

2017 VCE Japanese Second Language written examination report

General comments

Most students were able to answer the questions in all sections of the 2017 VCE Japanese Second Language written examination. Overall, they were well prepared and demonstrated a good understanding of the format and time allocation of the examination.

Students who scored highly exhibited an excellent understanding of grammar and vocabulary of the Japanese language. They gave clear, specific and relevant answers to the questions. The responses of students who did not score well often lacked sufficient detail or included irrelevant information.

Many students were able to produce a good, well-organised piece of writing in Section 3.

Part B in Section 1, however, proved to be challenging for many students. They found it difficult to convey their responses accurately in Japanese. Students are encouraged to pay closer attention to these kinds of listening exercises throughout the year. They should work on effective note-taking during the listening section of the examination in order to improve their marks.

Students are reminded of the importance of taking time to ensure that their responses make sense and match the questions.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual 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.

For Part B in both Section 1 and Section 2, the answers may be written in plain form or *desu/masu* form.

Section 1 – Listening and responding Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1c. and Question 1d. of Text 1 were not handled well by many students. In Question 1c. many students did not include 'rice' in their answers. Very few received full marks for this part. A large number of students had trouble identifying あまり好きじゃない (don't like that much)、さいきん (recently)、ばかり (only) and 魚ていしょく (fish set menu).

Question 1a.

last Thursday

Question 1b.

- vegetable tempura
- fish
- yakitori

Question 1c.

- vegetable tempura and rice
- because she doesn't like fish that much

Question 1d.

- the set menu with fish
- because he has been eating meat only/a lot/ too much recently

Text 2

Question 2a.

Room option	What is included	Price
1	room only (nothing, nil)	9 000 yen
2	breakfast	12 000 yen
3	breakfast and dinner	17 000 yen

Question 2b.

If you are staying at the Kyoto Ryokan during the festival, you will receive a festival ticket (free of charge).

Only a small number of students provided the correct answer to Question 2b. Some students found おまつりの間 (during the festival) and りょかんにとまると (if you stay at the Ryokan) problematic.

Question 2c.

- from 13 to 18 May
- because she wants to see the festival
- room with breakfast

Part B – Answer in Japanese

The answers in this section should be written in full sentences in Japanese. In order to score high marks, students are required to give correct and relevant information in response to each question. They should also use VCE prescribed *kanji* and accurate script and grammar patterns in their responses.

While most students attempted to respond to the questions, some did not provide the detail required or included irrelevant information. In addition, there were many *kana* and *kanji* errors.

Text 3

The words 中学校 (junior high school)、住みやすい (easy to live)、べんり (convenient) and たくさんふると (it snows a lot) were often missed in the answers to Question 3a. and Question 3b.

Many students found it difficult to recognise the meaning of 秋田のことばは、^{きょうかしょ}教科書の日本語と

ちがうので、分かりにくいかもしれません。This means that the language used in Akita is difficult to understand because it is different from the language used in Japanese textbooks.

Question 3a.

中学校で英語をおしえています。(teaching English at a junior high school)

Question 3b.

Positive points (any two from below):

- くだものおいしいです。(Fruits are delicious.)
- 人がやさしいから、住みやすいです。(People are kind, so it is easy to live.)
- えいががんやデパートやコンビニもあるのでべんりです。(There are cinemas, department stores and convenience stores, so it is convenient.)

Negative points (both):

- 雪がたくさんふると、出かけるのがむずかしいです。(When it snows a lot, it is difficult to go out.)
- ことばが分かりにくいかもしれません。(The language [used in Akita] may be difficult to understand.)

Text 4

Question 4a.

大学で日本語を勉強しているからです。(because he is studying Japanese at university)

Some students were confused by 日本のけいざい (Japanese economics) and 日本語とけいざい (Japanese and Economics). There were many students who misspelt つうやく (interpreting).

Question 4b.

- いろいろな日本人の友だちをつくりたいからです。(wants to make various Japanese friends)
- そして、きょうしつの外で 日本語を使いたいからです。(wants to use his Japanese outside the classroom)

Some students confused 使う(use) and 作る(make) and wrote 友だちを使いたい (want to use friends) instead of 友だちを作りたい (want to make friends).

Question 4c.

Any two of:

- 入り口でおきゃくさんをあんないすること。(to guide the visitors at the entrance)
- イベントのお知らせを英語と日本語でアナウンスすること。(to announce the events in English and Japanese)
- カーニバルがおわった後でそうじすること。(to clean up after carnival)

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 5

Students were able to write their answers to the questions, but some did not receive full marks because they did not translate the word えきべん (boxed lunches that are sold at stations).

Question 5a.

boxed lunches (*obento*) that are sold at stations

Question 5b.

at the south exit/entrance of Hiroshima station

Question 5c.

