



## **2012 Languages: Japanese Second Language GA 3: Examination**

### **Oral component**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Students generally performed well in the 2012 Japanese Second Language oral examination. It was evident that they had prepared thoroughly, had a good understanding of the prescribed topics and were able to present relevant responses.

The majority of students scored good marks for the communication criterion in both the Conversation and Discussion sections. This criterion also assessed students' pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. This meant that a student was expected to talk at a natural, appropriate speed, neither racing nor speaking slowly.

The language criterion assessed students' use of the Japanese language and was the criterion for which students scored the lowest in both sections. Students are encouraged to revise basic Japanese grammar. Accurate use of basic grammar in the examination will improve students' score for this criterion.

Some students did not know the meaning of every word in their prepared responses for the Conversation or their Detailed Study and did not understand the same words when they were used by assessors.

#### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

##### **Section 1 – Conversation**

###### **Communication**

Students needed to provide extensive responses to the questions, and carry the Conversation forward spontaneously and confidently. Successful students demonstrated that they had prepared thoroughly. They displayed excellent pronunciation and maintained a consistent pace without unnatural pauses.

It is very important that students listen carefully to assessors' questions and ensure that they address what they are being asked in order to give relevant responses. Weaker students often made assumptions about the questions, but strong students listened closely to each question and answered accurately.

Students should learn strategies to carry the Conversation forward. In addition to あいづち (linking words), それから、そして、その後で、それに、そのうえ and ですから are useful words to help the conversation flow smoothly and be more interesting. However, a considerable number of students repeated じゃ instead. This is not appropriate during the Conversation in the oral examination.

When students wanted to hear the assessor's question again, some students said もういちど下さい. This is incorrect. It should be もういちど言ってください.

Most students' pronunciation and tempo were satisfactory. Some students, however, continued to have difficulty with some words, especially katakana words, such as レストラン (レストラン)、ホースト (ホスト)、ユーロッパ (ヨーロッパ)、ローム (ローマ)、パリ (パリ) and カラオキ (カラオケ) .

###### **Content**

It was clear that the majority of students had prepared and practised very well for the questions in the Conversation section.

The Content criterion assesses the relevance, breadth and depth of information, ideas and opinions as well as the capacity to support or elaborate on responses with reasons, examples, evidence and new ideas. Therefore, students need to anticipate the questions that will be asked. Some excellent responses showed a broad understanding of ideas and opinions. These were supported by interesting examples.

During the examination, assessors wanted to interact with students, ask questions and follow up on details. To do so, they encouraged students to express not only facts, but opinions and ideas. In general, students were comfortable when providing information about their families, the subjects that they studied, holidays, part-time jobs, future aspirations and



hobbies. However, when they attempted to reflect on the topics, many experienced difficulties with extending their responses. Students who prepared for questions such as *はどうでしたか* exhibited their ideas and opinions, and received higher scores for this criterion. Responses such as *おもしろかったです* or *楽しかったです* were not sufficient.

Some students experienced difficulties with answering questions such as *今年のVCEの勉強はどうでしたか*. In order to prepare for this type of question, students are encouraged to think about what life has been like for them during the year. Some personal reflection on this time would be excellent preparation for the examination.

### Language

This criterion emphasises the importance of accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar. Students are expected to use a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary in their responses.

Competent students used a variety of vocabulary, structures and expressions accurately and appropriately. Weaker students often confused tenses and particles, and used an insufficient range of grammatical structures required at this level.

Some common errors with language were

- particles with time expressions
- tense
- *きれい*と*思う*
- *アルバイト*があります
- *私*の*かもく*
- use of *い* and *な* adjectives
- *て* form of verbs
- *もら*う/*あげ*る
- *そう*です
- *たり*たり
- *時* (when)
- *た*ことがある
- *あまり*/*ぜんぜん*/*よく*
- *から*/の*で*.

English words, such as *ビーチ* (beach), *サイコロジー* (psychology), *レリジョン* (religion), *リーガルスタディー* (legal studies), *ナース* (nurse), *ベースボール* (baseball) and *マス* (mathematics), should all be presented in Japanese.

