

# WE LOVE



# NEW ZEALAND

## My Experience in New Zealand

CR11NO.5 Nagisa Okazaki

I experienced many invaluable things during my stay in New Zealand. Through interacting with many people, I was able to deeply understand new cultures, customs, and values that are different from those in Japan. Initially, I felt quite confused because almost everything including the language, the seasons, and even the daily meals were so different from what I was used to. However, I would like to share some aspects of New Zealand that I found particularly impressive.

First, I was struck by the role of religion and tradition in daily life. I vividly remember our first meal in New Zealand. Before we started eating, everyone held hands to surround the table, closed our eyes, and offered a prayer of thanks. My host mother explained that they do this before special meals. At first, I was a little confused because we do not have this custom in Japan, but I found it to be a very interesting and warm tradition. Furthermore, when we visited Massey High School, the students welcomed us according to Maori culture. Inside the school, I noticed many photographs of people who had contributed to the school but had passed away. In Japan, it is rare to see so many portraits lined up, so it was very impressive. While Japanese people also respect their predecessors, I felt that in New Zealand, the feeling of gratitude toward them is so strong that people never forget to thank them.

Second, I noticed a fascinating difference in human relationships. New Zealand is a very diverse country, with people from various backgrounds, religions, and native languages. Despite these differences, everyone seemed very close. I enjoyed how actively greetings were exchanged even strangers at school or in the neighborhood would say "Hello" or "Hi" as I passed them. I began to think about why this atmosphere is different from Japan, and I noticed that fewer people were using AirPods or looking at their smartphones while walking. Because they were not distracted by their devices, they seemed more interested in the people around them. I felt that this openness makes it much easier to get along with others.

Finally, I learned the importance of communication. At the beginning, I struggled to speak English fluently, which made me hesitant to speak up. However, I realized that it is crucial to initiate a conversation myself, even if my English is not perfect. For example, I started talking to others when the food was delicious or when I noticed a cultural difference. These small efforts helped the conversation spread and allowed me to build bonds with my host family and school buddy.

We had a wonderful time swimming in the pool, playing with pets, and visiting famous spots. The meals were delicious, and I was surprised by how large the portions were. Overall, my time in New Zealand was amazing. This experience has motivated me to study English harder so that I can return one day to meet my host family and friends again.



## My Study Abroad Experience in New Zealand

CR11 NO.10 NAME Runa Kondo

My study abroad experience in New Zealand was my first time going overseas, and every day was full of new discoveries and challenges. Through many experiences, I could not only create one of the most unforgettable memories of my life but also understand cultural differences between New Zealand and Japan.



After arriving in New Zealand, I had many exciting experiences. I went to the two beaches. These sands were each different, white sand and black sand. Both of the waves were bigger than I expected, and badly sunburned. I was surprised that the sun was stronger than in Japan. I also visited a museum. Looking at various exhibitions on the history of War, I realized that I should go to the War museum in Japan as well.

School life in New Zealand was very different from Japan. There was a snack time, and then students ate some snacks and talked with friends. What impressed me was how students actively participated in class. They asked questions, and talked freely with teachers. One of the best memories was participating in a Māori welcome ceremony. During the Māori ceremony, boys and men are greeted by each other by touching their noses, not doing handshakes. It was new to me, so interesting.

I want to introduce the differences between New Zealand and Japan, which surprised me. In Japan, buses always stop automatically if someone is waiting at the bus stop. However, in New Zealand, I have to raise my hands to signal the driver, or the bus will not stop! Also, it was interesting that what we call the first floor in Japan is called the "Ground floor(G)" in New Zealand, and the second floor is called the first floor.



Through staying with my host family, they gave me many opportunities to experience nature. I was able to see animals such as sheep, horses, and even peacocks. In addition to this nature experience, I was able to eat many kinds of food such as Chinese food, and Marmite which is a traditional dark spread. I was taken to a sushi restaurant. The appearance and taste were different from in Japan, but there were things like teriyaki rolls

and katsu, and they were very delicious. Also we made hand-rolled sushi together. It was very exciting!

These experiences I gained in New Zealand will be my strength. I will never forget and will always be grateful to all the warm and kind people I met.



## Jump into the World

CR11 NO 19 NAME Tsutsui Sakura

I joined this study program to improve my English skill. However, there was more than just that. This experience was very beneficial for me.

In high school, I was really surprised about the difference in education between New Zealand and Japan. In our country, we usually learn a variety of subjects such as math, social studies and science. Though, in New Zealand, students take only classes they are interested in, so there are unique subjects like films, photography, art history, and so on. Also, they search about future jobs and decide future goals in the class. In other words, they are doing their best to achieve their clear goal. My buddy was the same age, but I was impressed because she thinks about her future better than me. Of course, I like both education, so that is to say it is very significant to study with a purpose.



In addition, I spent a very good time with my best host family. I usually go shopping on weekends in Japan, so the opportunity to feel the air of nature is a rare case. However, their town has a lot of beautiful nature. Thus, I interacted with many kinds of animals. That was my special experience. Also, my host family does not have a father, so their family consists of a mother and her daughter. Even though the family is a little small, they enjoy their time such as cooking, drawing, hanging out, and so on. They may think family time is really important.

In Japan, people always look busy, so I think Japanese people do not have enough time to be with each family so much. Therefore, I want Japanese people to live more freely and treasure their own family.

In New Zealand, there are lots of famous animals like kiwi and penguins. I am especially sure that sheep are familiar. I often found their activity there. First, sheep were grazed in a variety of places. Therefore, we can see them so easily. Second, there were many products that used sheep. For instance, the souvenirs of sheep like stuffed animals and key chains. Additionally, clothes made from sheep wool were very popular there. Just as Japanese people treasure their own culture, New Zealanders also cherish their culture, particularly sheep. I was fascinated by their culture.



In conclusion, studying abroad is not just to practice English. By interacting with foreign people directly, we can learn and understand each new culture better. It was definitely a nice experience for me. I could make the best memories thanks to my best host family. I cannot say thank you enough to them. I think that this good experience will be the start of visiting and understanding other foreign cultures.

## Discovering New Perspectives

CR12 NO.04 NAME Hina Ishida

I'm going to write about my experience staying in New Zealand. Through this stay, I noticed a lot of differences between Japan and New Zealand and developed new interests.

First, I will write about the school life of Massey high school. There were a lot of surprising things for me. For example, the relationship between teachers and students is closer than in Japan. There is also a break time separate from lunchtime, and the campus is very large. And I took many classes with my buddy. There were classes similar to Japan, such as history, math, and English. However, there were also some classes quite different from Japan such as art history and photography. My favorite class among the classes I took was "fabric". In this class, students make clothes and learn how to process the fabric. It was so interesting to practice using a sewing machine with my buddy. And I was very surprised because we don't learn such specialized skills at Japanese public schools. I thought it was great that they can learn these skills without having to go to a specialized school or something similar.

Second, I strongly felt the closeness of family through my homestay. My host families often talk with their families on the phone in the evening. And they often ask me if I didn't call my family. I don't place much importance on talking to my family on the phone, so I learned about differences in values and culture from living with my host family. Also, I was surprised by the grandeur of the birthday party. At that time, a lot of relatives came and celebrated their birthday. It was also a new experience for me to have all their relatives gathered together for a birthday party.

