



**2006** **LOTE: Japanese Second Language GA3: Examination**

**Oral Component**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Many students performed well in the Conversation section. They demonstrated a good understanding of the prescribed topics, presented relevant responses and expanded on their answers. Better students offered opinions spontaneously while weaker students had difficulty maintaining the conversation and needed frequent support from assessors.

In the Discussion section, successful students exhibited a thorough preparation. They understood their chosen sub-topic and demonstrated that they had studied various resources. They explored their sub-topics in sufficient depth and their opinions and ideas were supported by examples and evidence from the resources studied.

Students who relied on rote-learned language experienced difficulty conversing with assessors spontaneously in both sections.

It is imperative that students understand that each section is designed to focus on different ways of using Japanese. The focus of the Conversation is on students' everyday lives. Students should prepare for this by developing skills needed to speak Japanese in the appropriate linguistic and cultural ways. However, when readying themselves for the Discussion section, students should be aware of the need to explore ideas, opinions and information. This will require them to use more formal, less colloquial, language.

**SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

**Section 1 – Conversation**

**Communication**

The students who scored highly provided detailed answers to assessors' questions. They demonstrated that they had prepared thoroughly and, consequently, they were able to speak confidently and fluently. They had excellent pronunciation and maintained a consistent pace without unnatural pauses.

Once again, however, there were students who provided memorised responses. One of the unfortunate results of this approach was that on many occasions these students were not able to respond adequately to the questions posed by assessors. Thus it was very difficult to maintain the conversation.

Listening skills are essential for success in the oral examination and it is important that students endeavour to grasp the significance of every word posed to them in questions. Failure to do this often meant that students did not understand the point of the question and consequently gave irrelevant or partly irrelevant responses.

Pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo were assessed in this section. Most students' pronunciation and tempo were satisfactory. Some, however, continued to have difficulty with the words such as いろいろ, 四人, レストラン, ヨーロッパ, メルボルン, オーストラリア, りゅう学生, 中学. Pronunciation of 高校, 学校, しています, 知っています and りょう still requires more practice. Many students said ホースト instead of ホスト.

**Content**

Preparation is the key to success in this criterion. Excellent responses showed a broad understanding of ideas and opinions that were supported by interesting examples which substantiated the points being made. Unfortunately, however, weaker responses demonstrated a lack of detailed understanding. Once again, many of the weaker students provided simplistic viewpoints.

Most students were able to respond to questions on topics such as subjects studied, school activities, hobbies and family life. However, when they attempted to reflect on their experiences during their last year of school, many had difficulty extending their responses. Students are encouraged to think about what life has been like for them in Year 12. Some personal reflection on this time would be excellent preparation for the examination.

Some students needed to be able to provide much more detailed information on the topic of part-time jobs and future aspirations. If students have a part-time job, they should be able to describe what they do, discuss whether or not they



enjoy it and what they have learned from this experience. When asked about future aspirations, students should provide reasons for their choices. These could be supported by past experiences which have influenced their thinking.

### Language

This criterion emphasises the importance of accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar. VCE students are expected to use a variety of grammatical patterns and vocabulary in their responses. This year, excellent responses were characterised by a sophisticated range of vocabulary and the accurate use of complex structures.

However, weaker students made many mistakes in the use of grammatical patterns and vocabulary. It is strongly advised that students pay closer attention to the accurate use of time words and numbers, such as 一ヶ月、一週間、一年間、四人. Wrong particles and inappropriate use of tense were the most common mistakes. Many students still said *きれいと思う* instead of *きれいだと思う*. *アルバイトがあります* is not correct, it should be *アルバイトをしています*.

Students must learn common interrogatives, such as *だれ*, *どうして*, *なぜ*, *どのぐらい* and *どうやって*, and how to respond to them appropriately. It is useful to learn how to use words like *どこか*, *どこにも*, *何でも*, *だれでも* and *何も*.

There were still many students who said *えいが* instead of *英語*. Moreover, *家族* was confused with *かもく*, as was *日本* with *日本語*, and *大学* with *外国*. Furthermore, *きょうだい*, *さいきん*, *しんせき*, *手つだい*, *なかよし*, *こまったこと*, *とくらべて*, *のほかに*, *めずらしい* and *週に何かい* caused problems for some students. Students who want to talk about sports should learn words such as *かつ*, *まける*, *つよい*, *よわい* and *ゆうしょう (する)*

## Section 2 – Discussion

The sub-topic selected for the Detailed Study should reflect the interests and abilities of the student. The chosen topic should also suit the students' language capacity and allow them to express their opinions and generate new ideas. This year, some students found it very difficult to understand some of the more sophisticated topics. Generally, students had a good understanding of the resources they had used and were able to discuss them comfortably.

