

# 2017 VCE Japanese First Language written examination report

## General comments

The majority of students sitting the 2017 VCE Japanese First Language written examination achieved modest results.

The key finding from the results was the relatively widespread incorrect use of *kanji*. The following are examples of common errors (the correct translations are also given).

English word/phrase	Incorrect translation	Correct translation
world	平界	世界
the voting percentage	投票率	投票率
limitations	限開	限界
relation	間係	関係
use	理用	利用
law	法立	法律
offer	提共	提供
patience	忍体	忍耐
feel	関じる	感じる
receive (a message)	受身	受信
memory	気憶	記憶
miserable	悲参な	悲惨な

Students who scored highly were generally able to identify key words in the questions and express their responses logically around those words with specific, appropriate and relevant information. Lower-scoring students often did not identify the key words, and their responses, therefore, tended to be unfocused, with no natural progression or consistent theme. These deficiencies can only be overcome with practice – in particular, practice in summarising information from various types of texts and writing the summary in a logical and sequenced manner.

Based on an overall assessment of the examination results, the following recommendations are made for teachers and students of Japanese First Language preparing for this examination:

- Students need to peruse the examination carefully. They need to ensure that their responses address the questions asked. Some of the student responses, particularly in Section 3, did not take all aspects of the questions into account.

- Students need to be careful when writing *kanji*. For example, some of the correct *kanji* characters in the list above were used in the examination questions but were incorrectly transcribed by students.
- Generally, students should use paper dictionaries in class, in preference to electronic dictionaries, when studying Japanese. Using paper dictionaries helps inculcate characters in memory. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the examination.
- Students may find that using *genkooyooshi* (manuscript paper) will help with their writing of *kanji*, particularly in the spacing of characters.

## Specific 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.

### Section 1 – Listening and responding

Section 1 of the examination required students to identify and understand key points raised and respond to the questions using that information.

Most students answered Section 1 questions adequately. Students who scored highly summarised their responses using the identified key points and answered appropriately. Students who did not score well did not identify the key points and consequently had difficulty structuring their responses at the expected standard.

Some students misread or misunderstood the Section 1 questions, particularly Question 1b. and Question 1e.

#### Text 1

##### Question 1a.

- 役者たちが素敵だった。(Actors were so good.)
- あらかじめ演目の解説を読んでいったせいか、内容が全部理解できたから。(綺麗な舞台がどんどん変わって、これぞ芸術だと思ったから) (Because she had prepared well beforehand with the resources, she was able to understand all about the performance. Because the stage scenes frequently changed, she thought it was so poetic and artistic.)

##### Question 1b.

- 人型ロボット ([first] android in science)
- インスタントラーメン (instant noodles in food)
- 新幹線 ([first] bullet train)
- QR コード (QR matrix code in technology)

##### Question 1c.

- 極める・もっと良くしよう。(focus on mastery)
- 海外からの文化を日本の文化に融合させる。(take in the new culture from overseas to harmonise with Japan's own culture)

##### Question 1d.

- 結束して独自で新しいものを作り出すことを学んだ。(learned to work together and create new things)
- 結果、日本人の生活水準/生活の質が上がって、都市は発展、サービスの質も向上した。(Japanese living standards have become better, their cities have been developed, and the quality of services have improved)

### Question 1e.

The following points should have been included in responses:

- ジャネットが歌舞伎を見に行き、日本の伝統芸能について考えた/感じた/思った/気が付いた。(Janet went to see a performance of Kabuki, which started her reflecting on/thinking about/noticing the depth of Japanese culture.)
- 日本の伝統（・技術）の海外への影響、また海外からの導入について考えた。(It highlighted the importance and influence of Japanese traditions and values and how different cultures mix, interact and impact on each other.)
- 日本の結束力や忍耐など、他の国々も学べることもある。(Other countries could learn from Japan about working together and being patient.)
- 違う文化の中では、同じことを違うように解釈することもあるので、異文化同士の相互理解（・文化交流）は重要だ/大切だ。(Cultural exchanges are important for global understanding because people can learn that other cultures do the same thing differently.)
- 文化交流の質を常に向上させ続けることが世界平和に繋がる/大切だ/重要だ。(The regular improvement of cultural exchanges will lead to world peace.)

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Texts 2 and 3

#### Question 2

In Section 2, Question 2, students were required to demonstrate their comprehension of Texts 2 and 3 by identifying the main ideas and information in the texts and writing an evaluative essay intended for publication in a newspaper.

The four key areas of the texts were:

- SNS によるコミュニケーションの双方向性 (two-way communication by social media)
- 誰もが表現の自由を楽しめる (anyone can enjoy expressing themselves freely)
- 低コストで効果的なマーケティング (efficient marketing with a low cost)
- 負の影響：世論操作、悪質な噂、国家機密漏えい、偽りの人間関係、偽りの広告 (the negative impact: manipulating public opinion, unfounded rumours, the leaking of important government information, false relationships, false advertising)

Most students included at least three of the above points in their responses, but higher-scoring responses included all four. Students who scored highly produced their responses using various skills, including identifying the key words and main points in the questions and succinctly, logically and accurately summarising that information to show that they clearly understood it. Conversely, students who did not score well had difficulty identifying the key points and logically structuring and summarising their responses. Some students randomly copied sentences from the text in *genkooyooshi*.

Many students would benefit from regularly practising the preparation of summaries of texts. They would also benefit by using *genkooyooshi* to assist with writing Japanese, such as helping adhere to the rules for spacing characters. These kinds of rules are basic knowledge that students should be practised in before sitting for written examinations in Japanese.

## Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

In Section 3, students were able to choose from five questions.

Question 3 was the second-most popular question. It required students to write a newspaper article about competition and rivalry among people. The task required students to set out the benefits and shortcomings of each.

Question 4 was the most popular question. It required students to write a speech script about *minpaku*, which enables people to lease or rent accommodation. Students were required to identify some of the benefits and difficulties of *minpaku*, both from the tourists' and owners' points of view.

Question 5 required students to write for a newspaper an imaginative story whose ending reminded them of the Japanese proverb 'A good medicine tastes bitter'.

Question 6 required students to write a letter to a student centre at a Japanese university about their experiences of student employment internships in a company, including the benefits and difficulties of internships.

Question 7 required students to write a diary entry about their last day of living with nature in a remote location for a week as part of a challenge. The diary entry was to be shared with the organisers of the challenge.

Some students responded well to their selected question but, overall, the responses were not sufficiently developed. For example, while students were generally able to identify and describe benefits and shortcomings where relevant, the arguments of the benefits and shortcomings needed to be more balanced.

The following recommendations may assist students sitting Section 3 of this examination:

- Practising reading and writing *kanji* is indispensable for any section of the written examination. Students should engage in regular *kanji* exercises at school and at home.
- Students should clearly understand and practise different writing styles, such as speech scripts, essays, newspaper articles and diary entries. Past examinations are a useful source of practice questions for this purpose.
- Students should practise preparing for examinations under strict time constraints, which will assist pacing their responses and help them avoid running short of time. Past examinations are useful for students to practise writing Japanese under simulated examination conditions.