



2005 LOTE: Japanese First Language GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral examination assesses the students' knowledge and skill in using spoken language. It has two sections: a Presentation and a Discussion of a chosen Detailed Study. Each section should last for approximately five minutes (a total of approximately 10 minutes).

In general, students this year were well informed of the examination procedures and showed a good understanding of the requirements of this examination, especially the correct use of cue cards, the length of the presentation, and the stipulation to give only their first name. It was good to see that cue cards on which a whole script had been written were not sighted this year, although some students had used sentences rather than point form notes. Most students kept to the time limit of four minutes for the Presentation.

The performance levels of students were varied. Some students had prepared sufficiently for the Presentation, demonstrating a deep knowledge and elaborating on ideas and opinions linked to the texts studied. They were also able to clarify any points presented confidently and develop their ideas and opinions further during the Discussion. In strong performances, students included critical analysis of the texts and other resources, giving opinions clearly and logically, and discussing findings and views spontaneously while reflecting on real life. On the other hand, some students did not read the texts thoroughly, or they had difficulty comprehending the main points from the texts related to their issues. In some performances, students did not respond appropriately to the questions raised by assessors in the Discussion because of inadequate preparation given to the issues. These students gave only general and superficial responses. As a result, they performed poorly despite their good oral skills.

While most students were able to follow the examination procedures correctly, there were still students who needed to improve not only the content of their chosen topic, but also their analysis and presentation skills. Students must realise that this examination is more than a simple test of their ability to speak Japanese. Some students seemed assume that they did not need to prepare and could improvise during the examination. This is an inadequate approach. It is strongly recommended that time be allocated in class to practising both the oral Presentation and Discussion. Frequent rehearsal of the tasks should build confidence and fluency, and help to decrease the effects of nervousness. It will also give students the opportunity to discuss any issues with the class as part of the preparation for this examination. Even First Language students require this kind of preparation.

The oral examination requires logical thinking and critical evaluation, as mentioned above. To develop these abilities, students should be aware of social issues in their environment and consider them carefully. Students are encouraged to broaden their horizons, so they can understand different points of view. It is also recommended that students articulate thoughts and exchange opinions with others after reading books and watching films. These kinds of activities can help students develop the skills and knowledge required for the task.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Presentation

Before the Presentation, students are asked to state their first name and to give a brief outline of the selected issues (no more than one minute). Students may use support objects and/or a cue card (no more than 20 cm x 12.5 cm) written on in point form. Cue cards may need to be shown to the assessors in order to verify the size and writing form.

After the one-minute outline, students perform a four-minute Presentation. In the Presentation, they should take a clear stance on the issue selected and be able to support their opinions with evidence. Most students successfully performed the presentation within the given time.

Good students emphasised important points by changing their tone and putting stress on some phrases, and were able to engage the assessors' attention. Weak students had long pauses or hesitated due to a lack of preparation. Also, some students were affected by nerves: some spoke too quickly, while others hesitated and relied too much on the cue cards.

This year students demonstrated better skills in the Presentation than they did last year. In the more successful presentations, students showed that they could establish conceptual links between different resources and highlight



examples to support their views. In poorer presentations, students mostly summarised the texts studied, and did not objectively evaluate or elucidate adequate solutions for their issues in the conclusion.

Criterion 1: Capacity to present the information appropriately and effectively

The communication criterion has three areas: accuracy, variety, and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar; clarity of expression (pronunciation, intonation, stress, and tempo); and capacity to engage with audience. Students should be sure to include a wide range of vocabulary and expressions in their presentation. They should practise enunciating clearly, pausing when appropriate, and maintaining a smooth and even delivery as much as possible. Monotonous, memorised and/or rushed presentations are not desirable.

Criterion 2: Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

The content criterion has three key areas: relevance of information/ideas; range of information/ ideas; and capacity to support and elaborate on information with reasons/examples/evidence. Students must include highly relevant information and ideas and express them clearly and logically. It is not sufficient to simply present the arguments and information; students must develop a conclusion and be able to discuss the issues in depth.

Section 2 – Discussion

In the Discussion section, students are asked to discuss aspects of the nominated issue and clarify or elaborate on any points presented. All students had studied a sub-topic based on Language and Culture through Literature and the Arts. Students are also expected to discuss related, broader issues beyond the one selected for the Detailed Study.

Some students this year were able to discuss the issues effectively, and strong students readily responded to assessors' questions and comments. They demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the issues, were able to explain their opinions convincingly and proposed possible solutions for their issues within the framework of the Japanese social system. However, many students presented conventional and superficial ideas. They repeated simplistic opinions, which were often drawn from limited study. Their arguments were usually only abstract and they were unable to move to more specific, everyday issues. Other weak students gave incoherent arguments and confused viewpoints.

