

April Release for Updated GrapeSEED Curriculum

GrapeSEED, MeySen's innovative English curriculum used in Kindergarten, Friends Club, and Premier School, has received a major update. The new version will be released in its entirety in April. It also includes new material specifically designed for K3.



GrapeSEED

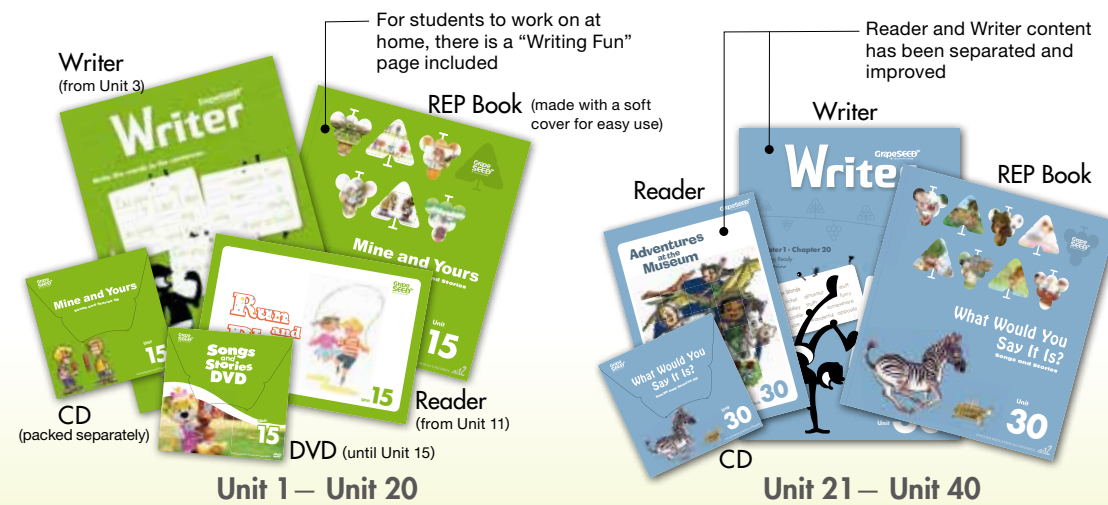
Corresponds with all American English Educational Standards

For grades K4 and up, the curriculum continues to feature content for lively and engaging English learning, but also includes more content for strengthening writing ability.

Parents of MeySen students will receive newsletters for each of the units as their children progress

through the curriculum, and the school plans to introduce a service for checking study content and learning goals.

The staff of MeySen Academy expect to see more effective study not only in the classroom, but in the home as well.



LittleSEED

Curriculum for K3 students

New material specifically designed for K3 students includes a textbook and a DVD, with stories of fun and original characters that will introduce English to young learners in an engaging way. The curriculum is designed specifically to train young children in listening skills and help them learn correct pronunciation. Teachers using this new curriculum will be provided with training.



Bible verse

Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10: 9, 13 (ESV)

聖書

Incorporating a learning place for students, and a gathering and socializing place for parents and the local community

Re-birth of Maruyama Hall

The hall at Maruyama campus was finished in 1971, just four years after the founding of MeySen Academy. For the past 47 years it has been a place for hosting various events, as well as a place for learning and play for students. The hall has grown old with its many years of use and is no longer big enough for the student body, so construction on a new hall has begun and is planned to be finished in 2020.

The new hall will be about 1.5 times larger than the previous one and is square-shaped, expanding its usefulness for student activities and play, as well as its general utility for other purposes.

We ask for your understanding and cooperation as we adjust our use of the rotary during the ongoing construction.



Events for the Whole Family

The old hall was too small to allow students to invite all of their family members to events, but the new hall will be large enough to host everyone!



Sunshine Lounge

Entering the hall you will find the lounge, a place where parents, guests, and even people from the community will be able to relax. Enjoy your time in the sunshine with a cup of your favorite beverage.



MeySen's Architect



Mike Whalen (Certified by the American Institute of Architects)

Mike Whalen resides in Seattle, WA, and has designed hotels, museums, and residential buildings in both America and Japan. Mike took over design of the buildings and grounds at MeySen Academy when it began its major reconstruction of the old school buildings several years ago, and is responsible for creating the beautiful campuses of MeySen

that you see today.

With the new hall, Mike again took MeySen's desired concept and made it a reality, creating "a place to gather and to rest," as well as a new symbol for MeySen's Maruyama campus.

