

高校生対象・英語エッセイコンテスト
第12回 IIBC エッセイコンテストの受賞者が決定
～最優秀賞は渋谷教育学園渋谷高等学校 貴田 悠斗さん～

日本で TOEIC® Program を実施・運営する、国際ビジネスコミュニケーション協会 (IIBC) (所在地: 東京都千代田区永田町、理事長: 大橋圭造) では、毎年、高校生を対象に『私を変えた身近な異文化体験』をテーマに英語エッセイコンテスト「IIBC エッセイコンテスト」を開催しています。12 回目を迎えた 2020 年は、本選に 162 校・248 作品、奨励賞に 38 校・1,797 作品のご応募をいただきました。このたび過去最高の応募数となった本選 248 作品の中から、審査を経て、最優秀賞 (1 名)、優秀賞 (1 名)、優良賞 (1 名)、特別賞 (5 名)、今年新設したアルムナイ特別賞 (1 名)、日米協会会長賞 (3 名) 計 9 名 (ダブル受賞者 3 名含む) の受賞者が決定いたしましたので、発表いたします。

■本選受賞者: 9 名 (うち 3 名はダブル受賞) ※受賞者のエッセイ本文および内容は 2 ページ目以降でご覧いただけます。

<最優秀賞(1名)>



貴田 悠斗さん 渋谷教育学園渋谷高等学校 (東京都) 2 年
タイトル: Tackling Issues with No Answer

<優秀賞(1名)>



有吉 萌さん 渋谷教育学園暮張高等学校 (千葉県) 2 年
タイトル: The Family Next Door

<優良賞(1名)>



浅尾 奈佑さん 鎌倉女学院高等学校 (神奈川県) 2 年
タイトル: The Secret Ingredient of My Bento Box

<特別賞(5名)>



村瀬 結子さん 学習院女子高等科 (東京都) 3 年 タイトル: Culture through the looking glass
土反 ケイト アンジーさん 三重県立松阪商業高等学校 2 年 タイトル: You Need Help!
細谷 優衣さん やまがたけんりつやまがたきたこうとうがっこう 山形県立山形北高等学校 2 年 タイトル: Your "Normal", Someone's Dream
柏木 杏さん 私立山脇学園高等学校 (東京都) 2 年 タイトル: Knowing What I Need
門松 心美さん ふじせいしんじょしがくいんこうとうがっこう 不二聖心女子学院高等学校 (静岡県) 3 年 タイトル: How Do You Change?

<アルムナイ特別賞(1名)>



手塚 まりこさん おおつまなかのちゆうがっこう こうとうがっこう 大妻中野中学校・高等学校 (東京都) 2 年
タイトル: Kindness Not So Kind

<日米協会会長賞(3名)>



貴田 悠斗さん 渋谷教育学園渋谷高等学校 2 年 タイトル: Tackling Issues with No Answer
土反 ケイト アンジーさん 三重県立松阪商業高等学校 2 年 タイトル: You Need Help!
柏木 杏さん 私立山脇学園高等学校 2 年 タイトル: Knowing What I Need

第 12 回 IIBC エッセイコンテスト結果詳細はこちら (https://www.iibc-global.org/iibc/activity/essay/2020_result.html)

【第12回 IIBC エッセイコンテスト概要】	
テーマ	『私を変えた身近な異文化体験』
表彰内容	<p>【本選】1 校 2 名 (2 作品) までの応募。本選応募作品の中から最優秀賞 1 名、優秀賞 1 名、優良賞 1 名、特別賞 5 名を決定</p> <p>【アルムナイ特別賞】今年度、新設。過去の IIBC エッセイコンテスト受賞者が審査し、受賞者 1 名を決定。今年度の審査員などはこちら (https://www.iibc-global.org/iibc/activity/essay/2020_result.html)</p> <p>【日米協会会長賞】一般社団法人 日米協会より本選応募作品の中から、国際理解や国際交流の観点で優れた作品 3 名に贈られる賞</p> <p>【奨励賞】1 校 20 名 (20 作品) 以上の応募校へ贈られる賞</p>

本リリースに関するお問い合わせ先

PR 事務局 (株式会社カーツメディアワークス)
担当: 石黒・田口・小石・森山
Tel: 03-6427-1627 Email: iibc@kartz.co.jp

一般財団法人 国際ビジネスコミュニケーション協会 (IIBC)
総務・広報チーム 担当: 志摩・中山・松田
Tel: 03-3581-4761 Fax: 03-5221-5970 公式サイト <https://www.iibc-global.org>

