

## 2024 Debate Contest Speeches

### 1<sup>st</sup> Debate – Japanese schools should go paperless.

#### Affirmative

Yabuki Saya  
Ohigashi Masaki  
Hu Yoka  
Tsuji Anju

Good afternoon, judges, audience, and the opposition. We, the Affirmative team, argue that schools should go paperless. According to the report by Tsuchiura 1st High School, over 2 million sheets of paper are used at their high school every year. Going paperless will transform the application of digital tools, offering numerous benefits for schools and students. We will illustrate this through three key points: SDGs, better organizing, and student engagement.

Our first point is that schools should put more effort into achieving the SDGs. By minimizing the use of paper and ink, schools can actively support SDGs such as 12, 13, and 15 in many ways. Going paperless aids in decreasing deforestation, preserving habitats, and reducing school waste. Furthermore, it helps prevent global warming by reducing harmful substances produced during the process of manufacturing, transporting, and discarding paper. Eliminating the use of paper at school will greatly contribute to our being environmentally friendly.

Second, it is easier for both teachers and students to organize and manage. Preserving huge piles of paper requires a lot of space and can attract pests such as cockroaches, mice, and other sickness carrying creatures. With digital tools, it saves space, makes it easier to find materials when needed, and makes it less likely to lose them. By managing documents online, it makes it easier for everyone to stay focused and be able to work more efficiently.

Lastly, classes will be more attractive. According to the study conducted by Sidney K. D'Mello, a professor of the Institute of Cognitive Science at the University of Colorado Boulder, digital learning technology improves students' learning engagement. This engagement is fundamental for improved academic performance, self-efficacy, and sustained interest in learning. Interactive tools like simulations and videos foster critical thinking, creativity, and a positive classroom environment. Digital technology contributes to creating a more engaging and efficient learning environment overall.

For these reasons, schools should go paperless to contribute to our environment, organize more efficiently, and make a better learning environment for students. Thank you.

## Negative

Hashimoto Kokoha  
Shinozuka Seigo  
Konishi Anna  
Ikushima Kako

Judges, audience, and members of the opposition, good afternoon!

I would like to ask everyone. Are you a paperless person? Certainly, many classes use iPads in our school, but is it really good for our education? Using three points, academic, physical, and financial, we will prove how going paperless is not the answer but is actually more harmful.

Our first point is that some families cannot afford an iPad. In Kyoto in 2021, many parents responded to the report and expressed their opinions about having to purchase expensive tablets themselves. Because high school is not compulsory education, there is no subsidy from the government. Students in Hyogo have also begun purchasing iPads at their own expense starting in 2022. Many families cannot afford an iPad, so we think it is better not to use one as this is unfair to those without access to it.

The second reason is that using an iPad can affect children's health. "Blue light," which you have probably heard of, is a high-energy light that can affect our body if we are exposed to it for a long time. For example, the adverse effects include eye fatigue, retinal damage, and decreased vision. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children between the ages of 5 to 18 spend no more than two hours a day on screens. However, according to a Japanese survey, as of 2018, the average time spent on the Internet by elementary, junior high, and high school students was 169 minutes. We think it is better not to use it at school in order to improve children's health problems even a little.

The final reason is that it is easier to memorize things on paper than on an iPad. This is the result of a survey conducted by second-year high school students. 92% of students answered `by using papers to study.` According to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (WSJ), "Students who took classes by using PCs forgot the content of the class 24 hours later. However, students who took notes in class could memorize it better and still remember the information even a week later. We think taking notes in daily classes is effective for studying more efficiently and improving test scores.

For these reasons, we strongly believe that all Japanese schools should not go paperless.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Debate – Japanese high schools should separate their curriculums into Humanities and Science.

### Affirmative

Maeda Maya  
Suji Takane  
Miyawaki Mai  
Yoshioka Kosuke

Good afternoon. We firmly believe that we should divide science and humanities students into different classes to help them get the maximum benefit from their high school education. We have three strong perspectives to support this idea.

Our first reason is that this provides a good opportunity for students to think about what they want to study in university. According to a questionnaire conducted by the famous cram school, Toshin, half of the students haven't determined what they want to do with their careers. We believe that choosing humanities and sciences could give students an idea of what they want to study in further education.

Secondly, students can focus on studying what they like and are good at. Most of the students have found their strong and weak subjects by the time they get into high school. Unlike Keimei, almost all the students in other schools must take the Common Test for University Admissions, which is the most important test for students to get into their dream university. According to the National Center of University Entrance Examination, the test consists of questions that require understanding knowledge and abilities to think, judge, and express. This means that they want to know whether students have deep knowledge about the subject for the exam. Therefore, we believe it's logical and efficient to study what you're good at and try to get a higher score than studying a subject you don't like or are not good at.

Lastly, the school can cultivate highly specialized talent. In an era where everything can be learned through internet searches, what society demands is individuals equipped with profound knowledge who can effectively apply it. The specialized knowledge acquired in university must build upon the foundational knowledge cultivated in high school. This foundational knowledge, which can be gained by separating students into classes for humanities and sciences, allows students to concentrate on gaining essential subject-specific knowledge.

