

## Q21 Could you improve the ALT system? How?

Answered: 169 Skipped: 2

#	Responses	Date
1	Direct hire. Training. Pay. All the basic things that any company that doesn't want to go out of business would do.	2/5/2015 11:37 AM
2	I think part of it is just more focus on the JTEs side of things. ALTs get constant information about how we are supposed to be used. We are supposed to do this, we are supposed to do that. We have to be the ones making sure that the Team Teaching is working. We have to notify our teachers about prefectural meetings. We have a really big burden placed on us and then getting stuck with teachers who don't listen nor care is a big issue. I think there needs to be a little bit more focus on the JTEs and them getting the information about how ALTs can and should be used.	1/22/2015 5:23 PM
3	I might've answered that one in the previous question...	1/15/2015 8:01 AM
4	Yes, by showing we could do more than what is expected of us. By doing more than the JTEs ask but not overlapping their role or taking over their responsibilities.	1/13/2015 5:01 PM
5	Better clarification on the roles that ALTs are allowed to take on in the work place.	1/12/2015 10:54 PM
6	I personally cannot improve the ALT system. However, if I could change the education system, I would make foreign language (English) OPTIONAL and also allow for other languages to be taught.	1/12/2015 11:36 AM
7	Scrap it. Or at the very least, demand that the ALTs are appropriately credentialed. A CELTA/TESOL certificate should be the absolute minimum. And they should be appropriately remunerated.	1/10/2015 11:34 PM
8	No	1/10/2015 11:28 AM
9	See number 20.	1/9/2015 5:07 PM
10	1) Change the curriculum to better suit conversational English if having a high standard of spoken English is the goal. This means dedicated modules to only spoken English. 2) Provide sufficient and regular training for ALTs by competent trainers. No peer training but shadowing would be beneficial. 3) Standardize the system. No one should accept that every situation is different. Every school who wants an ALT should be ready to accept an ALT and deal with them in a way that the Board of Education has laid out. This means: a) having a dedicated supervisor. This is someone who organises the ALTs paperwork, informs them of anything in the school they need to know about including schedule changes and being a point of contact if there is a problem either professionally or personally. b) detailing the workload of JTE and ALT. It is often the case that an ALT is left to make all lesson plans and deliver them (sometimes without a JTE being present at all) or ALTs are used as 'human tape recorders'. Both teacher and assistant should participate in the lesson in equal or near equal amounts. Apart from anything else, this allows the students to see how easy it is to speak and interact with a native English speaker. Let the ALTs and JTE both know where they stand, no tiptoeing around the subject and make sure that this is consistent throughout the school year. c) implementing goals for spoken English. This would ideally mean overhauling the final examinations and creating a spoken test for students. Every teacher and student in the country could work to the same goal while establishing spoken English as a subject of importance for students. If this is not possible, set goals within the parameters available e.g. taking Eiken tests or nationwide in-house speaking tests. 4) Inform the ALT applicant of what the job entails before they sign the contract or leave for Japan. This can only be done if the system is standardised as unfortunately every situation is different. If they will be sitting at their desks for 20 hours a week with nothing to do, let them know. This is not always a fault as some will use this time to study Japanese but let the applicant make an educated decision. If they are told there will be an opportunity to set up an English club only to find that there is a barrage of red tape when they set to work this is because they were not informed about their job properly. Again this stems from my time on JET and may not apply to all ALTs in Japan.	1/8/2015 9:41 PM
11	ALTs are underpaid, nearly everyone I know works at least one part-time job to cover their costs of living. And neither BOEs or dispatch companies offer any incentive or benefit for doing one's job well. A larger salary for ALTs, and bonuses or other benefits for high performing ALTs, and BOEs and dispatch companies doing the right thing and paying for their half of shakai hoken and fully paying for company cars. Many students are also not motivated to try to learn English because they have no need or chance to use it outside English class. Making schools visit an international school or traveling abroad would give them greater incentive.	1/8/2015 3:09 PM

12	The only way to improve it is to offer long-term employment (and security) with similar benefits that full-time teachers here enjoy. I think that many ALTs would welcome more responsibility and control of how education is carried out here. Japan spends more money on English education than many other Asian countries, but is consistently one of the lowest scorers of the TOEFL test. The problem is not how much money is used, but how it is utilized, and the end-goal of the English program. At this time it is still test-based, for entering high school, and has no relation to English that could be utilized for traveling, working, and interacting on the global stage.	1/8/2015 2:58 PM
13	No I could not. The decisions are being made by officials with seniority and whose ideas will not be openly challenged by younger generations. One way to quickly enhance the need and importance of ALTs is to include a speaking section on the university entrance examinations. However this would require massive overhaul of the current testing system and is unlikely to happen.	1/8/2015 2:52 PM
14	My JTEs at the moment, <b>despite many years of "team-teaching", do not understand at all how an ALT can be used</b> , it seems. I don't know if this is because they are not interested (I know they have no choice but to have me in the classroom) or if they are unable to learn. Despite training provided by my city every year regarding how ALTs and JTEs can work together, things don't change, so I can only conclude that some JTEs are simply not interested. Interestingly enough, at my school, those are the less competent teachers. Maybe the JTE should be free to invite the ALT (or not)? Right now I'm so busy with classes every day that I don't have the time to prepare adequately, yet I have to standup throughout a whole day only to read a textbook for 5 min in each lesson.	1/8/2015 2:45 PM
