

2023 ASSESSMENT REPORT

JPN315114 - JAPANESE

Oral Exam (Criterion 2)

General comments

The Japanese oral examinations were conducted in the last week of October and first week of November 2023. Students took part in an interview with two examiners which lasted approximately 10-12 minutes. They were questioned on their basic details (name, age, birthday, place of residence), family, school life, daily routines, hobbies, leisure activities, likes/dislikes, helping at home, friends, part-time work and future plans. Most students seemed well-prepared for this part of the exam with students generally showing confidence and a knowledge of the structure and expectations of the oral exam. The following points from the examiners highlight characteristics of students who performed very well and those who were less confident.

Students who performed well:

- understood all questions or were able to clarify a word or two using Japanese
- used a variety of Level 3 structures and vocabulary
- responded fluently and naturally
- included some natural expressions like expressing humility
- maintained polite です・ます Japanese throughout the whole conversation
- mastered past-tense verbs and adjectives.

Advice for weaker students:

- It is important to use as many Level 3 structures as possible. A simple way of doing this is to give an answer using the same structure as the question. For example: Q: 日本にほんに行ったことがありますか。A: はい、行ったことがあります。Instead of just はい or はい、あります。Even though the second one is quite a natural response, it doesn't show evidence of understanding the grammar.
- Students are encouraged to use Japanese to clarify words or questions when they do not understand, rather than resort to English.
- Students need to prepare responses to a wide range of topics, not just family, school and friends. Weaker students struggled to communicate beyond these topics.
- Some students responded to questions such as 「学校がっこうの後あとでなにをしますか」 by using the て-form, rather than たり、たりします。Using て implies a sequence of actions (and then, and then), which was not always appropriate for these types of questions.

- Students are encouraged to listen to the end of the question to determine the appropriate tense (past, present, future) in formulating the answer.
- Some students used —さん when talking about their own family members. When referring to family members in Japanese, students are advised to use the title (あに、いもうと etc)*most natural, or 'name' without さん.
- Weaker students failed to complete sentences fully, with some students giving the first part of an answer and not adding the verb (です・ます)。
- A number of students used the phrases, 「シャワーをします」 instead of 「シャワーをあびます」 (have a shower), 「ふくをきます」 instead of 「きがえます」 (get dressed) and answered questions about things or places with 「元氣」 rather than いい (good) or にぎやか (lively).
- Some students confused the pronunciation of numbers when combined with other Kanji: 七才(しちさい) instead of ななさい and 七時(ななじ) instead of しちじ。

Section A: Listening and Responding Criterion 1

4 Questions, 60 minutes

General comments

Four spoken texts were presented, and students were asked to respond to questions about the texts in English. As with previous years, Section A: Listening and Responding section of the exam proved more challenging than Section B: Reading and Responding. Whilst most students understood the general content of the passages well, full marks were only given to those students who answered questions in detail. Students are reminded that all answers are to be in English, so when giving reasons for answers, students will need to translate what they hear, not just write verbatim from the passage in Japanese. Students are encouraged to answer questions more literally, rather than summarising information, to avoid missing key vocabulary in their answers.

Question 1

Solutions

- Someone is moving house / moving to a new house/someone built a house (1)
 - Someone / a removalist is helping them to move/ owner says the new house is done / asking where to put things (1) **(2)**
- near / close to (0.5) the kitchen (0.5) **(1)**
- 4 **(1)**
- 2 (0.5) (of the) chairs/them (0.5) **(1)**
- beautiful **(1)**
- in the living room (1) behind (1) the lounge / couch / sofa (0.5) **(2.5)**
- friend (0.5) will come (0.5) and take (0.5)
 - long time ago (0.5) (their) friend's (0.5) grandfather (0.5) painted/drew it / (the picture) (0.5) **(3.5)**

- h) in (0.5) the rubbish bin / trash can (0.5)
she (0.5) it broke (0.5) and can't be used (0.5) (anymore) (0.5) **(3)**

TOTAL 15

Comments

- In general, students found this question the most challenging.
- More successful students referred to the text when giving a reason, in answer to question a)ii.
- Key vocabulary for location was often missing or mistaken such as in questions b) near, f) behind.
- Question g) proved challenging for many students with answers missing some of the detail required for full marks.

