

Japanese (continuers)

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

JAPANESE (CONTINUERS)

2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Interaction

Common topics included Family, School Life, Hobbies and Future Plans.

It was noted that some schools were giving all students in the assessment group the same set of questions in the same order. This often led to a very structured conversation and did not allow for depth in responses (I2) and spontaneous conversation (E3). Teachers should ask a variety of open and closed questions to allow students to expand on, and give depth in their responses (I2).

Some schools used a list as a guide and asked students a variety of questions on the topics. They were also able to follow the student's leads and this resulted in a more spontaneous conversation and students were able to demonstrate an A level in Expression (E3), as responses were more spontaneous, and conversation was initiated.

It was noted that students who were prepared to expand their ideas were also able to include an extensive variety of linguistic structures (E1).

Most schools adhered to the time limit of 5–7mins for Interactions. A few schools exceeded this limit, and could not be assessed beyond the 7 minutes.

Text Production

Topics included Travel to Japan, Homestay Experiences, School Life and Job Applications.

Common text types were letters and speech scripts. Some schools used a stimulus text to respond to, but the majority of schools wrote a creative text on a given topic. If writing from a stimulus it is helpful for the passage to be included as part of the task sheet in the package. The design of tasks should specify context, purpose and audience.

It was noted that most tasks enabled students to achieve high levels in the Ideas and Expression assessment design criteria.

Text productions varied in length, and although there is no word limit in Assessment Type 1: Folio, most schools set character counts between 600–800 characters. In some cases text productions that were less than 400 characters, lacked in I2 *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*.

Text Analysis

A range of topics were covered, and material from the clarifying forum was also used by some schools. Reading and responding tasks were predominant with few schools including listening tasks.

Where using a percentage to calculate a grade, this must be further referenced to the performance standards. When using past exam style comprehensions and listening tasks, these generally only assess IR1, and teachers are advised to consider the suitability of these tasks, and amend as appropriate.

Many schools were not assessing analysis of the language in texts IR2. Text analysis is the most appropriate place to assess IR2. The design of the task can include questions related to linguistic features to be able to assess IR2.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

In depth Study Topics

Common topics this year included Anime, Japanese Food, Harajuku Fashion, Japanese Schools, and Sumo Wrestling.

Students should be encouraged to choose topics that enable them to use their Japanese rather than topics that require vocabulary and structures significantly beyond this.

The personal topics, 'A trip to Japan', and 'My Host Family' are topics that may not enable students to perform at high levels in I1 and I2, as depth of ideas, information and opinions were not detailed. The topics listed above did not enable students to demonstrate research aspects of Japanese Culture.

Oral Presentation in Japanese

Most schools adhered to the time length of 3-5 minutes with only a few schools under or over the prescribed time limit. Most students chose a speech for the Oral Presentation in Japanese.

In some cases students read their speech and it was apparent that there was little understanding of the content. They were not able to achieve high levels in E2, as intonation, fluency and pronunciation was affected by lack of understanding of content.

In most cases students prepared an informative speech which was well structured, and they were able to include a range of linguistic structures. Depth in ideas was also most prominent in the oral presentation.

Written Response in Japanese

The majority of schools adhered to the character limit of 600 characters. Responses that were under this limit were not always able to demonstrate sufficient depth. Students who do not use *genkouyoushi* for the written response are advised to include a character count.

Generally the oral presentation was an informative speech, and the written response a personal piece, allowing these students to use the content they have researched in two different text productions.

A good task design for the written response in Japanese was a diary, allowing for personal writing, and therefore differing in language and structure to the oral presentation.

In the written response students achieved higher grades in I1 when they included relevant information associated with the In-depth Study topic, and I2 when they were able to include depth of knowledge in the topic researched.

It is important to note that some students were using an on-line translator as they were taking on topics well beyond the language required for Stage 2. Care should be taken to ensure the authenticity of student work.

Reflective Response in English

The limit of 600 words was generally adhered to. Most students chose a written report.

A few schools chose the video option and students were able to reflect on their chosen topic for 5–7 minutes. This gave students the opportunity to develop ideas (I2). It was noted however, that in some cases that students who chose this option tended to use a content approach, rather than reflection.

