

## Q17 Why are ALTs in the classroom?

Answered: 171 Skipped: 0

| #  | Responses  | Date               |
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| 1  | It depends on the teacher. Sometimes it's to have a graduate stand in the corner and read a passage of English occasionally. sometimes it's to have a graduate teacher make all the lessons for you because you have no time. Sometimes it's to be an assistant to do all the things you don't have time to do, like planning clubs etc.   | 2/5/2015 11:35 AM  |
| 2  | I am not sure. I was under the understanding that we are there to help them learn and get them excited in English using our own experiences and helping them out in whatever ways we can. But after 3 years I'm not so sure anymore.   | 1/22/2015 5:18 PM  |
| 3  | To give native English (American English) pronunciation and demonstrate audible qualities of English that aren't in books. SOMETIMES I get the chance to tell them about something in my city, or quickly tell them alternate vocabulary/grammar usage that native speakers use even though it's not in the textbook.  | 1/15/2015 7:54 AM  |
| 4  | In my opinion, it is to make students comfortable talking with foreigners. There are some JTEs who are very qualified to teach without an ALT. There are recordings so the presence of an ALT is really unnecessary. On the other hand, I think there are still many JTEs lacking the speaking skills and practical knowledge of the English language specially in rural areas. Thus, ALTs are employed to support these JTEs.   | 1/13/2015 4:57 PM  |
| 5  | To showcase proper pronunciation of English and to expose Japanese students to foreigners and other ways of thinking/living. More often than not, to be the flash card master of the universe :D   | 1/12/2015 10:37 PM |
| 6  | To promote international awareness and understanding. To give students chances to use their English skills. To give students access to REAL English. To make students comfortable with foreigners.   | 1/12/2015 11:17 AM |
| 7  | To provide a model of native English? To motivate students to use the language to communicate? To improve grassroots cultural exchange? A little while ago I heard about another reason that had to do with purely economical reasons, but I've forgotten the specifics.   | 1/10/2015 11:32 PM |
| 8  | To motivate the students to communicate in English. Support the JapaneseEnglish teacher  | 1/10/2015 11:24 AM |
| 9  | Good question. It is something that local boards of education need to consider before starting an ALT programme. They need to do a needs assessment first, instead of going backwards like now.  | 1/9/2015 5:06 PM   |
| 10 | Many reasons... Not all good. A few are... - To motivate students to learn English :) - to make up for Japanese English Teachers lack of ability :( - Government Policy (political reasons)  | 1/9/2015 12:22 AM  |
| 11 | To make English seem real to the students, to show them that there is a real use for this  | 1/8/2015 7:20 PM   |
| 12 | I imagine everyones answer is different on this and many people couldn't even say why. I honestly can't say why every alt is in a classroom but I know why I keep going to class- to encourage, to have fun, and to make them smile if I can.  | 1/8/2015 3:45 PM   |
| 13 | To expose students to foreigners and show them there are other people and languages in the world   | 1/8/2015 3:08 PM   |
| 14 | I believe that ALTs are important for creating an authentic connection and experience of English in a classroom where otherwise a textbook and a CD might be the only English-related materials. English is a dialogue, between two or more people, so having two teachers can be very effective to demonstrate real usage of the language. Also, ALTs can be excellent sources of culture and information about different countries, which gives English color and a life beyond texts and tests. | 1/8/2015 2:57 PM   |
| 15 | In theory, to help students learn about the cultures of English-speaking countries, to provide students with realistic (rather than textbook) use of language, and to hear native pronunciation and intonation. Whether the schools use ALTs for this is another issue.  | 1/8/2015 2:51 PM   |
| 16 | Because many JTEs don't really speak English, or because they teach English like a list to remember; not as a language that has a function, a context, and a culture attached to it.   | 1/8/2015 2:43 PM   |
| 17 | I don't think JET, CLAIR, or the schools know the answer to this question - theoretically it is to give a native speaker's influence and knowledge (and pronunciation modeling) to break the 'Janglish bubble', but so many teachers seem to have no idea what to do with the ALT, or what I am even expected to do.   | 1/8/2015 10:40 AM  |

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| 18 | ALT's have several different roles in the classroom. It is to provide a speaker whose L1 is English to the students, to introduce foreign cultures to Japanese students, to help develop both JTEs and students English skills and to normalize a foreigners presence.   | 1/8/2015 9:29 AM  |
| 19 | ALTs are in the classroom to provide a real world learning experience to introduce a language, via a native speakers channel as well as a culture different from the students' own culture and language.   | 1/8/2015 9:05 AM  |
| 20 | To support the Japanese Teacher in conducting the English lesson.  | 1/8/2015 1:00 AM  |
| 21 | to facilitate communication, and eventually learning and fluency, in English to provide a model of proper way to communicate English to inspire students that they too can learn and become fluent in English (only applicable to ALTs whose native language is not English)   | 1/7/2015 10:19 PM |
| 22 | <b>The answer varies depending on the needs of the JTE, the students, or the school.</b> 1. To provide native English to a classroom. 2. To make English fun. 3. To cultivate an interest in travelling abroad in students. 4. To make a school look good.   | 1/7/2015 7:21 PM  |