The sub-topic chosen for the Detailed Study should:

- follow the guidelines provided in the *Japanese Second Language VCE Study Design*
- relate to Japanese speaking communities
- interest students
- have appropriate and relevant resources in Japanese
- contain an issue(s)
- have enough information to maintain seven minutes of discussion with assessors.

It is vital that students choose their sub-topic judiciously. This should enable them to prepare in such a way that a meaningful discussion and the use of appropriate language will take place.

Following are some examples of sub-topics which were problematic for students this year.

- *けいたい電話* This was a very popular topic and there were many excellent presentations. However, some students failed to make sufficient connections between the topic and what they chose to talk about. For example, if the topic was young people in Japan, it was inappropriate to talk about the use of mobile phones in Japan without making connections to the issues of youth culture. A better approach would have been to report on their investigations into the problems associated with why and how young people use their mobile phones.
- *リサイクル* Assessors expected students to know more about issues associated with recycling rather than how domestic garbage is collected in Japan.
- *まんが* This is always a popular topic; however, some students were unable to speak in depth about it because of their lack of knowledge and research.
- *日本の家、まつり* Some students failed to present the issues associated with this topic. It is inappropriate to simply present factual information.
- *りゅう学生* Very few students who chose this topic were able to pronounce this word correctly. In some cases, it was not clear to assessors whether the student meant to talk about a Japanese person who came to Australia or an Australian exchange student who studied in Japan.

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- クラブかつどう, じかんわり Some students provided limited information. Consequently, they were not in a position to discuss this topic adequately.
- おぼん からて Some students spoke only about their experiences in Japan. They provided limited evidence to support their opinions.

Students are allowed to bring in supporting materials to provide a basis for discussing their topic. However, it needs to be understood that any writing on their material should only consist of headings and labels.

## Communication

An introduction at the beginning of the Discussion is very important. Assessors should be given a clear understanding of the main focus of the sub-topic in order to maintain a good discussion. However, teachers and students are reminded that this section of the oral examination is a **discussion**, not a presentation of the topic. The introduction of the beginning of the section should be **no more than one minute**. A considerable number of students this year presented a memorised speech about their topic. Consequently, they were interrupted by the assessors.

Good responses contained an outline of the sub-topic in their one-minute introduction. The students indicated the title of the sub-topic and briefly explained its main focus. They clearly stated their resources. They were able to carry the discussion forward with some original input and could maintain the conversation without the assessors having to support them. Their pronunciation was very good.

Weaker responses necessitated intervention by the assessors in order to provide support to keep the discussion going. Some students chose topics which were too difficult.

Some assessors commented that they had difficulty understanding what some students said. This was of particular concern in relation to the names of sub-topics and the use of unfamiliar words in the discussion. It is essential that students practise the pronunciation of difficult and unfamiliar words associated with their chosen topic.

Some students often said はい、分かります (yes, I understand) after hearing questions. These students wanted to tell the assessors that they understood the questions. However, this is not appropriate. *Aizuchi* should be used instead.

## Content

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

## Language

Better students exhibited an excellent range of vocabulary and used accurate grammatical patterns. Expression was sophisticated. These students usually self-corrected their errors. The use of style and register was consistently appropriate.

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 patterns and the key words associated with their chosen topic. Moreover, they should have sufficient knowledge to discuss the subject.



## Written Component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The questions on Text 2 in the Listening and responding section were challenging and many students appeared to experience difficulty understanding the recorded conversation. In addition, there were many questions to answer within a limited time. The majority of students also experienced difficulty with the questions on Text 6 in Section 2. It was evident that students were not familiar with questions which required analytical thinking, such as Questions 16 and 17. However, there were many students who gave excellent responses in both sections. Their answers were clear, specific and relevant to the questions.

Most students completed Section 3 of the examination this year. They demonstrated a good understanding of the kind of writing, text type, purpose and audience required for each topic. Consequently, they scored well in criterion 2 for this section. However, their responses often lacked sufficient detail or included irrelevant information. There were still many script and grammatical errors in these pieces of writing.

Students would benefit from developing better examination techniques to improve their marks. They should write answers neatly in both English and Japanese. Marks cannot be given if the writing is illegible and the response cannot be understood. Students should avoid rewriting the questions as they are given only limited space on the examination paper. It is essential that succinct and relevant answers are provided in response to the questions posed. Moreover, it is very important to read the question carefully. This includes reading the task in English and Japanese in Section 3. This year many students made unnecessary mistakes.

More specific comments on student performance appear in the Specific Information below. The answers given here are samples of correct responses only; there may have been other possible responses to some questions.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Listening and responding

##### Part A

##### Text 1

##### Question 1

Overseas/international/exchange students (in Japan)

Surprisingly, a considerable number of students did not give a correct answer to Question 1. Many students failed to recognise りゅう学生.

