

**Why is it so hot?! – Ashley Prescod**

Every year it feels like it is getting hotter and hotter. The sun is so hot that it feels like I'm in the Sahara Desert instead of Kumamoto, Japan. Scientists have found three reasons as to why it was getting hot: human-influenced climate change, ocean warming, and El Niño.

Human-influenced climate change - Ever since the steam engine (蒸気機関), humans have been burning more and more fossil fuels (coal, oil, etc.) for energy. The problem is that burning fossil fuels (化石燃料の燃焼) releases CO₂ into the air, which creates a blanket that traps the hot air in, making it hotter.

Ocean warming - Everyone likes a good hot tub (温泉), but what most people don't know is that water vapor (水蒸気) is also a greenhouse gas that increases CO₂. As the temperature of the Earth rises, the ocean absorbs (吸収する) that heat and releases not only heat but also water vapor, leading to one of the main causes of our heat waves (熱波).

El Niño - El Niño (which means "boy" in Spanish) happens when the wind moves from west to east instead of east to west. Normally, when the winds go from east to west, they carry warm water, and this raises the water level and helps ocean life and agriculture (農業). But when they blow from west to east, something strange happens: The warm water reaches deeper into the ocean, killing ocean life and fish. There is also a decrease in moisture (水分) and the lower sea levels cause droughts (干ばつ) and heat waves. There is no way to predict (予測する) when El Niño will hit, but the number of times El Niño happens has increased with rising temperatures.

So, what should do you do in the heat? Try and stay cool. Make sure you drink a lot of water and eat well. Use sunscreen and try not to be in the sun for too long if you can help it. It's going to be hot this summer, so be careful. Also, let's work hard to take care of our environment and reduce the use of fossil fuels to **save our planet!**

The Magic of County Fairs – Katelyn Sondereker

In the summer, cities in most states in America have a festival called the County Fair. It's kind of like a very big 文化祭 that happens at the end of August and lasts four or five days. When I was a child, my family and I would go every summer, so they are very nostalgic (懐かしい) for me!

There are many things you can do at a County Fair. There are amusement park rides like a Ferris wheel (観覧車), a merry-go-round, a haunted house (お化け屋敷), and small roller coasters (ジェットコースター). You can also play carnival games at booths to win prizes like stuffed animals and toys.

The food, which we call "fair food", is very delicious! People eat things like deep fried Oreos (my favorite), corn dogs, elephant ears (fried dough with cinnamon), Stromboli (if pizza were a sandwich), freshly made doughnuts, French fries, and huge cups of lemonade. Because there are lots of different food stalls (屋台), it is impossible to try everything!

But the best part of County Fairs is that it brings the community together (人を集める) and helps people to sell their local products. Animal farmers (動物農家) bring their best animals, so you can walk around and look at cows, sheep (羊), pigs, chickens, goats (ヤギ), rabbits, and ducks (アヒル). Children who are in culture clubs can show what they have made that year, like sewing projects (縫い物) or artwork. Farmers who grow fruits and vegetables can show their best crops (作物). In my city, we even have a contest to see who can grow the biggest pumpkin!

Even though it is very hot during the day, at night it cools down and all of the rides and food stalls light up (イルミネーションがある). It looks so cool! If you are ever in America, please go experience the magic of County Fairs in the summer!



Try to match the pictures with the County Fair vocabulary words!



☐ Deep Fried Oreos ☐ Ferris Wheel ☐ Snow Cones
☐ Pumpkin Contest ☐ Carnival Game ☐ Corndog
☐ Elephant Ears

Let's get to know your ALTs! Come talk with us anytime!

Hi! My name
is Kate and
I'm the
二年生 ALT!



How long have you lived in Japan?

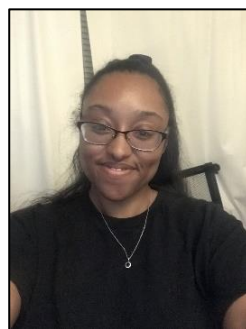
Over three and a half years!

What is your favorite kanji?

I like the kanji for dream (夢). It's fun to write!

**If you could live in any Ghibli movie,
which one would you choose?**

I would choose to live in *My Neighbor Totoro* so that I could hug Totoro anytime 😊.



Hi! My name
is Ashley and
I'm the
一年生 ALT!

How long have you lived in Japan?

I will have been here
almost a year in August!

What is your Favorite color?

Green. It is so refreshing
and I love the forest.

What is your favorite animal?

I usually say cats, but actually my
favorite is a ferret. They are so cute!