| 23 | To provide a model of communication, be a resource to teachers and students  | 1/7/2015 4:07 PM  |
| 24 | In elementary schools, ALTs are in the classroom because the Japanese teachers aren't qualified to teach English and (the majority) have very little confidence in their ability to teach English. As a result, ALTs are in the classroom to teach English to the students, and model effective teaching methods to the Japanese teachers. In junior high schools, I think that ALTs are in the classroom to keep the English that is being taught authentic, and also to expose Japanese teachers to new ideas and teaching methods.  | 1/7/2015 3:48 PM  |
| 25 | Introduce foreign cultures to Japanese students  | 1/7/2015 3:45 PM  |
| 26 | Ideally, to expose students to real-world English as well as facilitate a better understanding of foreign culture. Pragmatically, to teach students correct English and aid in pronunciation/listening practice drills.  | 1/7/2015 2:58 PM  |
| 27 | ALTs are in the classroom to help the students communicate in English. In most cases this is using the English that they have recently been taught by the JTE from the text book. An ancillary function to the above is keeping pronunciation within the bounds of comprehensible English; occasionally a JTE's pronunciation may be misleading to their students.   | 1/7/2015 2:52 PM  |
| 28 | ALTs serve a variety of functions. 1) model language 2) introduce foreign culture 3) allow students to meet a foreign person 4) share a different perspective  | 1/7/2015 9:58 AM  |
| 29 | I think this is a very broad question. <b>By definition</b> , the ALTs are in the classroom to assist in the language teaching goals of the primary teacher. <b>However</b> , in practice, the role of the ALT changes dramatically from school to school because the goals for the classrooms change from teacher to teacher. At times, ALTs are representatives of a different cultural background. At other times, ALTs are a source of native "fact-checking" and pronunciation. Still, other times, ALTs may find themselves being utilized as an "ala carte" support role, where they may be expected to have multiple activities ready to be flexibly and interchangeably introduced where appropriate. In sum, ALTs are in the classroom in order to provide authentic learning experiences for students, but the nature of those experiences is never the same. | 1/7/2015 9:37 AM  |
| 30 | Clearly an opinion question. You really should clarify these. Maybe ask someone to help you refine your questions so you get more clearly defined results. I hope that ALTs are in the classroom to help teach English. In addition, we provide direct contact with a foreign culture to the students. <b>Something that appears to be wasted on them.</b>   | 1/7/2015 8:52 AM  |
| 31 | That answer depends on who you ask. Entire books have been written on this subject! Seriously. The answer that I like best is that having an ALT gives the students a small taste of foreign life / foreign language without them having to leave the country. Ideally, having an ALT should pique their interest and make them want to learn a foreign language more and be more interested in foreign culture & lifestyle.   | 1/6/2015 11:18 PM |
| 32 | To encourage (and subtly enforce?) English usage by students and the JTEs. To provide some excitement and realism to an otherwise boringly-presented subject.  | 1/6/2015 5:48 PM  |
| 33 | ALTs are in the classroom to support the main teacher in teaching students English and about the world around them.  | 1/6/2015 5:42 PM  |
| 34 | I think our most important function is to encourage students to speak and communicate, and to develop a curiosity about life outside of their town and country.  | 1/6/2015 1:05 PM  |
| 35 | To allow students to become <b>comfortable with a foreigner</b> , and realize that even though their English levels are low, we can still communicate.   | 1/6/2015 12:38 PM |

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| 36 | To make English more tangible and to provide alternative techniques to teaching seemingly abstract and possibly uninteresting content matter. It is not just to ascribe a fun image in my opinion.   | 1/6/2015 11:57 AM |
| 37 | Well native English speaking teachers have a few strong points that non-native English speaking teachers lack. Though both have their strong points. For example: non-NESTS are generally better at grammar knowledge, where as NESTS generally have better knowledge of idiomatic language. However, having both in the classroom definitely rounds out any of the skills either of us lack. That being said, I think ALTs are generally here because of our cultural knowledge and natural English.  | 1/6/2015 10:02 AM |
| 38 | The JET Programme was designed by the Foreign Ministry in the belief that it will create a pool of talent positive to Japan when the ALTs return to their home countries, strengthening Japan's "soft power". Since the program has been running for such a long time the term "ALT" has entered the lexicon and is now used to describe native speaking instructors in schools even when they are the sole teacher. People are so familiar with the idea of ALTs that they are assumed to be necessary, despite little evidence of their effectiveness. The design of the JET Programme makes it very clear that the goals are not educational~ a five year limit, no teaching experience required, etc. and unfortunately many non-government recruitment systems for ALTs have modeled themselves on JET. Oh, and grassroots internationalisation and stuff.  | 1/6/2015 7:53 AM  |
| 39 | My perception of our intended role is to be a native English speaker that allows the kids to become accustomed to the natural sound and speaking of the language. ALTs should play an active role in carrying out the lesson but should still be in a supporting role to the JTE. We provide an outside perspective and broaden the horizon of Japanese students, hopefully sparking an interest in what cultures and opportunities are outside of Japan.  | 1/6/2015 12:31 AM |
