



## 2005 LOTE: Japanese Second Language GA 3: Examination

### Oral Component

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

Students were, in most cases, well prepared for the Conversation section, and it was evident that they had practised and were familiar with the various 'asking' words. They were able to respond readily to questions.

In the Discussion section better students were able to discuss their ideas and opinions on their Detailed Study, demonstrating thorough preparation of the topic. They were able to explore their sub-topic in sufficient depth and their ideas and opinions were well thought out, reflecting knowledge and understanding of the resources studied.

Although the criteria for the Conversation and the Discussion were alike, each section was designed to test different skills and understandings. The Conversation section focuses on aspects of the students' lives, such as school and home life. The intention is to test the students' ability to speak Japanese in a linguistically and culturally appropriate way while discussing appropriate topics. The Discussion section focuses on broader issues with the aim of eliciting an exploration of ideas, opinions and information. The students are expected to take a more objective position. Consequently, the language used should be less predictable.

#### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

##### Section 1 – Conversation

###### Communication

The most successful students confidently provided extensive responses to the questions and carried their conversations forward spontaneously. 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.

A lack of flexibility and memorised responses were evident in weaker students' performances. Some students had learnt their answers by heart. When they were interrupted or asked questions, they often had difficulty continuing the conversation.

The questions the assessors asked were, on occasion, different from the questions students had learnt. It is very important for students to understand and address the specific question posed. Sometimes students did not listen to the question carefully enough; instead they focused on a key word and then provided an irrelevant response.

Pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo were also assessed in this section. Most students' pronunciation and tempo were satisfactory. Some, however, had difficulty with the words such as *いろいろ*, *四人*, *レストラン*, *ヨーロツバ*, *メルボルン* and *オーストラリア*. The pronunciation of *高校*, *学校*, *しています*, *知っています* and *りょこう* still requires more practice.

###### Content

Students generally prepared well for the prescribed topics. Moreover, good students demonstrated the capacity to elaborate on ideas and opinions by providing examples and presenting interesting responses. Conversely, weaker students struggled even with the simplest questions, offering only simplistic responses.

Some students experienced difficulty when they attempted to reflect on their own experiences; these students should try to focus on one or two aspects of the topic. For example, when talking about a trip to Japan, any of the following could form the basis of a reflection: good and bad experiences in Japan, what the student enjoyed most, the differences and similarities between life in Australia and Japan, or a special event or occasion.

When asked about Year 12, students could talk about enjoyable and memorable events during the last year of school, such as the Year 12 formal or winning a school championship in debating. Another possible topic could be the problems associated with being a Year 12 student.



When talking about family, students could detail the roles each different member performs, what the family does together, or how their family relates to each other. This is preferable to listing every member of the family, their names and their ages.

If students have a part-time job, they should be able to describe what they do, give some reasons why they enjoy the job (or do not enjoy it) and what they have learned from this experience.

### Language

VCE examinees are expected to use a variety of grammatical patterns and vocabulary in their responses. Successful students accurately used a sophisticated range of vocabulary and complex structures and were able to self-correct errors. However, there were also many mistakes in the use of grammatical patterns and vocabulary. It is strongly advised that students pay closer attention to the accurate use of patterns and vocabulary. Wrong particles and tenses were the most common mistakes. The use of から/ので, より/ほう and と思う needed more attention, and ことが好き was overused. Many said すしを食べることが好きです meaning 'I like Sushi'; however, すしが好きです should be used instead.

Students should learn common interrogatives such as だれ, どうして, なぜ, どのぐらい and どうやって and how to respond to them appropriately. It is useful to learn how to use words like どこか, どこにも, 何でも, だれでも and 何も.

Counters and time words should also be revised. There were still many students who said えいが instead of 英語. Moreover, 家族 was confused with かもく, as was 日本 and 日本語, 大学 and 外国. きょうだい, さいきん, しんせき, 手つだい, なかよし, こまつたこと, 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.

## Section 2 – Discussion

The choice of sub-topic is crucial for successful performance in this section. It is recommended that all students select a topic that they are interested in. Consequently, they will be more likely to use appropriate vocabulary and be able to express ideas and opinions about this topic more effectively.

It is recommended that students consider discussing features of Japanese society. Better responses showed an understanding of Japanese culture, while less impressive discussions featured only broad, unfocused comments. Indeed, there was a tendency by some students to make sweeping, general statements that stereotyped aspects of Japanese life.

Some students brought supporting materials in with them to use when discussing their topic. Students must be aware that minimal language should be written on such items. Headings and labels are acceptable, but sentences are not permitted.

### Communication

Good students outlined the sub-topic in their one-minute introduction. They indicated the title of the sub-topic, briefly explained its main focus and clearly stated their resources. They were able to carry the discussion forward with some original input and could maintain the conversation without the assessors having to support them. Their pronunciation was very good.

