



## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL

#### **What is the role of the lead teacher?**

The New Perspectives: Japan (NP:J) lead teacher serves as the liaison between Laurasian Institution and his or her student participants. In most cases, all communication and correspondence to students will be distributed through the lead teacher. The lead teacher is the school group's NP:J representative.

The preparation that the lead teacher and additional chaperone(s) engage students in before departing will make the chaperone role less demanding when the group is in Japan. Preparing students to behave responsibly and display cultural sensitivity will be an important process to begin long before leaving for Japan. During the homestay portion of the study tour, lead teachers, chaperones, and students will each stay with a Japanese family and attend the same Japanese middle or high school. In most cases, participants will travel to school with a member of their host family. In addition to preparing students for cultural interactions, the lead teacher will also work with students to customize "study days" that correlate the destinations in Japan to the group's chosen study theme.

#### **Can graduated seniors or college students participate?**

Students who have graduated from the 12th grade at the time of the NP:J trip in addition to college freshmen are welcome to participate. In the past, NP:J has had one or two college student participants join their alma mater high school group. Scholarship funding is restricted to high school students, so any current college students who wish to apply would need to be able to pay the full program fee.

#### **Who needs to get a visa?**

U.S., Canadian, and Mexican citizens are not required to have a visa for a short-term visit to Japan. Citizens of other countries should check with the nearest Japanese consulate. The process for obtaining a passport (and visa, if required) should begin as soon as the school group is notified of acceptance to the NP:J program.

#### **Where is the homestay?**

Homestay locations can range from as far north as Hokkaido or as far south as Okinawa. Sometimes, lead teachers request to be hosted by a particular school or in a particular town on their application. This could be because there is a sister-school relationship between the Japanese school and the American school. It could also be because the teacher has strong ties to the area; it may be their hometown, or they may have lived there for some time.

#### **What do students do during the homestay?**

During the homestay portion of the tour, students stay with a Japanese family and attend a Japanese school. Students will participate in daily family activities, sit in on classes, and often participate in uniquely-Japanese cultural activities like tea ceremony, kendo, or ikebana.

### **Can a teacher opt out of the homestay?**

The homestay component is the cornerstone of the NP:J experience and is what sets it apart from other programs offering summer trips to Japan. Students are often nervous about the homestay portion of the experience and gain strength and relief from knowing that their teachers are also staying with a family.

Laurasian Institution believes it is of the utmost importance for U.S.-Japan relations that host families learn from Japanese-language teachers about the realities of life in the U.S. and in American schools. Japanese families should develop a more realistic vision of the U.S. and become curious about daily life in America. The program's Japanese language teachers (both American and Japanese) serve as important cultural bridges!

While it is the expectation of the program and the host school that all NP:J teachers stay with host families, the alternative would be to stay in a hotel in the same community as the students or with friends/family, if applicable. Any teacher who stays in a hotel is responsible for food and lodging costs during this week. It is required that all teachers stay close to their students in case of an emergency or any concerns among the students and host families.

### **When will students and teachers receive information about the host family?**

Host schools/communities are finalized in the springtime. While Laurasian Institution encourages host families to submit their information in a timely manner, due to scheduling difficulties beyond the organization's control, homestay families may not be confirmed until a few days prior to departure.

### **How can natural families keep in touch during the trip?**

The internet is the preferred method of communication between parents and students. Laurasian Institution discourages the use of smartphones during the program, as visiting a new country is an experience in observing, listening, and being aware—particularly during the homestay. Participants are expected to avoid non-emergency calls to or from home, as cultural immersion is difficult with distractions.

[The NP:J Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/NewPerspectivesProgram) (facebook.com/NewPerspectivesProgram) will be updated on the day of or day following arrival. The page will also be updated mainly during the Tokyo and Kyoto portions of the study tour, so parents and friends can keep up with their student's travels.

Natural parents who expect their child to contact them during the homestay portion of the study tour should ensure their children are aware of free and cost-effective options, such as Viber and Skype. If participants intend to bring cell phones and use them internationally, they should contact their service provider to confirm whether their phone will work in Japan, and what additional technology (such as SIM cards) may be required.

Natural parents should be assured that students are well cared for, and that NP:J staff will contact natural parents immediately if there is any reason for concern.

In case of an emergency, family can call the emergency line at 888.310.4164. An NP:J staff member is available through the emergency phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **LOGISTICS**

### **Do students ever venture out individually?**

Groups must stay together unless the lead teacher gives permission to split up. If the lead teacher feels that an area is particularly safe and easy to navigate, they may let students explore or shop on their own for an hour or two.

**How will the group travel between sites and attractions?**

Participants will be traveling from attraction to attraction using Tokyo and Kansai's highly-efficient public transportation system. NP:J will provide each participant with a reloadable IC Card (metro card) in Tokyo. With assistance from the lead teacher, participants will add value to their cards at the beginning of each day.

If a participant loses her/his card, she/he is responsible for purchasing a new card (less than \$5) plus that day's transportation costs (less than \$20).

**Can a teacher stay in Japan after the program ends?**

Yes, as long as another teacher/chaperone travels with the students back to the U.S. Laurasian Institution is happy to book a return flight, and it will be included in the program fee. That said, the teacher is responsible for any differences in airfare if changing the date of the return ticket results in a higher ticket cost than the rest of the group. (This is the same policy for any student who plans to stay in Japan after the program end date.)

**Can a student stay in Japan after the program ends?**

Absolutely! Laurasian Institution is happy to book a return flight, and it will be included in the program fee. However, the student is responsible for any differences in airfare if changing the date of the return ticket results in a higher ticket cost than the rest of the group. Official participation in NP:J would end on the last day of the study tour upon leaving the group in Kyoto. Any and all arrangements for transportation from the Kyoto hotel to the next destination is the student's responsibility.

