

2022 VCE Japanese First Language written external assessment report

General comments

This year was the first year that students were assessed in the written examination under the new study design.

All students attempted all sections of the examination paper and most were well prepared. Some clearly struggled with time management, and were therefore unable to adequately respond to all the elements of some sections. The main general errors in student responses were in the use of kanji scripts. Common examples of this were the inappropriate use of radicals (招介→紹介) and using different scripts for the same reading (自前→事前).

Specific information

This report provides answers, or indications of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses to the questions.

Section 1 – Reading, listening and responding

Section 1 required students to read Text 1A and listen to a reading of Text 1B. The associated questions, 1a. to 1d., were designed to test the capacity of students to understand the texts in general; to be able to isolate specific aspects of the texts; and to accurately and appropriately identify and integrate relevant information and ideas from the two texts into their written responses.

All students attempted to answer all four questions. Questions 1c. and 1d. posed the most difficulty for students. For example, in their answer to Question 1c., many students incorrectly included information about 'BBC's 100 people of the year'. These difficulties highlight the need for students to practise reading and listening to texts to identify core information and then to appropriately integrate that information into their answers.

Question 1a.

- 「新相撲」として1997年に第一回全日本大会が開催されて始まった。(It began in 1997 as the 'New Sumo' when the first All-Japan tournament was held.)

Question 1b.

取り組みの稽古をする相手が必要だし、女子相撲特有のスキルを磨きたいから。(力よりスピードと技重視の) また、一緒に夢を追う仲間が欲しいから。その夢を成し遂げるためには/風穴を開けるには、チームが必要だから。

(Because she needs to have a partner to practise matches with and to hone the skills unique to women's sumo [speed and technique, rather than power]. She also wants companions to pursue their dream together. You need a team of women to achieve the dream.)

Question 1c.

最近の世界大会では、結果上位を東ヨーロッパの選手が多数を占めた。また、アジア大会でもタイやモンゴルの選手の力がトップの日本の選手の力に近づいてきた。世界でも、相撲のオリンピック競技化を推す声が高まっている。

(In recent world championships, Eastern European athletes dominated the top rankings. Also, at the Asian competitions, Thai and Mongolian athletes were getting closer in skills to the top Japanese athletes. Around the world there are growing calls for sumo to become an Olympic sport.)

Question 1d.

Students should have included the following points in their responses in Japanese.

利点. (Advantages):

- 相撲道を体験することで、自分を磨くことができる。(By experiencing sumo, you can improve yourself.)
- 日本各地を訪れることができる。(You can visit all over Japan.)
- 友達を作ることができる。(You can make friends.)
- 女性がより輝ける社会を作ることができる。(We can create a society where women have more opportunities to shine.)

障害 (Obstacles):

- 相撲は、伝統的に女人禁制のイメージがある。(Sumo has traditionally been seen as a male-only sport.)
- 女子相撲部がある学校は数校しかない。(There are only a few schools which have women's sumo clubs.)
- 五輪に相撲がない。(Sumo is not an Olympic sport.)
- 女性はプロになれない。(Women cannot be professional sumo wrestlers.)

Section 2 – Reading, listening and creating text

Section 2 required students to read Text 2A (which included an image), listen to a reading of Text 2B and then answer Question 2 in Japanese. The question was designed to test the capacity of students to identify, integrate and synthesise relevant information and ideas contained in the two texts, write their responses accurately, present information in a structured and sequenced way, and use appropriate language and vocabulary, grammar, script and punctuation.

The eight key points that students needed to identify in the two texts are summarised in Japanese, with translations/comments in English.

From Text 2A:

- タイニーハウス：小さくて機能的な家が評価される。イメージからの情報も含める。(Tiny house: Small functional homes are valued. From the image: A tiny house is transportable/movable; it also can be placed in beautiful surroundings such as the forest in the image.)
- コレクティブハウス：スペースを共有することで築く人間関係。(Collective house: Building relationship by sharing space.)
- 京町家：昔のものを再利用する魅力。(Kyo Machiya [Kyoto traditional townhouse]: The charm of reusing old buildings.)
- DIY リノベ：自分でリノベーションをして、コロナ禍でも住みよい場所を作る。(DIY renovation: Renovate yourself and create a comfortable place to live, even under the COVID stay-at-home restrictions.)

From Text 2B:

- 空き家問題（高齢化社会と人口減少の影響。管理不行き届きの問題）(Vacant house problem / impact of aging society and population decline. Mismanagement problem.)
- 新しく建設することによる量的な充足よりも、すでにある中古住宅を補修などして活用することを重視するという変化。(The change is to emphasise the repair and utilisation of existing houses rather than building more new houses.)
- 田舎への移住。移住支援。(Relocation to rural areas [countryside migration]. Available support for migration.)
- コロナの影響や働き方改革によって自宅で過ごす時間が増え、住宅の選び方に影響。(Choice of housing has diversified as people have had more time at home due to the influence of COVID and the consequent work style reforms.)

All students answered Question 2. However, a significant number of students did not fully appreciate the text type requirements for the responses. Detailed information about text type is available in the information guide on the VCAA website. Using the appropriate text type in examinations is important and students are encouraged to carefully review the requirements for various responses.

An image was included in this section of the examination (2A) for the first time this year, as required in the new study design. However, most students did not include the required information from the image in their responses. Students need to ensure that they are alert to such examination requirements and practise incorporating the image in their responses.

The feature that mostly distinguished higher- and lower-scoring responses in Question 2 was the ability to effectively identify key points in the two texts, and to synthesise that information in their responses. Higher-scoring students were much more adept at this task, using information from both texts. On the other hand, the focus of students who did not score as highly tended to be much narrower, with some of these latter students using information from only one of the two texts.

Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

Section 3 required students to write a response to one of two questions (Questions 3 and 4). The questions were designed to assess students' capacity to write with appropriate relevance, breadth and depth, to structure and sequence their ideas appropriately, and to use appropriate vocabulary, script, punctuation and grammar.

Question 3 was the most popular choice. It required students to write a personal blogpost about their experience in overcoming difficulties when proposing to study abroad (in Australia). Students could have included points about convincing their parents to allow international study and organising the arrangements to study abroad. The blogpost would be posted on a website for the benefit of other Japanese school students who may have been hoping to study abroad.

Question 4 required students to write an imaginative short story that featured a famous character from an old Japanese story appearing in their room and asking for their help with an important task that the character must undertake. The story would be published in a book about Japanese myths and legends.

In Section 3, students had some difficulty in using text types appropriate for the genre; for example, for a blogpost or a short story. As already mentioned, students will find valuable information about this on the VCAA website.

Students who scored highly in this section demonstrated an ability to effectively structure their text, to logically sequence the information they were seeking to convey, to use the appropriate characteristics of the text type and the kind of writing and to include a range of vocabulary and expressions.