2021 Japanese Continuers Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2021 assessment cycle, gives 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, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio must contain 3–5 tasks and must include one of each of the following:

* Interaction
* Text Analysis
* Text Production.

Interaction

The Interaction is to be between 5–7 mins in length. The choice of topics is determined by the teacher.

The more successful responses commonly:

* allowed students to discuss topics in depth and express and give opinions
* were maintained in polite form
* included a range of complex grammatical structures
* were fluent and spontaneous
* responded accurately using the correct tense and with correct use of particles
* used a variety of communication strategies to maintain conversation
* showed flexibility and spontaneity in responding to questions
* demonstrated engagement in the interaction by actively offering additional details
* used a wide range of cohesive devices effectively to elaborate their responses
* included a variety of linguistic structures when responding.

The less successful responses commonly:

* included closed questions that did not allow for depth in the response
* followed a specific set of questions rather than following the natural flow of the conversation or the interest of the student, which did not encourage spontaneous discussion
* included long periods to process questions and formulate answers
* began with a self-introduction, which was not an interaction
* included frequent basic particle and tense errors
* used very basic vocabulary and very few linguistic structures in their responses
* used English to answer the questions
* used learnt responses which were not relevant to the initial question or did not come across as a natural response.

Text Production

The text production is a written text in Japanese. The text type, topic and length of the text production are chosen by the teacher. The text can be handwritten or typed.

The more successful responses commonly:

* allowed students to explore the topic in depth and be creative
* included an extensive range of complex grammatical structures and demonstrate accuracy in their use. Grammar used was included appropriately and naturally.
* clearly demonstrated the purpose and audience (which was also made clear through the task design)

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth in ideas
* included only basic grammatical structures
* included many grammatical errors, including tense, spelling and particle errors
* did not include prescribed kanji characters as listed in the Subject Outline.
* did not use connective devices to link ideas but instead used a number of simple sentences
* relied heavily on google translate/dictionary and meaning was unclear due to incorrect word choice
* did not include prescribed SACE grammar structures, but instead used difficult words and simple sentences to convey meaning
* included grammar that was not used appropriately and naturally, but rather forced.

Text Analysis

Students analyse a text in Japanese. This could be a written or spoken text. Questions relating to interpretation as well as language analysis must be included.

The more successful responses commonly:

* included responses to language analysis questions where students were able to discuss text types, purpose of the text, style of language used in the text etc.
* used language examples to support their findings
* demonstrated depth and breadth in their interpretation of meaning in texts.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not include analysis of language in texts (questions to address this assessment design criteria may not have been included)
* used evidence from the text as examples to support their findings
* included only responses to questions from past examinations papers (interpretation questions only)
* were marked on a number scheme, rather than assessed using the performance standards.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

The In-depth Study must include:

* Oral presentation in Japanese
* Written response in Japanese
* English reflection.

Each task must differ in context, purpose and audience. Common topics in 2021 included anime, sumo, Japanese food, tourist attractions, and geisha.

Oral Presentation in Japanese

The Oral Presentation is 3–5 minutes long.

The more successful responses commonly:

* discussed the chosen topic in depth, using current statistics, interesting information and current issues related to the topic.
* demonstrated a deep understanding of the researched topic
* were well structured in their presentation of the topic
* included an extensive range of complex grammatical structures from the prescribed list as detailed in the Subject Outline.
* were presented fluently, with very good pronunciation and intonation
* demonstrated clear and accurate pronunciation of more sophisticated vocabulary specific to the topic

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided basic and well-known information on the chosen topic
* presented with pronunciation and intonation errors which impeded meaning
* used unfamiliar or ‘difficult’ words, indicating a lack of understanding of their meaning. This sometimes led to pronunciation and intonation errors.
* exceeded or did not sustain the 3‑5 minute time limit.

Written Response in Japanese

The Written Response in Japanese has a maximum character count of 600 characters. The text can be hand written or typed.