Weaker students, however, needed much more support and often chose topics which were too difficult for them. Some of them gave memorised speeches about the topic rather than a brief introduction followed by a discussion. Consequently, they were interrupted by the examiners.

Some assessors experienced difficulty understanding what students said, especially the names of the sub-topic and some unfamiliar words students used in the discussion. It is very important for students to practise the pronunciation of difficult words associated with the chosen topic.

### Content

Students who prepared the topic thoroughly had good resources and were able to demonstrate an excellent understanding and knowledge of their topic. Ideas and opinions were supported by the resources studied.



A number of students exhibited little evidence of in-depth study of the texts, just stating vaguely that their resources were the Internet, books and interviews. With this limited information they were unable to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the topic or to express their ideas and opinions with reasons and examples.

Students should be reminded of the expectations set down in the *Japanese Second Language VCE Study Design*: 'In order for the student to be able to explore their sub-topic in sufficient depth to meet the relevant outcome, it is suggested that a range of at least three different kinds of text are selected' (pages 91–92).

### Language

Better students accurately used an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Their expression was sophisticated, they usually self-corrected errors, and the use of style and register were consistently appropriate.

As 15 hours of class time are required for the Detailed Study, it is expected that students will be able to use the correct grammatical patterns and the key words associated with their chosen topic. Moreover, they should have sufficient knowledge to discuss the subject.

The Discussion section is quite different from the Conversation section. The language used in the Discussion should be less predictable, as there will be many new and unfamiliar words in the resources used by the students. Students should not only master these words but also practise using them in discussion. There were many occasions when examinees used sophisticated words and expressions in their presentation but were frequently unable to hear and understand them when used by the examiners.

Students who scored well in the Discussion section had selected a topic that interested them and studied three texts thoroughly. They had carefully thought about what was involved and prepared some extra information about the sub-topic. They expressed their ideas and opinions effectively, supporting them with appropriate resources.

## Written Component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall, most students performed better on the written part of the examination than on the listening section. Students who scored well gave clear, specific and relevant answers to the questions in both sections. They completed the task in Section 3 using a wide range of grammatical patterns and vocabulary.

This year there was some improvement in students' ability to write in Japanese. Many students had a good understanding of the kind of writing, text type, purpose and audience required for each topic in Section 3. However, there were still many students who made script and grammatical errors.

Assessors were disappointed with the performance in Part A of Section 2 – Reading and responding in English. Students should work on developing the capacity to select the information that is relevant to the questions in order to answer them succinctly. Most importantly, students must read the questions and the texts carefully. It is not appropriate to make assumptions about the facts and content.

Students need to develop their reading comprehension skills for the Reading and responding section of the examination. To improve these skills students should read a wide variety of texts in Japanese and familiarise themselves with as many different topics as possible. They would also benefit from practising reorganising exercises. For example, they could read a short passage and rewrite it in their own words.

Some students did not write clearly either in English and/or Japanese. Marks cannot be given if the writing is illegible.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The answers below give a number of possible responses, but are not the only answers that might have been awarded marks.

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## Section 1 – Listening and responding

### Part A

#### Text 1

##### Question 1a.

20 December

##### Question 1b.

27 December

The date of Kim's departure caused problems for some students.

##### Question 2

To borrow a tent (for hiking from Koji).

##### Question 3

- ring Naomi's (or Kim's friend's) house
- the number is 9634-2801

'Ring Naomi' was not correct. Many students, however, did write the correct telephone number.

#### Text 2

This was a challenging task. Students had to listen to a fairly long dialogue and answer many questions. Better students took notes in the note-taking space and prepared their answers after the recorded text was completed. Many English errors were evident in the answers in this section, and some of the sentences did not make sense. Questions 4 and 5 caused problems for some students who appeared not to read the questions carefully.

##### Question 4

Either of:

- he does not have a good friend
- he hasn't made a good friend yet.

##### Question 5

Tom has concentrated on studying.

##### Question 6

- Tom has not joined a school club, whereas John has joined the (music) club.
- Tom does not have good friends, while John has many friends.
- Tom speaks Japanese well but John doesn't speak Japanese very well (as he did not study Japanese before coming to Japan).

##### Question 7

Any two of:

- Tom is good at cricket (which is similar to baseball)
- the baseball club is looking for a new member
- training is only twice a week (therefore it would not take too much time from Tom's study).

##### Question 8

- He will make good friends.
- He will improve his Japanese.

### Part B

#### Text 3

Many students' answers to the questions on Text 3 were not entirely correct because important information was not included. For example, in response to Question 9 ゆう名なしょうせつを読んだ was not sufficient because it did not include じゅぎょうで. When answering Question 12, many wrote コミュニケーションがかわった instead of コミュニケーションのし方がかわった.

