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Japanese (continuers)

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio should consist of between three and five tasks and include one each of interaction, text production, and text analysis. An increasing number of schools are choosing to include the minimum three tasks.

Interaction

Most schools adhered to the appropriate time length of the interaction, 5–7 minutes.

**The more successful interactions**

* provided students the opportunity for depth and breadth in treatment of the topics, through effective questioning. Students were given a range of closed and open questions.

**The less successful interactions**

* were presented as scripted and rehearsed role plays that did not allow for spontaneous discussion
* relied on closed questions with rehearsed answers, and did not allow for the interaction to be initiated, sustained, or spontaneous. Natural and spontaneous topic shifts were not evident
* allowed the use of cue cards, which hampered fluency and intonation and did not allow for spontaneous conversation and depth of ideas.

**The more successful responses**

* initiated and sustained the interaction across a range of topics and responded spontaneously to natural shifts in the conversation
* conveyed genuine interest in the topics discussed
* provided responses that were consistently relevant, and where appropriate were able to discuss in more detail.

**General information**

An interaction assessment task has to give students an opportunity to interact with others to exchange information, ideas, opinions, or experiences in Japanese and must provide the opportunity for students to engage in spontaneous discussion with an interlocutor on an issue/topic/theme.

Role plays between two students or an interview with the teacher, where all answers have been rehearsed, are not appropriate tasks for this assessment.

Please check that audio files are audible for moderation. Two copies of audio files are useful for moderation.

Text Production

There was a range of task designs, topics, and text types for the text production assessment.

Length was varied. Many schools chose to include two different text productions in the folio, which varied in text type and topic.

**The more successful responses**

* came from tasks that provided students with the opportunity to create an individual piece of writing. This enabled each student to create individual work with breadth in the treatment of the topic.

**The less successful responses**

* came from tasks that were overly scaffolded by the teacher and did not give students the opportunity to create texts where the content was varied.

Text Analysis

**The more successful responses**

* came from tasks that were designed to give all students the opportunity to achieve at the highest level of the performance standards by providing the opportunity to address specific feature IR2, ‘Analysis of the language in texts’, and sufficient texts and/or questions to cover the scope of the performance standards
* came from tasks that provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate learning of interpretation, evaluation, and reflection.

**General information**

* Teachers should provide a copy of the listening script for moderation.
* If using tasks from past written examinations, teachers should ensure that questions related to language analysis are included and that the questioning of the text(s) adequately covers the range of assessment design criteria and the scope of the performance standards.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Students need to be supported through appropriate task design for the oral presentation and written response. Although these two tasks are based on the same topic, they have a different purpose, context, and audience. The oral presentation must not be simply a reading of the written task. Students cannot be given credit twice for the same task.

**Oral Presentation in Japanese**

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated high levels of fluency and correct intonation when they were presenting and did not read directly from cue cards
* were able to explore the topic using an extensive range of complex linguistic features.

**The less successful responses**

* were read from cue cards, with fluency and pronunciation at a lower level
* used internet translators to assist with language beyond their capabilities and beyond the Stage 2 subject outline or to translate sections of work.

**Written Response in Japanese**

**The more successful responses**

* explored the topic using an extensive range of complex linguistic features
* created texts that differed in context, purpose, and audience from the oral presentation, and language was varied between both tasks.

**The less successful responses**

* included sections of the oral presentation in their written response
* used internet translators to assist with language beyond their capabilities and beyond the Stage 2 subject outline.

**Reflection in English**

**The more successful responses**

* reflected critically on how cultures, values, and beliefs were represented in texts
* made connections between their own values and practices and what they had explored through texts.

**The less successful responses**

* based their reflection on the content of what they had learnt through the topic chosen
* described their own values, without making connections with those represented in texts.

**General information**

* It is important that students are guided carefully when selecting in-depth study topics. Moderators found that some students were unable to cope with the complexity of some topics chosen, leading to the use of internet translators in some cases. It also resulted in heavily edited work, which was well above the Stage 2 standard of language.
* The content of the oral presentation in Japanese and the written response in Japanese should vary, both in content and audience.
* The oral presentation in Japanese is *not* a discussion like the discussion in the oral examination. It is a presentation, and the teacher should not be involved in questioning and interviewing.

Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

All student work is to be submitted as required.

**General information**

* Packaging of student work was very good.
* Some schools did not make it clear who was speaking when videoed role plays were sent in.
* Teachers do not have to correct or make comment on student work sent in for moderation.
* Recordings must be clear and audible.
* Drafts for tasks and research of in-depth study are not required for moderation.

## External Assessment

Oral Examination

In 2016, 179 students presented themselves for the Japanese (continuers) oral examination. For the conversation, 28% of the students achieved in the A band and 14% received D+ or lower. In the discussion, there was large variability in student performance, with students achieving either at the high or low end, and fewer in between. Twenty-six per cent of students achieved an A grade, while 30% received D+ or lower. As in past years, marks were more heavily distributed towards the lower end in the discussion section.

**Section 1: Conversation**

**The more successful responses**

* comprehended questions accurately and gave relevant answers in their own words
* did not rely on prepared/memorised answers
* comfortably went beyond the minimum answers by giving appropriate detail and information, without over-talking
* presented well-thought-out opinions and ideas, with reasons
* handled less-expected and/or more difficult questions well, rather than evading them by simply saying ‘I don’t know’
* sought help effectively and appropriately when needed
* were able to make themselves look more relaxed and willing to participate in conversation
* spoke clearly with appropriate pace and volume
* maintained the natural flow of conversation, for example, by using fillers and aizuchi, confirming the question, responding to corrections, and thanking the examiners when receiving help
* expressed complex ideas accurately
* understood and used the formal register appropriately (e.g. お母さん/母、ごめん/すみません、私/おれ、もういちど？/もういちどおねがいします)
* demonstrated good knowledge of Stage 2 level vocabulary and grammar
* were able to speak in complete sentences.

**The less successful responses**

* typically had insufficient knowledge of vocabulary and grammar
* were weak in their listening and understanding skills
* could handle only simple and more predictable questions
* gave short and minimal responses, with no or very little information or content
* spoke too much by reciting long, prepared answers
* did not carefully listen to or fully understand the question, and thus did not answer the question appropriately
* did not have strategies to deal with unexpected or more difficult questions
* became too nervous to perform at their best
* spoke hesitantly with many unnatural pauses
* often had difficulties in expressing ideas accurately in complete sentences
* made frequent errors that impeded meaning
* did not understand when the same questions were asked in different ways (e.g. なぜ/どうして、どうやって/何で、どのくらい/何回/何時間、学校のかもく/学校で何を勉強して、車のうんてんができる/めんきょを持っている).

**Section 2: Discussion**

**The more successful responses**

* had chosen a suitable topic for their in-depth study. Their topics were manageable and sufficiently challenging to discuss in the final examination
* had chosen topics that they were genuinely interested in and willing to talk about
* demonstrated good understanding of the topic
* made use of appropriate and authoritative sources for research
* provided evidence of research (e.g. clear interpretation of the books and/or websites used)
* presented careful and insightful reflection on Japanese culture, values, and practices in comparison with their own
* effectively presented reflection on their own learning
* comprehended examiners’ questions accurately and gave relevant answers in their own words
* presented their main points of study accurately and efficiently in the outline form
* took part in genuine discussion without presenting a ‘speech’ on what they had learned by rote
* displayed a good understanding of their subject-specific vocabulary by responding to questions that they had not rehearsed answers for
* used both simple and complex expressions accurately and effectively
* spoke in their own words (formal spoken language) rather than recited a memorised texts written by someone else
* used a wide range of expressions with a high degree of accuracy
* engaged the audience (examiners) well by use of body language, eye contact, and intonation in voice.

