



2013 Languages: Japanese Second Language GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students were generally well prepared for the 2013 Japanese Second Language oral examination. They demonstrated their ability to communicate in Japanese. They had a good understanding of the prescribed topics and were able to present relevant responses.

Many students scored high marks in Criterion 1 and Criterion 2 in the Conversation section. They also achieved a high standard in Criterion 5 in Section 1, which assessed students' pronunciation. Good students were natural in their presentation and talked at the appropriate speed. A considerable number of students, however, continued to have difficulty pronouncing katakana words correctly. Students are encouraged to pay closer attention to this area.

Criterion 3 and Criterion 8 assessed students' accuracy in vocabulary and grammar. These were the criteria for which students achieved the lowest marks in both sections. Many students were able to include a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures in their responses but the accuracy of both was an issue. In order to improve marks for these criteria, students must revise Japanese grammar thoroughly and pay more attention to accurate use of Japanese words.

It was evident that some students needed to understand that the Discussion is about the chosen topic, and is not a presentation of chunks of rote-learned material. In order to maximise their marks for Criterion 6, students need to listen to assessors and give relevant responses to questions.

Students needed to be clearer about the use of repair strategies. The following are not appropriate repair strategies, nor answers to the questions: それについて勉強しませんでした, しつもんは分かりますが日本語でこたえるのはむずかしいです, もうちょっとせつめいしてもいいですか and 次にいってください。 Repeating these expressions is inappropriate. Using these expressions repeatedly, demonstrated a lack of preparation for chosen topics.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication/Content/Language

Many students performed well in the Conversation section. It was evident that they had prepared for the questions relating to their personal world, including school and home lives, family, friends, interests and future aspirations.

Successful students interacted well with the assessors, listening closely to each question and giving relevant responses. They carried the conversation forward spontaneously and confidently. They were able to elaborate on their ideas and opinions by providing reasons and examples to support them.

Weaker students often made assumptions about questions and, consequently, at times their answers were irrelevant. They were able to provide some appropriate information; however, they had difficulty including ideas, opinions and examples in their responses.

Many students continued to say もういちど下さい instead of もういちど言ってください when they wanted to hear the assessor's question again.

Students are expected to use a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary in their responses. Strong students had good control of vocabulary and structures and used them accurately and appropriately. Weaker students often confused tenses and particles. Moreover, they used only simple structures and a narrow range of vocabulary.



Common errors with language included: use of adjectives, for example, 小さいの時、めずらしいの食べ物、べんりと思う、こと as in しゅみは本を読むことです、particles and tense, use of から/ので、ながら and the て form of verbs.

Some students didn't know じゅぎょう (class), きょうだい (brothers and sisters/siblings), がっき (musical instruments), きゅうりょう (salary), 何年間 (for how many years), どのくらい (how much), どれ (which), どう (how), なぜ (why), どうして or 外国 (foreign country).

A large number of students had problems with common interrogatives such as だれ、どれ、なぜ、どうして、どのくらい and どうやって.

Students should revise the use of time words such as 一年間、一週間、一ヶ月、一年前、きょ年、来年 and 今年.

It is strongly advised that students learn the appropriate use of どこか、だれか、何か、どこにも、だれでも、何でも and いつでも. These are not only useful words but they also add sophistication to sentences.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication/Content/Language

Successful students had prepared their topic thoroughly. They had studied a wide range of resources and were able to demonstrate good understanding and knowledge of the chosen topic. Their information, opinions and ideas were supported with examples and evidence from the resources studied. They used a variety of grammatical patterns and vocabulary accurately and appropriately. They had good pronunciation and maintained a consistent pace without pauses.

Students generally demonstrated good understanding of their chosen topics and were able to discuss them. However, there were some students who chose sophisticated topics and found it difficult to explain them.

Good topic selection is vitally important. Students' interests should be taken into account when choosing a topic. A topic will be successful if students are able to discuss it effectively by providing relevant information. This should help them to express their opinions and to generate new ideas.

Students are encouraged to use a wide range of oral and written texts to form the basis of their topics. This year students used a range of resources, including material prepared by their teachers, information from the internet, Japanese newspapers, Japanese magazines, にっぽにあ, textbooks, DVDs and films, and information from interviewing Japanese students. Some students appeared underprepared, having limited themselves to a small number of resources. As a result, some topics showed great potential but insufficient supporting material caused students to struggle to maintain seven minutes' discussion.

In their introduction students must state the sub-topic clearly and indicate aspects of their topic that they wish to discuss. It is very important that students present their introduction clearly so that assessors are able to ask questions appropriate to the chosen topic.

In some cases, it was difficult to comprehend what students said in their introduction. This was of particular concern in relation to several aspects of their topics. This resulted in a number of problems in the Discussion.

Some students didn't recognise the same words used in their introduction when assessors used them in their questions.

It is important for students to be exposed to a wide range of typical questions in order to prepare for the oral examination, including different ways of asking the same questions.

クラブ活動、まんが、アニメ、からおけ have been popular topics every year. The presentation of these topics can be very effective if students have prepared thoroughly using a wide variety of resources and are able, as a result, to present several of their features in detail. Students should be able to discuss not only information but ideas and opinions with reasons, examples and evidence from supporting materials.

The following are sub-topics that reflected recent issues in Japanese society.

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おんせん (のこうか、マナー) (effect of a hot spring, etiquette/manners when visiting a hot spring resort)、外国人への対応 (attitude towards foreigners)、こんかつ (dating)、コスプレ (cosplay)、クールジャパン (cool Japan)、女せいのけっこんかんのへんか (changes in marriage outlook for women)、ゴミ問題 (rubbish problems)、自動販売機 (vending machines)、かigoロボット (nurse robot)、日本に住んでいる外国人 (foreigners living in Japan)、いくメン (man who enjoys child rearing)、AKB&アイドル (AKB and idol groups)、キッズニア (KidZania)、東京メトロ (Tokyo metro)、ぼうさい (ひなんくんれん、ぼうさいグッズ) (disaster-prevention goods).

It is expected that students will be able to use grammatical patterns and vocabulary involved in VCE-level Japanese Second Language correctly and appropriately. Students should also practise the pronunciation of difficult and unfamiliar words associated with their chosen topic.

Problematic expressions in the Discussion included the following.

その本を読んで何が分かりましたか (what did you understand by reading that book?)。 (それをかいけつするために) どうしたらいいと思いますか ([in order to solve that] what do you think should be done?)。かいけつほうは何ですか (in what way can we solve that?)。...についてどう思いますか (what do you think about that?)。ちがいは? (what are the differences?) いいところ (いい点) (positives [good points])、わるいところ (わるい点) (negatives [bad points]) and しりょう (materials/sources).

Some students used ええとね、そうねえ、うん、ごめんね, but these were not appropriate to say to the assessors.

To improve their performance, students should

- study a topic that has been carefully selected
- ensure that the introduction is carefully structured so that assessors have a good understanding of what is to be discussed
- not mention what they didn't study
- prepare enough information to maintain seven minutes' discussion with assessors
- practise the pronunciation of difficult and unfamiliar words associated with the chosen topic
- practise the pronunciation of katakana words
- pay closer attention to correct use of particles and tenses
- revise basic grammar structures
- avoid rote-learned responses that are not relevant to the question
- listen carefully to questions asked by the assessors and respond appropriately
- be aware that assessors' questions don't always match students' expectations of what they are going to be asked
- practise responses to a wide range of typical questions, including different ways of answering the same questions.