Some students misinterpreted reflection and instead provided a recount. This meant that, in some cases, IR3 could not be assessed.

Many students were able to reflect on their own learning journey (IR3).

In most cases there needed to be deeper reflection on *own values, beliefs, ideas and practices in relation to those represented in texts*.

Operational Advice

- In most cases learning and assessment plans were provided, and where necessary included an addendum.
- In many cases, when student's work was missing from folios, the Variations – Moderation Materials form was not included. Teachers are advised to ensure this form is provided.
- Moderators found that, where teachers had corrected over the top of work, some student work was difficult to read. Notes in the margin or underneath written work is an example of good practice.
- Teachers are reminded that an A+ is to be sustained across the assessment type.
- The majority of the schools packaged materials separately by student as required. It is expected that the two assessment types (folio and in-depth study) be kept separate.
- Task sheets should be attached to each piece of work. Teachers are reminded that it is not necessary to send in student drafts and teacher notes for each task.
- Schools should check that all CDs are in working order. It is important that moderators are able to access all student work to confirm assessment decisions.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Examination

Oral Examination

One hundred and twenty-seven students presented themselves for the Japanese (continuers) oral examination this year. For the conversation, approximately 30% of students achieved an A grade, while 15% received D+ or lower. In the discussion section, 22% achieved an A grade, while 9% received D+ or lower.

Section 1: Conversation

Overall, students performed very well in the conversation section. Most students comprehended all or most of the examiners' questions, and many provided appropriate answers with a good degree of confidence and fluency. Less successful students, however, were unable to go beyond short or minimum responses. Capable students were able to move comfortably beyond prepared answers and spontaneously elaborated on their initial responses by giving reasons, opinions and impressions.

Ideas (Relevance)

Although students' comprehension of questions was good, there was one main problem that has been pointed out by examiners repeatedly every year, that is, students being over-rehearsed or even 'taking over' the conversation. Examiners commented that some students were over prepared and kept on with learned sentences, adding things which were not necessarily relevant to the question that was asked. Some students interrupted the examiner and directed the conversation by presenting rehearsed information before questions were asked. It was also evident again this year that some students responded only to a familiar key word in the question and jumped into a prepared but irrelevant answer. Learning detailed information by heart and presenting it as 'speech' is strongly discouraged.

Students should be encouraged and taught to develop good communication/interaction skills to be successful in the conversation section. Some suggestions include:

- Listen carefully right to the end of a question paying particular attention to tense, aspect and mode (Remember the meaning of a Japanese utterance is typically determined in the end of the sentence).
- Wait until being asked more in-depth questions rather than presenting a long paragraph (especially when asked an open question such as 'what are your hobbies?').
- Learn to use 'fillers' and あいづち effectively in order to maintain the natural flow of conversation.
- Do not rely on predictable questions.
- Develop strategies to deal with unexpected or more difficult questions.

It is strongly recommended that students start to practise the above as early as possible, as it takes time to develop these skills.

Ideas (Depth of treatment of ideas, information or opinions)

Depth of ideas should be observed in the interaction (conversation) between a student and examiner. For a conversation to develop to a certain depth, it is helpful when students give the examiners something to continue the conversation with. For example, when asked about their summer holiday plans, students might include reference to visiting their grandparents, a part-time job and so on. So the examiners can then ask about their extended family (grandparents) or their job saying for instance, 'Oh, do you often visit them?', 'What do you do with them?', 'Do you already have a part-time job?', 'How would you like to use the money you will get?'

Again, it is not about presenting well-rehearsed answers that matters – this is strongly discouraged – it is about how deeply students can get into and develop their interaction with the examiners.

Expression (Capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately)

Although minor errors (particularly in pronunciation) are often ignorable when a conversation flows naturally, more serious grammatical errors can confuse the conversation significantly. Typical examples observed include the confusion of tense

of verbs and adjectives, and inaccurate use of case particles. It was also pointed out by examiners this year that students need a strong vocabulary base.