Third, I will write about Maori. There was a strong Maori influence. Before visiting New Zealand, I thought I couldn't touch Maori culture unless I did something special. However, it was incorrect. Maori cultures were many of them in my immediate surroundings. For example, my host family's neighbor was Maori and she taught me some Maori phrases. Also, I was also able to see the Harakeke in person, which I had researched as part of my preliminary studies.

Finally, I will write about what I felt most strongly during this stay. This is the high food self-sufficiency rate. I was surprised to find that everywhere I went, all the food was from New Zealand. In contrast, Japan faces the challenge of relying heavily on food imports. Before visiting New Zealand, I wasn't interested in farming so much. But now, I want to learn more about farming and foods.

This stay gave me a chance to learn about the differences between two countries and new interests. It was short but so great and a fruitful time for me. I will not forget this experience and will use it to my advantage in my future life and studies.



## Discoveries During My Study Abroad in New Zealand

CR12 NO.17 NAME KONISHI MINORI

I explored the question, "Do personal color and body frame analyses influence people's clothing choices?" as my assignment. Through my research, I found that many people wear clothes that are comfortable and easy to move in. I interviewed my school buddy, her friends and also observed people's fashion in New Zealand. As a result, I found that most people's clothing choices were similar to the answer to my research question. For example, my buddy usually wears a T-shirt and pants on weekends. It is the same for her friends. Also I observed that younger people wore shorts and cropped T-shirts, many mothers with children wore T-shirts and legging, and older people wore dresses.

The five days at Massey High School were a great inspiration for me and an opportunity that I could not experience in Japan. I found many similarities between Japan and New Zealand such as teachers usually use slides in their lessons, students use computers for their assignments and there were not many school rules. For example, I took Math, English, Art, History, Biology, and Chemistry, and teachers used slides in their lessons except in Math and Art classes. I also asked my buddy what rules there were at there. She said there were no rules except for the school uniform. In fact, the students wore nail polish and makeup. Also, students were free to choose their hairstyle and hair color. On the other hand, there were also many differences. For example, classes did not always start on time, there were no clearing time, and the school had a stronger connection to Māori culture. In particular, the students were doing something in Māori like a prayer when first period started. I felt schools in New Zealand value and protect their culture.

It was a really great pleasure for me to spend time with my host family, who were wonderful people. When I met them for the first time, I was very nervous but they greeted me warmly. My host mother and father made dishes for me and my friend every day, and all of them were very delicious. Every weekend, they took us many places such as a museum, a zoo, Auckland and farm festival that is named Kumeu Show. In particular, at Kumeu Show, I saw many sheep, chickens, and baby goats, so I think I was able to have a unique experience. In addition, I talked with them a lot such as Japanese food, difference in education between Japan and New Zealand, and family. My best memory out of all of them was visiting the beach. The sunset, waves, and sea. Everything was really, really beautiful moment. However, that was not the only beautiful thing. At the beach, my host father, host mother, and their daughter were playing together, and that was the most beautiful to me. Seeing them made me realize that I had also been raised with a lot of love and care by my family. So I thought that I should express my gratitude to my family more often and try to repay them for everything they have done for me.



## My Debut Abroad

CR12 NO.18 NAME Satake Shiori

This was the first time for me to travel abroad. I didn't know much about New Zealand because it wasn't a familiar country for me. But I experienced many things there and want to look back on them.

Firstly, the school exchange. In high school, my buddy supported me a lot. At first, it was hard to keep talking but we became friends by continuing easy, short conversation. At lunch time, I could talk to my buddy's friends too. Also, there were many classes that YIS doesn't have. For example, photography and economics. At math class, I solved questions with my buddy. Although the English sentences were difficult, the questions were easy. It was memorable that students used calculators. I felt the difference in education between Japan and New Zealand.

Secondly, the homestay. My host family was very kind and took me to many places. I found some cultural differences. One of them was driving. The rules of driving are not as strict as in Japan. Drivers sent messages and let go of the handle. I was also surprised that my host mother showed my host father the video of her smartphone from an assistant driver's seat. I thought these were allowed because the traffic isn't heavier than in Japan. Every place which I visited was amazing. When I saw a beautiful beach, I was glad to come here. Also, meals are quite different from Japan. It is similar to American and British. I ate mainly sandwiches and snacks at lunch and had a hamburger or fish and chips at dinner. I remember that I was shocked when I was served foods with a lot of carbohydrates and sugar at the party. I also remember how happy I was when I ate Katsudon and drank miso soup at the food court. Furthermore, the accent was unique. The English of New Zealand was based on British English, but my host family and my buddy spoke with pronunciations which I had never learned. At first, it was difficult to communicate with them. But at the end of the day, I understand what they say easily. To improve English skill, it's important to keep practicing.

Finally, personal research. I searched the climate of New Zealand. It's quite different from Japan. For instance, daytime is longer than in Japan. I was impressed when I saw a morning mist on the way to school. I envy children in New Zealand because they can play outside longer. Also, whether at noon or in the evening, the sunshine was strong like one in summer. I sensed ultraviolet light so sunscreen was necessary. However, it was cold in the morning and evening rather than hot. This climate is difficult to explain by using the Japanese climate. I had to be careful of the weather. It was changeable. One day, it rained three or four times.

Through this visit, I experienced many things which I can't do in Japan. Moreover, I made many new foreign friends. New Zealand has beautiful nature, clean towns, and kind people. I can't know all about them at one time. So I really want to visit New Zealand once more and I hope to see my host family and my friends again.



## A Life-Changing Experience in New Zealand

CR12 NO.27 NAME Nakajima Rian

At school, the students and teachers really cared about us. My English is not very good, but everyone listened to me and spoke to me kindly. My buddy is a Muslim, and it was Ramadan, a time when people don't eat or drink from sunrise to sunset. I didn't know much about religion before, so it was a very special experience for me. In New Zealand, there are many people from different countries and cultures, so it is normal to see many different kinds of people.

Also, I noticed that students in New Zealand use calculators in math class, and formulas are written on tests. In Japan, we memorize formulas and do math without calculators, so I was very surprised. When I asked why, they said they care more about thinking than speed. Also, in real life, people use calculators for work and money. I understand that, but students in New Zealand use calculators even for simple math, so sometimes I was faster than them when I didn't use a calculator. I'm still not sure which way is better.

During my homestay, my host family treated me like a member of their family and showed me wonderful scenery. It was a life-changing experience, and I cannot thank them enough. In New Zealand, water fees are very high, so I had to take showers for only 10 minutes and be careful not to use too much water. I was surprised that people in New Zealand don't take showers every day and only do laundry about twice a week.

Another difference is that each person prepares their own meal and eats at their own time, so I felt that it helps develop independence. However, I also think that saying "Itadakimasu" together at the same time, as we do in Japan, is a beautiful custom.

I researched the level of happiness in New Zealand before going there. New Zealand is known for having a high level of happiness in the world. I focused on freedom in education, and safety in New Zealand. When I actually went there, I was surprised at how much more freedom schools in New Zealand have compared to Japan. I think it is good for developing students' creativity and independence. However, I also felt that there are some negative aspects, such as students being late and eating snacks during class. People there are calm and very kind, and I think that makes the country safe. One time, my friend dropped something in the street and didn't notice, but a local person called out and picked it up for her. Also, people often say things like "How are you?", "Bless you," and "Have a good day." and I thought that was very nice. I realized that small things made me happy during this school exchange, and that they are connected to the happiness in New Zealand.

