

2022 VCE Japanese Second Language written external assessment report

General comments

In the 2022 VCE Japanese Second Language written examination, most students demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the gist of the listening and reading texts in Sections 1 and 2A, although responses did not always interpret specific details accurately. Many responses did not identify the right information for the right question in Section 2A, although the students seemingly understood the content of the given texts.

Students generally approached the extended response task in Section 2B with greater confidence and skill, incorporating relevant ideas from the stimulus text. However, the features of the specified text type and style of writing were not always reflected correctly.

In Section 3, the essay questions included familiar concepts that would have allowed students to present a range of information, ideas and opinions in their responses. It is imperative that students read the question carefully to understand the exact nature of the task and avoid automatically citing their prior general knowledge, as this could result in irrelevant responses. Students should be encouraged to apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and aim to write naturally within the specified context, rather than frequently relying on unfamiliar words and expressions found in the dictionary.

Across all sections, some rudimentary mistakes with grammar, spelling and *kanji* were noted in responses written in Japanese.

In general, students should be advised to consolidate their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and *kanji* expected at the VCE level and develop a clear understanding of different styles of writing and text type features. They should be able to apply their knowledge and writing skills to a range of question types and not rely on prepared responses. Students should also use a variety of listening and reading materials to improve their comprehension and hone their note-taking skills.

Specific information

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

Section 1

Part A – Listening and responding in English

This section assessed the students' capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

Question 1a.

An example of a correct response is:

- It is 800 yen but it is 500 yen if you do cosplay.

Most students handled this question well. Some misunderstood 500 yen as an additional cost rather than the discounted entry fee for cosplayers. Some responses incorrectly identified the Japanese currency 'yen' or wrote it in *kanji*.

Question 1b.

An example of a correct response is:

- At first, Millie thinks the party sounds fun but feels a bit embarrassed about cosplay.
- After hearing many people would be in costume, she no longer feels embarrassed.

Students needed to convey the precise meaning of expressions such as はずかしい (embarrassed) and おもしろそう／楽しそう／よさそう (sounds interesting/fun/good), rather than generalised ideas such as 'worried', 'unsure', 'excited', 'relieved' or 'looking forward to the party'.

Question 1c.

An example of a correct response is:

- Go to the costume rental shop to choose their favourite character costumes.
- Buy special cosmetics/make-up and masks.

The correct verbs were often missing from student responses as they did not distinguish えらぶ (to choose) and 買う (to buy) in the context of a rental shop. けしょうひん (cosmetics) was also not understood well.

Question 1d.

An example of a correct response is:

- Japanese anime is very popular overseas.
- The popularity of cosplay has risen.
- You cannot only make friends with Japanese people but also with people from various countries.

Some responses did not recognise the grammatical patterns used in the second and third points: 高くなってきた (has become increasingly high) and だけでなく (not only but also). Some responses misinterpreted 外国で (in foreign countries/overseas) as 'among foreign students'.

Part B – Listening and responding in Japanese

In this part of the examination, students were assessed on their understanding of the listening text and their ability to accurately convey appropriate information from the text in Japanese. The information presented in the response needed to be relevant to the question. Students were not awarded separate marks for content and language. Responses that included the relevant information and were expressed clearly in Japanese were awarded full marks.

Question 2a.

An example of a correct response is:

- 週に3回午後7時から10時半まであいています。(It is open three times a week from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm.)

Many responses did not recognise 10:30, responding with 11:00 instead. 'Three times a week' was also not understood well.

Question 2b.

An example of a correct response is:

- ホームレスや仕事がない人たちのためのパートタイムの仕事を作ります。(They provide part-time work for homeless and unemployed people.)
- この仕事をしたら お金がもらえます。(They can earn money from this job.)

In the second point, students needed to link 'receiving money' to the work created for them by the Night Bakery.

Question 2c.

An example of a correct response is:

- とおくの有名なパン屋に行かなくてもいいです。(They don't have to travel far to famous bakeries.)
- おいしくてユニークなパンを安く買うことができます。(They can buy delicious, unique bread cheaply.)

Students needed to identify both points correctly, including 行かなくてもいい (don't have to go) and 安く (cheaply) and relate the first point to the second. Most students misunderstood the information as either they can buy delicious, unique bread at a famous bakery or buy famous, delicious and unique bread.

Question 2d.

An example of a correct response is:

- パン屋は売れなかったパンを夜のパン屋さんにあげます。(Bakeries give unsold bread to the Night Bakery.)
- パン屋はパンをすてなくてもいいです。(Bakeries don't have to discard bread.)