There were many students who did not sufficiently cope with questions which contained more complicated structures (e.g. relative clause). Some also showed a lack of confidence with interrogatives such as どう、どんな and どうして. The less successful students often struggled in saying complete sentences. The most successful students, on the other hand, showed a mastery of complicated sentence structures, including a range of subordinating conjunctions (e.g. ~から/ので、~たら、~時、~ても). It was pleasing to see that some students comfortably used a variety of verb forms (e.g. ~たことがあります、~つもりです、~たいと思います、~からです), which in previous years had been reported as difficult for students to deal with.

Pronunciation was generally good, and yet common errors which appear year after year did so again. Some examples include:

- confusion between similar vowels as in えいが/えいご; あに/あね; おにいさん/おにさん;
- まだ/まで; かわいい/こわい;
- confusion between similar consonants as in かもく/かぞく/かがく.

'Foreign accent' or phonetic interference from one's background language was often evident in students' pronunciation and intonation, but it was very rare that foreign accent by itself seriously confused the conversation. When uncertain, an examiner will ask a student to repeat or clarify what is just said so that the meaning of the utterance is determined by a natural flow of interaction between a student and examiners.

Other linguistic features that were often not known or were confused included:

- The conjunction から/ので mistakenly preceded the reason-clause like 'because' in English.
- numbers and counter suffixes, especially in 年、年生, かい (number of times)
- tense and time words (e.g. 来年…しました。今朝…行きます。)
- ほか as in, for example ほかの日に…, and ほかになにか言いたいことがありますか

With regard to appropriateness of expressions, it came to examiners' attention that some students did not differentiate between formal and informal ways of speaking. In the context of oral examination, students should be able to keep to formal/polite expressions such as すみません rather than ごめん, and もういちどおねがいします instead of もういちど?

Expression (Coherence in structure and sequence)

Typically, weaker answers did not give any or much new information – usually repeating or confirming what was said by the examiner (e.g. 'Yes, it is') or just presenting a single piece of information. In such short and simple answers, there was minimal room for organising information and ideas logically and coherently other than arranging words in the correct grammatical order, even which was not always done successfully. Although short responses are often more appropriate than irrelevant long answers, students should know that they need to provide some content or information to sustain conversation with. Strong students effectively added extra information and opinions to support their statements without overtalking and overtaking the conversation.

Effective use of あいづち should be more encouraged for better and coherent interaction. When used appropriately, あいづち can be a very useful linguistic device to show that a student understands the examiner's questions and is genuinely engaged in the conversation. Although many students used あいづち to some extent, most of them relied on one simple expression such as はい. Only very strong students were able to use a wider range of あいづち expressions including ああ、そうですね、～ですか (confirming the question, seeking clarification)、ああ、わかりました、それはそうですが and so forth.

Expression (Capacity to interact and maintain a conversation)

This varied significantly among students. The strongest students were able to use a variety of verbal communication strategies during the conversation, e.g. あいづち fillers, thanking to the examiners when receiving help, responding to correction, as well as using the silence (pauses) appropriately. On the other hand, not much interaction happened with weaker students as they tended to stick to their minimal responses looking reluctant to go beyond the prepared answers.

Most students knew at least one expression to seek help when needed (e.g. 'Please repeat'). It is extremely important that students keep practicing real, every day conversations rather than learning and sticking to a few set phrases.

Section 2: Discussion

As has been observed in the previous years, there was a wide range in students' ability to cope with the discussion. It is apparent that, compared to the conversation, a higher level of language proficiency is required to sufficiently cope with the discussion on their In-depth Study topics. This is probably why many less capable students relied heavily on memorised answers and were unable to discuss beyond what had been rehearsed. Some students could say nothing at all except what they had learnt by rote.

In addition to thorough preparation and practice, the appropriate choice of topic is crucial to a successful performance in the discussion section. Teachers should ensure that their students' topics are manageable, interesting and sufficiently challenging to discuss in the final examination. While it was pleasing to see many students passionately talk about the topic of their own choice and interest, it was quite obvious when students had not chosen the topic themselves because they tended to lack the interest and ability to comment independently with opinion. Examiners commented that some topics were too broad (e.g. Japanese festivals) or too 'easy' (e.g. Japanese schools) to allow students to go into depth in discussion or demonstrate their research. Also noted was that some students had chosen topics that were far beyond their linguistic level and hence did nothing but reciting memorised sentences from books and the Internet sites without sufficiently understanding the content.

