

# Japan Exchange Essay

Ochanomizu University  
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I have definitely learnt a lot since coming to complete exchange in Japan. I've had a lot of experiences. It's my first time living away from my parents independently, so I felt my independence grow each day. My Japanese is improving much faster than it did at home.

The first thing I noticed after moving to Japan is that my listening skills improved very quickly. Even though I had studied for 5 years before coming to Japan, I struggle to understand spoken Japanese and think of a response quickly. My responses can still be slow, but I noticed my listening comprehension improved greatly in only a few days. Now, even if I don't understand every word, I can clearly hear every sound that's being pronounced, and use context to understand what's being said. In this way, I'm quickly learning practical skills that help improve my Japanese much faster than from reading from a textbook. Thanks to the University's Japanese culture classes, I was able to learn about things like Ikebana, Japanese food, festivals and more. So with my Japanese skills, my understanding and appreciation for Japanese culture strongly deepened.



Exchange life has had a lot of difficulties, but I think these difficulties are helping me become a stronger, smarter and more independent person. Australian culture is the polar opposite of Japanese culture in my opinion. For example, in Australian University, we have only 3 classes and due dates are less strict. In Japan, I'm taking 9 classes, and have many strict due dates all the time, so I'm learning a new skill in staying organised. There were also times where I felt a little lonely and found it hard to make Japanese friends. As time passed, I gradually became more skilled at making Japanese friends, and I think I will be able to carry the skills of making friends from

different cultures all throughout my life, so it was very valuable.

Thank you to the teachers and staff who helped my exchange run smoothly. I want to thank my advisor, Wang Yiqiong, for always extending a smiley face and a helping hand. I also want to thank Sakurai Sensei, who was a constant source of support, understanding and always provided a kind and non-judgemental answer for any questions I've had. The staff of Otowakan have also always offered support and concern for my well being, and always do their best to explain everything in simple Japanese so that I could understand. Finally, I would like to thank Tawara Sensei, who brought laughter to every class.

I have had a lovely and fulfilling experience at Ochanomizu University so far.