

Boys and girls, I would like to say a few words at the starting point of the second semester, 2016.



How did you spend your summer vacation?

Did you do anything in particular during that time?

I think you may have spent a lot of time
in preparing for the *Gaien-sai*, our school festival,
which will be held this week.

In fact, there are only five days to go.

Students, guardians, and teachers are all looking forward to the
Gaien-sai,

in which each class is going to perform a famous play,

and a couple of clubs are going to show us musical performance.
Last year, more than eight thousand people visited the *Gaien-sai*
even though there were no food booths and no haunted house.

I'm sure that they visited just to enjoy your plays.

These plays are a unique feature of our school festival,
and we can be proud of them.

It doesn't matter whether you appear on stage in an acting role or not.

I hope all the students working on stage or behind the scenes
will contribute together to our cultural activities
during the *Gaien-sai*.



I am going to talk about three more things today.

First,

Steve Jobs said,

“If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?”

Steve Jobs died five years ago at the age of 56.

I am the same age, and I sometimes ask myself the same question.

“If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?”

This question means a lot as you get older.



After the *Gaien-sai*, you will have to concentrate on studying again.

I think one of the purposes of studying is

to find out answers to two questions:

“What do I want to do in the future?” and

“What can I do for others?”

We have to continue gaining knowledge

before we will be able to find answers to these questions.

Life is short, and I hope you try as many new things as you can.



Life, however, is not always fair.

Not every good person is able to live a happy life.

And not a few good people are sometimes burdened with diseases, injuries, money problems, or other unhappy things.

Then why do we have to work hard?

Nobody knows what will happen in the future.

There are no guarantees that diligence and honesty will bring you good things.

Even so, you should not take a dark view of life.

Learning is the one thing we can do to make our lives worth living.

Do what you want to do today for the sake of your future self.



Second,

the government lowered the voting age,

92 of you had a chance to vote in the House of Councilors election,
and 105 of you had a chance to vote in the election for
the Governor of Tokyo in July.

I hope all of you who had the right to vote went to the polls. Unfortunately, in the Councilors election the voting rate for 18-year-olds was only about 52%, and that for 19-year-olds was 40% or less.

Comparing these rates with that for voters as a whole, which was about 55%,

I feel a little worried about the future of our society.



Voting is one of the important rights guaranteed to us under the Constitution, and it is also a civic duty. Elections are very good chances for you to think about some of the political issues we face in our society today.

I hope you will all take an interest in political issues
in order to try to help make our society better.



Within a few years, the Civil Code will be amended,
and people will legally become adults at the age of 18.

That means some of you would be already legally adults,
and the rest of you would be so within a couple of years.

So you are almost adults.

It is essential for you, soon would-be adults,
to be able to think critically,
to compare campaign promises and policies
on a variety of issues,

and not to judge

on the basis of only one or two sources of information.

Don't hesitate to discuss political issues with your friends
or within your families.

It is you who can change the world for the better.



Third, and last,

the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro ended last week.

Japan won 41 medals in all.

There were a lot of wonderful performances, close games,
heated matches, and exciting races,
and they moved us profoundly.

What most impressed you?

Fukuhara in her table tennis matches?

Uchimura in the gymnastics competition?

Nishikori in his tennis matches?

The Taka+Matsu pair in the badminton competition?

We feel proud of these athletes

not only because they are Japanese,

not only because they won medals,

not only because they are famous,

not only because of their looks,

but because they are honest and make untiring efforts.

Well, what do you think?



On the 7th of September, the Paralympic Games will open in Rio.

Let's support all the athletes and enjoy their performance.



By the way, every one of you must have been surprised to see Prime Minister Abe pop out of a giant green pipe at the closing ceremony in Rio.

BBC reported that Mario from the Super Mario games is one of Japan's best-known exports.

(And when) Japan's prime minister emerged dressed as Mario and doffed his hat to enthusiastic crowds, he set social media alight.

The parade ended with Mr Abe

holding aloft a now glowing red ball, Japan's rising sun.

And what else can we look forward to in Tokyo?

Mario was not the only pop culture icon in attendance.

Doraemon, the animation character with a famous magic pocket from which he can pull out gadgets from the future along with the mouth-less cat, Hello Kitty.

The BBC article also included

some requests for Tokyo from social media;

There were calls for Japan's most famous film studio, Studio Ghibli, known for its fantastical tales and extraordinary animation

to have a role in the opening ceremony.

And there were no Pokemon characters in the ceremony
but that did not stop people from suggesting
Pokemon Go could become a sport in four years time.



We have a lot of things to learn in order to get ready
for the next Olympics in 2020.

In four years, all of you will legally be adults,
and most of you will be studying at universities.

You will be mature enough to volunteer
to support the Tokyo Olympics.

The Olympic Games in Rio were splendid.

I hope the Olympic Games in Tokyo will be even better.



I have spoken about three things today:

first, about what makes our lives worth living,

second, about voting as a chance to change the world for the better,

and, finally, about the Olympic Games in Rio and Tokyo.



Now I have just one final thing to say.

I intend to continue

standing in front of the school gate each morning,

to say good morning to you.

Please don't say that's awful.

I hope you will return my good morning greetings
with big smiles on your faces.

Muito Obrigado

Thank you very much. 1204 語