| 40 | I believe ALTs are in the classroom because they are to <b>provide an international representative</b> for the language that is being taught. Some Japanese English teachers solely conduct English lessons in Japanese and only recite what is in the textbook. I believe this is a bit counterproductive. This type of teaching can cripple a student's capability to speak in English. In some cases, students are very good at writing in English, but lack self-confidence in communication. The ALT can be the figure that encourages Japanese students to speak in English. What better way to learn a language than to speak with a native? The ALT can also be seen as a "breath of fresh air" from the stagnant, monotonous English teachings that they endure everyday. An ALT could also be seen as the "language-partner in crime" for the Japanese English teacher. If the Japanese English teacher have difficulties with a cultural difference, English pronunciation and others, the ALT can provide back up. | 1/6/2015 12:10 AM |
| 41 | to assist the Japanese Homeroom Teacher  | 1/6/2015 12:10 AM |
| 42 | In my situations, they were there to provide expert native perspective of English language usage.  | 1/5/2015 10:29 PM |
| 43 | Good question. <b>Because MEXT has insisted they be?</b> In elementary school, we're there so the teacher gets a break. In middle school, we're there so the students can here "native" pronunciation.   | 1/5/2015 10:01 PM |
| 44 | For exposure to foreign culture, the chance to use english for an actual reason, added fun, and hearing native pronunciation.  | 1/5/2015 9:26 PM  |
| 45 | *to share culture *for communicative practice *to create a safe space where Ss can practice their English without *get Ss used to seeing non-Japanese people *expose Ss to other English accents   | 1/5/2015 7:10 PM  |
| 46 | Because JTEs have wobbly English skills and make various mistakes that would cause students to achieve lower scores on proficiency tests, Also, it helps to provide an image of an "open" Japan which welcomes foreigners.   | 1/5/2015 6:50 PM  |
| 47 | To assist the language teaching in the classroom by being a model speaker for students to listen, speak and interact with. This includes cultural exchange from both sides, and as such improves the students global awareness as well as sensitivity to cultural differences. For small children, ALTs can be seen as getting them acquainted with the idea that foreigners exist, and they are no alien beings to point and stare at.  | 1/5/2015 6:40 PM  |
| 48 | To give students the opportunity to speak in English. As most JTE's only speak in Japanese during class they don't get many chances to practice.   | 1/5/2015 6:40 PM  |
| 49 | I still believe ALTs are a great source of motivation and inspiration to students. The textbook and grammar may bore them to tears, but interacting with a native speaker and learning about the home country and life experiences of the ALT can have a positive impact. Several of my former students are now English teachers themselves, or have jobs that require English language skills (hotels, travel agencies, etc.).  | 1/5/2015 5:51 PM  |
| 50 | In an ideal state, we are there to provide a real live demonstration of how english is used outside of Japan.  | 1/5/2015 5:47 PM  |
| 51 | ALTs are in the classroom because the Japanese government wants it's citizens to learn English. Without a clear, standardized establishment of the ALT's role in the classroom, with clear learning outcomes that can only be achieved with an ALT's presence, this goal will not be achieved. In many of the schools I am in, a shift in the way English is taught needs to occur for the ALT to provide value to the classroom.  | 1/5/2015 5:45 PM  |

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| 52 | Should be to provide stimulus for real meaningful production in actuality to conduct grammar practice games.   | 1/5/2015 5:37 PM |
| 53 | I believe that they get the chance to interact with people from another country and that lets them see outside of Japan. Maybe it'll encourage them to learn more English and to learn about another country's culture.  | 1/5/2015 5:29 PM |
| 54 | To prove English is a living, changing language not one of grief and lecture like in the textbooks. Also because of politics between Japan and other countries.  | 1/5/2015 5:26 PM |
| 55 | I think they are there to expose the students, especially the countryside kids, to people outside of what they are used to. I think that if MEXT was serious about ALTs improving the English ability of students, there would have to be sweeping changes in not just the role of ALTs, but in the English education system in Japan. As of now, I think ALTs just serve to connect with students and encourage them to at least try English a little, but rather than a large scale effect, I think it is more a result of an individual connection. | 1/5/2015 5:24 PM |
| 56 | Good question! My opinion is that we are there to model the language by reading and speaking to the students in as natural a manner as much as possible and that we should be communicating with the students as much as possible. Given that that I am not given any of my own time in the class, I feel I am EXTREMELY under utilised at Junior High School. After 9 months, some of them are still unsure how to <b>answer a basic question</b> if I meet them in the hallways.   | 1/5/2015 5:17 PM |
| 57 | Various political reasons, dating back to decisions made by MEXT or christian schools.   | 1/5/2015 5:02 PM |
| 58 | Ideally, they should be a tool for practicing real communication in the second language. However, teachers often focus on teaching the grammar in Japanese and we run out of time to practice communication. At the moment, I have no role in the classroom and am a <b>waste of government money</b> . To maximize the funds being spent on this program, there needs to be reform.   | 1/5/2015 4:57 PM |
| 59 | To make English come alive.  | 1/5/2015 4:53 PM |
| 60 | To serve as living breathing models, real time pronunciation and corrections, develop bonds and ease tensions  | 1/5/2015 4:39 PM |