The more successful responses commonly:

* included in-depth information on their chosen topic in the written response
* included an extensive range of complex grammatical structures
* used a range of cohesive devices to link ideas
* wrote with excellent control of language
* wrote in diary form and expressed feelings about their experiences after the event
* explored the chosen In-Depth Study topic in a different context and text type, so that information could be shared differently to the Oral Presentation
* included interesting information and depth of ideas about the chosen topic
* adhered to the text type. (e.g. diary — was written in diary form and set up as a diary).

The less successful responses commonly:

* included little information relevant to the chosen topic
* did not write with accuracy
* did not include a variety of grammatical structures
* did not include a variety of cohesive structures to link ideas
* were very similar or in some cases the same in content and context to the Oral Presentation in Japanese
* expressed information about their chosen In-Depth Study topic in a very simple way and lacked in depth
* did not follow a clearly designed structures or text type conventions.
* exceeded the character limit of 600 characters.

English Reflection

The English Reflection is a maximum of 600 words in written form or an oral presentation of 5-7 minutes.

The more successful responses commonly:

* reflected critically on how cultures, values, and beliefs were represented in texts
* made connections between their own cultural backgrounds, values and practices and with what they had explored through texts
* critically analysed texts and drew comparisons or differences between cultures

The less successful responses commonly:

* based their reflection on the content of what they had learnt through the chosen topic
* described their own values, without making connections with those represented in texts
* discussed content researched about their chosen topic rather than reflected on cultures and values within their chosen topic
* reflected mainly on their own learning and the research process rather than on cultures and values
* exceeded the 600 word or 5-7 minute limit.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral Examination

167 students attended the 2021Japanese Continuers Oral Examination. Overall, students demonstrated good conversation and discussion skills, with approximately 34% achieving an A grade.

Part 1: Conversation

The more successful responses commonly:

* listened to the examiners carefully and comprehended questions thoroughly
* gave relevant responses in their own words and in complete sentences
* comfortably went beyond the minimum answers by giving an appropriate amount of detail and information
* presented well-thought opinions and ideas with reasons
* expressed complex ideas accurately and effectively
* handled less-expected questions well
* demonstrated good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar
* sought help/clarification effectively when needed
* spoke clearly with appropriate pace and voice volume
* maintained the natural flow of conversation. These responses including the use of fillers, confirming the question, and thanking the examiner when receiving help
* understood and used the formal register appropriately (e.g. お名前 vs. 名前, ご家族 vs. 家族, お兄さん vs. 兄, すみません、もういちどおねがいします vs. もういちど？)

The less successful students commonly:

* demonstrated insufficient knowledge of Stage 2 level vocabulary and grammar
* did not fully understand the questions and gave irrelevant answers
* unsuccessfully tried to guess the meaning of a question instead of asking for clarification or help
* were unable to engage in natural/genuine conversation in Japanese
* relied on the question list from the SACE Board website and on rehearsed answers
* gave excessive answers through the recitation of long prepared answers
* did not have strategies to deal with unexpected questions, and/or could answer simple questions only
* gave short and minimum responses with little or no information/content
* spoke hesitantly with many unnatural pauses
* made frequent grammatical errors that impeded meaning. e.g. tense and particles
* did not understand when the same questions were asked in different ways. e.g. どのくらい/何回/何時間, 何で/どうやって, なぜ/どうして, ほうかご/じゅぎょうが終わってから, 学校で何を勉強して/学校のかもく

Part 2: Discussion

The more successful students commonly:

* had chosen a suitable (i.e. manageable and sufficiently challenging) topic for their In-Depth Study
* demonstrated good understanding of own topic
* provided solid evidence of research (e.g. clear interpretation of books/websites used, not just the titles)
* made use of appropriate and authoritative sources for research
* presented careful and insightful reflection on Japanese and own cultures, values, and practices
* effectively presented reflection on their own learning
* presented their main points of study accurately and effectively in the outline form (e.g. more specific and concise than general and broad)
* thoroughly comprehended examiners’ questions and gave relevant answers in their own words and effectively responded to questions for which they had not rehearsed answers
* took part in genuine discussion without presenting a ‘speech’ on what they had learnt
* displayed a good understanding of subject-specific vocabulary
* used a wide range of expressions, both simple and complex, accurately and effectively
* spoke in their own words rather than reciting memorised texts written by someone else
* engaged the audience (examiners) well using effective body language, eye contact, and intonation.