Question 2

Solutions

- a) Japan (0.5) Tasmania (0.5) **(1)**
- b) Every year (0.5) May (0.5) **(1)**
- c) Children's Day **(1)**
- d) Make (1) carp streamers/koinobori/carp kites (0.5) **(1.5)**
- e) Made using/made from (0.5) recycled (0.5) or easily composted (0.5) things (0.5) and so on/etc (0.5) **(2.5)**
- f) Supports (0.5) Hobart/it. (0.5) / Gives (0.5) support (0.5) **(1)**
- g) Monkeys **(1)**
- h) Wombats (0.5) and wallabies (0.5) **(1)**
- i) Pictures (1) (of wombats) **(1)**
- j) They love them **(1)**
- k) Took photos (0.5) of places (0.5) that they like (0.5) **(1.5)**
- l) People in Tasmania /Tasmanian people (0.5) can know (0.5) more (about) Japan (0.5) **(1.5)**

TOTAL 15

Comments

- Markers were looking for detail in the question b), with inclusion of 'Every year', not just 'May'.
- More successful students were able to include the key words 'made from' and 'and so on/etc'.
- Note that the weighting of marks for questions d) and e) were adjusted to better reflect the detail.
- Question k) was most challenging, with less successful responses missing one or more of the three pieces of key information. Students are reminded to include as much detail as possible in their answers.

Question 3

Solutions

- a) By bullet train/shinkansen (1) (from) tomorrow (1) **(2)**
- b) i. Hotel (0.5)
 - ii. Wants (0.5) to leave/put (0.5) his luggage (0.5) **(2)**
- c) Tokyo station (1) Shinjuku station (1) **(2)**
- d) Where is (0.5) the most (1) fun (0.5) and interesting (0.5) place (0.5) **(3)**
- e) Tokyo (0.5) Skytree /Sky 3(0.5) **(1)**
- f) Likes high (0.5) places (0.5) **(1)**
- g) Good/clear weather day (1)
 - From the top (of Skytree) (1) you can see far away (1) and it is very (0.5) pretty/ beautiful (0.5) **(4)**

TOTAL 15

Comments

- In general, students performed most strongly on this question.
- Many students found question b)ii. difficult, despite correctly answering question b)i with the vocabulary item おきたい (want to put/leave) proving to be challenging for most students.
- Stronger students provided detail in questions d) and g).
- Sky 3 was also accepted as a possible answer as the English number '3' can be pronounced as ツリー. Students who were unfamiliar with this landmark were therefore given marks for this interpretation of ツリー.

Question 4

Solutions

- a) Baseball (0.5) **(0.5)**
- b) When he was 3 (1) with his parents (1) **(2)**
- c) Loud/annoying (0.5) very (0.5) scary (0.5) **(1.5)**
- d) In April (0.5) of first grade / grade 1 (1) **(1.5)**
- e) Osaka (0.5) Tigers (0.5) **(1)**
- f) At his friend's house (1) watching (baseball) on TV / television (1) **(2)**
- g) Grade 2 (1) with his aunt (0.5) and uncle (0.5) **(2)**
- h) 9 years (1) he wants (0.5) to become (0.5) a professional (0.5) **(2.5)**
- i) After school (1) practice from 4:00 to 6:30pm / for 2.5 hours (1) **(2)**

TOTAL 15

Comments

- In general, students performed comparatively well on this question.
- Many students missed writing 'April' for question d). Students are reminded to give as much detail as possible and look to the marks given, as a guide to how much information could be needed.
- In question f), many students wrote about watching TV with a friend, however, for full marks to be given, 'at friend's house' was needed. Students are encouraged to write answers more literally, rather than summarising information heard.

Section B: Reading and Responding Criterion 3

4 Questions, 60 minutes

General comments

The first two texts involved answering questions in English, whilst the third text required a response in Japanese. As with previous years, students performed more strongly in Section B: Reading and Responding compared to Section A: Listening and Responding. Students were generally able to read the required Kanji and had good comprehension of the more complex grammar structures found in this course.