##### Question 2

	Old schedule	New schedule
Meeting place	In front of the gym	Japanese classroom
Visiting place	Zoo	History museum

'In front' (たいいくかんの前) and 'History' (れきしはくぶつかん) were often left out of responses. Students should know the difference between the Japanese classroom and a Japanese class.

##### Question 3

They are unsure about the weather around lunch time. (If the weather improves they will eat in Yamashita Park. If it is raining they will eat at the food court near Yamashita Park.)

##### Text 2

This was a challenging task. The recorded conversation about the rules for eating lunches at Expo and Disneyland was fairly long and the dialogue was confusing for some students. Others understood the gist of the text but found it difficult to respond to many questions within a limited time. Many responses to the questions on Text 2 were not sufficiently correct to gain full marks. Some students wrote 'food' instead of 'obentoo/packed lunches'.

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## Question 4

### 4a.

The rule of *obentoo*/packed lunches

### 4b.

They want customers to buy *obentoo*/packed lunches there/at the Expo. (There are various shops which sell *obentoo*/packed lunches.)

'Because they sell packed lunches there' was not a sufficient response.

### 4c.

Checking bags at the entrance (to see if *obentoo*/packed lunches are homemade or shop bought) takes a long time.

Many students left out 'bags' and 'at the entrance'.

## Question 5

- The restaurant and/or shops are crowded.
- They have strange *obentoo*/packed lunch rules.
- It takes a long time to enter (the Expo).

## Question 6

Any two out of the following answers.

- At Disneyland you can take any (type of) *obentoo*/packed lunches. (There are no *obentoo*/packed lunch rules.)
- You can eat *obentoo*/packed lunches in the picnic area. (There is a picnic area where you can eat your lunch.)
- You can decide for yourself whether to eat an *obentoo*/packed lunch or eat at a restaurant

## Question 7

They are speaking in plain form/casual style.

Most students gave a correct answer to Question 7.

## Part B

Students generally performed better in Part B than in Part A. This section tests students' capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts and convey information accurately and appropriately. The answers needed to be written in Japanese and, to receive high marks, students had to use VCE Kanji and accurate script and grammatical patterns in their responses.

### Text 3

The numbers and dates in responses to Questions 8 and 10 caused some students problems, and many students found Question 9 difficult.

### Question 8

ねこは3200円で、いぬは4500円です。

### Question 9

(おきやくさんは) 日曜日の6時まで来ることができないからです。

### Question 10

#### 10a.

十二月十日 (12月10日) に (ペット) をあずけます。

#### 10b.

十二月十六日 (12月16日) にむかえに行きます。



**Text 4**

**Question 11**

The memo needed to include five points from the following list.

- (日本人) の新しいやきゅうチームができました。 / (日本人) の新しいやきゅうチームはメンバーをぼしゅうしています。
- アルバートパークでれんしゅうします。シテイーに近いからべんりです。
- れんしゅうは (毎週) 土曜日、十時から十一時半 (まで) です。
- やきゅうが好きなオーストラリア人もだいじょうぶ/OK/いいです。
- やきゅうをしたことがない人でもだいじょうぶ/OK/いいです。
- 上手じゃない人でもだいじょうぶ/OK/いいです。
- やきゅうのどうぐを持っていなくてもだいじょうぶ/OK/いいです。 / やきゅうのどうぐをかりることができます。
- れんらくは 9203 1546 までおねがいします。

Students needed to include five correct and relevant points from the text. Students are reminded that assessors only mark the required number of answers, in the order in which they have been written. This applies to all parts of the examination paper. Many students wrote five or more points; however, some of these, such as ‘日本人のチームですがオーストラリア人もできます’ and ‘女の人のマネージャーもぼしゅうしています’ were not entirely correct. The spelling of ‘Albert Park’ should be アルバートパーク and ‘Captain’ is キャプテン, not カプテン or カプタン. Plain style was also accepted.

**Section 2 – Reading and responding**

**Part A**

**Text 5**

This task assessed students’ capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of the text. Text 5 was a sophisticated letter containing some unfamiliar vocabulary and high-level Japanese expressions. Many students were able to fill in the tables successfully but found Questions 13 and 15 difficult, struggling to find the fourth answer in Question 13 and failing to answer Question 15.

**Question 12**

Feature	How it works	Result/effect
Mirror duct	Special mirrors are used to gather light and sunlight enters every room.	It is brighter than the previous house (and mum is happy).
Solar panel	It makes electricity with sunlight.	Electricity charges are cheaper than before.
Hot water system	It makes hot water with sunlight.	You can take a bath without using gas.

**Question 13**

- Use (more) natural energy (without pollution).
- Make electricity at home so it (electricity) is not wasted.
- Consider/think (more) about how to use energy.
- Live together with nature.

