

Experiences of Japanese Writing Instruction: Beliefs About Rhetorical Organization

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Reference Data:

Bankier, J. (2014). Experiences of Japanese writing instruction: Beliefs about rhetorical organization. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2013 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

For teachers of writing, text organization can be difficult to teach. Learners can produce texts that differ from what teachers expect in structure and style. In the past, this has been attributed to transfer of cultural writing patterns, but today most view experience of instruction as a more important factor. In this paper is described a questionnaire ($N = 71$) conducted to better understand the depth and type of experience Japanese students have of writing instruction in their first language. It demonstrated that many students in Japan have had little instruction in writing in their first language, and what instruction they have had was generally focused on expression rather than organization. In addition, participants' preferences for particular organizational patterns suggest that this lack of experience, rather than cultural transfer, leads to challenges in learning English writing.

ライティングの教師にとって、文章の構成を教えることは困難である。学生は、教師たちの期待とは異なる文章を書く。多くの場合、スタイルと構造が異なっている。過去には、それは文化に特有なライティングパターンへの転移が原因と考えられた。しかし、今日、大部分の人が、指導の経験が、より重要な要因であるとみなしている。本論文では、日本人学生の母語におけるライティング指導の経験の深さとタイプをよりよく理解するために実施されたアンケート ($N = 71$) について説明する。アンケートは、日本の多くの学生は、第一言語では、ほとんどライティングの指導を受けていなかったということを示した。また、彼らが受けた指導は、通常、「構成 (organization) よりむしろ「表現 (expression)」に集中していた。さらに、ある特定の構成パターンに対する参加者の好みについては、文化的なものの転移というより経験の欠如が、英語で書くことを学ぶ時の困難さにつながるということを示した。

As a teacher of academic writing in English, the area that I spend the most time on is text organization. This includes when and how the main point of a text is introduced, how much information is necessary to support it, and in what order this information is presented. The type of writing that I teach tends to be deductive, which means that the writer presents all claims then supports them, for example by introducing the main point of an essay with sentence like "In my view, it is necessary to . . .", followed by sentences or paragraphs that explain this main point. However, many of my students whose English ability is otherwise very good struggle to write a coherent and logical essay.

One explanation for this is that compositions that appear illogical or incoherent are in fact following a writing pattern characteristic of the writer's first language. This idea was proposed by Robert Kaplan in the 1960s. Patterns in text organization between English and other languages were compared, with English styles described as logical and deductive, while



“Asian” styles were described as inductive and circular (Kaplan, 1966, 1972), meaning the main point of the text was not explicitly stated until the end, and then often unclearly. Hinds (1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1990) claimed to have found a number of features of Japanese writing that were very unlike English writing. These included *kishoutenketsu*, in which unexpected information or a shift in topic could be introduced without warning (Hinds, 1980), and delayed introduction of purpose (Hinds, 1990).

Later commentators, including Kaplan (2005) himself, were critical of this subjective approach to rhetoric and the reliance on interpretations based on a small amount of data. Researchers therefore attempted to better represent genres of writing and to look at potential differences more critically. In Japan, researchers have demonstrated that Japanese and English writing styles were actually very similar. Kubota (1997, 1998) did not find transfer of Japanese cultural writing patterns. Based on a much larger survey of writing and literature about writing than used by Kaplan or Hinds, Cahill (2003) found that rhetorical styles in Japan varied but were not unlike those of English. Furthermore, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002) described changes in writing education in Japan, moving towards a style of writing very similar to the Western academic mode. This was supported by Hirose (2003), who showed that Japanese university students use a deductive style, often characterized as typically Western, in both L1 and L2. However, many researchers (Donahue, 1998; Guest, 2001; Kubota, 1997, 1999) emphasized that beliefs about the distinctness of Japanese writing remain influential.

