

# KIRITAKA English Journal Vol.30

~Stay Independent, Stay as ONE TEAM~ February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024



## Kiwi Corner



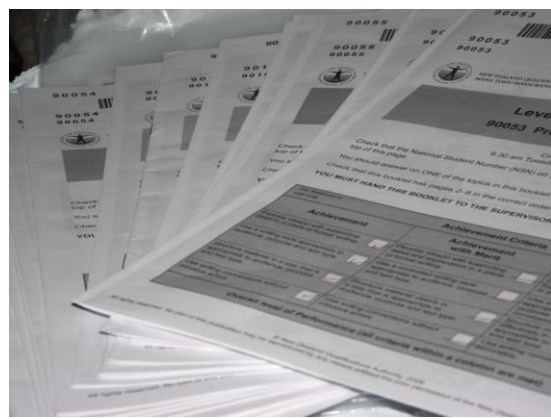
Happy February, everyone! This month is an especially busy one for teachers, as we have the end of year exam for our students, followed closely by the high school entrance exam for potential future Kiritaka students. This made me think about the difference between end of year exams between Japan and my homeland, New Zealand.

As you may already know, the end of year exams at Kiritaka are held over four days, this year being from February 6<sup>th</sup> until February 9<sup>th</sup>. Each subject's test is 50 or 60 minutes long. In New Zealand, we have **national exams** at



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA  
The authority that checks exams

the end of the school year. However, each subject's exam is **three hours long!** As each subject's exam is so long, the examination day is divided into two halves; the morning and the afternoon. Furthermore, as there are so many subjects available to learn, the examination period is over three weeks long; the 2024 schedule shows that the first day of examinations is November 5<sup>th</sup>, and the last is November 29<sup>th</sup>. Due to this long period of examinations, there is no school during this time. In addition, the week before the exams begin becomes a



Typical exam papers in New Zealand

dedicated "self-study week", where students no longer have to come to school and can study on their own at home. Students can come to school to study or to ask their teachers for help, but there are no classes. This means that **school ends for most students at the beginning of November.**

After the examination period is over, it is the long, wonderful summer holiday, which usually lasts until the beginning of February. So, depending on when your last exam is, you may get an extra few weeks of vacation! However, you then have to wait until the end of January to see your results online.

Another interesting difference is that New Zealand now has digital examinations for certain subjects, meaning that they can take the test on their own electronic device like a computer or tablet. I think this is unfathomable in Japan, where you seem to love paper!

What do you think? Would you prefer New Zealand's style of exams? Or Japan's? Please let me know. Here is an old, but very famous song. You may have heard it before. It's famous for being a very motivational song, so it is perfect for students who still have exams! All the best of luck to you! You can listen to it here:  
**(Liam Campbell)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDMLBCju8>



# Lauren's Newsletter



## Escape the Cold and Boredom with Escape Rooms!

Hello, everyone! I hope you are enjoying your February and having a nice start to 2024! For this month's article, I'd like to talk about one of my favorite things to do with friends: escape rooms!

Have you ever been in an escape room before? If you have, then you know they are usually centered around a theme such as adventure, horror, fantasy, or mystery. These rooms are full of puzzles you and your friends need to solve within about 60 minutes. Rooms vary in difficulty, from easy, to moderate, to difficult, so if you're a beginner, you can start with easier rooms before trying more challenging ones.



An example of an escape room.

When you arrive at an escape room, the employees will welcome you in, check your reservation and ask you to put your belongings in a locker. They will go over the rules of the game and then guide you to your room. They give you one last reminder that you have 60 minutes to escape, and then the game begins!



The entrance to Red Door Escape Room in San Diego.

Everyone in the room will start looking for clues, trying to think creatively to open locks and new doors, and escape within the time limit.

During the game, players will have to work together to figure out how different clues go together. The room will be full of numbers, riddles, words, and colors that must be connected in a certain way so your team can progress. There are a variety

of puzzles to solve, from number and letter locks, to vending machine codes, to balancing scales, and more! Also, if you ever get stuck on a puzzle, you can always ask the staff for hints.

My friends and I love to go and test our knowledge and skills, and if you haven't yet, I hope you can try and enjoy an escape room here in Japan! If you're interested, here is a fun and free online escape room that is Harry Potter themed! Good luck and all the best!

Online Hogwarts Escape Room:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfInxNM0jzbZJjUqOcXkwhGTfii4CM\\_CA3kCxImbY8c3AABEA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfInxNM0jzbZJjUqOcXkwhGTfii4CM_CA3kCxImbY8c3AABEA/viewform)

Here's a song loop that helps me focus when I study or solve puzzles. Take a listen here:



Your Friendly Neighborhood ALT,

**(Lauren Taylor)**