

Q19 What problems do you regularly face?

Answered: 169 Skipped: 2

#	Responses	Date
1	LATER	2/5/2015 11:37 AM
2	The teachers are too busy to do anything. Don't communicate and too focused on test scores to do anything else. I'm sitting here watching the kids hate English but the only thing that some teachers care for is the test scores. I think that there is a high discord between the information ALTs are given and JTEs are given about how an ALT can and should be used and I think that really needs to get fixed.	1/22/2015 5:20 PM
3	I would like more than 10 minutes to be told that I need to create an activity (even though I didn't know where that teacher was in the textbook.) I'm not even sure what I'm allowed to help with, so I don't know how to ask and I get VERY bored during those down times. Having to teach incorrect grammar from the textbook as correct.	1/15/2015 8:00 AM
4	Rowdy students	1/13/2015 4:59 PM
5	Cultural/linguistic misunderstandings. My experience so far has been that Japanese people either assume I know everything there is to know about their culture or nothing at all. Passive aggressive behavior from time to time. Most people expect me to be my predecessor but I'm not him.	1/12/2015 10:47 PM
6	Inattentive students and lack of class participation. Arguments about the correctness of grammar and the correct usage of grammar in certain contexts with JTEs. Lack of active time in some schools (some schools only want me to pronounce the vocabulary and/or read the text passage). Lack of class input (no long-term projects to test student ability such as presentations) Lack of education on customs and culture differences. Lack of use of multimedia. There is very little, if any, deviance from the textbook. Scheduling issues such as double-booking.	1/12/2015 11:26 AM
7	At my current school, the problems are student motivation and discipline.	1/10/2015 11:32 PM
8	Teaching styles.	1/10/2015 11:24 AM
9	Student indifference, lack of reason to study.	1/9/2015 5:06 PM
10	Not being told about the schedule Lack of guidance, feedback, instructions Unable to communicate with a staff member because all are too busy	1/8/2015 7:21 PM
11	Mostly, unenergetic, unenthusiastic or disinterested students	1/8/2015 3:08 PM
12	On the student side, motivation is always a problem, especially in cities like Niigata which are not metropolitan or international like Tokyo or Osaka. Many students have little interest in English because they have difficulty understanding why it might be useful. Without regular exposure to foreign people and countries, English is often regarded as a mysterious riddle, with no real consequences if it is completely ignored. One way I try to overcome this problem is by using music, movies, and other kinds of media to bridge the gap between the students' world and the outside (of Japan) world. On the teacher side, most Japanese teachers are completely unprepared for and unable to teach authentic English which will serve their students beyond the next exam. This is a product mainly of the learning environment that the teachers themselves came from, which was a very different world than the one we are living in now. If the Japanese teachers cannot use English or comprehend the importance of learning a foreign language, we cannot expect their students to do so. One way that this might be remedied would be to bring in teachers who have spent significant time abroad or have current teachers do so, to experience what one might call "living English".	1/8/2015 2:58 PM
13	Not enough classes and class time to actually help the students develop their communication skills (at best, only once a week for 45 minutes); the entire institution's attitude that my classes are unimportant due to there being no speaking component on the university entrance examinations; constant class cancellations; pressure (caused mainly by the textbooks I am required to use) to focus on grammar.	1/8/2015 2:51 PM
14	No communication. Only a few JTEs have communicated their expectations to me. The other ones look at me and smile, never telling me what they want. Even when the lesson goes badly, nothing is done to improve it. For 90% of my JTEs, "team-teaching" means I have the first 10-15min to do whatever I want, not related to the lesson's target language, and then they have a regular lesson for the remaining time. They will not help me during that 10-15min, even if students are at a complete loss. It's 10-15 min ALT, then 35-40min JTE. NO connection nor help.	1/8/2015 2:44 PM

15	Frustration at the drill sergeant teachers; frustration at the futility and terribly misguided approach of the Japanese English educational structure and system; student hesitation to take risks or attempt to speak English; difficulty obtaining clearly delineated expectations and lesson structures from co-teachers	1/8/2015 10:43 AM
16	uncooperative JTEs, JTEs speaking too much Japanese, translating comprehensible English.	1/8/2015 9:30 AM
17	older JTEs unwillingness to try modern teaching practices, younger JTEs inexperienced	1/8/2015 9:07 AM
18	Not regular problem but a sudden change of schedule annoys me.	1/8/2015 1:01 AM
19	scheduling, change of schedule, language barrier	1/7/2015 10:20 PM
20	Racism, sexism, a lack of disinterest from my coworkers at my base school, not being taken seriously when I bring up an issue I want to have taken care of, a lack of serious work, difficulties finding English camps willing to accept me because I live "too far away to be reimbursed for travel expenses."	1/7/2015 7:25 PM
21	Team teachers who lack team work or classroom management skills. A lack of student motivation and engagement. Mild discipline problems.	1/7/2015 4:10 PM
22	-Not being thoroughly familiar with the progress of the students, and what they have studied before they have a lesson with me. -Familiarizing students with my expectations, standards, and teaching style. -Being briefed on what I am being expected to teach in a timely fashion. -Transporting my teaching materials from school to school.	1/7/2015 3:49 PM
23	Occasionally disruptive students	1/7/2015 3:46 PM
24	My main issue is a lack of apparent understanding in what is appropriate/inappropriate for students to say to a foreigner when speaking their language, as well as a lack of ability on the JTE's part to explain the seriousness of the offenses made. (eg. Having a student incessantly say "Hello!" then run away laughing, is not socially acceptable in English countries.)	1/7/2015 2:59 PM