| 61 | To encourage communication, to help with pronunciation, and to expose students to different cultures, ideas, and ways of life.   | 1/5/2015 4:19 PM |
| 62 | ALTs are in the classroom to expose students to a native English speaker, to expose them to different cultures and to help them practice speaking in English. They also provide variety in the classroom and can help make activities fun.   | 1/5/2015 4:03 PM |
| 63 | Officially to provide a living embodiment of a living language. Unofficially, to provide help to JTE as requested.   | 1/5/2015 4:01 PM |
| 64 | They don't need to be Sometimes it's almost as if they aren't even if they are Many teachers don't require their assistance; however, some teachers can organize their curriculum to make room for visitors Japanese teachers should be fluent with or without foreigners  | 1/5/2015 4:00 PM |
| 65 | Ideally, to increase student fluency and comprehension and provide an incentive to learn English. I think ALTs can be really useful in getting the students excited for English and they are definitely invaluable as far as pronunciation assistance goes.  | 1/5/2015 3:59 PM |
| 66 | To show the importance of studying English, correct pronunciation, cultural awareness, making english fun and often elementary school class clown.   | 1/5/2015 3:53 PM |
| 67 | To show English as a living language. To model native English use. To support JTEs. To introduce students to different cultures and perspectives. To increase English competence for both students and JTEs.   | 1/5/2015 3:45 PM |
| 68 | To assist and to work as a team with Japanese teachers. To share their expertise in English to the students and homeroom teachers. To boost the confidence of the homeroom teachers by working as a team.  | 1/5/2015 3:42 PM |
| 69 | Culture and conversation education. As a support resource for teachers.  | 1/5/2015 3:40 PM |
| 70 | To foster a love of leaving a language, to expose students to native-level speaking and to aid the students in their studies. Also to aid the teacher in imparting the knowledge onto students   | 1/5/2015 3:37 PM |
| 71 | To perhaps give the students another component to help study English.  | 1/5/2015 3:19 PM |
| 72 | To expose students to a native speaker of English, to help students enjoy studying English, to help students improve/learn English, and to expose students to different cultures.  | 1/5/2015 3:17 PM |
| 73 | To supplement a lack of local talent   | 1/5/2015 3:13 PM |

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| 74 | ALTs are in the classroom to provide students with exposure to foreign culture and alternate learning methods to the ones they are familiar with. We give the students a chance to hear and practice English with a native speaker in an arena that is on their terms. It is their classroom, their school. Even if they don't do well, they know that they will be supported and encouraged by the ALT who should continuously encourage students to try, try, try and let students know that communicating an idea, even in poor English is a better than just thinking they can't.   | 1/5/2015 3:11 PM    |
| 75 | Because we have mastered the English language For cultural exchange To help the teachers To learn about Japanese culture  | 1/5/2015 2:54 PM    |
| 76 | ALTs are in the classroom less for the purpose of teaching language and more so to interact with Japanese children and demystify (or so I hope) the image of a "foreigner." Even as Japan gradually opens up to the rest of the globe, the telltale "foreigner" remains exactly that, very foreign.   | 1/5/2015 2:50 PM    |
| 77 | To see the language in use  | 1/5/2015 2:47 PM    |
| 78 | The idea is that the ALT is supposed to give the students a chance I not only practice their English skills and have an introduction to a foreign culture, but to also give the students an opportunity to experience English in a way that can't be done with a textbook and computer software. By witnessing a native English speaker actively using the language in vastly different ways, the students should, supposedly, come to realize that English is more than just a subject in a textbook to be tested on. This should, in essence, inspire the students to want to improve their English language abilities, opening up many opportunities to improve themselves and to see the world. | 1/5/2015 2:42 PM    |
| 79 | We bring alternative experiences and generate interest in English for students through interaction opportunities. I often give teachers alternative ideas for activities and material delivery to help maintain interest and show students what is waiting for them in the wider world, if they want to experience it.  | 1/3/2015 9:38 PM    |
| 80 | I think to liven up lessons and give students a human native speaker to interact with. Teachers say it helps students to hear about pronouncing.  | 12/31/2014 5:36 AM  |
| 81 | To provide a real need for English, to encourage/motivate students to communicate, to demonstrate successful English interactions (with JTE and with students), to be a link to the "outside world"--answer questions about culture, language, etc  | 12/30/2014 6:54 AM  |
| 82 | To give students a chance to communicate.   | 12/22/2014 10:38 PM |
| 83 | What a great question. I think that Japanese believe interacting with a native speaker will help give them confidence in future when speaking English. Also, the native teacher can teach the correct accent to non-native learners.  | 12/22/2014 6:27 PM  |
| 84 | As a selling point for the school? To provide more listening practice and speaking opportunities for the students.  | 12/22/2014 10:29 AM |
| 85 | My school was not informed of our arrival until the month prior and had no say in the matter, but in theory our role is to improve cultural relations and encourage the practical use of english. Not just in students, but also in the JTEs. In m experience it also helps to be on hand to correct the perceptions of the often outdated text books...  | 12/20/2014 12:06 PM |
