



2009 LOTE: Japanese Second Language GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2009 many students performed well in the Conversation section of the oral examination. They demonstrated a good understanding of the topics and were able to present relevant responses. Successful students often expanded on their answers and gave opinions, while other students experienced difficulty with maintaining the conversation and needed frequent support from assessors.

In the Discussion section, students who had thoroughly prepared their Detailed Study demonstrated a very good understanding of the chosen topic and were able to explore their sub-topic in sufficient depth. Their information, opinions and ideas were supported with examples and evidence from the resources studied.

A lack of flexibility and memorised responses were evident in the weaker students' performances. These students experienced difficulty conversing with assessors spontaneously in both sections. Students are encouraged to practise conversing with as many people as possible in order to become familiar with different types of questioning.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

The students who scored highly provided detailed answers. They demonstrated that they had prepared thoroughly by speaking confidently and fluently throughout the assessment without unnatural pauses. They spoke with correct pronunciation and appropriate intonation, stress and tempo.

However, over-preparation can sometimes be a problem. Students must learn to listen to the assessors' questions in their entirety and give the assessors the opportunity to respond to their answers. It is very important that students listen carefully to questions. They should ensure that they address what they are being asked in order to give relevant responses. Many students focused on a key word in the question and missed the real focus of the question.

Students need to pay closer attention to their pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. Most students' pronunciation was satisfactory; however, some continued to have difficulty with 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、旅行、高校 and 学校. Pronunciation of しています、しています and the words for sports such as バasketボール、フットボール and サッカー require more practice. Many students said ホーストの家族 instead of ホストの家族, and カリオケ should be カラオケ. In addition, tempo was often neglected.

はい、分かります、なぜならば and むずかしいしつもんですね are not appropriate responses after hearing questions. あいづち should be used instead. It is important to use あいづち to make the conversation flow. A range of linking words such as あの.....、そうですね、そして、ですから、ええと、それから、それに and そのうえ are also appropriate ways to continue the conversation naturally.

Content

Most students prepared well for their topics. Good students exhibited the capacity to elaborate on ideas and opinions by providing examples and giving interesting responses, although weaker students often provided simplistic viewpoints.

Many students spoke effectively about their family, school, subjects and holidays. However, students generally found it difficult when they attempted to reflect on their own experiences. Other areas that seemed to cause problems included giving reasons why they liked a subject or a part-time job or talking about their future aspirations. Students are encouraged to pay closer attention to these areas when preparing for the examination.

Language

The criteria for assessment emphasise the importance of accuracy, range of vocabulary and grammar. Students are expected to use a variety of grammatical patterns and vocabulary in their responses.



Every year the same mistakes occur, including incorrect particles and use of tense. Use of the から/ので、 よりほう、 と思う and て form of the verbs needed more attention. 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. たりたり and ことが好き were often overused.

よく and あまり/あんまり were often used incorrectly. よく which means 'well' and should be used with an affirmative word, while あまり should be in a negative sentence. For example, チームはよくかちません should be チームはあまりかちません.

たことがある caused problems for some students. Common interrogatives such as だれ、 どうして、 どのぐらい、 いつ、 どんな and どうやって and their appropriate responses should be learnt. Counters and time words such as 二人、 四月、 一ヶ月、 一時間、 週に一回、 去年 and 来年 should also be revised thoroughly.

It was disappointing that basic vocabulary such as 旅行、 仕事、 国、 外国、 がっき、 けいかく、 きょうだい、 しんせき、 なかよし and そつぎょうする were not known by many students. If students want to talk about sports, they 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

Communication

The introduction to the Discussion is very important. Assessors should be given a clear understanding of the main focus of the sub-topic in order to maintain good discussion. Good students indicated the title of the sub-topic and briefly explained its main focus. They clearly stated their resources. They then carried the discussion forward with some original input and maintained a discussion for seven minutes. Their pronunciation was good.

Weaker students, however, often chose topics which were too difficult and needed much more support from the assessors. Some of them gave memorised speeches about the topic rather than a brief introduction and were consequently interrupted by the assessors.

A number of students relied too heavily on memorised sentences and it was evident that they did not have a good understanding of what they were saying. Such tactics often resulted in the student not being able to answer the questions that followed.

The assessors occasionally experienced difficulty understanding what students said, particularly the names of the sub-topics and some Japanese words students used in the discussion. Therefore, students must practise pronunciation of difficult words associated with their chosen topic.

Some students said 「それだけです」 repeatedly, which made it difficult for discussion to continue. It is essential to use different strategies in order to help develop the conversation.

Content

The choice of sub-topic is crucial to a successful performance in this section. Students who prepared the topic thoroughly and had good resources were able to demonstrate an excellent understanding and knowledge of the topic. It was obvious that they had given careful thought to what was involved and had prepared some extra information about their sub-topic. Ideas and opinions were supported by the resources studied.

In contrast, a number of students exhibited little evidence of detailed study of the texts, stating vaguely that their resources were the Internet, books and interviews. With this limited information they were unable to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the topic or express their ideas and opinions with reasons and examples.

Many students showed their ability to speak Japanese very well in the Conversation section but their sub-topic of the Detailed Study did not adequately allow them to engage in a detailed discussion. Moreover, these students did not have enough content in the Detailed Study to enable them to speak for eight minutes. Teachers should ensure that texts have enough scope for detailed discussion and that they assist students to prepare adequately.

2009 Assessment Report



Some topics which were handled well by students this year included 給食、高齢化社会、じゅく、まんが、
自動販売機、日本の城、お正月 and コンビニ.

Language

Students should be reminded that 15 hours of class time are required for the Detailed Study. Therefore it is expected that students have had time to prepare and learn the correct grammatical patterns and the key words associated with their chosen sub-topic. Furthermore, they should have sufficient knowledge to discuss the subject.

The language used in the Discussion section should be less predictable. There should be many new and unfamiliar words in the resources used by students. They should not only master these words but also practise using them in discussion. There were many occasions when students used unfamiliar words in their introduction but were unable to hear and understand the same words when they were used by the assessors.

Some problematic words in the Discussion were: かいけつ、りゅう、げんいん、へんか、ふえる、へる、もんだい、いけん、かんがえ、どう思うか、どうすればいいか、and (the name of the book) を読んで分かったことは何か. It was disappointing that many students didn't know 女の子、男の子、女子、男子、部活、わかもの and お年より.

Strong students accurately used an excellent range of vocabulary and grammar. They usually self-corrected errors and had correct pronunciation.