Instead of positing a monolithic “Japanese writing culture,” researchers recognized instructional experience as an important factor in how Japanese learners chose to organize writing (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2009). English instruction in Japan is quite variable (Fujioka, 2001), but all Japanese have experience of *kokugo* (Japanese language) classes. Therefore, research focused on L1 instructional experiences in school and university.

Kobayashi’s study of high school literacy training (2002) found that L1 writing was rarely taught systemically. However, a follow-up interview study (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2002) revealed that many students received supplementary instruction outside of regular classes. Students learnt to write short persuasive essays for university entrance examinations, known as *shouronbun*. However, despite extensive research, Rinnert and Kobayashi (2009) concluded that how discourse types were taught in Japanese classrooms remains poorly understood. As a result, they concluded that small-scale research with a greater qualitative focus was needed. As subsequent research has not addressed this issue, the study described in this paper was conducted to fill this gap. In addition, it is necessary to build up a better picture of learners’ beliefs about good writing.

Research Questions

1. What first language instruction in writing have Japanese learners had in high school and university?
2. What are their preferences for different ways to organize short texts?

Methods

Participants

One hundred forty enrolled students and alumni from a conversation school, a preparatory school, and three higher education institutions were asked to fill out a questionnaire online. Participants were contacted by email or through Facebook groups. All participants had studied English intensively for 1 or more years, including instruction in English writing. Seventy-one responded. As Table 1 shows, the majority (48) had begun high school in the 2010s. Of those who had entered university, the majority had entered in the 2010s.

Table 1. Questionnaire Participants, N = 71

When did you enter high school?				
	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
	6	5	12	48
When did you enter university?				
I did not enter	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
5	6	3	8	49

Design and Procedure

Mixed qualitative and quantitative methods were used to build up a comprehensive picture of the participants' experiences and beliefs. A 21-item questionnaire (Appendix A) was translated into Japanese by a Japanese research assistant. It was checked for accuracy and ambiguities were reduced. Of the 21 items, 17 were closed questions and 5 required open responses. All but one participant completed the open responses in Japanese. In the first part of the questionnaire, participants were asked about their experience of Japanese writing in high school and university.

In the second part, participants selected their preference from among four paragraphs (see Appendix B) on the same topic but written in different ways. The texts had been translated into Japanese from English originals written by the author. The first paragraph is inductive, as the main point is not evident until the end. The second is a deductive paragraph, with the main point at the beginning. The third paragraph is also deductive, but includes an informative but irrelevant digression. The digression was designed to be interesting (it describes the latest research into the evolution of dogs from wolves), but breaks the unity of the text. The final text includes an unexpected shift in topic, then returns to the main point, based on Hind's (1980)

description of *kishoutenketsu*. It was necessary to include different content and more words in some texts to simulate features such as digressions and unexpected information. The goal was for the participants to respond to the texts, not to create objective representations of different rhetorical styles (Abasi, 2012). According to some conceptions of Japanese rhetorical preferences (Hinds, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1990), the expectation would be for the participants to select texts based on the content and to have a high tolerance for digression and for unexpected shifts in topic. According to other conceptions, learners would tend to prefer the deductively organized text for its simplicity and logical flow (Hirose, 2003; Kubota, 1997, 1998). In order to avoid encouraging participants to focus on organization or content alone, the questionnaire items were left open (Which paragraph is good? Why do you think so?). In other words, I wanted to see if they would consider organization, content, style, or other factors in choosing the paragraph they thought constituted "good writing."

Data Analysis

Quantitative questionnaire data were tabulated and analyzed by frequency. Qualitative open responses were translated into English by the author and research assistant and coded according to recurring themes, following Hatch (2002) and Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005). I began with several codes based on a broad reading of all responses, such as *coherence* and *emotional response*. I then separated the responses into units of meaning, generally either a clause or simple sentence. These I coded using my initial codes, which were added to as new themes appeared. When codes were found to be similar, they were combined. Frequency counts of the most commonly mentioned codes were compiled. This was then used to help identify common and salient themes.