Through this experience, I want to see many places I don't know. I want to be a cabin attendant in the future. Cabin attendants need to understand many cultures and nationalities, so going to New Zealand was a really good experience for me because I could learn about them. I want to improve my language skills and learn more about the world.



## My findings in New Zealand

CR12 NO.37 NAME Sakura Matsumoto

My ten-day stay in New Zealand became an unforgettable treasure. During my stay there, I was surprised by many things that were different from Japan, but I also found some similarities. Every day was full of new discoveries, and it was a great learning experience for me.

I spent one week taking classes with my school buddy at Massey High School. The first thing that surprised me was the free atmosphere of the school. Even after class started, students were walking slowly or chatting, which was very different from Japanese schools and very interesting to see. The style of the classes was also different. In Japan, students usually listen to the teacher, but in New Zealand, many classes involve students working on their own laptops. I felt that this style helps students develop their thinking skills and independence, and I thought Japan should learn from this. It was powerful to see students being so proactive, asking questions immediately whenever they had a doubt. Also, by seeing Maori prayer spaces and Maori sings around the school, I was able to learn about the culture that New Zealand values.

My host family was an Indian family. The biggest difference from Japan was how much they valued "family time" after school and on weekends. In Japan, we often spend time on our smartphones or playing games even when we are at home. However, in New Zealand, we went to the park after school and went to the beach together on weekends. I felt that they spent their time in a much more meaningful way than we do in Japan, and I really want to try this lifestyle back home. For dinner, they served an authentic Indian curry with many spices. It was quite different from the sweet Japanese curry-more like a soup-and to be honest, it didn't always suit my taste. However, this is also an experience that we can only have by studying abroad. Everything, including the food, became a great lesson for me.

For personal research on "English differences," I felt that New Zealand English was not as different from American English as I had expected. However, the Maori slang I learned from my buddy was very fresh and exciting. One expression that stayed in my mind was "lock in." My buddy told me that they use it when they want to tell people around them, "I'm going to focus now!" I was very happy to learn casual slang used by people of my own generation, rather than just the formal expressions in textbooks.

The things I learned during these ten days mean a lot to me. I want to take the experiences and the proactive attitude I saw in New Zealand and use them in my future school life and English studies.



## My unexpected journey in New Zealand

CR13 NO.03 NAME Anju Enomoto

I experienced a lot of things through this overseas training in New Zealand. There were many things that surprised me. Indeed, I was very nervous on the first day I went to Massey HS. But I didn't have to worry. My buddy and everyone spoke to me. There was a girl who liked Japanese culture such as anime, comic books. Also there was a boy who wore a T-shirt written in Japanese. I was glad because there were many people who like Japanese. It was difficult for me to listen to what students and teachers said at first. But when I got used to listening in English, it's not perfect, but it became possible. I could not only listen but also ask some questions.

During the homestay, many surprising things also happened. I could learn not only New Zealand culture but also Indian culture. Both cultures were interesting. I ate curry 4 times a day during my homestay. Their ingredients were different every day. For example, beans, roasted vegetables, row vegetables and chicken. The most interesting thing was a lot of spices that are used for Indian curry. I saw that there were approximately 20 spices on the shelf. Also I knew that there are many ways to eat curry. I ate curry with chapati, nan, and rice. All of these were awesome. That's why I ate curry many times. Other than that, most people in New Zealand use cars made from Japan. Such as Toyota, Nissan and Honda. I was very surprised that the announcement of the car wasn't different from Japan. (ETC card hasn't been inserted yet). In addition, it was impossible for me to cross the road. Because there are no crosswalks as far as I saw. In Japan, there are many crosswalks everywhere. So I had to wait until cars stop or leave. I realized that Japan needs many crosswalks because of its huge population. Actually, Japanese population is 24 times more than New Zealand's.

Education style in New Zealand was different from Japanese. Students in New Zealand did not write in their own notebooks. Instead of it, students use their own laptops. There is 1 blackboard per 1 classroom. But teachers don't use the blackboard at all. Therefore, it can be said everything is addressed in their laptop. Also, I noticed that the amount of homework in New Zealand was less than Japanese homework. They do assignment after teacher explained while taking classes. Most of time they have classes are used for doing assignments. In YIS, grades and scores of the tests are treated secretly. In contrast to YIS, these are expressed clearly in Massy HS. Hard working students can wear yellow tie or sky blue tie in New Zealand. I thought it is a good idea to motivate students.



kia ora from the land of nature and warm people

CR13 NO. 8 NAME Kiyoi Ayaka

I had such a precious time in New Zealand. This was my first time studying abroad. So I was so nervous. However, thanks to my host family, high school students and all the people I met, I felt at ease. Now I would like to talk about three things.

The first thing is school life. It was very different from Japan. Students can choose all of their classes by themselves, which I found interesting. For example, my buddy did not take P.E. and had music classes almost every day. Also, school finished earlier than in Japan, and even high school students had break time between classes. I was also surprised that we watched movies in class quite often. At first, I thought it was unusual, but I realized that it was one way of learning. Overall, I found the school system in New Zealand very flexible and interesting.



My host family was especially unforgettable. They were very kind to me. Every morning, they made me a delicious and hearty lunch box. Also they served hearty meals everyday. They were from India, and they cooked curry for us every day. Each curry has a little different taste. They were also vegetarians, and there were candles and decorations in the house that reflected their culture. Through this experience, I was able to learn not only about New Zealand culture but also about Indian culture, which was very interesting to me.

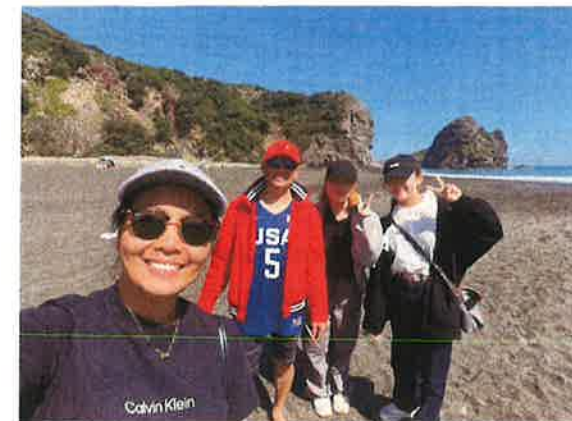
They also had a dog. It was quite old. It loved being around people and often snored while sleeping. There was also a six-year-old girl in the family who liked Japanese culture. I taught her how to play with ohajiki and how to make origami, and she seemed really happy. She enjoyed it so much that she kept asking me to play again. When it was time to say goodbye, I felt very sad. However, I heard that they might visit Japan next year, so I am really looking forward to seeing them again. I truly feel lucky that they were my host family.

The final thing is the difference in daily life between Japan and New Zealand. For example, some people walked around barefoot, which surprised me. Also, everyone kept dogs at home. In addition, most shops opened around 10 a.m. and closed at 5 p.m., and they were not open on weekends. I was surprised, but I gradually realized that people in New Zealand value a relaxed and balanced lifestyle.

In conclusion, staying in New Zealand had a very positive impact on me. There are many things I was able to learn that I could not have realized in Japan. This experience made me want to visit more countries. I will never forget this experience, and I hope to use what I learned in my future.

More than words

CR13 No.17 NAME Kokomi Shirai



Recently, I had the opportunity to visit New Zealand. Before my departure, I felt very anxious about communicating in an all-English environment. However, while I was there, I made many discoveries. This experience has greatly changed my way of thinking. It was a very important time for me to learn about a different culture and grow as a person.