■本選受賞 9 作品

＜最優秀賞/日米協会会長賞＞

貴田 悠斗さん 渋谷教育学園渋谷高等学校(東京都) 2年

エッセイ内容: 世界には貧困、環境問題、戦争などといった、答えを出すことが難しい問題が沢山ある。香港で行われた日中青年会議での異文化交流を通して、答えを導くことが必ずしも一番大切ということではなく、難しい問題であってもそれについて話し合い、考えることがより重要であるということ学んだ。

Tackling Issues with No Answer

I used to try finding the answer to everything. In everyday issues, I always wanted to determine who is right and who is wrong. Was my mother the correct one in the fight, or was it my father? Naturally, I extended this tendency to larger issues such as poverty and conflict. Here, I faced a problem; there was no clear answer. It was impossible to find a universal solution. Because of this, I felt helpless and miserable.

It was much later that I realized, having the answer is not always important. What is more important is having open and honest conversations about difficult topics for which we don't always have the answers. This change in mindset happened when I participated in the Sino-Japan Youth Conference as a Japanese delegate last summer. This conference was an opportunity for Chinese and Japanese students to interact to discuss their countries.

The first four days of the conference went by in a blur; we learned about each other's cultures, traditions, and national events. Finally, the last day came, and everyone was excited for the concluding event. Upon arrival, all participants were handed a sheet of paper with the instructions. My eyes skimmed the page and came to a sudden halt at a sentence written in bold, "We will be discussing historical conflicts that have occurred between our countries". Surprised, I scanned the paper and found that the discussion topics included both the Sino Japanese War and the Nanjing Massacre. I wondered, aren't these taboos that shouldn't be discussed? Especially not with people from China! These statements raced in my head and swirled like hurricanes. There was a larger question in my head too: what good is there to discuss a problem that has no clear answer and only causes discomfort? I looked up and sensed the same feeling from other participants too.

Their eyes were fixed to the floor and many were shifting uncomfortably in their seats.

As I glanced at the first person to speak, my eyes fell upon his name tag hanging on his chest and next to his name, a bright red flag with yellow stars. His hands trembled beside him, and he reluctantly began, "I am going to talk about the Nanjing Memorial Museum, which is blocks away from my house." He described the brutal acts carried out on innocent citizens by Japanese soldiers, and the countless photos displayed in the museum. I looked around and all Japanese participants, including myself, were listening intently to his story, pained by the atrocious nature of it. Hearing his account, I thought back to when I visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum which was 10 minutes away from my grandmother's home. I remembered the shock and trauma I experienced when witnessing the horrific pictures and exhibits. Our experiences are so similar, I thought to myself.

From then on, all participants took turns voicing their opinions about our country's relationships. There were all kinds of remarks: harsh, constructive, emotional, and hopeful. But they all had one commonality; they gave further insight into things I had never thought about before. It also allowed me to make new discoveries and connections to my own experiences. At this point, the important realization had hit me. After all, we had no solution to the issue between Japan and China's long and devastating historical conflict; we hadn't even come close to one. However, the discussion we just had was undeniably valuable. It opened our minds to new ideas and motivated us to continue thinking about the issue. It allowed us to listen and be heard.

In our world, the majority of problems do not necessarily have an answer. These are often controversial, and difficult to discuss. Disparity, discrimination, historical conflict are only some of them. It is important; however, not to be silent, and talk openly about these issues, even if one can't reach an answer. It allows us to broaden our perspectives and deepen our understanding of each other. I hope for a world where no one gives up just because there is no answer; we should rather stay hopeful and continue tackling important issues through communicating with one another. [692 words]

<優秀賞>

有吉 萌 さん 渋谷教育学園幕張高等学校(千葉県) 2年

エッセイ内容: 価値観や習慣の違いは、国家間ではもちろんだが、異なる家族の間でもありえ、その違いをお互い理解し合い、共通点を見つけるためにもコミュニケーションの重要性をあるファミリーディナーを通して学んだ。