Results and Discussion

Instruction in Japanese Writing

It is important to note that the results below only consist of what the participants could *recall* about their experiences. As such, the results show what was memorable about Japanese writing instruction rather than the reality of their instructional experiences. Quotations from open responses have been translated from Japanese unless otherwise stated.

As is shown in Figure 1, a slight majority of participants recalled being taught some form of Japanese writing in high school (56% or a total 39 out of 71 participants) or university (52% or 34 of the 66 participants who had attended university). Those who answered that they had had no writing instruction did not answer the questions that followed in the respective section, other than the final open question, "Do you have any other comments about learning to write in [high school/university]?"

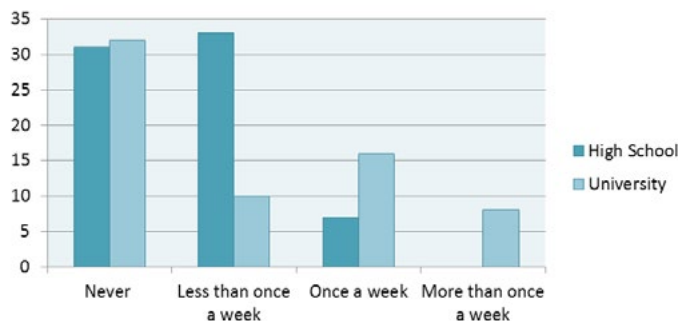


Figure 1. Participants' amount of Japanese writing instruction. The y-axis shows the number of participants who selected the option from a possible $n = 71$ (high school) and $n = 66$ (university).

Figure 2 demonstrates that, in high school, instruction seemed to focus on paragraphs. However, a smaller number could remember writing some form of essay. Only one learner mentioned university examinations, but respondents may have not included instruction outside regular classes.

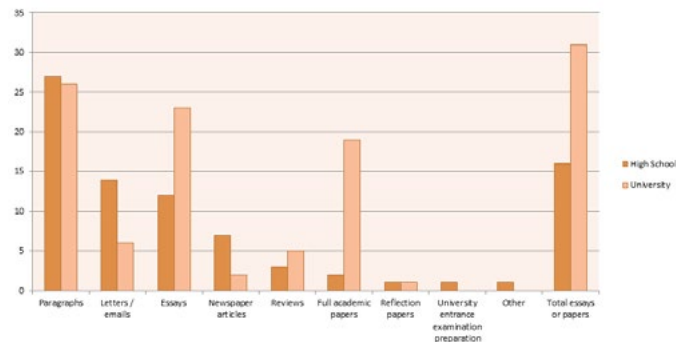


Figure 2. Type of writing instruction. The y-axis shows the number of participants who selected the option from a possible $n = 39$ (high school) and $n = 34$ (university) who indicated having received writing instruction. Multiple answers were possible. The option *university entrance examination preparation* was only present in the high school section.

Figure 3 shows the aspects of writing taught. In high school, sentences (26 of the 39 who had received writing instruction in high school), logical argument (21 of 39), and paragraph organization (21 of 39) were most common. In university, there was an increased emphasis on logical argumentation (selected by 30 of the 34 who had received writing instruction in university). New skills such as referencing were also taught (23 of 34).

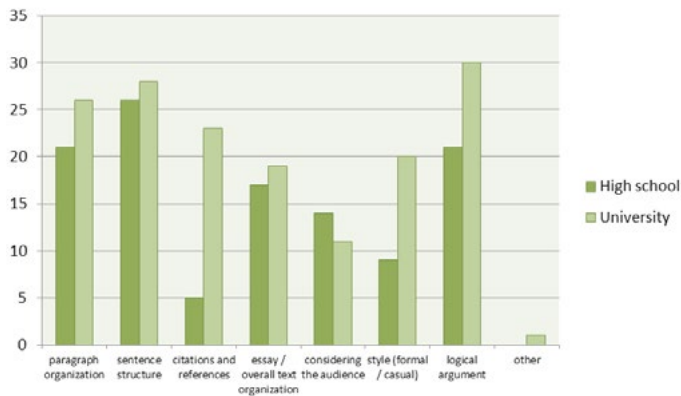


Figure 3. Aspects of writing taught in high school and university. The y-axis shows the number of participants who selected this option from $n = 39$ (high school) and $n = 34$ (university) who indicated having received writing instruction. Multiple answers were possible.

