



**2007** **LOTE: Japanese First Language GA 3: Examination**

**Oral component**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Japanese First Language oral examination assesses the students' knowledge and skill in using spoken Japanese. It has two sections: a Presentation and a Discussion of a chosen Detailed Study. The Presentation requires a brief outline of the issue selected (no more than one minute), followed by the presentation itself (no longer than four minutes). The brief outline requires the student to describe the Detailed Study topic, the titles of the main texts used and the main viewpoints on the issue. The topic and viewpoints should correspond to the content of the presentation. Students may be asked to cease their presentations after four and a half minutes.

Students may use objects and/or a cue card written on one side in point form and no larger than 20cm × 12.5 cm. Students are requested to show the card to assessors in order to verify the size and writing form.

In the Discussion section, which lasts for approximately five minutes, students are asked to discuss aspects of the nominated topic and clarify or elaborate on any points presented. Students are also expected to discuss related, broader issues beyond their selected topic. They may be asked questions related to the main texts studied.

In general, students this year were well informed about the procedures and the requirements of the oral examination. However, students should be reminded not to wear school uniform or to mention their full name. Most students used cue cards correctly, kept to the time limit of four minutes for the Presentation, and employed an appropriate register during their examination. Many students were able to argue main aspects of their topics within the five-minute discussion.

In some cases, students from the same school employed the same approach to the same issue. As a result, their presentations were very similar and their responses in the discussion were almost identical. In order to avoid this, it is strongly recommended that teachers ensure that students develop their own individual approach and responses to their issue. Students need to be aware that originality is important.

The performance levels of students were varied. Some students had prepared thoroughly for the examination. They were able to evaluate objectively and elaborate on opinions and ideas linked to the texts studied. These students discussed their views readily and logically and a possible solutions and/or specific examples.

On the other hand, some students did not research their topic adequately and did not comprehend the content of texts sufficiently or deal with information appropriately. Consequently, these students had some difficulty expressing comprehensive opinions and ideas and were not able to respond appropriately in the Discussion. They repeated the same ideas mentioned in the Presentation and were not able to develop viewpoints further in the Discussion because their conclusions were drawn from the texts, not their own ideas and thoughts. They gave general and superficial responses, which often relied only on personal experiences. Some of them had difficulty maintaining interaction with assessors. In addition, a few students did not understand basic vocabulary and expressions.

For a successful examination, it is crucial to improve comprehension skills. Students need to demonstrate that they understand an author's intention and the subject matter of a text. They need to evaluate the content, expressions and views, then critique the text using their own knowledge and experiences. Finally, they need to present their opinions and ideas logically. Students must show that their reading and thinking are clearly and logically linked.

It is recommended that teachers allocate time in class for students to read materials and books. They should have the opportunity to rehearse presenting their ideas and thoughts logically in both spoken and written form.

A wide variety of resources was used, including novels, non-fiction resources, reports, poems, feature articles of monthly magazines, films, TV dramas, documentaries, newspaper articles and editorials, texts of music, online resources and statistics. Many students studied three texts drawn mainly from the field of Literature and Arts as suggested by the study design. This year more students employed adequate resources as main texts. However, a few students used only inadequate resources such as simple online resources.



In some cases multiple students had used the same three texts. In order to avoid identical performances and encourage variation in performances, it is recommended that students use at least one text different from those used by other students in the group.

Topics for the Detailed Study were diverse and included 'Bullying', 'The Battle of Okinawa', 'Life', 'The Image of an Ideal Teacher', 'Food', and 'Bushidou'. Some issues were too abstract or unfamiliar for young students to handle.

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Section 1 – Presentation

#### Communication

This year most presentations were shorter than in previous years and were completed within four minutes. Occasionally presentations were too short due to a lack of preparation. It was good to see the improvement of presentation skills.

Some students this year used objects effectively.

#### Content

Strong students were able to establish conceptual links between different resources and highlight examples to support their views, while weak students gave little information, or explained only personal experience related to their issues. Students who performed poorly had a limited range of content in their presentations. These students had problems comprehending the major points of their texts and did not read their texts thoroughly or research their topic sufficiently. Some students drew incorrect conclusions from the texts. They were not able to focus or expand on a particular aspect of their topic and gave only vague arguments. They did not evaluate their topic sufficiently, and expressed confused ideas and thoughts.

It should be made clear to students that this is a critical, evaluative presentation, not an informative or a personal one.

### Section 2 – Discussion

#### Communication

Strong students responded readily and confidently and were able to cope effortlessly with difficulties, whereas weak students did not respond appropriately. They hesitated frequently and made little or no effort to maintain interaction with assessors.

#### Content

Strong students showed a deep knowledge of the issues, explained their thoughts logically and convincingly, and gave possible solutions or concrete examples of their issues. However, weak students presented general and superficial ideas mostly drawn from texts or subjective thoughts that relied only on their limited experiences.

It is suggested that students come to the examination prepared to explain possible solutions, realistic ideas or concrete examples related to their topic.