Also extremely important is how the main points are presented on the In-depth Study Outline form. The dot points should provide information to enable examiners outside the school to instantly understand the focus of the study and facilitate the discussion effectively. Also, the dot points should sufficiently cover/match the overall topic of one's in-depth study. Some students' topics were very general (e.g. Japanese

festivals, Japanese food etc.) but the actual research was done only on one example of the whole topic. Teachers are encouraged to supervise and give guidance on how students present their dot points on the outline form well before the examination.

Some students brought in support objects such as photographs from the Internet and fluffy toys or plastic figures of anime characters. If used effectively, they can be a good starting point of discussion, but mostly they were not really useful. To make a significant impact on their marks, students should be able to provide more than just an explanation of what the object is.

Ideas (Relevance)

Research topics presented this year were generally fairly relevant to the purpose of the In-depth Study, but students' performance did not consistently deliver the appropriate amount of relevant information and ideas. Most students could mention some relevant detail for each 'dot point' but many struggled to go beyond the prepared answers and could not genuinely engage in the in-situ discussion with the examiners.

Students and teachers are reminded this year again that the one-minute introduction speech is only optional and not assessed. If students have decided to give an introduction of their in-depth study, they should do so in as short a time as possible so that they can use relevant information and expressions in response to questions, thus maximising the opportunities to actually engage in the discussion, which is assessed.

Also, students should not give long 'speech' when asked to explain what they have learned about a dot point. They should say a few relevant things and then wait to take part in a more natural discussion.

Ideas (Depth of ideas, information or opinions)

Most students had researched their topic in some detail but not in sufficient depth. Only the most successful students showed evidence of good research and were able to give thoughtful and convincing comments and opinions in response to various questions. Other students could have pursued their research much further. In preparation students and teacher should ensure that reliable and reputable sources are accessed. They should not rely on Internet sites of dubious quality.

Most students were able to answer only the simple introductory questions which asked them to explain each dot point. There was limited depth when deeper questions were asked (e.g. justify one's opinion, provide reasons). Genuine discussion is challenging, but students should at least predict what they might be asked based on their dot points and practise. Examiners commented that many students used the expression 'それについては勉強しませんでした (I did not study that)' as an excuse when they probably just did not understand the question. Stronger students at least tried to guess or gave some sort of reply rather than evading the question.

Expression (Capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately)
Expression (Coherence in structure and sequence)

There was the full range of performance here. Generally grammatical accuracy and range of expressions were of good standard in rehearsed parts of answers, but there was little flexibility when less-predictable questions were asked and students had to change the sentences they had memorised. Examiners commented that some strong students handled questions relating to Interpretation (IR1) and Reflection (IR3) well. Yet, it still seemed very difficult for most students to go beyond basic answers. Many said, 'It was interesting', 'I learned a lot', and 'My opinion changed' and so on, but couldn't further elaborate. Students should fully understand the nature of IR1 and IR3, and develop language skills and knowledge to deal with these questions. As questions are rather predictable, appropriate practice and preparation will certainly lead to a successful outcome. Suggestions and guidance are included below.

Interpretation (IR1) questions for IDS discussion are mainly to examine:

- how insightfully and clearly a student interpret and explain the content and context of the texts he/she used for IDS; and
- how effectively a student give evidence or example/s from the texts to support his/her interpretation.

Questions may be heard as:

- どんな本を読みましたか。それについて少し教えてください。
- その本にはどんなことが書いてありましたか。
- それはどんな本ですか。

In answering these questions, students should present their interpretation of meaning in the text(s) by identify and explaining:

- the content of the text(s) (general and specific information)
- the context, purpose and targeted reader or audience
- the concepts, perspectives and ideas represented in the text(s).

Reflection (IR3) questions for the discussion are mainly to examine to what extent a student has learned:

- about culture, values, beliefs, practices and ideas of Japanese people from the texts used and his/her own values, beliefs, practices and ideas in relation to those expressed in the texts
- from his/her experience of doing an in-depth study.

