

Study Trip to Vancouver, Canada 2026

– Student Reflections and Learning Outcomes –

令和7年度バンクーバー海外語学研修に参加した生徒の感想等を掲載します。掲載スペースの都合上、1～8の各項目に3名ずつの感想を掲載しました。

Odawara High School conducted a study trip to Vancouver, Canada from March 16 to March 26, 2026. 30 students participated in this program. In this program, they experienced homestay, learned English and studied about food waste at University of British Columbia (UBC). The followings are the comments from three participants for each topic.

1. Homestay

- My host family was a family of four, including two sons aged six and eight. My host mother and father were very supportive. For example, they always cared about the amount of my lunch and spoke to me patiently until I understood them. They also helped me by translating when I had trouble communicating with my host brothers.

A classmate stayed in the same house with me. Her English was much better than mine, so she could join their conversations naturally. However, I often could not keep up with them. Especially in daily conversations, there were several times when I felt frustrated because the talk went on without me. I didn't understand what they were saying, but my classmate did.

【1st grader】

- I was initially nervous about what to talk about, but I found that conversations flowed naturally just by asking about daily events or things that piqued my interest in Canada. Playing card games together was a particularly fond memory. I also loved experiencing the local culture through food—the flavors and aromas were unlike anything in Japan. I vividly remember how touched I was when they served pancakes for breakfast on Saturday morning!

During our weekend outings, I had a blast seeing scenery and shops that you just don't see in Japan. We also went to a lake and played badminton, where a funny little mishap occurred. Our shuttlecock got stuck on the roof of a small hut where the restrooms were. My host mother asked someone nearby for help, and they brought over a chair. My host mother tried to reach it but couldn't; however, the person who lent us the chair managed to get it down for us. I was deeply moved by the courage to speak to a stranger and the kind, cooperative spirit shown by everyone involved.

【1st grader】

- Prior to the program, I had been told that I would need to help with household chores. However, since my host family was quite wealthy, they had a dishwasher and dryer, and they prepared all the meals for me. As a result, I was able to spend my time very comfortably. There were no strict house rules and I had my own bathroom, so I could relax without having to overthink things. I

later found out that they frequently host international students—in fact, another Japanese student was scheduled to arrive just two days after I left!

The family members were very easy to talk to, kind, and treated me so well. On the first night, because they were so used to hosting, they didn't ask me many questions and the dinner ended with them chatting amongst themselves. At first, I was worried about how I would manage, but after dinner, I was able to spend quality time with them.

Monday: We talked about Japan and got to know each other. They were very happy when I showed them photos of my travels in Japan.

Tuesday: We watched movies and played games. On the way home, they took me to a donut shop and a supermarket. The four of us bought matching red hats.

Wednesday: We made bracelets. My host mother made me a bead keychain in Canada's colors.

Thursday: I played billiards with my host brother and two others at his mother's friend's house. Even though none of the four of us knew the rules, my brother explained them in easy-to-understand English, and we had a great time. He was incredibly good at it!

Friday: Two friends came over to play games.

Saturday: My host mother's friend took me to the mountains and the sea. The vastness of the nature made me feel the incredible scale of being abroad. It was truly an extraordinary experience.

Sunday: In the morning, we got excited watching a reality dating show at the friend's house. Even with the language barrier, we had so much fun together that I didn't even notice it. In the afternoon, we went shopping at a mall so large I had never seen anything like it in Japan. I also tried a California roll, but to be honest, I didn't really like the combination of avocado, crab sticks, and fried shrimp.

Monday: I packed my bags and we took a photo together wearing our matching red Canada caps.

Tuesday: On my last night, I planned to go to bed early, but we were suddenly invited to McDonald's. An error occurred with the ordering machine, and my friend accidentally ordered two servings each of an incredibly sweet smoothie and ice cream. We all ended up laughing about it together. Finally, we took a group photo.

Summary and Reflections

Most of the time, I was with the four family members plus their relatives or friends, so it was always lively. I experienced so many things and made deep, unforgettable memories.

Before leaving for Canada, I had a strong resistance toward international exchange and speaking English; honestly, I was so anxious that I even thought I shouldn't have applied. However, the ten days I actually spent there became an incomparable experience that broke me out of my shell. By jumping into the daily life of my host family, I was able to experience the authentic local atmosphere and the warmth of the people.

