



Testing Season is Here... – Michael Henderson

As the season turns into spring, and the new school year starts in Japan, things are a little different back home in America. Our school year starts in September, but spring is still an especially busy time for American students! In addition to normal tests at school, there are many special exams for college that students can choose to take. This time I'll talk about the SAT and ACT exams!

First of all, what are the SAT and ACT? They are both college admission exams, and though not as important as the 共通テスト in Japan, are used by American universities to determine if they want to accept a student or not (Universities also look at a lot of other things about a student such as their grades, extracurriculars, and their admissions essay). These tests are usually held a few times a year nationwide. Both tests are very similar, having sections focused on Math, Reading, and Writing, though there are a few differences in structure. Students can choose which test to focus on and take.

While these tests require general knowledge on Math and English, they mostly test a student's critical thinking skills (クリティカルシンキング) instead of raw knowledge (知識). For example, the science section of the ACT requires very little science knowledge; instead, it tests your ability to read graphs, find important information, and make conclusions.

Times are changing in that many colleges are now not requiring the test for admission. However, many other colleges still do, so most students will take one of these tests. I used to be an SAT and ACT tutor, so I've worked with these tests many times. While there are a few good things about them, I personally think the ACT/SAT have a lot of issues and aren't a good measure of a student's ability. If you're curious to learn more about them, or want to see what the test questions look like,



feel free to come talk to me! ☺

High school in America – Katelyn Sondereker

In Japan, the new school year starts in April. But in America, the new school year starts much later, usually at the end of August or the beginning of September. Also, the students at most public schools (公立学校) do not have to wear uniforms! There are many differences between American and Japanese schools.

First, everyone in America has to go to high school, so it is free and there is no entrance exam (入学試験) to get into high school. Most people go to their high school because it is close to where they live. In Japan, most students walk or ride their bike to school, but American students ride the school bus to and from school until they are able to drive a car. American high schools have four grades (年生): 9th (freshmen), 10th (sophomores), 11th (juniors), and 12th (seniors), so we start high school around 14 or 15 years old and graduate at 17 or 18 years old.

Second, there is no teachers' room (教員室). Instead, each teacher has their own classroom, so the students move from room to room to go to each class. There is also one big lunch room (食堂) where all of the students eat together. Japanese students usually eat in their classrooms, but in America you can buy a school lunch and eat with lots of people from different classes.

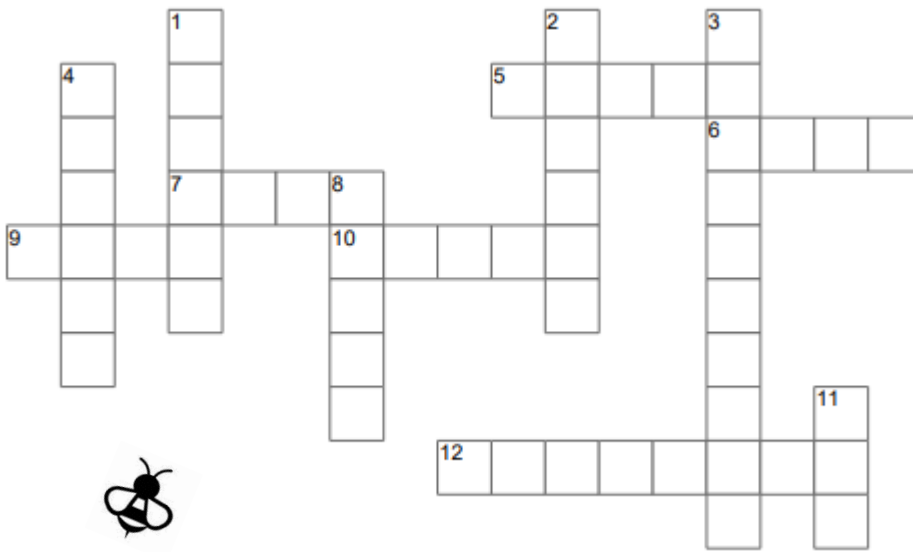
Third, schools in America do not have big events like the sports festival, class match, and cultural festival. The two biggest events that American students have are dances: Homecoming in October and Prom in May. At these events, students wear very fancy dresses or suits and dance with their friends all night long.

These are just a few differences between Japanese and American schools. What do you want to know about high schools in America? Come ask us about it!



Kate and her friends before the high school homecoming dance.

Spring Crossword!



ACROSS

5. A flower
6. Precipitation
7. Not cold or hot
9. Flying a _____ is the perfect windy day activity
10. Another month of Spring
12. Rain or sun protection

DOWN

1. A brief fall of rain
2. A small pool of water
3. A day for playing tricks
4. The season after winter
8. A month of Spring
11. Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of the month of



APRIL	RAIN	SHOWER	WARM
PUDDLE	MAY	SPRING	KITE
TULIP	MARCH	UMBRELLA	APRIL FOOLS

Spring Phrases!

Spring Cleaning

- ⊗ As the weather becomes warmer in spring, many people in Western countries begin cleaning their houses very thoroughly, scrubbing and dusting everything, as well as throwing out many old things they no longer need.

◇ Example: "I need to do some spring cleaning, I have so many old clothes I don't wear anymore!"

April Showers Bring May Flowers

- ⊗ This saying is about how during April, there are often many rain showers (light rain) and bad weather, but when May comes around, it is sunnier with many flowers blooming. Sometimes people use this phrase to talk about how there is always happiness after difficult times.

Busy Bee

- ⊗ This phrase refers to someone who always looks busy. Usually it is more of a compliment and is when someone is doing work that they probably enjoy.

◇ Example: "She is such a busy bee, always doing extra work around the house!"