First, I experienced a Japanese language class at a local school. In Japan, lessons use textbooks and notebooks, but in New Zealand, there were few writing activities and more movement-based activities. At first, I was surprised by the atmosphere, but I was able to participate happily. From this experience, I learned the differences in lesson styles.

Next, in the daily life of New Zealand, there were many moments where I felt differences in culture and how people interact. What remains particularly impressive is my visit to a church. The atmosphere of the worship felt very fresh to me. Also, I was impressed that many people talked to me naturally after the service and treated me with smiles despite meeting me for the first time. In Japan, I sometimes feel hesitant to talk to strangers, but in New Zealand, I did not feel such a wall and realized the closeness between people.

On the other hand, there were surprising cultural differences. For example, in Japan, it is common to refrain from talking on the phone in public transportation, but in New Zealand, I was very surprised to see people talking on the phone inside the train. From these experiences, I felt that human interaction is more familiar in New Zealand, and a culture of helping each other is rooted there.

In addition, through preliminary learning and activities on-site, I was able to learn about English expressions unique to New Zealand. For example, I noticed that "I reckon" is used with the same meaning as "I think,". I realized that there are many different expressions. At first, I was sometimes confused by unfamiliar expressions, but by touching the words actually used on-site, I realized that English changes according to the region and culture. I learned the importance of touching real English that is actually being used.



Through this experience in New Zealand, I was able to learn many things about human interaction and language. By touching the warmth of the local people, I realized the importance of not only words but also caring for other people. Also, I have become able to perceive language from a wider perspective. From now on, I want to make use of this experience and strive to improve my English skills, actively involve myself with people, and communicate my thoughts.

## My Wonderful Week in New Zealand

CR13 NO.18 NAME Yuki Takai

Last month, I went to New Zealand for a one-week study abroad program. It was my first time to go abroad for school training, so I was very nervous, but it became an unforgettable experience. New Zealand has beautiful nature and kind people. During this trip, I learned many things that I cannot learn in Japan.

Before the trip, I was surprised to see the information sheet about my host family. I thought I would stay with a "Kiwi" family, but my host family was originally from Sri Lanka. However, when I met them at the school, they welcomed me with big smiles. They were very warm and friendly. They spoke English fluently and told me many interesting things about their home country. One day, while we were driving to a beautiful place, we talked about the relationship between Japan and Sri Lanka. My host father told me that our countries have a long and strong friendship. He said that a long time ago, a Sri Lankan President helped Japan at an international conference. I did not know that at all, so I was very moved to hear about this history. Through this conversation, I realized that New Zealand is a multicultural country where people from all over the world live together and respect each other.

During this trip, I also focused on my research theme: "B Corp." In New Zealand, I was surprised to see the B Corp logo in many places. I found the mark not only on daily snacks at supermarkets but also on many souvenirs. Since I already had some knowledge about this system, it was a great opportunity for me to see how companies actually work for the environment and society in the real world. I realized that the idea of B Corp is very common in this country. This experience made me want to study more about how Japanese companies can use this system to improve our society.

On weekdays, I went to a local high school and took some classes. To be honest, the classes were difficult for me to understand perfectly, but I tried my best to communicate in English. We also had a traditional Maori ceremony at the school. I remember it well because I did a special greeting where we pressed our noses together. I was surprised at first, but I felt a warm and peaceful connection.

On the last day, I felt very sad to leave. My host family gave me a big hug and said, "Please come back again." This trip changed my life. Before I went there, I was afraid of speaking English, but now, I want to study it more to talk with people from various backgrounds. I will never forget this wonderful week.



## My experience in NZ

CR 1321 Towa Nagai

### in Massey High School

I learned the difference in the education system between NZ and Japan.

The color of the tie has a meaning.

Yellow ties are given to students who have good leadership skills.

Gray ties are given to students who have received awards.

Blue ties are given to students with good grades.

Black ties are given to students who are over 16 years old.

Brown ties are given to students who are under 15 years old.

They may have tried to increase students' motivation by giving each student a different look.



### in My Host Family House

They mainly use cars in NZ. There are many cars in NZ, so the government tries to prevent traffic jams. For example, the road has a roundabout. I was surprised that there are many cars which are made in Japan. They can't read Kanji, so when they use navigation systems, they use a translator. Maps can only be used in Japan, so they drive without a map. Also, each person who can drive has a car in the host family.



### Love Life

In my host family's house, the husband often helps his wife. For example, he cooks dinner every weekend and always drives a car instead of his wife. I know that NZ husbands are called KIWI husbands, because most of them help their wives with housework, and childcare.

Also NZ has a diversity of races and cultures, so they also have difficult love. My host family's son has a girlfriend, but he has never said that he has a girlfriend for his parents. He is Muslim, but his girlfriend is Hindu. There are differences in religion. I feel that it is still difficult for people to understand each other's culture.

## The Learn from the life in New Zealand

CR13 NO.23 Fuko Hasuike

First, the school life in Massey high school was a very valuable experience. The one thing I really liked was the diversity of students. In the school there are many students who have various backgrounds, for example my buddy is of mixed Chinese heritage. It was impressive to see how students from different backgrounds interacted naturally, looking past their differences. By taking some classes, I found the differences about a different perspective on learning. The geography class was about the piracy of Africa, and the history class was about the war between New Zealand and Fiji. These were unique perspectives not found in Japanese schools and made me interested.



Second, at my homestay, I really felt the differences between NZ and Japan. In New Zealand the shortage of water is a very serious problem, so I had to take a shower for less than 10 minutes. And, people in New Zealand sleep very early and a habit I felt I should adopt. Over the weekend, our host family took us to many places such as the beach, the museum and the zoo, and they used cars every time. Also, cars and buses are the main way to get to school. So I realized that using a car is much more common than taking a train or walking there.

Lastly, through life in New Zealand I could learn about the Maori culture. On the first day of Massey school, students put on a traditional Maori welcome performance and then I heard the Maori language for the first time. Interestingly, the pronunciation of the Maori language was similar to Japanese. And these traditions are deeply rooted in their daily lives. For example, in the beginning of class the teacher offers a prayer and in the bus there are announcements in both English and Maori language.

My research topic was "Does translating Japanese into English affect the impression of the words?". However, against my initial predictions, Japanese anime and movie culture were not as deeply ingrained as I thought. Therefore, I wasn't able to conduct the validation I had planned. However, I was able to gain valuable insight into how people interact with Japanese culture instead. My buddy knows some Japanese words such as "itadakimasu" and it has no direct translation in English. I realized that many concepts unique to Japan have become integrated into other languages in their original Japanese forms, rather than being translated.

In conclusion, my time in New Zealand gave me a lot of new cultural experiences. It was my first time to visit abroad and while I have some regrets regarding my health issues during the program, it was a highly valuable experience. I was able to undertake various challenges, including communicating in English and engaging in cultural exchange. I am thankful for the chance to be part of this program. I intend to build upon this experience and further advance my learning in the future.

## Discovering Life in New Zealand

CR 13 NO. 25 NAME Sachika Hara

Before visiting New Zealand, I had learned about its environmental efforts, such as waste sorting, reusable items, and renewable energy. However, I did not expect how naturally these ideas were part of daily life. Through my homestay and school experience, I was able to see not only environmental awareness but also the lifestyle and culture of the people.