**Question 14**

feature	How it works	Result/effect
Shoji/sliding door	Take it off (in summer) to make way for the wind.	Wind passes through easily (and it cools down).
Engawa/wooden veranda	Sunlight enters the house (in winter).	It warms the house.

**Question 15**

Because the eco house and old houses are the same as they both live with nature/use nature’s power.

**Part B**

**Text 6**

Questions 16 and 17 proved to be the most challenging questions on the paper. A few students provided correct and relevant answers using their own words, while others just copied the information from the text.



#### Question 16

子どもは、お年だまをもらって、高いものでも買うことができるから 楽しみにしています。でも大人になると子どもにお年だまをあげなくてはならないし、子どものお年だまの使い方がしんぱいになります。だから、大人になるとお年だまがいや（きらい）になるかもしれません。

#### Question 17

お年だまにはいいんともんだいてんがあるからです。いいんは、ちょ金ができることです OR きょういくに使えることです OR 金せんきょういくのきかいになることです。わるいてんは、子どもがむだに使うことです OR じぶんで、はたらかないで人からもらったお金をぜんぶ使うことです OR おやは子どもが何にお金を使っているか分からないことです。

One of the reasons why Question 17 was handled poorly was that many students did not understand the title of the text ‘お年玉としだまはいい習慣しゅうかんか’. This is a shortened form of お年玉としだまはいい習慣しゅうかんですか。わるい習慣しゅうかんですか。It means that the author of the article is asking her/himself/the readers whether お年玉としだま is a good custom or not.

### Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

It was encouraging that the majority of students completed Section 3. Students were able to identify the features of the various text types and the kind of writing required in each task. They had a good understanding of the use of Genkooyooshi and punctuation and wrote within the word limit. However, some students did not read questions carefully – either in English or Japanese. Consequently, their writing lacked appropriate depth and relevancy.

Assessors noted many spelling errors in Hiragana and Katakana. It was a pity that many students did not use prescribed VCE Kanji where necessary in their writing. Incorrect use of particles and inconsistent use of tense were widespread problems. In order to improve their performance in the writing section, students should pay closer attention to the use of grammatical patterns required at this level. Periodic reviews of basic grammar, such as the use of negatives and past form of たい, て form and past tense of verbs, negative and past tense of adjectives, たり、たり、から (because) てもいい/ てはいけない, 時 (when), 間 (while), ながら and より, would also be beneficial for some students. Appropriate use of conjunctions and linking words is often effective in a piece of writing and can be the difference between successful and not so successful writing.

#### Question 18

This was the most popular choice. Most students adopted the appropriate format for an email and presented well-organised writing that was within the prescribed length. Therefore, they were awarded good scores for criterion 2 – appropriateness of structure and sequence.

However, many students failed to include annual international events held in Victoria, and some students mentioned only local annual events. This led to a significant loss of marks for criterion 1 – relevance, breadth and depth of content. Successful students presented two to three international events, such as the Melbourne Cup, the Australian Open and the Grand Prix, describing each event and giving some advice to a friend who wants to come to Australia. They used an excellent range of vocabulary, sophisticated expressions and complex grammatical patterns.

#### Question 19

Some students seemed to be able to relate to this task well and responded with entertaining accounts of their first meal with their girl/boyfriend’s parents. Better students presented interesting and comprehensive diary entries which emphasised tense feelings and impressions rather than factual, objective information. The diary format was well handled in general, but some students did not use plain form consistently.

#### Question 20

Students’ performance in response to this question was disappointing. The task required students to write an evaluative report about their home-stay experience. Students needed to give a title to their report and make up a name for the author. The response needed to include an introduction and a conclusion outlining the good and bad points of a home-stay experience in Japan. Good students used evidence effectively to support their ideas and provided some interesting suggestions in order to improve the program.

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## Question 21

A small number of students selected this topic. Some students failed to write a letter that clearly convinced the reader to award the writer a scholarship. Students needed to use formal language; for example, 鈴木様 should have been used for the addressee. Expressions such as お元気ですか。すぐ手紙を下さい。 and さようなら, comments about the weather and あなた to address Director Suzuki were not appropriate in this case. Successful students gave clear reasons about why they should be considered for the scholarship. They outlined their prior learning of the language, future aspirations and how they could use their experience to strengthen ties between Japan and Australia. They closed the letter with どうぞよろしくおねがいします instead of さようなら.

## Question 22

Only a few students attempted this task. There were some excellent pieces of creative writing within the required word limit. Students described the different worlds behind the red and green doors well. Some of the ideas were original and entertaining. However, some students experienced difficulty creating an interesting story and often included irrelevant information. Students are reminded that the format for a story includes a title and an author's name and is described in detail in the *Japanese Second Language VCE Study Design*.