

# 2016 VCE Japanese First Language written examination report

## General comments

The majority of students achieved moderate results in the 2016 Japanese First Language written examination.

Many students used the incorrect *kanji*. The following are examples where *kanji* characters were commonly misused in response to questions in the examination (the appropriate correct characters are also shown):

Incorrect	Correct
多きく	大きく
近速	迅速
住ごす	過ごす
目視	目線
乗車客	乗客
交務員・公俊員	公務員
周落	集落
生長	成長
精意	誠意
活期的	画期的
特徴	特徴
主都圏	首都圏
通難	通勤
優先度	優先席

Higher-scoring students were generally able to identify key words in the examination questions and express their responses logically around those words with specific, appropriate and relevant information. Lower-scoring students did not identify the key words and their responses tended to be unfocused, with no natural progression or consistent theme in their writing. These deficiencies

can only be overcome by practice, in particular, practice in summarising information from various types of texts and writing a summary in a logical and sequenced manner.

Based on an overall assessment of the examination results, the following recommendations are made for teachers and for students of Japanese preparing for this examination:

- Students should read the examination paper carefully. They need to ensure that their responses address the questions asked and that they use *kanji* correctly. Some responses, particularly in Section 3 of the examination, did not take all aspects of the questions into account.
- Students need to be careful when writing *kanji*. For example, some of the correct *kanji* characters shown above were used in the examination questions, but were incorrectly transcribed by students. A number of characters used by students were not *kanji* at all.
- It is recommended that students practise using printed dictionaries, in preference to electronic dictionaries, when preparing for the examination. Students are encouraged to become proficient in the use of printed dictionaries as electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the examination.
- Students may find that using *genkooyooshi* (manuscript paper) will help with their writing of *kanji*, particularly in the spacing of characters.

## Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

### Section 1 – Listening and responding

Section 1 of the examination required students to identify and understand key points and respond to the questions using that information.

Most students answered the questions in this section quite well. The higher-scoring students summarised their responses using the identified key points. Lower-scoring students were generally able to identify the key points, but were unable to structure their responses around those points at the standard expected. Question 1f., in particular, caused a number of students some difficulty.

A number of students were unable to respond specifically to Questions 1b. and 1c., and some misunderstood the text of Question 1e. In order to properly respond to Question 1e., students needed to understand the point that Mr Fukunishi appreciated that Mr Tanaka had visited him. A number of students did not understand this.

#### Text 1

##### Question 1a.

- 公務員 / 地方・ふるさとの姿を守る仕事をしている。(Public servant/working to maintain the countryside of people's home towns.)
- (奈良県の人口300人の) 小さい村出身。(Comes from a small village (in Nara Prefecture with a population of 300 people))

##### Question 1b.

- 活性化を実現した人の努力は評価する。(He values the effort made by local communities to achieve revitalisation.)
- その言葉自体は大嫌いだ。(He hates the word itself.)

- どこでも実現できるわけではない。/それが絶対にできない集落もある。(It cannot be achieved everywhere/There are communities that can never achieve it/where it can never be achieved.)

**Question 1c.**

- 消滅が避けられない集落に対し、無関心でいいのか。

(Whether it is okay to be uninterested in the communities facing unavoidable extinction.)

- 絶対に活性化できない集落がなくなるのを、黙って見ていて/見逃してもいいのか。

(Being uninterested in the near-extinct communities/Doing nothing, watching communities disappear.)

**Question 1d.**

昔は、人口が百人以上いて、賑やかな集落だった。現在は、一夫婦（二人）だけが住む（限界）集落である。

(In the past, it was a vibrant community with a population of over 100. Now it is a [near-extinct] community with only one couple [two people] living in it.)

**Question 1e.**

辺境の地に住む自分たちにわざわざ会いに来てくれた/来て話を聞いてくれたから。/ 辺境の地に住む自分たちをわざわざ訪問してくれたから。

(Because [Mr Tanaka] came a long way to visit them in the remote areas.)

**Question 1f.**

The following points should have been included in students' responses.