Sub-topics for the Detailed Study covered a wide range. Some interesting topics were 'Bullying', 'Human rights', 'Discrimination' and 'Changes in the Japanese language'. Successful topics were investigated in depth using three texts and other resources, and analysed critically. Good students were able to not only argue from an individual viewpoint, but also expand to include wider social perspectives. They could also discuss complicated issues from different perspectives. Furthermore, by using Japanese literature such as Tanka, some students successfully expressed emotions such as sorrow and agony.

All students are urged to choose a sub-topic carefully, in consultation with their teacher, and to study the topic in depth. In order to achieve high marks, students should explore topics as fully as possible and develop an understanding of the issues through the three texts they choose in the field of Literature and Arts. Additional resources help students to develop a deeper understanding of the issues, and to form opinions with a clear stance. Moreover, students should not only consider issues based on their own viewpoints, but also consider them from different angles.

There was a wide variety of resources used, including novels, journals, films, TV dramas, magazine articles, newspaper articles, documentaries, interviews, questionnaires and the Internet. Although many students studied three texts drawn from the field of Literature and Arts as suggested by the Study Design, some students still used only simple articles from the Internet and/or editorials, which are insufficient as main texts.

Criterion 3: capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

The communication criterion has three areas: accuracy, variety and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar; clarity of expression (pronunciation, intonation, stress, and tempo); capacity to link with assessors. It is inappropriate for students to use a casual style speech at any time during the oral examination. While this was generally adhered to in the Presentation, some students had a tendency to use a casual style in the Discussion. Students should be aware that they must maintain the correct register even when discussing the issues.

Criterion 4: relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

The content criterion consisted of three areas: relevance of information and ideas; range of information and ideas; capacity to support and elaborate information with reasons/examples/evidences/new ideas. In the Discussion section students are expected to expand on and explain their views and respond appropriately to the assessors' in-depth questions and comments.



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

2005 was the first year for the reduced examination time of two hours (plus 15 minutes of reading time at the beginning). Most students coped well with the new time pressures and completed their answers to all questions; however, the shortened examination time highlighted the importance for students to practise reading a set of written texts (2000 ji in total) and reorganise the content, in 900–1100 ji, in 40 minutes. Students who handled Section 2 well usually achieved good overall results.

The majority of students generally wrote Kanji correctly. There were less *ateji* (Kanji with the same reading, but an incorrect meaning), incorrect *okurigana* (Hiragana following Kanji) and incorrect Kanji characters compared with the amount of errors in 2004. Students and teachers should be congratulated for their better preparation in Kanji. It is recommended that students use *kyoiku kanji* throughout their VCE studies, so they do not have to lose time checking kanji in the dictionary during the examination.

Although the incorrect application of text types and incorrect use of *genkoo yooshi* have been identified as weaknesses almost every year in the Assessment Report, a number of students still lost marks because of these errors. Students are strongly recommended to learn and practise the specific requirements of various text types and the correct use of *genkoo yooshi* (for example, indenting three boxes in front of a title). Students are required to read a wide range of topics in the Study Design to broaden their vocabulary and familiarise themselves with different topics.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Students were most successful in this section and had little trouble identifying the key information for Questions 1 and 2. However, as 25 marks are allocated to this section, all information needed to be included in these answers.

Some misuse of Kanji was still observed. Some students wrote 「製作」 instead of 「制作」, and others did not use all *kyoiku kanji* (for example, 夫婦、脚本家、映像、声優 and 高齢化 were written in Hiragana).

In Question 3 the majority of students only wrote about 100 ji, which was not sufficient to include all the necessary information. Students are advised to read the instructions carefully and follow them properly, as 150 ji was given as a guideline for how much information needed to be included. It was also important to use conjunctions and ending expressions to develop the summary in a meaningful way. The majority of students wrote several key sentences taken from the listening text, but did not successfully adapt the structures into their summary. Conjunctions such as *ので*、*従って* and *また* are recommended, as well as endings such as *～という不安がある*.

Question 1

二人の関係	夫婦
そう判断した理由	「私たちも結婚したときから見ていた。」「確か美智子が生まれた年に始まった」と言っているから。

Question 2

変わること	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ドラえもんの声の大山のぶ代さんを始めとする声優陣が全員変わる。 総監督脚本家など制作の主なスタッフが一新される。 映像がハイビジョン化される。
その理由	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 放送 25 周年で一区切りついたこと。 声優の高齢化
変わらないこと	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ドラえもん、のび太といったキャラクターは基本的に変わらない。

総監督、脚本家など制作の主なスタッフが一新される is the suggested answer for one of the changed features, and all factors, such as 「総監督」「脚本家」「制作」「主な」「スタッフ」, needed to be included in the answer.

