

July was a busy time for both staff and students as the school semester came to a close. Teachers were collected final grades and gave students their summer homework. There were several special meetings during the month. One of them was the cellphone safety meeting, the cyber division of Shiga police explained how to be safe while using a cellphone. On a lighter note the other meetings were about organizing the fall choir contest and sports day preparation. The teams for sports day were picked and preparation has begun.

English class also had its share of wrap-up activities. Students played review games such as the card game Go Fish and the quiz game Jeopardy. Students of all levels were able to find mistakes in English sentences and recall grammar and vocabulary from over the semester. Students were surprised to learn that the USA is a very young country with the holiday of American Independence Day. The USA was founded in 1776 which was during Japan's Edo Period, that fact really put the date into perspective for students. This month's English Board featured information about US history with a Japanese translation of the Declaration of Independence and pictures from an anime about the time.

July was also a busy time for Shiroyama's ALT in and outside of class. On July 7th, she and many other ALT's took the national Japanese language exam in Hikone. The next weekend she presented a poem by famous author Neil Gaiman in Japanese to her Koka City Japanese class. She found Shiroyama's students to be supportive as they encouraged her to continue to study Japanese over the summer break. "Even teachers can have homework" they said.

By the end of July, many older ALT's from her program finished and left for new opportunities. Wonderful farewell dinners and parties were held. As bittersweet as the farewells can be, the ALT is also excited for the new ALT arrivals in the fall.

