home after school, that's fine too! You can find other, less time-consuming ways to reach out to students and the community.

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## **Class Flow**

Here is how a typical junior high school class plays out.

1. **Greetings:** Greet the students with the time-appropriate greeting (good morning, hello, good afternoon). Ask some questions, typically "How are you?" "How's the weather?" "What day is it?" "What's the date today?" Sometimes I mix it up by asking different questions like "What time is it?" or asking them to spell the day. Keep them on their toes, but keep it simple.
2. **Warm up:** Not every JTE uses a warm up, but I think it's a good way to get the kids relaxed and ready to enjoy English class. If your JTE doesn't do this, ask if you can! See ideas for some warm ups on the next page.
3. **The grammar point of the day:** Usually this will be the JTE talking, and your role will be to act out a skit with the JTE or have the students repeat after you.
4. **Activity to practice the grammar point:** This may be where the JTE has asked you to prepare an activity beforehand. If so, it's your time to shine! If not, make a role for yourself as much as possible. If there is a worksheet, help the JTE pass them out and patrol the class to check students answers.
5. **Wrap-up:** Say "Goodbye" and "See you (later/next time/whenever)" to the students. Ask the JTE if he/she needs any help carrying something, and walk back to the staff room together. This is a good chance to discuss how the class went.

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## Warm Ups

- 1. What am I?:** The students ask a series of questions (“What color are you?” “Are you an animal?” “Can you fly?” etc) to guess what you are. It may be slow going at first, but this activity gets better the more often you use it because students get used to asking good questions. Sometimes I bring a sticker of the thing to give to the student who guesses it. One variation of this for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year students is “What is it?”. This version makes them practice the question structure “Is it ...?” instead of “Are you ... ?” If they aren’t cooperating, make everyone stand up; the students that ask a question get to sit down.
- 2. Nazo nazo (riddles):** Write a riddle on the board and read it to the students. Let them work in pairs to figure out the answer. You can even use Japanese riddles so long as you are asking in English! Here are some of my favorites:

Q: It is a food. It has nine colors. What is it? A: school lunch (because kyushoku means both school lunch and nine colors)

Q: It is an animal. It’s in the sky. What is it? A: a fly (hae, because hae in katakana appears in the kanji for sky)

Q: It is a sport. You play it with your grandfather. What is it? A: Softball (Sofu to boru or ball with my grandfather)

You can search online for a lot more. Also feel free to use your childhood favorites. One of mine is - Q: Mary’s mother has four children. The first child’s name is April. The second child’s name is May. The third child’s name is June. What’s the fourth child’s name? A: Mary. Tongue Twisters Use your childhood favorites or look up some online.

- 3. Parachute Man :** This is the same as hangman, but it doesn’t horrify the kids as much. Draw stick figure connected to a parachute with five strings. For each letter guessed wrong, erase one string
- 4. Hot Potato:** Close your eyes while the kids pass around a ball. When you say “STOP!” the student holding the ball has to answer a question.

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## Activities and Games

While it’s great if you can make a completely original activity from scratch, the reality is that you don’t always have the time (and energy!). On the next page are some activities and games that can be used for almost anything you want to teach.

