

Tilly is from the UK, aged 26. She studied hard and now speaks fluent Japanese, specializing in translation and interpreting. After a year-long application and several exams, she was thrilled to get a job working for the Japanese government in Tokyo.

She wants to fit in as much as possible and be treated like the others around her. However, as the only native English speaker in her office of 200 people, she's found that instead of being able to use and improve her language skills, most of her work is checking English written by her Japanese colleagues. She's given no work with responsibility and colleagues often slip English into their conversations with her.

The office environment also doesn't suit her and is poorly designed. Sitting all day makes her shoulders ache and the small laptop she was given can't be divided to create a more ergonomic workstation. The office's open-plan layout makes it hard to concentrate, so she listens to music surreptitiously to help her focus. She exercises outside at lunch to get some natural light because the windows' blinds are always down and she's sitting under florescent lighting all day. A reliance on paper means everyone's desks are piled high with documents, and book cases stacked with files make the office seem cramped. Although she likes everyone, she finds the job intensely unfulfilling.

She knows this isn't the life she wants, so in her free time she works freelance. She writes, illustrates and translates so that soon she can quit her job to begin a new chapter in her life as a self-employed illustrator.