

33rd National J★PAN B●WL

2025 REPORT



THE JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON DC

33RD NATIONAL



Presented by

Japan-America Society
of Washington DC
(JASWDC)

Co-Host

Edwin O. Reischauer
Center for East Asian
Studies

Dates

April 4-5, 2025

Venue

Johns Hopkins School
of Advanced International
Studies (SAIS)

On Thursday and Friday, April 4–5, 2025, the Japan-America Society of Washington DC (JASWDC), in partnership with the Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies, welcomed 20 schools, 43 teams, and 123 students from across nine states and one U.S. territory to compete in the 33rd National Japan Bowl, held at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC. They were joined their teachers, chaperones, and observers for two exciting days of competition, cultural exchange, and community. Students faced more than 80 challenging questions and a dynamic Conversation Round, with the top-scoring teams advancing to the Day 2 Championship Rounds to determine this year's national champions.

For the past 32 years, JASWDC has organized the Japan Bowl to recognize and encourage high school students across the United States who have chosen Japanese as their foreign language of study. The National Japan Bowl—America's premier Japanese-language competition—plays a vital role in inspiring young language learners and reinforcing their teachers and school districts' efforts and investments.

JAPAN BOWL REPORT



The Japan Bowl is more than just a competition. It offers students a unique opportunity to experience Japanese culture firsthand and to connect with peers who share their passion for Japan. Between competition rounds, students took part in live cultural workshops, including kendama, calligraphy, and karuta. Teachers and students also participated in the “Opportunities in Japan” fair with university representatives, cultural organizations, and sponsors highlighting pathways for language learning, study abroad, and future careers.

The top winners of the 33rd National Japan Bowl will travel to Japan for a week of cultural immersion, including student exchanges, a homestay, and an audience with Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado, the competition’s honorary patron.

Events like the National Japan Bowl not only motivate students to pursue language study but also build enduring bridges between the U.S. and Japan—one student at a time.

Participants

20 Schools
43 Teams
123 competing students

9 States and 1 US Territory

California, Connecticut,
Guam, Illinois, Maryland,
New York, Ohio, Oregon,
Texas, Virginia

33RD NATIONAL JAPAN

LEVEL 2

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

1st Place: Henry M. Gunn High School (CA)

2nd Place: Lynbrook High School (CA)

3rd Place: Stuyvesant High School (NY)

4th Place: Langley High School (VA)

5th Place: Stevenson School (CA)

CONVERSATION ROUND

Gretchen Whitney High School

St. John's School Guam



LEVEL 3

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

1st Place: Lynbrook High School (CA)

2nd Place: Henry M. Gunn High School (CA)

3rd Place: Gretchen Whitney High School (CA)

4th Place: Stuyvesant High School (NY)

5th Place: Stevenson School (CA)

CONVERSATION ROUND

Serena Louie, Stuyvesant High School

Abigail Mizan, Montgomery Blair High School



BOWL WINNERS

LEVEL 4

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

1st Place: Lynbrook High School (CA)

2nd Place: Stuyvesant High School (NY)

3rd Place: Cupertino High School (CA)

4th Place: Northside College Preparatory High School (IL)

5th Place: Montgomery Blair High School (MD)

CONVERSATION ROUND

Dristi Brubaker, Cupertino High School

Rhea Bathula, Langley High School

HAIKU COMPETITION

Dublin Scioto High School



寒風や
渚の隣
極楽だ

かんふうや
なぎさのとなり
ごくらくだ

MARUBATSU JUDGES



Minister Fumito Miyake

Minister of Public Affairs – Embassy of
Japan in Washington DC

Maki Hishikawa

Vice President, International Affairs,
Aflac Life Insurance

Shihoko Goto

Senior Fellow at the
Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation

Kihachiro Nishiura

Founder, Nishiura Style

Yoshinao Anpuku

CEO, NIKOLI Co., Ltd.

CULTURAL WORKSHOPS



Tea Ceremony Whisking Experience

Jennifer Swanson

SHO Calligraphy Lecture and Demonstration

Kihachiro Nishiura

Competitive Karuta–The ultimate mind sport from Japan

Mutsumi Stone

Kendama – Beginner to Black Belt

Matt Hall



Guide to Packing a Healthy and Delicious Bento Box

Harmonious Kitchen

Japanese Yukata Trial Workshop

Hideko Uchiyama

Japanese Logic Puzzle Adventure: A Workshop with Nikoli

Yoshi Anpuku, Nikoli



SPONSORS & SUPPORT

CO-HOST



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REISCHAUER CENTER
FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

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TOSHIBA



Sojitz Foundation

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Center for Global Studies

Connecticut

Cupertino High School

California

Dublin Scioto High School

Ohio

Gretchen Whitney High School

California

Hayfield Secondary School

Virginia

Henry M. Gunn High School

California

Langley High School

Virginia

Lynbrook High School

California

Maggie L. Walker Governor's

School for Government and

International Studies

Virginia

Montgomery Blair High School

Maryland

Northside College

Preparatory High School

Illinois

Paint Branch High School

Maryland

R.L. Paschal High School

Texas

Stevenson School

California

St. John's School Guam

Guam

Stuyvesant High School

New York

Sunset High School

Oregon

Thomas Jefferson High

School for Science and

Technology (TJHSST)

