

Message from Tonya, student from Australia



This March, I was lucky to experience the life of a Japanese teenager.

It was not like being a tourist who asks for the menu in English and takes pictures in kimono, which I also did.

I was let into the real Japanese High School, wore the same uniform and tried to follow the same rules. Some rules surprised me, but since it was only one week, I survived. (joke)

I was given extraordinary insight into school life. All the classes I was given the privilege to attend were very interesting. I found the differences in the styles of learning and teaching particularly interesting.

I would like to thank the School not only for letting me attend the school, but also for giving me a chance to be a part of the Brass Band Club, the English Club and attend many events.

Many people greeted me in the hallways and showed me true Shoyo spirit, it made me feel very welcome. I think the Shoyo students are very kind and open. I made lots of friends who I already miss dearly.

I would like to share some things that surprised me in Japan and in Shoyo.

First, in Japan people bow very often. I wasn't used to it, so when I was told to bow several times during my speech I felt very awkward and didn't believe that it was the right thing to do. It was very different from my culture where people never bow!

Second, you have to apologize and thank people for everything, even for small things. In my country people are more relaxed and not as concerned about the opinions of others. For example, people rarely arrive more than 10 minutes before a set time, students do not stand when a teacher enters the room, people talk on trains, people post photos of themselves on social media.



Third, boys and girls are separated in school gatherings and in class. They don't seem to hang out together, and when they are told to make groups, they prefer one-gender groups. In my school everyone, boys and girls, prefer mixed groups and are kind to each other, so it is not scary to talk to boys/girls, and there's no tension if you have to communicate with genders. Here, if a boy talks to a girl, rumors start that they are in love! It was funny. One girl asked me how to get a boyfriend. I told her to talk and chat with many boys, so she can know what kind of people they are, exchange jokes and communicate. She got very shy and said no, saying that talking with boys is embarrassing. I was surprised!

I was also surprised about the Baseball Club hairstyles and loud greetings. In Australia, there are no special hairstyles for sports clubs, so I thought it was a matter of taste, but here you can easily know who is in the baseball club by looking at their hair!

Wearing Shoyo Uniform. I left most of my uniform at home, but I wanted to be like Shoyo Students, so we borrowed a uniform from a graduate student. Thank you, Serina Mito! You are tall enough, so your size was good on me!



As part of my time at Shoyo I got to visit 3 A, B, C, D, 2A and some other classes for presentations. I put together a presentation about Japanese and Australian differences which I hope those students enjoyed. Everyone's english skills were very impressive. Thank you for all the questions!

I will especially treasure the time I got to spend with the Shoyo Brass Band. Each member was full of passion for music which made me feel so privileged to have rehearsed and performed with them. Despite my Japanese being very poor, we were all able to communicate through the language of music. The pieces we played and the

friends I made have made me very inspired in my saxophone practice. I am eternally grateful for the time I spent with the Shoyo brass band.

Thank you for a time I will never forget. I send best wishes to Shoyo from Australia

Sincerely,

Tonya Mikhaylova