2000 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre Japanese

Japanese

2 Unit Accelerated

Speaking

Many candidates had difficulty with the following vocabulary items: *itsu, dono gurai, kyoodai, shigoto, donna*

Part A: Report and Conversation

The high-ranking candidates were able to present a clear report of appropriate length demonstrating good knowledge of advanced structures. They were able to respond to most questions with 2 or more highly relevant, clear and accurate sentences. In their answers they demonstrated expertise not only in understanding advanced structures but also in their ability to reproduce them appropriately.

Part B: Role-play

Most candidates performed better in Part A than in Part B. In order to receive a high rank in Part B candidates must take the inniative in carrying out their role i.e. They must show that they are in control of their chosen situation. They must ensure that they cover all areas of the question using a variety of relevant vocabulary and sentence structures. They must use advanced structures accurately and appropriately.

Paper 1

Part A: Extracting Information from Spoken Passages

Candidates, on the whole, showed good understanding of the spoken passages. Candidates should ensure that all details are included in their responses and that their responses are written entirely in English. For example dates cannot be written using *kanji* for months and dates and English numbers. Candidates also need to ensure that they respond to the specific question word(s) asked i.e. "when, who, why". Highlighting or circling the question words before listening to the passages may help candidates to focus on these aspects. Attention to particles would also help as many careless errors occurred in this area eg. beer <u>and</u> juice was in fact beer <u>or</u> juice, Japanese <u>and</u> history was Japanese <u>or</u> history. Location words (in front of, next to) also need to be learnt more thoroughly. Candidates found Passage 5 part C the most difficult in this section.

Part B: Responding to Spoken Passages

Candidates displayed an expected range of abilities.
In order to achieve outstanding marks in this section, candidates should be aware that they need to use several independent advanced structures and kanji and a degree of creativity from the original text. At the same time, they need to display a good knowledge of what was used in the spoken text. Good use of tense, verb forms (plain/polite forms) is essential and a meaningful flow of expression.

Paper 2

Part A: Extracting Information from Written Texts

Text 1: More than half the candidates did not indicate the correct time in Part (d). Many wrote 9.15. There were many interpretations of the word *shinsetsu*. Candidates should not list (guess) a lot of adjectives – markers are looking for one. *Amai* was unfamiliar to the majority of candidates.

Text 2: Many candidates wrote "China" instead of "Korea" for Part (d). The word *abunai* was not well known. Candidates need to be able to correctly romanize words of English origin such as *saafin, skyuuba daibingu*.

Part B: Responding to Written Texts

This question was handled quite well by most candidates with many able to apply the post card format conventions appropriately. In most cases the postcard had a proper beginning and concluded well. Candidates should adhere to the suggested length of the response i.e. 80 – 100*ji*. The following advanced structures were handled successfully: - *to omoimasu, -kute, tsumori desu, -tai desu.*
Candidates should avoid simply listing information and be aware that all information given in the text does not have to be used. The candidates should select some and introduce other elements into it. Many candidates simply listed the rooms in the house without any creativity. Many candidates confused the contact person's telephone number and used it as their telephone number.

Paper 3

Writing

General: The 3 choices of topics in this section allowed for a wide range of possibilities in both style and language. Many candidates demonstrated a good level of fluency in their answer.

Question 1 – Speech
High-ranking candidates in this question were able to effectively communicate a good range of relevant ideas about "Japanese home life" and they used the appropriate beginning and ending for addressing a group. Weaker responses provided less relevant information i.e. related more to school life / sightseeing etc.

Question 2 – Dialogue
This was the least often attempted of the 3 questions. The high-ranking responses covered all areas of the question and demonstrated good knowledge of spoken Japanese i.e. Using appropriate greetings / *keigo* etc.

Question 3 – Diary
This question was chosen by the majority of candidates. The question provided a good opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their ability in using advanced structures and in reproducing the number of English place names necessary to answer the question in *katakana*.

The high-ranking candidates included the appropriate language for the diary format i.e. beginning with date and weather and ending with a good final statement eg. *kyoo wa tanoshikatta desu*. Lower ranking candidates tended to use letter writing format i.e. ending with "name" and *yori* and date.
Candidates should be able to use GENKOOYOSHI correctly. Candidates are strongly advised against the inclusion of irrelevant pre-learned material (eg. from their oral report) in the written section.