Being exposed to the grand scale of nature and the free-spirited mindset of the local people—

things I could never experience in Japan—truly broadened my worldview. The most important lesson I learned through this program is to look at things with a wide perspective, without being bound by the "common sense" of Japan.

My dream for the future is to be involved in urban planning and design, creating places where many people can live comfortably. I intend to make great use of the broad perspective and unforgettable memories I gained during this stay, and I will push forward with all my might toward my big dream. 【2nd grader】

主な内容 生徒たちは温かい家庭に迎えられ、日常生活を通して英語や文化に触れました。

- ・会話についていけず悔しい思いをしたが、家族の支えで積極的に話す姿勢が育った。
- ・カードゲームや外出を通して、現地の人々の親切さに触れた。
- ・毎日さまざまな活動に参加し、自然の雄大さや価値観の違いを体感した。

2. English learning

- The English classes were different from those in Japan, always focusing on pair work and discussions. The teachers constantly encouraged us with a positive attitude so that we could speak up without fear of making mistakes. There were many creative ways to enjoy using English, and I was able to rediscover the joy of expressing myself in the language. 【1st grader】

- First, we introduced ourselves. I learned that I can expand a topic by using conjunctions, instead of just using simple sentences like "I like..." I also learned that I should keep this in mind not only for self-introductions and daily conversations but also for formal debates.

In the final class, we used what we learned in the first class to discuss several topics, such as the use of social media and the development of technology. The themes felt a bit difficult. However, because of that, I started to think about how I could express my opinions with my current English skills. To say what I want to say, I try to express my thoughts simply. By doing this, things that were unclear to me become clear. Translating from Japanese into English helps me clarify my own opinions.

The teachers spoke slowly using simple words and many gestures, so their lessons were very easy to understand. 【1st grader】

- In class, instead of focusing on difficult topics like SDGs, we learned about Canadian culture and English grammar. The teachers were very friendly and created an environment where we could speak without fear of making mistakes.

The classes were not only lectures but also included games, which made learning enjoyable. We also had buddies from Canada who joined the classes, so we could ask questions and work together. This increased our opportunities to use English while having fun.

We also had activities such as ordering at Starbucks in English and going bowling, which were very enjoyable. At first, I was nervous about taking English classes, but thanks to the pre-training and practice lessons, I was able to enjoy the experience. 【2nd grader】

主な内容 UBCでの英語授業は、日本とは異なるアクティブなスタイルでした。

- ・ペアワークやディスカッション中心で、間違いを恐れず発言できた。
- ・接続詞を使って話題を広げるなど、実践的な表現を習得。
- ・カナダ人バディとの活動や、スターバックスでの注文など実践的な学びが多かった。

3. Learning at UBC

- Studying at the vast campus of the world-renowned UBC was very stimulating. The facilities, such as the library and student union building, were excellent. Seeing students from all over the world studying seriously greatly increased my own motivation to learn. I realized that a university is not just a place to acquire knowledge, but also a place to encounter diverse values. Additionally, having a UBC student buddy show me around and talk about university life provided a great opportunity to think about my own future career path. 【1st grader】
- In the classes at UBC, I mainly learned about the global situation regarding SDGs, especially food loss, and UBC's efforts to achieve the SDG goals. I was surprised by the initiatives at UBC. There, activities to contribute to SDGs are built into student life. You don't have to think about it too deeply; you can contribute naturally.
For example, at the cafeteria, some shops serve food in paper containers. There are also specific reusable containers; if you put them in a designated box after use, they can be used again and again. Additionally, there were "Food Banks" and "Free Stores." These are spaces where students can leave things they no longer need, and anyone who needs them can take them freely. Also, there are gender-neutral toilets that anyone can use regardless of gender. In this way, UBC has many creative ideas to contribute to SDGs in various situations. I thought it was wonderful that we can help solve social issues not only through difficult methods like discussions but also through systems that are part of daily life. 【1st grader】
- In class, I first learned about the current situation of food loss. I learned about the contradiction that while a large amount of food is thrown away at supermarkets and homes, many people in Japan suffer from poverty. However, we are rarely taught these things in school classes. I think it is a problem that even when we hear about the current situation, it is hard to think of it as our own business, and we don't know what we can do. It was difficult for me to think of what I could do beyond what I already do, such as eating everything on my plate and consuming food before it goes bad. These issues easily feel like someone else's problem, but I want to think about how everyone can see it as their own business and find more ways we can contribute to reducing food loss every day. 【1st grader】

