

Practice Writing

Explain why Takahashi had such difficulties in the story. First introduce Hidden Culture. Then introduce Debate Style, and compare Japan with the West. That is, explain why Japanese avoid debating but westerners like to do it. Next, write this transition sentence: "These differences in debate style often lead to difficulties in communication for Japanese working in western companies." Next give an example from the story. Finally, conclude with a sentence about what you think Takahashi-san should have done in this situation.

[illegible]

Debate style

- Preferred by Westerners
 - Explain your opinion clearly
 - Ask questions
 - Disagree with others
 - Change your idea
- The main objective of debate style is to _____
 - Japanese culture is to avoid debating because _____

Apology

You are too busy to help your friend. Write a response to your friend in Japanese:

Western Culture and Japanese Culture

- Westerner apology style:
 - not say sorry
 - give an explanation
- Japanese apology style:
 - say sorry
 - not give an explanation
- These differences are connected to Debate Styles
- Westerners value logic, reason, and explanation
- Japanese value face and humility

Practice Questions

1. Read the following message:

My rent pays for this. You don't own all the room. Put your basket on your machine.

Which of the following is missing from the message:

REQUEST

APOLOGY

EXPLANATION

2. Read the story about Rick and then answer the question.

Hello. My name is Rick. I am an Australian and I have been teaching at a Japanese university for five years. I am used to life in Japan, but still things surprise me and make me angry. One such thing is the recent realization that Japanese will stop responding to emails suddenly and abruptly. For example, I requested some extra work from a student. We exchanged several emails about the work. Then suddenly the student stopped writing emails for no reason, and he never did the work. Another example is that I began to make arrangements to go out for drinks with a colleague. We sent some emails back and forth trying to pick a date. Then suddenly he stopped writing emails. When I saw him, we talked and I said, "Email me!" He promised that he would email me, but he never did, and I do not know why. I feel like I am dealing with little children. Why do Japanese people have such bad email etiquette¹?

Of course, it is not true that Japanese people have poor email etiquette. This is an example of cultural miscommunication and stereotyping. In fact, the Japanese people are refusing the invitation by 「自然消滅」. But Rick does not understand this. Write a brief essay explaining why Rick had such difficulty. Begin by introducing HIDDEN CULTURE. Then give THE ROLE OF THE EXPLANATION as an example of HIDDEN CULTURE. Compare the

importance of explaining in Japan with the West. Explain the relationship between EXPLANATION and DEBATE STYLE in Western culture. Next, write this transition sentence: “These differences in the importance of an explanation may result in miscommunication for westerners living in Japan.” Next give one example of this difference from the story. Finally, conclude with a sentence or two about what you think Rick needs to learn or do to stop being angry.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

¹ etiquette: 礼儀, 作法, 礼法, エチケツト