



2012 Languages: Japanese Second Language GA 3: Examination

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students attempted each section of the 2012 Japanese Second Language examination. Successful students displayed their control of the language well. They provided excellent responses and their answers were clear, specific and relevant to the questions.

The majority of students were able to answer the questions in Section 1 – Listening and responding. However, many responses lacked detail or included irrelevant information. Students should avoid including their own knowledge about the topic in their responses and should use only information from the text. For example, the answer to Section 1, Question 3a. was ‘traditional event (in Japan)’, but a considerable number of students wrote ‘traditional Buddhist event’ and Buddhism was not mentioned in the text.

Text 6 in Section 2 – Reading and responding was challenging for many students. It was evident that the majority of students experienced difficulty with Questions 6h. and 6i., and few students provided a correct response to Question 6i.

Most students were able to complete the task in Section 3 – Writing in Japanese. Many students were able to produce good pieces of writing.

For Part B in both Section 1 and Section 2 the answers are written in plain form but *desu/masu* form could have been used. Words in brackets in an answer were optional.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

**Section 1 – Listening and responding
Part A – Answer in English**

Text 1

Generally, students understood the text and were able to respond to the questions for Text 1. However, many students misunderstood はたち and responded with 18 years old rather than 20 years old for Question 1a. A number of students found シナリオ (scenarios) in れきしのゲームのシナリオを書いてみたい difficult to identify.

Question 1a.

Twenty years old

Question 1b.

Reading history/historical books

Question 1c.

Work in a computer company

Text 2

Question 2a. was handled well. However, a number of students confused こうさてん with きっさてん and translated となり as ‘near’. Question 2b. was challenging for students and few received full marks. Students who didn’t identify きのうさいふをおとしてしまった (the lady lost her purse) failed to answer the other two questions correctly.

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Question 2a.

First, go straight.

Then turn left at the big intersection.

It is located next to the post office.

Question 2b.

- (Yesterday) she lost/dropped her wallet/purse.
- (This morning) she had a call from the Koban/police box (of this town).
- (She was told that) someone had brought/handed in the wallet/purse to the Koban/police box.

Text 3

This text was challenging for some students. Identifying *せんぞ*, *思い出す* and *いのる* proved difficult for many students. Some students included their own knowledge on *おぼん* and wrote irrelevant information. Many students misunderstood fireworks *花火 (はなび)* as flower viewing *花見 (はなみ)*. Most students found Question 3c. difficult and missed out on marks because they didn't include relevant information in their responses.

Question 3a.

- traditional event (in Japan)
- to remember and pray for ancestors

Question 3b.

Two of

- Bon/obon dancing wearing Yukata/summer kimono (in the park)
- watching fireworks
- eating (festival) foods.

Question 3c.

Meeting her old friends from childhood whom she hasn't seen for a long time

Part B – Answer in Japanese

In order to receive full marks, students were required to give correct and relevant information in response to the questions. Students should have used VCE *Kanji* and accurate script and grammar patterns. Students must pay attention to the instructions for this section – that is, to answer the questions in full sentences in Japanese.

Text 4

The majority of students attempted to answer all questions. However, few students were given full marks. Students found it hard to provide all the necessary information for Questions 4c. and 4d. Many students found it difficult to note the required details from the text, although most students were able to identify the main point. *四国* is often not in *Kanji*. *のうぎょう* was misspelt in a variety of ways. It was surprising that many students didn't understand *オーガニック* (organic).

Question 4a.

四国 (しこく) から来ました。

Question 4b.

のうぎょうです。And/or (山で) みかんを作ります。

Question 4c.

- (さいきん) けんこうできなくだものややさいに人気があります。
- (川田さんが作るみかんは) オーガニックだからけんこうにいいです。
- スーパーやお店で買うよりしんせんで安いからです。

Question 4d.

オンラインでいつでもちゅうもんできて、クレジットカードではらうことができるからです。そして日



本中どこでも2日か3日でとどけることができます。

Question 4e.

(川田さんの) みかんの作り方をホームページでしようかいしているからです。

Section 2 – Reading and responding
Part A – Answer in English

Text 5

Most students understood Text 5. A number of students missed the 半 in 2時半 and omitted 午前 and 午後. 市立 in 市立図書館 caused problems for some students.

Question 5a.

Repairs/fixes toys

Question 5b.

Town/city/municipal library

Question 5c.

From 9.00 am to 2.30 pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays

Text 6

Text 6 was an article containing vocabulary that students may have been unfamiliar with. The majority of students were able to respond to all questions but only a handful of students received marks for Questions 6h. and 6i. Question 6g. was also problematic for some students. 退職 and 直して were translated as ‘leave their job’ and ‘cure’. A large number of students wrote ‘various people meet’ in their answer to Question 6b., while the sentence in the text is いろいろな人に出会ったり, meaning they meet various people. 発見 was also difficult for some. The correct answer to Question 6c. was ‘about 20 people’ but a large number of students omitted ぐらい. ものを大切にすることは also misunderstood by many students. It is important that students read texts very carefully. They also need to consider the context of the text when choosing appropriate words from a dictionary.

