

# Action Research Final Report 2016

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**1 Title:** How to develop students' communicative abilities by using Japanese Senior high school textbook.

## 2 Context

Students: 1st year senior high school students.

Class size: 41 students in each class.

Subject: Communicative English I classes a week.

Textbook: New One World Communication I (Kyoiku Shuppan)

## 3 Problems and Goal

### (1) Speaking test and lessons before the test

In the speaking test conducted in July, students made great effort to memorize all what they would talk in the test. In the test, a pair of students talk about a topic with partner. They had a lot of time to "prepare" for the talking. The conversation is based on their memorization, they didn't pay attention to the message which their partner said. That is, they didn't react to what they heard and also they didn't make any question about their partner said. All they paid attention to is say the script they made without any mistakes. It could be said that this kind of activity can help them practice pronunciation and learn new word, but it is skeptical that they can use the knowledge in real situation.

### (2) How they increase the accuracy

Then I increase the time students can communicate with each other. Compared with previous situation, they got used to use English. Now they can make simple English sentences, but it is often sees that they made the same grammatical mistakes again and again. As for some simple grammatical mistakes, some students could notice the errors and modified their utterance. There are still many students who cannot notice the errors and modify their language correctly. Some research show that students develop their fluency first and then their accuracy. In a classroom situation, what kind of scaffolding or feedback do they need for their language acquisition?

### (3) The topics they talk about in the class room.

Even in the textbook 1st year students use, there some topics they feel difficult to talk about. Sentence structures and grammars used in the textbook are simple to understand, but when the students talk about the contents they read, it is difficult for them to talk about with each other. The questions they will talk about with each other should be changed into more familiar ones.

### (4) Goals

(a) Students can develop their communicative skills by being given plenty of opportunities to communicate with other students.

(b) Students can help their learning with each other through interactive activities.

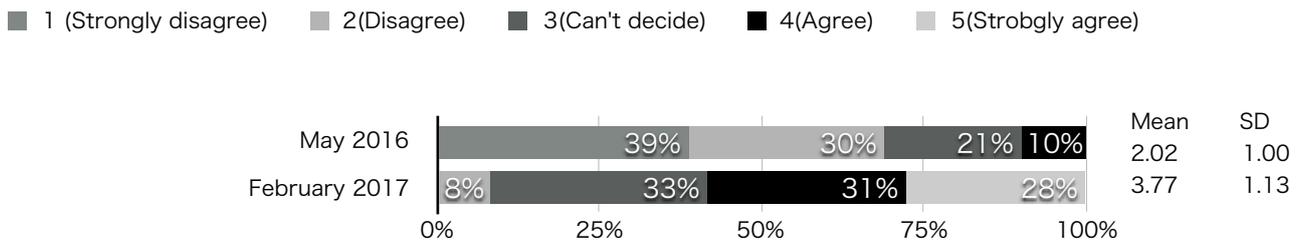
## 4 What I did

- (1) Small talk
- (2) Students' self evaluation
- (3) Peer editing
- (4) Conversation strategies
- (5) Speaking test

## 5 Result and what happened

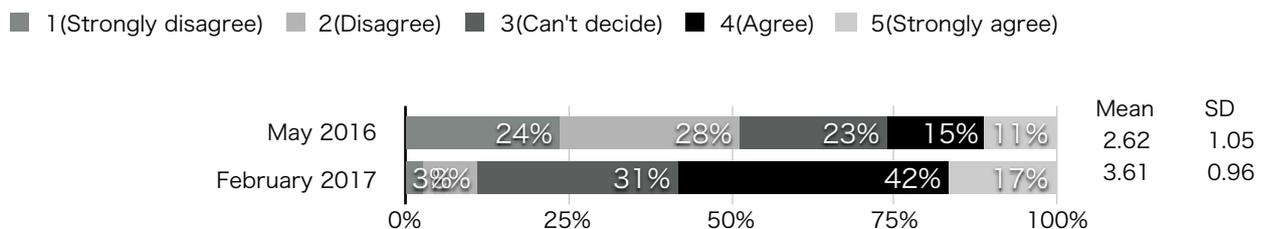
### 5.1 Small talk

Most students answered that they didn't have any confidence to talk in English, that is because they didn't have any opportunities to use the language. I use this activities in order to increase the chance to use the language. The classroom is small for 40 students, it is hard for them to move around the classroom, but I use the same movement to change their partners. For example, all the students move one seat to the same direction. The student whose seat is the last moves to the first seat. At first they are confuse which way to go, after some activities, gradually they got used to the way to change their partners.