**FINANCES****Does the program offer financial aid or scholarships?**

The NP:J Jackson Bailey Scholarship is awarded to qualified students based on a combination of academic merit and financial need. Named after the late Japan scholar Professor Jackson Bailey of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, the scholarship exists to make study in Japan a reality for students who otherwise might not be able to participate. Scholarships cover up to half of the program fee; the maximum scholarship is \$2,000 for school group students. Scholarship results will be announced in December. If selected for a scholarship, the student must share what they learned during the NP:J program with the school and/or community.

**What are some ideas for fundraising?**

Participants in the past have organized talent shows, auctions, bake sales, bingo nights, walk-a-thons, and car washes with friends or a school club. They have also arranged Japan-themed dinners or cultural evenings and charged a small admission fee, in addition to exhibiting drawings, paintings, pottery, photography, or other creations, collecting commissions on artwork.

Other ideas might include contacting local businesses. Participants might write a letter to local companies, stores, restaurants, or other organizations for contributions. Businesses with an international or Japan connection are especially relevant.

**What does the program fee include?**

- Round-trip international air transportation to and from Japan
- Surface travel to and from international airports and accommodations in Japan
- Breakfast and 1,500 yen dinner meal money during "study days" in Tokyo
- All entrance fees to special attractions as per the group's approved tour itinerary with the exception of Ghibli Museum and Skytree tickets
- Pre-departure study and orientation lessons

- Comprehensive sightseeing and cultural exploration activities in the Tokyo and Kyoto regions
- Homestay with a Japanese family and exchange with a Japanese school
- Follow-on activities designed to help reflect on the experience and articulate “new perspectives” of Japan.

**For which expenses is the participant responsible?**

- Transportation to and from the U.S. departure airport designated by Laurasian Institution
- Health insurance coverage during the NP:J program
- All lunch, snack, and drink costs during the study tour (Host families ordinarily provide breakfasts and dinners while participants are expected to pay for any additional meals.)
- Participants are given an IC Rechargeable Card to cover transportation costs. NP:J will provide the transportation allowance on a daily basis. If a participant loses the IC Rechargeable Card, they are responsible for any remaining transportation cost for the rest of that day plus the purchase of a new card (\$5).
- While transportation to and from school is covered during the homestay portion, transportation, entertainment, activity costs, and other miscellaneous expenses incurred during free time is the participant’s responsibility.
- All personal expenses, such as internet fees, postage for mailing packages, excess luggage fees, personal purchases (toiletries, souvenirs, gifts, etc.), and medical, dental, or hospital bills
- Any checked baggage beyond the first bag (if airline charges participant for first bag, they should retain receipt and submit to Laurasian Institution for reimbursement).

**Are there any additional fees?**

- Late passport fee: Passport copies must be submitted to travel agents well before departure. Participants who fail to send a valid passport copy to NP:J by the March 15 deadline must pay a late passport fee of \$50. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the conclusion of the NP:J tour.
- Nonsufficient funds: If a participant’s check is returned to Laurasian Institution due to insufficient funds, a \$50 fee will be added to the participant’s balance.
- Guides: Japanese volunteers or guides are available to accompany groups on study tour days for an additional fee of \$250-\$500 per day.

Additionally, tickets to the Ghibli Museum and Tokyo Skytree are not included in the program fee. If the group wishes to visit the Ghibli Museum, an extra \$15 will be added to each participant’s program fee. If the group wishes to visit the Tokyo Skytree, an extra \$25 will be added to each participant’s program fee.

**How much spending money should a participant bring?**

Depending on eating and spending habits, \$400-\$600 should be sufficient for souvenirs, lunches, snacks, film, etc. ATMs at banks do not take U.S. bank cards. While the prevalence of stores and restaurants which accept credit cards has increased over the years, Japan primarily remains a cash-based society. Participants may withdraw Japanese yen from 7/11 ATMs but should be aware that most U.S. banks charge a small fee for international transactions. Participants should call their bank prior to withdrawing money overseas so the bank does not freeze a card due to suspected fraud.

## **MEDICAL AND SAFETY CONCERNS**

### **Does Laurasian Institution provide traveler's insurance?**

Lurasian Institution does not provide insurance for participants. A travel insurance policy that includes medical expenses, emergency medical evacuation, and a 24-hour assistance hotline is required for those NP:J participants who do not have a personal health insurance policy that covers them abroad. Travel insurance is highly recommended for others. Everyone will be asked to provide proof of such health or travel insurance to NP:J by April 15.

### **How safe is Japan for students?**

Japan is one of the safest countries in the world for foreign students. An established infrastructure, a low crime rate, and the desire of most Japanese to assist foreigners in Japan all contribute to a safe and welcoming environment for visitors. While Laurasian Institution cannot guarantee that an accident won't happen, experience leading study tours in Japan reinforces that it is a safe destination for students.

### **Can participants bring prescription medication to Japan?**

The short answer is "Yes," with the exception of Pseudoephedrine (Tylenol Cold, Nyquil, Nyquil Liquicaps, Sudafed, Advil Cold & Sinus, and similar products) and stimulants (Methamphetamine or Amphetamine including ADHD medications such as Adderall, Dexedrine, and Vyvanse). Participants should confirm any medication inquiries with their local Japanese consulate.

### **What happens if a participant becomes ill or injured in Japan?**

Lurasian Institution does everything it can to ensure the safety of participants, but the act of traveling in and of itself will always include risks. If a participant becomes ill or is injured, bilingual staff will seek appropriate medical attention.