The Family Next Door

One wall, another culture. Who would have guessed that a family dinner with our next-door neighbors would reveal so much striking contrast from family hierarchy to how natto is eaten? It was a bewildering but exciting experience visiting an apartment identical to ours but with a completely unique ambiance. As we took seats and began to enjoy the dinner, certain differences soon revealed themselves. My father was the chef in my family, but their mother cooked, and for our appetizer, she served us natto on mini toasts! We only ate natto on rice. Although the floor plans were identical, how they made use of the adjoining tatami room was also different: my dad, who emphasized the importance of studying, had created a study whilst theirs was a second living room. Most importantly, their unspoken house rule always put the father first: he sat down before the other members and was always served first, after the guests, of course. This new finding was intriguing. Although we were both average Japanese families, living in the same town, the same apartment building, on the same floor, our familial practices stood in contrast. This was my lightbulb moment: the differences in cultural practices were also apparent at the family level, which explains why people have differing views of how life should be. House rules are cultural traditions; they are passed down from generation to generation, and shape ways of thinking. This explains why values transcend generations within families but not necessarily across families living in the same era. Growing up with disparate sets of house rules from different backgrounds, we hold dissimilar values. Before, I thought my family's ways were normal, but, upon reflection, there seemed to be no absolute normal anymore. Perhaps, it is an outcome of subjectivism in postmodernity, in which each looked for their own proper values. Therefore, just as our familial hierarchies were different, not all of what one thinks of as common sense is common sense to others. For that reason, we need to be scrupulous when interacting with others because an action we think is appropriate could be interpreted otherwise – perhaps they thought my mother was too lazy to cook when really, she was too busy working. This may seem inconsequential, but it's crucial because miscommunication could result in conflict if one is offended by another's actions. However, paranoia surrounding our differences could divorce us from any connections at all. Our lack of confidence in the validity of our actions results in fewer real-world interactions outside of our immediate circles and more online communities in which people can hide behind their virtual profiles and feel less responsibility for their actions. The lack of confidence could also account for people who consider themselves komyushou (asocial people) and hikikomori (recluses who withdrew from society by living in self-imposed confinement). From an early age, Japanese children are taught never to cause discomfort to others. If someone helps us, we are taught to feel more sorry than thankful. The encouragement of conformity in Japanese culture induces eccentrics to hide away from society. Distancing ourselves from interactions removes the possibility of conflict. However, I experienced it differently overseas: complete strangers complimented me on my tote bag, offered me help when I seemed lost, or just asked me where I was from; they were trivial but they really made my day. These show that it is possible to defeat the fear of encountering conflicts. There is, of course, always a risk of encountering conflict from misinterpretation, but embracing the potential for conflict is also an essential part of engaging with others because doing so results in deeper intimacy when the dispute is resolved. Communication is indispensable to overcoming conflict with the understanding of each other's differences. We must not let our differences in values restrain us from forming real-world connections, because those differences make each of us unique, and social interactions more meaningful: I would never have discovered how lucky I am to have my dad as our family chef and the delicacy that is natto on toast. [674 words]

<優良賞>

浅尾 奈佑さん 鎌倉女学院高等学校(神奈川県) 2年

エッセイ内容: 小学校一年生の頃、日本人学校に馴染めなかった私は、毎日泣く日が続いていた。そんな時に私を救ってくれたのは、シンガポール人である母親の努力の結晶である、「お弁当」だった。

The Secret Ingredient of My Bento Box

Ding dong...

The chime sounds and it is lunch time. The date is October 31st and as I open the lid of my bento box, I see an eye covered with hair looking up at me, with five fingers creeping out of the rice, covered in vivid red blood. "Wow! That's so cool! Everyone, look at her bento! How did your mom make that?" says my friend. It is easy. She used five sausages and cut them to make them look like five fingers, adding some ketchup to resemble blood. For the eye, she used some cheese and put a circle of seaweed on top, adding more seaweed around it to make it look like hair. However, none of this could be done without my mom's effort, passion and flair.

My bento journey began when I was 7 years old. I had just started attending elementary school, but I always felt different because I could not speak Japanese well and my bento was not the stereotypical one that everyone had. I disliked school and I would always cry at home repeating the words, "Why am I different?" One day, when I was sobbing as usual, my mom comforted me and said, "Stop crying and look at me. I know that it is a tough time for you, but mom will work hard to cheer you up, so will you promise me to do your best at school as well? If we do this, we can get through it. Let's believe in ourselves." It was this moment that my mom decided to take greater efforts with my school bento.

My mom is a Singaporean. She grew up in a country with renowned culinary culture famous for dishes such as chicken rice, char siew meat and noodles, laksa, and many more. It was common for students to have those meals for lunch in cafeterias at school, so she was not familiar with Japanese bento culture. Therefore, she started from scratch by reading cookery books and going to lessons. She sometimes made bento even on weekends and brushed up her skills through trial and error. Her efforts paid off the day I saw a bento filled with cute rice balls and side dishes. Even though it was not the best-looking bento, I still remember the ecstatic happiness I felt as I opened the lid. And thanks to this bento, I was able to start conversations with my friends and find my comfort zone at school. As my mom got more and more into making bento, so I gained the courage to take a step forward in many aspects of my life, especially socializing and speaking Japanese.