All three of:

- buy famous *ekiben*
- get to know the history of *ekiben*
- get some tea

Text 6

Questions 6a., 6b. and 6c. were handled well by the majority of students.

Question 6a.

Either of:

- because its maximum speed was 160 km
- because it could do 515 km (from Tokyo to Osaka) in 4 hours.

Question 6b.

The Tokyo Olympics

Question 6c.

	1964	2016
Overall distance covered	515 km	1800 km
Time from Tokyo to Osaka	4 hours	2 hours and 22 minutes
Number of commuters in a day	85 000	900 000

Question 6d.

Many students responded to this question, but their responses were not accurate and often small but important details were left out. Words such as 大雨 (heavy rain)、一分以下 (less than one minute)、すぐ (immediately)、今まで (until now)、じしんがあれば (if an earthquake occurs)、出発する前の七分間で (during the seven minutes before departure) were problematic for many.

All three of:

- It does not get delayed. If there is a problem, technicians will go to fix it straightaway.
- It is safe. There have not been any accidents where people were injured.
- It is comfortable. All Shinkansen that depart from Tokyo are cleaned within seven minutes before departure.

Question 6e.

Because many countries think that it is better to have cheaper trains, even if they are not as fast as the Shinkansen

Few students wrote a correct answer to this question. A large number of students found it difficult to translate しんかんせんほどはやくなくても (even if they are not as fast as the Shinkansen).

Part B – Answer in Japanese

Text 7

Question 7a.

大山さんはながのに行っていていわれます。こばやしさんは家でいわれます。(Mr Oyama is going to Nagano to celebrate the New Year and Mrs Kobayashi will spend her New Year at home.)

Most of the students were able to answer where Mr Oyama celebrates the New Year, but some assumed that Mrs Kobayashi lives in Tokyo, which is not mentioned in the text.

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

大山さんは長野でいわって、小林さんはどこにもいかないで、家でいわれます。

Question 7b.

でんとうてきなお正月は、家でおせちりょうりを作って、家族といっしょに食べますが、今は、旅行に行ったりおせちりょうりを買ったりします。しかし、変わっていないことは、家族といっしょにお正月をすごすことです。(The traditional New Year is that people cook and eat *osechi ryori* with family at home, but today many people go travelling or buy *osechi ryori*. However, people spend time together with their family during the New Year. That has not changed.)

Although many students seemed to have understood much of the text, they struggled to organise their responses to the question. They found it difficult to compare the traditional and modern Japanese New Year celebrations effectively and accurately. However, there were well-crafted answers expressing the comparison clearly. They were written in students' own words, showing these students' skills at paraphrasing.

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

変わったことは旅行に行ったり、おせちりょうりを買ったりする人が多くなったこと。社会がかわったから。かわってないことは人々が家族とお正月をすごすこととおせちりょうりを食べること。

Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

Students could select one question from questions on five topics with five text types and five kinds of writing. The kinds of writing were a speech (persuasive), a letter (informative), a journal entry (personal), an article (evaluative) and a story (imaginative). Question 8 was the most popular question. Very few students chose Question 10 or Question 12.

A large number of students produced well-organised pieces of writing in this section. They wrote an essay of good length and demonstrated good understanding of the format of text type, the requirements of each style of writing and the use of *genkoyoshi*. Some students who did not score well did not read their selected question carefully. Consequently, they failed to include the necessary information required for the task.

Question 8

This was the most popular topic. Students were able to provide good reasons for continuing Japanese studies, such as exchange programs, traveling to Japan, learning Japanese culture and job opportunities. Students who scored highly used persuasive expressions and included some evidence to support their ideas in their essay.

Question 9

This topic required students to write a formal letter to a teacher about the aspects of Australia for Japanese students. This was the third most popular question. Many of those who did attempt this topic wrote about Australian beaches, nature, animals, multicultural diversity, sports and food. The

topic gave students the opportunity to write about aspects of Australia with which they were comfortable. However, students found it difficult to integrate the information into a polite letter to the teacher.

Question 10

A very small number of students chose this topic. Among them there were some excellent pieces of writing creating a personal atmosphere and emphasising feelings and reflections about their experience. Students are reminded that a personal journal entry should be written in plain form and usually in the past tense. Some students included the work they did for one whole week instead of reflecting on one day's work.

Question 11

Students who scored highly wrote interesting information about the advantages and disadvantages of going overseas for schoolies with evidence and examples such as the cost of travel overseas, language barriers and different cultures and dangers in foreign countries. Some students just wrote about schoolies in general, not about schoolies overseas.

Question 12

Few students attempted this topic. Although there were some imaginative stories with interesting interpretations of the picture, the majority of students had difficulty developing a convincing storyline required for the task.