Many responses did not distinguish between パン屋 (bakeries in general) and 夜のパン屋さん (the Night Bakery), or understand 売れなかったパン (unsold bread – literally, *bread that didn't sell*) and すてなくてもいい (don't need to discard).

Question 2e.

An example of a correct response is:

- ミニバスのかずがもっとふえることです。(To increase the number of minibuses.)
- ソーシャルメディアで夜のパン屋さんについてもっと知ってもらうことです。(To increase the awareness of the Night Bakery through social media.)

Some responses did not recognise the correct use of particles with the transitive/intransitive verbs ～をふやす／～がふえる (to increase ～／～ increases). 知ってもらう (to get people to know) was sometimes misheard as してもらう (to get people to do), or the meaning was understood but the *te*-form was incorrect and written without *kanji*.

Section 2

Part A – Reading, listening and responding in English

In this part of the examination, students were assessed on their understanding of general and specific aspects of the reading, listening and visual texts. The information presented in the response needed to be relevant to the question.

Question 3a.

An example of a correct response is:

- looking at the trees
- listening to the sound of the forest
- touching the trees
- enjoying the smell of the forest.

Question 3b.

An example of a correct response is:

- Walk the mountain trail / Kumano Kodō Trail that people walked 1200 years ago.
- *Shinrinyoku* / Using the five senses to feel the nature and connect with the Shinto and Buddhist traditions.

Many students misinterpreted the question and responded instead with ‘school lunch’ and ‘farm stay’ mentioned in other parts of the texts. Students needed to include the Kumano Kodō Trail in their responses, and explain how *shinrinyoku* (forest bathing), using your senses and nature connected with Shinto and Buddhism. It was important to recognise *kanji* in 山道 (mountain trail), 歩く (to walk) and 大事にする (to cherish), and hence the accurate meaning of these words.

Question 3c.

An example of a correct response is:

- To increase the number of people who would cherish the interaction with Japanese people the most, rather than Disneyland or shopping.

Most students understood there was something more important than Disneyland and shopping but did not necessarily identify the aim of the Rural Experience Tour accurately. They did not always recognise the word こうりゅう (interaction/exchange) within the complex grammatical structure of the sentence.

Question 3d.

An example of a correct response is:

- Japanese people who live in big cities like Tokyo would want to participate in the Rural Experience Tour.
- There are students who started studying English seriously at school because they want to become guides for the Rural Experience Tour.

Common errors included 大都市 (metropolis/big city) being misunderstood as 大阪 (Osaka); さんかしたい (want to participate) as さんかした (participated); and 真剣に (seriously) as しけん (exam). The grammar pattern ーのような (such as ー) was not understood by some students, who read the meaning as Japanese people living in Tokyo and Osaka participated in the tour, and students started studying for English exams.

Question 3e.

An example of a correct response is:

- Go to a local school and have school-provided lunch with students.
- Sally had food she had never had before.
- Sally made various dishes with her host mother / Sally learned to make *tamagoyaki* (egg roll).
- Cooking with Japanese people / a food-related aspect taken from the image.

Question 3f.

An example of a correct response is:

- The farmhouse Sally stayed in was old but had high-tech toilets.

Many students wrote about helping with farm work from early in the morning rather than describing the farmhouse. Some students also did not recognise the word ハイテク (high-tech).

Part B – Reading and responding in Japanese

Students were required to demonstrate an understanding of the stimulus text/texts and to address the requirements of the task by conveying the relevant information from the text/texts that was appropriate for the audience and the prescribed writing style and text type.

Student responses were assessed holistically according to the assessment criteria and the expected qualities published on the VCAA website. Students were not awarded separate marks for content and language accuracy; however, language accuracy was an important expected quality that was considered in the assessment.

The length of the response specified in this section is approximately 300 *ji*. However, it was possible to achieve a high score without exceeding the character limit.

Students should be reminded that independent wording is another important aspect of the criteria. They need to develop skills to manipulate the language from the stimulus reading text to convey original meaning in their own words. High-scoring responses demonstrated an ability to incorporate relevant information and express the content with minimal reliance on the language in the reading text while adhering to the requirements of the persuasive email to a friend. Responses that did not score well tended to copy the bulk of the text into their responses.

Students needed to include some basic information about the eSports Café such as the location, price and what you can do there. They also needed to explain the reason why they should go together, using persuasive language. Most students were able to identify the key information, yet many responses had a tendency to be informative and lacked a personal link between the author and the reader. Students should be advised to learn correct text type features of email. Also, the addressee should be given an appropriate name, not 友だちへ (Dear Friend) as seen in some responses.

