

Volunteers: Jon*, Meghan

Students : Yoko, Rainbow, Jing Sun, Marie

We began by reading three short articles and discussing some of the words in them. In reading the story of March coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb, we showed the silent "B" in lamb and in a similar word, "comb." In the Paralympics article we discussed several other words with the prefix "para," such as: paralegal, parallel, and paramedic.

We read about daylight Savings Time and asked if they have it in their countries. In China and Korea, DST was in place for about ten years and is no longer used. Japan does not use DST either. The students liked DST, for the most part, since it makes the days longer. Rainbow said it shortened the time-difference between the US and China when China used DST also. She and her mother have a hard time coordinating phone calls when USA is on DST and China is not, since one of them is usually sleeping when the other is awake.

We then moved on to a demonstration of how Americans ask questions, using a handout Jon had brought. We explained that in casual conversation, when Americans ask a question such as "What did you do today?" It can sound like, "What dija do today?" or even Wha ja do today?" We used the white board to show how Americans regularly drop endings and make "reductions" of certain words, especially in questions. The students really liked this topic and took many notes and asked a lot of questions. They were eager to practice asking and understanding questions using these reductions. (Ex. Where ja go after work? Are ya gonna get a new car? Are yat work right now? Kinya gimme a ride home? Whadda ya think? When kinya call me? and many more.) Marie was able to recall several words, such as "kinda" for "kind of" that young people use. She asked if this is slang and Meghan explained that it is.

They wanted to know if this is a regional accent and if they use the same reductions in California, for instance, would people understand them. We weren't sure but thought reductions like "gonna" and "gimme" are probably the same all over the country, although some regions have other ways of saying things as well. Meghan told us of a unique Oklahoma slang term that took her a while to understand when she was there.

Besides having the printout, Yoko said it was very helpful to be able to listen to me pronounce the reduced words. She asked me to record the sounds so, as class ended, they recorded me reading both the proper and the casual, reduced, way to ask the list of questions on their handout. Yoko, Jing and Marie recorded me and Rainbow may have done so on her iPad as well. Yoko will see if she can send the recording to the other students. She said Satoko is particularly interested in learning things like this.