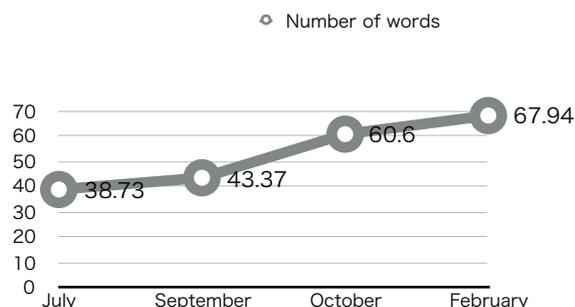


**Figure 1 I can talk more then 1 minute in English**

In May, students were asked if they have confidence on speaking in English for about 1 minute. The result shows most of them didn't have confidence. At the time, many students tried not to make grammatical mistake, after several months, they came to enjoy talking with other students in English. It can be said that makes good atmosphere to practice speaking. On the other hand, some students didn't care about grammatical errors and some of them just repeated some words. In February, more than 50 % students answered they agree or strongly agree. The time provided for the students to talk in English is important to build their confidence on speaking in English.



**Figure 2 I can write more than 50 words in English**



**Figure 3 the average number of the words they wrote**

In the same way, they gradually gained confidence on writing more than 50 words in English. In May only 26% of the students answered they agree and strongly agree, in February, more than 59%

of the students answered they agree and strongly agree. Also, the average number of the words they wrote increased from 38.73 words to 67.94 words in February.

## 5.2 Students' self evaluation

### (1) Self evaluation sheet

Although they got used to talk with their partner in English, what they say in their conversation didn't change, partly because they couldn't have clear objectives of the conversation. I wanted them to try to use some basic conversation strategies, so I included it in the criteria of speaking activity. The score was determined based on the number of the conversation strategies they used. I didn't include accuracy in the criteria because I wanted them to try to keep conversation going without any hesitation.

Fluency & Content	(5) 2分以上の会話をなめらかに続けられた。 (3) 時々沈黙はあるが、適切な内容で続けられた。 (1) 沈黙が長く続き、1分以上の会話を続けられなかった。
Delivery (Volume&eye contact)	(5) 充分な声量で、アイコンタクトをしながら話せた。 (3) 声の大きさやアイコンタクトが十分にできなかった。 (1) 声も小さく、アイコンタクトもあまりできなかった。
Conversation Strategies (1)rejoinder (2)shadowing (3)follow-up question	(5) すべてのconversation strategiesをよく使い、Follow-up questionは3回以上使われた。 (3) 一部のconversation strategiesは使われていた。Follow up questionは1回使われた。 (1) conversation strategiesは充分に使われなかった。
Accuracy	(3) 文法の間違ひもなく、話を続けることができた。 (2) ところどころ間違ひがあった。 (1) 間違ひがたくさんあり、単語のみで会話を続けていた。

**Figure4 Self Evaluation criteria**

It is true that many students pay attention to the criteria and tried to increase the number of conversation strategies such as rejoinders and follow-up questions, but they don't pay attention to the idea in the conversation. For example many of them use the phrase "How about you?" just after they told their ideas many times. It is useful to change turns of the conversation. However it deprive the chance to react to the utterance. It makes the conversation unnatural. They have to focus on how each utterance build their conversation.

### (2) Peer editing

I had them write about a certain topic, and after they wrote, had the students read other students' writing, then they underline the part they got interested or they want to ask or the part they think is good. Some students wrote some comments or questions about the writing. The peer editing was done three times. The paper was returned to the original students. They rewrote it with the comments or question as a guide.

They usually use the activity to improve their writing but I used this activity in speaking activity in order to check their speaking. During their conversation, they use their own voice recorders to record their talking. After they record the conversation, they transcribe it on the worksheet, then they handed the paper to other students, they underline the part they got interested or they don't understand, and they wrote some questions about it. The papers were returned to the original students, they tried to modify what they would say next time.

