On random normal days, in random normal classes, at my random American normal high school; I would day dream and wonder what it would be like to go to school in another country. “What would classes be like? Would kids be the same or different? Would it be more exciting then where I am now?” questions like these filled my head day in and day out. Fortunately while I was living in Japan I received an amazing and rare opportunity, to attend a REAL Japanese high school.
My high school’s name is Chukyo University Senior High School. Chukyo is famously known all through out Japan for its winning Baseball team and Olympic medaling alumni. I was very intimidated to attend yet excited to see the differences. However, even with an amazing track record Chukyo isn’t that different from school in the states, well the students aren’t anyway.

Following my host sister Yuko Saeki, I was placed in class 3L. Class 3L was tucked in the farthest corner of the school on the second story. They weren’t really unknown but they weren’t known for anything either, until I came along. My class had a population of 38 students and one amazing home room sensei, or teacher.

Unlike in American high schools, where you change classes every block and are lucky to be in the same class as your best friends or that crush of yours or are mixed with other years, in Japanese high school you stay in one room the whole day and school year and only with students your same grade. Every lesson has a new sensei that changed classes and you only have the same schedule every week unlike every day. However you have the same type of classes daily. Even lunch times are different, in Japan lunch is at 1pm unlike America’s 11:30 or 12:00.

Following the theme of differences between high schools, rules in Japanese high school are very strict (depending on what type of high school you attend). For example every one must wear school uniform and no variation. At Chukyo our summer uniform was a white polo shirt, knee length pleated grey skirt or pants (for boys only), and knee high navy blue socks. You are not allowed to have dyed hair, make up, or piercings of any kind. However most of everyone doesn’t follow the “no variations” concept. In attempts to make the uniform cuter girls roll the tops of the skirt and pull it higher up on the waist so the skirt is shorter and everyone rolls the sleeves up about three times making them shorter. The sleeves issue is more due to the insane heat then the aspect of what is fashionable. More strict rules that no one disobeys are the rules in the class room. These rules are simple, when ever the teacher is talking or teaching the class is silent, no drinking or eating.
anything, and basically due everything in your power not to stand out. In class students don’t ask questions, there are no volunteers, and the teacher can pick anyone as they please to answer questions. This tactic while humorous at times is absolutely terrifying, even for the top student.

Separating from the differences between Japanese high school and American high school, the two are the same based off who fills these buildings. Despite that during study hall students in Japanese high school actually study, my friends in Japan are very much like my friends in America. All students want to see the foreign exchange student, the minute a teacher leaves the classroom everyone talks, and everyone tends to become bored when learning about William Shakespeare and his plays. Even though it was very taboo and abunai, dangerous, I would sometimes take pictures during class to have proof that we are the same.

Unlike my classmates of 3L I would change classes. A more detailed explanation is I would travel to different English classes so student could have real practice in speaking English. Even though I was treated like a celebrity, which flattering but I could have stood without, I was able to make friends with other student out side of my assigned class. My favorite class to visit was 3A, the sports class. Composed of the elite athletes of Chukyo, 3A as a specialized class that was designed to work around everyone’s extra practices and prepare them for when they deal with media attention and managers in their future.
Out of all the classes I visited this group was the most energetic and outgoing, that being said besides a small handful of figure skaters, everyone was on the baseball, soccer, or track and field team.

Along with attending classes I was aloud to partake in after school clubs. Unlike in America, everyone is in a club and takes pride in it. The clubs I went to, which are basically every club, which stood out where the baseball team, Japanese archery, judo, rock band, dance, and cheer clubs. Judo was the one club I enjoyed the most because they had me laughing until I was crying. After scaring me half way to death from slamming each other on the mats, I asked if we could all take a picture together.

“eto, mina-san ishouni shushyin totte iiyo.”

“Hey everyone let’s take a picture together.”

“HAI!”

“Yes!”

‘all the boys immediately run to the mirror and start fixing their hair’

“suimasen, demo nani shimasuka?”

“Im sorry but what are you guys doing?”

“Mina-san ha ike-man desu.”

“Becoming sexy men.”

And thus with this exchange I was rolling on the floor with tears in my eyes laughing. In Japan guys carry more hair product then girls in America.
Overall my questions where finally answered about class in another country. My conclusion, classes are the same, the classes you enjoy are fun but the ones you don’t care for are boring. Although raised with slightly different out looks towards things the students are the same. And everyday is exciting because you can never guess or expect what’s going to happen.

I loved my time in Japan and now that I am home in America I find my self home sick for Japan. Thank you, 4-H for giving me such an amazing life experience. With out a doubt this has been my best summer ever.