

LOTE: Japanese First Language GA 3: Examination

Oral component

Generally, students were better informed about the examination procedures, and their sub-topics for the Detailed Study covered a wider variety than in the previous year.

There was a considerable range in students' performance levels. When students were well prepared on their personally selected topics, their presentation had depth of knowledge, and they were able to handle the ensuing discussions with confidence. Some students had not prepared sufficiently well and performed poorly in spite of their obviously good oral skills. In the Discussion, some students used inappropriate language style for the oral examination.

In summary, students need to choose their sub-topic carefully, study in depth a minimum of three texts with the objective of gaining a broader perspective, to grasp clearly issues in the texts, and to form their own ideas/conclusion/thoughts based on sound reasoning.

Section 1 – Presentation

The interview lasts for 10 minutes. Within the first minute, each student must inform the two assessors of his/her choice of the Detailed Study option whether it is the Literature option or the VET option, the sub-topic and texts studied, the focus and gist of his/her study, and whether any props (photographs, tables, graphs, etc.) are going to be used during the interview.

A considerable number of students went straight into the presentation after introducing themselves (must use first name only). It is important for them to realise that the assessors do not have any pre-knowledge of their sub-topics. A clearly delivered preamble prepares assessors to direct their attention to the specific area of the student's study and to ask relevant questions in the second half of the interview.

For the presentation, students are allowed to use notes **written in point form** on a small card of no more than 20 x 12.5 cm (study design p. 29). There were a number of students who had a full script written out to read from and continued reading even after an assessors' warning not to do so. The actual presentation should be approximately 4 minutes.

More than half of the students chose issues related to the physically handicapped for their Detailed Study sub-topics as they did in the previous year, and used mostly the same source materials. Although some of these students gave an excellent presentation, in general, they lacked spark and depth. Some students read only the synopsis of their reference materials, and were unable to answer questions referring to the contents of such materials, nor had they any ideas/thoughts on the issues on the sub-topics of their own choice.

Some of the successfully handled topics were 'Bullying at schools', 'Changes in the Japanese language', 'World Cup', 'Today's youth', 'Technology in daily life (e.g. mobile phones and robot cleaners)' and 'Traditional Japanese music'. It was encouraging to observe that their source materials showed a wide range including recent novels, feature films, TV dramas, and music, and was supplemented, as reference materials, by a variety of audio and visual materials such as TV and radio documentaries, statistics, newspaper and magazine articles, and interviews.

Assessment criteria

Capacity to present information appropriately and effectively

Three areas were looked at under this criterion; namely, a) accuracy, variety and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar, b) clarity of expression (pronunciation, intonation, stress, and tempo) and c) capacity to engage with the audience.

In area a), students' use of a range of appropriate vocabulary, sophisticated expressions, accurate grammar and appropriate style were assessed. In b), manner of presentation using clear diction, delivering the presentation at the correct speed, voice and pauses; and in c) quality of contents centred on an issue/s, use of a cue card and the length of presentation as well as whether the student demonstrated the ability to engage the audience (assessors) interest by discussing the topic from a refreshing point of view, were considered for marking.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Under this criterion, assessment was focused on the following three areas; a) relevance of information, b) range of information and ideas, and c) the student's capacity to support/elaborate information with reasons/examples or evidence/new ideas.

For a), assessors considered whether the information and/or ideas given by the student related to the topics studied; b) the depth of research, and whether the ideas and opinions linked to the contents of the texts studied; and c) the student's ability to support/elaborate information with appropriate reasons/apt examples/evidence.

Drawing examples from their own experiences/environment to illustrate their points of view was persuasive and effective. When the student uses supporting objects, these should be well presented. Some props were little more than a torn out newspaper/magazine photograph with a scribble in pencil in the margin.

Section 2 – Discussion

The objectives of the Literature and Arts option are clearly explained in the study design (p. 22–23). It requires students to study the selected texts in depth from an objective/analytical point of view.

Taking *Manga Culture*, for example, it is not sufficient to learn biographical details of well-known cartoonists such as Osamu Tezuka and Satoshi Miyazaki, nor a long list of animation films they produced. Instead, the study focus can be on what manner of impact their work made on Japanese, Asian and European cultures. It can be studied from the point of view of the style. What is unique about each cartoonist's work, whether their styles changed over time and what caused the changes? Another approach may be to compare the two cartoonists from the social contexts. Whatever the focus may be, students should be able to discuss their findings and their own views on the sub-topics chosen.

Assessment criteria

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

- a) Relevance of information/ideas
- b) Range of information/ideas
- c) Capacity to support/elaborate information with reasons/examples/evidence/new ideas

In a), the assessment focus was on the range and accuracy of vocabulary and grammar, and the use of appropriate style (DESU/MASU) in b) on clear diction, delivery speed, pause, audibility and c) on the student's ability to link with assessors, to exchange comments spontaneously and naturally, and to redirect focus when necessary.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

- a) Accuracy, variety and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar
- c) Clarity of expression (pronunciation, intonation, stress, and tempo)
- d) Capacity to link with assessors

In a), the assessment focus was on whether information/ideas given by the student in discussing the sub-topic was relevant. In b), assessors looked into the depth of research, quality of information/ideas, and whether the student was able to move beyond the issues concerned, for example, to reflect on related experience.