I thought they paid more attention to the contents when they do this peer editing activity. The followings are the comments students wrote after the activity.

I want to include the details of the place and reasons next time.  
 I want to add a reason to the idea next time.  
 I want to tell the details more.

Also, they think about how they build the conversation.

I want to use rejoinders more.  
 I try not to stop our conversation next time.  
 I want to use many kinds of rejoinders.  
 I used the same phrase to react to what the partner said.  
 I didn't use follow up questions. I want to use them next time.

(2) Transcribe your talking.  
 Silent-- ( ), Inaudible---???

(K) Hello! How are you? I'm a bit sleepy

(A) Hello! I'm hungry. OK.

(K) What season do you like the best?

(A) I like autumn best. Because we can see red leaves.

(K) Oh, I see. I like winter the best.

(A) How about you?

(K) Because there are many events. For example my birthday and Christmas and Oshogatsu.

(A) Oh, nice.

(K) Please tell me your memories in the season.

(A) I don't have good memories in autumn. But we can eat delicious foods.

(K) Oh, I see. I have memories birthday at 12.11

I ate birthday cake and humn's. So delicious.

I gave me to many presents. I felt happy.

(A) Good. (K) Oh, I see. Thank you ... Nice Talking with you.

Shadowing (Repeat what your partner say)  
 Rejoinders Me, too! (肯定文や同意) Me neither (否定文で同意) Really? Oh, yeah? Sounds (good, nice, bad...) Good! Super! I see.  
 Repair Sorry? Once more please? I don't understand. I don't know.  
 Follow-up Questions For example? How? When? Who? With who? Where? Like what? How long? How often? How many? How far? Tell me more.

(3) Circle conversation strategies used in the conversation.  
 (4) Underline what you think is interesting and ☆  
 (5) Ask some questions about the conversation. + your name  
 \* 秋の思い出は何ですか? (memory) → 紅葉、C1、J42、T1、D2  
 What food did you eat? (Yuka) → ケーキ、C1、J42、T1、D2

(6) Write what you will try to do next time.

Figure 5 students work sheet (Transcription)

### 5.3 Conversation strategies

In the first speaking activity, they just said what they prepared. They didn't pay attention to what their partner said and didn't ask any question about what their partner want to tell. Conversation strategies are useful tools to make their conversation more natural. With basic conversation strategies, they can check their understandings, ask some questions, and keep the conversation more smooth. I gave a list of conversation strategies to encourage them use more in their activity.

Table 1 Score of the speaking test in November

Total Score (21)	16.17
Rejoinders and Shadowing (5)	3.82
Follow up question (5)	2.02

After their practice they can use more and more conversation strategies. The table 1 shows the average score of the students' speaking test. They can increased the number of rejoinders and shadowing but many students felt hard to make follow up questions. It takes more time for them to use it more smoothly.

## 5.4 Speaking test

Students chose one topic from the ones they practiced in class. The pair was shown just before the test. Students had a plenty of time to practice to talk about the topic before the test. I told them to practice talking in class so that they can talk about the topic with any students. The criteria was shown to the students prior to the test. They. Understand what is important for them to improve the score. They were given 90 second. During the time they tried to continue their conversation using some conversation strategies.

### *Students' comments on speaking test*

#### *(Comments about their confidence)*

*I was nervous but I realized that I was able to communicate with my friends in English.*

*I could keep talking in English for 90seconds but it didn't go smoothly.*

*It was fun to talk in English.*

*I was not so nervous during the test.*

*Compared with previous speaking test, I was not so nervous this time.*

#### *(Comments about their language)*

*I am always using "How about you?" during the test.*

*I want to learn more vocabulary and grammar to be able to talk more.*

*I think it is better if I could choose the topic freely.*

*I couldn't use follow up question at all.*

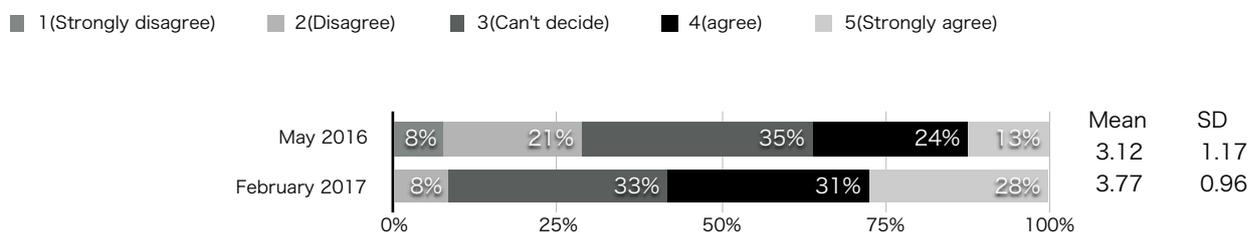
*I was waiting for my partner asking me some questions.*