As Figure 4 shows, overall the participants thought the primary purpose of writing classes was personal expression, with little connection to instrumental goals such as writing for work or writing university papers. It seems writing is being taught to some degree, but not systematically and rarely beyond short texts.

Figure 5 shows how much participants recalled enjoying or not enjoying writing instruction. However, qualitative analysis of open responses revealed a slightly different picture to the ratings in Figure 5. As mentioned earlier, responses were coded and recoded several times during analysis. In addition, codes were marked as *positive* or *negative*. For instance, “We didn’t have much time to think and write on our own” was coded as *opportunity to write, negative*. Similarly, “We made lots of sentences in Japanese” was coded as *opportunity to write, positive*.

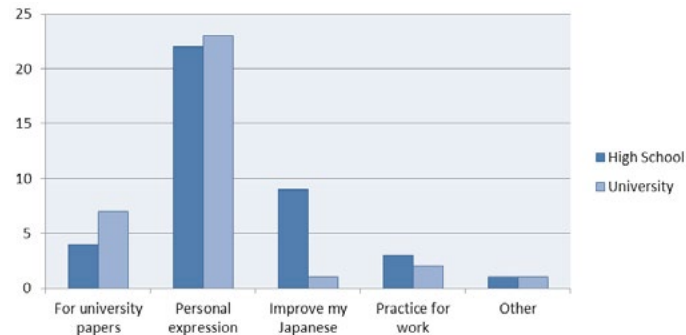


Figure 4. Participants’ opinions about the main purpose of writing classes. The y-axis shows the number of participants who selected the option from a possible $n = 39$ (high school) and $n = 34$ (university) who indicated having received writing instruction.

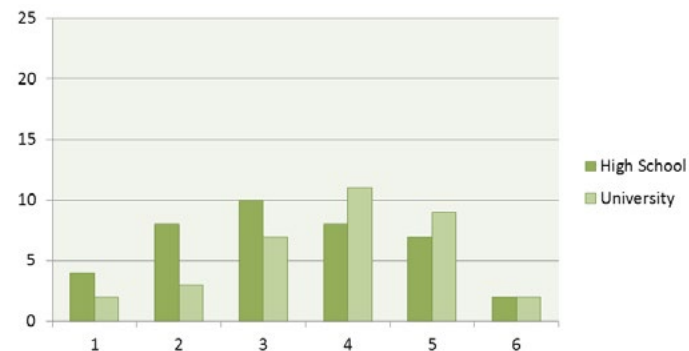


Figure 5. Participants’ enjoyment of Japanese writing instruction. 1 = not at all, 6 = a great deal. The y-axis shows the number of participants who selected the option from a possible $n = 39$ (high school) and $n = 34$ (university) who indicated having received writing instruction.

For high school, 38% of these codes were positive, and 62% negative. Frequent negative responses related to problems with writing ability, such as not being able to express ideas clearly: "Writing text logically with my views was difficult." Emotional factors were also mentioned: "It was very boring, and because of this I felt lethargic." The main positive reason was intrinsic enjoyment, or taking pleasure in the act of writing itself: "The sense of accomplishment when I could form an opinion, and the lessons I learned from this, were great."