25	Because I'm reasonably experienced in this job, I don't have problems. The biggest limiting factor that I face is my lack of Japanese ability.	1/7/2015 2:52 PM
26	Elementary School: 1) There are several students with learning disabilities. 2) Since I only teach once a week in my main school, students don't retain much 3) Since I only teach 8 times year, and 4 times a year in the other two schools, students don't retain anything 4) The curriculum is awful. Jr. High School: 1) The JTE is mentally unstable (not trying to be funny). Whether or not she is having a bad day determines whether or not my day will be difficult. 2) The students only see me as a guest and not a teacher. 3) The curriculum is awful. High School: 1) The JTE is mentally unstable (again not trying to be funny). He is afraid of confrontation and told me he was bullied by his previous students. He is unable to discipline students about anything. 2) The students are some of the lowest achieving students in all of Japan. They typically do training during the daytime, such as skiing, and study at night. By the time class starts, it is already 6:00-7:00 at night. Needless to say, motivation is a problem.	1/7/2015 10:13 AM
27	Lack of communication Passive-Aggression Lying Refusal to assist in classroom management or activity guidance Refusal to reply to inquiries communicated via any method Misplacement of paperwork Isolation/Ostracism Being politely ignored Social and emotional coercion and bullying And I take it all with a smile, because I refuse to let it get to me. I'm a professional. :)	1/7/2015 9:49 AM
28	The teachers are often too busy, or lazy, to meet with me or leave me a note asking me for something.	1/7/2015 8:55 AM
29	Mostly JTEs and administrators not taking ALTs seriously because we are younger / not qualified in Japan as professional teachers. Different rules that ALTs have to follow but JTEs do not (one example is that all ALTS absolutely must wear a suit or business attire while the Japanese teachers are allowed to teach in shoddy track suits).	1/6/2015 11:21 PM
30	Few times to plan together with other teachers. Knowing little about the students of my visit school, yet having to plan entire lessons for them. Students thinking I'm cute, and therefore not taking me so seriously. Knowing teaching theory, but struggling to implement any of my ideas due to seldom teaching in the same classroom.	1/6/2015 5:50 PM
31	Teachers (JTEs) have differing views about what the role of an ALT is, and I'm sure they've also had varying experiences with different kinds of ALTs. This makes it difficult to build rapport with some teachers in the first few months.	1/6/2015 5:44 PM
32	Some teachers don't give me any input on classes until we're in the classroom, then ask me to do something that would be better done with some preparation. I'm also used by most JTEs as a game machine.	1/6/2015 1:07 PM
33	My main problem is boredom. There are many days when I don't have many/any classes and I can only plan so many small activities.	1/6/2015 12:40 PM

34	Lack of communication, an undefined or unclear role . JTE's too busy to explain what they want ALTs to do, teachers arguing over who gets the ALT in the context of a large student population, the list goes on.	1/6/2015 11:58 AM
35	How to get to get to school through a maze of busses and trains, finding good activities to use for classes, how to explain something to 11 year olds in English or with gestures so that they can understand the target language clearly.	1/6/2015 10:09 AM
36	In ES the main problem was a negative attitude from HRTs towards English which they communicated to the students, for example saying 難しいなあ repeatedly throughout class, speaking "gaijin Japanese" in a comical voice, encouraging racist stereotypes and otherwise introducing negativity into what were otherwise classes the kids really enjoyed and felt excited about. In JHS there were always problems with the curriculum design, such as moving on to new grammar points without sufficient repartition of the previously learned material, the emphasis on unnatural written English at the expense of communication and the insistence on excessive translation (ie "Japanese pizza" for okonomiyaki). I found it depressing being asked to mark as incorrect perfectly understandable and grammatically correct English assignments because they were not exactly the same as the textbook examples (ie "It's sunny today" would be incorrect if the textbook used "today it's sunny"). Personally, I struggled with a few individual JTEs who lacked classroom management skills (in one case I had to physically restrain a male student who was considerably larger than me after he had seriously attacked another student with a pair of scissors, and the JTE just stood at the front of the class saying どうしよう どうしよう。I ended up having to ask a student to run to the office and bring help because the JTE was just frozen and I was on the floor holding the kid down and couldn't move). There were also a number of JTEs who seemed to hate English, refused to speak it, discouraged the students from speaking it and spent English classes talking about how Japanese was a much better language and how difficult and unnecessary English was. One of those JTEs confessed to me at a drinking party that he'd wanted to be a science teacher but failed the test and hated teaching English .	1/6/2015 8:06 AM
37	The problems I have encountered so far are feeling like I am picking up where my predecessor left off but without knowledge of what their working relationships/habits were, struggling to keep up with lesson planning and teaching solo classes, and a general feeling of burnout.	1/6/2015 12:34 AM
38	Not feeling like a complete member of my school. In some cases, one JTE regularly cancels his classes with me. But, he has done it with my predecessor as well. Also, given his hectic schedule, I can understand his situation. The student's lack of enthusiasm in class .	1/6/2015 12:21 AM
39	Japanese Teachers who always rely on me. who presumes that you will prepare everything. For short, no orientation of what will happen in the lesson.	1/6/2015 12:15 AM
40	Lack of student motivation .	1/5/2015 10:30 PM
41	Not being given an active role in or outside of class . Being given too much to do all at once and then nothing to do for long stretches. Being expected to drop everything to work on something that's actually not that time sensitive. Having nothing to do but wanting to do something. Feeling isolated.	1/5/2015 10:06 PM
