Japanese Language Speech Contest Victoria 2026

Entry List and Speech Summaries

Morning Session (9:00-11:45)

High School Senior Background Speaker Division

Entry 1: Keitaro Okabe

It is beautiful because it falls
散るからこそ美しい

With the main message being based on a poem read by Ariwara-no-narihira in the Heian period, I will present the beauty in impermanence and how it changed my way of perceiving life.

Entry 2: Rio Barrett

A World Connected by One Ball
ボール一つでつながる世界

The World Cup is an event that unites the world. It clears languages, politics and makes bonds that exist in no other space on our globe. I am writing about the pure importance that this significant quadrennial brings to our world and how we should be appreciating it

Entry 3: Reina Conway

It's not enough to be kind
やさしさだけでは守れない

日本では、オーバーツーリズムによって、観光地の混雑やゴミ、地域住民の生活への影響などが問題になっています。一方、オーストラリアでは、自然や地域を守るために、明確なルールや罰則を設けている例があります。日本の「おもてなし」は大切な文化ですが、ツーリストが増え続けるこれからの時代には、優しさや善意だけでは地域や自然を守ることが難しくなります。日本のおもてなしと、明確なルールを組み合わせることで、ツーリスト、地域住民、そして自然が共に幸せになれる観光を目指すべきだと考えます。

High School Senior Division

Entry 1: Alexander Lasocki

The importance of forest bathing in Japan
日本の森林浴の大切さ

There are many words in Japanese that don't have a direct equivalent in English. *Shinrinyoku* (forest bathing) is one example, I will talk about why it is emphasised so much in Japanese culture but not in English culture.
I think it's due to the demanding Japanese city life, Japanese people's disconnection from nature, and the issue is exacerbated by idealised social media. Studies have shown that shinrinyoku has proven to reduce stress and other damaging substances.
Melbourne is becoming a big city, and as such, its residents are disconnecting from nature. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important to go to a nearby green space and connect with nature. Nature accepts us how we are, rather than demanding an idealised, perfect version of ourselves. Will we see 'shinrinyoku' have a direct translation in English?

Entry 2: Grace May

My Japan
私の日本

My travel in Japan, why traditional and off the beaten 'tourist' track is better than where all the tourists go, paying close attention to local traditions and culture.

Entry 3: Christopher Thean

The Spirit of Omotenashi
おもてなしの心

During my first trip to Japan, every local answered my Japanese in English, until a shop assistant in a small convenience store showed me why. What is mistook for rejection, was actually Japanese hospitality or おもてなし. This speech is about how that discovery changed the way I communicate, and the lesson I brought home to multicultural Australia to always give first rather than wait for others to give to me.

Entry 4: Kayla Lee

Time never returns
帰らない時間

Have you ever looked back and wondered where all the time has gone? We often become so obsessed with preparing for the future that we forget to truly experience and appreciate the present. In this speech, I will share the story of how my perspective and attitude towards life had changed, inspiring me to find a balance between my goals and living in the present.

Entry 5: Catherine Fu

My Grandmother's Words
祖母の言葉

Centering on the communication barrier between my grandmother and me, this speech, ‘My Grandmother’s Words’, encapsulates the crucial role languages play in human connection and understanding. Following my personal experiences of both language loss and gain, it recounts the shift from my initial aversion for studying foreign languages, to my newly found determination to relearn my mother tongue. Throughout the speech, I share the feelings of regret, joy, and hope that define my linguistic journey, and how they have helped shape what language means to me. Ultimately, this piece captures the universal challenges all language learners encounter - and, most importantly, the wonders we unlock by overcoming these obstacles.

Entry 6: Mikaela Chan Tin

The Quiet Courage I Learnt From the Bathhouse
銭湯が教えてくれた静かな勇気

A speech about how watching the movie Spirited Away made me a better artist.

Entry 7: Dinh-Phan Truong

Failure is the mother of success, when I overcame a language barrier
失敗は成功のもの一言葉の壁をのりこえた時

A trip to Japan last year taught me how to overcome language barriers, make new friends and make everlasting memories.

Entry 8: Eshani Wewelwala

The forgotten subject
忘れた科目

From my experience of choosing subjects for Year 11 and 12, I faced criticism and discouragement from selecting art as one of them. Art is often seen as unimportant, or less useful than other subjects, but I believe that this is a misleading view. I believe that art is what gives the world meaning, and through this experience of selecting subjects, I was able to learn the value of art, and would like to share it today.

Entry 9: Qiwan Hu

Not just learning Japanese
日本語だけではなかった

Learning Japanese was not just about being able to speak and read the language, it was to understand people, values and social communications. The most important part was not taught by learning words or grammar but concepts that could not be translated, concepts that carry amounts of meaning which I only understood by experiencing it. Language has taught me culture and a way to broaden my vision when seeing the world.

