

## If I Were To Create a School in Japan: A Better (and More Fun) Way To Learn

Japan is ranked among the world's "smartest" countries, excelling academically; students are diligent and supported by dedicated teachers, involved parents, and strong cross-year interactions through clubs. However, the Japanese education system, which relies heavily on memorisation, restricts creativity and critical thinking. From attending American and British schools, I enjoyed learning through a more open, creativity-driven approach and would like to spread that in Japan. If I were to design a school in Japan, it would blend the positive aspects of all systems, emphasising creativity, critical thinking, individuality, and global awareness.

Firstly, my school's learning system will be more analytical and discussion-based to develop critical thinking skills. In history, for example, students will analyse events and their causes and effects instead of remembering small details. I discovered my passion for history in the UK when the subject was no longer memory-based and I was able to explore history from a new, sharper perspective. Traditionally reciting dates is unlikely to help in a real-life crisis, but critical thinking can be applied anywhere and is especially important in today's digital world. We will encourage in-class participation, and through this open-minded approach, students can be creative, observant, and self-confident individuals.

This leads to my school's second characteristic; an active mindset towards studying. Currently, learning at school in Japan is seen as an activity done at a desk, which leads to a lack of motivation and interest towards it. To show students how immersive and enjoyable learning can be, I would increase the number of school trips and promote outdoor exploration. The current emphasis on memorisation and excessive competition among students creates significant stress, which can negatively impact children far into adulthood. My school's learning approach can provide a less stressful, supportive environment where every student can explore and rightfully experience the joy of learning.

Third, my school will hold bi-weekly lectures on global issues and conflicts. This is inspired by my experience in the UK where weekly assemblies addressed humanitarian crises; something I barely saw in Japan. Although Japan has a pacifist constitution, avoiding "sensitive" topics will never lead to true peace—it is only a temporary band-aid. These lectures will encourage students to seriously engage with world realities, promoting compassion and moral justice. Teaching new generations about these issues can prevent their continuation in the future, so lectures will also address internal issues like sexism and bullying that must be strictly handled in Japan. These lectures will spark meaningful discussions, helping students become socially conscious citizens who work toward a more equal future.

Finally, despite all these changes, my school would keep the Japanese club system. The senpai-kouhai relationship allowed me to form strong bonds with those in other years, and I think everybody should experience pure joy and fulfilment in working hard with teammates to achieve a shared goal.

When students graduate from my school, I hope they will be fully equipped with crucial skills like critical thinking, creativity, communication, and strong morals; they will ensure that Japan's future is in good hands.