In conclusion, we believe that considering traditional exam preparations, exploration of future academic interests, and the cultivation of highly specialized knowledge, it is advisable to segregate classes into humanities and sciences.

## Negative

Manabe Hikaru  
Izawa Sakura  
Okamoto Yuki  
Yamada Hinako

We are opposed to separating the humanities and sciences courses in High school. Various evidence supports this claim, all indicating the importance of acquiring both science and humanities backgrounds.

First, there is a problem with the current system. The clear separation between the humanities and the sciences limits students' future opportunities. Many students are uncertain about their future and need the opportunity to explore a wide range of fields, and yet they have to choose between the humanities and the sciences. Even students who have chosen a major have disadvantages. For example, social sciences require both social and mathematical knowledge. The current system deprives them of this learning opportunity and forces them to make a hasty decision. This undermines the diversity of student learning.

Lack of basic literacy due to unbalanced education is also a big problem. Even literature uses statistics to analyze sentences, and engineering uses ethics to program automatic operating systems. At university, students are often required to have skills in both the humanities and the sciences in every department. Moreover, math and computer skills are no longer exclusive to the sciences. It has become a literacy needed in almost every field. Students should be able to study both the humanities and the sciences to cover the basic skills needed in universities and society.

In addition, companies require a wide range of skills. According to a survey by Keidanren, more than 80% of companies say that they place importance on knowledge and education that transcends the boundaries of humanities and sciences when hiring. Many companies also value employees with an understanding of mathematical sciences and AI. However, there is a need for more people with these skills, and a curriculum that cultivates a broad range of humanities and sciences is needed.

In conclusion, opposing the separation of humanities and sciences is crucial due to significant issues within the current system. To provide students with a wide range of choices and prepare them for the future, we must improve the current system.

## **Final - Japan should change its school year to start in September.**

**AB Affirmative      CD Negative**

### **Affirmative**

Good afternoon. We support the introduction of a September School year start, known as enrollment system. We have three strong reasons to support this: globalization, the season of the exam, and extra time for preparation.

First, it leads to the globalization of Japan. According to a survey by the University of Tokyo, there are 116 countries that have adopted the September entrance system, and this will facilitate study abroad and acceptance from abroad. In fact, the adoption of September enrollment was discussed in 2020, the year of the new coronavirus epidemic. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is still discussing the internationalization of education. We believe that the September admission system should be adopted as the first step to promote internationalization in the education field.

The second reason is that entrance examinations can be held in the spring. Currently, many schools in Japan hold entrance examinations in Winter. However, this is the time of year when colds and influenza are prevalent. Due to the pressure and tension of entrance examinations, students' immune systems are weakened, and they are more susceptible to viral infections. In addition, heavy snow and ice could cause a traffic infrastructure shutdown, which leads students to miss their exams. By having the exam in spring, students and parents preparing for the exam will have less worry about natural disasters. Also, spring in Japan strongly symbolizes a fresh start, which would encourage the students with nervous feelings. For this reason, it is better to do it in the spring when it is warmer and more comfortable.

The last reason is that it gives people a longer period of time to prepare for the new grade. From a teacher's perspective, this will give them more time to prepare for the new school year and their classes. From the students' point of view, the school year will change, preventing students from having a learning gap due to extended vacations. According to the results of Nikkei, about 60% of respondents were in favor of September enrollment, with younger people more likely to be in favor. Currently, students have assignments during the summer vacation, but by switching to September enrollment, they will no longer have assignments, allowing them to study for the new semester and try new things.

For these reasons, we are in favor of adopting the September enrollment system.

## Negative

Good afternoon. We firmly believe that we should continue starting the school year in April. We have three strong reasons to support this plan.

Firstly, Starting the academic year in September will affect not only educational institutions but also the entire Japanese society, including subsequent job applications, recruitment by related companies, and administrative and legal work by all government ministries and agencies. Additionally, according to government estimates, 15 million students would be affected, 33 laws would need to be revised, and personnel shortages and hiring would severely impact companies. Thus, the April start to the school year is entrenched in Japanese educational institutions and society as a whole, and the costs of making the change are far out of proportion to the benefits.

Secondly, there are cultural reasons to consider. Spring has been the season of meetings and farewells since the Meiji period. April is a symbolic season when cherry blossoms bloom, and it is closely associated with the commencement ceremonies and the beginning of the new school year. The sight of cherry blossoms on the first day of school symbolizes a fresh start and hope. Altering this tradition would lead to losing the cherished "cherry blossom enrollment" tradition, potentially sparking resistance from many individuals. In fact, opposition to a shift from April to September enrollment is evident among students, with 80% of elementary and junior high school students, 40% of high school students, and 55% of university students expressing disagreement.

Thirdly, some may think it'll be easier for people who want to study abroad or attend foreign universities if the government decides to start the new school year from September like other countries, and that students will have no problem applying and entering higher education abroad. Observe the data on this PowerPoint. You can clearly see that the increasing number of international students each year indicates that schools, even those not following the September enrollment system, are actively establishing study-abroad programs without making any changes.

In conclusion, we strongly believe that considering Japan's financial situation, cultural history, and the government system, starting the school year in April is the optimal solution."