The following is a sample response.

じゅんくん

元気ですか？ この間 e スポーツにきょうみがあると言っていました。最近広島に新しい e スポーツカフェがオープンしたそうです。じゅんくんの家からも近いし、行ってみませんか？

e スポーツは一人でするパズルやチームで楽しめるゲームなど、色々あるようです。一時間 500 円からで安いし、カフェに来ている人とれんしゅうもできるんです。それに、プロゲーマーのレッスンにさんかできるから、けいけんがない私達もきっと上手になれるでしょう。そうすれば、いつか世界大会やバーチャルオリンピックにも二人で出られるかもしれません。最新のコンピューターやゲームも使えるらしいし、ぜったいおもしろいと思います。

だから、いっしょにこのカフェに行きましょう！ メール待っています。

ともみ

Hi Jun,

How are you going? You were saying the other day that you are interested in eSports. Well, apparently a new eSports café opened in Hiroshima recently. It's close to your house too, so why don't we go and have a look together?

There are lots of games in eSports like puzzles you can do on your own and games you can enjoy as a team. Also, you can participate in lessons by professional gamers, so even people like us without any experience can become skillful at eSports. Then, maybe one day we get to compete in the world tournament or virtual Olympics together. You can also use the latest computers and games, so it should be really fun.

So let's go to this café together! I'll be waiting for your mail.

Tomomi

Section 3 – Writing in Japanese

Questions 5–8

In this part of the examination, students were given a choice of four questions: evaluative speech, personal letter, informative article and imaginative story. They were required to produce a response of 400 to 500 *ji* to one of these questions.

High-scoring responses successfully conveyed significant and original information relevant to the task, which was integrated effectively into the required style of writing and text type. They demonstrated a strong command of the language to express their ideas with a high level of accuracy and sophistication.

Most responses were written reflecting the appropriate style, text type features and audience specified in the task, but with a varying degree of relevance, comprehensiveness, sophistication and accuracy. The essay questions included some familiar concepts many students would have come across during Units 3 and 4. To some extent, this created an opportunity for students to present their in-depth knowledge. Responses that did not score well simply reproduced the work they had previously done elsewhere during the course of their study, which did not address the question in many cases.

Question 5

Most students attempted this question. The task was an evaluative speech to the Year 10 students at a Japanese sister school on the benefits and challenges of studying languages at the VCE level in Australia. However, many responses did not address the question on two grounds – it was either that students wrote

about foreign language study in general without any reference to VCE, or that they simply wrote a personal evaluation of their Japanese studies.

Some examples of benefits given in high-scoring responses were a deeper appreciation of other cultures and broadening their perspective, visiting a target country on school tours and exchanges, making friends through homestay, scaled-up ATAR scores and broader career opportunities. The examples of challenges were the time and effort it takes to study a language and balancing the demand of language study with other VCE subjects. Students need to recognise the correct features of a speech script and avoid *聞いてくれてありがとうございました* (thank you for listening) as a closing remark. This is a literal translation from English, which is unnatural and not used in Japanese to conclude a speech.

Question 6

Some students chose this question. The task was a personal letter to a Japanese friend to thank them for their support and advice over the past few years since the student's family hosted them. Higher-scoring responses were able to include personal descriptions of how the Japanese friend helped and supported them, what it meant to them and how much they appreciated the friendship. Some examples given in their responses were receiving help with Japanese homework and practising conversation together, as well as personal advice on part-time jobs, school commitments, social relationships and so on. Responses that did not score well lost focus and wrote mainly about what they did together during the homestay, what they intend to do when they meet next or what gift they would like to get for the Japanese friend.

Question 7

This question was the second most popular choice. The task was an informative article for a Japanese sister school's online newsletter about the positive effects pets have on our physical and mental health. Most students who chose this topic were able to discuss the physical benefits, such as regular opportunities to exercise outdoors and increased fitness levels, as well as the mental-health benefits such as reduced stress levels, companionship and greater social interaction. Some students digressed from the topic and wrote about the pros and cons of owning a pet, which did not address the question entirely.

Question 8

Very few students chose this question. The task was to write an imaginative story for a creative writing competition based on the image of a family looking out the window of a plane. Students needed to use their inspiration from this image and use descriptive language to set the scene, develop the plot and bring the piece to a climax in an engaging and convincing narrative. While high-scoring responses saw the development of a clear storyline with impressive creativity, others lacked narrative qualities and simply gave an explanatory list of events.