One student said that he wants to learn more grammar and vocabulary to talk in English more. I realized that this speaking test encouraged them to learn more and motivated. Some students answered that they were very nervous in previous speaking test in which they tried to memorize all what they said in speaking test, but this time they said that they were not so nervous. I think they could rely on each other to make a conversation.

I felt that this performance test encouraged them to talk in English in class. Also, they could feel they are able to use the language. I want to continue to teach basic conversation strategies and give them enough time to use the language, at the same time, I want them to feel their language accuracy is also improving through speaking and writing activities.

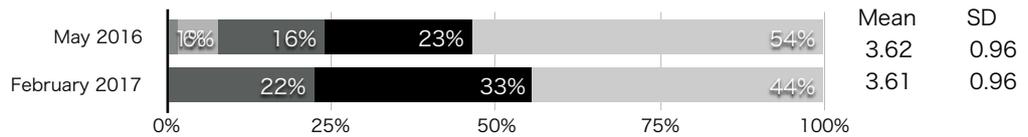
## 6 What I learned

After they had more time to use English in class, their attitude toward learning English began to change. Figure 6 shows that the percentage of the students who like learning English increased from 37% to 59%. The opportunity to use the language didn't give negative pressure but positive attitude toward their learning.



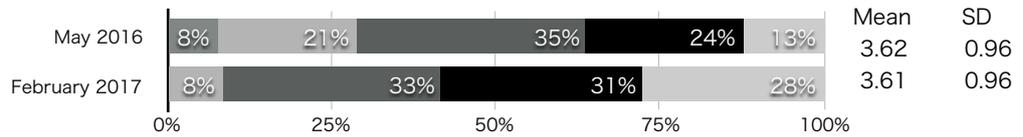
**Figure6 I like learning English**

■ 1(Strongly disagree) ■ 2(Disagree) ■ 3(Can't decide) ■ 4(agree) ■ 5(Strongly agree)



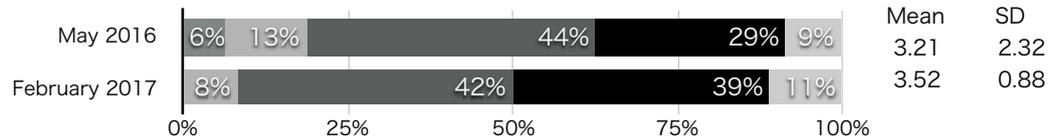
**Figure7 I think pair and group work is useful**

■ 1(Strongly disagree) ■ 2(Disagree) ■ 3(Can't decide) ■ 4(agree) ■ 5(Strongly agree)



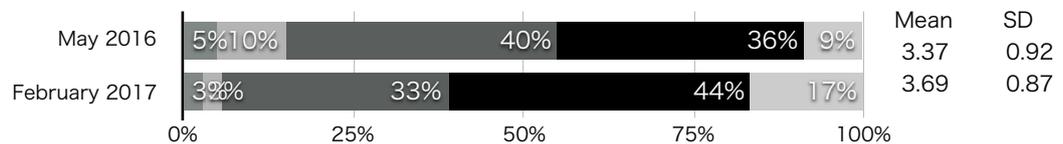
**Figure8 I want to improve communicative English skills**

■ 1(Strongly disagree) ■ 2(Disagree) ■ 3(Can't decide) ■ 4(Agree) ■ 5(Strongly agree)



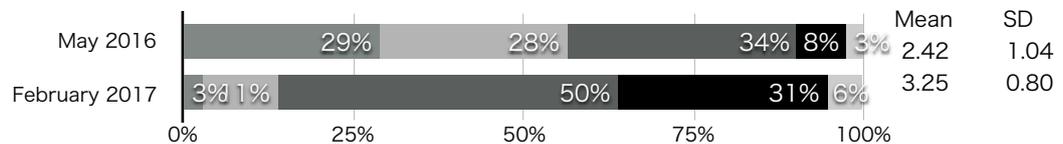
**Figure9 I can actively participate in group work**