The less successful students commonly:

* did not fully understand the examination procedures and requirements (e.g. outline form, one-minute (not assessed) talk option)
* had chosen a topic that was too difficult to handle for their language level
* had chosen a topic that was too broad or too simple to go into depth in discussion
* were underprepared to talk about their main points on the outline form and unable to display sufficient knowledge of their topic
* did not provide good evidence of research (e.g. could not explain about books/websites used)
* did not listen to entire questions, picked out key words (often from their dot points) and gave irrelevant responses
* did not understand basic expressions for In-Depth Study discussion (e.g. どうやって, どうして, 学びました, しらべました, 分かりました, 変わりました, 多い, 少ない, 文化, かんけい, いみ,ちがい/ちがう etc.)
* did not understand or handle harder and/or unexpected questions
* relied heavily on memorised answers, which were too often long and irrelevant to the questions asked
* provided limited answers to reflection questions (e.g. おもしろかった、むずかしかった without being able to say what, why and/or how).

Written Examination

164 students sat the 2021 Japanese Continuers Written Examination. Students’ scores were spread over a wide range, with all questions discriminating students’ levels well. Overall results show the students’ sound knowledge and understanding of basic Japanese language at the SACE Continuers level.

Section 1: Listening and Responding

Generally, there was a good understanding of the texts and the questions posed. Many students were able to identify basic information, but at times were unable to pick up and include finer and deeper detail from the texts. It is also advised that students read their answers to ensure that they are coherent and ‘make sense’.

Question 1

The more successful responses commonly:

* identified and provided comprehensive justification of whether Sarah will be successful or not.

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified and provided limited justification of whether Sarah will be successful or not
* provided incorrect details (e.g. has worked in hotels, refuses to take off her necklace)
* made errors with the days that Sarah was unable to work.

Question 2

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed comprehensive understanding of the best activities offered at the museum for people on a budget
* fully identified the suggestions the tour guide has for souvenirs
* correctly identified the arrangements that have been made for departure from the museum.

The less successful responses commonly:

* contained incorrect information (e.g. cheaper noodles at the canteen, original cup ramen for lunch)
* did not give all necessary details.

Section 2: Reading and Responding (Part A)

This section proved challenging to many students. Students appeared to either have a clear understanding of the text or significantly miss the content.

Question 3

The more successful responses commonly:

* correctly identified the two rules the café’s customers are expected to follow
* displayed comprehensive understanding of why Aki feels the café was an awful place — it is so small that owls can’t fly, there is no place for the owls to hide, species from different climates are placed together in the same environment, some customers touch the owls
* identified and provided all relevant details as to how Tomo’s view has changed.

The less successful responses commonly:

* only partially identified relevant information
* did not seem to carefully read the whole text including the heading
* contained incorrect information (e.g. すわる (to sit) and さわる(to touch) were mixed up.)
* contained Japanese expression without English translation
* did not use a dictionary effectively (e.g. guessed unknown words, unable to identify verb stems) — it is strongly recommended that students learn how to use a dictionary effectively and efficiently in order to develop their reading and writing skills.

Section 2: Reading and Responding (Part B)

Students’ marks were spread broadly. Most demonstrated at least sufficient reading and responding skills in Japanese for this level. The stimulus text was about organising a retirement party for a teacher who was leaving school after forty years of service. Key points to respond to included: why you were not at school for a week, responding to Sam’s questions about Suzuki Sensei’s retirement party, the feasibility of the restaurant you work at for the party, providing own opinion about the present and supporting opinion with reasons.

Question 4

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed accurate understanding of the question (e.g. context, audience, and purpose)
* identified and responded to relevant points in the stimulus text
* created the desired interest by elaborating ideas beyond the obvious (e.g. the restaurant is too small/booked out, suggesting an alternative venue, discount for a large group, that Suzuki Sensei is loved by students and therefore should expect a large turn up, own feeling about Sensei’s retirement)
* included a wide range of effective expression with high degrees of accuracy (e.g. V なければならなかった、～と思う、V ことができる、V-potential form, ～すぎる、V たい、～そう、～かもしれない、A より B のほうが, ～よ／ね)
* displayed effective use of cohesive devices (e.g. だから、から/ので、それに、それから、たら、ても)
* were structured well, using paragraphs effectively and observing the text type conventions
* conveyed more complex ideas effectively within the word limit.