After a long journey, I arrived in Auckland in the afternoon. The area around the school was calm, with low-rise buildings and beautiful greenery. My host family welcomed me warmly. I felt relieved, but at the same time, I was a little nervous about the days ahead.

During my first weekend, I went to a local event with many food stalls and small attractions.



It felt like a festival, and I enjoyed trying different foods. I also spent time walking around the neighborhood with my host family, which helped me relax and gradually get used to the new environment.

When I went to school for the first time, I was very nervous. However, I met my buddy, and that made me feel more comfortable. In class, I noticed that lessons were more interactive, with communication between students and teachers. Compared to Japan, the atmosphere felt more open and relaxed. This made it easier for me to participate and enjoy learning.

Outside of school, I visited places like a mountain and the sea. From the mountain, I could see a wide view of the city, which was very impressive. At the sea, I experienced the beauty and power of nature. These moments made me appreciate the natural environment of New Zealand even more.

One thing I noticed was how people value sustainability. Many people carried reusable bottles, and plastic use was limited. Compared to Japan, I felt that environmental awareness was more visible in everyday actions. Seeing this in real life made a stronger impression on me than just learning about it beforehand.

Through this experience, I learned that environmental protection is not something special, but something that can be part of daily life. I also realized the importance of adapting to new situations, communicating with others, and trying new things without fear.

This trip was not always easy. I felt nervous, made mistakes, and sometimes got tired. However, these challenges helped me grow. I want to continue thinking about what I can do for the environment and keep challenging myself in new situations in the future.

## Beyond Borders: My Kiwi Journey

CR13 No.29 Minami Hirukoi

My ten-day exchange program in New Zealand was a life-changing journey that greatly expanded my horizons. Although I had traveled abroad with my family before, going on a study program by myself was a new and nervous experience. However, those ten days became some of the most valuable moments of my life.

I attended Massey High School, where everyone was incredibly kind. Even though my English was not perfect, the students spoke to me often and made me feel welcome. I spent most of my time with my Korean buddy. At first, I was worried because our personalities and interests were completely different. However, we soon became great friends. We attended classes together, and I truly enjoyed our daily life. I also had fun eating lunch and snacks with my buddy's friends. One day, we even went to the city together after school. Many of these friends were not born in New Zealand; they had moved there from various countries. Thanks to them, I learned not only about New Zealand but also about many other cultures around the world. During my stay, I had the chance to teach Japanese culture in a class. I was surprised and happy to see how much the local students were interested in my country. This experience made me realize the greatness of Japanese traditions, which I had always taken for granted. I felt a strong sense of pride in my heritage.



In my physical education classes, I noticed something important about fairness in sports. Students of different races and backgrounds played together equally. Seeing this made me wonder how we can spread this spirit of multicultural kindness to the rest of the world. I also noticed that students did not use smartphones at school. It seemed that they valued nature and face-to-face communication more than relying on technology like AI or computers.

My homestay life was also very exciting. I lived with three young boys and a cheerful mother who loved playing loud music in the car. The house was always noisy, but this helped me talk with my host family a lot. I especially enjoyed playing in the garden with the boys and talking about shared hobbies with their cousin. My host family was very diverse; the mother was from South Africa, the father was from Fiji, and the grandparents were Muslim. I arrived during Ramadan, the month of fasting. On my last weekend, I was able to join the Eid celebration, which marks the end of Ramadan. I wore traditional Islamic clothes and visited neighbors' houses to eat and celebrate together. I was deeply moved by how warmly everyone welcomed me, a student from another country. Experiencing their daily prayers and traditional ways of eating was something I will never forget.



This experience taught me more than just English; it gave me a deep sense of gratitude. I realized how excellent Japan's infrastructure and standard of living are. I want to thank my teachers and my parents for giving me this wonderful opportunity. This trip made me proud of Japan and inspired me to keep learning more about the world.



## Multicultural Coexistence in New Zealand

CR1338 Momoka Yoshida

I am going to write this article focusing on multiculturalism in New Zealand, sharing my experiences from school, my homestay, and the country as a whole.

At school, the students were incredibly bright and welcoming. I was deeply impressed to see everyone interacting in such harmony, regardless of their racial backgrounds. When I asked my buddy and friends where they were from, I found that most of them were originally from outside New Zealand. I was truly moved to see them sharing and enjoying each other's cultures. This experience strongly made me realize the importance of English as a common language that connects people from different backgrounds. Furthermore, I felt that the school had a well-established environment for preserving Maori culture. There were many opportunities to learn about it, such as signs in the library written in Maori, hosting Maori-related events, and performing traditional Maori dances. It made me realize that multiculturalism and traditional culture beautifully coexist there.

During my homestay, I was welcomed by a Muslim family. It was my first time experiencing Islamic culture, and it was full of new experiences. I had the opportunity to actually experience their lifestyle, such as eating meals with my hands, adapting to a pork-free diet, and wearing traditional Muslim clothing. Furthermore, observing the family pray every day around 4 PM was particularly striking. I felt a cultural difference from Japan, realizing that many people in New Zealand live their lives centered around their religion.

What surprised me during my one-week stay in New Zealand was that I faced absolutely no racial discrimination. There was no line drawn just because I am Japanese or a foreigner; I was treated equally at all times. I felt this is the unique strength of New Zealand as a multicultural nation. Moreover, when I talked with a friend about beauty standards, I noticed the sense of freedom in New Zealand. I learned that although "having good style" is a criterion for beauty, the standards are not as rigid as in Japan because people of so many different races live together.

In conclusion, this program made me realize that diversity affects not only foreign nationalities, but also concepts of beauty and daily life. I came to believe that spreading the concept of diversity would be an effective way to make Japan a more comfortable place to live.



## Unforgettable Memories

CR.14 NO.1 NAME Aoki Yuna

At first, I was very nervous about this program, but I was also excited. I was worried about whether I was a good fit for the program and how much I would be able to grow through it.



However, when I got on the plane and arrived in New Zealand, I was filled with excitement. What I noticed was that I found aspects of Japan in everyday life more often than I had expected. For example, most of the cars driven in New Zealand were made in Japan, and I often saw people wearing T-shirts with Japanese writing, and there were many restaurants selling don and sushi along the roads. These facts were interesting because they were different from my image of foreign countries.

On weekdays, we went to Massey High School. I could feel Japanese culture in school life, but I also strongly felt that New Zealanders accept diversity. In class, we read texts in Maori, and we were also welcomed in Maori when we arrived at the school. Though these experiences, I realized that Maori culture is still highly valued today. My buddy, Zaithy, is Filipino. She is a very kind person. Also, most of her friends were not New Zealanders, such as South Africa, Spain, and India. Even though they have their own native languages, they could all speak English fluently. In addition, they are younger than me! This feeling of frustration motivated me to work harder on my English. Zaithy and I often talked about Japanese anime and watched anime during class. I was surprised when she told me that students were allowed to watch videos or listen to music if they used earphones or headphones during class. Experiencing different teaching styles was a very interesting and valuable experience. Those five days were so special that I didn't want to say goodbye to them.

On the weekend, I spent time with my host family: my host mother, Nicol, my host father, Karthik, my host brother, Benedict, and the baby, Carmella. They are a very kind and cheerful family. I had a wonderful time eating oranges and playing with a train toy with Benedict. I was impressed when they made lamb for dinner. When I talked with my host mother, we often discussed life in New Zealand. For example, there aren't many streetlights, so many New Zealand teenagers have earlier curfews than Japanese teenagers,



many New Zealanders go to bed around 9 p.m., meat is cheaper and more delicious than in other countries, the Maori spirit of acceptance is highly valued, and New Zealanders are called "Kiwis." I was happy to learn things that can only be understood by actually living there.