■ 1(Strongly disagree) ■ 2(Disagree) ■ 3(Can't decide) ■ 4(Agree) ■ 5(Strongly agree)



**Figure10 I can give feedback or advice to my classmates**

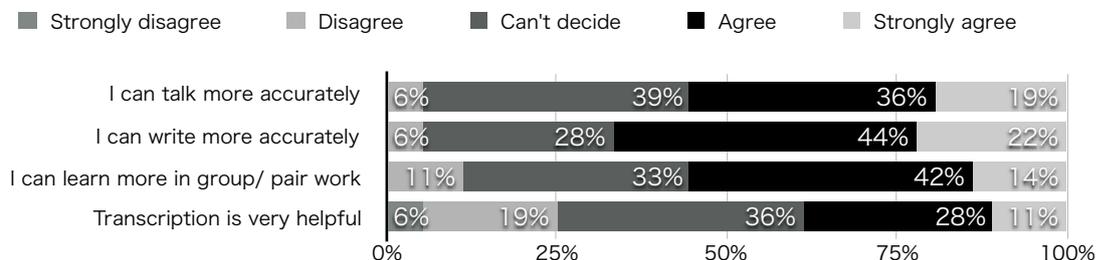
■ 1(Strongly disagree) ■ 2(Disagree) ■ 3(Can't decide) ■ 4(Agree) ■ 5(Strongly agree)



**Figure11 My Friends' feedback or advice is useful**

From Figure11, they began to consider learning with other students are useful and important because 45% students answered their friends' feedback is useful in May, but in February 61% of the students answered so. Moreover, figure 12 shows that only 11% of the students answered they can give their feedback to other students, while 37% of the students answered they can in February. From the result, how they learn English can affect their beliefs for language learning.

Figure 12 shows how the students consider communicative activities in class. Surprisingly, 55% of the students answered they improved their accuracy in speaking through the activities and 66% of the students answered they improved their accuracy in writing. They didn't have much time of grammar exercises but majority of them think they could improve the accuracy through communicative activities with other students.



**Figure 12 Students' thought on the activities in class (February)**

### 7 Future Issue

- (1) How to give effective feedback during students' communicative activities or after performance test like speaking test.
- (2) How to encourage their autonomous language learning.

### 8 Lesson plan

Day 1 (Part 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Preview of Lesson 8 Students listen to Beethoven's ninth symphony and answered the questions.</li> <li>(2) Share their idea with partner Students will ask each other what they choose in activity.</li> <li>(3) Listening to the story on P.86 Students listen carefully to the story and answer the T/F questions.</li> <li>(4) Language Students combine 2 sentences by using "perception verb". They learn word order in the sentence.</li> <li>(5) Vocabulary Input Students check the meanings of the words in example sentences</li> <li>(6) Quick reading Students read the textbook p.86 and record the reading time.</li> </ol>
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<p>Day 2 (Part 1)</p>	<p>(1) Small talk (review of previous lesson) Students will talk about folk remedies they have used for a cold before with each other.</p> <p>(2) Quick reading They will time their reading time.</p> <p>(3) Detailed questions Students answer the detailed questions and share with other students.</p> <p>(3) Reading practice (A) Read with teacher (B) Read with low voice by themselves (C) Read and look up with their friends</p> <p>(4) Vocabulary Out put In order to complete sentences, students fill in the blanks with new words and phrase.</p> <p>(5) Talk with partners. <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b> Students will be give enough time to prepare the conversation. They will write their ideas on the handout. After that, they will have conversation about the question with their students.</p>
<p>Day 3 (Part 2)</p>	<p>(1) Small talk <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b></p> <p>(2) Review of part2 Students will look at the picture on p.88 and guess the answers of the questions. Then, they will talk about the questions with other students.</p> <p>(3) Vocabulary Input. They choose the Japanese definitions and check with their friends.</p> <p>(4) Quick reading (p.88) Students will read the story silently and try to understand the contents. They will be asked to answer the question about the story.</p> <p>(5) Detailed Questions They will answer the question in English and compare their answer with other students. They will ask their partners' answer with model conversation.</p>
<p>Day 4 (Part 2)</p>	<p>(1) Small talk <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b></p> <p>(2) Quick reading They will time their reading time.</p> <p>(3) Reading practice (A) Read with teacher (B) Read with low voice by themselves (C) Read and look up with their friends</p> <p>(4) language Students combine the sentences by using relative adverb.</p> <p>(5)Vocabulary Out put In order to complete sentences, students fill in the blanks with new words and phrase.</p> <p>(4) Talk with partners. <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b> <b>(b) Please tell me your memories in the season.</b> Before they have conversation, they will brainstorm what they will talk. Through this activity, they will practice "follow-up question" using a list of follow up questions.</p>

