



2007 LOTE: Japanese Second Language Report GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2007 the standard of many students was very good and it was evident that they had prepared thoroughly and practised giving detailed answers to questions and directing the conversation. However, over-preparation can sometimes be a problem, particularly in the Discussion section, and students must learn to listen to the assessors' questions in their entirety and to give the assessors the opportunity to respond and interact too.

Topic selection is very important for the Discussion. Teachers need to assist students in selecting topics and sub-topics which interest the students and which have various points of view. Teachers should bear in mind that less able students should perhaps select topics which include familiar vocabulary. Some weaker students found themselves out of their depth when they had selected a difficult topic.

Students and teachers need to remember that the Conversation and Discussion sections are different and require different sorts of knowledge. Students need to develop skills to be able to speak Japanese in appropriate linguistic and cultural ways for the Conversation section, which deals chiefly with students' everyday lives. However, for the Discussion, students need to learn to explore ideas, opinions and information. More formal language is required in this section.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Many students did very well in this section and it was clear that they had been actively using their conversation skills throughout their schooling in Japanese. It is very important that teachers prepare students in their early years as it is during this time that they develop skills in pronunciation, stress and tempo, plus the confidence to deal with conversations in Japanese.

Sometimes students ignored assessors' questions and kept talking about whatever they wanted; this was a problem of interaction and even very capable students attempted to dominate the discussion rather than interact with the assessors. Some students over-memorised their content and needed greater flexibility. On the other hand, weaker students sometimes waited for questions, giving little elaboration and hesitating to carry the conversation forward. Teachers should train students to develop depth of content.

'Asking' words that proved problematic included *どんなこと* and *どう*. For instance, *今年はどうでしたか* and *今年一番楽しかったことは何ですか* are very natural questions to ask a student completing Year 12. Students should also be able to respond to *きょうだいはいますか*, but many students did not understand this question.

Some 外来語 continue to prove difficult for students to pronounce: *イタリア*, *メルボルン*, *オーストラリア* (not *オーストレリア*), *カラオケ* (not *カラオキ*) and *サッカー* (not *ソカー*) were regularly mispronounced.

Some students used vocabulary *理科算数* when they needed to use secondary equivalents of *数学* and *科学* (or, for further distinction, *せいぶつ*, *ぶつり*, *かがく*). *いろいろ* was often mispronounced (*いるいる*) and *とても* and *たくさん* (*たくさん人*) were used incorrectly.

The full range of VCE grammatical patterns should be familiar and students should feel comfortable with their usage. Students need to check usage of *あります* and *います*, avoiding *あらない*. Students need to be reminded that *あまり* should always be used with negative verbs and adjectives. Some patterns which regularly caused confusion were *から*・*まで*, *たことがあります* (not *たことができました*), *たりたりします* (not *たりたりです*) and *だと思*います.

In addition, *あいづち* need to be practised in the early years of Japanese learning. They are very important and even weak students who can use *あいづち* often manage some degree of communication and interaction. However, if they



are not regularly incorporated into conversation, their usage can be inappropriate. Examples of ones often misused are そうですね, はいそうです and はいわかりました (a phrase which many like to use to show that they know what they have been asked and that they are going to respond).

Time words are very important and some students still confuse 来週 with 先週, and 来年 with 去年. Many students did not understand the word がつき (school term).

Students should avoid casual language. It is inappropriate to use うん when conversing in the examination situation.

Section 2 – Discussion

Many of the points discussed in the above section were relevant to this section also. Topic selection is of key importance and teachers/students are encouraged to choose a topic that presents an issue and is of interest to the student. Students find it far easier to discuss topics that are of interest to them and perhaps introduce some controversial aspects. Students are encouraged to choose a topic which is within their range of ability and which has vocabulary that they can use comfortably. They should be able to explain any words used in their one-minute introduction. The topic and sub-topic must be introduced very clearly to assessors and within the specified time.