One day, my host family had plans, so I went to Auckland Zoo with my friend who was staying in the same house. There, we saw kiwi birds and many other birds. At that time, we were able to go inside an enclosure and see birds flying above us. I thought it was a special experience unique to New Zealand, where people care about nature and animals.

My host family, the local people, bus drivers, friends I made there, and all the Kiwis were very kind and friendly. I was supported by their ability to accept others like Maori splits. I also want to become a person who can help others, and I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who was involved. Thank you for reading.

## Learning and discoveries in New Zealand

CR14 No.10 NAME Yuzuka Kawakami

Through this New Zealand school visit program, I discovered new interests and made many exciting discoveries, especially regarding Japanese culture. During my stay, I attended high school in New Zealand, I enjoyed talking with my buddy and participated in various classes. I also went to many places with my host family. Throughout this experience, I truly felt the fun of cross-cultural exchange and the excitement of discovering the unknown.

My new interest is sharing Japanese culture and viewing Japan from various perspectives. My friend and I brought matcha powder and origami as souvenirs for my host family. Fortunately, they really enjoyed them. I prepared matcha for them and taught them how to fold origami; it was a very fun and interesting experience. It was very fun and interesting. I was happy to see them enjoying Japanese culture. This taught me how rewarding it is to share the attractions of Japan. Moreover, we made an iced matcha latte. I didn't know about this way of enjoying matcha. So, I could discover a new side of my own culture. In addition, my school buddy likes Japanese anime so we talked about it a lot. I was thrilled to see so many people enjoying Japanese culture. These experiences have inspired me to share the charms of Japan so that even more people can enjoy them.



Another discovery was the difference between Japan and New Zealand. In classes, teachers used various materials. For example, some used movies to teach English and asked for our opinions. Also, there was a teacher who connected the spiciness of chili peppers to chemistry, and some students actually ate them to experience the spiciness. Before my trip, I had researched New Zealand's education system. I knew students used laptops frequently and teachers used many things for teaching materials but teachers approached class from various perspectives more than I had researched. In addition, the atmosphere of classes was much more lively than I had expected. Students asked many questions to the teacher and discussed topics actively. When teachers asked questions, students answered them immediately. I felt a significant gap between the two countries. Thanks to my preliminary study, I was able to compare the two systems and reconsider Japanese culture and education more deeply.

I experienced the warmth of the local people and I felt the joy of connecting with others across countries through this New Zealand school visit training. I made many precious memories and friends which are now my treasures. The knowledge and experience I gained in New Zealand will surely guide my future.

## The memory in New Zealand

CR14 NO.18 NAME Takeuchi Fuka

In school life, at first, I wasn't sure what I should talk about with my buddy because I was very nervous but she talked to me a lot about something like school and her friends, so I was happy and felt her kindness and friendliness. When I talked with my buddy, there were a lot of words I didn't understand. That time, I was aware of asking questions about them because it's not embarrassing to admit when I don't know something and even though I do it, she was happy to explain it to me using easy-to-understand examples. Thanks to it, I could learn and make use of them during the conversation with students at Massey high school. Additionally, I could find games, which are my common favorite things with my buddy and we got excited to talk about them. At that time, I faced the problem that the character name was different between Japanese and English but I explained the character's appearance, skills and hairstyle and I could not only tell what I wanted to say, but also knew the English name.

During a homestay, I went to the festival, where the traditional food and items were on sale and held a concert which used a variety of different languages and sang. I bought food which my host mother recommended to me. At that time, because I was so indecisive, I couldn't decide what I wanted to buy but she waited for me and talked about the traditional food for sale. Finally, thanks to the conversation, I did things I wanted to do and I enjoyed it right up to the very end. On another day, she made a variety of traditional foods and delicious desserts for me. The thing that gave me trouble when I first came to my host family's house was that there were two dogs at the house because I've never had dogs before. However, my host father taught me how to become friends with them and as time went by, they got used to me and I could feed and rub their stomachs.

I learned about the relationship between multiethnic nations and gender-natural through life in New Zealand and there are two events that I noticed the difference between Japan and New Zealand. The first is that it is natural for students at Massey High School to choose between skirts or pants, whichever they prefer regardless of whether they are boys and girls. Actually, my buddy wore pants but nobody mentioned it and on the contrary she had a lot of friends. From this, I realized that the character was more important rather than appearance. The second is that even though they don't like pink, which is generally said to be a girly color, they said it with confidence. Of course these trends have spread in Japan recently but I don't think it is common for every Japanese person. Therefore, I believe that Japan has to learn from New Zealand's example to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of gender-natural.



## My great experience in New Zealand

CR14 NO.23 NAME Yumeka Higuchi

I spent time abroad for the first time in New Zealand. It was a surprising experience for me because I had never been abroad before. I was a little nervous before, but my host family and my buddy were very friendly and kind. So, I had a wonderful time in New Zealand. In particular, there are three things that surprised me in New Zealand.

First, New Zealand has high environmental awareness. When I looked at the city, I noticed that there were many trash bins in public spaces. As a result, there was little littering, and I felt comfortable. Also, when I went to the beach, there were no plastic bottles. Japan has serious plastic problems, so I was very impressed by the environmental awareness in New Zealand. In addition, people were careful about saving water and electricity. From this, I learned that small daily actions can make a big difference. I want to do something to protect the environment in Japan too.

Second, people in New Zealand maintain a healthy diet and get enough sleep. When I ate cereal, I was surprised because it was not sweet. I usually eat sweet cereal, so it was a new experience. According to my host family, they choose healthy food. Healthy foods are marked with stars. The milk I used for my cereal had many stars on it. I realized that people in New Zealand also have high health awareness.

Third, bus schedules are irregular. I went to school by bus. In Japan, it is normal for buses to arrive on time and wait. However, in New Zealand, buses sometimes come fifteen minutes early and leave right away! I missed the bus once before I went to school. After that, I tried to go to the bus stop earlier. From there, I never missed the bus! I learned that New Zealand has some aspects that are better than Japan, but there are also some inconvenient points, such as public transportation.

Finally, I will talk about the differences in education between New Zealand and Japan. I researched this before my trip. After taking classes in New Zealand, I realised students in New Zealand speak more than Japanese students. Also, students talk more than teachers. They ask questions quickly when they do not understand something. I thought this was a very good attitude. At first, I was afraid of making mistakes, so I was not active. But, students in New Zealand were very active. From there, I thought I want to speak more actively in class in Japan too.

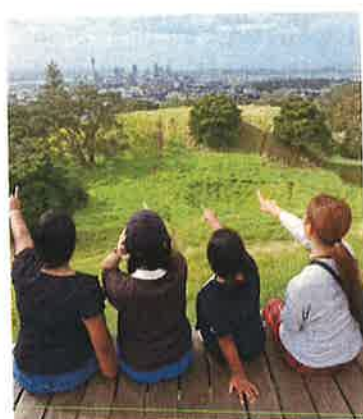
Through these 11 days, I found many good points in New Zealand, but I also learned about the convenience of life in Japan. I was happy to experience different from Japan such as food and lifestyle by myself. This experience was very important for me, so I want to use what I learned in my future. I will never forget this visit training and life with my host family and my buddy. I want to go to New Zealand again!