15	Sorry, I answered too early again! -More stringent qualification requirements (pedagogical study, linguistics background, etc.) -Clearer expression of expectations for the ALT from CLAIR to the schools - a lot of people don't know what to do with me. A lot of ALTs end up tape recorders, but I actually rarely do that because the teachers know I am a trained teacher and feel guilty using me as such, so they end up not using me at all if that was their intended role for me in the lesson. -Team teaching workshops and training required for all of the participating JTEs and ALTs.	1/8/2015 10:47 AM
16	I would hire <b>more qualified teachers</b> to be a part of the ALT system. I think that if a goal of the system is to improve the english ability of the japanese population so that they can participate in the global economy; if they want to have English spoken 100% of the time in SHS English courses, then they need to start hiring those who are competent and qualified *already* as teachers so that it progresses more quickly. For example, the 5 ALTs in the JHS and ES in my city all had no prior teaching experience but were told they were placed here for their Japanese proficiency (it's quite high) but the students I receive as 1st years have a low comprehension of speaking and listening skills and while I have no proof of correlation, it does not seem unrealistic to me that a cause of this could be that they aren't being instructed by more qualified ALTs and when the JTEs are teaching solo, they aren't using English at a higher percentage of the time. While I think that the English classes are going to undergo many changes in the near future to meet the MEXT goals, I think some changes could be made to the ALT acceptances to help aid the process.	1/8/2015 9:30 AM
17	I would like to but don't feel confident enough in my understanding of the ALT system quite yet, I only just arrived three weeks ago. I do hope to change the system a little in teaching ALTs how to teach, using a variety of effective strategies such as CRISS and Kagan	1/8/2015 9:07 AM
18	MAYBE. Communication with the JT for a better collaboration or <b>division of duty</b> during English lesson .	1/8/2015 1:10 AM
19	I do not know. Not yet fully familiar with the Japanese school system	1/7/2015 10:21 PM
20	I'm going to withhold my answer for now.	1/7/2015 7:30 PM
21	Yes. By providing team teachers with appropriate resources.	1/7/2015 4:11 PM
22	-Restrict the number of schools that a teacher can be stationed at to two or three. -Give ALTs jobs a really language teachers and <b>pay them more.</b>	1/7/2015 3:49 PM
23	<b>See the classes more regularly</b>	1/7/2015 3:47 PM
24	<b>Remove evaluation forms.</b> Implement an ALT trainer program whereby an experienced ALT goes around and offers advice to new ALTs in their schools after observing lessons. Allow ALTs to acquire full teaching positions. Drastically revise test evaluations as one cannot fail a language unless they give up attempting to communicate through that language.	1/7/2015 3:00 PM
25	As stated above, I think the ALT system is basically OK-it's for the JTEs to implement MEXT's communicative guidelines. However, I feel that if ALTs were given a well-constructed, cogent book or guide containing good lesson plan structures and activity plans (and maybe as little as <b>2 days training in</b> how to use it), then each ALT would be better at their job from the start, thus improving the whole system.	1/7/2015 2:53 PM

26	I do not think that I could change the system, but I have changed the perspective somewhat in my schools. When I arrived two and a half years ago, I was delegated to the typical ALT role. By showing my ability to work independently of the JTE, I was given more freedom and responsibility. If more teachers showed the initiative and ability, perhaps the system could change.	1/7/2015 10:21 AM
27	I am not sure that I would improve the ALT system, if I had a magic wand. I would change the education system to better cater to students' needs. That would involve too much, though, and would be difficult to successfully accomplish in a <b>society of veiled and thoughtfully disguised social reprisals</b> . So, in order to improve the ALT system, I would at least implement a system of standards, agreed upon by prefecture, that outline what students should be able to accomplish in a progressive scaffolding. Systems like that already exist in many other countries, and work very well. That would enable both ALTs and JTEs to have an agreed-upon action plan for student progress in which they could cooperatively develop their team approaches. I would also <b>train ALTs and JTEs together in co-teaching methodology</b> , student-centered lesson planning and Response to Intervention - in workshops that happen much more than once or twice per year. I would also create a system of accountability for students that rewarded them for achieving goals and benchmarks, rather than berating them for lack of achievement. There are many other improvements I would like to see happen, but I just don't think Japan is ready to take those steps, or wants to, for a variety of reasons.	1/7/2015 10:01 AM
28	More <b>clearly define the roles of the ALT</b> in classrooms. Incorporate TEFL training into the curriculum of all future JTEs. JTEs who miss this in university will have to go through a 6 month course qualifying them to do TEFL. Mandatory yearly training for all JTEs and ALTs where they practice all elements of team teaching from meetings to planning to actual teaching.	1/7/2015 9:03 AM
29	<b>Hire more qualified teachers (not just young people straight out of university)</b> / people with different life experiences. MUCH MORE TRAINING on how to work with ALTs for ALL Japanese teachers when they are in university (not just the one teacher per school once a year at some random conference, because they never relay training info to other staff).	1/6/2015 11:24 PM
30	I'm trying ever more. In order to improve it, I think we have to change usual JTE-only lessons away from lecture-based lessons so that ALT's communicative lessons are not such a shock to students. The expectations of the students in the JTE-run classes and ALT-run classes are very different, and I think difference causes the most problems.	1/6/2015 5:53 PM
