

2025-2026 21st Japan Center Essay Competition

Sponsored by Canon U.S.A.

Organized by the Japan Center at Stony Brook University

Aim:

The aim of the competition is to provide young Americans with an opportunity to think creatively and critically about their lives by relating them to some aspect of Japan so they can broaden their horizons and develop global citizenship.

Awards:

Best Essay Award in the High School Division:

- 1st Place: \$3,000 and a Canon product
- 2nd Place: \$2,000 and a Canon product
- 3rd Place: \$1,000 and a Canon product

Best Essay Award in the College Division:

\$3,000 and a Canon product

Uchida Memorial Award:

\$1,000 and a Canon product

Special Award:

\$500 and a Canon product

Essay Topic:

Contestants should discuss one or more aspects of Japan including art, culture, tradition, values, philosophy, history, society, politics, business, and technology in relation to their personal experiences, views, and/or future goals. (Contestants do not need to have any experience in visiting Japan or studying Japanese.) The judging criteria and additional guidance (FAQ) can be viewed at the Japan Center's website: www.stonybrook.edu/japancenter

Entry Qualifications for Contestants:

1. They must be 13 years old or older and enrolled in high schools or undergraduate programs in the New York Metropolitan area during the **2025-2026** school year.
2. They must be able to release the copyright of their essay to the JCSB and present their essay orally at the award ceremony.
3. They must be U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents of the U.S. except void in Maine and wherever prohibited by law.

Judging:

Submitted essays will be evaluated by the JCSB Essay Competition Organizing Committee and the panel of Stony Brook faculty judges (Chief Judge: Sachiko Murata, Director of the Program in Japanese Program) on the bases of their insight, creativity, and originality of expression as well as their style, form, and organization. (See the judging criteria and FAQs posted on the JCSB's website.)

Honorary Judges:

Mikio Mori, Ambassador and Consul General of Japan in NY
Isao Kobayashi, President and CEO, Canon U.S.A., Inc.

Submission:

Submit your essay by **January 8, 2026**, via the form on the JCSB website: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/japancenter>. You'll receive an automatic confirmation; if not, email us at japanessay@stonybrook.edu.

Rules and Procedures:

- Submit your essay in English, 12 pt, single-spaced, as a doc, docx, or rtf file.
- The file name should have the division code (**H** for high school; **C** for college), author's first and last name initials, an underscore (**_**), and the first three words of the essay title without spaces or symbols. For example:

HJS_TeaTheEmbodiment (High School Division, John Smith, *Tea: The Embodiment of Japanese Values*)

CEK_JapansLanguageof (College Division, Ellen Kaplan, *Japan's Language of Art and Music*)

- Within the essay body, **only** include:
 - File name (see above)
 - Full essay title
 - Essay body (**500 - 750 words**)
 - Works cited, if any
- Do NOT type your name or your school's name within the essay body. You can enter the author's information in the designated fields in the official Essay Submission Form.
- Do not use footnotes or endnotes.
- Do not include photos, illustrations, diagrams or tables.
- If you use others' ideas, cite them in the text and list sources at the end.

Tips:

Be sure to connect your experiences, views, or goals to some aspect of Japan. Focus, depth, and engagement are key—use the power of words! See the FAQs on the JCSB website for more tips.

Award Recipients:

The award recipients will be announced on the JCSB website in the first week of April 2026 and formally recognized at the Charles B. Wang Center at Stony Brook University on **Sunday, May 3, 2026**.

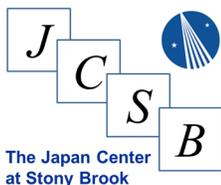
Organizing Committee:

Yasuko Fujita (Chair), Eriko Sato (coordinator), Roxanne Brockner, Carolyn Brooks, Evelyn Cruise, Kristina Chambers, Mary Diaz, Marlene Dubois, MaryAnn Hannon, Raphael Hao, Naomi Kirkup, Feng-Qian Li, Jane McNulty, Patricia Marinaccio, Hiroko Matsuzaki, Ayaka Mayo, Eva Nagase, Chikako Nakamura, Atsuko Oyama, Mitsuko Post, Theresa Spadola, Yvette Vetro, and Gerard Senese

JCSB Board Member in Charge: Yoko Ojima

Canon U.S.A. Representative in Charge: Keiko Shinki

*For more information, visit: stonybrook.edu/japancenter
email: japanessay@stonybrook.edu



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