主な内容 世界的大学 UBC での学習は、生徒に大きな刺激を与えました。

- ・広大なキャンパスで多様な価値観に触れ、進路を考えるきっかけになった。
- ・フードロスや SDGs について、日常生活に組み込まれた取り組みを学んだ。
- ・日本とのギャップを知り、社会課題を自分事として考える姿勢が育った。

4. Food bank

- I had never even heard of food banks before going to Canada, so it was quite a shock. I felt that food banks are a very meaningful initiative because they benefit both the providers and the recipients, and they help reduce food waste. I also thought that since the purpose is clear to anyone, it's easy for the general public to get involved. Although I haven't heard much about them in Japan, I believe there would be many people willing to use them if a food bank system were established and made accessible. 【1st grader】

- In the first class, we learned about the Canadian dollar. In the next class, we spent 20 dollars at a supermarket to buy food to donate to a food bank. Since the currency units are completely different between Japan and Canada, it was difficult to get a sense of the value of money. We bought canned soup and tuna. I have never had trouble getting food, so although I was interested in food banks, I was not familiar with them. Therefore, I didn't know what people who need food banks want the most. When I visited a food bank and asked the staff about it, they said baby food and milk.

The food bank staff consists of group members and volunteers. I heard that there are only a few group staff members, so volunteers are essential. Today, life is becoming difficult for everyone, regardless of the country. Not only the people who need food banks, but also we ourselves are struggling to make a living because the prices of everything are rising. In such a situation, I was impressed that there are people who want to be helpful to others. At the same time, I thought that more generous support on a national level is necessary so that people in need can continue to receive food. 【1st grader】

- At the Foodbank, I learned about food support systems. Since this kind of system does not exist in the same way in Japan, it was a very new experience for me. I realized that many people need support, and I strongly felt the difference in social conditions between Canada and Japan.

In Canada, supermarkets often have spaces where people can donate food to Foodbanks, and donating food is part of the culture. Also, most of the people working at Foodbanks are volunteers, which shows that not only the government but also citizens are actively addressing hunger issues.

In Japan, many people think hunger is not a serious problem, but after researching, I found that there are people in need. I think Japan could also benefit from having more facilities like Foodbanks. 【2nd grader】

主な内容 カナダのフードバンク文化は、生徒に強い印象を残しました。

- ・初めて知る仕組みに驚き、提供者・受益者双方にメリットがあると実感した。
- ・寄付活動を体験し、ボランティアの重要性を理解した。
- ・日本でも必要性が高いと感じ、社会制度の違いを考えるきっかけになった。

5. Solution to food waste

- In our presentation, my group proposed two systems: one to sell "non-standard" (imperfect) vegetables to local restaurants at a low price, and another for an educational system about food loss.

For the first system, we suggested reducing income tax for the people involved to encourage them to join. For the second system, we proposed an idea where elementary school students visit farms on school trips to experience harvesting and listen to farmers' stories. I proposed the first idea, and my friend proposed the second one.

I proposed the vegetable system because I learned in the UBC class that while only beautiful vegetables are displayed in supermarkets, there are actually many non-standard ones. I thought the problem is that consumers do not want to buy them because they are difficult to use. The reason non-standard vegetables don't reach supermarkets is the transportation cost. When they are packed into cases for trucks, their uneven shapes take up too much space, so only a small amount can be carried compared to regular vegetables. I thought that if farmers process these vegetables into easy-to-carry shapes and sell them to local restaurants, everyone would benefit. Restaurants could buy vegetables cheaply and offer meals at lower prices, making it easier for customers to eat out. Also, farmers could earn more income by selling crops that would otherwise be wasted.

Regarding the educational system, we thought education is important because the food loss problem cannot be solved unless everyone takes action with awareness. To make people interested, experiences from childhood are necessary. I believe that physical experiences are more realistic than learning in a classroom, and they help children see the problem as their own business.