## Wonderful Experience in New Zealand

CR15 No.2 Name Anzai Chinatsu

I had a precious experience in New Zealand. On the first day, after a 17-hour flight, I had my first contact with my host family. Although I was a little nervous then, my host father welcomed my friend and I by talking with us a lot. When we entered the house, two girls and their mother also welcomed us, and as soon as we met, we played with one of the girls outside of the house. The game we played was interesting: a tagger pursued other people with their eyes closed. Our host sister was very good at playing the game, so we were completely exhausted. On the first weekend, my host father took us to many places, such as a mountain called Maungawhau, food expo, and the sea. We enjoyed both beautiful nature and New Zealand city. In addition, we taught Japanese culture to our host family. We enjoyed origami together by folding cranes and shuriken, and drinking matcha. Our host sisters both love matcha, so they looked very excited to drink real matcha in Japan. In our homestay house, there was a university student from China. She also talked with us a lot. She often showed us pictures of China, and played games. Moreover, she took us to Auckland City on the weekend because our host family went to the church. Since our host family and a university student from China were so kind to us every time, we spent fun and relaxing time together.



On weekdays, I went to Massey High School and had some classes with my buddy and her friends. The classes I had were different from ones in Japan. They were more specialized than Japanese ones. For example, my buddy had all science classes. Also, one of her friends had economics class, and another had art class. Since all of them have specific dreams, they study subjects they need to study for the goals deeply. This is the difference between New Zealand and Japan. Talking about my school life, I enjoyed some games with my friends there: word games and card

games. It was so fun! Massey High School had various kinds of students, but all of them respected each other's cultures and customs. This atmosphere led to a comfortable school life for me. I learned from my friends that we can live together regardless of cultural differences. I strongly thought I need to remain in this mindset forever.

Finally, this is about my individual research. Before I went to New Zealand, I researched about the relationship between animals and people in New Zealand. During my stay, I had a chance to go to the animal show on the farm. I watched many kinds of animals, such as pigs, goats, birds, alpakas, and sheep. Most of them were allowed to touch. I was so surprised to experience that because that is a rare case in Japan. In addition, around the farm the animal show was held, there were vast lands. A lot of animals walked around the lands there. These discoveries showed animals are so familiar with people in New Zealand. Animals and people coexist because people cherish the animals and interact with them many times.



## What I gained in New Zealand

CR21 No.04 Arita Rio

I visited New Zealand as a school exchange program, and it was a very special experience for me. When I was at school, I acted with my buddy. She had some classes such as photography and media. In the photography class, students were using professional cameras and editing software. Moreover in the media class, students made their original movie story. These classes were unusual for Japanese high schools, so it was refreshing. School has a break time separate from the lunch



break. During that time, students were having a free lunch or chatting with friends. About class format, it wasn't a time for the teacher to lecture and teach unilaterally, but rather a time for students to complete their individual assignments. It felt very different from Japan, so I was very surprised. I realized that the students were very independent because they had to manage their own time to finish their tasks. Furthermore they can gain the ability to think for themselves. In addition there were people from various countries, because there were so many students. I was able to experience Maori culture. The nature in New Zealand was breathtaking, and the air felt very fresh every morning. The school campus was so vast that we had to walk a lot between classes, but I enjoyed seeing the greenery along the way.

My host family was like my best friends. They were so kind and active. They were originally from the Philippines, so the dishes my host family made for us were Asian food. Moreover they are Christian, for this reason, they went out almost every night to do bible study. On Saturday and Sunday, I went to Church with my host family and studied the bible together. It was a first-time experience that I wouldn't easily get in Japan. When they eat something, or drive a car, they always pray before taking action. Someday, after the BBQ, even though it was 10 p.m., we went to eat ice cream. This shop was crowded even late at night, and we enjoyed talking while eating. It was an unusual experience for me so I was very excited.



In New Zealand, people are tolerant of mistakes because they have the idea that mistakes lead to success. When I arrived at my host family's house, I couldn't use English actively because I was afraid of making mistakes. However, everyone kept smiling and listened carefully to what I



talked about. Moreover they said to me that you don't need to be ashamed about your mistakes. That's why on the last day I could talk with people in English actively and also I decided to keep taking on challenges without fear of failure. Through this school exchange program, I could get the strong attitude toward making mistakes and broaden my horizons by talking with many people who have different backgrounds. I want to make the most of this experience, cherishing the precious memories with my host family and friends, and continue to learn more about different cultures in the future to become a person who can connect people from all over the world.

## My experiences in New Zealand

CR34 NO.08 NAME Ayase Otsuka

During my study abroad in New Zealand, I had three meaningful experiences

First, my homestay experience was very memorable. I spent time with my host family and their friends who are all Christians. Every evening, they gathered for a Bible study, where they learned about the Bible and shared their thoughts. After that, each family brought their own food, and everyone shared their meals together. This was my first time experiencing such a gathering. By listening to people talk about their beliefs, I was able to learn different values and ways of thinking. It was very different from what I had learned. I felt that I was experiencing real-life values that exist in everyday life. Also, everyone was very kind and welcomed me warmly, even though I was new. This made me feel comfortable and happy. Through this experience, I understood the importance of respecting different cultures.



Second, my school experience was also very important. I spent time with my buddy, attending classes and eating meals together. My buddy often stayed with their friends, so I had many chances to talk with other students. Speaking in

English with people of my age helped me find common interests and enjoy conversations. In Japan, I usually study English in class, but in New Zealand, I used English in real life every day. This made me realize that English is not just a subject, but a tool for communication. I learned that language helps people connect and understand each other better.

Third, I worked on independent research about the differences in food culture between New Zealand and Japan. Before going abroad, I learned that it is common in New Zealand to bring food and share it with others. When I actually saw this during my stay, I found it very interesting. Because I had studied this culture before, the experience became more meaningful. I could clearly see the difference in lifestyle between the two countries. Sharing food with others was not only enjoyable, but it also helped people build strong connections. I learned that meals are not just for eating, but also for creating relationships. Based on this, I tried to talk to people more actively than I usually do in Japan. As a result, I was able to connect with many people and feel more confident. I believe this was an important step in my personal growth.



Through these three experiences, I learned that studying abroad is not only about improving language skills. It is also about understanding different cultures, sharing time with others, and growing as a person. In the future, I want to join a long-term study abroad program. I hope to improve my English skills and build deeper relationships with people from different backgrounds. This experience helped me realize the value of international exchange and discover my own potential.

## Wonderful time in New Zealand

CR34 No.12 NAME Misaki Kijima



On March 12, I headed to New Zealand full of excitement and nerves. Summer was coming to an end, but it was pretty humid. There was a lot of greenery and mountains. As I looked around, I realized there were no Japanese speakers around me, I could only hear English. I finally felt like I arrived in NZ. Anti and Unkel, my host family, welcomed Kiko and me with a warm smile.

People in NZ had a different atmosphere from people in Japan. From my research, I learned that there are many people who are cooperative in NZ. When I visited Massey HS, there were many students from different countries. However, Massey HS students interacted with each other regardless of races. I was surprised. In Japan, most students tend to stay with the same races and it is rare to see students interacting with foreign students. It is not easy to understand different backgrounds, but I feel it would be nice if all of the people have warm feelings. People in NZ have become my ideal personality.