The less successful responses commonly:

* displayed only superficial understanding of the stimulus text (e.g. neglecting the context and purpose 日本に山のぼりに行きたい、先輩そつぎょうおめでとう)
* failed to identify the main responding points in the stimulus text
* conveyed only basic information in simple or fragmented sentences
* contained irrelevant content and went over the word limit
* contained frequent grammatical and spelling errors (e.g. basic verb/adjective conjugation いいだと思う、気分がわるいだ、はいれることができる；知らない vs.分からない mixed up; あります vs. いますmixed up; ちょうと(ちょっと), まま(まあまあ))
* contained inappropriate expressions relying on English (e.g. よやくを作る、レストランは100人持てる).

Section 3: Writing in Japanese

Most students sufficiently completed the task. Students were generally able to write a text related to the topic that they chose, but only stronger students demonstrated thorough understanding of the question and were able to address all aspects of the topic and purpose.

Question 5

Option 1

Fewer students selected Option 1, but most responded well.

The more successful responses commonly:

* described in detail their ‘great plans’ for the day (e.g. birthday, anniversary, a fun day out) and how/why they went wrong
* effectively established the context (e.g. who, what, when, where, why, how)
* vividly expressed their feelings and emotions (e.g. excitement, disappointment, frustration, devastation)
* applied a range of relevant grammar effectively and accurately (e.g. のに、てしまった)
* created a good flow and cohesion by using conjunctive adverbs effectively (e.g. はじめに、それから、つぎに、さらに、しかも、おまけに、これだけじゃなくて)
* used paragraphs effectively to reflect on the day.
* conveyed more information/ideas within the word limit (e.g. by using Kanji).

The less successful responses commonly:

* only wrote about a bad day, disregarding the part of the question specifying “I had many great plans”
* copied expression from the prompt without elaborating
* lacked detail and depth; stating what happened but feelings and emotions were poorly expressed
* demonstrated partial understanding of the text type without observing the diary entry conventions
* contained many basic grammatical and spelling errors that impeded meaning (e.g. tense, particles, plain form, see far below)
* heavily relied on expression from the dictionary
* were too short or incomplete.

Option 2

Option 2 was by far the more popular option, however overall, this question was handled less successfully.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated clear understanding of the purpose of the letter and its recipient (a friend in Japan)
* explained how the long-awaited opportunity came about and why they had waited so long
* described all the things they had been waiting to do
* vividly expressed excitement of finally being able to go to Japan (and see the friend)
* were structured well, and information and ideas were presented logically
* incorporated interaction with the recipient (e.g. asking questions about Japan, arranging a meet up)
* applied a range of grammar effectively and accurately.

The less successful responses commonly:

* displayed partial understanding of the question
* were limited to a description of their travel plan, failing to convey the excitement of finally being able to go to Japan after a long wait
* generally lacked detail and depth
* contained a limited range of expressions (e.g. overuse of たり、たりand たいです)
* contained many errors and incorrect selections of words from the dictionary (see below)
* used expressions without considering the relevance or appropriateness (e.g. writing sentences for the sake of using particular grammar)
* did not observe the text type conventions of a letter.

Common errors (Option 1 and Option 2)

* i-adjective うれしいだった、かなしいの時
* ‘want to do’ Vたいだ、Vたいかった、Vたいだった
* ‘to see/meet up with someone’ を見ます（に会います）
* basic particle errors
* spelling errorsりょこ、りょうこ、まま（まあまあ）、ちょとう（ちょっと）、いしょうに
* あらない
* つもります
* 何と思う（どう思う）
* 知りますか（知っていますか）
* confused use ofくれる / もらう, いる/ ある, 行く/ 来る, 知る/ 分かる
* overuse of たり、たり、つもり
* fail to use Kanji.