Other groups also shared their own opinions and proposals. The group that won the most votes suggested a quiz app about food loss. If you answer correctly, you earn points to get non-standard vegetables. Every group had unique ideas, and it was very interesting. 【1st grader】

- Canada's efforts to address food loss included various measures such as the Green Bins placed in front of homes, food banks, and shared trash bins. I even saw Green Bins placed not only in front of homes but also on the sidewalks near department stores. There is a food bank at UBC as well, and the trash bins there featured messages asking, "Is that really trash?" indicating that measures to address food waste were well-established. I also presented on the causes of food waste. Specifically, in households, these include buying too much, being tempted by cheaper items, and forgetting what was purchased; for businesses like restaurants, they include overproduction, expiration dates, appearance, and discarding food at the end of the day.

I was struck by how far behind Japan is in this area. The Green Bin program and food banks are particularly innovative, and I felt that Japan needs to take bolder action. My host mother mentioned that Canada isn't perfect—some people still don't sort their waste—but since the situation in Japan is even worse, I realized we need to do more than just look at Japan's current

state; we need to raise awareness about how far developed countries have come and what initiatives they are implementing. Still, since catching up isn't something that can be done easily, I realized that we need to think not just about raising awareness but also about creating the necessary systems. 【1st grader】

- We researched food waste in Catherine's class and UBC lectures and created a project to reduce food waste. Our idea was to visit farms and learn how vegetables and meat are produced, so people can understand the effort behind the food they eat. By doing this, we hoped people would value food more and reduce waste.

We also focused on the issue that many people throw away food because of its appearance, such as irregular shapes. We planned to have people actually try such food and realize that it tastes the same, encouraging them not to waste it. 【2nd grader】

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- ・寄付活動を体験し、ボランティアの重要性を理解した。
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6. Differences in Food Waste Initiatives between Canada and Japan

- I learned that in Canada, people cooperate at the provincial level. Canada has something called a "Green Bin," which is used to collect food waste to make fertilizer. This waste is not buried in landfills; instead, it is composted and reused.

In Japan, some local governments have similar programs, but most do not have such systems. In some areas, the rules for separating garbage are very loose. I think this big difference between regions is a problem in Japan. For example, in the Shonan area, there is a system where you can get a subsidy if you buy a compost bin. However, individual families have to do it themselves. I think many people don't want to try it because managing it is troublesome. I felt that it would be more effective to create a system led by local governments, like in Canada.

Also, in Canada, there is an app for restaurants and supermarkets to sell food near its expiration date at a low price. By using this app, consumers can eat food from their favorite shops cheaply. There is a similar app in Japan, but I think more people should know about it. 【1st grader】

- I felt that social initiatives to reduce food waste are more advanced in Canada than in Japan, such as the common use of "doggy bags" (takeout containers) at supermarkets and restaurants. Also, in Vancouver, they have a waste separation category called "Green Bins" for organic materials (paper, vegetable scraps, yard trimmings, etc.), with a system to return this waste to the earth through composting. On the other hand, Japan has the wonderful spirit of "*Mottainai*." By comparing the differences between the two countries, I learned about the diversity of approaches to environmental issues. 【1st grader】

- In Canada, there is a strong awareness of reducing food waste, led by the government, and systems like Foodbanks are well established in society. Supermarkets provide spaces for food donations, and donating food has become part of the culture.

Since many Foodbank workers are volunteers, it shows that citizens as well as the government are actively working to solve food waste issues.

In contrast, although Japan is making efforts to reduce food waste, I feel there is still room for improvement in both public awareness and systems. 【2nd grader】

主な内容 フードウェイストに関するカナダと日本の取組に違いを学びました。

- ・カナダでは「Green Bin」など自治体主導の仕組みが整備されている。
- ・寄付文化やコンポストの普及など、市民の意識も高い。
- ・日本の「もったいない」精神も強みだが、制度面では改善の余地がある。

7. Life and culture in Canada

- Before going on this trip, I knew that Canada has people from many different cultures. When I actually walked around the city, I saw so many different kinds of people. In food courts, there was food from all over the world, such as Finland, China, the U.S., and Japan. I also saw mosques and churches while traveling to my training site.