Nine years have passed and even to this day, my mom has not lost her passion for making lunch boxes and she is always 100 percent committed to her menus. Her bento boxes are filled with originality and creativity and she has even gotten involved with several bento clubs. This whole experience has taught me to be brave, hard-working and passionate, even when I am in a foreign environment, because there will always be room for people with drive and enthusiasm who are willing to adapt and learn. My mother was unfamiliar with bento lunches and she was nervous about making them correctly at first. However, she made real efforts to adapt to this culinary culture and ended up finding a creative passion in it. I feel extremely fortunate to have been taught these life lessons by my mom and I hope I can be someone who can encourage and inspire others, as my mother encouraged and inspired me.

Currently, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we find ourselves in an environment we are not used to, full of uncertainty and anxiety, but I believe it is possible for us to unite and move forward. By changing fear to courage, and not allowing inexperience to discourage us, I believe we will be able to approach things more calmly and positively. Perhaps we can develop skills and find passions of our own, in spite of adversity, building connections with people in unexpected places along the way. (687 words)

<特別賞>

村瀬 結子 さん 学習院女子高等科(東京都) 3年

エッセイ内容: 幼少の頃から憧れてきたクラシックバレエ。そのプロダンサーが、SNS で日本文化の「金継ぎ」を紹介していた。異国から見る我が国の伝統工芸の素晴らしさ、あわせて現代における異文化間のつながりの良さを知った。

Culture through the looking glass

One can only see oneself in a mirror. Something akin to the mirror is the perspective of a third person. My discovery of a single Instagram post taught me that the same applies to culture. Although there are many kinds of eye-opening situations when discussing cross-cultural experiences, my encounter with this post was especially impactful.

Steven McRae, who is the poster of the post, is a principal dancer of the Royal Ballet. The Royal Ballet is a ballet company with a worldwide reputation located in the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Ballet, having originated in the Italian Renaissance and developed in France, serves as the foundation of many European dance forms. Nowadays, ballet is taught and performed worldwide, and Japan is one of the countries with the most students. I myself have loved watching, and dancing ballet since the age of three. In the process of learning ballet, facing obstacles was inevitable. The hurdles were both physical and mental, including mild injuries such as sprained ankles, and shin splints. Even minor injuries can be serious to dancers, for they hold the dancer back from practicing. This causes the dancer to be left behind by the class, resulting in frustration and the requirement of huge efforts to catch up. Even without injuries, every dancer learns at a unique pace, and has a body of their own. There almost always are mirrors in every studio, making it natural to observe oneself and compare with others. This often causes a feeling of inferiority, and it is a fact that many dancers suffer from perfectionism and eating disorders. Consequently, a professional dancer appears superhuman, having overcome all of the difficulties of dancing to the young dancer's eye. In fact, Steven McRae appeared to be perfect in my eyes when he performed as the Mad Hatter in 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland', a show from the Japan Tour 2013. He was tall and slender with beautiful lines, and had a air of mesmerizing sophistication in his performance despite the Mad Hatter's comical costume and character. I had never imagined that he would have interest in, let alone post about Japanese art.

On July eighth, 2020, Steven McRae posted pictures of himself on Instagram with the following comment : "The thought of a Career threatening injury for a Dancer is terrifying, and anyone, Dancer or not, will experience some sort of physical or mental break at some point, BUT the pain does not have to dictate to us a negative new world..... The concept of Kintsugi highlights the need for us all to focus on these moments as an opportunity to add even more value to ourselves by creating another chapter in the stories of our lives..... I will now be visualising my scars coated in Gold, Silver and Platinum." Kintsugi, which he mentions in the comment, is a Japanese art form of fixing broken pottery using lacquer. The lacquer is then coated with metal powder of gold, silver, or platinum, giving the pottery a new and distinctive look rather than leaving it looking flawed.