| 86 | To assist HRT in English language.  | 12/19/2014 10:01 PM |
| 87 | Theory one: to polish and refine the already excellent language tuition they get from JTEs. Theory two: to repair the damage done by JTEs.  | 12/19/2014 7:10 PM  |
| 88 | To provide cultural awareness, and promote the use of natural English.  | 12/19/2014 5:19 PM  |
| 89 | I suppose to show English being used naturally and to inspire students to want to learn it and use it in the future.  | 12/19/2014 3:17 PM  |
| 90 | Because of the lack of English proficiency of homeroom teachers   | 12/19/2014 2:44 PM  |
| 91 | To give students a sense of relevance to what they're learning, I suppose, and show that they cant' just get by on Japanese if they want to live an international life.   | 12/19/2014 10:43 AM |
| 92 | To get the students accustomed to hearing native English from an English-speaking resident, as opposed to an instructor who knows English but has lived only in Japan. Moreover, a westerner can become the bridge for exchanging culture between two or more nations (I often talk to my students about American and Vietnamese culture, as my ethnicity is Vietnamese).   | 12/19/2014 10:24 AM |
| 93 | To provide native English expertise and act as cultural ambassadors to other countries.   | 12/19/2014 9:21 AM  |
| 94 | To assist the main teacher...and to assist the students   | 12/19/2014 7:26 AM  |
| 95 | To be the ambassador of English   | 12/18/2014 11:15 PM |

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| 96  | I don't believe that ALTs, JTEs and the Ministry of Edu. agree on a single reason, but it is to provide a nearly homogenous group of people exposure to "others" and give motivated students a chance to speak English with a person who doesn't share their native language.   | 12/18/2014 10:05 PM |
| 97  | Basically, based on my observations and experience , the JT's couldn't handle an English lesson properly or they don't have the proper training nor confidence to teach the language.   | 12/18/2014 9:57 PM  |
| 98  | They are there to provide an accurate model of English usage, to motivate students to speak English, and to provide exposure to foreign cultures.   | 12/18/2014 8:45 PM  |
| 99  | To provide native pronunciation and cultural knowledge  | 12/18/2014 8:26 PM  |
| 100 | Hah! Depends on who you ask. I've heard all kinds of answers. Personally, I believe our greatest legacy is to encourage (not force) JTEs to see new perspectives and try new styles, advise JTEs about linguistic priorities (archaic or uncommon forms and low-frequency vocab still abound in textbooks), improve their own English, and help them overcome both their insecurities about English and various native-speakerist beliefs that have a very harmful impact on English education in Japan. Additionally, ALTs should support JTEs' growth toward being able to lead classes in English and plan and lead communicative activities--ALTs should not just do everything themselves. However, a great number of systemic factors prevent ALTs from working effectively toward these ends. Apart from this, in the classroom, ALTs can do a number of valuable activities ranging from acting essentially as a paraprofessional (a 2nd teacher in the classroom can be a great boon!) to sharing the lead with the JTE. However, real change to the system must come from within and it is highly inappropriate and arguably immoral to expect, as some in power do (as well as many naive ALTs), that merely importing a bunch of ALTs and asking them to force JTEs to change will actually achieve the desired effect, especially when the main systemic issues at play have little to do with ALTs, much less are within their power to affect. | 12/18/2014 7:28 PM  |
| 101 | To engage students in English learning  | 12/18/2014 7:24 PM  |
| 102 | That's a good question, I'm still not entirely sure.  | 12/18/2014 6:44 PM  |
| 103 | To give exposure to native English -of which the effectiveness is still being debated. As I'm sure you're aware native speakers of English are now vastly outnumbered by non-native speakers, also in real life Japanese people have a much *much* higher chance of speaking English with non-native speakers so I don't see why the need for native speakers is given such a priority.   | 12/18/2014 6:41 PM  |
| 104 | I don't know. I feel redundant as one and that teachers don't like utilizing me as they feel threatened.  | 12/18/2014 5:15 PM  |
| 105 | I think ALTs encourage the students to become more interested in learning English, help them to speak English, and hopefully will motivate them to explore places outside of Japan.   | 12/18/2014 4:14 PM  |
| 106 | In my opinion? Well, ideally they are supposed to be there to help provide the teaching of English language with a native speaker's perspective and experience. However, I think a lot of the times it is a way for the educational system to appear like it is putting forth as much effort as possible towards English education. The actual implementation of ALTs and their role within the English education system can be quite dismal.   | 12/18/2014 4:04 PM  |
| 107 | I don't know. If there were defined goals for them, defined uses for them, then... maybe they would have an effect. But, you have JTEs who don't know how/ don't want to use them - you have ALTs who aren't actually qualified (and yes - I include myself in that!) - and sometimes they can do more harm than good. IMHO the system needs an overhaul.   | 12/18/2014 4:01 PM  |
| 108 | For real life samples and assistance in natural speech.   | 12/18/2014 3:47 PM  |
| 109 | To give more teaching opportunity, to diverse the classes, to teach about other culture, to help students. The ALTs don't know what is going on when they first arrive, they can give opportunities to improve themselves to students who normally don't listen.  | 12/18/2014 3:41 PM  |
| 110 | ALTs are in the classroom because English is a confusing language, both in terms of conflicting grammar and unwieldy pronunciation. We are there to build the foundations for a more native familiarity with a foreign language than the stunted textbooks could ever possibly offer.   | 12/18/2014 3:05 PM  |