## Section 2 – Discussion

The choice of topic for the Detailed Study is important. A topic can be very successful if students are able to express their opinions in addition to providing relevant information and generating new ideas. Good topics are ones that include an issue that can be discussed. The topic selected should also reflect the interests and ability of the students. Generally, students had a good understanding of the topic they had chosen and were able to discuss them. However, some students found it very difficult to discuss more sophisticated aspects of their topic.

Teachers and students are reminded that the aim of the Detailed Study is to explore and compare aspects of the language and culture of the Japanese-speaking community through a range of oral and written texts in Japanese. Therefore, careful selection of texts is needed as students are expected to be able to refer to the texts studied.

This year there was a considerable number of students whose topics were based on their experiences during their stay in Japan. In addition to this, there were some students whose topics belonged to the Japanese culture but the students focused only on aspects linked to the Australian community. For example, the topic *カラオケ* was presented as *カラオケ* in Australia or if *まんが* was the topic, the student talked about how Australian students learned the Japanese language using *まんが* in class at their own school. These are not appropriate ways in which to approach the Detailed Study.



## Communication

The introduction allowed students to state the sub-topic and indicate aspects of the topic that they wished to discuss. Students should not mention topics that they have not prepared or resources that they have not used as this mistake caused a number of problems in the Discussion. Some students did not manage to answer assessors' questions and gave the impression that they had a limited range of information, ideas and opinions.

A successful Discussion showed that students enjoyed their topic and had prepared a wide range of aspects to talk about. As a result, they were able to respond readily and confidently, and to carry the conversation forward with original input.

In some cases, it was difficult to comprehend what students said. This was of particular concern in relation to the titles of sub-topics and the use of unfamiliar words in the Discussion. Thus, it is essential that students practise the pronunciation of difficult and unfamiliar words associated with their chosen topic. It is also vital for students to have a good understanding of what they are saying.

Teachers and students are reminded that this section of the oral examination is a discussion about the topic, not a presentation of chunks of rote-learned material. Students need to interact with assessors. There was a large number of students who presented a memorised speech about the topic. Consequently, they were interrupted by assessors and found it difficult to discuss their topic.

There were many students who repeated *それについて勉強しませんでした* and *日本語でせつめいできません*. These were not the answers to the questions and repeating these expressions was not appropriate.

## Content

This year there were students who prepared their topic thoroughly, had good resources and were able to demonstrate excellent understanding and knowledge of their chosen topic. These students supported their ideas and opinions by referring to the resources that they had studied.

However, a number of students exhibited little evidence of detailed study of the texts, stating vaguely that their resources were acquired from the internet, books and interviews. Frequently, students who made these kinds of statements demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding. Their ideas and opinions were inadequately supported by reasons and examples.

Some of the popular sub-topics were *じゆく*、*こうれいかしゃかい*、*けっこん*、*へんか*、*ひきこもり*、*クラブ活動*、*まんが*、*アニメ*、*食生活の変化*、*自動はんばいき*

Sub-topics that reflect recent issues in Japanese society were

- *ぜんにゅうじだい* 大学全入時代
- 24時間社会
- おんせん (こうか、マナー、外国人への対応)
- こんかつ、ばんこんか
- 日本のデパート
- コスプレ
- クールジャパン.

## Language

Students should be reminded that 15 hours of class time are required for the Detailed Study. Therefore, it is expected that students will be able to use correct grammatical structures and key words associated with their chosen topic.

Some questions in the Discussion that students had trouble understanding were

- その本を読んで何が分かりましたか。
- それをかいけつするためにどうしたらいいと思いますか。
- かいけつするためにどうしたらいいと思いますか
- かいけつほうは何ですか
- についてどう思いますか

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Some students did not know the words 週何回、のほかに、ねだん、せんぱい、ほうかご、しりょう、わかい人、わかもの、ろう人、年より、女の人、女の子、女子校、男の人、男の子、男子校.