Sometimes いじめ, ひきこもり and 社会的^{てき}プレッシャー were studied in a superficial manner and generalisation and stereotyping were common. Some students who had prepared the same topics used almost identical content. They should be encouraged to select different sub-topics with different content. Some students chose inappropriate topics. It must be noted that everyone, including excellent students, needs to research their topic and not just draw on past experiences. Assessors felt that many students could have improved their marks by studying their topic in more detail so that they could have elaborated or given more examples and evidence of information.

Students need to use linking strategies and think carefully about the topic, ensuring that they develop their own opinions.

Sometimes good students were so anxious to impart their knowledge that they wanted to take control of the conversation, hardly allowing any time for the assessors to speak or listening and responding to their questions. Many students wanted to direct the discussion totally and continued their introduction using 次に...について話したいと思います. These students need to wait for assessors' questions. This year many students often said それについて勉強しませんでした or すみません、日本語でせつめいできません and assumed that was enough to say.

Many students did not understand どう思いますか orを読んで何が分かりましたか. Students should know expressions such as かいけつするために, どうしたらいいですか, いいてん and よいてん.

Students must know the names and details of the materials used; just saying that they used a book or an article is insufficient. This year, some students used a Japanese TV drama (1 リットルの涙^{なみだ}) but their introductions resembled a book review. Students are reminded that they must be able to engage in a discussion on anything mentioned in the introduction; for example, technical terms such as しゅるい and 売り上げ.

Many students relied on rote-learned material. Tenses were sometimes incorrect and the questions asked by assessors were not always understood. Students at Year 12 level should have a good knowledge of more complex structures; however, they should ensure that the language they use is appropriate for their level of knowledge. Sometimes the vocabulary was too complex.

Some topics which worked well this year were: じゅく, ひきこもり, 国際結婚^{こくさいけっこん}, 自動販売機^{じどうはんばいき}, 少年犯罪^{しょうねんはんざい}, 給食^{きゅうじょく} (健康^{けんこう}), 高齢化社会^{こうれいか}, ニートとフリーター^{げいしや}, 芸者^{げいしや}, 環境問題^{かんきょうもんだい} and おんだんか. These topics enabled good students to demonstrate their knowledge, opinions and ability to bring up relevant issues.

Students and teachers are reminded that only a heading and labels are acceptable on any support materials used for the Discussion. Neither Japanese nor English sentences are permitted.



Students should be aware of the need to adhere to examination procedures and that appropriate dress and behaviour are required.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2007 students coped well with both the written and listening sections of the examination. Most students were able to complete the tasks in all sections, and many students gave excellent responses. Their answers were clear, specific and relevant to the questions.

However, assessors were disappointed with the performance in Section 1 – Listening and responding. Some students had trouble with time words and numbers and Part B in this section appeared to be particularly challenging. Many students understood the text but they were unable to convey the answers correctly in Japanese. Students are encouraged to practise these types of tasks in particular.

Once again, students would benefit from further developing their examination techniques. Some students needed to write their answers more neatly in both English and Japanese; marks cannot be given if the writing is illegible. It is most important to read the question carefully to avoid unnecessary errors. This includes reading the tasks in Section 3 in both English and Japanese and taking note of every requirement for each topic, such as the kind of writing, text type, purpose and audience.

Students are encouraged to use the reading time to predict some of the recorded information and the answers in order to make it easier to focus when listening to the text.

More specific comments on student performance appear in the separate section below.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Very few students gave the correct answer to the finishing time in Question 1. Questions 2 and 3 were handled well. Question 4 proved to be a little more challenging for some students as they failed to recognise *めいわくにならないよ* うに. 'Quietly' or 'without disturbing others' was often left out of the response.

Question 1

It begins at 9.20 and finishes at 10.50.

Question 2

You will not be allowed to enter the examination room.

Question 3

Erasers

Question 4

You may leave quietly without disturbing others.