In c), the focus was on the student's ability to elaborate and support information from the texts and other resources, and to present firm evidence and clear reasoning rather than stating a generally accepted, simplistic opinion. A considerable number of students seemed to be content just doing the latter.

Written component

Most students performed well in the listening and responding section. However, some students missed points by using a wrong *kanji* such as 人権費 for 人件費, or by giving a partial answer such as テロ for テロ対策. Where a paragraph answer was required, students' results ranged from excellent to producing no response at all.

Not many students handled the Reading and Responding section confidently.

For Section 3, most students chose Question 7 (to write a personal letter to a close friend to seek his/her advice on the subject of having an argument with their parents about their choice of future career). In this case, the text type proved to be problematic because it allowed students to be most casual in style, using vernacular expressions.

It is necessary for students to familiarise themselves with the specific requirements of various text types and the correct use of *genkoo yooshi*.

There were some exemplary pieces of writing produced by students showing their mature thought process and well developed writing skills. Teachers are encouraged to continue allowing students to choose sub-topics from diverse areas and read contemporary works of literature.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

Criterion 1 Capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts

Criterion 2 Capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately

Most students gave correct responses to Questions 1 to 4. Question 5 required a concise summary within the word limit of approximately 200 *ji*. In addition, students needed to pay attention to structure, accuracy and appropriateness of grammar and vocabulary, and *kanji* and *kana* spelling.

Text 1

Question 1

- a) テロ対策、交通規制、通訳サービス)
- b) スポーツボランティアは、自分たちの技能や知識をスポーツイベントに提供すると同時に、自分たちもそのイベントを楽しむことができる。
- c) 日本では、ボランティアの持つ「自分の意思で参加する」という自発性に欠けていた。OR 日本人のボランティアに対する姿勢。つまり、日本人は自分の意思で行うことが少ない。

Part B

Text 2

Question 2

平均 5%、15–24 歳 9.7%、26–34 歳 6%

Question 3

- a) 家族を食べさせなければならない。
- b) 子供の養育費を払わなければならない。
- c) 家のローンを払わなければならない。

Question 4

- a) 不景気 or 経済不況
- b) 人件費
- c) 正社員
- d) 労働力

Question 5

企業：若者を積極的に育成する必要がある。

夢や希望を与える必要がある。

労働意欲を高める必要がある。

若者：(いろいろな機会に) 仕事に役立つ技術を身につける必要がある。

いろいろな資格を取っておく必要がある。

教育面：学校教育も変わらなければならない。

中学・高校で職業観を養うことをしたほうがいい。

社会人になっても生涯教育を充実させる。

政府が援助して職業訓練所などを作ったほうがいい。

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Criterion 1 Capacity to identify and synthesise relevant information and ideas from the texts

Criterion 2 Appropriateness of structure and sequence

Criterion 3 Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Question 6

Task – Write a report on the topic of ‘gender equality in the work place’ (1000–1200 *ji*)

Two texts were given for this task; one on the equality of opportunity in the field of law for men and women, and the other on maternity leave for men.

From the first text, students should have identified: Create a job environment where women would be able to start a family while maintaining their career; and to enable men and women to maintain both work and family life. Text 2 contained information on maternity leave for men with some statistics and situations in Europe and in Japan, and the benefits and problems raised by two Japanese men who took maternity leave.

Not many students could successfully identify and link information from the two texts, probably because the idea of maternity leave for men is in the pioneering stage in Japan and students were unable to fully understand its significance.

Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

Criterion 1 Relevance, breadth and depth of content

Criterion 2 Appropriateness of structure and sequence (including word length and text types)

Criterion 3 Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar (including register/style, script, use of *genkoo yooshi* and paragraph indentation)

Criterion 4 Range of vocabulary and grammatical structures and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Question 7

Letter to a friend asking for advice – imaginative

Most students chose this topic, and wrote a piece in an overly casual style with an emotional overtone. Perhaps the topic may have been too close to their hearts and they wrote a speech that they actually might use in their daily conversation with friends – too realistic rather than being imaginative.

Question 8**Script for speech on learning foreign languages other than English – evaluative**

Not many students wrote on this topic and there were only one or two exemplary pieces. Students were to evaluate the benefits and reasons for introducing into the Japanese curriculum such languages as Chinese, French, German, Korean and Spanish, rather than making English the only compulsory foreign language at primary and secondary levels.

Some students did not follow the correct conventions for the required text type script for a speech.

Question 9**Story 'Magic lantern' – imaginative**

This topic was quite popular. Each piece showed some originality but not many students could escape some influence from the famous story 'Aladdin and his magic lamp'.