31	Yes. By <b>suggesting new ideas of pedagogy to teachers and helping them understand the purpose of these ideas.</b>	1/6/2015 5:46 PM
32	I think ALTs need more training before starting in the classroom, as well as more useful workshops during conferences. JTEs should also be advised on how to use an ALT. There needs to be more team teaching and less time as human tape recorders or game machines.	1/6/2015 1:10 PM
33	I think if I were significantly more assertive I could improve my situation a bit by gaining more responsibility at work, but I don't think I could improve the ALT system as a whole.	1/6/2015 12:43 PM
34	I would attack the general consensus of students and teachers that performance is unimportant. The students are missing out on the basic skills required to maximize their time in high school. English is no exception. I have seen students copy all the answers on their homework from the book (I think they should not receive this), perform miserably on tests (class averages around 30-50), and show disinterest and utter disrespect to ALTs and teachers. On the other side, teachers are so busy with bukatsu (club sports) and various job functions that their most fundamental job-- grading students' work-- is given a halfhearted effort. I've seen teachers skim assignments with wrong answers on a repeated basis to save time under the misguided belief that students "won't try anyway." This problem needs to be fixed before we can really help ALTs with their impact in the classroom.	1/6/2015 12:03 PM
35	Being this is my first year I am not sure I can contribute anything yet. I have thought the textbook could be organized better. They could introduce phonics more and try to help students recognize different ways of writing the same sound. This has to be introduced early in an attempt to get Japanese students to be able to read properly. English orthography is a bit difficult, though I think learning kanji is difficult as well.	1/6/2015 10:24 AM
36	Instead of ALTs, we should be hiring part time native speaking teachers. Not <b>assistants who serve a cosmetic purpose, actual teachers</b> who speak Japanese and have experience and qualifications and who are treated in a more similar way to the other teachers, including bonus pay and infinitely renewable contracts assuming satisfactory performance of duties.	1/6/2015 8:21 AM
37	It may seem cynical but I think it's difficult to say that one ALT is capable of changing the whole ALT system as it stands. We can try our best as individuals to be better ALTs but too many schools, teachers, and ALTs are rooted in the routine and status quo of the current system. I think the only way to change for the better is overhauls from the top down. The top levels of the JET program need to establish a higher standard and commit to comprehensive training for JTEs and ALTs.	1/6/2015 12:40 AM

38	I cannot answer that because I am only 5 months into my ALT job.	1/6/2015 12:30 AM
39	Maybe , JTE and ALTs will also have a team workshop, so there will be a good, interesting <b>learning approach</b> . That BOE of each City will also give an schedule for a workshop or a training. And that they will not assign an Japanese Homeroom Teacher to teach English because everything what the ALT taught will become useless and it will create confusion on the part of the students.	1/6/2015 12:19 AM
40	Yes. By showing JTE'S how to better utilize the ALT's at their schools.	1/5/2015 10:31 PM
41	Realistically, no, because I have no power.	1/5/2015 10:08 PM
42	Keep the ALTs at single schools so they are more relevant to the English teaching trajectories and the students themselves. This would also help them work better with other teachers.	1/5/2015 9:30 PM
43	Have people who are more serious about the education and their jobs [this could affect the Ss future and how they approach learning other languages] Have JTE's be trained to use ALTs Have ALTs not visit SO MANY SCHOOLS! How are they supposed to establish relationships when they see the teachers and Ss so infrequently	1/5/2015 7:27 PM
44	First, train Japanese teachers to use various forms of teaching and have them learn how to use an ALT from the onset. There is no reason why a teachers coming out of university should be such carbon copies of each other. Second, have ALTs and JTEs train <u>together</u> . Third, ensure the possibility of a "space" wherein students can explore non-Japanese identity and the struggles/realities of different types of foreigners. Allow for a space where the usual Japanese rules of decorum are cast aside so ALTs can introduce alternative customs, ways, and ideas. Allow for more natural interactions and train JTE in listening to and engaging in these with the ALT.	1/5/2015 7:05 PM
45	I believe there is always room for improvement but I'm only in my first year so I don't think I have the experience yet to know how. My only suggestion would be better communication between JTE and ALT	1/5/2015 6:59 PM
46	The JTEs need to be taught how to make effective use of their ALTs. With this, the ALT will have a more active role in the school, make them not seem like a waste of space or resources.	1/5/2015 6:49 PM
47	Provide more training and feedback to the ALTs on their performance, but I know it is not really part of the Japanese culture to offer feedback...ALTs are somehow expected to realise they are not doing the right thing or not working hard enough. JTEs need to learn how to give feedback.	1/5/2015 5:59 PM
48	see previous answer	1/5/2015 5:55 PM
49	If I could, I would send JTEs for more training in terms of team teaching and language teaching. Also, remove the obsession with translation and move towards actual practical usage of the language with a strong focus on creative sentence making that allows the students to explore usage of the language on their own. This would allow the kids to consult more with their ALT on various usage of the language.	1/5/2015 5:53 PM
50	I just presented about this at JALT so if you want me to give you a detailed explanation please email me at <a href="mailto:stevenasquith@hotmail.com">stevenasquith@hotmail.com</a>	1/5/2015 5:44 PM
51	I don't think I could improve it other than having the higher ups checking in more often to make sure that the ALTs are being utilized more efficiently in the classes.	1/5/2015 5:36 PM