Text 2

Most students seemed to understand the text and were able to complete the table. However, many responses were not sufficiently correct to gain full marks. Students must always provide clear and relevant answers. Some students left out key words in their responses. On the other hand, some students gave answers with irrelevant information, such as 'Sue wants to become a manager of K-Mart' and 'the restaurant is hot in summer'. Many students misunderstood *教えてく* れる. Ambiguous answers such as 'it is hot in summer' should be avoided.



Question 5

	Advantage of the job	Disadvantage of the job	Reason for working
Sue	Discount card for workers and family members	Low wages	Wants to become a manager of a big store like K-Mart in the future
Ichiro	Either of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wages are good being taught about various dishes. 	Either of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have to work until late the kitchen is hot in summer. 	Wants to own a restaurant in the future

Text 3

A considerable number of students failed to identify three things in Question 7, and many responses contained guesses.

Question 6

You can experience an earthquake.

Question 7

Any three of:

- open doors and windows
- extinguish fires
- turn off the gas
- hide under a big table.

Part B – Answer in Japanese

This section tests students' capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts and capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately. The answers needed to be written in Japanese. In order to score full marks, students had to give correct and relevant information to the questions asked. Moreover, students needed to use VCE Kanji and accurate script and grammatical patterns in their responses. Generally, this section was handled reasonably well and students responded to all questions.

Text 4

Several students said that the park was convenient but failed to provide a reason why, therefore their answers were not awarded marks. It was disappointing to see many students unable to recognise the price of admission for children. Some students confused 六つ and 三つ. Many misspelled ペット.

Question 8

- だれでも楽しめる。
- とおくに行かなくてもいいからべんり。
- おんせんが六つある。
- ホテルもある。
- ペットもいっしょに行ける
- 子どもは千六百円。

Text 5

Some students used しゅくだい instead of 勉強 in their response to Question 9. Students at Year 12 level should know the difference between these words. One of the correct answers in Question 10 is 友だちがたくさん入っているから, not 友だちがたくさん入るから. Students must check their answers to ensure the correct tense is used.

Question 9

勉強する時間がなくなるからしんぱいしている。

Question 10

Either of:

- 中学生の時からサッカーをしているから。
- 友だちがたくさん入っているから。



Question 11

Any three of:

- りょうしんと話しあう。
- クラブかつどうのいいてんをせつめいする。
- 週末にたくさん勉強する。
- せいせきがわるくなったら、クラブをやめる。

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

This task assesses students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of the texts. Students understood most of the text and were able to answer all the questions. However, some students lost marks as their responses did not have the required details or included irrelevant information. Students should always read the text and the questions thoroughly and write succinct answers that are relevant to the questions.

Text 6

Question 12

All of:

- English was difficult
- he couldn't keep up the lessons
- so much of the homework was writing reports
- he couldn't make Australian friends.

Many students found it difficult to translate ^{じゅぎょう}授業についていけない, which means 'can not keep up lessons'.

Question 13

Both of:

- he received help from exchange students from other countries
- his teachers helped him at lunch time.

Some students wrote 'his teacher helped him during holidays'. It was disappointing that 昼休み was not understood. ところ in 分からないところ does not translate as 'a place (to go)' in this case. It means 'the things or points he did not understand'.

Question 14

He made friends when he attended a church youth club every Sunday.

A considerable number of students wrote 月曜日 in their answers. A few students wrote 'a news club' or 'a course club' instead of 'a youth club'. It was obvious that they needed to read Katakana words more carefully.

Question 15

All of:

- listened to the teacher
- gave their opinions
- presented what they researched
- investigated on the Internet.

^{はっぴょう}発表する confused some students. 'Present' is a more appropriate translation than 'announce'.

Question 16

Any three of:

- while he was researching, he learnt many things naturally
- he came to enjoy his research
- lessons became interesting
- reading and writing in English became easier.