| 111 | To foster an environment more open to English usage and to also help expose students to different cultures. The majority of us lack the training to actually function as teachers   | 12/18/2014 2:39 PM  |
| 112 | Assist the JTE in teaching about the lesson. Its more on assisting or helping.  | 12/18/2014 2:03 PM  |
| 113 | THE students need to hear the language from a native speaker. Many JTEs have very thick accents or sometimes have limited speaking ability.   | 12/18/2014 1:58 PM  |
| 114 | To make English more relevant and fun for the students  | 12/18/2014 1:56 PM  |

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| 115 | Because we work in the government schools that's why we are in the classrooms.   | 12/18/2014 1:29 PM  |
| 116 | To provide a native influence, both linguistically and culturally, to improve the learning experience for the students and the teaching experience for the teachers.   | 12/18/2014 11:33 AM |
| 117 | To make it seem like the government is serious about internationalization, and because putting a bandaid on the gaping wound that is the Japanese educational system is easier than radically overhauling it   | 12/18/2014 10:54 AM |
| 118 | To give students a chance to interact and communicate with native English speakers. To internationalize the classroom and humanize foreigners. To show that many people of many backgrounds speak English as their native tongue (in other words, it's not just white Americans that speak English). To remind students that English is a global language, and they cannot always rely on their native Japanese if they wish to succeed in an increasingly globalized community.   | 12/18/2014 5:48 AM  |
| 119 | To share experience and strengthen ties between the team members   | 12/18/2014 5:13 AM  |
| 120 | Because they are paid handsomely to pursue other interests in japan and that is the trade off  | 12/18/2014 2:38 AM  |
| 121 | To show students people from other cultures, to maybe spark interest.  | 12/18/2014 1:08 AM  |
| 122 | At junior high school, ALTs are there to pronounce things, to check the accuracy of various things, and to make English a real thing. I think, if used properly, an ALT can be an invaluable asset to a classroom. If not, they can be nothing more than a strange person who walks in to the classroom occasionally and says things for the students to repeat. I think it is important for ALTs to both act, and be treated like, real teachers. Assistant teachers, but still, teachers. To function best, they need to know what is going on in the classroom, what expectations are, what kinds of things the JTE wants to happen. That way, a good ALT can figure out how best to fit themselves into the room and the class. It can be hard to be more than a tape-player if you don't know what's going on. ALTs, on their part, need to make themselves as useful in the classroom as possible, while JTEs need to see their ALTs as more than special guests and people who can do much more than speak pretty English. BUT, ultimately, I think an ALT is most useful outside of the classroom. | 12/17/2014 9:48 PM  |
| 123 | To help the JTE with classroom management and teaching in general( helping to check written work and listen to speeches ) and provide a difference perspective plus a chance to improve the students speaking and listening ability.   | 12/17/2014 8:44 PM  |
| 124 | That depends on the JTE  | 12/17/2014 7:25 PM  |
| 125 | At the time I was teaching "Kokusaika" was all the rage. Truly, I have no idea beyond that. It certainly wasn't to teach English effectively.  | 12/17/2014 7:16 PM  |
| 126 | To use their pizzazz to trick students into speaking lots of English?  | 12/17/2014 7:13 PM  |
| 127 | A lot of times it is to make a lesson "fun." Also to allow students some sort of interaction with a foreign person.  | 12/17/2014 7:13 PM  |
| 128 | From what I've observed and heard, ALTs perform a variety of functions, depending on the teacher. In the elementary school English classes I've observed, the ALT does everything while the homeroom teacher looks on or perhaps participates as a student.  | 12/17/2014 6:51 PM  |
| 129 | In theory, we are here to give students exposure to foreign people, ideas, and culture while increasing individual interest and confidence in the English language. For me that means having as many silly conversations as I can.   | 12/17/2014 6:39 PM  |
| 130 | To help the students with listening, speaking and reading.   | 12/17/2014 6:39 PM  |
| 131 | To be the foreigners to show students and reaffirm stereotypes about foreigners - our purpose is to be displayed like the Hottentot Venus.   | 12/17/2014 6:23 PM  |
| 132 | GOOD question!!! Most importantly: it makes the school seem more modern and like a "better" school. Less importantly: it makes life easier for the team teacher. (The team teacher can depend on us to do the things they are unable to do. The team teacher is also able to blame us when lessons don't go well.)   | 12/17/2014 5:35 PM  |
| 133 | I believe that the purpose of ALTs in the classroom are to provide an organic learning experience. Having a native English-speaker in the classroom not only helps students to improve pronunciation, natural speech patterns, and comprehension, but also gives them a physical representation of the "point" of learning English. In classrooms where ALTs are given more freedom, I also imagine ALTs get to promote cross-cultural learning.   | 12/17/2014 5:22 PM  |

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| 134 | I think it's to give the students a ~real foreigner~ to practice with. They become more interested because they want to communicate with this person that they know nothing about, and they also have someone that they can practice their English on without being judged for making a mistake. Being in the classroom helps form a trust between the students and the ALT, I think. I have a lot of students that will ask me how to say random words, or they'll ask their JTE how to say something so that they can say it to me. Just being present is enough for the kids to become more interested in learning English. Maybe they're not studying when they go home, but the fact that they're asking questions is so important.  | 12/17/2014 4:24 PM |