42	Teaching without Japanese with little to no assistance from a ES Japanese teacher can be incredibly difficult. It is a major deterrent in good lessons. Communication with JTEs is extremely difficult. Understanding foreign culture and feeling as if you fit in is nearly impossible, and dealing with subsequent loneliness is very difficult.	1/5/2015 9:28 PM
43	*language barriers [the program has been on since 1987- how is the basic information not translated????!??] *trying to keep up with schedules that keep changing [despite having my supervisor check my monthly schedules in advance] *not having resources [laminators, scissors]	1/5/2015 7:18 PM
44	JTE have a hard time communicating in English and the students are used to being taught exclusively in Japanese, so using English leads to angry students and confused JTE.	1/5/2015 6:52 PM
45	There isn't a lot of communication with me. For instance I am not allowed to attend other teachers English classes . I was told to create my own lessons with no outline just anything I wanted and even when I try to share with JTE's what I've planned for our class they seem disinterested.	1/5/2015 6:51 PM
46	Being uninformed and feeling un-needed or like a waste of space.	1/5/2015 6:46 PM
47	The problem I most often faced was lack of motivation . I taught at a rural school in Shimane and many of the students did not understand why they were being forced to study English. A lot of them had no plans to leave the prefecture. It was sad, really. The students I taught during the first three years in the early 1990s all wanted to go to the US or somewhere and see the world, but the post-bubble students seemed to lack hopes and dreams .	1/5/2015 5:54 PM

48	Communication with JTEs is my number one problem. it doesn't matter how persistent or proactive I am, some teachers will not listen to what I have to say, and continue to use me as a tape recorder/clown. It would be helpful if the ALT's role was clearly defined, as my role varies from school to school. Another problem is that some of the school I am in are quite low level, and I believe they should not be required to take English. At this level most students do not pay attention during lessons, even when I am not there. I also face problems because I do not speak Japanese. I would feel more a part of the climate of the school if I could communicate with teachers, and I believe that would improve my time in the classroom as well.	1/5/2015 5:50 PM
49	Schools not planning for the arrival of the ALT this resulting in only ONE class a day at times or ONLY ENGLISH CLUB.	1/5/2015 5:49 PM
50	At the moment very disruptive students. Low expectations of JTEs. This varies greatly from school to school.	1/5/2015 5:40 PM
51	Being a human recorder and seeing how boring some English classes are in my Jr High. I'm fine with being a recorder as long as there is a meaning for it, but many times there is no meaning to it. In my Jr High, the 3rd year students English class is so boring. It's only repeat after me, then a worksheet about the grammar, then translate what they repeated. I can see the students yawning and being so bored and truth be told, I'm super bored too, but I don't feel as though I have any position to talk to my JTE about it.	1/5/2015 5:34 PM
52	No classroom time. Treated as object. Horrible textbooks. Teaching to the test. Lack of caring about English from JTE. No teaching of every day international culture so "foreigners" are more than what people see on tv.	1/5/2015 5:28 PM
53	I don't have any specific problems - luckily my colleagues are all very kind and friendly. Mostly it is an ever pervading feeling of being under-utilised that bugs me, and the sense that I am seen as an unnecessary presence in the classroom.	1/5/2015 5:25 PM
54	Resistance from older, more entrance examination focused teachers - especially those who don't want to conform to Teaching English in English	1/5/2015 5:25 PM
55	Students of vastly different level in the same class. Improper language samples, or errors in Japanese Entrance tests, forcing the teaching of the mistake in order to pass the exam. Varying levels of language proficiency in the Japanese Teachers. Belief that the students are less capable or able to be challenged. A requirement of the students to pass a certain level or score on English tests, which have little impact on their actual learning needs.	1/5/2015 5:06 PM
56	Being told no. Being told yes to an activity but then never letting me execute it. When I ask if there is anything I can do for the teacher, they frequently tell me that there is nothing I can do for them.	1/5/2015 4:59 PM
57	Unruly/unmotivated students, unmotivated teachers	1/5/2015 4:54 PM
58	Misunderstandings (JTE only wants to speak in English, as good as his is, sometimes Japanese would be more comprehensive for myself (my Japanese is decent)) As a new JET, I'm still getting used to the classroom and being an ALT and it sometimes frustrates my JTE who worked with my predecessor for four years	1/5/2015 4:41 PM
59	Communication problems with my JTEs, but only at one school. I'm at two JHS and one is great but the other is pretty difficult to communicate with the staff. I don't go to every class and I don't do anything in certain classes with one of the teachers, who happens to be the principal. But I'm still new so I'm trying my best to work through them.	1/5/2015 4:22 PM
60	Being under utilized, comprehension and translation issues both with students and teachers (they don't understand the meaning of a word or the goal of the lesson/activity), not being able to understand much Japanese (for example, a schedule change or missing out on events and instructions), student disinterest, not knowing when (or if) I will teach on a certain day.	1/5/2015 4:18 PM
61	Many JTEs assume all countries in the West have American traditions, when this is not the case. I can't do a Halloween or Thanksgiving lesson the way they want me to, because it doesn't exist in my country. My schools struggle to understand this, and still want me to conduct a lesson on these topics because it's expected. My country's celebrations are met with confusion because they're unfamiliar, but I think this is an issue that will be solved in time.	1/5/2015 4:06 PM