Question 3

Students were asked to write a summary in approximately 150 ji. They should have included the following points.



- 後任に適任者が見つかるか。
- 違和感を感じる為、慣れるまでに時間がかかるであろう。
- まるで違う作品のようになってしまうかもしれない。
- 今までのように楽しい作品を作り出すことができるかどうか。

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Question 4

This was the hardest section of this examination. The topic (animal experimentation) is not a topic close to students' everyday life and the vocabulary used in the texts was often scientific. Successful students were able to identify key information correctly and also describe clearly, in a well-balanced manner, without copying sentences or expressions straight from the reading texts.

A small number of students did not read the question carefully and wrote their own opinions rather than a report of both the positive and negative aspects of animal experimentation using information from the reading texts. In the Study Design it is clearly stated that Section 2 of the written examination assesses students' knowledge and skill in analysing information from written texts. Future students will benefit from exercises where they need to identify and synthesise relevant information and ideas from two written texts.

The following points needed to be identified as reasons for and against animal experimentation.

動物実験に反対：

- ① 動物の権利を無視している
- ② 動物と人間では薬の効果が異なるかもしれない

動物実験に賛成：

- ① 薬の有効性のチェック（薬が本当に効くか調べるために必要）
- ② 薬の安全性のチェック（安全な薬か調べるために必要）

The majority of students were able to identify two reasons against animal experimentation, but a number of students had difficulty in ascertaining the two reasons to support animal experimentation, mainly because they seemed to be sidetracked by the examples in Text 3.

Many students wrote a couple of hundred ji about the example that the SARS virus was found for the first time through animal experimentation. However, this example was only used in Text 3 to explain the necessity of using animal experimentation to prepare for an unknown infectious disease. The word limit for this section (900–1100 ji) is not very long, so students should not waste words in describing an example that is not directly used as a reason for supporting animal experiments to invent a new medicine.

To receive a high score for the first criterion (the capacity to identify and synthesise relevant information and ideas from the texts), students needed to successfully identify all of the four reasons explained above.

Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

Students had to respond to one question from the five options given. The numbers of students who chose each writing task were relatively evenly spread, and each question, except Question 9, had some excellent pieces of writing.

A number of students did not appear to read the instructions carefully and wrote their responses without fully understanding the requirements of the task. For example, in Question 6 most students focused only on home care volunteer services for elderly people, but that was just one example of volunteer work and other types of volunteer work were expected to be discussed also. Students are advised to read the instructions carefully and draw a plan for paragraph development before rushing to start writing.



Question 5

Question 5 asked students to write the script for an evaluative speech on the effect of 'slow food' on people's lives.

The highest number of students chose this topic. Students were asked to write the script for a speech to present the positive and negative effects on people's lives of slow food. However, the majority of students only described what 'slow food' is in comparison with 'fast food'. Those who used a well-balanced argument to describe the effects of 'slow food' received a high score. Some of the positive effects that were mentioned included a relaxed life style, better family relationships, improved taste and health. The major negative effects mentioned in students' responses were lack of time, pressure of cost and the loss of employment in the fast food industry.

Question 6

Students were asked to write an evaluative letter to the Tokyo Education Board about the positive and negative aspects of studying community service as a compulsory subject in high school. As students were able to write their own personal view as a high school student, it seemed easier for students to produce a letter from various viewpoints, and a number of well-considered letters were produced in this topic.

Successful students showed that they knew how to write a formal letter and were able to use conventional expressions in their letters.

Question 7

Question 7 asked students to write two days' journal entries of a trip wearing Japanese clogs. This imaginative task produced some very creative journal entries that attracted readers' attention with clever story lines. Successful students were able to illustrate climactic incidents in the trip rather than just narrating what was happening. Students lost marks when they did not follow the correct text type.

Question 8

Students were asked to write an imaginative story about the relationship between a robot pet, Paro, and elderly people in a nursing centre. There were some excellent stories containing heart-warming connections between Paro and elderly people. It was possible to write the story from anyone's point of view (Paro, an elderly person, a nurse or a third person), but the failure to create a clear main character made some stories less attractive to readers.

Question 9

Students were asked to write an evaluative article to explain which type of school (single-sex or co-educational) should be chosen for Japanese high school students who want to come to Australia to study. There were very few successful articles that showed a well-balanced view of the different types of schools. This seemed to be because most Japanese First Language students had a knowledge of their own school but not other schools, due to their limited time in Australia.

Students who only mentioned things such as subject choices and the benefits of studying in Australia were given no mark for the first criterion (relevance, breadth and depth of content) as it is clearly stated in the instructions that they needed to explain which type of school should be chosen by comparing good points and bad points of both single-sex and co-educational schools.