**The less successful responses**

* had chosen a topic that was too difficult to fully comprehend and discuss in Japanese
* had chosen a topic that was too broad (e.g. daily life in Japan) or too simple (e.g. Japanese school) to go into depth in discussion
* were not well prepared to talk about their main points (dot points)
* were unable to display sufficient knowledge of their topics
* did not provide good evidence of research (e.g. could not give book/website titles)
* did not fully understand the examination procedure and requirement (e.g. outline form, 1-minute talk option)
* provided very basic reflection (e.g. ‘interesting/difficult’, without saying why)
* did not listen to the entire question but focused on key words (often from their dot points), and hence answered incorrectly
* did not understand more difficult and/or less expected questions
* relied heavily on memorised answers, and became stressed when they forgot their prepared answer
* said most in their 1-minute introduction, which is not assessed, thus leaving very little to discuss
* gave only minimal answers to less expected questions, while giving too long and irrelevant answers to expected questions
* sometimes lacked interest and the ability to discuss.

Written Examination

In 2016, 180 students sat the Japanese continuers written examination. There was a wide range of marks achieved across all questions. The overall standard was consistent with that of previous years.

**Section 1: Listening and Responding**

*Question 1*

Despite the simplicity of language and content, this question was one of the most poorly handled questions in the examination. Only 22% of the students achieved full marks.

**The more successful responses**

* identified that Jun had a toothache
* identified the correct time for his new appointment.

**The less successful responses**

* did not identify that Jun had a toothache
* gave the wrong time and/or gave extra information that was not correct
* were written in Japanese kanji.

*Question 2*

This question was answered well by most students; 44% achieved full marks.

**The more successful responses**

* identified that the man wanted to go to the airport
* provided comprehensive and accurate detail about how the woman tried to help the man.

**The less successful responses**

* did not comprehend the word ‘ くうこう’ hence did not identify what the man wanted to do
* provided only partial detail
* provided inaccurate and/or irrelevant detail (e.g. 9:30 pm, the ferry left at 1:30).

*Question 3*

There was a wide spread of marks for this question. Although 22% of the students achieved full marks, another 22% scored zero. Approximately half of the students scored at least 3 out of 5 marks.

**The more successful responses**

* identified the four instructions that the travel guide gave to the tour participants.

**The less successful responses**

* did not include the instruction that the participants were forbidden to put hand and head out of the bus window
* provided incorrectly guessed information (e.g. put rubbish in the bin at the park).

*Question 4*

This question was well handled by most students — 77% of the students achieved   
3 or 4 (full) marks. However, students who provided only a descriptive answer, instead of an explanatory answer, received fewer marks.

**The more successful responses**

* accurately and precisely described Satoshi’s frustration and explained why he felt this way with relevant evidence from the text.

**The less successful responses**

* identified Satoshi’s frustration but did not sufficiently explain why he felt this way
* neglected to mention that Satoshi was continuously interrupted while ordering food
* neglected to mention that Satoshi sensed her internet friends were more important to her than her friend (himself) who was actually in front of her.

*Question 5*

This was the longest text in the Listening and Responding section (approximately 2:40 minutes), and the question proved the most challenging for many students. The students found this question to be the most challenging in the examination. Although students’ marks spread widely from 0 to 6, only 10% of students achieved full marks.

**The more successful responses**

* showed extensive understanding of the text, covering comprehensive details of the content and the context
* clearly described how Carlos was influenced by his Japanese grandfather
* identified the two reasons why Carlos was impressed by his Japanese students.

**The less successful responses**

* included no mention of Karate
* did not mention what influenced Carlos to go to Japan and what inspired him to travel and teach Karate overseas
* displayed misunderstanding of key words (e.g. ちゃんと to be chanting)
* showed that students did not understand some basic words (e.g. あいさつ、そうじ).

**Section 2: Reading and Responding (Part A)**

This section clearly discriminated the students’ levels. Those who thoroughly read and understood the texts displayed their understanding clearly and concisely, while those who understood the texts only partially gave vague or incorrect answers based on their guesses. Overall the students demonstrated general understanding of the texts, but many did not show comprehensive understanding of details in the texts.

*Question 6*

The score distribution was broad. More than half of the students achieved 5/8 or higher, with 13% scoring 8/8.

**The more successful responses**

* identified and distinguished the different treatment of the white snake by the children and the old woman
* provided thorough detail of the treatment
* displayed a good understanding of the white snake’s power and accurately described the ways the children’s and the old woman’s actions affected it
* identified the two different reasons why the villagers visited the shrine.