- 1. Janken Card Game:** This is a simple game that all grade levels get excited about. Have some small picture cards for whatever you're teaching. Each kid gets 5 or so and wanders around the classroom doing rock paper scissors. The kids do the dialogue you've taught and the loser gives a card to the winner. The goal is to collect as many cards as possible. You can let the kids play for as long as you like, and it can be used for a variety of grammar points ("What do you have for breakfast?" "What's your favorite OO?" "Do you like to OO?" "Have you ever OO?" and so on). If you'd like, have volunteers present their cards after the game (for example - ALT: "What do you have for breakfast?" Student: "I have rice and juice and natto and a panda.") Another variation is to incorporate a writing element so it's not just speaking; at the end of the game have the students write a sentence in their notebooks based on what cards they have.
- 2. Battleship:** Instead of numbers and letters, split a sentence in half and put the halves along different sides of a battleship grid. Print two copies for each student, or put two on one large sheet. Tell the kids how many ships to make and what sizes (one ship four boxes long and two ships three boxes long works well). Students work in pairs taking turns making a sentence by connecting the words on the y axis with word on the x axis to sink each other's ships. Google "battleship worksheet" for some blank templates.
- 3. Typhoon:** Split the students into teams of 4-5 people. Draw a blank 5x5 or 6x6 grid on the board with letters across on side and numbers on the other (for more advanced classes, consider using 10/20/30/... instead of 1/2/3/... or 13/30/14/40/... lots of variations possible here). Have the same grid on a piece of paper that only you see with point values for each box. Also include a couple of Ts (typhoon) and GTs (give typhoon). Ask a question, and the student who answers correctly chooses a box. Refer to your sheet of paper and announce the point value of that box. The team gets that number of points. T means they lose all or X number of points, and GT means they can choose a team to lose all or X number of points. This game is great for an end-of-semester review.
- 4. Pair Search:** Students search for another student under a certain set of conditions. When they find their match, they can sit down. For example, half the students are given a card or piece of paper with a schedule, and the other half is given a fake concert ticket for a certain day. The students with the ticket have to invite other students to the concert until they find someone who can accept.
- 5. Q&A Row Game:** (Also a great warm up activity!) All students stand up. Ask any question. Students raise their hand to answer. If the answer is correct, the student can choose "row" or "column" and all the other students in either that row or that column can sit down as well. Play until the whole class is sitting.

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## What To Do From Now

You have a few days before classes begin. Use them wisely to get off to a good start.

You will probably be asked to do a self-introduction for your first class, so get started on that. Check with your JTE to see if you can use PowerPoint. Ask the JTE about what the students have studied so you can tailor your speech appropriately. Bring any props you brought from home, and plan some fun activities to make it last the full period. If you're having trouble coming up with some, ask sempai ALTs in your area (or on Facebook!) for ideas.

If you have an English Board, consider making the first one about yourself and/or your home country.

Prepare some of your first elementary school lessons.

Study the textbooks; become familiar with what the students have already studied.

Since your coworkers will be busy once classes start again, take advantage of the relaxed summer vacation atmosphere in the staff room and strike up some conversations. This will make a fantastic first impression.

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## Resources

The internet is a deep and vast ocean, and many ALTs of both the past and present have posted their ideas on it. Surfing the web, you will probably stumble across all sorts of great resources for teaching ideas. Here are a few of the resources that ALTs come back to again and again:

MES English: A great resource for flashcards, playing cards, and even worksheets. FREE.

<http://www.mes-english.com/>

Genki English: Apparently it's the key to success in Elementary School. An English program primarily focused on learning English through songs. There are plenty of picture cards and game ideas here too. Some of the downloadable material costs money; make sure your predecessor doesn't already have a password for this before you put any money down.

<http://genkienglish.net/>

Englipedia: There are lesson plans and games here for 5th and 6th grade elementary, junior high school, and high school. Information is categorized by textbook, and almost every JHS English textbook used in Japan is covered here. FREE.

<http://www.jhsenglipediaproject.com/Pages/HS.aspx>

Planet Eigo: A book offered by AJET for ALTs. In addition to lesson, game, and project ideas, there is some interesting literature that will serve as a crash-course in pedagogy. Before you buy it, make sure your predecessor doesn't already have a copy. The entire text is bilingual, so your JTE can use it too. Costs 4,200 yen when ordered online from Genki English.

<http://genkienglish.net/planeteigo.htm>

Other ALTs: One of the best resources possible! When you need help, ask ALTs in your area to share their materials and ideas. Sometimes a simple post on Facebook is all you need to solve your problems. (Be discrete when using Facebook at work; though you are using it as a tool for your job, some teachers might mistake it for you slacking off.)

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### **Afterward**

There are many more pages we could write about being an ALT; what we have written here is only a springboard for you to start. Do some reading, ask your friends, and keep a journal so you can reflect on how each class went, closely examining yourself and pushing yourself to be the best ALT you can be!

Good luck, and have fun!

Emily and Erik