<p>Day 5 (Part 3)</p>	<p>(1) Small talk  <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b>  <b>(b) Please tell me your memories in the season.</b></p> <p>(2) Preview of part3  Students look at the picture on page 90, then they will guess the answers of the questions.  After that they will compare their answers with other students.</p> <p>(3) Vocabulary Input.  They choose the Japanese definitions and check with their friends.</p> <p>(4) Quick reading  Students will read the story silently and try to understand the contents.  They will be asked to answer the question about the story.</p> <p>(5) Detailed Questions  They will answer the question in English and compare their answer with other students.  They will ask their partners' answer with model conversation.</p>
<p>Day 6 (Part 3)</p>	<p>(1) Small talk <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b>  <b>(b) Please tell me your memories in the season.</b></p> <p>(2) Quick reading  They will time their reading time.</p> <p>(2) language  They will combine two sentences together by using relative adverb, when.  They will learn how to use the relative adverb.</p> <p>(3) Reading practice  (A) Read with teacher  (B) Read with low voice by themselves  (C) Read and look up with their friends</p> <p>(4) Vocabulary Out put  In order to complete sentences, students fill in the blanks with new words and phrase.</p> <p>(5) Talk with partners  <b>(c)Please tell me what you want to do in the next your favorite season?</b>  Before they have conversation, they will brainstorm what they will talk.  Through this activity, they will practice "follow-up question".</p>
<p>Day 7</p>	<p>(1) Small Talk <b>(a) What season do you like best? And why?</b>  <b>(b) Please tell me your memories in the season.</b>  <b>(c)Please tell me what you want to do in the next your favorite season.</b></p> <p>(2) Reading practice with partners.</p> <p>(3) Writing activity  "Write about your favorite season and the reason."  Students will write their own answer using useful phrases such as "in addition", "what's more", "also", and "and besides"</p> <p>(4) Peer editing  Students underline the part they like.  Students underline the parts they don't understand.  Students write some comments on their friends' writing.</p>

Day 8

- (1) Small Talk **(a) What season do you like best? And why?**  
**(b) Please tell me your memories in the season.**  
**(c) Please tell me what you want to do in the next your favorite season.**
- (2) Common errors  
In group, they work together to find grammatical error(s) in each sentence.
- (3) Rewrite their writing.  
Based on their friends' comments and common errors, they rewrite it.
- (4) Peer editing  
Students underline the part they like.  
Students underline the parts they don't understand.  
Students write some comments on their friends' writing.
- (5) Rewrite again  
Based on their friends' comments and common errors, they rewrite it.  
Hand in the writing to a teacher.

# 9 Sample handout

## Lesson 8 The Ninth Symphony in December *Handout #3*

HR# ( ) Name ( )

Goals of the lesson  
You can talk about your memories using rejoinders and follow up questions with your friends for more than 90 seconds.  
You can compare your friends' idea and yours and write about it with more than 60 words.

### 1 Preview of part 3

Look at the picture on page 90. Guess the answers of following questions.

- (1) After living in the camp, they didn't have good impression on Japanese people.  
Yes / No
- (2) They are all Japanese who were taught musical instrument by German prisoners.  
Yes / No
- (3) They want to say "Thank you" to Tokushima people.  
Yes / No
- (4) After the war, they could return to their country.  
Yes / No
- (5) Even now, they keep in touch with people in Tokushima.  
Yes / No

Share your answers

AB: **opener**

A: Let's talk about question #1. What is your answer?