Reading this post on Kintsugi was an eye-opening cross-cultural experience. The post enabled me to observe and respect an art of my own culture from another perspective. I had known about Kintsugi from a fairly young age, for some of my grandmother's crockery were fixed using the techniques of Kintsugi. However, never had I viewed it as anything impressive. To me, the art of fixing broken pottery was a mere outcome of the "*Mottainai*" spirit, a way of thinking that criticizes the production unnecessary waste. How he had related the pottery's cracks to his own life tribulations was profound. Besides, the idea of a professional in ballerino posting on Instagram about a culture different to his own from nearly six thousand miles away was fabulous. Steven McRae's comments on Kintsugi added a more modern, powerful, and dynamic sensation to the art, improving the original image of old, worn out pottery on the shelves. I felt proud of Kintsugi, and of belonging to the culture of this art. My desire is that more of these empowering discoveries occur through cross-cultural interaction both on and off line. [694 words]

<特別賞/日米協会会長賞>

土反 ケイト アンジーさん 三重県立松阪商業高等学校 2年

エッセイ内容:人に助けを求めることは悪いことじゃない。助けてもらうことで、他の人から学んだり、人間関係を築くことができる。自分自身が成長するために助けてもらおう!

You Need Help!

Growing up in the Philippines I was always taught that I can do anything on my own and that I shouldn't ask for help. When I was young my aunt once said "You don't need anyone's help in order to achieve something in your life". From that time, I applied what she said to everything I did. When there was something I didn't understand I wouldn't ask for help because I thought if I asked for help everyone would think I was a loser, or that I was weak.

Everything changed after I came to Japan. When I first went to a school here I was nervous that everyone would think of me as the dumb new student. I stayed silent in class. I was embarrassed about not knowing the language because I knew eventually I would need someone's help to speak and write. I did my best by myself, I studied Japanese really hard but I didn't improve at all. At first I hated that I needed to ask for help because I lacked communication skills. Whenever my teacher would ask if I understood I would say, "Hai" thinking I could catch up at home. Then one day at school I was listening to my teacher when my Japanese classmate asked them to explain more. I was so surprised because they didn't hesitate to ask. I was used to not asking questions at school. In the Philippines people just nodded, everybody thought asking questions was stupid, if there was something they didn't know they'd just leave it.

After that class I immediately talked to a teacher and I asked her if its normal to ask for help in Japan. She said, "You see all the teachers here? Before we became teachers we were students too, we needed help, we asked for help. By asking for help you can learn a lot. Your way of thinking will be changed!" At first I was hesitant to ask questions because every time I would remember what my aunt told me but eventually I started asking for help. If there was something that I didn't know I'd ask my classmates or teachers. I learned more things about Japan. And I got high scores on my exams! It was the best feeling.

Asking for help influences you to help other people. When I asked my classmate to teach me Japanese, he wasn't hesitant to help. He helped with my grammar, so I was able to speak Japanese better. My teachers were impressed. Then when a new student came to our school who was like me; she didn't know any Japanese, I was inspired to help her because my classmate had done the same for me. Asking for help makes us feel grateful to, and connected with others. Helping is also a good way to improve cross-cultural relationships. Another time there was a different Filipino student at my school who would ask me questions about school and about Japan. Every time she asked me for help I would feel more connected with her because she was showing that she trusted my ideas and skills.

I learned that asking for help from other people doesn't make you stupid because asking for help is a great way to learn from other people and build cross-cultural relationships. I learned that there is nothing to be afraid of when asking for help. For us humans to survive we need each other. We cannot survive on our own. Asking for help builds relationships that we didn't expect. Asking for help opens you up to new thoughts, approaches, and solutions that you wouldn't otherwise have access too. Asking for help develops our "growth mind-set" which will make us more curious, creative and give us the desire to learn. Admitting you need help and asking for it teaches you and those around you that asking for help is allowed and normal. As Les Brown once said, "Ask for help. Not because you are weak but because you want to remain strong." [669 words]

<特別賞>

細谷 優衣さん 山形県立山形北高等学校 2年

エッセイ内容: 不自由な生活に陥った経験をきっかけに、人々の「普通」のとらえ方の違いを目の当たりにした。私にとっての「普通」は誰かにとっての「夢」だったことに気づき、日本での障害者への接し方について考えた。

Your “Normal”, Someone’s Dream

What are your “normal” days like? Did you know there is someone who dreams about your “normal” life? I liked dancing and studying since I was little. All of my free time went into dancing or learning. Everyday was fun, and there were no problems. Suddenly, those happy days were robbed after only two weeks after I entered my dream high school.

All of my body got red, started to dry, and a serious pain attacked me. I became unable to stay in school all day, unable to walk to school, and ultimately, even unable to get up. I would pray, “God please, give my normal days back. I just want to walk to school with my own legs and study like everyone else does.” Unfortunately, that wish did not reach anyone. No one could understand what was wrong.

