

Growing up in America, we are taught that individualism is vital to success. In Japan, the culture is entirely different and is deeply rooted in courtesy and consideration of others. I plan to bridge the gap between these ideologies by being a cultural ambassador. In college, I met my closest friend, who was of Japanese descent. Tragically, she passed away last November. However, I was fortunate to have such a fantastic encounter with another cultural representative, and I want to offer that opportunity to Japanese students too. Teaching in Japan would be an absolute honor and a privilege to develop connections that transcend language.

The opportunity of being an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in the JET Program excites my soul. The support offered by the program is unparalleled, and with groups like the JET Alumni Association, I can continue to support future JETs. From a young age, I respected teachers who went out of their way to understand me, and I plan to follow in their footsteps. JET will allow me to experience Japanese culture and language, guide students in their English language learning path, and cultivate a space for mutual respect.

When I attended the University of Wisconsin – Stout, I was a Resident Advisor for two years and gained an affinity for guiding the youth. Although the job was mentally, emotionally, and physically demanding, since I was responsible for myself and 35 students, despite this, I loved it. I pride myself on being an empathetic, charismatic, and engaging person who aims to connect with every student. I can easily adjust to new environments and people, and I invite those changes with an open mind. I took two introductory Japanese courses in college, where I began learning the language and studied Japanese customs and culture. In addition, we were given a pen pal from Japan, and our friendship continues to blossom. I would love to incorporate this with my Japanese students if selected for the JET Program.

I acquired my TEFL Certificate as a Mentor and English tutor from the Intensive English Program (IEP) at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. I met with international students from Japan and China, all of whom had varying levels of English comprehension. This aspect made the sessions challenging as I needed to accommodate them as individuals and as a cohesive team. I had students role-play different situations or had them teach me something in English. My students were incredibly competitive, and I used this to my advantage by facilitating debates and discussions. As a teacher, I applied knowledge of anime, painting, and video games to communicate with my students through activities, events, and exercises. Recently I began volunteering at SEA Literacy in Milwaukee, WI. It's a non-profit organization that provides tutoring services to refugee students ages 6 to 23. Each week I meet with a new student whose English proficiency varies immensely. It's challenging but gratifying, and I spend my spare time building exercises or lesson plans for the students. Both experiences allow me to help students synthesize information and bring joy and meaning into their English language education.

Being selected for the ALT Position will not only provide me with the qualities to become a well-rounded individual, but it will also allow me to nurture relationships between two vastly different cultures. I am a published author and will use this accomplishment to create a space for Japanese students to explore English through stories and poems. I am confident of my qualifications, ambition, creativity, and relevance to the JET Program. I wish to use this experience to foster my future goals in higher education, either becoming an English professor or residing in Japan if given a chance. I want to experience Japanese life and culture firsthand, whether in the countryside or the cities. I am eager to fill this remarkable role, not simply as a teacher but as a cultural representative for the students of Japan.