Virginia

Townsend Harris High School

New York

Westview High School

Oregon

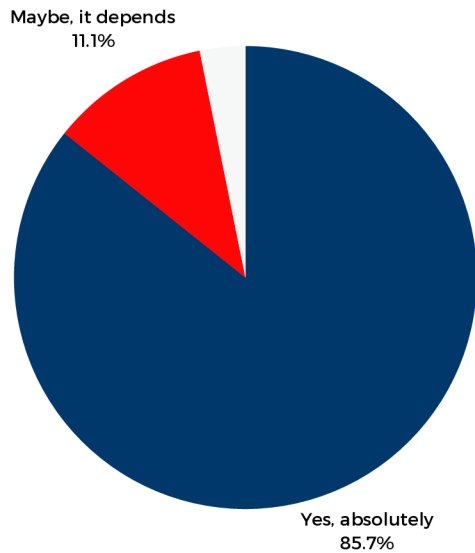
2025 SURVEY RESULTS

Did the event leave a memorable impression on you?

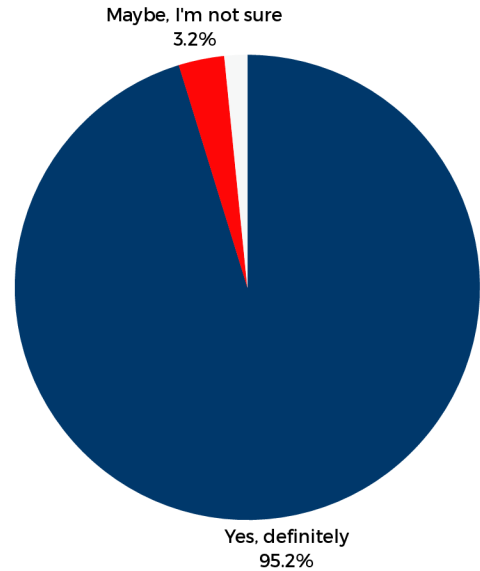


92% of participants responded with a 4 or 5 out of 5

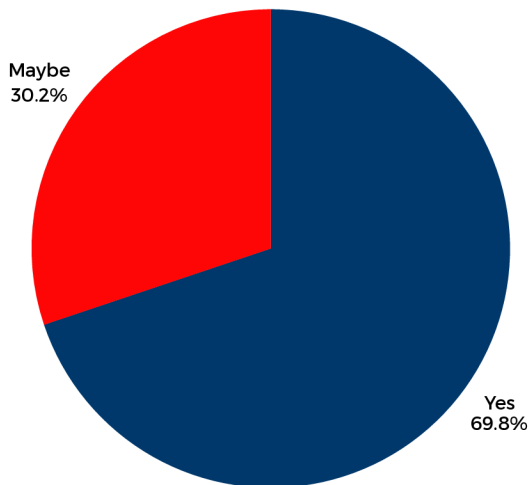
Would you like to come back to the National Japan Bowl next year?



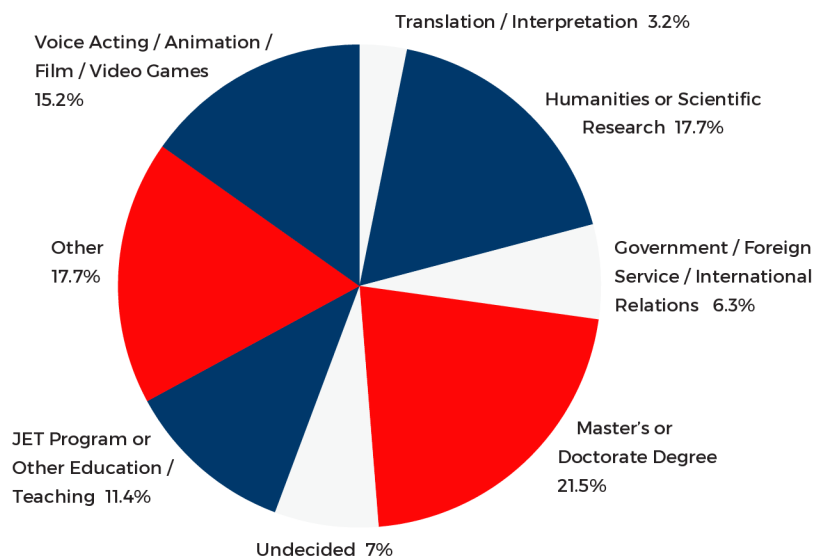
If you had to "do it all over again," would you still choose to study Japanese?



Do you plan to continue to study Japanese language after high school?



What career would you like to pursue?



Why Japan Bowl?

「楽しかった！」

“The National Japan Bowl 2025 was an unforgettable experience—equal parts intense academic competition and vibrant cultural celebration. 10/10, would totally recommend for any Japan-loving high schooler.”

