**Monday 15Th April morning - Leah**

Our first day having breakfast in Japan at Kyoto Tower Hotel. Emma and Jayne were the brave two who consumed natto and liked it!! After meeting our awesome tour guide Hiromi who spoke good English, was very knowledgeable and had very interesting stories, we took the bus with our guide to Ryoanji Temple which was really beautiful. There were a lot of school students from Japan who seemed just as excited to see us as we were to see them. The stone garden was peaceful where there are 15 stones but you can only see the 15th stone from heaven. Next we arrived at Nijo-jo (Nijo Castle) which was the official Kyoto residence of the first Tokugawa Shogun, Ieyasu. We toured inside and travelled across the nightingale floor which makes noise when walked across ……attacks from Ninja and assassins. We then walked to Kinkakuji-the Golden Pavilion. This gold foil on lacquer covers the upper levels at Kinkaku and a shining phoenix is on top of the shingle roof.

**Monday 15 April - afternoon Josh Watts**

Standing on the stage of Kyoumizu Temple we could see all of Kyoto and it felt great. We then walked up some stairs and there were two rocks, and if you could walk from one to another with your eyes shut they say you will find a girl or boyfriend. After that we went downstairs and went to a Shinto hand washing place, where you wash your left hand then your right hand then you wash your mouth out with the water, some of us tried that and it was a good experience. Then we went to a tea ceremony called Sadou and there was a tea lady wearing a kimono who showed us how to do tea ceremony. It was really great and everyone enjoyed their time there. First she gave us rice ball with anko (red bean paste) and we ate that before drinking our tea. To drink we have to turn the cup 3 times so the decoration faces the other people, then we drink and so the host knows you’re finished you make a loud noise so she knows you’re done. Then you turn it back and admire the cup and put it down. The tea was very strong but made sweet by the rice ball. . After arriving at the hotel we went downstairs to the hot bath, first we washed ourselves then we got into the bath. It was really hot but it was so relaxing. After that we went and ate okonomiyaki, our restaurant was really good, tasty and had a good atmosphere.

**Tuesday 16 April – Aleesha**

Shinkansen (bullet train) to Hiroshima, before arriving at the massive Hiroshima International Plaza (HIP), passing the many beautiful, traditional houses of Japan along the way. Favourite moment of the day; Playing baseball with some Japanese men who were absolutely hilarious and very welcoming as they met for their daily lunch break game of yakyuu.

**Wednesday 17 April morning - Tom**

After some free time (tennis, gymnasium, study rooming and sleeping), we met outside room 204, ready for a Japanese lesson filled with fun. We learnt about how to ask if it is okay to take pictures, and then practiced it by role-playing. We learnt many other things relevant to our Miyajima trip later in the day too.

**Wednesday 17th April afternoon - Brad**

After arriving at the ferry terminal, we boarded the ferry and enjoyed a 10-minute trip to the world-heritage Miyajima Island. We got to the Island and witnessed the amazing wild deer, freely roaming the area. Our guides, Makiko and Kaori explained that the Itsukushima Shrine was different to all others because it is built at the water rather than on a mountain and shoes are allowed to be worn inside it. While we were inside the temple, there was a traditional Japanese wedding where we all stopped to appreciate the serenity. After completing the tour of the temple, we broke up into small groups and explored the island. We went to the Omote-Sando shopping area where we were able to enjoy momiji-manjyuu.

**Thursday 18th April - Tim**

We had some free time so we hit the tennis courts for some serious tennis time. We hit some balls around for a while and then were off to our crazy class with Ikeda Megumi. We had a monster 6-hour class planned for the day. We learnt some handy hints for asking directions for our trip around Hiroshima. At lunch we played baseball with some employees and sort of ruined their game. We came back to the wonderful place of learning and met some students from a nearby university

**Friday 19th April morning - Matt**

We then went to our final lesson at the Hiroshima International Plaza. Today we were preparing for our school visit to the University high school. We brainstormed questions that we could ask the students then learnt about how to describe Australia.

