



2011 Languages: Japanese Second Language GA3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Many students performed well in the Conversation section (Section 1) of the 2011 oral examination and it was evident that they had prepared thoroughly. Students had a good understanding of the prescribed topics and were able to present relevant responses.

In the Discussion section (Section 2), successful students exhibited thorough preparation and understanding of the chosen topic, demonstrating that they had studied various resources. They were able to explore their sub-topics in sufficient depth and their opinions and ideas were supported with examples and evidence from the resources studied. However, students who relied on rote-learned language experienced difficulty conversing with assessors spontaneously, needed frequent support from the assessors and struggled to maintain seven minutes of conversation.

Students and teachers should note that the expression とくべつけんきゅうでは、いろいろなしりょうを使って is not required at the commencement of the Discussion section of the oral examination.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

The most successful students provided extensive responses to the questions and carried the conversation forward spontaneously and confidently. They had excellent pronunciation and maintained a consistent pace without unnatural pauses. They used あいづち and a variety of linking words to make the conversation flow.

However, lack of flexibility and the use of memorised responses were evident in the weaker students' performances. On many occasions these students were not able to respond to assessors' questions and it was very difficult to maintain a conversation.

Students should listen carefully to the assessors' questions and ensure that they address what they are being asked in order to give relevant responses. It is also important to give the assessors the opportunity to respond to their answers.

Students should learn strategies to carry the conversation forward. In addition to あいづち, linking words, それから、そして、その後で、それに、そのうえ and ですから are useful words to make the conversation smooth and interesting.

Repeating すみません。まちがえました。言いなおします。 and はい分かります。それはむずかしいしつもんですね。 after hearing questions is not appropriate during conversation.

Most students' pronunciation and tempo were satisfactory. Some, however, continued to have difficulty with some words, especially Katakana words such as スポツ (スポーツ)、フルト (フルーツ)、ホーンコーン (ホンコン)、ホースト (ホスト)、ユーロッパ (ヨーロッパ) and エジア (アジア) .

Content

It was clear that the majority of students had prepared and practised very thoroughly for the questions asked in the conversation section.

The content criterion assesses the relevance, breadth and depth of information, ideas and opinions, as well as the capacity to support or elaborate on responses with reasons, examples, evidence and new ideas. Therefore, students need to anticipate the sorts of questions that might be asked during the examination. Some excellent responses showed a broad understanding of ideas and opinions and were supported by interesting examples.

In general, students were comfortable when conversing with the assessors about their families, school subjects, holidays and hobbies. However, when they attempted to reflect on their experiences during this school year or during a school trip to Japan, many experienced difficulties extending their responses. For example, responses such as おもしろかった



です。or 楽しかったです。to the question はどうでしたか were not sufficient. Students should be able to give more detailed information, such as what they particularly enjoyed about the trip and why. Moreover, in order to prepare to answer a question such as 今年のVCEの勉強はどうでしたか。students should think about what life has been like for them during the VCE year.

Some students needed more detailed information about the topic of part-time jobs and future aspirations. If students have a part-time job they should be able to describe what they do, discuss whether or not they are enjoying it, and what they have learned from the experience. When asked about future aspirations, students should provide reasons for their choices. These could be supported by past experiences that have influenced their thinking.

Language

This criterion emphasises the importance of accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar. Students are expected to use a variety of grammar patterns and vocabulary in their responses.

It is strongly advised that students pay closer attention to the accurate use of time words and numbers such as 九月、一ヶ月、一週間、一年間、四人 as the same mistakes occur every year. Incorrect particles and the inappropriate use of tense were the most common mistakes. Many students still saidきれいと思う instead ofきれいだと思う。アルバイトがあります is not correct. It should be アルバイトをしています。私のかもく should be replaced by 私がとっているかもく。

Some students had problems with common interrogatives such as だれ, どうして, なぜ, どのぐらい and どうやって. It is very important to respond to them appropriately. It is useful to learn how to use words such as どこか, どこにも, 何でも, だれでも and 何も.

There were still students who said えいが instead of 英語. Moreover, 家族 was confused with かもく, as was 大学 with 外国. Furthermore 海外, さいきん, がつき, ひまな時, ほとんど, とくらべて, のほかに, めずらしい and 週に何かい caused problems for some students. If students want to talk about sports, they should learn words such as かつ, まける, つよい, よわい and ゆうしょう (する).

Students are reminded that they should not use English words where there are Japanese alternatives, such as ビーチ (beach), サイコロジー (psychology), レリジョン (religion), クライム (crime), ムービー (movie) and マス (mathematics).

Section 2 – Discussion

Teachers and students are reminded that this section of the oral examination is a discussion about the topic, not a presentation of the topic. The introduction should be no more than one minute. There was a considerable number of students this year who presented a memorised speech about the topic and these students were interrupted by assessors.

Communication

It is important that students introduce their topic, stating the sub-topic and the focus of the Detailed Study. Students are also encouraged to indicate aspects of their topic that they would like to discuss. Students should not mention, however, topics they have not prepared or resources they have not used as this can lead to confusion. Doing so frequently results in assessors asking questions that the student is unable to answer and gives the impression that the student has a limited range of information, ideas and opinions.

It is important that students practise the pronunciation of Japanese words they consider to be difficult as some Japanese words in students' responses were difficult to understand.

There were many students who repeated それについて勉強しませんでした。それはむずかしいしつもんですね。 and 日本語でせつめいできません。 These were not the correct answers to the questions and repeating these expressions was not appropriate.

Content

The topic selected should reflect the interests and abilities of the students as some students find it very difficult to comprehend sophisticated topics. The chosen topic should suit the students' language capacity. The chosen topic should



allow students to express their opinions and generate new ideas. Generally, students had a good understanding of resources and were able to discuss them comfortably.

Students who prepared the topic thoroughly had good resources and were able to demonstrate excellent understanding and knowledge of the chosen topic. These students supported their ideas and opinions by referring to the resources studied. However, a number of students exhibited little evidence of detailed study of the texts, stating simply that their resources were acquired from the Internet, books and interviews. Frequently, students who made these kinds of statements demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding, and their ideas and opinions were inadequately supported by reasons and examples.

Teachers must give students up-to-date information and help them to choose discussion topics carefully. Students should avoid generalising or stereotyping and should research interesting detailed information. Although the assessors do not give marks to the topics, some information on several topics such as サラリーマン、けっこん、けいたい電話、コンビニ and わかもののファッション was out of date. For example, Japanese サラリーマン have changed in many ways and it would be interesting to investigate how and why their attitudes towards work and family have changed.

Language

Students should be reminded that 15 hours of class time should be spent on the Detailed Study. Students are expected to use correct grammatical patterns and the key words associated with their chosen topic. Moreover, they should have sufficient knowledge to discuss the subject in appropriate detail.

Some problematic expressions in the Discussion were ...その本を読んで何が分かりましたか。それをかいけつするためにはどうしたらいいと思いますか。 and ...についてどう思いますか。 . A considerable number of students did not know the following words this year 週何回、のほかに、男の子、女の子、男子、女子、ねだん、せんぱい (despite their topic being クラブ活動)、ほうかご、おこめ and ごはん.