

Hints and tips on developing and presenting an argument or point of view

Both the questions for the Oral examination and the Written examination (Section II – Writing) are derived from the prescribed issues. Therefore, there are some similarities and overlap in the *content* and *skills* you need to develop in order to present a monologue for the oral examination and to write a 600*ji* composition for the written examination (Section II, Writing). A 600*ji* composition when read out/spoken at a moderate pace takes approximately 2-3 minutes. Therefore, you will be able to practise both by developing content and skills common to both examinations.

Make sure you are familiar with a range of vocabulary, expressions and grammatical structures and use them when putting together your response. This will form the main part of the language you need to build your monologue and composition. The grammatical structures are listed in the Stage 6 Japanese Continuers and Extension syllabuses.

While using a variety of vocabulary, *kanji* and grammatical structures is encouraged, try to avoid sentences that are overly long and complicated. The most important thing is the communication of ideas. It may be helpful to make a list of useful vocabulary and expressions that relate to the prescribed issues. Try to incorporate the structures that you are most comfortable with, not necessarily the ones that you feel are difficult and may impress the examiners. Using a variety of grammatical structures accurately is more effective than using complicated structures or overly long sentences and making mistakes.

Plan and write a draft of your response to questions related to the prescribed issues and, if possible, have them corrected by your teacher or a Japanese friend. Rewrite your corrected draft so that you have an accurate final copy. Use these corrected drafts to practise speaking your monologues aloud. Recording yourself allows you to become accustomed to speaking into a recording device (a tape recorder is usually used at examination centres). When recording, try to avoid stopping the tape partway even if you make a mistake or get stuck, as you will not be allowed to stop the recording once your HSC oral examination has started. File final copies of your monologues and compositions so that you have a collection of prepared responses for all prescribed issues.

One of the most challenging aspects of presenting a monologue or writing a composition is coming up with ideas in a short amount of time. As the prescribed issues and related sub-topics are broad, you

will not be able to predict what the questions will be in the HSC examination. Therefore, it is essential to be well prepared. Writing and practising out aloud the 600*ji* compositions will enable you to become accustomed to writing/speaking for the required length/time and will familiarise you with the response structure and cover a number of sub-topics related to the prescribed issues.

In order to develop your ideas, listen to the radio, read newspapers (in English) and watch current affairs and news on television (in English). Take note of the items that relate to the prescribed issues. This will give you ideas on which to build your response. Keep adding to these ideas. Brainstorm a list of possible questions under the heading of each prescribed issue and related sub-topics. Swap your ideas with your classmates.

Practise structuring your response. Your teacher will have some useful proformas and samples to get you started. In the exam, you are required to present and support a point of view, so get used to looking at the stimulus statement in the (exam) question and be prepared to argue the case for the affirmative (i.e. you agree with the statement) or the negative (i.e. you disagree with the statement). A good response structure consists of the following:

1. Opening statement - a statement that incorporates the stimulus statement and indicates whether you will be presenting the affirmative case or negative case.
2. Introductory statement - introduces what you are going to talk about, i.e. your point of view/argument. (You can list examples you are going to talk about here without giving details.)
3. Examples to support your argument - you will need to show *breadth* and *depth*. Breadth refers to the number of examples you give to support your point of view and depth refers to how deeply you explore each example (expand on examples above).
4. Concluding statement - restate your point of view but try to make it different to the opening statement.

The following sample argument will show you a response structure that demonstrates each of the four parts outlined above.

Sample argument

Question/stimulus statement:

「テクノロジーはストレスをおこします。」あなたは、どう思いますか。
Technology causes stress. What is your opinion?

1. Opening statement

私は「テクノロジーはストレスをおこす」ということに、はんたいです。

2. Introductory statement

なぜなら、テクノロジーのおかげで、色々な事がやりやすくなったからです。たとえば、家の中や、仕事場やレジャー活動のめんでです。(Note: there are supposed to be two で.)

3. Examples to support argument (breadth and depth)

はじめに、家事について話します。むかしは、家をそうじするのに、時間がかかりました。そうじも、洗濯^{たく}も、さら洗いも、みんな手でしなければなりませんでした。でも、今はそうじ機^きや、洗濯機^{たくき}などがあるので、本当に早くて、楽になりました。前より、時間がかからないので、その時間でレジャー活動を楽しめます。

つぎに、テクノロジーは、仕事をしやすくしています。なぜなら、コンピューターやインターネットのおかげで、なんでも、かんたんにできるからです。たとえば、電子メールでコミュニケーションがすぐにできるし、海外に行かなくても、ビデオコンフェレンスで外国の会社の人達とミーティングをすることができます。

さいごに、テクノロジーはレジャーのめんで、ストレスを少なくしています。ホームシアターや新しいビデオやコンピューターゲームなどで、ストレスをなくすことができます。それに、買い物やえいがや、コンサートのチケットのよやくもインターネットですぐでき

るので、家を出なくてもいいです。旅行のじゅんびもしやすいです。
こういうことは、みんな私達の生活を楽にしています。

4. Concluding statement

このように、テクノロジーは私達の生活を住みやすくしています。
だから、テクノロジーはストレスをおこすとは思いません。

Length: 620*ji*