

For a while I didn't think I would end up going to Japan Bowl, but my teammate Aidan stepped up and agreed last minute to go with me. I'm incredibly glad that I got to go in the end. I've never been the same age as my Japanese classmates at Pacific University and don't get to participate much in Japanese clubs, activities, etc. At Japan Bowl I got to meet people my age who are studying the same language as me and it was fantastic. The Japan Bowl has also brought things I would have never known about before to my attention, like games and history. I particularly liked learning about Koi Koi and Karuta - my dad can vouch for how many times I've made him play Koi Koi with me after he got me a Hanafuda set for Christmas. I've also become better at studying because of the Japan Bowl. I had to organize my beautiful 25 page study guide and created a really good highlighting system for myself that I think I will carry with me throughout my school years. All the studying was so worth it and made it really fun watching the championship rounds and trying to answer along with the other students. The whole day was a blast, even if I was tired by the end. The bentos were really good and I think they re-energized me. Getting to go around the college tables was also fun as I got to see one of my Pacific classmates from last semester and met one of the PSU Japanese teachers.

When the school names were being called for the level 4 round I was so happy to hear Forest Grove High School called; my goal the whole way through was to make it this far and show my school what the Tualatin Academy program can provide. I think the other teams did really well and I'm proud of everyone who joined this year. It's still surreal that I'll be going to the National Japan Bowl this April and I'm indescribably thankful for everyone who has helped me on this journey; Ms. Miyanaga, my Pacific teachers, my parents, and Mr. Burke. I really hope that the PNW Japan Bowl teams do well at nationals this year. To any students wondering whether or not to participate, I say do it.