Part A: Question 5

Solutions

- a) During (0.5) a maths (0.5) lesson (0.5) /7:03 PM *written on picture **(1.5)**
- b) (Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss) Yamada **(0.5)**
- c) i. No (0.5)
ii. (Akiko says that) you mustn't (0.5) use (0.5) a mobile (0.5) at school (0.5) **(2.5)**
- d) i. Akiko (0.5)
ii. (Sachiko tells her) don't (0.5) need to (1) to worry **(1)**
- e) OR it's okay (1) the teacher (0.5) is not (0.5) watching (0.5) **(3)**
- f) i. English (0.5)
ii. No (not at all) (0.5) **(1)**
- g) i. New (0.5) anime (0.5)
ii. She heard (0.5) it was good (0.5) **(2)**
- h) Hard to understand **(1)**
- i) i. Foreign/English movie (1) ii. (in order to) study English (0.5) OR i. Romance movie (1) ii. says it's good. (0.5) **(1.5)**
ii. 6:15 (1)
- j) After (0.5) club (0.5) in front of (0.5) gym (0.5) **(2)**
- k) Eat (0.5) udon (0.5) **(1)**

- l) Naughty/fun/daring etc (1) because...(2)*one mark for each piece of supporting evidence (3)

TOTAL 20

Comments

- Some students confused the speakers when answering the questions. This was taken into consideration by markers when allocating marks.
- Students are encouraged to be more literal when giving reasons, such as in question c) where markers were looking for key words; don't need/ isn't watching. Students must write answers in English, therefore reasons taken from the passage must be translated.
- Students are encouraged to read the questions carefully, making sure all pieces of information are given, such as in question j), where some students only gave one part of the answer.
- Students were given marks for a variety of answers for question l), provided they could justify their answers using information *from the text, in English*.

Part A: Question 6

Solutions

- a) Other (0.5) – people who use something other than Brand A or Brand B (0.5) (1)
- b) Battery life (1), quality of the camera (1), price (1), design (1), ease of use (1) (5)
- c) Which apps (0.5) they often (0.25) buy (0.25) (1)
- d) Number of hours (1) of use (0.5) per day (0.5) (2)
- e) Brand A (1)
- f) Social media (1) and games (1) (2)
- g) 2-4 hours (1)
- h) Between 600 (0.5) and 1000 (0.5) yen (1)
- i) Least / few / not many (1)
- j) Ride on trains (0.5) eat (0.5) (1)
- k) Popular types (0.5) of mobile phones / mobiles (0.5) with people under 20 (0.5) in Japan (0.5) Yes, that is what the questions and results are about (2) OR No, because the questions and results are about more than just popular phones. (2) (4)

TOTAL 20

Comments

- Students generally performed strongest on this question of this section of the exam.
- Some students wrote 'cheap' as a meaning for *ねだん* (price). Students are reminded to translate words more literally to ensure full marks are given.
- Some students missed writing 'per day/ in a day' for question d). Students are encouraged to write answers as fully as possible.
- Question k) proved most challenging for students, where the word *いか* (below/under) was missed by many students.

Part B: Question 7

Solutions

- a) スクーター (0.5) **(0.5)**
- b) 電気 (1) **(1)**
- c) いいえ (0.5)、とても (0.5)しずか (0.5)。 **(1.5)**
- d) 90 (0.5) キロ(メートル)(0.5) **(1)**
- e) はやくて・はやく (1)、とおくはしることができますから(1)。 **(2)**
- f) i. いいえ(0.5)、
ii. かるい(1) かんたんに(1)たたむことができます・たたみます(1) **(3.5)**
- g) 同じ(0.5)色(0.5)のヘルメット(0.5)がフリー(0.5)でもらえます(0.5)。 **(2.5)**
- h) 赤(0.5)、青(0.5)、くろ(0.5)、白(0.5) **(2)**
- i) (いちだい)十三(0.5)万(0.5)円(0.5) **(1.5)**
- j) やすくなります。(0.5) 二千円(0.5) オフ (0.5)。 **(1.5)**
- k) スクーターを買いたい人
スクーターにきょうみがある人
車がない人
サステイナブルライフをたのしむひと
かんきょうをかんがえるひと etc (any one of these) **(3)**

TOTAL 20

Comments

- Students generally found this question to be the most challenging of this section of the exam.
- Students should write いいえ・はい(yes/no) at the beginning of questions that ask for this type of answer, before giving the reason. Some students wrote the reason only. Students are encouraged to look at the marks given to determine how detailed their answers should be.
- In this section of the exam (Part B: Question 7) students are encouraged to use the wording of the question to help them find the answer in the text. For example, question e) contains the phrase, 「学校やしごとに行く」, so students should look for the sentence that contains this phrase. Whilst this method will not always hold true for every exam, it may have helped students find the correct answer for questions e) and f).
- When copying answers from the text, students are reminded to pay careful attention to verb endings and kanji, ensuring that they are written correctly in the answer.
- Some students did not write the first part of the answer for question j), やすくなります。 Markers were looking for both parts of the answer to award full marks.
- Markers were looking for more sophisticated answers than just 学生 or other one-word answers,

for question k). Students are encouraged to use the marks given as a guide to the length or sophistication of answers.