52	Yes, I would be prepared to offer suggestions to the BOE if I were asked. For example, Classes should focus more on verbal communication and less on translation and grammar. Class time should be shared equally between team teachers. All instruction should be given in English only. Japanese teachers should be discouraged from translating the English teacher's instructions into Japanese.	1/5/2015 5:33 PM
53	More training for supervisors and English teachers. I can't do it but the government should. I can communicate my feelings clearly and try to educate the students so they 're interested in international things themselves.	1/5/2015 5:30 PM
54	The first thing I would do is hire ALTs with proper TESOL/TEFL credentials. Perhaps this is bad to say about myself, but I am not qualified to do the job that I do. Just because someone can speak English, doesn't mean that they can teach English, so have the pedagogical background would raise the efficacy of the ALT a lot. Secondly, once ALTs have that higher qualification, I would give them more control over their own classrooms. Treating the ALT as a proper teacher in their own right and informing them of the educational standards by which they are to teach would allow trained and qualified teachers to actually help the students achieve the goals that MEXT so desperately wants them to achieve.	1/5/2015 5:28 PM

55	Absolutely. Some basic teacher training for incoming ALT's would go a long way, currently ALT's receive more cultural information and lofty goals (such as fostering practical communicative competence) and being given goals, to use reading writing speaking and listening in all lessons, but no actual training on how to teach a language. There should also be a short grammatical / Language awareness task/test given as a part of the JET program application, which would help determine which candidates have a better handle on the linguistic aspects, as the Japanese Teachers are bound to ask questions to which most ALT's can only answer "It's that way, because it sounds right." Additionally, an implemented system for recording, observing classes and giving on the job critiquing. There's not guidance from many schools (Though some give very good guidance). Currently there's a systematic goal and evaluation system, but there's not really in class observation and critique of areas to work on. This would be more difficult to implement, but could be done with a mandate to the prefectural advisors in the JET system, who do visit schools, but not actually observe classes. Of course these PAs would need to be trained in observing and critiquing, but it would be a step. Unfortunately, the largest issue is the dependance on the situation at different schools - with different issues, and different requirements - some schools requiring very little or nothing of ALT's, or just tape recorder, please say X. That is beyond the scope of what I could improve.	1/5/2015 5:16 PM
56	In my schools, I am not used very much. I wonder if there are other schools that need an ALT and would be willing to use them. Perhaps there should be some sort of check system local governments. If they don't use ALTs, take the funding and the ALTs away. Give ALTs to schools that need them. Unfortunately, the utilization of ALTs is often dependent on the Japanese English teachers and those teachers rotate often. I would also consider a program to teach Japanese English teachers about team-teaching. ALTs are given so much information on it but we have no power to implement the ideas.	1/5/2015 5:04 PM
57	More training time for everyone.	1/5/2015 5:00 PM
58	Me? One person? I probably couldn't. My situation is fairly unique and the problems I face are different from the majority of other ALTs	1/5/2015 4:43 PM
59	I have ideas of ways it could be improved, however to really change or improve the system is beyond my control. I do give suggestions and try to improve activities and lessons for my students, however it's not up to me ultimately whether or not they can and will be implemented. I do my best to build upon the curriculum and introduce relevant cultural and language topics but for far reaching or long lasting improvement you'd have to become part of a Board of Education or work for MEXT.	1/5/2015 4:25 PM
60	I would improve it by hiring ALTs who have more of an educational background. I would also improve it by training JTEs on how to use the ALT in the classroom.	1/5/2015 4:25 PM
61	See previous answer in regards more definition of the roles required by the ALT. This would require, however, increased ALT support as many, if not most, are not trained teachers and would, if only initially, require assistance in preparing themselves for possible increased and more specific educational roles.	1/5/2015 4:09 PM
62	I think there should be more than one ALT in a school, budget permitting.	1/5/2015 4:08 PM
63	Take them out of schools and let them teach the JTEs how to speak English.	1/5/2015 4:08 PM
64	Training for teachers, more awareness of the difficulties alts face, stop making alts go into school during holidays when there is no class.	1/5/2015 4:04 PM
65	I hope companies would hire ALT's who doesn't much a very strong accent. Grammar wise they should be knowledgeable, it doesn't have to be perfect but at least they can argue that they know what they are talking about. A better compensation benefits for the good and qualified teachers. ALT's should go workshops and trainings as a requirement at least once a month sponsored by the company itself.	1/5/2015 3:54 PM
66	More training for ALTs, especially formal training. As it stands, most training comes from the two conferences per year. And those leading the workshops are other ALTs. Lots can be learned from those who have been doing this job 2+ years, but I think even more could be learned from people trained in teaching how to teach. Also, communication between ALTs and JTEs needs to be more open. ALTs are constantly told how busy JTEs are, which may make ALTs feel like they can't or shouldn't interrupt their JTEs. Mandatory weekly/biweekly meetings between ALTs and JTEs should be implemented. I understand JTEs are busy, but I'm here to help and ignoring me or underusing me isnt helping anyone.	1/5/2015 3:51 PM
67	Comments in previous question answer. Also more support for new ALTs with class observations and feedback by more experienced ALTs would help support people who are unsure of what they are doing (as most people are not trained teachers and are often thrown in the deep end when they arrive).	1/5/2015 3:46 PM