Cover: With Belle retiring, a new horse has arrived from America. She's currently training hard so she can join everyone in all the events at MeySen Academy. We will let you know more details in our Spring issue!

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Friends is the MeySen Academy newsletter and publishes the latest news and event announcements for all members of our community, including students, alumni, teachers, and interested friends of MeySen.





We're sliding into winter!

The new year has started.

Let's enjoy the rich experience each day brings, whether it is overcoming an old obstacle or taking up a new challenge as we work to reach our goals.

Sledding, Setsubun (Spring Festival), and Girls' Day—everyone at MeySen Kindergarten is looking forward to fun times during third trimester both in the classroom and at events.

Stay warm on your way to school, and remember that even though it is cold, spring is just around the corner.

Sledding!



A Musical Autumn with Two Music Concerts

On October 29 and 30, the Kindergarten and Premier School Kindergarten students enjoyed a performance by the Mongolian National Folk Art Troupe. They were able to touch unique traditional Mongolian instruments such as the matouqin and the gayageum, an instrument similar to the Japanese koto. There was also an acrobatics performance, and the students cheered as they watched.

On October 30 and 31, MeySen held its annual music concerts, and Friends Club and Premier Elementary students enjoyed a percussion ensemble. Students could not help but move to the beat of the percussion instruments and the joyful sound of the marimba as the four musicians played. The students were also able to join in the performance using maracas which they made from recycled plastic bottles and brought from home, creating a wonderful musical experience.




MeySen Producing Audio CD for Picture Books


MeySen provides original picture books for its kindergarten students, with fun and exciting stories for the children. Kindergarten and Premier Kindergarten K3 and K4 receive nine Kanji and Kana picture books per year, and K5 receives eight books.

Last fall, MeySen began creation of audio CDs so that students can enjoy the books at home. The audio is performed by experienced voice actors and narrators. The use of speed and tone of these professionals make the characters really come alive, and with the added sound effects, you feel as if the stories are happening right before your eyes!


These will be finished by April, so be looking forward to it!




Vice-Principal Yoshimura and Chief Advisor Ms. Hiroko participate in the recording




Characters and Animals



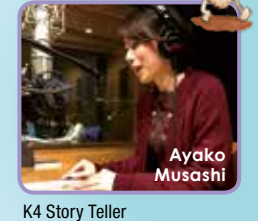
Tetsuya Kakuta
Bible stories, characters and animals




Kumiko Tanno




Maki Suguchi
K3 Story Teller



Ayako Musashi
K4 Story Teller



Mari Misaki
K5 Story Teller



You can learn more about our voice actors on our website. Please use the QR code to access the page. (Japanese Only)



Valentine's Day!



Bean throwing!

(Celebrating Setsubun)



You can find the message in its entirety on the MeySen website (Japanese only)

5 years of Myanmar High School Exchange Student Program

The Myanmar High School Exchange Student Program, which started in 2014, began its fifth year in 2018. Families of MeySen students have hosted a total of 18 high school and college-age students. The students visited Sendai for four days and returned to their home country with a heart full of emotion and wonderful memories.

The following is an excerpt from a message by Mr. Hideo Watanabe, Chairman of the Japan Myanmar Association, who attended the farewell meeting at MeySen.




The New Pro-Japan Myanmar

A Cultural Exchange of Human Resource Development and Heart

I founded the Japan Myanmar Association with some trusted friends and colleagues in December of 2011, about seven years ago. 77 years ago, although there were some legitimate reasons, Japan caused an enormous amount of damage to other Asian nations. The Federal Republic of Myanmar (Burma) was one of them, and it was pulled into a war which resulted in tremendous destruction and suffering.

However, despite this reality, the government of Burma never tried any of the Japanese soldiers that were in the country as war criminals, and sent them back to Japan unharmed. Not only that, Burma supplied Japan with free shipments of rice when Japan experienced a food shortage for several years. The Japanese people survived because of it. Moreover, Burma abandoned its claims for war reparation made by other Southeast Asian countries, and they supported Japan's application to the United Nations.

What impresses me most is the fact that in the years following the world war, Myanmar has never taught anti-Japanese education, making them a very pro-Japan nation and people. This is the reason why I, as a Japanese person living in this age, founded the Japan Myanmar Association.

Looking at the Myanmar of today, we see a nation that is well behind in their development, and the Myanmar people suffer from living in poverty. As an elderly Japanese politician, I am deeply saddened by the current state of Myanmar, and with a firm desire to help Myanmar in any way possible, I have endeavored to work

towards gathering support for this vision and the association.