2/3 Unit (Common)

Listening

Candidates in general performed well. The major errors came from a lack of sufficient detail in response to the questions and misreading of the questions. *Shizen, soo iu, tsukutte iru tokoro, tokubetsuna* and *shoosetsu* were poorly understood and interpreted. The description of the band in Item 8a was the most challenging question. Many candidates also missed the comparisons. The relative clauses were handled well as were directions, subjects and time words.

Speaking

The general performance of candidates in this area was pleasing and those who showed a thorough knowledge of structures and vocabulary scored well.
Teachers are reminded that candidates are judged on their ability to communicate effectively. Therefore, senior structures should be used as often as possible and with a high level of accuracy. Candidates are also advised to speak with an even, consistent flow and to aim for natural intonation and pronunciation.
In the case of the monologues, candidates should be encouraged to expand on an idea in order to adequately answer the question.

Reading Comprehension

Question 1
This question was handled quite well by most candidates. The set-out of the passage was beneficial to candidates. *Enryoo* and *tokubetsu* were not well known and details such as *sugu ni, mata* and *zenzen* were often omitted. Structures such as *-tara ii, yoo ni, -nakute mo ii* and *–ta koto ga nai* caused difficulty. Candidates need to focus on the correct meaning of particles and be encouraged by teachers to include all relevant material in their answer.

Question 2
This question was more difficult than question 1 and generally speaking not handled as well. Words which were not well known included *kenkyuu, mawari* and *sen*. Candidates need to distinguish between rivers, seas, oceans, beaches, lakes and harbours. Grammar structures, which caused difficulty, were: *-te agetari, -te morattari, hodo…wa nai* and *nakunatte kite iru. Chikyuu o taisetsu ni suru* was often translated incorrectly.
As always candidates are reminded to include ALL relevant details in their answers.

Writing

Question 3
This question was generally well done. Most candidates were well prepared and showed a good knowledge of kanji, both for writing and recognition purposes. Problems were encountered most often with compounds and particularly with the reading of *tabi*. Candidates are advised to take care in the writing of kanji and to thoroughly learn all readings and their uses.

Question 4
Most candidates knew katakana well. The most common errors were with double letters (vowels and consonants) and with sound combinations.

Question 5
Overall this question was done well. Most candidates were very familiar with letter format though some candidates confused it with diary format. Better responses created a positive, welcoming feel in the letter to make the host student feel comfortable. They also addressed both parts of the question equally.
Some candidates still have trouble, spelling *Oosutoraria* correctly and write the long vowel sound in katakana incorrectly when writing vertically. *Kimasu/ikimasu* are confused by many candidates and there were many errors with "different to". Candidates must ensure that any pre-rehearsed sentences should only be used if they fit into the context of the question asked.

Literature Option

The literature option questions were answered more confidently this year and candidates showed a better understanding of the set text passages and the novel as a whole. Both passages were equally well done.
Candidates must read the questions carefully and answer exactly what is asked. Irrelevant material does not gain marks. If a quotation is given, candidates should translate it first, to show their understanding, then go on to explain, interpret etc. Candidates should also try and avoid repetition of the same material in subsequent questions.
Neat writing and using the same numbering system that is on the exam paper when answering is to be recommended.

Film Option

The overall standard of responses seemed better this year, with many candidates showing a good knowledge of specific parts and the film as a whole. However, many candidates left out important specific details in their answers and should pay greater attention to answering questions carefully.

Tourism

Question 1
This question proved challenging to most candidates and the overall standard did not seem as high as in previous years.

Situation 1 – Many candidates experienced difficulty with the set expressions early in the situation. Some vocabulary items related to the tourism topic were handled poorly. More care needs to be taken with the pronunciation of katakana (*gairaigo*) words.

Situation 2 – The majority of candidates handled this situation well, yet some candidates had difficulty with the "time related" words. The better candidates were able to finish the situation with good linking and use of senior grammar structures.

Question 2
Candidates were generally well prepared for this question. The best responses included an appropriate introduction and ending to their speech. The answers were formulated in a creative and interesting manner linking the ideas well while being directly related to the question. Ideas were not well sequenced in the weaker responses.

Part (a) Many candidates talked specifically about a place in Australia rather than a general description.

Part (b) Many weaker responses only included "one" animal with no mention of other Australian birds and animals.

