

# 2021 VCE Japanese First Language written external assessment report

## General comments

All students attempted all the required questions in the 2021 examination.

It is apparent that some students need to improve their *kanji* skills. There were three main categories of mistakes students commonly made, briefly described as follows.

- Inadvertent use of homonym words (同音異義語; i.e. words that have the same pronunciation but differ in meaning). For example, where students intended to use 専攻 (meaning 'major') they used the homonym 専行 (meaning 'doing arbitrary decision'). Or, where 業界 (industry) was intended, 業介 was used.
- Using malformed *kanji* shapes. Many *kanji* characters written by students lacked necessary lines, or had extra lines added.
- Incorrectly using words visually similar to words intended. For example, students used 人林 where 人材 (human resources) was intended.

These types of mistakes are easily made by students of Japanese living in an environment where English is the lingua franca. Such mistakes are avoided by regular practice in writing *kanji*.

Students are allowed to use a printed dictionary in the examination. They should practise using the dictionary effectively in an examination environment to avoid many common mistakes.

## Specific information

Note: 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.

English translations of the indicative Japanese texts are also shown.

## Section 1 – Listening and responding

Section 1 required students to listen to a reading of Text 1. The associated Questions 1a. to 1e. were designed to test the capacity of students to understand general and specific aspects of the spoken text, and to convey information accurately and appropriately in their written Japanese responses. Most students were able to answer all questions in the section, although many struggled to answer question 1c. and 1e.

## Question 1a.

- 経済学を専攻している(学んでいる)大学生が、高校生を対象に(対して)スピーチをしている。A university student who is studying economics as a major is giving a speech to high school students.

## Question 1b.

- 室内の温度が保たれ、エアコンの電気代が節約される。Maintaining the temperature inside a building/house/room saves air-conditioning costs.
- 勉強の効率が上がり、学習にかかる経費が節約される/浮く。Improved study efficiency saves on the cost of learning.

## Question 1c.

- 世界の色々な国々で、「森林浴」という言葉を題名に入れた英語の本が多数売られている。また、森林浴ツアーを行っている/というのものもある。In various countries around the world there are many books in English sold with the word *shinrin-yoku* included in the title. Also, they have *shinrin-yoku* tours.

## Question 1d.

- 緑の多い裕福な地域では、気温が抑えられる。一方で、緑の少ない裕福でない地域では、気温が上昇する・ヒートアイランド現象が起こる。結果として、生活の快適さや、エアコン代に差が生まれる。In relatively wealthy areas there is much greenery, which helps to suppress high temperatures. In less wealthy areas with less greenery, temperatures tend to rise due to heat island effects. Consequently, a gap between liveability and air-conditioning cost between those areas is generated.

## Question 1e.

In their responses to this question, students generally identified some of the required points from the spoken text, but many did not identify all those they needed to include in their answer. Students should have included the following points in their responses:

- スペースが必要 (needs space)
- メンテナンスにお金がかかる (maintenance costs money)
- 木を育てる知識と経験が必要・得られる (requires, or can gain, knowledge and experience of growing trees)
- 格差の少ない社会づくりに貢献できる/近づけられる (can contribute to making a more equal and better society)
- この学校に行きたいと思う生徒が増えて、学校のバリューが上がる (raise the value of the school by attracting more students).

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

Section 2 required students to read Texts 2 and 3 on the examination paper and then answer Question 2 in writing in Japanese. The question was designed to test the capacity of students to identify and synthesise information; write their responses accurately; present information in a structured and sequenced way; and use appropriate language and vocabulary, grammar, script and punctuation.

The 10 key points that students needed to identify in the two texts are summarised below in Japanese, with an indicative English translation following.

- ロボット技術が介護の為にどのように使われているか。(explanation of how robot technology is used in the aged care area)
- ロボット技術の効果・利点と問題点 (effects/advantages and issues arising from robot technology)
- 介護職の現状（仕事がきつい割には低賃金） (current state/issues of care workers [hard work, but low wages])
- 介護職の問題についての対策（処遇改善） (solution to the issues of care workers [better treatment and higher wages])
- 外国人介護人材を受け入れている点 (Japan is accepting long-term foreign workers)
- 外国人介護人について日本人の意見 (people's opinions about foreign caregivers)
- 家族介護者支援 (how family caregivers are supported)
- 家族介護者のニーズ (what family caregivers need)
- ランド・アルツハイマー村についての説明（入居前と変わらない日常生活が送れる） (explanation of Landais Alzheimer village [people can live in the same way as they did before coming to the village])
- 新しいケアモデルとして日本でも「村」を応用できないかということ（フレイル予防・治療） (possible use of the new 'village' care model in Japan [Prevention and treatment of frailty]).

Most students identified some of the points noted above. Higher scoring responses identified most or all of the points, incorporated them seamlessly and wrote answers clearly and logically. They appropriately structured the answers using precise and concise sentences. They summarised the information in their own words using the appropriate text type requirements and wrote a response appropriate to the specified audience, purpose, and style of writing.

Lower scoring responses typically did not use all the available information. Students struggled with writing their answers logically, using appropriate paragraphing and calling on a sufficiently broad vocabulary. As a result, their responses were often repetitive, generally not fluently structured, and tended to be unclear and poorly articulated.

Rectifying these deficiencies can only be achieved with extensive practice in the reading and writing of Japanese, both in and outside the classroom. Using *genkooyooshi* (manuscript paper) is an effective tool in such practice.

## Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

In this section, students chose one of five questions. The questions assessed students' capacity to write with appropriate relevance, breadth and depth; to structure and sequence their ideas appropriately; and to use appropriate vocabulary, script, punctuation and grammar.

The options were as follows:

- Question 3 required students to write an evaluative article about the benefits and difficulties of providing breakfasts at school. The article was to be published in the school newsletter.
- Question 4 required students to write an evaluative speech script for a local speech contest about the advantages and disadvantages of building bullet train networks in Shikoku.

- Question 5 required students to write two imaginative diary entries, one on the day the diarist won a contest for an idea about how to transform abandoned houses in their hometown, and the other about the day the local government unveiled the transformation to the houses.
- Question 6 required students to write an evaluative letter to a person in charge of an IT company planning to produce an AI-based language translator to be used on mobile phones when travelling. The letter was to include the potential advantages and concerns about using the translator.
- Question 7 required students to write an imaginative story starting with something writers found unexpected from their mother's childhood. The story was to be submitted for judging in a high school story contest.

All students chose to respond to Question 3.

The following general comments are offered to assist students answer writing in Japanese questions in future examinations.

## Use of *genkooyooshi*

Most students followed the rules of *genkooyooshi* to an acceptable standard in their writing. The most common deficiency was the inappropriate positioning of punctuation.

## Mixed forms

Students need to be careful not to use mixed forms when constructing sentences. The use of mixed forms, such as using both *です・ます* and *だ・である*, was not uncommon in the work of some students. When students reread their composition after completion, reviewing for the inappropriate use of mixed forms should be a priority.

## Text type requirements

Students should be aware of the main characteristics of a range of text types and gain experience in the writing of the various types.

## Sentences and paragraphing

Writing should be clear and flowing. Sentences should be capable of standing alone but nevertheless be logically and clearly linked to form paragraphs. Paragraphs are longer subsections in a piece of writing, each generally limited to one or a tightly constrained set of logically connected ideas. The construction of sentences, the formation of paragraphs and the linking of the paragraphs together to create a clear flowing piece of writing is a skill that takes time and experience.