One such endeavor is the development of human resources. Working toward this, I formed friendships with several directors of Myanmar universities who shared my aspiration to tackle this issue. However, I had been feeling some disappointment as my plans to develop this for junior high and high schools did not seem to be coming to fruition.

It was during such a time that I began to collaborate with Board of Directors Chairman John Broman, who shared this desire, and obtained his insight in helping host top students of Myanmar. Through this project, I have come to understand, recognize, and respect the people of MeySen Academy.




Last October, I was invited to an exchange event with top students from Myanmar. I was deeply moved as I witnessed how, not only the faculty of the academy, but also the parents and the alumni united in wholeheartedly hosting these students from Myanmar. It was hard to hold back my tears as I encountered the MeySen family working as one. This is education in its very essence, education in its true form.

I hope and pray that the fruit born out of MeySen Academy will blossom in educational environments within Japan and all over the world, and for all of its success and prosperity.

From a Myanmar High School Student

If somebody asked me, "What is the most memorable and unforgettable thing in your past?" I would answer, "My home stay with a Japanese family in Sendai." It is not easy to take care of someone for three nights together in a family, but the Japanese families were willing, and gladly accepted the Myanmar students for a home stay. I was so excited, and also a bit worried, but when I arrived, my friend, Manaya (Maruyama High School Program G10, Jack), and his family made me feel very comfortable, like I was their own son. The first dinner I had with my host family was very delicious because of their kindness and warm smiles. The next morning, Manaya took me to his school by public bus, and after school, we went to downtown Sendai.

I made a lot of Japanese friends and Manaya's family is a second family for me. Although we Myanmar students were in Sendai for only four days, when it was time to leave from Sendai and also from my host family, I couldn't stop the tears from my eyes for my host family, friends, and MeySen. I hope the relationship between Myanmar students and students in Sendai, including MeySen, will be firm forever, and I promise I will come back again to see the smiles of my Japanese friends.

Thank you very much MeySen for your invitation to Myanmar students. I will never forget your support and I am really grateful to all of the MeySen family from my heart. I hope to see all of you in good health when I come back again.



Zaw Lu Htet

From a Host Family

When I heard of the need for host families, I decided to host an exchange student for the first time as a way to give back and express my gratitude for the experiences my daughter had during her own study abroad experience.

I had no idea what to expect or how I would communicate with students from a different culture and with a different language, but the college student that came to stay at my house was studying Japanese. Her Japanese was so good it was hard to believe it was her first time to visit Japan, and she and my daughter connected so quickly it didn't seem like they had just met. She shared with us her dream of having a career connected to Japan, and how she is studying to make it come true. I was impressed with her passion and enthusiasm.

The four days went by quickly, but it became one of our most precious experiences: eating together, sharing about our cultures and countries, letting her experience Japanese high school life, and attending the foreign exchange meeting BBQ event that was held on the last day together. I would like to encourage other families to experience this.

As she left, she said goodbye to her new family, promising to see us again.



Takamori High School 11th Grade
Aika Suzuki (Heidi)'s parent
Shinichi Sasaki

Passing of Prof. Bin Komiyaji

Prof. Bin Komiyaji, who had been staying in a hospital, passed away on November 14, 2018. Funeral services were held at Tama Newtown Christ Church on November 19 and 20.

Prof. Komiyaji taught many of our teachers, including our principal, and visited MeySen every year for eight years since 2008. He was a teacher who taught the joy of singing, the joy of living, and the heart of education, and brought warmth and countless blessings to students and staff that cannot be put into words.

Many people came to the ceremony, saying good-bye as they sang surrounding his coffin. MeySen will continue to value and pass on the many precious lessons he taught during his life.




MeySen Students Make Strong Showing at English Speech Contests Again this Year

In the preliminary round for the 70th H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy All Japan Inter-Middle School English Oratorical Contest, which was held in September, Aoi Ito (Takamori G9) and Haruna Takahashi (Maruyama FC graduate) were awarded for their outstanding performance, making them eligible to participate in the semifinals held on November 28 and 29. Unfortunately, they were not able to proceed to the finals, but their endeavor at such a prestigious stage (becoming one of 151 semifinalists out of 100,000 participants) should be a goal for many students reach for.

At the 68th Miyagi Prefectural Junior High Speech Competition, Taito Uchigasaki (Maruyama G9) was awarded first place, and Kokoro Akasaka (Takamori G9) was awarded first runner-up. Taito went on to participate in the 66th Tohoku Six-Prefecture Regional Junior High Speech Competition held in Fukushima on November 9.