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しぜんに学べました does not mean ‘learnt about nature’. 楽 in 楽になり、caused some problems. Although it can mean ‘comfortable’ or ‘enjoyable’, in this case it is ‘easy’.

Question 17

The assignments took a lot of time.

This was a simple question, but it caused trouble for some students. 時間がかかっていやだと思いました does not mean that Makoto thought assignments took a lot of time. It translates to ‘assignments took him a lot of time and he was annoyed (because he had to spend a lot of time)’.

Question 18

Both of:

- the teachers read all the assignments
- the teachers gave students individual advice.

Question 19

Any three of:

- lessons are boring because students just listen to the teacher
- test and exam results are very important
- some students forget the things they memorised for the test after two or three days
- emphasis is placed on memorising.

先生の話聞くだけ means ‘just listen to the teacher’. Some students misunderstood this as ‘only teachers speak’.

Part B – Answer in Japanese

This task assesses students’ capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the texts as well as to convey information accurately and appropriately in Japanese. Students must use the VCE prescribed kanji in their responses. Misspelling of the scripts and grammatical errors resulted in the deduction of marks. Some students just copied sections of the text. Consequently, their answers did not match the questions.

Text 7

Question 21 and Question 22 asked ‘なぜ’ and ‘どうして’. The answers to these questions should end with からです。 or から。

Question 20

Any one of:

- プレゼントをあげたりもらったりする。
- 高きゅうレストランでロマンチックに過ごす。
- ガールフレンドのために20万円も使う。

Question 21

Any one of:

- ひっしやは子どもの時、家族とクリスマスをすごしたい思い出があるから。
- 日本ではまだたくさんの方がクリスマスを家で家族といっしょにすごしたいと思っているから。
- 日本ではまだたくさんの方がクリスマスをひっしやおなじようにかんがえているから。
- クリスマスをひっしやおなじようにかんがえている人が多かったから。

It was not enough to simply say ‘the author was happy because 78 per cent of the people surveyed wanted to spend time with their families at Christmas’. Answers needed to include **why** this would have made him happy.

Question 22

日本にはむかしからおちゅうげんやおせいぼというおくり物のしゅうかんがある。このおくり物のしゅうかんのよう、クリスマスもプレゼントをあげる日になったから。



Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

This section was generally well handled. The majority of students' responses were within the required word length and displayed a good knowledge of the features of the various text types and the kind of writing required for each task. The use of Genkooyooshi and punctuation was also good. Students are reminded that using a pencil is quite acceptable and in this section it is advisable, as it is important to keep the script accurate, neat and legible.

Students should use the prescribed VCE Kanji and always check their spelling, especially of words written in Katakana. As in previous years, incorrect use of particles and inconsistent use of tense were problematic areas. Students are encouraged to practise using previous examination questions. Moreover, it is important to read each task carefully. The information required should be included and irrelevant details should be avoided.

Question 23

This was the most popular question. Although it was generally well done, many students just wrote about their holidays without including their career plans. Some answers were more like extended versions of the responses students had prepared for their oral examination and lacked adequate introductory and concluding sentences. A number of students were unsure about the features of an essay and failed to include a title and the author's name.

Question 24

Very few students wrote on this topic convincingly, as many wrote about Australia in general, rather than their home town. In most responses cultural and geographical features were not included. Some students concluded this task with an invitation to visit, as if they were writing a letter.

Question 25

This question was also a popular choice. Many students failed to give details about the trip and omitted to mention the trip being an 'end of year trip with friends'. Many responses were not convincing enough.

Question 26

This topic was generally well handled, but in some cases only advantages were mentioned. The better responses clearly outlined both the advantages and disadvantages of wearing school uniform and supported these with detailed reasons and examples.

Question 27

Very few students chose this topic and, of these, very few wrote well-developed stories that aroused the readers' interest. Students tended to have insufficient control of grammar and knowledge of vocabulary.