Section C: Writing Criterion 4

Part A of the writing examination guides student in a response to a situation outlined in the question. Part B of the writing examination asked students to select a topic from five questions presented covering the following text-types: email/letter, diary entry, conversation script, profile and story. Students are required to answer the questions using Japanese, including all prescribed Kanji, vocabulary and structures. The general observation of the writing exam this year is that many candidates potentially spent too much time on Part B: Listening and Responding or Part C: Writing Question 8. This resulted in many candidates not having sufficient time to produce adequate quality or quantity of work in Question 9. Time management is a key skill in the exam. Having good vocabulary and Kanji reading and writing skills would reduce the amount of time spent on dictionaries, allowing candidate to complete the exam efficiently.

Part A: Question 8

In this question, the candidates were required to translate the provided English passage using appropriate sentence structures and words accordingly. The assessment was based on how accurately the candidates used the simple and complex sentences. The markers also carefully looked at the use of required Katakana and Kanji words.

Solutions *possible

土曜日のあさにはやくおきて、シャワーをあびた。朝ごはんにつくったトーストはおいしかったけど、まだおなかがすいたから、りんごを二つ食べた。父と話しながら、テレビでニュースを見た。ご前九時四十五分にちかくのきっさてん（カフェ）で大学生を会いに行った。その人に私のふるい本をやすくうった。

Possible structures

はやく	て
Past tense	つくったトースト
かった	
でも・が・けど	まだ
から・ので	ながら・あいだ
に(at)	で
やすく	Counter for apple

Possible kanji/katakana (*may not be included)

日・土	曜	日	シャワー	古
トースト	二	食	間*	本
父	見	前	分	人
九	時	四	十	
五	テレビ	ニュース	カフェ*	
大	学	生	会	

Comments

The candidates were generally successful in using connecting words such as **でも、けど、(but) ので** (therefore) etc. Required Katakana words were accurately written most of the time and Kanji characters such as **土曜日、二、食、父、九時四十五分** were used correctly by most candidates.

The verb **あびます** is irregular when it comes to verb conjugation and it's **あびた** in ta form. Even some of the strong candidates were not able to write it accurately. Only a handful of candidates were able to write the required relative clause for “The toast I made for breakfast was delicious...”, instead many wrote “I made a toast, it was delicious”. “I went to meet...” was missed by majority of the candidates and many wrote “大学生に会いました” instead of “大学生に会いに行きました”.

The word **午前 (AM)** was missed a lot in the passage; the candidates are reminded to pay attention to detail and write as much information as possible in this task to be successful.

Part B: Question 9

The most popular questions for this question in writing were Question 10 and Question 13. The least popular question was Question 11. Many students wrote about music enthusiastically in their exam; however, most of their writing was just using simple sentences like “私は...が好きです。何が好きですか”. The candidates are assessed on how well they can use complex sentence structures amongst the simple sentences, so it's important for students to have a range of different sentence structures to showcase their writing skills. Some stronger sentence structures in this question were; “...を聞くより...を聞くほうが好きです”, “一ばん好きなおんがくは...です”, “...を聞いたことがありますか”, etc.

Prescribed Kanji characters were written accurately most of the time across the writing exam. There were some confusions between similar characters such as **聞** and **間** which were understandable. Katakana characters are very difficult to write accurately, especially when it comes to people's names, however, the examiners were generally able to understand what the candidates were trying to communicate.

When assessing, the examiners look for the accurate use of verb forms with sentence structures. Many candidates attempted to write complex sentences, however, if they were written with incorrect verb forms, they were unable to receive full marks. In order to improve their writing, students are reminded to practise and memorise correct verb forms for the sentence structures in this course.