

Student Story

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Some interesting differences Naoko has found between Japan and life in the UK.

Smile to ask

On the way to school, I met a woman who was walking with a dog and she gave me a sweet smile! It was the second time for me to meet her and at the first time she also gave me a heartfelt smile. Not only her, but also most of English people gave me a heartfelt smile when I meet them. At the first time I became really happy and also I was surprised because in Japan most people don't give a smile and it is usual. I like the English custom of smiling very much, so I'm trying to smile all the time. However, I forget it sometimes and I regret it.

Today I had Tim's class and we did a review of the way of British common conversation. The key words were "answer", "add" and "ask". Tim told us it is a rudeness not to ask some questions. I remembered my host father, he always asks me something when I talk with him. Sometimes it is a strange question or quite a little question, but he always tries to ask me. It is too busy for me to make questions, because we don't have the custom like England in Japan. However, I must try it and have good conversations with English people. I think that "Smile" and "Ask" are the key words for my English life!!

Greetings

I want to write about the difference between British greetings and Japanese greetings. In the first week of my English life, I often got confused about the problem.

In Japan, we have lots of greetings to say in our daily life. For example before eating foods we say "Itadakimasu", then when we finished eating we say "Gochisosame". This is our custom, so if you don't say these words it is impolite. However, in England, there aren't the words to say before you eating or when you finished eating. It was really strange for me to say nothing! So when I eat dinner with my host family I don't know when I can start eating. I want to say some greetings but there are no words which suit this scene.

The other greetings are for when you leave home and when you arrive at home. When we left home and going to somewhere we say "Ittekimasu" to our family and our family replies "Itterasshai". Then when we get back home we say "Tadima" and our family replies "Okeri". So if I don't get the reply from my family (because they have gone out) I feel a bit lonely. Also there are no greetings similar to these Japanese greetings in England. In my host family's home, everyone says nothing when they leave home and get back home. At once when I wanted to go out, I wanted to say a greeting to Jo, so I was waiting for her coming downstairs but when she came down she said "I didn't know that you hadn't gone out!" smiling. I was surprised but also she said "Have a good day!" to me and I thought that these words are the most suited words for this scene. The difference between Japan and England is very very interesting.