68	By allowing then more autonomy in the classroom, but also more training. Especially in the area of child protection.	1/5/2015 3:40 PM

69	I don't know if I could personally change the whole system. All I can do is do my best to foster my schools mindset towards having and using an ALT. Other than that, I do not have much power.	1/5/2015 3:26 PM
70	Perhaps have one ALT per school. Some ALT's have mutple schools. But this is more of a budget issue.	1/5/2015 3:24 PM
71	Yes. I'd prefer not to say.	1/5/2015 3:22 PM
72	As of now, I am not sure how it could be improved overall.	1/5/2015 3:19 PM
73	Give the ALTs paid training before they start. Start the ALTs at the beginning of a school year. Keep them at only one school. Have them teach with only a handful of JTEs. Focus on communicative English. Bring back counselling resources. Try to standardize schools a bit as to what is expected... or at least, have a written list of expectations when it comes to the role of the ALT for each school.	1/5/2015 3:08 PM
74	I could be more assertive in my communication with JTEs, and I could be more whole-hearted in my role as an ALT. I think sometimes I don't put forth enough effort.	1/5/2015 3:01 PM
75	Any improvements to the. System would require the cooperation of the various boards of education throughout the country, and until that happens, the system will likely never improve.	1/5/2015 2:56 PM
76	Having JTE attend JET conference also.	1/5/2015 2:49 PM
77	Better screening of candidates. Real classroom practice in the home nations before offering posts. Maybe with groups of students where English is a second language, especially at Primary schools, so they can see what it's like before flying out, and where teachers can give pointers or even assess candidates. Make ALT contracts performance related/ teacher and BOE reviewed before offering recontracts. Many BOEs see out the 3 years rather than making waves. But we are expensive and should be accountable. Recontracting is too early, it should be moved back until February or March so ALT's can better grasp their situations. Clearer guidance on what ALT's roles and responsibilities are. Identify areas and things they are expected to help do in school lessons. Deliver more focus at orientation on how to do this, eg. Techniques for teaching a text passage effectively, linking words etc. Make it clearer that they are coming to Japan, not to be teachers, but support teachers. Maybe change the title to English Classroom Assistant. It then falls on the schools to allocate more responsibilities as they see fit. We often get paid as much as new teachers, if not more. But we don't have the responsibility or peer review like they do. Maybe a system where new ALT's visit and observe classes to have a better understanding of the role here and what they could do. Make an extra curricular activity/ and a community based activity compulsory. Even just once a week or fortnight to forge better links with students and the community. You cant dispel a bad image if you don't engage with the community...	1/3/2015 10:18 PM
78	Higher salary. More school sponsored ALT metings where the ALTs can sharre ideas and advice.	12/31/2014 5:43 AM
79	Lots of ways. Though I don't know how many would be cost-efficient, which I think is a big barrier to change.	12/30/2014 7:00 AM
80	No as ways to improve the system needs to be done by both ALT, teachers and boards of education as due to cultural differences	12/22/2014 10:43 PM
81	I believe if ALT's had more teacher training i.e. methodology and a JTE's had a clearer idea of how to use the ALT, that would be my major suggestion. Also, if English is being taught in Elementary Schools, then Junior High Schools need to modify their approach, as the students have had some exposure to the language. High Schools too could change based on what was being taught in Junior High.	12/22/2014 6:39 PM
82	Training courses for bothe the jte and alt on ideas and how to work well together. Having more time for communication !	12/22/2014 10:45 AM
83	I think some training for JTEs in how to use their ALTs would be helpful, or if possible sending more, high level teacher abroad to English speaking countries for training. Sending the younger, enthusiastic and receptive to change teachers only seems to make them more of a minority on the return. I think the ALT system is actually very good, but there's not much more we can do from this side to make it more effectively utilised by schools and JTEs.	12/20/2014 12:16 PM
84	I don't know yet.	12/19/2014 10:08 PM
85	Simple: erase the distinction and just employ "English teachers." regardless of native status. Foreigners fluent in Japanese, and Japanese competent enough to teach at their level. Bilingualism essential.	12/19/2014 7:14 PM
86	No	12/19/2014 5:21 PM
87	I'm sorry, I don't think I can answer this yet, 5 months isn't enough time.	12/19/2014 3:22 PM
88	By expressing how to team teach better.	12/19/2014 2:46 PM

89	I don't think there's anything I can do to change the system at large. If anything, it's a system created by Japan, so Japan should be the ones who decide what they want to do. But I can try to change the perception of ALTs by being a hard, involved worker. I think part of my problem at my base school is that they had an ALT who broke contract and went home, which really hurt their trust of ALTs. I should try harder to make great lessons and listen to what JTEs want from me.	12/19/2014 10:55 AM
90	No idea	12/19/2014 10:30 AM
91	See previous comment	12/19/2014 9:29 AM
92	Nope i dont think so	12/19/2014 7:30 AM
93	Redo the entire way english is approached in Japan.	12/18/2014 11:16 PM
94	Me personally? No, I don't think very highly of the system. I would make an effort to hire trained proficient teachers (regardless of nationality) from the beginning so that the ALT system could be avoided entirely. I know that personally that if I taught Japanese, I would not hand my class over to a Japanese ALT if they had no training or background in language acquisition or education. I would use them as an assistant, someone to grade papers or run after school review sessions. Bringing in mostly untrained native speakers is not how Japan will improve its English.	12/18/2014 10:28 PM