B: I would say ( ) How about you?

A: **Rejoinder** I think so, too. / I don't think so, I think it is ( ).

B: Then, How about #2

AB: **Closer**

2 Now read the textbook page 88 silently.

3 Listen to a story and answer the following question.

- (1) When was the Ninth symphony played for the first time in Japan?
- (2) Why did they give several more concert?
- (3) Did local people enjoy the concert?

(4) What do families of the German prisoners and people in Tokushima still do?

(5) **Discussion:** Your plane went down and crashed in a rain forest in South America. You were rescued by the local people in Amazon. You don't know their language. What are you going to do to express gratitude for them?

Read the **textbook p.90** again and correct the answer if you want to.

### 4 language

(A) Write what you did in 2016. And what you want to do in the future.

(1) 2016

(2) in the future

(B) Combine these sentences

It was 2016. / (1)

The day will come soon. / (2)

### ◎ Grammar rule

5 **Vocabulary input** Choose the correct answer.

- (1) The rainy season has finally **come to an end**. ( )
- (2) He **express** a desire to study abroad. ( )
- (3) There were **several** movie theaters in this area. ( )
- (4) Tom **makes a great first impression**. ( )
- (5) Excited **audience** shouted during the baseball game. ( )
- (6) I **exchanged** a few friendly words with Kihai. ( )

A 終わる B 交わす、交換する C いくつかの D 表現する、表す E 良い第一印象を与える F 観客

### 6 Quick Reading

Read the textbook page 90. And time your reading.

( ) seconds

### 7 Quick Reading

Read the textbook page 90. And time your reading.

( ) seconds

### 8 Reading Practice

- (1) Read with teacher and check the pronunciation.
- (2) Read with soft voice by yourself.
- (3) Read and look up with your friends.

### 9 Vocabulary output

Finally the war ( ) to an ( ). The German prisoners held ( ) concerts to ( ) gratitude for the local people. The performance was splendid. They made a ( ) ( ) on the ( ) It is surprising that they still have concerts with the prisoner even today.

### 10 Write your idea about the following questions

- (A) The ninth symphony is often performed in December in Japan.  
What season do you like best. And What can you see in the season?
- (B) Please tell me your memories in the season.
- (C) Please tell me what you want to do in the next your favorite season.

### 11 Talk with your friends

Don't forget to use rejoinders and follow up questions.  
You are going to keep talking for 1 minute to 1 minute and half a minute.

# 10 Appendix

## Questionnaire forms

**Action Research Questionnaire for students**

		No	←	-----	→	Yes
		1	2	3	4	5
(1) Attitudes to learning English	(a) Do you like learning English in this class?	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(b) Pairwork and Group work are useful to improve my English.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(c) I want to improve communicative skill in English more.	①	②	③	④	⑤
(2) How to learn English	(a) I actively participate in group / pair work activities.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(b) I can give feedback or advice to my classmates.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(c) My classmates' feedback or advice is useful.	①	②	③	④	⑤
(3) Self-evaluation of English skill	(a) I can talk in English for more than 1 minute.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(b) I can write more than 50 words English sentences.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(c) I can understand what teacher says in class.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(d) I can understand 80% of the contents of the textbook.	①	②	③	④	⑤

(4) 自分の英語の力について、コメントを書いて下さい。

**Action Research Questionnaire for students (2)**

CS=Conversation Strategies / follow up question , shadowingなど

		No	←	-----	→	Yes
		1	2	3	4	5
	(1) パートナーの英語の内容をCSでチェックすることができる	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(2) パートナーのCSでもっと英語を話せる	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(3) 英語を話すことに慣れてきた	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(4) 新しく学んだ単語を使ったり、間違えることに対して抵抗はない	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(5) 友達が使っている英語から、役立つ表現を学ぶことがあった	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(6) 友達と活動をする時と比べてもっとできる気がする	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(7) 以前よりも正確に話せている気がする	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(8) 以前よりも正確に書けている気がする。	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(9) ペア・グループワークのほうが学ぶことが多い気がする。	①	②	③	④	⑤
	(10) 文字起こしによるスピーキングの見直しは役に立った。	①	②	③	④	⑤

(8) 1年間の授業の中でよかった点○、よくなかった点△としてコメントを書いて下さい。