Question 6a.

Retired and/or elderly people

Question 6b.

- meet various people
- make friends with people who have the same hobbies/interests
- discover new things

Question 6c.

About 20 people

Question 6d.

- Cars that no longer move.
- Musical instruments that no longer play sounds.

Question 6e.

Who: Grandmothers/old ladies.

What kind of toys: They bring old toys with memories.

Why: Because they want their grandchildren to also enjoy the toys.

Question 6f.

Toys that are made by hand

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**Question 6g.**

To make children smile

Question 6h.

They can learn to look after things with care and to be thankful.

Question 6i.

Elderly people feel/think they are useful/helpful to society by using their time and skills.

Part B – Answer in Japanese

This task assesses students' capacity to understand general and specific aspects of the text as well as to convey information accurately and appropriately in Japanese. Students must use the prescribed VCE *Kanji* in their responses. Misspelling of the written Japanese scripts and grammatical errors resulted in students missing out on marks.

Text 7

Many students copied a section of the text in their answers, but these copied Japanese sentences frequently did not match the questions. Some students understood the first part of the text but failed to provide clear examples of positive and negative aspects. Question 7b. was handled well. However, few students were given full marks in Question 7c.

Question 7a.

よい点はコンピューターがひらがなを漢字にしてくれるので漢字が使いやすくなったことです。よくないてんは手紙/漢字を書かなくてはいけない時に、漢字をわすれてこまることです。

Question 7b.

目上の人に使っています。

Question 7c.

年下の方が年上の人より会社のポジションが上になることが多くなりました。だからけい語の使い方が分かりにくくなりました。

Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

In this section students were assessed according to the following criteria.

- relevance breadth and depth of content
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriate of vocabulary and grammar

This section was handled well by most students. In general, students who understood the task demonstrated knowledge of the characteristics of the text types and appreciated the kind of writing required in this section. Most students used *genkooyooshi* correctly and wrote within the word length. It was, however, disappointing that a number of students wrote pieces that did not relate to any of the set tasks. Moreover, some students seemed to be using material memorised from their Detailed Study, which usually had little relevance to the question or was adapted inadequately. Their responses often lacked sufficient detail or included irrelevant information. These responses were heavily penalised as they did not exhibit an understanding of the tasks in any way and vocabulary and grammar requirements were not addressed.

Students should use the prescribed VCE *Kanji* where necessary in their essays. There were many spelling errors in *katakana* and *hiragana*. Incorrect use of particles and inconsistent use of tense were widespread problems. In order to improve their performance on Criterion 3, students are encouraged to pay closer attention to the use of grammatical patterns required at this level and to use them accurately. Periodic reviews of basic grammar such as て form of verb and adjectives, past and negative form of adjectives, use of たり、たり、から/ので、よく/あまり/ぜんぜん、より、たことがある and 時 (when) would also be beneficial for some students. Moreover, appropriate use of conjunctions and linking words is also effective in a piece of writing and is the difference between a successful and not so successful essay.

Question 8

Many students chose this topic. Successful students wrote in detail about the typical life of Year 12 students in Australia compared with Japanese students. However, a large number of students failed to focus on Australian Year 12 students'



lives. Instead, they focused on the differences between high schools in Japan and Australia, including little information of the typical life of Year 12 students in Australia. Some essays were similar to an evaluative piece of writing. Some students misunderstood the situation described and wrote a speech to an Australian audience about Japanese high school life. Some of the speeches were about students' own experiences of being an exchange student in Japan.

Students are reminded that they must read questions carefully and be mindful about the main focus of the question, who the audience is and the text type and kind of writing that are required.

Question 9

A small number of students chose this topic and it was pleasing that most wrote a journal entry in plain form. Good responses to this question emphasised feelings and impressions rather than objective information. There were several moving and interesting pieces of writing that reflected in detail on the New Year's resolution, what happened to the resolution and students' feelings about the outcome. However, many essays were not appropriate and students did not provide reasons and feelings to support what had happened to their resolution. Many students did not include the day, date and weather.

Question 10

Many students selected this topic. In general, students wrote letters conveying a range of relevant reasons and explanations in order to persuade their host mother not to limit the time they spent on the computer. While the letter format was generally well managed, many students were not aware of the style and register of writing a letter to older people.

Question 11

This was another popular choice and it was generally well handled. There were some interesting articles that clearly outlined the advantages and disadvantages of Australian students getting their driver's licence, using evidence to support the ideas presented. Some students found it difficult to use unfamiliar Japanese words in their articles.

Question 12

Very few students chose this topic. Of the students who did choose this topic, very few wrote well-developed stories that aroused the reader's interest. Some students had good ideas for interesting stories but had insufficient control of grammar and knowledge of vocabulary required for this task. Students are reminded that a story needs a title and an author's name.