Regarding unique Canadian culture, I saw many things related to Indigenous people. I found goods with Indigenous patterns near Gastown and the totem poles. I also saw their art and objects everywhere, including shopping malls and the airport. On the other hand, I realized again that Canada does not seem to have traditional culture that is deeply rooted in daily life today—like *Wagashi* (Japanese sweets) or Kimono in Japan. 【1st grader】

- I fell in love with Canada's nature. I was surprised to learn that the government regulates land development to promote nature conservation. The small forests scattered everywhere are beautiful. I also noticed that bus stops have chairs and roofs; I thought that was so kind, but then I learned it's because it rains often—a real reminder of the climate difference! I was also surprised to see so many cherry blossoms, along with Magnolia trees which look like cherry blossoms but offer a different kind of beauty.

Most of all, I was moved by the kindness of Canadians. On the day I arrived, I was at a dollar-store-

like shop in a mall. I was in line but realized I needed something else. When I went back to the register, I wasn't sure if I should return to my original spot, but the person behind me kindly told me it was okay to step back in. This small act of kindness really touched me, and I want to become someone who can respond to others with that same kindness. 【1st grader】

- Canada is a multicultural society where people from various countries and backgrounds live together. I was impressed by how much people respect each other's cultures, making it a very comfortable place to live.

I also enjoyed learning about many different countries. In daily life, people clearly say “thank you” and “sorry,” which helps build good relationships.

Unlike in Japan, where people often expect others to understand without words, I realized the importance of expressing my own opinions clearly and actively. 【2nd grader】

主要内容 カナダの生活と文化に触れ、いろいろなことを学んだり感じたりしました。

- ・多文化社会の中で、互いの文化を尊重する姿勢を学んだ。
- ・先住民文化の存在を身近に感じた。
- ・日常の小さな親切に触れ、自分もそうありたいと感じた。

8. My English skills

- My host family and friends said my English was improving, but honestly, I don't think so. Even on the last day of the program, there were many times when I couldn't understand conversations or express what I wanted to say. However, I think I became more conscious of using English. On the first day, I saw a sign at a shopping mall and wanted to know what it said. I tried to use a translation app because the sentences were long and had many difficult words. Then, a classmate said to me, "That's a waste!" In the end, I couldn't understand it because my phone was not connected to the internet.

Classes started on the second day. There were 30 Japanese students in one place, and the only foreigners were the teachers and buddies. So, I heard a lot of Japanese not only during breaks but also during class. I remembered what my classmate said at the mall and thought, "She's right. There is no point in being in Canada if I only speak Japanese." So, I tried to use English during class, during breaks, and even when talking with other Oda High School students.

In daily conversations with my host family, I used many example sentences from the vocabulary tests in class. By doing this, I realized which words I had learned well and which ones I couldn't say. I feel that using English in real conversations helped me remember the vocabulary better. I cannot say my English became fluent through this program, but I was able to use what I learned in class. I found that even if I don't know perfect grammar or expressions, I can communicate if I have the will to use English. 【1st grader】

- I was able to communicate with my host family at a basic level and engage in casual conversation, but I realized there's still so much I can't do. Naturally, compared to my fluency in Japanese, I couldn't speak as well as I'd like, and I wondered if we could have understood and enjoyed each other's company even more if I could have used English more effectively. Of course, even with my limited English, we were able to talk about university life, local topics, anime, and much more, which was a lot of fun. My reluctance to use English has diminished, and I've started wanting to speak more. Also, since there are many non-native English speakers at my university, seeing people from my own country speak English fluently boosted my motivation to learn English. At the same time, it made me want to take my Chinese studies—which I'd previously been doing just for fun—more seriously. 【1st grader】

- If I had just waited for others to talk to me, I wouldn't have had many chances to use English because Canadian culture does not rely on unspoken understanding as much as in Japan. However, by speaking even with imperfect English, I gradually became more fluent day by day. I learned that trying is more important than being perfect. People were kind and spoke in easy-to-understand English, and if I didn't understand, they rephrased using simpler words. This allowed me to improve my English without stress.

【2nd grader】

主な内容 英語を実際に使う環境に置かれて、英語学習で大切なことを実感しました。

- ・完璧でなくても「伝えようとする姿勢」が大切だと実感。
- ・実際に使うことで語彙の定着を感じた。
- ・英語への抵抗が減り、さらに学びたいという意欲が高まった。