

Omori Cup – International Japanese Essay & Speech Contest (2026)

Call for Participants

1. Overview

The Omori Cup – International Japanese Essay & Speech Contest is a global competition for Japanese language learners across the world. It aims to provide participants with an opportunity to express their thoughts, experiences, and ideas in Japanese through both writing and speech.

The contest emphasizes not only linguistic accuracy but also communication skills such as expression, voice, attitude, and the ability to engage with others. Participants are encouraged to share real-life experiences and challenges using “living Japanese,” fostering meaningful intercultural dialogue.

This contest inherits and further develops the spirit of the long-running Japanese Essay Contest organized by Mr. Kazuo Omori and Ms. Hiroko Omori, who have contributed to grassroots international exchange for 37 years by supporting Japanese learners worldwide.

Over the years, they developed their own original Japanese language learning materials and donated more than 800,000 copies to universities and institutions in approximately 50 countries and regions.

They have also published a free e-book titled “「日本」という国” (Japan as a Country)”

https://nihonwosiru.jp/digital_book/

Furthermore, they jointly organized the Japanese Essay Contest 27 times, attracting a total of 73,304 participants from 102 countries and regions.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the contest is:

- To provide Japanese learners with opportunities to express themselves using their own words
- To encourage communication beyond language learning tests
- To connect people and cultures through Japanese language
- To pass on the legacy of international exchange established by the Omori couple

The contest is not only a competitive event but also a “stage of hope” where learners can build confidence and share their voices globally.



3. Theme

“Me and Japan”

Suggested topics include:

- Your favorite aspects of Japanese culture
- Japanese customs or ideas you want to introduce in your country
- Challenges in your country and what you learned from Japan
- What you like or dislike about Japan
- Why you continue studying Japanese
- How learning Japanese has changed you
- Difficult moments in your Japanese learning journey

4. Eligibility

- Open to **non-Japanese nationals studying Japanese**
- No restrictions on age, nationality, place of residence, gender, or occupation

5. Application Process

Applicants must complete the following steps:

- 1) Submit an essay (approx. 600 Japanese characters) via email
 - 2) Selected candidates (52 participants) must submit a 2-minute speech video based on their essay
- Submission email: oikawasensei@yahoo.co.jp

6. Competition Format

The contest consists of three stages:

1) Preliminary Round – Essay Screening

Participants are evaluated based on:

- Content
- Clarity and readability

13 participants are selected from each of four regions (total: 52 participants)

2) Regional Round – Video Speech Evaluation

- Conducted as an online regional competition

- Includes speech presentation and Q&A
- Top 3 participants from each region (total: 12 finalists) are selected

3) Final Round – Online Grand Final

- Finalists participate in an online final competition
- Includes presentation and Q&A
- Final rankings are determined

Regions:

- ✓ Asia & Middle East
- ✓ Africa & Oceania
- ✓ Europe
- ✓ Americas

7. Evaluation Criteria

- **Essay:** Content and clarity
- **Speech:**
 - ✓ Clarity of expression
 - ✓ Voice and delivery
 - ✓ Audience engagement and presence

8. Schedule (2026)

Application Period: April 1 – **August 31**, 2026

Preliminary Results Announcement: September 5, 2026

Regional Rounds: Around September 15, 2026

Regional Results Announcement: Around October 10, 2026

Final Round: Around October 15, 2026

Final Results Announcement: November 10, 2026

Award Ceremony: Around January 2027 (planned in four countries)

9. Awards

- **Grand Prize (1 winner):**

Scholarship of JPY 300,000 + Certificate

- **Excellence Awards (5 winners):**

Scholarship of JPY 50,000 + Certificate

- **Regional Grand Prizes (6 winners):**

Scholarship of JPY 30,000 + Certificate

- **Special Awards (40 winners):**

Scholarship of JPY 10,000 + Certificate

(Prize details may be adjusted depending on participation.)

10. Notes

- Submitted works must be original and unpublished
- Changes to submitted content are generally not permitted
- No individual feedback on judging results will be provided

11. Organizer and Support

Organizer:

Koji Oikawa (Chair, NPO Japanese Speech Association)

Supporting Organizations:

- Three A Network Co., Ltd.
- Volunteers supporting Omori couple's legacy
- NPO Japan Sea International Exchange Center

Endorsement:

- Japan Foundation (JF)
- Asahi Shimbun
- JICA Tohoku Center

12. Contact & Application

For further details and application:

<https://oikawakohji.com/event/omorihai/>