95	Hah! There are all kinds of ideas out there about this. Of course I myself could not. But to begin with it really depends on what one believes the goal of the ALT system to be. I guess that must finally be outlined more clearly by the involved ministries. Then... First, we have to drop the goal of ALTs transforming the nature of English education in Japan. Change must be supported from within, and currently there is little support from MEXT itself for teachers to implement the changes MEXT desires, much less for ALTs to do so. Second, we must recognize that many problems within the ALT system stem from larger problems with the education system as a whole. If teachers have little time for planning without an ALT, they'll have even less time for planning with an ALT; if teachers have little training in solo teaching methods, they'll have even fewer ideas about how to teach in a team; and so on. So those larger problems need to be addressed first before their smaller ALT-specific manifestations can be addressed. In the absence of these broader changes to the education system, I wonder what can be done. Hiring more highly-trained (i.e. TESOL-certified and/or experienced teacher) ALTs, as is often suggested, will not necessarily be effective in the present situation, as many will find themselves frustrated, their knowledge and skills wasted by confined perceptions of their position. However, providing more training and guidance to ALTs regarding ALT teaching situations, strategies, and roles once here could be of great benefit. I wonder sometimes if a few ALT positions could be traded for something like a T-T mentor position. This mentor would be a highly trained and skilled teacher (ideally a JTE) who would provide more extensive training to T-T pairs and/or ALT supervisors, either in regular workshops or (considering the absence of JTE time) in an extended period of observations and meetings at school (instead of offsite). The idea is to get a more detailed picture of what is happening at a school and provide some authoritative guidance to JTE-ALT teams how to work together more effectively. This is not just a one-day observation where the team (and often the students too) plan and rehearse a single demonstration lesson several times before the observer actually comes to do the observation, but rather an in-depth analysis of not just a series of lessons but also the school setting. Of course, this would be a hard sell for JTEs, just as the (much over-rehearsed) observations currently are, but even if the mentor were only able to work regularly with the ALT, it could mark a vast improvement in that particular teaching situation. The mentor would rotate to a new school(s) every few weeks or so, thus able to provide in-depth support to a number of schools. I imagine there are bureaucratic hurdles to such an idea, and I'm not sure how effective it would be, but perhaps it might add something of value.	12/18/2014 10:23 PM
96	First and foremost, ALT's should be treated equally with high respect as any educator, more BOE's should hire them directly, timely trainings	12/18/2014 10:20 PM
97	Mandatory prior experience in either TESOL or Japan, and then training in whichever they don't have.	12/18/2014 8:52 PM
98	Hire better qualified teachers and give them more freedom to plan their own lessons.	12/18/2014 8:48 PM
99	hahaha I wish! I wouldn't know where to start.	12/18/2014 7:25 PM
100	More rights for ALTs. Clearer guidelines and protections. Regular evaluations by the contracting organisation.	12/18/2014 6:49 PM
101	Train English teachers (JTEs specifically) on modern approaches to language learning, i.e. the communicative approach, or I like to use Nation's Four Strands.	12/18/2014 6:45 PM
102	See previous answer	12/18/2014 5:19 PM

103	The same as the last question, if the JTE's are more open/ know how to utilise ALTs, the system would be improved. Rather than thinking of an ALT only as a "fun and games" teacher. I mean, fun and games is great. But I'd rather go to class and just help out with a bit of reading and checking workbooks over sitting in the teachers room at my desk.	12/18/2014 4:18 PM
104	I think training is a huge part. If ALTs have basic training I think that their time in the classroom could be a lot more useful. With that being said the amount of participation that ALTs can have is entirely up to the administration and JTEs. There needs to be clearer examples of what team teaching is and WHY it is effective and WHY it is a beneficial way of approaching language teaching and learning.	12/18/2014 4:09 PM
105	As explained earlier - defined goals - JTEs need training on how best to use them - the standard of ALT needs to improve.	12/18/2014 4:04 PM
106	Unknown.	12/18/2014 3:48 PM
107	By having more time with the students. The bound between the normal teachers and the students is very strong, the ALTs don't know half about the students as the JTE knows. Also, I wish we had more time to discuss about TT with the JTEs.	12/18/2014 3:43 PM
108	I think what needs to be improved, most importantly, is the textbook, rather than the ALT system. I feel like, when I use the textbook, my job becomes more damage control than actual communication or education. The textbook definitely needs to be written by native speakers of English, and standardized. Does Japan want to learn American English, British English? The textbooks need to stick to one rather than contradict each other and confuse the students.	12/18/2014 3:26 PM
109	Find people qualified to do the job and bring the ALT pool down to hundreds rather than thousands.	12/18/2014 2:45 PM
110	Educate the JTE by influencing the JTE on ALTs know how about the language and on how to improve the JTEs skills and ability in teaching. Because as far as you are an ALT, ALT's role is just really of assistance not playing a primary teacher in the classroom.	12/18/2014 2:32 PM
111	the real issue is not with ALTs. Students are not taught how to form their own sentences but to repeat what the book or the teacher tells them. This renders all language learning useless and prevents any useful kind of ability being learned.	12/18/2014 2:05 PM
112	No	12/18/2014 1:59 PM
113	I don't think it will improve unless the government of Japan will have the initiative.	12/18/2014 1:33 PM
114	Be stricter on guidelines governing ALT expectations and responsibilities, and vastly improve training for JTEs in regards to properly dealing with and utilizing ALTs.	12/18/2014 11:45 AM
115	Hire teachers who actually speak English in the first place, even if they aren't Japanese.	12/18/2014 10:57 AM