“My one hope is that Japan Bowls never comes to an end. I wish future generations can feel just how I do, and is as passionate about learning, meeting, and overall having fun for forever to come.”

“Japan Bowl made me extremely motivated to continue my studies on Japanese history, literature, art, and more.”

“A great experience that every student should try out at least once.”

33rd National Japan Bowl Participants

Testimonials from Teachers:

“This event is a great opportunity for students who want to do more with their Japanese studies outside of the classroom. It's certainly a challenging experience, but I think it's perfect for students who want to deepen their learning. It's also fun for them to meet students from across the country.”

“I feel that the Japan Bowl has been an immensely rewarding experience for both me and my students. The topics covered each year challenge students to do a deep dive into elements of Japanese culture and society that we don't always have time to explore in depth during our regular class time, so it's a perfect chance for students with an interest in the culture to extend their learning. The collaborative element is also fun, as students can support one another with their individual interests and strengths to make a well-rounded team. They also get to compete against students from all across the country who share their interest in Japan, so they often enjoy making friends with the other participants between competition rounds. “

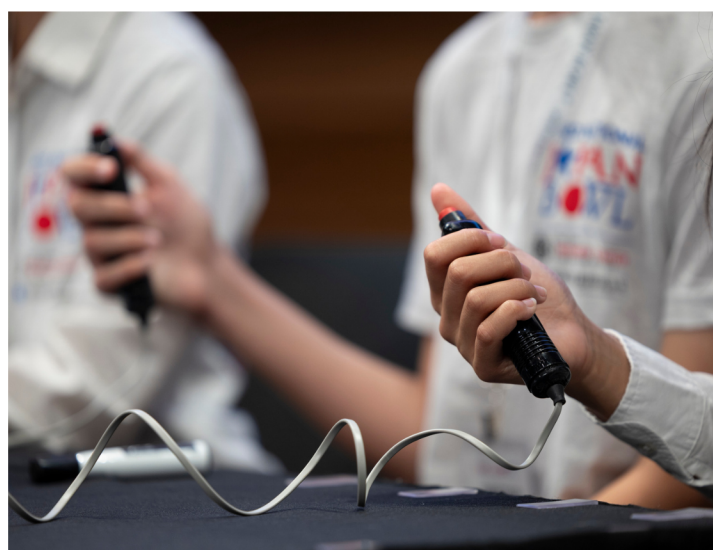
“The Japan Bowl provides students with opportunities to learn more about the Japanese language and culture beyond the classroom. It also helps develop students' leadership, organizational, and communication skills. Students enjoyed networking with others and learning about future opportunities to use their Japanese.”

“The National Japan Bowl is a highly academically challenging event. It not only benefits the participating high achievers but also the whole Japanese program.”

PROGRAM



HIGHLIGHTS



JAPAN BOWL COUNCIL & STAFF

JAPAN BOWL COUNCIL

The Japan Bowl Council works throughout the year to create questions – over 400 – which are challenging, informative, and entertaining. The questions are the lifeblood of the Japan Bowl. Half of the questions are focused on the Japanese language, and the other half relates to Japanese history, culture, society, daily life, and more.

William Brooks (In Memoriam)

Louisa Rubinfien

Mylz Hahn

Tomoko Hoogenboom

Kirsten Jensen

Sufumi So

Seiko Kyan

Yoko Lawless

Sang-Mi McHale

Peggy Breer

Yoshiko Mori

Akane Shirata

Takae Tsujioka

JASWDC STAFF

Ryan Shaffer - President

Saori Kobayashi - Executive Director

Sami Marks - Japan Bowl Program Manager

Mallory Hendricks - Japan Bowl Assistant

Hannah Rozei - Japan Bowl Intern

Mari Fromel - Administrative & Program Manager

William Denton - Communications Manager

Emily Johnson - Program Manager

Colette H. Fozard - Operations Manager

Ryunosuke Saeki - Administrative and Program Assistant

33RD NATIONAL JAPAN BOWL TEAM

PRELIMINARY ROUND

LEVEL II

English moderator - Kirsten Jensen
Japanese moderator - Seiko Kyan

LEVEL III

English moderator - Andrew Lamb
Japanese moderator - Tomoko Hoogenboom

LEVEL IV

English moderator - John McLaughlin
Japanese moderators - Sachiko Beeman, Yoshiko Mori

CONVERSATION ROUND

LEVEL II

Louisa Rubinfien
Sufumi So
Jennifer Swanson
Noriko Otsuka

LEVEL III & IV

Tomoko Hoogenboom
Takae Tsujioka
Akane Shirata

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

English moderator:

Tracy Mahoney

Japanese moderators:

Seiko Kyan, Sachiko Beeman, Masayoshi Kamizono

Judges:

Sufumi So, Louisa Rubinfien, Kirsten Jensen,
Yoko Lawless, Akane Shirata

Emcee: Mariko Baika

Scorekeepers:

Takae Tsujioka, Yoshiko Mori

Mouthpiece:

John McLaughlin

Timekeeper:

Jennifer Swanson

Ppts and Buzzers:

Mallory Hendricks



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