- 消えゆくふるさとに住む人々に最期まで寄り添う。(Be with the people living in the disappearing home town until the end)
- そこに住む人々に会いに行き、話を聞く。(Visit the people and listen to their stories)
- 人々の生活を最後までサポートする。(Support the people to maintain their lifestyles until the end)
- 文化や歴史を後世に残す。(Pass on their culture and history to the future generations)
- (人々の生活、) 集落の様子を写真に撮る。(Photograph people's lives in the communities)

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

第一の要点は、消滅しそうな集落に住む人々に最期まで寄り添うことである。そのために、集落を訪れ、人々の話を聞く。また、最期まで幸せに自分のふるさとで暮らせるよう、一人一人の生活を最後までサポートする。

二つ目の要点は、その文化や歴史を後世に残すことである。集落の様子を写真に撮ったり、人々の話を聞いて、それを伝えることが大事だ。

(The first point is to stay with the people living in the near-extinct communities until the end by visiting the communities and listening to the people's stories. Also, to maintain each person's life to the very end, so that they live happily in their own home town.)

The second point is to leave their culture and history for the future generations. It is important to take photos of their lives and listen to people's stories to pass them on to others.)

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Texts 2 and 3

#### Question 2

In Question 2 of Section 2 students were required to demonstrate their comprehension of Texts 2 and 3, identify the main ideas and information in the texts and write a report intended for publication in a travel magazine. The five key areas of the texts were:

1. 一昔前の通勤電車について触れている(Outline of the general image of previous commuter trains)  
例) 大量輸送重視、混雑による不快を許容する乗客  
(Importance of mass transport, passengers who accept the unpleasantness of the congestion/packed trains/overcrowding)
2. 最近増えてきた通勤スタイルについて触れている (Explanation of the recent commuting style)  
例) 座席指定・特急電車での通勤、ゆとりある通勤・通学  
(Commuting with a seat reservation, the limited express train, easy commuting, attending school)
3. 車内でのスマホ・インターネット利用 (The use of smartphones/internet on smartphones in the train)  
例) 車内広告の在り方の変化、車内は情報を得る時間  
(Change in the system of showing advertising inside the carriage, when people are on the train it is the time to get information)
4. フリースペースの導入(Introducing the 'free space' )  
例) 排除されない社会作り(Leading society not to exclude people/making this an inclusive society.)
5. インテロス導入について触れている(Outline/summary of the introduction of INTEROS)  
例) 安全と責任のシェア(Sharing the responsibility of security)

Most students attempted to address four, rather than all five, of these areas in their responses, with the consequence that the two texts were not always adequately summarised.

High-scoring students correctly identified the key words and main points, and showed that they clearly understood that information by succinctly, logically and accurately summarising it. Conversely, lower-scoring students had difficulty in identifying the key points and structuring logical responses. Some students wrote about their subjective feelings and opinions, which were not related to the texts.

Many students would benefit from regularly practising the preparation of summaries of texts. They would also benefit by better using *genkooyooshi* (manuscript paper) to assist with the writing of Japanese, including the rules of spacing characters and punctuation. Such rules are basic knowledge that students should have practice in before sitting for written examinations in Japanese. There is scope for most students to improve their *kanji*-writing skills, including *okurigana* (declensional kana endings).

## Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

In Section 3 students were able to choose from a number of questions. The two most popular were Questions 5 and 7.

Question 5 required students to write an article about the benefits and potential difficulties of using expensive nursing robots in nursing facilities. Students choosing this question were generally able to describe both the benefits and limitations, although some students needed to better balance their responses between the benefits and potential difficulties. Generally, the content of student responses was not adequately developed.

Question 7 required students to write an imaginative story commencing with a circumstance where something extraordinary falls from the sky. Some students did not commence with the required lead-in. Students are reminded that they need to read examination questions carefully before writing. Other students wrote stories based on events in their daily lives, without displaying the required creativity or describing the emotions felt by the characters in the story.

Questions 3 and 4 were the next most popular questions of Section 3. Those questions also required students to identify benefits and limitations of described situations. The responses of lower-scoring students tended to lack objectivity, logical structure and substance.

In the Section 3 responses there were several instances of students writing *kanji* characters incorrectly, even when transcribing characters from the examination.

Question 6 required students to write a diary over two days when the special event was a success. The diary text type requires a date, the day and the weather in plain form. In this question, students needed to explain the event and how the event ran successfully over two days.

The following recommendations may assist students sitting Section 3 of this examination:

- Practising reading and writing *kanji* is crucial. Students should engage in regular *kanji* exercises at school and at home.
- Students should clearly understand and practise different writing styles; that is, informative, evaluative and imaginative writing. Past examinations are a useful source of practice questions for this purpose.
- Students should practise preparing for examinations under strict time constraints. Past examinations are useful for students to practise writing Japanese under simulated examination conditions.
- The use of paper dictionaries can be useful in committing *kanji* to memory.