In contrast, for university, 62% of open responses were positive and 35% negative, with one not weighted either way: "I neither loved nor hated writing." Intrinsic enjoyment of writing and good teachers were frequently described: "The teacher of the written expression class taught me how to transmit ideas in an easy-to-understand way." Unlike the closed questions, the instrumental value of the writing instruction was markedly present: "For my future work, learning formal style to express my views was often enjoyable," and "After I was taught in the basic seminar, I thought that from now on my university life wouldn't be so difficult." Most negative comments related either to the writer's own lack of skill or to the new and unexpectedly rigorous requirements of university academic writing: "Compared to high school, it became more academic," and "My knowledge of vocabulary was low, so when I read texts I could not understand them easily, so I then couldn't express myself well."

In an open response box for additional comments, 21 commented that they wanted and needed more L1 writing instruction in high school. Many mentioned lack of assistance from the teacher: "In my high school, other than the basics, the teachers taught us mainly only sentence structure" [original in English]. Others discussed curricula and textbooks that lacked writing instruction: "I think we need to submit more reports at university, as this will mean it is impossible to avoid an improvement in writing skills." Six called for more writing instruction in

university, in particular for clearer goals: "A fixed format, as in English, is not taught, so I want to learn first the basics like I learned in English." One comment sums up the issues very well:

I often had a hard time with the rules of how to write. For example, how to quote, or how to write a bibliography . . . emotional expression was all we were required until high school. As we are asked to plainly state the facts and opinions in college, I was puzzled about the difference in format.

Preferred Organizational Patterns

In responding to the Japanese paragraphs, most participants thought that the deductive paragraph (35%) or the digressive paragraph (37%) was good. Fewer thought the inductive paragraph (13%) and topic shift paragraph (15%) were better choices.

Respondents commented negatively that the inductive paragraph "did not explain details." Of those who preferred it, some commented that it was clear and easy to read (44% of those who preferred it) or objective (33%).

Positive comments on the deductive paragraph focused on its unity (44%) and coherence (52%): "It explains the main reasons, arranged one by one," and "In my university classes, I learned that an introduction, body, and conclusion are necessary for an essay. Reading the text with this in mind, I thought number two was correct." Only one participant commented solely on content: "I also have a dog, so I could relate to some of what was written." Overall, participants responded favorably to the organization of the deductive paragraph.

For the digressive paragraph, some responses also mentioned getting "lost." It was also commented that "the part about history is unnecessary," that it had "some irrelevant sentences,"

and that “it wasn’t clearly connected to their reason.” Of respondents who preferred the paragraph, 65% commented on the coherence of the text: “It flows naturally and is easy to read because it’s well organized, and it’s divided into introductory sentences and concluding sentences.” The content was mentioned only slightly more often than that of other paragraphs, meaning the 37% who preferred the paragraph were probably responding to its organization rather than simply how interesting it was. The digressive paragraph, however, was still a deductive paragraph, albeit somewhat lacking unity.

All critical comments referring to the topic shift paragraph mentioned content “unrelated to the theme and not necessary to persuade the reader.” However, the reasons mentioned by the 11 who preferred the paragraph were diverse. Seven commented on its concise, logical, and objective reasoning: “It’s based on objective facts. It doesn’t use ‘I think’ when giving an opinion.” It was also viewed as coherent as “all the sentences are together.” Two participants seemed to choose it by default: “None of them are very good. I only think it’s the better of the four. All of them are written from the point of view of humans. Honestly, what would dogs think?” This suggests that sudden shifts in topic are not any more acceptable in Japanese than in English, but also that the differing content in the paragraph influenced some views more than the organization, the opposite of my intention.

After comprehensibility, the second most commonly mentioned factor was coherence (48% of total responses), or how the texts flowed and were organized. Only 17% mentioned the content of the text. This shows that most participants preferred texts that gave their main purpose at the start and then stuck to it, and that irrelevant information was usually not tolerated.

