

Research project: How do fluent English speakers deal with difficult questions without long silences?

Your name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Interviewee's name: _____ Nationality: _____

Directions:

1. Find a fluent or near-fluent English speaker to interview, either in-person or online. Be sure to politely make an appointment! Ask them if it's okay to record the conversation on your smartphone. Tell them this is for a class project, and that you are studying how fluent English speakers answer difficult questions. You will ask them a few questions about Japan and would like them to answer as best they can, even if they are not sure.
2. Write 3 ~ 5 trivia questions about Japanese culture. Create challenging questions! If they are too easy, you will not be able to collect enough data. You can find good questions online by searching for "Japan trivia questions". Show your questions to your teacher for checking before you conduct the interview.

Question 1: _____

Question 2: _____

Question 3: _____

Question 4: (Optional) _____

Question 5: (Optional) _____

3. Record the interview on your smartphone. Use the free built-in voice recording app. If you haven't used this before, ask your teacher or classmates for help. If you don't have a smartphone, let your teacher know and another recording device will be provided. Practice a bit to make sure you can record smoothly.
4. After recording your interview, transcribe it below so you can analyze the responses more deeply. Remember to write down EVERYTHING the interviewee says when trying to answer a question, including any grammar mistakes or noticeable pauses. If a pause is short (<1 sec), you can mark it with "..."; If it is longer (>1 sec), you can write the time in (parentheses), like this:

Me: So, Mr. Jones, what do you think is the second tallest mountain in Japan?

Mr. Jones: Hm! Wow, that's a difficult question, I must say... Hm... I know Mt. Fuji is the tallest, but which

mountain comes next? (2) Gosh! I don't really know the names of mountains in this country... I'm not

really into hiking or anything like that... Hm. (3) Well, I must say, I don't have the answer! What is it?

5. After your transcription work is done, highlight the strategies and expressions used to avoid long silences. Sort them in another form and get ready to present the findings to your classmates.