Entry 10: Olivia Fontana

"Beware of Chikan"
「チカンに注意」

My speech “Beware of Chikan” will discuss topics relating to the normalisation of sexual harassment in Japan. My speech will provide examples from thorough research and my personal thoughts about how *chikan* (public groping) is a serious, unsolved issue. I will explain some of my own opinions on this topic, as well as how I believe current solutions aren't actually solving anything; Instead, they are just giving a temporary fix.

Entry 11: Sophie Schembri

When silence breeds isolation
沈黙が孤立を生む時

Japan, although such an amazing developed country rich in culture, has an issue with mental health. And it’s big. Japan is also known to have one of the biggest suicide rates in the world. This, along with social isolation increasing every year within Japan’s society (*hikikomori*); this needs to be fixed. Although Japan's most notable development and how they are so far ahead they lack mental health resources. It needs to be talked about more as it can potentially be a step forward within the mental health crisis in Japan. I was lucky enough to access Australia’s developed services and it should be a given in Japan too.

Entry 12: Aiden Silva

Cherish the present
今を大切にすること

Inspired by the song "Hitchcock", composed by a Japanese artist named Yorushika, my speech explores the transience of our lives. After listening to the song, I came to the realisation that everything in our lives is temporary. Whether it's periods of time or people that we love, everything has an end. Sometimes even times that we currently don't enjoy like our school days might make us feel nostalgic and regretful later because we didn't enjoy that time to the fullest. I personally implemented my learning from this realisation in a recent hosting exchange program where I wanted to enjoy my time with my exchange student to the fullest as I knew it would soon be over. Whether it's good or bad, fun or stressful, we should try to enjoy every moment of our lives to the fullest, because eventually, everything will come to an end.

Entry 13: Reubann Saldanha

The World is Vibrating
世界は振動している

My speech is a reflection on my hobby of playing the guitar, including how it has helped me with my mental health, as well as forming connections with others. I also connect it with the nature of our world, consisting of many different vibrations that we see, hear, and feel.

Entry 14: Yan Ting Ashley Chan

My Childhood Teacher
私の子ども時代の先生

Growing up, Doraemon was more than just a cartoon to me. It was my childhood teacher. While I loved Doraemon’s magical gadgets, I found myself relating most to Nobita, who was imperfect, who often failed and struggled to face difficult things. Despite his weaknesses, Nobita remained kind and continued to help others. Through him, I learned that true strength does not mean being perfect. Instead, it means accepting our weaknesses, learning from failure, and continuing to move forward. Nobita taught me that our imperfections can become the very things that make us stronger.

Entry 15: Eva Humphris

Eco-friendly habits
もったいない

Speech on the topic of the Japanese concept of "Mottainai", various eco-friendly habits we can adopt.

Entry 16: Nakyung Kim

When what you like becomes 'homework'
好きなものが「宿題」になるとき

日本語と絵は、もともと自分が好きで始めた趣味でした。しかし、長く続けるうちに周りから期待され、自分自身も「長くやっているから上手でなければならない」と思うようになりました。JLPT に落ちた経験や、絵が上手な同年代の人と自分を比べる経験から、いつの間にか「楽しいか」よりも「上手にできたか」を気にするようになり、好きなことがプレッシャーや宿題のように感じられるようになりました。最後は、好きなことを長く好きでいるためには、いつも上手である必要はなく、時には「上手にできなくてもいい」と自分に許すことも大切なのではないか、という自分の考えを伝える内容です。

Entry 17: Sitong He

There Is More Than One Right Answer
「正解は、一つじゃない」

オーストラリアでの留学生活を通して、私は自分の考えを言葉にすることの大切さや、「優秀」とは何かについて考えるようになりました。このスピーチでは、実際の経験を振り返りながら、海外生活の中で変わった自分の考え方についてお話しします。

Entry 18: Isabelle Bandura

To face fears
恐怖と向き合う

Discussing the idea of having many fears, but realising that things often aren't as scary as they seem. Having travelled to Japan on a school trip there were many things I thought could go wrong, but facing those fears pushed me to create some amazing memories and challenging fears became much easier after that.

Entry 19: Jed Cervini

Japan and Australia's Kindness
日本とオーストラリアの親切さ

This speech will analyze the cultural nuances of kindness through an Australian and Japanese lens, highlighting the unique strengths of each tradition.

The speech highlights Australia's genuine spirit of mateship and relaxed warmth alongside Japan's thoughtful, structured harmony and anticipatory care.

The piece concludes by demonstrating how merging these two traditions, combining Australia's approachable, open warmth with Japan's respectful, attentive empathy, can create a harmonious and deeply supportive cultural dynamic.