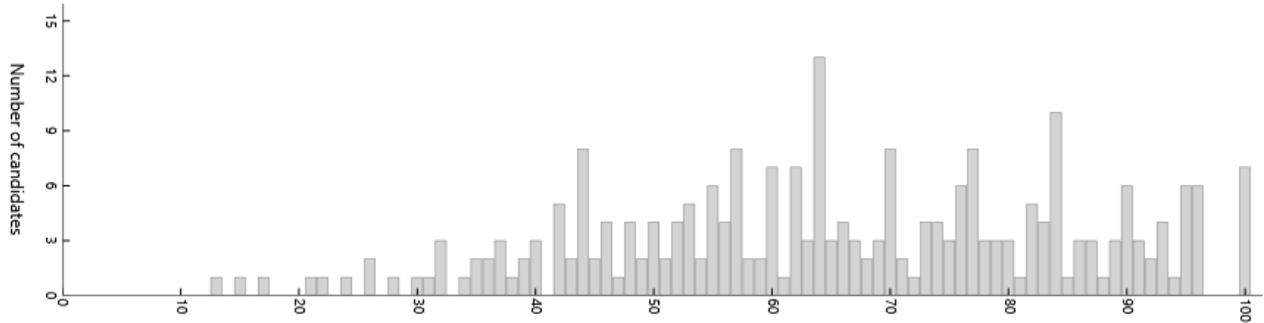




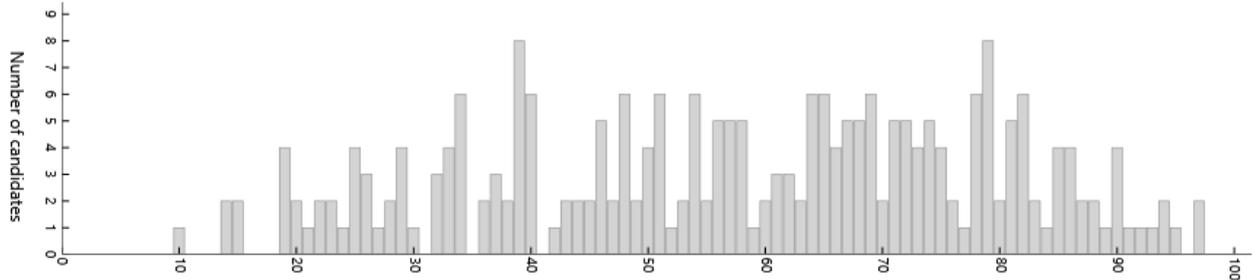
Summary report of the 2017 ATAR course examination: Japanese: Second Language

Year	Number who sat all examination components	Number of absentees from all examination components
2017	250	1
2016	285	5

Examination score distribution – Practical



Examination score distribution – Written



Summary

Candidates completed a practical and written examination.

The practical (oral) examination consisted of three parts, Part A: Preparation, Part B: Discussion prompted by stimulus and Part C: Conversation. The spread of marks for the practical examination ranged from 13.05% to 100% and the mean was 65.43%.

The written examination consisted of three sections with candidates required to attempt all questions in Sections One (Listening) and Two (Viewing and reading). In Section Three (Written communication) candidates were required to complete one compulsory question and to then choose one of two questions. The spread of marks for the written examination ranged from 10.36% to 97.05% and the mean was 57.69%.

Practical examination

Attempted by 252 candidates Mean 65.43% Max 100.00% Min 13.05%

Section means were:

Part B: Discussion prompted by stimulus Mean 67.24%
Attempted by 252 candidates Mean 23.53(/35) Max 35.00 Min 0.00

Part C: Conversation Mean 64.46%
Attempted by 252 candidates Mean 41.90(/65) Max 65.00 Min 7.80

Written examination

Attempted by 250 candidates Mean 57.69% Max 97.05% Min 10.36%

Section means were:

Section One: Response: Listening
Attempted by 250 candidates Mean 58.49%
Mean 17.55(/30) Max 29.35 Min 1.30

Section Two: Response: Viewing and reading

Mean 57.37%
Attempted by 250 candidates Mean 22.95(/40) Max 39.35 Min 1.94

Section Three: Written communication Part A: Stimulus response
Mean 56.20%
Attempted by 244 candidates Mean 6.74(/12) Max 12.00 Min 0.00

Section Three: Written communication Part B: Stimulus response

Mean 59.95%
Attempted by 246 candidates Mean 10.79(/18) Max 18.00 Min 1.44

General comments

Candidates have gained familiarity with the format of the practical and written examinations and attempted the questions with commendable effort. Most candidates provided extended responses where required and kept their answers succinct where appropriate. This has resulted in better time management in the written examination and better conversation flow in the practical examination. Candidates who paid close attention to the finer details in the questions achieved successful results. It was pleasing to see that every candidate wrote in the appropriate register in Section Three.

Practical examination

Advice for candidates

- Say what topic you are going to discuss at the beginning of Part B. You can use a phrase such as ‘きょうは < your topic: e.g. アルバイト>について話します’ or ‘(私の)スピーチのトピックは<topic>です’ to open your discussion prompted by the stimulus. This will increase your chances of receiving questions that are familiar to you.
- Keep your introduction within the duration specified so that you have enough time for the discussion that follows.
- Develop strategies for unexpected questions. Learn how to clarify words you do not understand or how to demonstrate what you understood. Try to maintain your confidence.