| 135 | Help use the English language in a natural way and to introduce students to a new culture they may not be familiar with.  | 12/17/2014 3:41 PM |
| 136 | Mostly so children have a chance to interact with a real foreigner  | 12/17/2014 3:21 PM |
| 137 | Assist Japanese teachers in teaching English  | 12/17/2014 3:11 PM |
| 138 | I think there are a few reasons. First of all, in a country where English is NOT a pressing daily reality, having a foreign speaker in the room makes students try harder to use what they are being taught. I often don't understand a student's Japanese and find they are able to make me understand in English what they thought they were incapable of expressing before. This is useful with difficult students who argue they will never need to use English. Secondly, as a "cultural ambassador" (granted, that is a lofty term), I often get approached by students and staff who are interested in the world beyond Japan. I've helped students study abroad, prepare for university entrance exams, and host exchange students. I now have a permanent role as an unofficial international coordinator, helping when the school hosts exchange students or sends students abroad. Students and staff are comfortable asking ALTs about life in other countries - even in countries other than the ALT's native one. ALTs are walking reminders that there are other countries and cultures. Also, I think ALTs are useful in improving JTE English and checking the reality of what textbooks say. Often teachers I do not team teach with come to me as a reference for a grammar point or sample sentence that they aren't sure is perfect - and often, isn't. ALTs are a good resource for JTEs to build on their own English skill and carry that into their own lessons. | 12/17/2014 2:46 PM |
| 139 | To inspire students to actually use English and hopefully to introduce communicative activities. Honestly, if JTEs were better-trained in communicative teaching, and entrance exams and tests were done differently, ALTs wouldn't be necessary. Maybe 1 English adviser for the whole school who is actually CELTA- or TEFL-Master - certified would be a better idea. Of course, that is only IF JTEs were no longer teaching grammar-translation  | 12/17/2014 2:44 PM |
| 140 | ALTs provide an accessible native speaker. We serve a variety of uses: we demonstrate proper pronunciation, we make English a bit more relevant, and we help expose the students to other cultures.   | 12/17/2014 2:32 PM |
| 141 | That's a good question. Does mombusho even know why?  | 12/17/2014 2:31 PM |
| 142 | So kids have access to a native speaker. The ALT is their resource to improve English and the ALT should interact with the kids as often as possible.   | 12/17/2014 2:28 PM |
| 143 | Make English fun. Expose students to regular, extended native English speech, give students the confidence to speak with native speakers  | 12/17/2014 2:16 PM |
| 144 | To promote grassroots internationalisation. Though such a buzzword doesn't help without further discussion, however the fact that I have zero teaching experience prior coming to Japan can give insight as to the nature of my presence in class. My primary concern is to encourage my kids to be confident, speak up and sell themselves..   | 12/17/2014 1:50 PM |
| 145 | They act as both culture ambassadors and a teaching resource for JTEs and the students. They provide novel ways of teaching that are night and day from the Grammar Translation Approach. They are there to show students that learning English can both be fun and rewarding. ALTs are also there for the purposes of having a culture exchange and trying to connect with the students.   | 12/17/2014 1:50 PM |
| 146 | We are supposed to be there as a direct source of how English is supposed to be spoken. But honestly, I felt more in the way of the teachers half the time.   | 12/17/2014 1:41 PM |
| 147 | To provide a native speaker's perspective. I admire ALTs with educational training who feel comfortable leading classes, but I don't have that experience and I'm not confident when it comes to that. I provide an opportunity for students to learn about other cultures, interact with foreigners, and figure out how to use the English they know to communicate with someone who doesn't know Japanese (although I do know Japanese, so I don't know how successful I am at that last bit).  | 12/17/2014 1:25 PM |
| 148 | They are there to essentially provide a way for children to be exposed to foreign people and become aware of internationalization. However, JTEs sometimes relegate them to be a living CD.   | 12/17/2014 1:24 PM |



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| 149 | To be bottomless wells of cultural and quasi-linguistic information that may or may not be utilized. ALTs are also seen as ambassadors between two countries and ideally inspire international study and relations.   | 12/17/2014 1:20 PM  |
| 150 | They are meant to provide new ideas and fluent English examples to the students and teachers.   | 12/17/2014 1:10 PM  |
| 151 | To pass on culture and to help students speak with fluency including casual words.  | 12/17/2014 1:01 PM  |
| 152 | It is assumed they provide a perfect model for students to aspire to and learn from   | 12/17/2014 12:20 PM |