Some related questions may include:

- In-depth study の勉強をして、日本の（人々、文化、社会、習慣、価値観 など）について何を学びましたか。
- In-depth study の研究の前と後であなたの（かんがえ方、いけん）はどうですか。かわりましたか。
- 日本の・・・と、あなたの文化の・・・をくらべてどうですか。同じですか、ちがいますか。
- In-depth study の勉強（経験）はどうでしたか。
- どのくらい研究しましたか。研究はうまくいきましたか。
- このトピックについてもっと知りたいことがありますか。

Students should then present their reflection on:

- how Japanese cultures, values beliefs, practices and ideas are represented or expressed in the text(s);
- their own values, beliefs, practices and ideas in relation to those in the texts studied; and
- their own learning.

Expression (Capacity to interact and maintain a discussion)

As mentioned above, many students struggled to discuss. Weaker students often could only give one word answers such as yes or no. Many struggled with sentence endings (especially tense) and particles. Even clearly strong students often gave long and rehearsed responses to the examiners initial questions. Students should be encouraged to keep an initial response short (approximately not more than two or three sentences) and then wait for the examiners to ask follow-up questions.

It is emphasised again that one minute introduction speech is not assessed. Examiners agree that those students who did not give the speech tend to do better in the discussion.

Written Examination

General Comments

Students' marks were spread over a wide range. Overall results show the students' sound knowledge and understanding of basic Japanese language in the SACE Continuers level.

This year in general Section 1 (Listening) and Section 4 (Writing) were handled well. Questions that required higher level of language understanding and deeper analysis (e.g. Section 1 Question 5 and Section 2 Question 7 proved to be the most challenging to many students.

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Question 1

Majority of students answered this question successfully. More than 50% achieved full marks. Less successful responses were either too broad lacking necessary details or containing inaccurate information.

e.g. 'They will have miso and tofu for dinner', without stating Tomo was cooking the dinner.

'Dad is at work'.

'Tomo and mum are going to order take away'.

Question 2

Question 2 was also treated fairly well by many students. However, many included inaccurate detail in their answers. For Question 2(a) most students understood Saori was having a stomach ache, but many omitted fever and very few picked up nausea. Numerous students thought that Saori was constipated and couldn't go to the toilet. For 2(b), finer details such as when Saori ate obento and why were often incorrectly picked up. A number of students wrote that she was ill from the stress/overwork related to club activities.

Question 3

This question required students to analyse beyond the superficial meanings of language and understand rather sarcastic interaction between the speakers. Most students did this successfully, but there are some students who thought that Sam actually was a good student as he said he had been up late studying. Forgetting about Kanji test and not bringing homework were well picked up. Lateness - three times that week was often omitted. Full marks were achieved by 31% of students.

Question 4

Students handled this question very well. 46% gained full marks. Common errors were observed in phone number, serve number (6 人分) and price amount.

Question 5

There was a full range of levels of response to this question. For some students this was the most difficult question to answer.

5(a) The text is about an emotional journey of a girl who became able to swim after her diligent and consistent effort over a summer holiday. Successful answers must sufficiently explain the emotional journey of the speaker, covering transformation from incapable to capable. Stronger students included all of the necessary stages from disappointment/embarrassment, persistence/determination to elation/happiness. Weaker answers did not explain the emotional journey but just recounted the speaker's situation. There were numerous students who thought the speaker was a professional swimmer who was competing in a race. A few students were unable to ascertain that the text was about swimming, and wrote a broad response, responding to a tone in her voice (e.g. 'slow..., and built up to excited')

5(b) Most students who accurately understand the text content gave appropriate answer to this question. Common praising expressions (e.g. おめでとう, よくがんばったね, すごいね) were well understood. Negative evaluation comments (e.g. がんばって) were irrelevant therefore given no marks.

Section 2: Reading and Responding Part A

This section clearly discriminated the students' levels. Those who successfully read the texts and understood the details expressed their understanding clearly and concisely, while those who understood the texts only partially gave broad and/or incorrect answers based on their guess or personal knowledge. Overall, students demonstrated general understanding of the texts, but many did not show comprehensive understanding of details in the text.

Common text-analysis techniques should also be learned. Many students did not seem to be sufficiently capable of handling tasks such as comparing or contrasting related texts, extracting and summarising the relevant points etc. Basic language for text analysis (e.g. text types, styles, tones, purposes etc.) should also be introduced in preparation for the Reading and Responding section. It is also encouraged to incorporate a wide range of language texts from various sources so that students can become familiar with texts of different styles, topics and purposes, and of different linguistic difficulty or complexity.