A few days later, Idear, an exchange student from Thailand, came to our house. She was very kind and friendly. We became good friends. Idear was good at cooking. One day, she made tom yum goong, a Thai traditional dish, for us. It was my first try, but tom yum goong was way better than I expected. I ate a lot during my stay. Whenever we were free, we went out and spent time together.



Going to Massey High School was the thing that I was most excited about. In Massey High School, there were students from many different cultural backgrounds. I liked the way every student tried to understand their values and respected each other. During a school visit, I took classes with Deborah, who was my buddy. Deborah was always hardworking and friendly. I also made a lot of friends: Deborah, Beth, Minseo, Jan and Queen. While I was in Massey High School, my mindset changed. I started to feel like I needed to speak English, because I wanted to be friends with Massey HS students. I spoke English as much as I could. Sometimes, I mistakenly used wrong grammar, but I did not care about making mistakes. Anyway, I was happy that I could talk with many students in English and became friends. I enjoyed talking in English and I got confidence in my English. I really had a wonderful time in Massey HS. On the last day of my school, I gave Kumihimo, a Japanese traditional craft, to my friends. The time I spent with my friends was always special and fun. I hope we can meet again soon.



Looking back on my stay in NZ, I am really glad I visited New Zealand. I love the warm atmosphere and beautiful nature. I am very appreciative of YIS giving us such a valuable opportunity. I will share this wonderful time with my family and friends. I hope more and more Japanese people will have connections with people around the world and build a strong relationship.

## My New Zealand Study

CR23 NO.14 NAME Kiko Kou

In New Zealand was not only an opportunity to improve my English skills but also a meaningful experience that changed my perspective on education, culture, and beauty standards. Through school exchange, homestay life, and my personal research, I learned the importance of diversity and understanding different values. During the school exchange program, I spent five days attending classes with a local student as my buddy. The most memorable experience was a history class discussing the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I was deeply impressed that students in New Zealand were learning and debating about an event that happened far away from their country.

The students actively exchanged opinions, and I was asked to share my thoughts as a Japanese student. At that moment, I realized that history is not only something to memorize but also something to discuss and reflect upon together. Seeing international students seriously learning about Japan's past made me feel both responsible and proud to represent my country.

My homestay experience became the most unforgettable part of this program. I lived with my partner Misaki, a Thai student named Idea, a Chinese student named Jessica, and my host family consisting of a host mother, host father, and their daughter. Living together with people from different cultural backgrounds allowed me to experience real cultural exchange in daily life.

One of my favorite memories was exploring the city together with Jessica and our friends. Jessica and I discovered that we were both Chinese and came from the same hometown in China. This surprising connection helped us become close very quickly. She showed us her high school, introduced popular local foods, recommended shops and brands, and guided us around the city. We took many photos and created unforgettable memories together.

My personal research focused on the differences in beauty standards between New Zealand and Japan. Through firsthand observation, I came to understand that beauty is not defined by a single standard but exists in many diverse forms. While shopping in the city, I noticed that clothing in Japan is often categorized into fixed sizes such as S, M, and L. In contrast, New Zealand stores offered a wider variety of fits designed for different body shapes and heights. People were encouraged to find clothes that suited their individuality rather than conforming to a uniform ideal. This is realizing that accepting diversity in appearance allows people to express themselves more freely.

This trip taught me that diversity enriches both education and society. I learned that schools can promote equality, friendships can overcome cultural differences, and beauty should celebrate individuality rather than uniformity.



## New Zealand memories

CR32 NO.24 NAME Tsutsumi Sara

My research question in this visit is whether New Zealand's diet has a good nutritional balance and what characteristics it has compared to the Japanese diet. The reason why I set this question is because I like to cook and eat delicious foods and I'm interested in the food culture of various countries. Before the visit, I searched about some famous food in New Zealand and there were many kinds of junk food like fish and chips so I thought people living there always ate such foods. However, contrary to my expectation, they eat a nutritionally balanced meal. For example, my host family provided me with bread and bananas in the morning, sandwiches, yogurt, a kiwifruit and a carrot as a lunch box at noon, and chicken curry and salad in the evening. Every meal I ate contains essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals.

I learned many things at Massey High School. I could talk to many students in every class to improve my communication skills in English. Teachers and my new friends were always kind to me. The most memorable experience in the school was the presentation of Japanese culture. In my group, we told the history and role of Omamori, and we made Omamori charm together. We prepared for a long time but it was not easy to make them understand at first because there were no manuscripts and we had to explain in our own words. In addition, there were times when the conversation in the group was not exciting and I was told that it was awkward. That made me nervous. However, this experience made me grow too. Thanks to the experience, I learned two things. First, I learned the word "awkward" (actually I didn't know that word until then). Second, I could learn how to create a pleasant atmosphere with people who meet for the first time.

The time I spent with my host family on this trip is a treasure to me. The 8-year-old host sister is cheerful and talkative and the 4-year-old host brother is a little shy but his smile is so cute. I played with them a lot. For example, we made photo frames with seashells that we picked up on the beach. Also, we played treasure hunt in the house. My favorite is finding ladybugs in the lemon tree in the garden. I was very surprised that ladybugs were blue. Through talking to them, I learned lots of new words. I am an only child in my family so I didn't know how to deal with small children, but they made me realize that it is not difficult and fun. We had a party on the last day. Then, my friend and I danced Soran Bushi and sang Ito for them. And they showed us Indian dance. It was interesting. At the end of the party, we gave them a letter and some presents. After reading the letter, I saw my host mother crying a little and I also felt lonely. But at the same time, I felt very happy to meet them. I will make use of those experiences there in the future and would like to come back to NZ soon. I want to thank everyone I met on this trip.



## Strong Connections Beyond Borders

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We live in a world where connections shape our lives, yet we often take them for granted. Before visiting New Zealand, I had never thought deeply about what connection really means. However, my experience in New Zealand showed me the true meaning of connection beyond borders.

I experienced a traditional Māori welcome ceremony, which made me feel warmly accepted from the very beginning. Even though I was in a different country, I felt a strong sense of belonging. I also spent time with my buddy, attending classes together and having lunch, which helped me feel closer to the students. The most impressive thing was the farewell party. Many students expressed how sad they were to say goodbye, and even after I returned to Japan, they continued to send me warm messages. Through these experiences, I realized that we were able to build strong connections despite differences in language and culture.

While I was able to build connections at school, my homestay experience allowed me to form even deeper connections. My host family was originally from India, and through living with them, I was able to experience a part of Indian culture. I enjoyed their traditional food and learned about their customs, which was very different from my life in Japan. What impressed me the most was how warmly they treated us. Even though we stayed for only a short time, they welcomed us as if we were part of their family. This made me feel a strong sense of connection and belonging. Through this experience, I realized that genuine connections can be built not only through shared culture, but also through kindness and mutual respect.

Building on these personal experiences, I also explored connections on a broader level through my personal research. My research focused on how Japanese language education influences people's impressions of Japan in New Zealand. Through my observations, I realized that interest in Japan is not only developed through learning the language itself, but also through cultural elements such as anime, games, and Japanese food.

These aspects of culture seemed to attract many people and deepen their interest in Japan. This made me feel that culture plays an important role in creating connections between people. Even without direct interaction, these indirect cultural influences help build connections between Japanese people and people in New Zealand.

Through my experience in New Zealand, I came to realize that people can build connections regardless of how far apart they are or how different their backgrounds may be. These experiences have also changed the way I see connections in my daily life, and I will continue to value and build connections with others in the future.