62	Limited availability of JTE's to include me in the planning limiting my role to little more than a tape recorder. On many occasions my JTE's have said that they wish to provide me with a greater role however, even when attempts are made by me to increase my role or provide assistance, this is often met with disinterest. On the rare occasions where I am able to make a difference, the increased role may last a week or two before returning to the previous equilibrium. To be noted; this is year 2. Year 1 I had more involvement in classes and had after school journal communication with pupils on a regular basis.	1/5/2015 4:05 PM
63	Not being able to communicate fully with students because 1) asked to speak only english 2) other teachers hesitate to approach you	1/5/2015 4:02 PM

64	Going to lessons not having any conversation with the Japanese teacher before hand and just having to make stuff up on the spot. Difficulties with following the progress of students as I go to several schools so by the time I return they have moved on in the text book. (Junior high) Elementary schools difficult as teachers are unsure of alts role in the classroom so every teacher expects different levels of assistance from you. If they want you to plan an activity often they won't say.	1/5/2015 4:00 PM
65	My limited Japanese ability prevents me from effectively helping students. Lack of motivation from students Lack of support/team planning from JTEs Lack of training in effective lesson/game planning and implementation	1/5/2015 3:47 PM
66	Some homeroom teachers have no interest in English at all. They end up leaving up to you the entire lesson and sitting or just watching you at the back during the whole lesson if you won't get them involved from the very beginning.	1/5/2015 3:46 PM
67	Lack of classes, misunderstandings due to culture and language differences	1/5/2015 3:42 PM
68	Disruptive students and miscommunication between staff	1/5/2015 3:39 PM
69	Communication: Some of my JTEs do not have time to sit down and plan lessons with me. They will give me a very general outline of what they want, or ask me if I have an activity for a specific grammar point. One of my JTEs in particular doesn't make time to communicate even though she is free. It can be challenging to come up with an activity that will please the teacher but also be beneficial for the students. Feeling like an outsider in the staff room: I sit with and around many teachers but I rarely have a chance to communicate with them. Some of my younger Japanese colleagues are friends outside of work and even though they are around my age I haven't been able to become close with them. I feel a bit alienated sometimes . Being asked to do the same activity over and over: I have one JTE who uses me purely to make Jeopardy reviews for students. Every time I go to their class I make a different Jeopardy. I have tried to branch out but to no avail. It's very frustrating and disheartening.	1/5/2015 3:22 PM
70	Sometimes it is difficult to find time to prepare a lesson with the JTE. They have many responsibilities and can be busy.	1/5/2015 3:22 PM
71	The main problem I gave is that in lesson planning my JTE will tell me my lessons are fine and that they are at the students level. Even if there is some problem with the lesson, she will never tell me about it until after the class has commenced or finished when it is too late to fix it.	1/5/2015 3:14 PM
72	Lack of empathy from Japanese teachers, little to no support from my company	1/5/2015 3:14 PM
73	Sexist behaviour by male JTE's Lack of lesson planning together with the JTE's Lack of communication Negative feedback without positive feedback at the one school Roles and expectations aren't clearly defined Cultural misunderstandings The stress of working in a high academic high school in Japan Loneliness and inability to connect with students and staff at one school A very long commute to the one school Treated differently from the rest of the staff Not kept up to date with all events Not included in staff meetings Language barrier Stress from being next to the Vice Principal at the one school	1/5/2015 3:00 PM
74	I often feel rather outside the social circle of the staff room. I quite often feel like an "other," an anomaly with which they don't quite know how to contend. Part of the issue lies in my own shyness. I imagine they expect me to be the outgoing one and to socialize with them first. But, unfortunately, if anything, I think Japan has made me even more shy, which certainly does not help when it comes to socializing with Japanese co-workers. I honestly do not feel that I have made any friends or bonds with any of my co-workers. And I feel that might be my fault for not trying hard enough.	1/5/2015 2:54 PM
75	Communicating what JTE want.	1/5/2015 2:48 PM
76	Mostly language barriers preventing me from getting closer to my coworkers. Particularly at the school where I receive little assistance in the classroom. Those particular teachers that I should be team teaching with don't talk to me, which could just be a result of not having such a high level of japanese language ability. Likewise, another issue I face is a total lack of motivation from the majority of students . The class sizes are, on average, too large to do many activities, and the JTEs don't personally use English as much in the classroom as they probably should.	1/5/2015 2:47 PM
77	Language... I believe it is impossible to successfully teach lessons fully in English, if you want the students to really understand, and I struggle with Japanese... Not in the teachers room, but often at JHS grade 3, I struggle to answer the students grammar or more complicated questions, partly is my own confidence, at this stage as exams approach, I do not want to give students wrong answers or answers different to the teachers or the day's teaching goals.	1/3/2015 9:46 PM
78	The only problems are reading the invisible rules about behaviour . There are some unwritten modes of acting that I am not sure about and I am nervous about breaking them.	12/31/2014 5:38 AM

79	Sometimes classes are changed suddenly. Sometimes the JTE wants me to do all the prep for a lesson and gives no input. Sometimes the JTE has very limited English skills.	12/30/2014 6:58 AM
80	My classes being cancelled so that JTE's can catch up on the grammar section	12/22/2014 10:40 PM