Part (c) Most candidates talked about Sydney or another famous place for an ideal holiday without direct reference to their "local area".

3 Unit (Additional)

Listening

Candidates in general performed well. Major errors came from misreading questions and omitting details in responses. 3 Unit structures were handled reasonably well. Item 7 proved the most challenging.

Speaking

It was felt that there was a marked improvement in standard overall, reflecting better preparation and exam technique.

Question 1
Better responses included a statement about the type of person Tottochan's father was, supported by evidence from the text. Weaker responses tended to be just re-telling the story without linking it to the type of person Tottochan's father was.

Question 2
This was the best-answered question. It gave candidates the opportunity to speak from a personal point of view, which most were able to do. Better responses included details of both the good and bad points of being a teacher. The arguments were coherent and logical and used expressions such as *mazu, naze nara, to iu no wa* etc.

Question 3
Candidates were able to talk about at least one or two problems that old people have. Better responses had more ideas with greater detail. Most candidates were also able to say what they can or would do to help old people. A surprising number of candidates could not read the kanji *otoshiyori* correctly. Candidates should try and avoid using lengthy, cumbersome sentences, which end up sounding unnatural.

Reading Comprehension

Candidates should read the passage carefully noting additional vocabulary listed at the end. Candidates should try to include all relevant details in their answers without translating whole passages from the text. A note should be made of grammatical functions used in the passage, and in answering the questions; candidates should try to demonstrate an accurate knowledge of these.

Set Text
Candidates need to have a thorough knowledge of the prescribed text in terms of theme, language usage and characterization, etc. Candidates should read the questions carefully and include all relevant details in their answers. Candidates should draw on their knowledge of the text as a whole when answering the questions. Care needs to be taken when transliterating *kanji* to *hiragana*, particularly with double vowels and consonant sounds and in the use of *tenten* and *maru*.

Composition
The picture provided an excellent stimulus and gave all candidates a chance to be creative and hence there were a variety of topics. It was felt that the standard was better than in previous years. The better responses used a variety of more difficult structures. Weaker responses had poorly written, or too few, kanji and a mixture of plain and polite forms. Tense was also not consistent, especially *–te iru* and *–te ita*.

Japanese for Background Speakers

Written Examination

Section 1   Reading Skills

General Comment: The responses in Reading Skills were pleasing and the candidates generally demonstrated their good knowledge, understanding and skills in both literary and non-literary questions.

Part A: Unseen

Items 2, 5 and 8 were answered very well. Item 3, however, proved to be very challenging as the candidates needed to analyse effects of the language used. Item 7 was found to be a demanding question. Excellent candidates demonstrated how they could summarise the author's message in the text. Items 4 and 6 examined the candidates' ability to understand contextual meaning.

Part B: Prescribed Text

The candidates were well prepared in the literature studies. They responded adequately to most of the questions.

   (a) In Item 3 use of the metaphor proved to be difficult. In Items 1 and 6, a full analysis of the language features was only completed by a few candidates. Items 2, 4 and 5 were good literature questions and were answered confidently by most of the candidates.

   (b) Items 1-4 were mostly answered well. Item 7 was the most complex question. Candidates were required to synthesize the ideas from the whole text, and examine the theme of the chapter from the prescribed text.

Section 2   Writing Skills

Part A: Translation

Most candidates showed their familiarity with the prescribed text. Many candidates displayed excellent knowledge of specialised vocabulary items in English and were able to translate them into a sophisticated level of Japanese. However, there are still some candidates who just translate literally from the English, which results in very strained Japanese. Some English words and phrases were not fully understood by weaker candidates.

Part B: Composition

Content
Many candidates expressed opinions well, displaying their argument with reference to relevant sociocultural aspects of Japan.
Excellent responses to both topics (a) and (b) demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the prescribed texts from which the extracts were drawn. They showed a very good grasp of the author's point of view and analysis of the contemporary issues raised in the text. Better candidates were able to draw on their personal experiences of learning English and living in Australia and were then able to make generalisations of the benefits of cross-cultural communication.
Weaker responses expressed opinions without substantiation, relying on some factual information or personal experience.

Essay Structure
Most candidates structured their essays well. Some candidates, however, did not develop their arguments logically or coherently.

Use of Language
A good written style was maintained in general. Simple expression is better than the misuse of difficult vocabulary and expressions. Incorrect use of *kanji* is still a problem for some candidates.