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## Question 9

Past high schools

Any three of:

- (国語の)じゆぎょうで、よくゆう名なしようせつを読んだ。
- 英語では読むことや書くことが大せつだった。
- 男の子は家ていかを勉強しなくてもよかった。
- クラスに50人いた。

Current high schools

Any three of:

- じゆぎょうでしようせつはあまり読まない。
- 英語で話すことが大せつだ。OR 会話のれんしゅうをたくさんしなければならぬ。
- 男の子も家ていかをしている。
- クラスに35人いる。

## Question 10

コンピューターゲームばかりして、家で一人であそんでいる。だから、コミュニケーションが下手だ。OR むかしはよく友だちときつき店やえいがに行つてみんなでいっしょにあそんだ。でも、今の子はそれをしない。

## Question 11

- コンピューターでイーメールをおくる。だから、友だちとよくコミュニケーションをしている。
- よくカラオケに行つて、みんなであそんでいる。

## Question 12

今の高校生も友だちとのコミュニケーションを大せつにしている。コミュニケーションのし方が

かわつただけ。

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part A

#### Text 4

Again, students must read questions carefully. Question 13 asked for descriptions of three things that demonstrate the popularity of 「冬ソナ」 in Japan. 'The leading actor of 「冬ソナ」 is very popular amongst women in Japan' was not the correct answer. In response to Question 15, '56% of Japanese nationals answered that they feel close to Korea in the government survey' was not sufficient. The response should have included the fact that the survey was held recently and the figure is the highest ever. Question 17 was handled poorly. If students read the text carefully, they would have seen the explanation of the meaning of 韓流<sup>かんりゅう</sup> in the first paragraph in the text.

#### Question 13

- A large crowd of women gathered at the airport and the hotel when *Yon sama*, the leading actor of '*fuyusona*', went to Japan.
- Many DVDs, videos and the book of '*Fuyusona*' and calendars of *Yon* sell at department stores and on the Internet.
- 500 000 people went to the event that featured '*Fuyusona*' (in Gunma prefecture).

#### Question 14

- The number of people who join tours to Korea is increasing.
- The number of people who learn Korean is increasing.
- Korean food/cuisine is highly popular.

#### Question 15a.

He/she thinks that pop-culture has the power to change (influence) society.

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## Question 15b.

In the recent government survey, 56% of Japanese nationals answered that they feel close to Korea. This figure is the highest ever.

## Question 16

- the Soccer World Cup in 2002
- because Japan and Korea hosted it together

## Question 17a.

The current boom of Korean culture in Japan.

## Question 17b.

The author hopes that the current boom of Korean culture in Japan will not end and that cultural interaction between the two countries will continue.

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part B

#### Text 5

There were still several students who wrote their answers in English in this section.

Many students found the answers in the text and copied chunks from the passage. The sentences in their answers should be matched specifically to the questions. For example, one of the correct answers to Question 18 is カタカナ語は新しくてあかるいイメージがある。rather than カタカナ語は新しくて明るいイメージがあつて、好きだ。Students are encouraged to develop the skill of rephrasing the sentences in order to provide correct answers. Answers that are merely copied from the text will result in a loss of marks.

Question 20 was not handled well. It required students to have a good understanding of the text and the capacity to explain it in their own words.

## Question 18

Any two of:

- 新しくて、あかるいイメージがある。
- 英語がそのまま使えてべんりだ。
- せかいの新しいじょうほうや文かをつたえる。

## Question 19

Any two of:

- 新聞を読むのがたいへんだ。
- わかい人の話がわからない。
- でんとうてきな日本のことばがなくなる。

## Question 20

One of the following answers, or a combination of these:

- 年よりも分かるようなことばをつかった方がいいから。
- 分かりにくいカタカナ語があるから。
- 日本のことばを大せつにしなければならないから。

## Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

### Question 21

Students who chose this topic seemed to understand the task; however, not many students appropriately expressed the purpose of this piece of writing, which was to ask a friend to recommend them to the director of the centre. The letter should have included the reasons why she/he wanted to apply for an assistant teacher position. Students should also have written about their ability to speak Japanese and talked about their experience in teaching English to children.

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## **Question 22**

Many students who selected this question did not understand the requirement of the task. Some focused on environmental issues in Japan and Australia rather than on recycling activities in their hometown. Students were also expected to include some benefits that those activities could bring to the town.

## **Question 23**

Only a few students attempted this task. Generally, students experienced difficulties creating an interesting story that clearly described the impact of the blackout on Kaoru's day. Responses were expected to include how this event influenced the behaviour and attitudes of Kaoru and others. Instead, some students wrote about their own personal experiences on one day. Students are reminded that the appropriate format for a story includes a title and author's name.

## **Question 24**

A small number of students chose this topic. Many of them struggled to produce a comprehensive piece of evaluative writing that discussed the difference between the book and the film versions. In order to complete this task successfully a variety of appropriate vocabulary was needed.

## **Question 25**

This was the most popular choice and there were some excellent pieces of writing. Students produced creative emails that explained the reasons for visiting Australia in January while at the same time presenting the case for not coming to Australia in August. Some of the reasons for not visiting Australia in the winter were original and interesting.