

Teaching:

What is teaching at the Wakakusa English School like?

At the Wakakusa English School, teachers are given free reign to design their classes within the bounds of the curriculum. This includes planning classes, designing or creating props, flash cards, games, and teaching materials that suit their classroom goals.

What is teaching at the public Junior High Schools like?

By design, Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) work together with licensed Japanese Teachers of English (JTE) as team-teachers. The exact nature and dynamic of this team teaching varies somewhat depending on the needs and individual preferences of the school and/or the JTE's teaching style. Typically the ALT will be focused on communicative, spoken English and work on intelligibility, pronunciation, and intonation.

While dependent on the role each teacher has, lessons are likely to be planned in advance by the Japanese Teacher of English. However, as native English speakers, ALTs often take the lead in helping students develop a more natural pronunciation and occasionally helping the Japanese teacher to come up with games and activities for the classes.

In addition to attending regular English classes, the ALT participates in some after-school events, such as school festivals and sports days, and Speech Contest and Proficiency Test preparation. They may also opt to be involved in after-school club activities (sports, art, martial arts, etc.). These after-school programs offer good opportunities to speak with students outside of the classroom setting and to get to know them on a more personal level. Participation in the club activities is at the discretion of the teacher, but is strongly encouraged.

It is quite unique, especially for a rural city, to have a full-time ALT in every junior high school. It is also unique to the program that all of the ALTs in Tamura city are Christians who live together in community as a missions-oriented team. The program is not just a job, and Wakakusa will often require teachers to do community-related events and activities. By serving the people of Tamura, ALTs are also serving Christ. In this way, teachers can be salt and light to the Japanese people in the community. Some examples are three English camps in the fall, and Christmas or Easter programs offered at the community center.