One day, at the doctor’s office, I was suddenly told that I was suspected of having Anhidrosis. One week later, I went to the Tokyo Medical and Dental University Medical Hospital for hospitalization, being far away from my family in Yamagata. Every night, I felt loneliness struggling against my disease. I cried and cried in despair. At last, I was diagnosed with Anhidrosis.

After being diagnosed with Anhidrosis, I witnessed that everyone around me lives with their own different “normal”. The “normal” life of a boy of the same age as me wearing a knit hat and walking along the wall with a drip in his arm. The “normal” life of a man who has difficulty with walking straight. The “normal” life of an old woman who cannot breathe well. I was so surprised at their acceptance towards their own illnesses. I was inspired to accept my own illness, even though it was hard. That was the first moment when I noticed that my previous “normal” days were someone’s dream.

I went back to Yamagata, having a strong will to understand more people than I used to. My classmates also started to try to understand the difference between me and them. I felt so relieved because before, I couldn’t apply any medicine when I was in class. It has become easier to concentrate on treatment since everyone has accepted me. My condition has dramatically become better and better.

In Japan, people tend to ignore and avoid disabled people. They even hesitate to talk to them on the street. Japanese people tend to see them as different, and exclude them from mainstream society. However, outside of Japan, people with disabilities have been treated as humans who have the same rights. For example, society uses the term “people with disabilities”. This is because they emphasize the person rather than the disability. Honestly speaking, I also couldn’t accept myself having an illness; I thought that it was not normal. But now, through my experience, I finally realized accepting disabilities is completely normal. That acceptance and understanding from people is what people with disabilities dream of.

As stated by Reverend King: “We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.” Many people with disabilities think the same thing. In my opinion, the first step is to make people understand that everyone has a different “normal”. In this world, there are not only people with healthy lives, but also with disabilities. I believe there will be a time where people with disabilities will be able to live with support and acceptance. [566 words]

<特別賞/日米協会会長賞>

柏木 杏さん 私立山脇学園高等学校(東京都) 2年

エッセイ内容:この夏、DO-IT Japan のスカラープログラムでの異文化体験で価値観が変わりました。障害の有り無しに関わらずお互いを助け合うことで、みんなが幸せになれることに気づきました。私はそんな社会を作りたいと思っています。

Knowing What I Need

“Is this what you REALLY want?” This question surprised me, and made me think. A few months ago, I participated in a program hosted by Tokyo University called the DO-IT Japan Scholar program. This program primarily focuses on assisting disabled people to get higher education, to achieve in society, and to become leaders.

I have a disability, and it's medically known as low vision. I can only see about a meter in front of me, even with glasses, and I have trouble reading a person's expressions. I have been living with abled people for all of my life, and I was usually the only one in the room that had a disability of any kind. All of the types of disabilities, the people, and the tools introduced in the Scholar program were new to me.

I was in one of the classes in the Scholar program, and it was about asking for reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. We made presentations to ask for specific support or allowances, and I asked about bringing my iPad to class to take pictures of the whiteboard. When I finished my presentation, the teachers told me, “Is this what you REALLY want? You don't have to be so considerate when requesting support. What about requesting a note-taker? There are lots of other options for getting the help you need. Getting rejected is part of the negotiation process. That's how you find a middle ground with someone.” I was surprised. I had never really thought of other options, especially having a note-taker. It turned out that I was ruling out options that require a person to alter their schedule to assist me. Maybe I was afraid to ask, to be a burden. I then realized that the word "can't" itself is a burden that I carry, that we all carry. This is especially true for our thoughts. It binds our minds and paralyzes us. I understood that I needed to break this mindset. However, people can't live all by themselves. We need help from each other to succeed. One of the other discussions I participated in was about dependence and independence. The professor said that being truly “independent” is an illusion. No one is completely independent. A person who is considered independent, depends on many other people without realizing it. I believe these types of people generally tend to be abled, since the disabled often have to ask for help that requires more time and energy. However, if everyone can help each other out, even if the task is time-consuming or costly, it will make us all feel happier.

