

# 2020 VCE Japanese Second Language oral examination report

## Specific information

2020 was the first year this study was delivered according to the newly accredited VCE Japanese Study Design 2020-2024 and examination specifications. It is important that students and teachers familiarise themselves with the specifications for oral examinations, available on the [VCE Japanese Second Language study webpage](#). Students and teachers are also reminded that a [series of videos](#) has been produced to help with preparation for the oral examinations.

Students were generally well prepared for both sections of the examination. A number of students seemed to have memorised a script for both sections, and consequently found it difficult to answer questions that digressed from this. It is important that students prepare to answer a range of questions in both sections and respond naturally to the questions asked. There is no set order of questions in each section, nor are there prescribed questions; the examination is designed to be an organic conversation, not a rehearsed dialogue. Students should become familiar with being asked questions on different topics in a variety of ways and are advised to develop their vocabulary knowledge in preparation for both sections. Most students demonstrated good pronunciation and intonation.

## Section 1 – Conversation

In general, students handled the requirements of Section 1 well. Students were well prepared for the questions relating to their personal world and interactions with the Japanese language and culture as learners. Students who scored highly provided detailed information in their responses and included a range of grammatical constructs rather than one-sentence answers. Some students could not respond when asked about Japanese culture or how they felt learning kanji and vocabulary.

Many students made a number of basic grammatical errors, such as incorrect verb tenses and adjective conjugations. Common grammatical mistakes included the use of ～と思います、～なければなりません、～たことがあります、～ので. Some students did not understand vocabulary, including 困ったこと、がっき、きよく、海外旅行、読書.

Students need to be familiar with a range of question words, including どうやって、どうして、なぜ、いつ、どこ、だれ、どのぐらい. The correct pronunciation of katakana words, such as オーストラリア, is important.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Students who scored highly in this section had prepared broadly, shared interesting content, thought about a variety of aspects and perspectives of their chosen subtopic, and gave their opinions. They were also able to respond to hypothetical questions. For example, what ゆるキャラ (mascot character) would you design for Melbourne?

It is important for students to be strategic in their choice of subtopic for this section, remembering they need to interact with the assessors for eight minutes. In their choice of subtopic for Section 2, students need to remember that the assessors must be able to ask a range of questions so that students can provide detailed

responses and demonstrate all they have prepared. Therefore, careful selection of a broad subtopic that will sustain the length of the discussion is imperative.

Sub-topics that offered sufficient depth and scope for discussion and therefore lent themselves well to this section of the oral exam included the following: ゆるキャラ (mascot characters), コンビニ (convenience stores), 高齢化社会 (ageing society), へんなホテル (weird hotels), お弁当 (boxed lunches), 給食 (provided school lunches), クラブ活動 (club activities), 漫画喫茶 (manga cafés), 自動販売機 (vending machines) and ロボット (robots).

Some students were able to effectively integrate their chosen image to support their subtopic, rather than just describe the image. Images that included rich information provided more opportunity for students to be able to offer a greater depth and range of information, ideas, opinions and reflections about the subtopic. For example, rather than a sample menu for provided school lunches (給食), an image of students eating or serving provided school lunches together was used more effectively to support the discussion. Some students needed to give more consideration to the scope of the image they had chosen in terms of how it supported the discussion of their subtopic. For example, if a simple portrait is selected, students need to consider whether this image provides sufficient stimulus for the assessor to be able to generate appropriate questions that will enable the student to discuss their ideas and opinions in sufficient depth. Students are reminded that their chosen image should not be a collage and should only contain minimal writing, such as a heading or title.