81	The main problems were behavioral . Especially at the Junior High School. Many students were forced to learn a language they were not interested in, and if the classroom teacher was new or uninterested in discipline, then I typically had to suffer through 45-50 minutes. Outside of class though, I typically had a lot of positive experiences with the students, as I would go see what they were doing after school.	12/22/2014 6:32 PM
82	At school or in the classroom ? Lack of communication between english department and nte department (6 of us for about 2000 students). Not receiving information which directly affects our classes , or receiving it very late.	12/22/2014 10:39 AM
83	Office politics. My supervisor is keen to use CLT methods and to generally improve the level of spoken English in Japanese schools- however, entrance exams do not require spoken english, and the rest of the teachers largely are not interested in this, and do not want to devote any time to this whatsoever. Same for clubs- students are already too busy with other activities and English is not a priority. Even when they *want* to have an english club, we're being put off.	12/20/2014 12:10 PM
84	I talk a lot but I am happy to know that ALT's are limited 20 mins.talking already.	12/19/2014 10:06 PM
85	The usual - they all know the answer but won't say it unless you crouch down near their desk.	12/19/2014 7:12 PM
86	I never know whats going on since I dont speak Japanese. Some JTEs dont make students listen/shut up during class.	12/19/2014 5:20 PM
87	poor timing. I just cannot get the hang of timing my classes fantastically. Things I think will take 10-15 minutes take 30 and things I think will take 30 take 10. Overall I am happy with where I am and what I am doing.	12/19/2014 3:19 PM
88	Communication problems	12/19/2014 2:45 PM
89	At my base school, my biggest problem is under-use. In a school of 800, I only teach one 40-student class twice a week, so that means I only teach one class to students on Mondays and Thursdays. Because of this, it's easy to get really bored and discouraged- it's hard to know whether it's my fault or not that they don't use me in other English classes. At my visiting schools, it's hard to create interesting games that are educational but still not too difficult, and that students will want to play. Some students are really interested in English, but some students will do nothing but sleep in class, so it's hard to find games that works around those sleeping students. With most classes at visiting schools, I only see students once a month, so it's hard to establish a rapport and to gauge their ability level and what they enjoy.	12/19/2014 10:48 AM
90	Student enthusiasm in the classroom. My school is very academic (one of the top schools in Yamanashi Prefecture), so my students are extremely studious. But they are also very shy, and often have the mentality of perfection in their academic life; therefore, most of them don't participate in class by answering questions or interacting unless they know 100% that the answer is correct, which is counterproductive to an engaging class. Furthermore, this means that I cannot accurately gauge what level of comprehension my students have in their lesson for the class when I don't know what ideas or words they don't understand.	12/19/2014 10:28 AM
91	There were occasional lapses in understanding, due to language and different cultural expectations, but even these cases could be resolved with patience and understanding.	12/19/2014 9:24 AM
92	Sometimes when the main japanese teacher is wrong, its not allowed for me to correct her even in private...	12/19/2014 7:29 AM
93	not being taken seriously, not told of changes, etc	12/18/2014 11:16 PM
94	My skills are ignored or under utilized due to the ALT label. They also treat me as they would someone with no education background. I'm also constantly treated like a tourist even by people I have known for years. Many coworkers refuse to recognize that I can read anything in Japanese that isn't written in hiragana because I am not Japanese (despite having JLPT N1). Many of the same people leave me out of meetings and don't give me school handouts because they believe I would be bored because I wouldn't be able to understand.	12/18/2014 10:14 PM
95	Unruly students who don't respect nor recognize authority and do nothing but disrupt the lessons.	12/18/2014 10:08 PM

96	Lack of JTE time to meet, discuss, plan, and evaluate lessons. Lack of training of JTEs, specifically (1) JTEs teaching English with literature or French degrees, not English education degrees or teaching methods courses, etc.; (2) little or no training in the new (for JTEs) communicative methods that MEXT wishes JTEs to use; and (3) lack of training in how to team teach with an ALT. (A deeper understanding of classroom management skills and strategies would go a long way toward helping JTEs be more comfortable running interactive activities.) Lack of training of ALTs (who usually lack any background in education). Lack of opportunities for trained ALTs to use their training (leading to frustration). Lack of clear guidance or job descriptions for ALTs, as well as problems keeping ALTs in the loop on important information as it arises. Lack of intervention by JTEs when ALT-produced lessons or materials are inappropriate/incorrect. Lack of communicative, task-based, or function-based textbooks. Too many disconnected textbooks used simultaneously (10 total for 1st year English). Emphasis placed on rote memorization of entrance exam language (low-frequency vocab and nuances) and skills (reading and listening) as opposed to communication (further encouraged by principals who have increased mock testing at all levels and constantly compare and criticize their school's performance relative to others). Extremely ridiculous entrance exams (often poorly written questions, focused on obscure nuances of language). Exams that paste in the entirety of the texts read in class, thus forcing questions to be focused on grammar or trivia rather than key content. Poor pacing: emphasis placed on finishing the (10 poorly designed) textbooks rather than mastering the language (conditionals can't be mastered in 1 class period!!). Division of the 5-day English curriculum into 3 disconnected courses--(1) Communication (i.e. grammar and vocab in context), (2) Solo JTE-taught Expression (i.e. grammar again, but not connected to Comm), and (3) Team-taught Expression (almost never connected to solo-taught Expression)--exacerbating the problems of pacing, mastery, skill focus, etc. Lack of cooperation / coordination among JTEs teaching the same course (leading to assessments designed by one JTE that are inappropriate for the other JTEs' students but still given to them for a grade). Criticism from school principals for using too much English during English lessons (directly contradicting the course of study). Lack of classroom technology and/or lack of understanding by JTEs how to use available classroom technology effectively. Native-speakerism and its plethora of inter-related stereotypes and beliefs and their effects on ALTs, JTEs, students and Japanese people in general. I'm sure I am missing some problems, but there's plenty here already to keep you occupied.	12/18/2014 8:53 PM