I listened to an online course from Yale University called “The Science of Well-Being,” and it said that to be happy, you should be socially connected with other people. Just the act of being with someone can change your level of happiness. It also taught me that helping others is the perfect way to spend your time. You not only make the receiver of the kind act happy, you yourself become happier as well. One of the examples in the lecture was an experiment where the participants received five dollars. One half was told to spend it on themselves. The other half was told to spend it on someone else. All of the participants are surveyed later that day to measure how happy they are. The results were that the people who spent the money on another person ended up happier than the people who spent the money on themselves. This shows that helping others also improves your own happiness. I want to create, and be part of a society where everyone, abled and disabled, can use their strengths, and have someone else there to help compensate for their weaknesses. To achieve this goal, everyone needs to be open with each other and be willing to ask, offer, and accept help. Participating in the DO-IT Japan Scholar program and listening to the lecture from Yale University has changed how I look at asking others for help. This experience will become a starting point for me to start asking for the assistance that I truly need. [689 words]

<特別賞>

門松 心美さん 不二聖心女子学院高等学校(静岡県) 3年

エッセイ内容:なぜ日本の女性の社会進出は世界と比べて遅いのだろう。この疑問も身近な家族との団欒の中に答えがあるように思う。異なる世代を生きた祖父と私との間にある考え方の違いから得た学びを自分らしくエッセイにまとめた。

How Do You Change?

It was the very first time for me to realize that my grandfather and I are living in different cultures. I tried to persuade, explain, and make him understand again and again, but I failed completely. My family consists of 5 members; my father, mother, younger brother, and 'my soulmate', my grandfather. He is the person who explains everything about life and society to me most precisely. One day, I said to him. "I believe Miss Aiko will be the next empress in Japan. Do you think so too?" His answer wasn't what I expected. He said clearly, "No." Then I asked, "Why isn't it possible in Japan, even though it's possible in Britain?" His answer was very simple. "This is how it has always been in Japan." However, I wasn't convinced. I personally believe that we live in an age when women can become even Presidents. The debate was fired up when my mother joined in. She stated that women could be much more active in society because they have much more power and strength in some ways than men, for example their experiences of giving birth, and raising children. Then I asked my grandfather again. "Why do you think the Japanese government is reluctant to do something for gender equality, like some other countries are doing?" He said, "Our government can't break the traditions, I guess. I think young people are to blame because they don't go to vote." To be honest, I couldn't say anything back to him. His answer made think about the issue more deeply and I started to wonder if my approach to the problem, that is, to blame the government and society, would provide the truth. A few days passed. I was still pondering the question. Then something became clear to me. Ms. Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo, was holding an online conference with several female university students. The participants were asking the Governor exactly the same questions I had asked my grandfather. They were quite frustrated by the fact that women's status in Japan hasn't really improved, compared to those in other countries, especially the extremely low percentage of women participating in Japan's politics. All questions in the conference were related to why the Japanese government isn't willing to improve the situation. As I listened carefully to the discussion, the answer to the question gradually became crystal clear to me. It is because WE DON'T CHANGE. It's our fault. We, women, hesitate to be on stage. Ms. Koike's answer was very clear, "Just do it!", adding that we are now making good progress where more women can have a good balance in working and raising children. After watching the conference, I was successful in clarifying the reason why my grandfather and I hadn't been able to agree with each other. It was not due to the differences in our opinions on women's status but truly in our different approaches to what we think we can do to try to make our country better. At first, I had believed that the real cause of women's low status in Japan was due to the laziness of the government, or to society. However, my grandfather implied that women, especially young ones like me, should be involved in the problem because it is our problem, too. He helped me to find the answer for myself. I now believe that it is women in Japan who are responsible for this problem. I know many people think we ourselves can't make changes, hoping someone else may do it for us. However, all women should be expected to do what they can do to make change happen. We usually say "The old don't understand the young." If you look at generation gaps, or cultural differences between generations, I suggest that you should reflect on your own opinions and sometimes change your ways of thinking. Whatever others say, there should be surely a key to solve the problem. And for me, my grandfather is still my soulmate, and he continues to give me new insights into life. (677 words)

<アルムナイ特別賞>

手塚まりこさん 大妻中野中学校・高等学校(東京都) 2年

エッセイ内容:外国人＝英語という勝手な思い込みの中で感じた違和感。外国人留学生たちとの交流によって真のコミュニケーションとは相手の立場に立って考えることから始まるのだと気づかされた。

Kindness Not So Kind

Something was wrong. I, myself, was glowing with satisfaction. I had tried my best and spoken to them in perfect English. Yet as I saw their expressions, it was clear they were deeply dissatisfied. English was my strongest skill, wasn't it? Weren't they happy with my explanation?

I had been looking forward to this event at school, with a club I belong to that collaborates with people outside the school. It was an event where Waseda University's international students mainly from other Asian countries join workshops at our school festival.