In fact, many of the participants’ responses were similar to what I would train my students in, which strongly suggests that their concept of good text organization and mine are not very different. This implies that the students I teach who have prob-

lems in English writing are not trying to use different cultural ideas, but rather simply lack experience in composition. It also implies that those who succeed do so because they are familiar with writing in either L1 or L2.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

This study confirms that instruction in Japanese writing is not systematic, and that many learners have little or no instruction. What is taught tends to be at the sentence or paragraph level and focuses on personal expression. Some learners do enjoy writing for its own sake, but a practical motivation to learn for work or academic study is often absent. Indeed, many learners found the disconnect between the goals of Japanese writing classes and the lack of instruction demotivating and challenging, particularly during the transition to university. Despite this, the types of paragraphs the participants preferred, and their reasons for doing so, most often concurred with the goals of my own English academic writing classes.

In terms of future research on this topic, further investigation is needed to connect experiences and preferences for particular discourse types. The use of author-produced texts, though it generated some useful data, should be replaced with discussion of actual student work. Most importantly, although this study has focused on the L1, research must also investigate L2 views and experiences, and the interaction between these factors. The qualitative methods used in this study were somewhat impersonal, so face-to-face interviews or other means are necessary to improve our understanding of this complex but important topic.

From the perspective of teachers of English, this study gives further weight to the argument that students who are having problems with L2 writing lack experience of writing instruction *in any language*, and are not simply transferring what they have learnt in their L1. Thus, assuming that problems learning L2

composition are a result of culture would be unwise. Instead, teachers need to find out their students' experiences and beliefs. Teaching that makes use of past experiences is more likely to succeed than teaching that makes assumptions about learners based on their culture or language. Teachers also need to bear in mind that logical writing, support, and clear organization are not characteristics only of English but are equally relevant to academic writing in Japanese.

Finally, participants suggested a number of changes that could be made in Japanese schools. In high school, L1 writing classes must have a purpose, as "self-expression" is too vague a goal for most. Classes need to prepare students for academic writing in university, introducing citations and referencing and logical academic style. In university, writing needs to be more systematic and to include instruction on both academic and business writing. The inclusion of L1 and L2 writing in university entrance examinations is motivating, but students require structure and feedback from their teachers. Such instruction will have a positive impact on learners' composition skill in both L1 and L2.

Bio Data

John Bankier has taught English for 10 years in Japan and New Zealand. He has taught a wide variety of levels and nationalities in his teaching career. He completed his Masters in Science in Education (TESOL) from Temple University and now teaches on two intensive academic English programs in Japan. He is currently enrolled on a PhD at Lancaster University, researching English academic writing in Japan.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions, Part I

- When did you graduate from high school? 高校を卒業したのはいつですか?
1970s / 1980s / 1990s / 2000s / 2010s
- Were you taught writing in Japanese in high school 高校の授業で、日本語で書くことは楽しかったですか?
Never 一度もない
Less than once a week 週に1回以下
Once a week 週に一回
More than once a week 週に1回以上
- What type of writing were you taught in high school? 高校の授業で、日本語で書くことは楽しかったですか?
Short essays 軽い論文
Paragraphs パラグラフ
Newspaper articles 新聞記事
University test-style essays 大学受験用小論文
Essays エッセイ
Letters / emails 手紙/メール
Reflection papers 読書感想文
Reviews レビュー
Research papers / full academic papers 研究論文/学位論文
- What aspects of writing were you taught? どのような文章の書き方を教わりましたか?
Paragraph organization パラグラフ/段落構成

Sentence structure 文章構成

Citations and references 引用, 参考文献

Essay / overall text organization エッセイ構成/全体の文章構成

Considering the audience 読者のことを考えて書く

Style (formal / casual) フォーマルスタイル(例:アカデミックエッセイ)
カジュアルスタイル(例:手紙、日記など)