97	Not knowing about schedule changes etc, not knowing what teachers want, not being trained to teach	12/18/2014 8:49 PM
98	Student discipline , particularly in junior high school.	12/18/2014 8:47 PM
99	Teachers forgetting we have class.	12/18/2014 7:24 PM
100	Miscommunication Different expectations of what students should be learning during class time Classroom conduct Differences in terms of what I may see as (in)effective assessment tasks. Expectations re what a teacher is and should be doing for their students' learning are also different.	12/18/2014 6:48 PM
101	Knowing that there are much more efficient ways to learn languages (i.e. by actually using them in speaking and writing activities) and not being able to do anything about it	12/18/2014 6:42 PM
102	JTEs who don't speak very good English. A timid supervisor who never communicates with me. Students who completely ignore me in class and talk at full volume among themselves. Class schedules that are constantly moved around.	12/18/2014 5:17 PM
103	Not being utilised enough. For example, English classes are on, but I am not in them...	12/18/2014 4:15 PM
104	Communication issues on a daily basis. Elementary teachers not speaking any English or making an lesson plans. No contact prior towards me coming to the classroom.	12/18/2014 4:06 PM
105	None really - on the whole I'm happy - one teacher always repeats the same lesson plan which drives me crazy but on a personal level no problems.	12/18/2014 4:03 PM
106	None worth mention.	12/18/2014 3:48 PM
107	Disciplines, misunderstanding, time management.	12/18/2014 3:42 PM
108	I have no framework around which to plan my classes, I am pretty much flying completely blind. I feel like I've just been thrown into this situation where whether I sink or swim could drag down an entire generation of children in my small town with me if I fail. I desperately don't want to be the reason for any of these kids to come to hate learning English, but with no experience and little idea what I'm doing, I constantly worry about overwhelming the kids I am supposed to teach.	12/18/2014 3:16 PM
109	Very few. I think the biggest problem is seeing that there's no systematic continuity when teaching English in Japan . From school to school and grade to grade kids are taught in a drastically different way. It makes sense why they struggle with English. I believe that these systematic issues would hurt the study of any foreign language, not solely English.	12/18/2014 2:43 PM

110	1. In public school junior high school, most of the students in the 2nd year level don't show much interest in second language-English. 2. The 2nd year level students in JHS don't participate well. 3. They are difficult to manage. 4. Most of them don't do their assignments and seatworks.	12/18/2014 2:12 PM
111	COmunication. Even the english speaking teachers dont always understand what I am communicating with them.	12/18/2014 2:01 PM
112	Despite having no formal teaching (in an EFL environment), being expected to produce lessons on obscure topics. I also find that as a native speaker, my grammar is not quite up to scratch.	12/18/2014 1:57 PM
113	Bad students, they don't want to learn and they are always lazy. Teachers who don't participate and don't want to involve themselves. Also the company itself, they have rules/ system we don't like.	12/18/2014 1:31 PM
114	Having to teach material of an unrealistic level (due to curriculum design that occurred before my arrival).	12/18/2014 11:38 AM
115	Lack of discipline in schools; kids sleeping, talking and teacher does absolutely nothing.	12/18/2014 10:55 AM
116	A few of my JTEs do NOT speak to me in English, which I find extremely strange. I speak decent Japanese, but it makes zero sense to me that JTEs would not desire to practice and improve their English with a native speaker, especially when there are so few in my small town! It really infuriates me. Even when I speak English to them, I'm met with Japanese responses. Because I have eight schools, I don't feel like I truly belong anywhere, or that I'm considered a real teacher at any of my schools. I don't like feeling like the baby that needs to be taken care of or catered to. I'm not much different than my coworkers, yet sometimes they fail to see that. I hate the fact that I still receive "compliments" on my chopstick use, or my Japanese skills, or the fact that I can eat sashimi. It's really frustrating. Japanese people don't realize that these so-called "compliments" are offensive. I don't enjoy being stared at by old people when I go for jogs outside.	12/18/2014 5:51 AM
117	Language issue is a major problem. Proficiency in Japanese is a must, though.	12/18/2014 5:14 AM
118	It's all good	12/18/2014 2:39 AM
119	Not much	12/18/2014 1:08 AM
120	JTEs who translate everything that I say before the students have a chance to try and understand it themselves. This distances the ALT and the students, and makes me feel inaccessible. Feeling not useful in the classroom. In no way is this my most frequent feeling, but these days do happen. Feelings of frustration with the way English is being presented and the lack of use of things other than the textbook as resources and exposure to English.	12/17/2014 9:54 PM
121	Not enough time to prepare as much as I would like to, plus discipline problems in one JHS although I am not directly involved.	12/17/2014 8:46 PM
122	Being asked to explain complex grammar patterns when they have no bearing on the task at hand.	12/17/2014 7:26 PM
123	Biggest problem is lack of communication between ALT and JTE. Most of the other "problems" stem from that.	12/17/2014 7:17 PM
124	Sexism, rampant sexism!!!	12/17/2014 7:16 PM
125	Getting winded playing tag.	12/17/2014 7:14 PM
126	Not having enough time!	12/17/2014 6:53 PM