As I was introducing Japanese anime and we used words like '*otaku*' and '*oshi-men*,' which were difficult to define in English. For instance, '*otaku*' can be used to describe someone who is a geek, or those who are addicted to pop culture; it does not have a single interpretation. The students asked me, "How do Japanese people describe *otaku*?" and I explained it in English to them because translating to English would be less troublesome for non-Japanese speakers. Yet, when I spoke, instead of nods of understanding, it was like a balloon deflating, the atmosphere sank.

A few weeks later, I had another opportunity to talk with them. Through our discussion, I understood their strong passion for learning Japanese. Suddenly, a thought struck my mind. The students left their home country to learn Japanese, and they already had some background knowledge of Japanese culture. Maybe they wanted to learn how to describe it in Japanese, and that was the reason why they asked me the question. They were expecting to get the answer from me in Japanese but instead, I used English just to show off my skills. Reflecting on my past attitude, I felt ashamed of myself for having grasped this opportunity for communication in such a limited way.

After my experience with International students, I was unsure of my communication process. Should I speak to foreigners in Japanese every time? Or was my experience a rare case? What helped me establish my new method of communication was an opportunity to take a lecture on '*yasashii-Nihongo*'. The professor explained how using Japanese in a kind or simpler manner could be useful in many situations such as in case of emergencies and at hospitals. She also mentioned that, to my surprise, foreigners wished to be spoken to in Japanese in some cases. At this point, I was certain of a hidden ignorance in myself. The kindness I gave, was not very kind at all. I had always thought speaking English must be the best solution for non-Japanese speakers, but this lecture taught me that it is not always the best answer. I finally realized my faults, and was ready to move to the next step.

My experiences have changed the way I think about communication. Sympathizing with the feelings of others and considering their needs are essential for building mutually satisfying communication. Last summer, I participated in a study trip in Thailand with local partnership schools, and I was planning on using English as a common tool. However, the Thai students wished to be spoken to in Japanese to improve their skills. As a response, I spoke to them in Japanese very slowly so they could understand. Some of them spoke back to me in Japanese, with a sparkle in their eyes. This is the true satisfaction of communication, I thought, this is kindness. After the trip, I wrote New Year's cards to them using simple Japanese next to my drawing. When it arrived, the students wrote back in Japanese as well! Their sentences had some mistakes, but I felt their hard work and warmth from their cards. Kindly using Japanese made our bond closer than before. By thinking and feeling on the same level, we were able to overcome the gap and come to a true, mutual understanding. Communication only truly succeeds when you consider the needs of others. I will become the person who can have the heart to think, to feel in someone else's shoes, and can communicate in a way that fits each person's needs. Sometimes, making things easier is unkind, sometimes making things a bit harder is kinder. (693 words)

■奨励賞 38 校

明治大学付属明治高等学校	熊本県立第二高等学校
昭和薬科大学附属高等学校	開智日本橋学園高等学校
山形県立山形東高等学校	北海道札幌国際情報高等学校
北海道千歳高等学校	北海道登別明日中等教育学校
頌栄女子学院高等学校	私立中京高等学校
上海日本人学校高等部	福岡県立北筑高等学校
関東学院六浦中学・高等学校	早稲田渋谷シンガポール校
東海学園高等学校	岡山県立総社南高等学校
白梅学園清修中高一貫部	国府台女子学院高等部
私立山脇学園高等学校	津田学園高等学校(六年制コース)
立教英国学院高等部	私立富士見丘高等学校
不二聖心女子学院高等学校	渋谷教育学園渋谷高等学校
大妻中野中学校・高等学校	東京都立雪谷高等学校
愛知県立阿久比高等学校	神奈川県立座間高等学校
江戸川学園取手高等学校	クラーク記念国際高等学校 東京キャンパス
大阪府立三国丘高等学校	郡山女子大学附属高等学校
山梨県立甲府西高等学校	仙台育英学園高等学校
長崎県立島原高等学校	名古屋市立北高等学校
中野学園オイスカ高等学校	神村学園高等部

TOEIC® Program

TOEIC® Listening & Reading Test、TOEIC® Speaking & Writing Tests、TOEIC Bridge® Listening & Reading Tests、TOEIC Bridge® Speaking & Writing Tests の総称。

3つのテストを合わせた世界の TOEIC Program 受験者数は世界 160 カ国、約 14,000 団体で実施されている。

一般財団法人 国際ビジネスコミュニケーション協会

(IIBC: The Institute for International Business Communication)

「人と企業の国際化の推進」を基本理念とし、1986年に設立。「グローバルビジネスにおける円滑なコミュニケーションの促進」をミッションとし、国内外の関係機関と連携しながら TOEIC 事業およびグローバル人材育成事業を展開している。