

Japanese Success Stories

Four Japanese students made choices and took steps that helped them realize their dreams. Which story do you think is the most surprising or impressive? Why?

1) University student majoring in architectural engineering

- Studied abroad in the U.S. for 3 months during junior year
- Maintained contact with U.S. friends via email
- Also got to know many English speakers after returning to Japan
- Became fluent in English
- Began job-hunting and had a clear career goal: to work as an architectural engineer in a management position + interested in living and working abroad
- Interviewed for a position as Project Manager for a large construction company
- The position involved working abroad
- Final interview was in English
- Was hired for the position
- Was sent to Azerbaijan and Indonesia as a project manager for construction projects
- Used English to communicate in both countries

2) Junior high school student (15 years old) who moved to the U.S. with her family

- Wanted to return to Japan and avoided speaking English during 1st year in the U.S.
- Didn't like school and didn't plan to go to college
- Studied English at a language school in New York in the summer after junior year
- Did a home stay for two weeks while studying at the language school
- Attended college in New York after graduating from high school
- Focused on improving English proficiency during first two years
- Transferred to a business college in New York during junior year
- Focused on acquiring business skills and computer skills
- Did an internship with a large Japanese cosmetics company during senior year
- Applied for a position as a sales representative with the company after graduation
- Was hired as a sales representative for the company's headquarters in New York

3) University student majoring in international relations

- Participated in many club activities during 1st year
- Took many computer classes and was certified as a systems administrator during 2nd year
- Submitted graduation thesis during 3rd year and began job-hunting
- During job hunt, had a clear career goal: to work as a business consultant for a top international marketing firm in Tokyo
- Based on excellent computer skills, was offered a job
- But had to improve English proficiency before starting to work
- Took 11 English courses, including Business English, public speaking, intercultural communication during senior year
- Also subscribed to English newspaper, read English novels and watched English news broadcasts on TV everyday
- Studied English and did a home stay in Sydney during spring break
- Was able to increase TOEIC score from 370 to over 800 points
- Began working as a business consultant for a large U.S. marketing firm in Tokyo

4) University student majoring in social work

- Took private English lessons at language school on weekends
- Did research on child abuse prevention for graduation thesis
- Her research involved visiting Child Consultation Centers to interview staff
- Also interviewed personnel at Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
- After submitting thesis, worked as volunteer with Kids Earth Fund, an international NPO
- Assisted with art workshops for children who had suffered abuse or trauma
- Met NPO founder and expressed interest in doing an internship
- Worked as an intern doing office work at the NPO
- Was hired by NPO as a part-time office assistant
- Wrote essay (in English) for graduate school application on career goal of improving communication and networking among social agencies in order to prevent child abuse
- Enrolled in International Christian University Graduate School to pursue a Master's degree in child development