| 153 | This is different for every school. In my opinion, in schools that actually aspire to engage with English seriously, ALTs are in the classroom to help with the understanding of the material and expose students to material outside of the textbook (e.g., cultural tidbits); it's a knowledge base that is not readily available to most JTEs. I think this should actually be the situation in all schools that employ ALTs, but in my situation and many others like mine, I think schools are forced to employ an ALT and thus do not have a plan for how the ALT can be useful; this usually results in the ALT only being used as a stand-in tape player of sorts, which is a shame. But for many schools without a clear plan for their ALT, this is what they see them as - a native speaker with native pronunciation who can demonstrate for the class. | 12/17/2014 12:18 PM |
| 154 | I don't know. I don't really serve a purpose. I could serve a purpose, but the system is very difficult to change so I've given up. Now I just try to stop students from falling asleep by making the class as interesting as I can, with the limited opportunity I am given.   | 12/17/2014 12:12 PM |
| 155 | To provide an insight into 'real' English, and make learning more immersive.  | 12/17/2014 12:01 PM |
| 156 | To expose the country folk of Japan to foreignness and a hope that we can carry Japanese 'Soft Power' back home with us. It also seems to be a status symbol and part of an image that the towns wish to create around themselves. We aren't very useful but they pay us very well for the amount of work that we do and so I stay. I often ask this question to myself though...and I want to hope that we're important to English education, but I really don't know if there are statistics to back that up...   | 12/17/2014 11:49 AM |
| 157 | ALTs are in the classroom to provide authentic native English and be Cultural Reference Experts. ALTs are able to inform students and JTEs of how English is currently (or historically) used and ensure that their learners will be able to effectively communicate with other English speakers. While ALTs may not all have the same teaching or English skills, ALTs know how English statements prepared by students may be perceived by other native speakers. ALTs can then improve their students' vocabulary and grammar skills based on current linguistic norms.  | 12/17/2014 11:38 AM |
| 158 | So Japanese students can hear proper pronunciation  | 12/17/2014 11:34 AM |
| 159 | Expose students to a real foreigner? It is a loaded question. I think it can be less to do with teaching English and more to do with interaction when using or listening to English... Just having an ALT encourage kids can really get them more positive about the compulsory learning of English   | 12/17/2014 11:29 AM |
| 160 | A jte once invited me to a class to help her in implementing a new comprehension methodology. After she gave them a survey to fill out with a space for comment on TT. Almost all students said it was great to listen to native speaker and it gave them confidence when they understood. It brings English alive for them and as i dont use japanese in the classroom its motivation to speak in english  | 12/17/2014 11:28 AM |
| 161 | Probably because some bureaucrat in the late 80s decided to start the JET program. Honestly, I ask myself this question everyday.   | 12/17/2014 11:23 AM |
| 162 | Cultural exchange, English learning motivation (seeing a real life example of the language they are learning and attempting to make it "fun"), pronunciation coaching, conversation practice.   | 12/17/2014 11:17 AM |
| 163 | ?   | 12/17/2014 11:13 AM |
| 164 | Provide a cultural representative for English and for students to hear the native speak.  | 12/17/2014 10:53 AM |
| 165 | For the realistic accent...although they get JET's from all over the world and we all truly have different accents and ways of saying things. But, I know now, with my students, when they hear a Japanese person speaking, it is more realistic than when I speak.   | 12/17/2014 9:13 AM  |
| 166 | Because Japan cannot staff public school classrooms with enough fluent Japanese speakers of English. Since non-Japanese can not be licensed public school teachers ALTs serve as a <b>culturally acceptable band-aid for Japan's shortcomings in EFL</b> . We are an easily disposed of temp position with no real power that (in theory) that can help bring native English to the classroom. JET ALTs have the extra burden of grass roots internationalization and building Japan's soft power abroad.   | 12/16/2014 11:03 PM |

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| 167 | To provide cultural insight and proper pronunciation of the English language. Basically to be a model of what a native English speaker is like so that they can practice their English with someone who uses it on a daily basis.   | 12/16/2014 6:41 PM |
| 168 | To encourage communication with native speakers, and in a natural way. To introduce 'natural' English (a loaded term) and foreign culture to Japanese students.   | 12/16/2014 5:40 PM |
| 169 | To support the JTE in teachin English and so students can hear a native speaker.  | 12/16/2014 5:30 PM |
| 170 | I think we should be in the classroom to teach English classes (at least half the lesson, if not all of it), especially in cases where the ALT has a rather good amount of teaching skill, experience, and qualification/training. (Which, in my experience, most do these days.)   | 12/16/2014 4:55 PM |
| 171 | ALTs are in the classroom for a variety of reasons. Many Japanese kids live completely isolated from non-Japanese people and an ALT is a good way to expose them to foreigners. Studies show people raised in non-diverse environments naturally become less tolerant. This is the main reason I think ALTs are a good idea. ALTs are in the classroom because Japanese people in general feel there is a mystical connection between race and language ability. Thus, foreigners are necessary to impart "real" English. ALTs are in the classroom because a native speaker does have a kind of linguistic and cultural fluency that few Japanese people will have, and that is a valuable resource. (Though not as powerful as some seem to think.) ALTs are in the classroom because the government wants to increase the number of people who can speak English, but they don't want to change entrance exams to expensive oral interviews, so ALTs are the compromise. | 12/16/2014 4:17 PM |