

As the Level 2 and Level 3 winners of the 6th and 7th Annual Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl in 2023 and 2024 respectively, coming back in 2025 for Level 4 was, again, a nerve-wracking moment. It was our last year attending the Japan Bowl, and our team would love to win the regional Japan Bowl and go to Nationals again for 2025.

As usual, there was a lot of the content we learned from Japanese class, but some others we learned out of our own time, using the study guide as a basis. During the time studying, it was really fun to learn about Osaka and haikus, as well as immersing myself even more into Japanese culture. During Round 1, it was somewhat relieving to know that we didn't miss much of the questions besides a few slip ups here and there.

During the break between the rounds, we were able to get some Japanese snacks, such as the candy that was provided. There were also different flavors of Pocky, and some of them seemed to be imports from Japan, which was very cool. During this time, I was able to reconnect with a friend that moved back from Texas, and we had a good time chatting with one another.

The second round was, as expected, harder than the first round. There was a decent bit of content that we weren't prepared enough for, and required more studying. Other than the questions that we didn't study for, it was smooth sailing from there.

The lunch provided was amazing. There was rice, gyoza, salad, and so much more, and it reminded me of the lunches I buy in Taiwan. Overall, it was similar to last year's Japan Bowl bentos. During lunch, we were also able to see a traditional Japanese musical performance, and it was wonderful. I loved the experience and wish to experience it again soon.

Lastly, the podium round was nerve wracking. Although I have been on the podium twice already, the final round always gets me and makes me nervous. The first section of the final round went well for our team. For the second section, where we are supposed to make a sentence using an onomatopoeia, I was skipped since I got the "oyasumi" card (similar to last year). My teammates, Tomola and Riley, did a great job for their parts, where only one judge gave a "batsu". Then finally, we were at the last section, which was the toss-up questions. Surprisingly when compared to the previous years, we were able to get most of the questions. We were able to win again, and that's very amazing and exciting, going to DC for another year.

Overall, Japan Bowl was a really fun experience and I am looking forward to the National Japan Bowl. The food was really good, and the questions were quite interesting and fun to answer. I loved the experience I had at Japan Bowl and would like to attend it again next year.