116	See previous answer to question 20	12/18/2014 5:54 AM
117	Yes,	12/18/2014 5:15 AM
118	Cancel gaikokujin in English classes and give them other jobs teaching other classes in their schools	12/18/2014 2:41 AM
119	If everyone came to my site to learn how to be the best ALT for your company and for yourself. That would mean everyone would have more fun in Japan. That's my goal.	12/18/2014 1:09 AM
120	I think much of the problem lies with the structure of English education and the limited place it seems to leave for ALTs in the classroom (looking at you, reading practice). But with the ALT system specifically, I think it depends too much on the people themselves and their ability to communicate with each other to really offer improvement suggestions for the whole system. I would say, I suppose, simply stressing to both JTEs and ALTs the importance of communication with the other and the amazing opportunity they are being handed to step outside the box and bring English to their students.	12/17/2014 9:59 PM
121	Would help to have a better English language curriculum and teaching material!!	12/17/2014 8:49 PM
122	More interaction between JTEs and ALTs. Stop treating ALTs as guests! In the JET program specifically, allowing long-term residents who speak Japanese and have a vested interest in the community to join, establishing part-time positions to attract foreign moms, etc. More experienced, older ALTs would benefit the program. Pay should increase over the years with experience and training. Right now it's a dead end job that does not attract the cream of the crop.	12/17/2014 7:31 PM



123	JTEs need more/better training in how to work with ALTs. It's been said many times and the government has allotted for more training, but schools don't push for it. ALTs need at least basic teacher training, but since their jobs are largely impermanent the duty really must fall on the JTEs.	12/17/2014 7:23 PM
124	The best way to improve the ALT system seems to me to discuss your classes or whatever problems and questions you have with your fellow teachers. Every school is different.	12/17/2014 7:21 PM
125	No. Nobody on the ground wants it improved. Nor the time to implement any ideas.	12/17/2014 7:18 PM
126	Make it optional; if the regular teacher wants to request a team teacher, they should be able to, but they should also be allowed to opt out and teach independently.	12/17/2014 6:59 PM
127	More language and cultural awareness training. It's great that you don't have to speak Japanese to get an opportunity like this but it still makes life easier for everyone if you can express yourself to some extent.	12/17/2014 6:48 PM
128	Paying qualified teachers what they're due and having good working conditions/contracts in place.	12/17/2014 6:43 PM
129	Instead of having ALT's be human tape-recorders, allow the advanced students or students who want to learn communicative english attend ei-kaiwa sessions with ALTs instead of English classes that just memorize the textbook (especially important if the ALT has a rotating schedule). Include ALT's in class planning - it will help inform the ALT as to what the JTE is trying to accomplish. IE, 'use' the ALT.	12/17/2014 6:36 PM
130	It could work IF (BIG IF!!!) JTEs stopped thinking of us as "ALTs." There is NOTHING about me or my teaching abilities that makes it necessary for them to think of me as an "ASSISTANT Language Teacher." The system needs to be redone/reworded. We should have JTEs and NSTEs (=Native-Speaking) or FTEs (Foreign)!!! FTEs and JTEs should each be able to (no, actually "required to!") lead/teach 50% of the lessons.	12/17/2014 5:46 PM
131	I'm not sure that I could improve anything in my given position. It's pretty clear that our position in the BoE is low, and (at least for my BoE), there's not a whole lot of trust placed in us. I think perhaps CIRs or people higher up the food chain may have a chance of improving the system. But truly, the Japanese education system needs to change first to create an effective environment and method of learning English.	12/17/2014 5:34 PM
132	If there was some way to free up the JTEs' time to discuss things with the ALTs, or a way to help open up the JTEs' minds so that they trust their ALTs more or want to utilize them more. I think in a lot of ways, it's already successful. There just isn't enough open communication and mutual learning between ALTs and JTEs.	12/17/2014 4:34 PM
133	Training JTEs how to use an ALT. Outlining clear goals for what the ALTs role is. Speaking a competent amount of Japanese in elementary schools to be able to communicate ideas to homeroom teachers.	12/17/2014 3:46 PM
134	Cover more content in the lesson	12/17/2014 3:23 PM
135	Make sure alts and jtes know the expectations of alts and give each tools to fully utilize their skills. Basically better preparation	12/17/2014 3:15 PM
136	Ah, I just mentioned this in #20! I think the system does need improving, but I am not sure how to go about it. A more detailed application of ALT skills / interest in teaching / commitment to the job would be a better indication of where they should be placed, but would be easy enough to lie about for someone who wanted to get on the program. The matching system is probably a good place to start, though. If a school wants a seen-not-heard ALT, they should ask for someone only intending to stay for a year (or who really only wanted to come to Japan to travel), and not take an ALT with a teaching degree who plans to run their own lessons. If a school expects to do a lot of ALT-led activities, they should seek out a more active applicant. Also, if transfers were less daunting, I think many ALTs would be able to adjust their circumstances and find a better fit after their first year.	12/17/2014 3:01 PM
137	I would make it a 2 year minimum commitment. Another thing I would do is make it mandatory for more JTEs to go to the Midyear Conference, and make LOTS of changes to that conference. It is pretty much a joke of a conference, and ALTs and JTEs need more opportunities to have discussions with one another about what is expected of the other party. That is never done at the conference and I think it would greatly help build better team teaching relationships between ALTs and JTEs.	12/17/2014 3:00 PM
138	See #17. If JTEs taught a more communicative approach that focused on all 4 skills and entrance exams were changed, ALTS wouldn't be needed.	12/17/2014 2:45 PM