Logical argument 論理的に考え文章を書く

5. Which aspects did you spend most time on? (Respondents could choose two.) どの文章を書くのに一番時間をかけましたか?

6. What do you think was the main purpose of writing in your high school classes? 高校の授業で、文章を書くことの主な目的は何だと思えますか?

Practice for university 大学で役に立つように練習する

Express my opinion 自分の意見を表現する

Improve my Japanese vocabulary, grammar or kanji 日本語の語彙、文法、漢字の能力をのばす

Practice for work 仕事で役に立つように練習する

Other 物事を論理的に主張できる能力を養う

7. Did you enjoy writing in Japanese in high school? 高校の授業で、日本語で書くことは楽しかったですか?

(I hated it 嫌いだった) 1 2 3 4 5 6 (I enjoyed it a great deal とても楽しめた)

8. Why did you enjoy / dislike writing in Japanese in high school? 高校の授業で、なぜ日本語で書くのが楽しかったですか?または嫌いでしたか?

(Open box, mandatory)

9. Do you have any other comments about being taught writing in Japanese at high school? 高校で日本語で書くことを教わることについて、何か他にコメントはありますか?

(Open box, optional)

Questions 10-19 covered university writing and were similar except for Q. 15 below:

15. What do you think was the main purpose of writing in your university classes? 大学の授業で、文章を書くことの主な目的は何だと思えますか?

Express my opinion 自分の意見を表現する

Practice for work 仕事で役に立つように練習する

Improve Japanese vocabulary, grammar or kanji 日本語の語彙、文法、漢字の能力をのばす

Improve my own university papers 大学で役に立つように練習する

Get credit 単位を取るため

Other

Appendix B

Paragraphs in Different Patterns

Survey questions:

20. Which paragraph is good? どのパラグラフが良いですか?

(Open box, mandatory)

21. Why do you think so? なぜそう思いましたか?

(Open box, mandatory)

Sample paragraphs:

1. Inductive

動物は私たちの生活にとってとても大切である。動物は、何千年の間私たちと生活を共にしてきている。人間と動物の関係は長く強い、この関係は人間にとって特別のものである。確かに、人間と話すことはできないにもかかわらず人間の感情を読み取り理解する動物も中にはいる。実際、人間と生活することを好む動物もいるのだ。これらの動物にとって、人間と一緒に過ごすことは、彼らにとってとても自然なことである。しかし、世界中で唯一、人間と長い間関わり、コミュニケーションを取り、私たち人間といることを好む動物がいるのだ。それは、犬である。

Animals are very important to our lives. They live together with us, and they have been doing so for thousands of years. The relationship between humans and animals is both strong as well as long, and this relationship is unique to humans. Indeed, some animals are able to understand human emotions very well, and though they may not be able to communicate with us, they can understand what we want. In fact, some animals prefer to live with humans. For these animals, spending time with people has become totally natural to them. However, there is only one animal in the world we have had such a long relationship with, can communicate with, and which prefers to spend time with us. This animal is the dog.

2. Deductive

私の意見では、人間にとって最も大切な動物は犬であると思う。まず最初に、犬と人間は何千年の間一緒に生活してきている。私たちが牛や羊を飼う前は、犬を飼っていたのである。犬と人間の間はとても長い。

次に、犬は人間の感情を理解することができる。私たち人間が何を言っているのかよくわからないだろうと思っても、人間の声のトーンや顔の表情を見て、私たちの感情を理解するのである。猫やウサギなどの他のペットにはできないと私は思っている。最後に、犬は人間と生活するのを好むのである。ほとんどの動物は、機会があればすぐに逃げ出してしまうが、ほとんどの犬は逃げ出したりはしない。これは、犬が何千年の間そうしてきたからなのかもしれない。または、人間と動物が生存することよりもむしろ愛の絆を

分かち合っているのかもしれない。これらの理由により、犬は他の動物とは違い、人間にとってとても特別な存在なのだ。

In my opinion, there are three things which make dogs the most important animals for humans. Firstly, dogs and humans have been living together for thousands of years. Before we had cows or sheep, we had dogs. The relationship between dogs and humans is very long. Secondly, dogs are able to understand human emotions. Even though I do not think dogs can understand what people say very well, they listen to our tone of voice and see the expression on our face to understand what we are feeling. Other pets such as cats or rabbits cannot do this, in my view. Thirdly, dogs prefer to live with humans. Most animals will escape from humans if given the chance, yet few dogs ever run away. This may be because they have been this way for thousands of years, or it may be because humans and animals share a bond of love rather than only survival. For these reasons, dogs are different from other animals and are very special for humans.

