

2020 VCE Japanese First Language oral examination report

General comments

Overall, students were aware of, and followed, the requirements of the 2020 Japanese First Language oral examination.

Some students scored very highly. Most of the remainder performed adequately, but it was clear that their results could have been substantially improved with better and more focused preparation. The comments in this report are offered to provide guidance that might help students to do that in future years.

The examination consists of two sections: the oral presentation of material selected and prepared by the students, and a discussion of the presented material in conversation between the students and assessors.

Specific information

Thorough preparation for the examination is crucial and the bedrock of good preparation is having a thorough knowledge of the issue selected, which relates clearly to the sub-topic chosen for detailed study. The sub-topic chosen for the Detailed Study must be related to one or more of the prescribed topics listed in the table on page 13 of the *VCE Japanese First Language Study Design*. Students must thoroughly understand the issue selected for their presentation if they are to deliver it clearly, confidently and logically. They must understand the issue sufficiently so that they can anticipate questions that are likely to be asked by the assessors and guide the direction of the discussion. This will enable them to engage in the discussion fluently, concisely and with relevant information.

Section 1 – Presentation

Communication

The defining characteristic of students who communicated their presentation proficiently was their knowledge of the subject matter. This meant that students did not have to rely too heavily on their cue cards. They communicated clearly and confidently, speaking to and engaging with the assessors, and making appropriate eye contact. Their practiced communication skills allowed them to deliver their presentation at an appropriate speed and with a natural voice.

Students who did not score highly for their presentation tended to rely too heavily on their cue cards. This was generally because they were not confident of their issue, which in turn resulted in hesitant and uncertain delivery. These students were unable to engage appropriately with the assessors and lacked the natural flow and speed of a speaking voice.

Content

It was clear that the presentations of students who scored highly were thoroughly researched and that the material was based on a variety of sources. Consequently, the presentations were informative, logically structured, and developed to facilitate understanding and delivery of the content presented.

The presentations from students who did not score highly demonstrated a lack of preparation. The superficial content impeded students' ability to appropriately structure the ideas and to elaborate on the matters raised. These deficiencies in content inevitably impacted the students' ability to effectively communicate.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Effective communication in the discussion section crucially depended on the students being thoroughly familiar with the subject matter. Familiarity with the issue selected enables students to be precise and concise, use appropriate formal language, be relevant in their comments and responses, and not repeat expressions using an inappropriately narrow vocabulary. Consequently, the students who had prepared thoroughly tended to communicate clearly, confidently and respond readily to assessors.

Students who did not score highly during the discussion section tended not to demonstrate a deep understanding of the content. This resulted in students being unable to influence the direction of the discussion, being hesitant and uncertain of their comments and responses, and displaying a tendency to use filler expressions and informal language when responding to questions.

Content

Students who had carefully prepared their presentations and had a good understanding of the underlying issues tended to be confident, able to influence and direction of the discussion, use appropriate formal language, cite relevant evidence, and elaborate on the issues raised without being repetitive or hesitant.

Students who did not score highly in the discussion of their presentations tended to demonstrate an insufficient grasp of the issue selected. The consequence of this was a lack of confidence, undue reticence in their interaction with the assessors, a lack of control, and an inability to elaborate fluidly and relevantly in their interactions with assessors.