**The less successful responses**

* did not distinguish the different actions of the children and the old woman towards the white snake
* included inaccurate information about the snake’s power
* did not include the full details, displaying only partial understanding of the story
* did not identify the two reasons why the villagers visited the shrine.

*Question 7*

This question was generally handled well, with 70% of students scoring 4/7 or higher. Twelve per cent of students achieved full marks.

**The more successful responses**

* clearly explained with relevant details why the author said ‘Water is important for Japanese people’s life and culture’
* were able to articulate the persuasive techniques used by the author
* gave relevant examples from the text (e.g. rhetorical question, repetition of key words) to support the answer.

**The less successful responses**

* attempted to explain why the author said ‘Water is important for Japanese people’s life and culture’, without providing sufficient or relevant details from the text
* listed examples (extracts) of how the author persuaded the reader, without explaining the literary techniques used.

**Section 2: Reading and Responding (Part B)**

This year, the stimulus text was comparatively simple whereas the task expectation was more complex and required thought and planning in order to achieve a high score. Most students read the text correctly but responded in a very basic manner. Some students missed the point of the response to be made *after* attending the party, not before the party. Students’ marks were most heavily distributed in the 40–60% achievement range (29%), followed by the 60–80% range (28%).

*Question 8*

**The more successful responses**

* showed accurate understanding of the stimulus text and the question
* identified and responded to relevant points in the stimulus text
* created the desired interest by elaborating ideas beyond the obvious
* included a wide range of complex and effective linguistic structures (e.g. nominalisation, relative clause) with a high degree of accuracy
* used cohesive devices (e.g. conjunctions) effectively to achieve natural flow and cohesion
* observed the text type and the word-limit.

**The less successful responses**

* did not understand the question accurately (e.g. wrote a response to an invitation)
* did not read the stimulus text successfully
* did not identify the main points to respond to in the text
* conveyed only basic information/ideas, mostly copied from the stimulus text
* contained much irrelevant content and went over the word-limit
* contained frequent grammatical errors and incorrect selection of words.

**Section 3: Writing in Language**

Most students completed the task. There were only a few who did not attempt this section. Question 10 was by far the most popular, being chosen by 72% of students, followed by Question 9 (17%) and Question 11 (11%). The three questions were of the same degree of difficulty, with the average scores 51–52 out of the possible 100.

*Question 9*

**The more successful responses**

* created the desired impact and interest to engage readers of the music magazine
* clearly described the song and what it meant for them with a high degree of linguistic accuracy
* used a range of appropriate expressions to convey meaning and achieve cohesion
* observed the text type (magazine article) and the word-limit.

**The less successful responses**

* lacked the capacity to convey information and ideas accurately
* mostly consisted of simple vocabulary and short sentences with many errors
* were often incomplete.

*Question 10*

**The more successful responses**

* provided useful and thoughtful advice based on own experience
* vividly and accurately described own homestay experience with relevant details
* successfully used more complex grammar and expressions, including relative clause and conjunctions
* displayed a good understanding of expressions for giving advice, appropriate to the Japanese cultural context
* observed text type conventions (speech) and the word-limit.

**The less successful responses**

* showed only partial understanding of the question
* did not include useful advice to the future host family
* did not provide relevant details of their homestay experience
* contained many grammatical and spelling errors
* contained inappropriate and repetitive use of conjunctions
* contained much irrelevant information
* did not observe the text type conventions and/or the word-limit
* were often incomplete.

*Question 11*

**The more successful responses**

* created the desired impact and interest to engage readers of the class journal
* included thoughtful reflection on how the TV program had influenced them
* clearly described the details of the TV program with a high degree of linguistic accuracy
* were logically organised with the accurate use of tense and conjunctions
* expressed more complex ideas clearly
* observed the text type conventions (journal) and the word-limit.

**The less successful responses**

* did not include a reflection on how the TV program had influenced them
* lacked the capacity to convey information clearly and accurately
* mostly consisted of simple vocabulary and short sentences with many errors
* were often incomplete.

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