Advice for teachers

- Students should be advised to open their stimulus introduction with a statement indicating their topic of choice. Stimulus introduction within one minute is also an important point. The stimulus item used must be appropriate for the discussion.
- Verb tense continues to be a major problem and more practise is recommended.
- Students need to practise more on questions related to ‘the Japanese speaking community’.
- Students should be advised on different ways to handle unexpected questions.
- Some of the grammar structures that students need to be reminded of include:
 - ~たいです versus ~てほしいです
 - ~けれど、~だけど versus ~のに
 - ~たり~たり versus ~し~し

Written examination

Advice for candidates

- Ensure your response/s in English flows naturally, is logical and make sense in real life. Review your response/s as they may be missing some vital information, or the subject and the object of a sentence has been confused.
- Pay close attention to the instruction and question, and grasp fully what is required in your response. Give enough information in a concise response that does not have unnecessary information.
- Avoid using 'they' or 'them' when the subject of the question is clearly singular so that who/what you are referring to is clear. Use 'the writer' or 'he/she' instead.
- For Section Two, develop skills to understand a link between sentences.
- For Part A in Section Three, be mindful of the verb tense used in the stimulus text and respond appropriately. Try to use some connective vocabulary in your extended writing to improve flow.
- Avoid using SMS-style abbreviations and make sure your writing is legible.

Advice for teachers

- Students need to pay greater attention to the instruction and question. Responses need to provide enough information, but lengthy responses are often unnecessary and may lead to greater possibility of errors occurring.
- Students should be reminded that use of abbreviated language is not appropriate. This includes the listening section.
- Students should be advised to ensure that their responses flow naturally and are logical.
- Students should be encouraged to practise understanding a link between sentences when reading Japanese texts.
- Students should be encouraged to take notice of the verb tense in the stimulus text, and use connector vocabulary in the extended response section.

Comments on specific sections and questions

In the practical examination, most candidates were well prepared and demonstrated their willingness to engage in discussion/conversation by expanding their responses beyond the minimal answer. Comprehension and speech skills have continued to improve. Accuracy was a weak area with verb tenses and particles being identified as an issue. Some candidates were confident when delivering their well-rephrased responses but found it difficult when managing the question that immediately followed, including some basic questions such as 'how long' or 'what colour'.

In the written examination, most candidates were able to attempt all questions, including the extended written responses. This indicated their familiarity with the examination format and good time management. Some responses lacked important information required in the question thereby failing to gain the full mark.

Legibility and use of abbreviated language have continued to be a major problem. Some candidates were not properly erasing or crossing out words they had written, making it difficult to identify the actual response. Others issues were writing Japanese letters (hiragana) or 'romaji' (e.g. onsen) in the English responses (Sections One and Two), instead of giving the appropriate translation.

Most candidates attempted to incorporate a good range of appropriate grammar in Section Three and kanji production has improved. Lack of connection words was a common issue, resulting in disjointed text and poor flow.

Practical examination

Part B: Discussion prompted by stimulus (20 Marks)

The majority of the candidates demonstrated their preparedness, delivering a good relevant introduction of a stimulus item and handling the questions that followed. Some candidates however needed to make the topic of their stimulus clearer as their chosen topic was not apparent. Others struggled with unexpected questions.

Part C: Conversation (25 Marks)

Candidates were well prepared, showing their familiarity with the type of questions typically asked in this section. An excellent effort was made to provide extended answers with appropriate grammar structures. In some occasions, candidates were unable to modify their rephrased responses, which made their replies ambiguous or inappropriate. Managing unexpected questions has continued to be a problem.

Written examination

Section One: Response: Listening (46 Marks)

Legibility continued to be a problem. Candidates needed to read the question properly to ensure they knew exactly what response was required. Candidates often responded literally instead of making natural flowing sentences making it difficult to decipher what the candidate was actually trying to express. Some candidates wrote responses that were not realistic.

Section Two: Response: Viewing and reading (62 Marks)

Legibility and use of abbreviations continued to be a major problem. Tendency to overuse 'they' or 'them' for the subject of a sentence made some responses unclear and confusing. With few exceptions, most candidate answers did not include too much unnecessary information. Understanding relative clauses and a link between sentences were challenging for some candidates.

Section Three: Written communication Part A: Stimulus response (16 Marks)

Most candidates attempted to incorporate a good range of appropriate course grammar. Some misunderstood the stimulus text and wrote from the perspective that they are still in Japan. In the text, 'お兄さん' refers to Jo's brother, not Yoshio's. A number of candidates failed to use the correct author's name mentioned in the text. Past tense and present tense issues were problematic. Paragraphing has improved with writing flowing more fluently. Many candidates did not acknowledge this was a 'reply message'.

Section Three: Written communication Part B: Extended response (25 Marks)

Some candidates did not write down the question they were responding to. Many candidates did not write a 'speech', failing to introduce what they are going to talk about and not providing an appropriate conclusion such as 'Thank you for listening to my speech'. It was common that candidates were over writing or under writing the 'ji' stipulated in the criteria.

Candidates included paragraphs; however, joiner/connector words were lacking, resulting in poor/disjointed flow. Kanji production has greatly improved, and most candidates produced the necessary prescribed Kanji. The majority of candidates were making a concerted effort to include a very large range of course appropriate grammar, but the rules of application were often inaccurate. In some instances they attempted to include too many structures in one sentence resulting in a poor flow and incomprehensible sentences. Most inaccuracies were about inappropriate application of grammatical structures and choice of words.