Question 6

The score distribution was broad. Although most students gained some marks, many responses did not include all the relevant information and/or failed to demonstrate required analysis techniques. 31% scored full marks or 5/6.

6(a) The most successful responses included all relevant information from the text.

Weaker students were only able to ascertain more apparent features (e.g. people go to the shrine on festivals and New Year day.)

6(b) Most students were able to ascertain that the author used descriptive language.

Stronger students articulated that this was the use of imagery. Many students referred to the author's emotional connection to the shrine to some extent, although only stronger students could fully identify and explain the author's techniques (e.g. use of emotive language) with appropriate evidence from the text.

Question 7

This section clearly discriminated the students' levels. Those who successfully read the texts and understood the details of the texts, expressed their understanding clearly and concisely, while those who understood the texts only partially gave vague or incorrect answers based on their guess or personal knowledge. Also to be noted is that many students did not have linguistic skills in English to effectively organise and present their answers for this type of question.

7(a) Many students missed the point of this question. Some even failed to understand the meaning of the Japanese sentence given in the question (目が少しかなしそうでした。)

7(b) Most students answered this question correctly.

7(c) This was a difficult question to obtain full marks. Many responses did not effectively present comparison and contrast on how the texts affect the reader,

but simply summarised or listed the main points of each text, and this was not necessarily relevant to the task. Successful responses provided clear and comprehensive contrast and comparison of both texts from a reader's point of view, stating for example, visual and emotional impacts of the descriptions of the shrine and its problems, and how the author (and the priest) love(s) the shrine. Many students made some comparison of the texts and highlighted some contrasts, but often lacked skills and/or vocabulary to effectively present their answers. Weaker students' responses lacked accuracy in interpretation, and there were many instances of short, insufficient and unsubstantiated responses. More careful attention to the text's linguistic details was needed.

Section 2: Reading and Responding Part B

Question 8

The stimulus text was of a comparable degree of difficulty to recent previous years. 24% achieved an A grade score. Most students seemed to sufficiently understand the context and the content, but students' linguistic skills in writing varied. Students must adhere to the word limit, as the task is designed for students to be able to provide a successful answer within the word limit. In Reading and Responding Part B, providing a relevant response to the stimulus text is most important.

Ideas (Relevance)

While stronger students understood the context, purpose and audience (i.e. the recipient of the email), less successful students misunderstood the stimulus text in one way or another. Successful responses included:

- explanation of why Jun is writing a letter to Takashi (refer to Ms Maekawa, Jun's former teacher)
- a brief self introduction
- advice on English language and on club activities (mention that Takashi is captain of the soccer team)
- relevant examples and details to support your advice

Some stronger students who showed good reading comprehension skills and grammatical skills, however, needed to be more careful with length of their texts and not to ramble on with creative but less relevant ideas.

Ideas (Depth of treatment of ideas, information or opinions)

More capable students wrote not only advice on English and soccer club but also included interesting tips and other information that Takashi will find useful. Weaker students' responses were simple without little elaboration on ideas and supporting details.

Stronger students were able to 're-work' the stimulus text effectively, combining information and expressions to create one's ideas and sentences. They did not just copy and paste ideas and expressions from the original text.

Expression (Capability to convey information accurately and appropriately)

There were a number of strong responses which demonstrated very good accuracy and manipulation of a wide range of relevant grammatical structures. They were able to relate very effectively what they wanted/needed to convey. Weaker responses attempted to convey their messages but lacked the linguistic skills to do so.

Many grammatical errors were related to:

- direct translation based on English
- inaccurate use of tense and case particles

Most of these errors significantly impeded or confused meaning of the response text. There were also frequent errors in most basic spelling, grammar and kanji.

Common examples were:

- verb and adjective conjugation (especially in the past tense, as well as when to use the past tense)
- verb + 時 (tense)
- use of から/ので (appearing in the wrong way around)
- Vなければなりません (where it is more appropriate to say Vたらどうですか、 Vた方がいいです)
- use of 行く and 来る (when to use which)
- basic spelling errors (often one letter missing)
- katakana words spelling
- kanji in the syllabus
- indecipherable writing.