127	Language issues, mainly. I want to communicate more about plans and feedback and whatnot but it's still very difficult. That, and my unfamiliarity with how disruptive behavior is handled in the classroom. Often enough students do things that would be considered unacceptable or rude where I come from but are not addressed in the classroom.	12/17/2014 6:44 PM
128	Discipline in the classrooms.	12/17/2014 6:40 PM
129	I have no communication time with my JTE's prior to class. I am not given an opportunity to interact with students without the interaction being completely scripted by the JTE.	12/17/2014 6:29 PM
130	How many hours do you have to read my answer to this question?!!! :D JTEs don't: take me seriously; let me lead lessons; listen to my ideas; let me suggest anything about how to improve the lessons; allow me to talk one-to-one to students; back me up when I try to ask/tell a student to do something (like sit down instead of wandering aimlessly around the room during the lesson); let me discipline any students with behavior problems; like it AT ALL when I am "so rude" and I force students to wake up... etc., etc., etc.	12/17/2014 5:39 PM

131	<p>Most of the problems I face revolve around the fact that I can't keep up with the Japanese used in the office. While I studied the language for two years prior to my acceptance to JET and have continued to study since my arrival in Japan, I still find myself unable to understand my coworkers. Luckily, my JTEs have great English and are very effective communicators, but they are often very busy and forget to inform me of important scheduling changes or events. I can't understand the morning meetings or any of the pamphlets I receive (if I'm even given any), and I often have to wait the whole day for the opportunity to ask one of my JTEs to translate for me. I also sometimes feel alienated by the other teachers because none of them make much of an effort to speak to me - either in English or in easy Japanese - and I can understand enough to know that they sometimes talk about me while I'm still in the staff room. I wouldn't mind, but I think the students mirror their teachers' reactions towards me, especially since I rotate between the classes and grades for lunch. In the homerooms of teachers who are apathetic towards me or treat my presence as an annoyance, the students rarely talk to me and are much more likely to claim that they "can't speak English" when I try to start a conversation. The homerooms of teachers who treat my presence as a fun opportunity or a special event are always more energetic and motivated to use what they've learned to speak to me.</p>	12/17/2014 5:29 PM
132	<p>Sometimes it's difficult for me to re-phrase my wording into a level easier for the students to understand. I think this is just because it's my first year and I genuinely have no idea what they've learnt yet. What I think is easy may very well be, but they still might not know it. I also feel extremely challenged when I'm asked to make an activity and am not given any guidelines to follow. I've been told as little as "An interview activity."</p>	12/17/2014 4:31 PM
133	<p>Communication difficulties with homeroom teachers, expected to plan or change lessons 15/20 minutes before a lesson beings, conflicting goals for students compared with JTEs who are "teaching for tests."</p>	12/17/2014 3:43 PM
134	<p>Sudden schedule changes that I find out when I arrive at the school</p>	12/17/2014 3:22 PM
135	<p>A few sleeping students</p>	12/17/2014 3:13 PM
136	<p>Miscommunication. I came to Japan with basically zero language skill, and have to deal with one-on-one miscommunications almost daily. That's part of the fun! I have amazing JTEs and even non-English teachers that are fluent or skillful in English, and they help me out more often than I care to admit. But individually, I still encounter some small hiccups in the average day. Again, this is mostly my own fault for my lazy studying habits. Another problem would be organizing JTEs. Japanese teachers are insanely busy, especially at the high school level. I have trouble wrangling my 4 main JTEs together to go over a plan every week. Often I can chase them down individually, but this leads to four teachers wanting four different lessons. Also, with the Board of Education dragging teachers away for business trips every other day, I often find myself with a prepared team-teaching lessons suddenly operating alone.</p>	12/17/2014 2:55 PM
137	<p>Teachers not giving me a heads up about schedule changes. I go to a school knowing that I have x many classes, but teachers decide to combine classes and I have to quickly improvise a lesson to work with a larger group. Another is teachers saying my lesson is too hard, but the kids are already able to do that level of English. Some teachers aren't even willing to try to challenge them, so the dumbed down lesson I do at the teachers insistence bores the kids to death.</p>	12/17/2014 2:53 PM
138	<p>Out-of-line students and not knowing how to discipline them</p>	12/17/2014 2:44 PM
139	<p>Probably my biggest struggle is figuring out how to connect with my students. Sometimes I give up the whole "pretending I can't speak Japanese" act, just so I can have a conversation with them.</p>	12/17/2014 2:35 PM
140	<p>Too much Japanese and no inter staff communication.</p>	12/17/2014 2:32 PM
141	<p>None. My school uses ALT well and treats them well</p>	12/17/2014 2:17 PM
142	<p>Not really any problems perse, just certain issues. Sometimes, my JTE commits a grammar error or basically reverts to making the class one of Grammar Translation.</p>	12/17/2014 1:56 PM
143	<p>Lack of enthusiasm from JTE's with an apathy towards misbehaving, inattentive and disrespectful students.</p>	12/17/2014 1:52 PM
144	<p>Stagnant teaching techniques that didn't really engage the children. However, that's a problem across the whole of Japan and not just in the English class.</p>	12/17/2014 1:42 PM
145	<p>As a third-year ALT, I've mostly learned to navigate my schools and I don't face too many problems anymore. The biggest thing is that I do wish that teachers at ES would give me a little more guidance for what sort of classes they would like me to do with the lower grades, and would give me feedback on the classes I teach. Another problem that occurs occasionally is non-communication, for example when I show up and am informed on the day of that the teacher is on a business trip and I'll have to teach a class on my own.</p>	12/17/2014 1:30 PM
