

Selected entrants to be invited to visit Fukushima!

**Japanese Essay Competition for Non-Japanese Nationals on the
Theme of “Fukushima”**

Submissions accepted from July 10 (Mon.), 2023 (JST)

The Reconstruction Agency will hold a Japanese essay competition for non-Japanese nationals on the theme of “Fukushima.” Through essay writing in Japanese, the Reconstruction Agency aims to eliminate the influence of rumor and to foster understanding of the state of recovery from the Fukushima nuclear disaster as well as the safety and attractions of the Fukushima area among Japanese language learners in countries around the world.

Essays submitted to the competition will be judged and a Best Essay Prize and other award winners will be selected. Winners will be presented with a certificate by the Minister for Reconstruction. In addition, several competition entrants will be invited to visit Japan, including the disaster-stricken Hamadori area in Fukushima Prefecture, to witness first-hand the current state of recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Details

○Essay theme “The Fukushima in my heart”

○Submission period July 10 (Mon.), 2023 – September 15 (Fri.), 2023 (JST)

○Judging criteria Essays will be scored based on such matters as the ability to express oneself in Japanese; creativity in terms of viewpoint, etc.; understanding of the state of recovery from the Fukushima nuclear disaster as well as the safety and attractions of the Fukushima area; and desire to support Fukushima’s recovery.

○Judges Reconstruction Agency Deputy Secretary
Fukushima Prefecture Vice-Governor
Specified non-profit corporation Japanese Speech Association Chairman
Koji Oikawa
HITOkumalab Representative Aki Sato
The Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum
Director Noboru Takamura
Fukushima University International Center Assistant Director and Associate
Professor William McMichael

○Awards (proposed)

Best Essay Prize (Minister for Reconstruction Prize)	1 essay
Outstanding Essay Prize	3 essays
Special Prize (Fukushima Prefecture Governor’s Prize)	1 essay
Additional awards	Around 5 essays

■Submission Guidelines for the Japanese Essay Competition for Non-Japanese Nationals on the Theme of “Fukushima”

- Purpose: See “Purpose of the Japanese Essay Competition for Non-Japanese Nationals on the Theme of “Fukushima” on page 3.
- Entry requirements: The language used in everyday life by entrants must be a language other than Japanese. Entrants must also be studying Japanese inside or outside of Japan. (Entrants may be a high school student, vocational school student, university student, working adult, etc.)
- Submission period: July 10 (Mon.), 2023 – September 15 (Fri.), 2023 (JST; announcement website will be available from June 19)
- Essay theme: “The Fukushima in my heart”
Entrants may freely choose the title of their essay. Essay content is unrestricted as long as it contains portions referring to matters concerning Fukushima.
- Essay language: Japanese
- Essay length: Text (excluding title) between 800 and 1,600 characters
- Winning essay announcement: Late November, 2023 (planned)
- Award details: Winners will be presented with a certificate (in Japanese with English translation).
- Submission method: Enter and submit your essay via the following website:
https://www.smartcross.jp/fukushima_essay/
- Important points of note:
 - (1) Any and all inquiries concerning judging will not be answered.
 - (2) Essays that do not conform to the submission requirements will be excluded from the judging.
 - (3) Personal information included at the time of entry will be used within the scope necessary for the operation of this competition. Review and agree to “Handling of Personal Information” before entry and submission.
 - (4) Submitted essays will not be returned.
 - (5) Copyright of submitted essays will belong to the Reconstruction Agency.
- Other notes
Several competition entrants will be invited to visit Japan (Tokyo as well as the disaster-stricken Hamadori area in Fukushima Prefecture) for free.
When submitting your essay, please indicate whether you wish to visit Japan (scheduled period: December 1-4).

<Competition Inquiries>

Inquiries from news media: Japanese Essay Competition Public Relations Office (operated by PR Consulting Dentsu Inc.)

Contact Takuo Osada: t-osada@dentsuprc.co.jp/080-1384-9610 (+81-80-1384-6310 outside Japan)

Inquiries from persons interested in participating: Japanese Essay Competition Administration Office (operated by eforest Inc.) fukushima_essay@eforst.jp

Purpose of the Japanese Essay Competition for Non-Japanese Nationals on the Theme of “Fukushima”

When the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, Fukushima Prefecture and the rest of eastern Japan were devastated by the earthquake and tsunami, causing the loss of life of a great many people. In addition, the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident that accompanied the earthquake and tsunami forced large numbers of residents to evacuate the surrounding area for an extended period of time.

Thereafter, the passage of time as well as the decontamination conducted have lowered radiation levels in almost all areas to below those that would pose safety issues. Further, no foods that exceed standards for radiation are shipped or made available for sale. With an outpouring of support from people not only in Japan but also around the world, the areas stricken by the nuclear disaster have made great strides in their recovery. Infrastructure has been restored, the conditions of everyday life have been put in place, residents have returned, and survivors have rebuilt their lives.

At the same time, evacuation orders have yet to be lifted for a small number of areas, and there remain locations where people are not allowed to live. There are still many challenges, such as the return of the remaining former residents as well as steadily moving forward with the work of reactor decommissioning, which is expected to take a long time, and recovery of local industry and jobs including the fishing industry, which is still heavily impacted. Per the aforementioned, recovery from the nuclear disaster will take a long time, and Fukushima is still only partway along the road to full recovery.

In addition, unfounded rumors about Fukushima are hindering its further recovery. Particularly outside Japan, the image of Fukushima is largely tied to the nuclear disaster, and misunderstandings about the safety of the area remain firmly rooted. This in turn ultimately leads to import restrictions on Fukushima products in various countries, as well sluggish growth in overseas tourism. Moreover, it also further harms the feelings of local people working diligently to recover from the disaster, restore disaster-stricken areas, and rebuild their lives.

Fukushima Prefecture is an area brimming with its own innate attractions, including lush, seasonal nature and gorgeous scenery; seafood, fruits, vegetables, meats, and numerous agriculture, forestry and fishery products; sakes considered some of the finest in the country; historic streetscapes; hot springs; and festivals rich in tradition. The negative image described above, however, as well as misunderstandings and unfounded rumors have become a hinderance, and at present it can be difficult to even convey the charms of Fukushima to a wider audience both in Japan and internationally.

In addition to improving the Japanese language abilities of all who participate, one of the goals of this essay competition is to serve as the impetus for more people around the world to learn about the state of Fukushima and, through that, eliminate the influence of unfounded rumors and support the area's recovery.

Accordingly, while entrants are required to write on the topic of Fukushima, essay themes and content are unrestricted as long as the essay contains portions referring to matters concerning Fukushima.

Your understanding of what's going on in Fukushima today, feeling affinity with the area and its people, and turning your thoughts into an essay will also help support local people striving to recover and rebuild their lives, as well as those suffering from the effects of unfounded rumors. We're looking forward to the participation of as many people as possible from all over the world.