Expression (Coherence in structure and sequence)

Most responses were reasonably well structured and sequenced.

Use of linguistic cohesive devices such as conjunctions and deictic words (e.g. それから、ここ) was often absent or problematic. Students are encouraged to incorporate these expressions so they can use the writing space more efficiently.

There were many untidy pieces of work with frequent crossing out, insertions, and poor writing of scripts. Students should plan well before they start writing and should present their responses as neat as possible. Some suggestions are below:

- plan your response (use provided space to take notes)
- take into account paragraphing
- do not rush, and be careful to avoid errors in simple things
- write legibly and neatly across the page
- avoid cross-outs and insertions
- read your answer and check carefully for small errors

It is also suggested that students need to think flexibly when they want to express certain things and cannot come up with appropriate words and grammatical structures. Do not struggle too much with uncertainty but instead try to think of a different way of responding.

Section 3: Writing in Japanese

Overall, most students completed the task. There were only a few who did not attempt. Question 9 was the most popular being chosen by 52% of students but proved to be the most difficult for students to achieve higher marks. Fewer students chose Questions 10 and 11, but in general they achieved higher marks. Two main things contributing to lowering the overall score in Question 9 were 1) many students carelessly misunderstood the question even though the English translation was provided (Relevance) and 2) many students did not demonstrate adequate linguistic knowledge and skills to describe self-reflection (Expression).

It was also evident that some students' answers went over the appropriate length. The word limit of 350-400ji should be observed.

Ideas (Relevance and depth of treatment)

Question 9

There was some careless misunderstanding of the questions. Numerous students wrote about their lives until their 13th birthday instead of 30th. Many students gave an autobiographical account of their lives, and some simply wrote about their birthday. Only a few successful students provided a reflective piece.

Question 10

Students who chose this question generally wrote relevant responses to the task. Context, purpose and readers were well understood. A few students, however, did not refer to (camping experience in) Australia.

Question 11

This question was answered well. Some students' responses were of outstanding quality reflecting their sense of humour and creativity. Many of the less successful responses consisted merely of a recount of their day and were lacking the focus on 'first shift at work'.

Expression (Capability to convey information accurately and appropriately)

Questions 9, 10 and 11: The most capable students demonstrated an excellent knowledge of grammatical structures and a wide range of vocabulary and kanji, correct tenses, and used a number of connectives to join phrases and clauses. Many other students tended to rely heavily on familiar structures that had probably been mastered in the earlier years of their language study and did not include the full range of expressions and structures available to students from language study at senior secondary level.

Expressions in students' responses were often incorrect, ungrammatical or inappropriate when students apparently resorted to the direct translation from English (or their first language), picked up words from dictionaries and put into their answer in a careless manner. Contextually inappropriate use of basic words was also very evident. Common examples include:

- ふるい was used when talking about human age (directly from English 'old')

- いのち or せいかつ for life (as in 'life journey'). The appropriate word 人生^{じんせい} was provided in the translation of the question.
- こうふんする as a word for excited or exciting

It is important that students learn meanings of words in contexts, rather than as de-contextualised form as often seen in vocabulary lists or concise dictionaries.

Other common linguistic errors include:

- poor control of plain form
- confusion of tense in common verbs and copula (-です/-でした)
- inappropriate use of particles
- spelling errors (* みんなさん、*ちよっとう、*オーストラリア)
- connecting expressions (use of conjunctions, verb/adjective conjugation)

Here again students should take more care with their handwriting. Markers commented that they had difficulty reading some answers because of illegible handwriting. For example, い、り、と、て、う、ら、つ、ぬ、ね were commonly written incorrectly or in a style that is very hard to read. Some errors in script tend to be long-term errors that could have been corrected early in a student's study of Japanese.

Expression (Coherence in structure and sequence, and observation of text-type conventions)

This was an aspect of the task that was generally well done. Most students, except for a few who misunderstood the text type to produce, were able to organise their response well, using paragraphs appropriately and attempting an introduction and a conclusion. It is strongly recommended however, that students use more lexical devices such as conjunctions and deixis to create a text of better and more coherent structure and sequence.

Japanese (continuers)
Chief Assessor