146	<p>Communication is a big issue. I've had JTEs who didn't provide me with essential class information which lead to unsuccessful activities or lessons.</p>	12/17/2014 1:25 PM

147	I'm being under utilized or over utilized.	12/17/2014 1:25 PM
148	My students are uninterested in using English.	12/17/2014 1:11 PM
149	Variance in culture, differences in workplace manners (leaving on time is frowned upon), and a language barrier.	12/17/2014 1:04 PM
150	I often feel like I am more a point of interest to the students than a teacher. This is largely because I am not given regular classroom time. I am only brought in occasionally, and only for supplemental lessons that are not part of the main curriculum structure (e.g., they finished a unit ahead of time and have a spare class to do a fun activity, so they bring me in to do something random, potentially related to the material they just covered, or the material they will cover, but more in the sense of a review game, rather than actually teaching new material). I have a M.A. in TESOL and have a lot to offer as a teacher; I have been a teacher for 3 years and taught ESL for the one year in the USA, and even knowing this, the JTEs at my school rarely give me the opportunity to actually be a teacher to the students.	12/17/2014 12:31 PM
151	The goal of the class is finishing the textbook. Everything revolves around that. I am only used when there is time. That doesn't happen quite often.	12/17/2014 12:25 PM
152	Students not fully grasping content, but being forced to move ahead in the textbook regardless. And it's not just one or two 'slow' kids, it's more than half the class. The classes move too fast. There is not enough time allocated to review. On the other side of the coin, the students who excel are being held back. Classes are also super boring. Every now and then there's a unique, interesting class, but otherwise they all follow the same broken pattern that guarantees 90% of the class are asleep.	12/17/2014 12:18 PM
153	When the JTE does the drilling to students himself, and pronounces everything completely wrong and I wonder why he doesn't ask me to do it!	12/17/2014 12:03 PM
154	Communication breakdown. Boredom. Feelings of worth. Thoughts on advancement or future plans when this ends. Mental isolation.	12/17/2014 11:54 AM
155	Typical issues arising from an inability to speak Japanese. However, my JTEs are incredibly supportive and helpful in this regard. The largest educational struggles are more commonly found in the lack of a standard English curriculum - locally, prefecturally, or nationally (to my knowledge). Teachers frequently do not know what they want students to achieve by the end of the semester or year. Without these goals, planning lessons becomes a daily struggle.	12/17/2014 11:45 AM
156	Not included in the loop. I am not told about announcements or important days.	12/17/2014 11:35 AM
157	Student demotivation, a curriculum that often focuses on stuff i dont consider necessary or suitable for their level. Some teachers focus on memorisation	12/17/2014 11:33 AM
158	JTEs not including me in classes - or not letting me take a more central role. Also, some kids get a bit rude as they dont see you as a real teacher - though that can be an age thing.	12/17/2014 11:31 AM
159	Lots. Constant translating of what I say. Being used as a tape recorder. Having every idea I have shot down and when I try to use native materials, I'm told it's too hard. Etc etc	12/17/2014 11:25 AM
160	My lessons are sometimes treated as "fun time" when that is not my goal. I think some jtes would take me more seriously if they would incorporate me more in their actual grammar lessons.	12/17/2014 11:19 AM
161	Nothing	12/17/2014 11:14 AM
162	Not supportive JTE, as in not translating what may be needed or not helping with classroom management.	12/17/2014 10:53 AM
163	None that stand out "on a regular basis".	12/17/2014 9:13 AM
164	I am very frustrated by the persistent stereotypes about ALTs- young, inexperienced, no relevant education or experience, no Japanese language skills . It makes it hard to do my job when people refuse to talk to me directly. I also have difficulty with my supervisor. She has 14 ALTs and the city's librarians to manage on top of other BOE duties. I end up teaching blind most days since mt supervisor fails to pass schedules and documents on to me.	12/16/2014 11:18 PM
165	I mentioned the tape-recording problem. I have some communication issues. I don't speak Japanese and even though I'm studying it's still not enough for me to be able to keep up. I feel like there's a lot of Japanese being used in the classroom to teach English. I want to be tougher on the kid sometimes, because I know they can do it but I have teachers that let the kids take the easy way out and sometimes that can be frustrating. But mostly it's just that miscommunication and feeling like I've not being fully utilized in the classroom.	12/16/2014 6:44 PM
166	Low-level students who think they can't learn English, and students with short attention spans who cause classroom management problems. Short preparations times.	12/16/2014 5:42 PM

167	Disrespect. Assumption of my ignorance/Japanese ability.	12/16/2014 5:31 PM
168	<p>I don't know that I face any major problems "regularly," but on occasion, the following sometimes happen: a) A handful of the JHS JTEs with whom I work -- thankfully just a handful -- seem to see ALTs as nothing more than "human tape recorders." b) Sometimes in JHS classes, and once in a while in the elementary classes, the JTE/homeroom teacher will just jump in and translate everything I say into Japanese. I always ask them not to. c) A few teachers (not many, but a few) write out lesson plans for me to follow, as if I don't know how to plan my own lessons. A few elementary teachers do this, even though they don't teach English or even speak it! It's not really a big deal, and perhaps they're just trying to help. But it's unnecessary work for them and signals to me (though it may not be intended) that they think I'm not capable. Whenever this happens, I just take their lesson plan from them, say "okay, thank you" -- and then just ignore it and teach the class my own way!</p>	12/16/2014 5:06 PM
169	Interfacing with the BOE can be difficult. I am lucky in how very generous and kind my BOE is, but my supervisor is overworked. Even though I speak Japanese just fine, communication can suffer sometimes.	12/16/2014 4:22 PM