3. Digressive

私の意見では、犬は人間にとって最も大切な動物であると思う。まず最初の理由は、犬と人間は何千年の間一緒に生活してきている。人間の歴史は確かに長い、犬の直系である狼の歴史よりも短いのである。しかし、犬と人間の間は長いのである。この関係性について考えることはとても興味深い。初期の歴史では、狼はおそらく人間が捨てた動物の骨やごみを拾うために、人間の後をついて来た。次第に、狼は最終的に犬となるまで少しずつ人間と生活するようになったのである。これらの犬は、人間と一緒に他の動物の狩りに出た。人間は知的で狩りの腕前も良いが、犬は人間の持っていない素晴らしい嗅覚、聴覚、視覚を持っているのである。お互いの長所を生かし、より良い狩りにしたのだ。犬と人間の間はとても強いと言える二番目の理由は、犬は人間の感情を理解することができるからだ。犬は、人間の声のトーンを聞きや顔の表情を読み、人間の気持ちを理解するのである。これらの理由により、犬は他の動物と違い、人間にとってとても特別な存在であると言える。

In my opinion, dogs are the most important animals for humans. The first reason for this is that dogs and humans have

been living together for thousands of years. Human history is certainly long, but it is much shorter than the history of the wolf, the animal dogs are descended from. The relationship between dogs and humans, however, is very long. It is interesting to consider the reasons for this relationship. In early history, wolves probably followed humans to pick up bones or other garbage that we threw away. Gradually, wolves came to live closer and closer to humans, until finally they had become dogs. These dogs allowed humans to catch different kind of animals; though humans are intelligent and have powerful hunting skills, dogs have an excellent sense of smell, hearing and vision. We used this to our advantage to become even better hunters. A second reason why the relationship between dogs and humans is strong is that dogs are able to understand human emotions. They listen to our tone of voice and the expression on our face and understand what we are feeling. For these reasons, dogs are different from other animals, and are very special for humans.

4. Unexpected Topic Shift

犬は人間にとって最も大切な動物である。他の動物に比べ、犬と人間の関係はより親密なものである。人間は牛や鶏を農場で飼っているが、牛や鶏と親密な関係であると思っている人は少ない。確かに、人間と犬との関係は、他の動物とは違う。たくさんの動物は、生き延びるために関係を作り上げるが、犬と人間は違う。例えば、掃除魚はサメの古い角質を食べることで、一緒にいるのだ。花と蜂も同様に、花は蜂に花粉を運んでもらうことで、また蜂は蜜を作ることで花を必要としているのである。しかし、これらの関係は、犬と人間とは異なるのである。実際、蜂と花の関係と犬と人間の関係は全く違うことは明らかだ。それは、夜と昼ほど明らかに違うのである。

Dogs are the most important animals for humans. Our relationship is much closer than that of other animals. We have cows and chickens in farms, but few people feel a strong connection to them. Indeed, the relationship between humans and animals such as dogs is very different from that of any other animal. Many creatures form relationships to help them survive,

but these are different. For instance, the shark and the cleaner fish work together, as the smaller fish feeds on the dead skin of the shark. Flowers and bees too must work together, as the flower needs the bee to transport its pollen, and the bee needs the flower to make honey. Yet these relationships are very different from those of humans and dogs. In fact, the differences between the relationship of bees and flowers to dogs and humans are clear and obvious to everyone. Indeed, the difference is like night and day.