139	As I said before, I think more training is key. A lot of companies give their ALTs minimal, if any, training. Most people learn on the job, which isn't altogether bad, but it can make for a rough and unproductive first few months.	12/17/2014 2:37 PM
140	Scrap it entirely and rehire actual trained foreign teachers to teach languages in an immersive environment.	12/17/2014 2:33 PM
141	Expect teaching qualifications from ALTs. Expect a minimum standard of Japanese from ALTs	12/17/2014 2:18 PM
142	The short answer is no.	12/17/2014 2:13 PM

143	There are definitely things that can be improved but I'm not sure how to go about doing it. Maybe make the ALT position a two year commitment rather than one in order to allow for better ALT retention.	12/17/2014 2:00 PM
144	Reorganised Japanese classrooms according to ability/level. Change the syllabus to focus less on obscure grammar and promote a speaking portion to the entrance exams to Senior High School.	12/17/2014 1:56 PM
145	Its not a problem that any one person can solve. Its a societal issue with the wah classes are taught and how the children are expected to learn. In the west, we learn very differently and we go to Japan thinking we can teach the way we were taught but its a different system from our own.	12/17/2014 1:46 PM
146	Like I said on the previous page, more training for new ALTs. I'd like a couple weeks of strict educational training in the summer upon first arriving, before we are suddenly thrust into the school system with no knowledge of it.	12/17/2014 1:32 PM
147	Although likely idealistic, I would incorporate JTEs into the training, or at least coach ALTs on how to promote team teaching in the classroom.	12/17/2014 1:27 PM
148	Yes. Make us the head teachers or a full time staff for at most 2 schools. We know the language and we cannot be the "only once a week blow off class" teacher.	12/17/2014 1:27 PM
149	JTEs need to have better training in how to use ALTs	12/17/2014 1:12 PM
150	Yes, I would give experienced ALTs the ability to conduct classes in a more free way. Also by applying a kind of mentor system for the first few lessons.	12/17/2014 1:10 PM
151	I am doing my best to offer suggestions to my JTEs about lessons I could do when I know they are covering a certain topic, or letting them know about cultural events (e.g., Thanksgiving) going on in the USA that they might enjoy teaching the students about, but beyond this, I don't know of much I can do. Many schools seem very set in their ways regarding how they use ALTs, and I don't think this will change unless a higher authority creates more guidelines for suggested integration.	12/17/2014 12:33 PM
152	Reduce workload of JTEs Train JTEs in CLT Develop textbooks which are for team teaching	12/17/2014 12:32 PM
153	-Standardization of job descriptions -Professional development incentives during work (work paid training, workshops, skills development) -Evaluation processes to show areas in which things are good and where improvement is needed -Options to have full time regular jobs instead of contract work -For new ALTs, assistance in integration to the workplace -Give more responsibility to ALTs/ share responsibility more -Create a system where experience and qualifications can lead to higher paying jobs rather than the glass ceiling. -Utilize the foreigners more in the schools for internationalization	12/17/2014 12:13 PM
154	Better curriculum planning from JTEs and instruction on to team teach. ALTs need to be more communicative with their JTEs, asking more questions to understand the JTEs educational goals for their students. ALTs also need to be educated (by their JTEs or outside pedagogical courses) on how to create lesson plans that reinforce their JTEs educational goals/objectives.	12/17/2014 12:12 PM
155	See 20!	12/17/2014 12:05 PM
156	Previous question	12/17/2014 11:40 AM
157	Japanese teachers need to know that we are of equal status	12/17/2014 11:35 AM
158	Honestly I dont know! It would be nice if the JTEs also attended conferences for ALTs... I think some JTEs can benefit from seeing new ways to use or involve ALTs. Maybe then less ALT and JTE relationships would be so strained - like creating a better understanding of the ALT and JTE role. Maybe?	12/17/2014 11:34 AM
159	See prior comment.	12/17/2014 11:26 AM
160	I would institute the aforementioned training.	12/17/2014 11:20 AM
161	Not sure	12/17/2014 11:14 AM
162	What system? What do you mean?	12/17/2014 10:54 AM
163	Hmmmm.....good question.....	12/17/2014 9:15 AM
164	There are few people that posses both the education background, the Japanese language skills and the ability to thrive in a foreign culture. ALTs that have proven themselves kept on and put in positions to create change. That failing, ALTs should be explicitly provided with curriculum, guidelines and teacher materials in English. JTEs should receive explicit guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of ALTs.	12/16/2014 11:31 PM

165	It's a little difficult to change the system as a whole. I feel like in some ways the schools aren't going to do as well with Alts as other schools or in other cases the alt is not a good fit for the school or is just not a good aLT. So it's really difficult to pinpoint down what would fix the system other than just being aware of what issues are currently occurring at certain schools and prefectures and fixing those as you go along.	12/16/2014 6:49 PM
166	I think more practical training in communicative activities would benefit both ALTs and JTEs.	12/16/2014 5:48 PM
167	Perhaps ALTs could be certified as full teacher in the Japanese system.	12/16/2014 5:32 PM
168	See my answer to the previous question.	12/16/2014 5:14 PM
169	Maybe. It's a huge, complicated system, and it would be the height of hubris to say I could definitely improve it. I know the system used to favor people with no Japanese knowledge or teaching experience. That's already started to change, but further selecting for and reaching out to people who can speak Japanese and/or who are certified to teach might make ALTs more effective. If grade schools are going to make English a part of the curriculum, I think making sure elementary schools have a JTE to teach English would be a good idea. This would also make ALTs more effective. A JTE, hopefully with some team teaching training, is probably going to bring out the best of an ALT more effectively than an HRT who hasn't studied English in 20 years.	12/16/2014 4:32 PM