

Contrasting International Campuses

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As an exchange student in Japan, I have experienced firsthand the striking differences between university life here and back home, in Montreal (Canada). This unique perspective has not only enriched my education but has also broadened my understanding of a different culture. The differences in daily life, cultural engagement, and academic workload have profoundly shaped my journey.

Daily Life and Commuting

In Montreal, although university students do take **public transport**, I find the system slow



and unorganized. In contrast, commuting in Tokyo is a **packed** but **well-organized** experience. Most students travel by train, and I quickly learned the importance of **punctuality**. The trains are remarkably **efficient**, with frequent schedules that accommodate thousands of commuters daily. While the crowds can be overwhelming, the system runs like clockwork, making it easy to navigate the city.

Academic Variety

Another striking difference is the academic **workload**. In Japan, I have the opportunity to take more than 12 classes in a semester, compared to a maximum of 5 back home. This **wide array** of subjects allows me to explore diverse interests and gain a well-rounded education. While the workload can seem all over the place, the variety keeps my experience **dynamic** and **enriching**.

Social Life

Social interactions in Japan are fascinating and reflect a blend of intensity and relaxation. Club activities, or “**bukatsu**,” can be quite demanding, often requiring significant time and commitment, while “**sa-kuru**” (circles) tend to be more casual and relaxed. The communal **lunchtime** is another highlight, allowing students to eat together and bond with friends. This is not the case in Canada, where classes are not delimited by specific course times. Sharing **meals** enables students to spend time together, all while meeting new friends!

