

Japanese Exchange

Year 10 Student Jacob Thompson Hope is currently on exchange in Japan and he sent us this update on his travels:

My host family is really nice and kind. My school is great, but I was surprised by the size – its larger than I'd imagined. So much happened. These have possibly been the most intense/busy months of my entire life, and I've loved it. About 1 month ago, I got to explore Tokyo for the first time. I've waited most of my life to do that, and it was completely worth it. On the drive there, we passed Mount Fuji, which assured me I was going to be in for a fun few days. Upon arriving, I noticed how massive and hectic it is. Tokyo is the most busiest, most complex, and amazing city I've ever seen. I could walk around Shibuya alone for hours on end without getting bored. While there, I visited a temple, ate too much food to comprehend, and took so many photos and videos from the top floor of the Tokyo Skytree. Watching the buildings and people that inhabit this huge city from 450 meters above the ground made me want to move there when I leave school. I definitely intend to go back again over the summer holidays to explore even further. Along with Tokyo, I went on a school trip to Kyoto University the next week. It was interesting to look around the campus and learn about the history of such a prestigious school. We also got the chance to shop around Kyoto for a couple of hours, which was pretty fun. I got to talk with some student I hadn't seen at school prior, and I made a few regrettable purchases (head band, futuristic sunglasses, etc.). School holidays have recently finished, and I spent a lot of time studying Japanese. I revisited Osaka, Kyoto and Nagoya, and also visited Tokyo again. This time, I got to experience the cities more thoroughly. Also, I had the opportunity to meet my dad's cousin that lives near Shibuya, which was really cool. I got to learn more about my distant relatives and meet people I had no idea existed. I apparently share the same great grandmother as 3 half-Japanese people! Not only that, but I've been practicing my speaking from meeting new people from different cities. Overall, the exploring aspect of Japan has been great. I'm continuing to study every day, and I know I'm improving. Although I've been having difficulty talking to people, I'm still making friends that are willing to correct my mistakes and go out of their way to get to know me, as I am trying to do with them. My teachers and host family have also been amazing. Compared to Australia, everybody is really down to earth. Everybody I've met on this exchange so far have been amazing, and I couldn't be more grateful. In summary, although school and everyday life may be frustrating, it can also be enjoyable and, in some cases, life changing, and I don't want to go home any time soon. I love Japan, and I'm waiting for the next 7 months with open arms. I'm making more and more friends, and my Japanese skills are slowly improving. My exchange is going strong, and I'm happy with how everything is going