



2012 Languages: Japanese First Language: GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Japanese First Language oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in spoken Japanese. It has two sections: Section 1 – Presentation and Section 2 – Discussion, which relates to a chosen Detailed Study. At the beginning of the presentation students are asked to give a brief (no more than one minute) outline of the issue(s) selected for the presentation. Students may bring a small (no more than 20 cm × 12.5 cm) card containing notes written in point form only.

In Section 1 – Presentation, students present the results of their Detailed Study research. It is suggested that students use at least three main texts, drawn from the field of Literature and Arts. In Section 2 – Discussion, students are asked to discuss aspects of the nominated topic and to clarify or elaborate on any points they present. Students are also expected to discuss related, broader issues beyond their topics. For each of the main texts studied, students may be asked background questions as well as questions about the intention of the author.

Throughout their study, students are expected to develop good research and comprehension skills. The Detailed Study research must be conducted with an analytical approach, embodying a clear stance on the issue(s). Comprehension skills require an understanding of an author's view and subjectivity within the texts, as well as an evaluation of the content and viewpoints. A critique of all texts studied is also necessary. Students are reminded that critical thinking is an essential component of the Detailed Study.

Some students used a novel and a film version of the same novel as two of their main texts. Other students used three different texts that had similar viewpoints. In both of these cases, information and opinions on the issues were likely to result in being narrow.

Students' performances varied. Successful students were able to present the results of their research exploring their topic from their main texts and other supplementary resources. They were able to evaluate a topic objectively, elaborate effectively on ideas and opinions linked to the texts studied, and present ideas and opinions logically. These students were able to develop the discussion further and demonstrated preparation and confidence, often reflecting on the issue. Weaker students presented personal thoughts and ideas rather than objective views drawn from their study. These students also tended to make very superficial comments in the discussion and an insufficient amount of preparation was clearly evident. Many students seemed to be better prepared for the presentation than for the discussion. Students need to prepare thoroughly for all parts of the examination and time should be allocated in class to practise the discussion.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Section 1 – Presentation

Communication

Many students managed the timing of the presentation well and finished within the five-minute time limit. Many students engaged well with the assessors. Some students used a good range of vocabulary and expressions and logical structures. Most students had good control of register and style. Weaker students seemed to falter or mumbled during the presentation. Students are reminded that they need to deliver their speech clearly in order to give themselves the opportunity to achieve good results.

Content

Some presentations were excellent and contained objective and logical viewpoints as a result of sound analytical research. However, some presentations were superficial, comprising only narrow viewpoints due to lack of sufficient research or comprehension skills. Some presentations simply summarised the texts studied and provided a word-for-word oral account. Students are reminded that the Detailed Study requires them to research topics thoroughly.

Students should seek the advice of teachers when selecting a topic, as some topics included less common social issues and it was evident that these students had struggled to complete in-depth research. Consequently, despite adequate investigation, many of these presentations lacked sufficient objectivity and analysis.



Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

The more successful students maintained a high level of engagement with the assessors. These students were able to respond readily and confidently, and maintain appropriate style and register, even when unanticipated questions were asked. In general, the less successful students communicated satisfactorily but had not prepared well and this caused them to hesitate and pause frequently. For the less successful students, speech style and register were less appropriate in the discussion than in the presentation, and these students used more casual speech, which is inappropriate in an examination setting. In order to excel, it is essential for students to prepare thoroughly for both sections of the examination.

Content

The more successful students were able to readily clarify and elaborate on their opinions and present their opinions and ideas logically and critically. They were able to broaden the discussion of issues beyond their chosen texts. However, weaker students presented more generalised and superficial ideas that were mostly summarised from texts, or they offered subjective thoughts that relied predominantly on their personal experiences rather than research. The less successful students repeated the same ideas in their presentation and discussion.

Students are reminded that analytical research, critical thinking and thorough preparation should generally lead to an engaging discussion.

Some of the successful topics chosen for the Detailed Study included Cyberbullying, Views of Life, Life and Death, and Women in the Workforce.