**Friday 19 April afternoon Lilly**

We all attended 2 classes at the local junior high school. We all did different classes, we then realised that these kids were mathletes. After this class finished we made our way to the next class. My group attended a music class. They presented a performance using traditional Japanese instruments and they both sounded beautiful. Everyone left with smiles on their faces

**Saturday 20th April – Sammy Hanford**

After breakfast his morning, we took the bus into Hiroshima City and met Mr Mito, a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing in 1945. The bomb detonated at 600m above the city on August 6th at 8:15am, and Mr Mito told us about the different types of classes survivors were divided into depending on their distance from the drop site. He was kind enough to explain to us about his family’s story, how close his relatives had been to the explosion, and the effects that the radiation had had on them. Mr Mito previously worked for the Peace Museum for 4 years, and he told us facts about the bombing that the museum didn’t contain – such as the speed of the heat wave being 1.4 seconds. We visited the graves that had been directly under the bomb, and were able to feel that the tops of the stones were melted and rough from the heat, but the sides and parts covered by cloth had remained smooth.

At the monument to Sadako, we strung our 1000 cranes alongside the others and said goodbye to Mr Mito. When we entered the museum, we were given audio guides and allowed to go at our own pace. The first areas had scale models comparing Hiroshima before and after the bombing and other facts about the development of the atomic bomb, and the next rooms contained some quite confronting artefacts and stories recovered from wreckages – including the bike of a young boy, and the wallet of a young girl who had been killed in the blast. There was a set of stairs from the front of a bank, where only a person’s shadow remained. Of course we’d all read about these things before, but seeing them in person was a completely different thing and we were all very shocked; some of us couldn’t hold back our tears.

**Monday 22nd April - David**

We are in Togane with our host families. After breakfast it was school uniforms on and time to go to school. Arriving at Togane Senior High School we had a short meeting before going on stage to our jikoshokai (self-introductions). Everyone was nervous but we all did well. After the assembly we met up with our buddies and went off to our first Japanese lesson – whether it was singing in music, doing a PDHPE exam or sleeping during History. It was a great experience. The bento boxes that our host families packed were extremely delicious. At the end of the day, after five minutes of cleaning the classrooms, some of us went to after-school clubs and did activities like koto (Japanese stringed instruments) and basketball – where we played pretty well against the club players, even if they weren’t going their hardest. Then it was walking or catching a train back to the host families for another excellent dinner which for some included going out to an authentic sushi train. Our first day at a Japanese school!

**Tuesday 23rd April – Jayne**

After meeting at Togane Senior High School we each recounted our night stay to each other. Aaron described the massive goat at his host family’s house and picking food for it in the afternoon. After the short meeting, we all set off to three more classes. Emma enjoyed teaching English to her English class, whilst I had fun in art class. We were challenged with complicated grammar and unknown words teachers taught, but it was interesting to hear the Japanese language being said at shinkansen speeds. Though, understanding it would be nice! Of course, I lost my indoor shoes! That was embarrassing…I have no idea where they’ve ended up!

**Wednesday 24th April morning - Emma**

Tokyo Disney Sea!  
We eagerly marched into the gates of the sacred land, hidden in many a coat, as the rain and wind were colder than a Canadian mountain goat. I began my journey with Natsumi, my host sister, as we marched towards the Tower of Terror.. We entered the Tower of Terror, mystified by its glorious illusions, and relished the ride of a lifetime. Journey to the Centre of the Earth and Mermaid Lagoon followed.

**Thursday 25th April - Owen**

Next, the Tokyo Tower. Yes! This tower was hype! About 333 metres high.. We had free time to explore this amazing structure. We also listened to some radios hosts doing their thing. After that we went off to Asakawa on a ferry which was quite “omoshiroi”(interesting). Asakawa: I would say shopping giant, flying koi fish, big bell things, “temple things” and Ninja star throwing. It would be a place that I would definitely revisit.

**Saturday 27th April - Jett**

The last day of our ‘educational adventure’. After a short but sweet sleep in, the day was spent with our host families, who had planned separate adventures. For some it was playing board games and spending time with the family, or visiting many astounding sites offered in Chiba Prefecture, even going out for a special lunch.

As 5:00 began to approach the mood quietened as we realised we were to be leaving soon. We all met up at Narita Airport around 5:00 for check-in. then it was goodbyes, leaving everyone in tears but goodbyes knowing we would keep in touch with our second family.