## Written component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2007 it was evident that students managed their time well during the examination and it was pleasing to see that most questions were attempted. The Listening and responding section was the most successfully completed section, and the Reading and responding section was reasonably well answered. Although a couple of topics in the Writing section were challenging, students generally managed their time well and produced a written piece of over 1000 *ji*.

A large number of *ateji* (using wrong kanji that has the same reading) was observed again this year. 急がしい (instead of 忙しい), 業事(行事), 状況(状況), etc. Students need to be more careful with kanji characters. A few students used 問題 instead of 問題 and 体職 instead of 休職.

Students are advised to use *genkooyooshi* correctly. The position and size of commas and full stops and indentation for paragraphs are common aspects that students need to know. When students write English numbers on *genkooyooshi*, two numbers should be written in one box.



For Sections 2 and 3, students must be familiar with all the text types and their identifiable features. If they use the correct format for the task, they are able to achieve a high mark for criterion 2.

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Section 1 – Listening and responding

As the topic for this section was rather familiar to students, they answered well in this section. Students were generally good at identifying specific details of the text. Most students received full marks for Questions 1 and 2, but a few students missed some marks because they did not write key information, such as 二月六日, instead giving only 六日. Students are advised to include all key information in detail.

In Question 3 students were expected to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying ideas in the text. Some students had trouble summarising Kazuya's thoughts, perhaps because he did not provide specific answers in the dialogue. Students need to practise focusing on the ideas underlying the text as well as identifying specific details from the text.

Some students only wrote approximately 160 *ji* for Question 4, instead of 200 *ji* as suggested. Successful students summarised the comparison of the mother's current and ideal ways of spending the end of a year and the beginning of the following year, using conjunctions in an effective way. Students must use *kyoiku* kanji in this section as well as in other sections. Some common kanji errors were 赤白 instead of 紅白 and 観行 instead of 観光.

#### Question 1

七草粥 今年一年、悪いことが起こらず健康に過ごせることを願う

#### Question 2

一月六日の夜に包丁やすりこ木などで七草を28回たたいて、一月七日の朝にさらに21回たたいたものをお粥に入れて炊き込んで作る。

#### Question 3

自分の家の年末年始の過ごし方に不満はない（満足している・気に入っている）。

理由はおせち料理やお雑煮、年末に作るきな粉もちなどの手作りの食べ物が気に入っているからである。

#### Question 4

（現在）忙しい・楽しめない

具体例－大掃除・もちつき・おせち料理etc.

（理想）のんびり過ごす・楽しむ

具体例－旅行・温泉・紅白・観光etc.

### Section 2 – Reading and responding

Most students attempted to answer this section and very few students left the *genkooyooshi* blank in Question 5. The majority of students could identify the correct answers; however, some did not synthesise their ideas very well. Those who copied the solutions from the texts generally divided them into four points or only copied two points. A few students lost marks as they included too much irrelevant information from their own knowledge. It is important for students to realise that in this section they are required to synthesise information from the two texts not just to identify some main points.

Some students did not use the report format and omitted a few elements such as title, author's name and conclusion. It is very important to use an appropriate format for the text type of the task.

#### Question 5

Three solutions

- 出生率を高める・子育ての負担を減らす



- 元気な老人を増やす
- 外国人労働者を受け入れる

### Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

It was pleasing to see that all the questions for this section were chosen by approximately the same number of students. Questions 6, 7 and 8 were evaluative writing tasks and Questions 9 and 10 were imaginative ones.

Students who chose an evaluative piece tended to present only one view, or a biased view of either the good or bad points of each topic. It is necessary for students to practise evaluative writing so that they can present unbiased views on both the pros and cons for a certain topic. Opinions must be balanced in an evaluative writing task.

Most students who chose an imaginative piece did not succeed in creating a vivid and dramatic piece. They could not develop content well as they did not fully grasp the requirements of the task. There was an interesting trend in that many students who chose an imaginative piece did not use paragraphs – it is important to indent one box at the start of each paragraph in a story and a diary, just as for other text types.

Students must use the correct text type for this section. Some students lost marks by omitting a few identifiable features for the text type. Careful planning is strongly recommended before starting to write to ensure that all the aspects of the task are covered.

#### Question 6

Few students presented balanced opinions on ‘baby post.’ Students needed to include at least two positive and two negative aspects. While students may adopt a strong opinion, they also need to properly evaluate the contrary view.

#### Question 7

As mentioned above, it seemed that students had trouble giving unbiased views on the pros and cons of whaling. It was acceptable to present a strong, one-sided opinion in conclusion but students still needed to cover both the pros and cons in a good balance.

#### Question 8

Responses to this task were generally better written than those for Questions 6 and 7. Successful students presented unbiased views as well as intelligent opinions on the pros and cons of SNS.

#### Question 9

It appeared very difficult for students to produce an adventure story with the theme of the importance of friendship. The majority of students who chose this task did not develop an interesting adventure story, although they tried to describe a friendship.

#### Question 10

This topic was also challenging as students were required to create a diary with unique school life in the 22nd century. Few students succeeded in developing an appealing diary entry. Students who described only ordinary aspects of the day could not achieve high marks for criterion 1.