Written Tests

It is necessary to confirm written test types and prepare for them in advance

Various types of written tests are held. Written tests are carried out to make sure that students have attained a certain level of knowledge and academic skills, and to make sure that they have the thinking faculties, decision-making capabilities, speed, processing abilities and accuracy, etc., required for the job, and they are used as reference material during interviews and to enable the selection process to be carried out efficiently when there are many applicants. The written tests must be submitted in Japanese as a basic principle, so the ability to read Japanese is imperative.

It is recommended that you fully understand how written tests will be carried out and prepare for them by checking at university career centers and reading the quarterly corporate reports, etc., of the companies you have applied for.

Written Test Types

Written tests come in three types, Aptitude Tests, General Knowledge Tests and Compositions and Essays.

Aptitude Tests

Aptitude tests are divided into three parts: competency aptitude tests, personality aptitude tests and general aptitude tests.

Competency Aptitude Tests

These tests are carried out to understand your levels of basic academic skills, basic knowledge and job aptitude, etc.

Personality Aptitude Tests

These tests are carried out to understand your basic personality, behavioral characteristics and job aptitude, etc.

General Aptitude Tests

These tests involve both competency aptitude tests and personality aptitude tests. Most companies require applicants to take the general aptitude tests.

General Knowledge Tests

The topics involved will cover a wide range of subjects, such as Japanese, mathematics, social studies, science, English, sports and current affairs, etc.

These tests are carried out to determine if you possess basic academic skills and basic knowledge. It is necessary to prepare for the tests by reading newspapers, etc., on a daily basis.

Compositions and Essays

These tests are carried out to understand the levels of logical thinking, viewpoints, creativity, information-gathering abilities and other such aspects.

Time restrictions and character-count restrictions will be in effect, so the best way to handle the tests is to complete them in a simple and easy-to-understand manner.

It is necessary to prepare by practicing written Japanese, etc., on a daily basis.

<table>
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<th>Name of Test</th>
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OPQ: Occupational Personality Questionnaires
Aptitude tests consist of two types; paper tests and tests carried out with the use of a personal computer. There are three places where tests may be taken: at home, at the company, and at test centers. There are cases in which the levels of difficulty of aptitude tests vary depending on the place where the test is taken, even though they are the same types of test. It is generally said that the paper tests taken at companies are the easiest, and the web tests taken at home are the most difficult.

1. Web Tests (Location: At home)
Aptitude tests that are taken at your own leisure at home with the use of personal computers.
Applicable Tests: SPI3, WEB-CAB, tamatebako web test, TG-WEB, etc.
Test Period: From March 01 after the ban on company PR activities are lifted

2. Test Centers (Location: Test centers that specialize in each type of aptitude test)
Aptitude tests that are taken at places specified for each test with the use of personal computers.
Applicable Tests: SPI3, C-GAB, SCOA, TG-WEB, etc.
Test Period: From March 01 after the ban on company PR activities are lifted

3. Paper Tests (Location: Companies)
Aptitude tests that are taken at the companies concerned or at places specified by the company with the use of written test papers.
Applicable Tests: SPI3, CAB, GAB, SCOA, TG-WEB, etc.
Test Period: From June 01 after the ban on company screening activities are lifted

Preparing for Aptitude Tests

1. Check out the aptitude tests given by the companies you intend to apply to
It is possible to check the results of different types of aptitude tests held by large and popular companies with the use of the Quarterly Employment Journal and other books on preparing for aptitude tests. This can also be checked for other companies in the reports written by people in the past archived by the career centers in the school you attend.

2. Understand the types of aptitude test questions and methods of solving them
It is necessary to understand the trends of the questions likely to be included in all types of tests, as well as the methods for answering the questions as swiftly as possible. It is important to accustom yourself to as many different types of topics as possible by checking out the books on preparing for aptitude tests available in bookstores, and the test samples available free of charge on the Internet.

3. Accustom yourself to the time restrictions on aptitude tests
The most difficult part of aptitude tests is answering a large number of questions within a short period of time. It is necessary to answer all questions as efficiently as possible, so it is therefore important to remain aware of the time restrictions while practicing and set yourself targets for answering the questions within the time allotted for the actual tests.

The fact that aptitude tests must be taken in the Japanese language causes problems for many exchange students. There are also small- to medium-sized companies, etc., that do not set aptitude tests. This means that searching for a company that does not require aptitude tests is one way of avoiding them for students who seriously have trouble taking them.

Preparing for SPI3 Tests

1. Obtain a clear understanding of the topic patterns.
2. There are many questions included, so allocate your time carefully.
3. Check the questions and answers to long composition topics before reading the compositions.
4. Answer all questions without leaving any unanswered even if you don’t know the correct answers.
5. Make sure you do not make any mistakes over the questions involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
Interviews

Use your own words to express yourself

Interviews are the most important part of the screening process. Use the self-analysis and evaluation and the examination of industries and companies that you have conducted as a base to prepare yourself to use your own words to communicate to the interviewer why you are applying for the job, what your strengths are, and what views you have.

Types of interviews

In Japan, the interview and examination process generally takes place over three separate sessions. This allows a number of different observers to evaluate the applicant’s behavior and thought processes at different times, in order to determine whether the applicant is a suitable recruitment target.

The most common interview formats are group discussion, group interview and one-on-one interview. Other formats include completing a task as a group, and delivering a presentation. Here, we will look at the three most common interview formats: group discussion, group interview and one-on-one interview.

Group discussion

A group discussion involves four to six applicants discussing a topic nominated by the employer. The interviewers observe the discussion and rate the applicants objectively. The aim is to determine how well each applicant functions as part of a group.

Format

Applicants: multiple groups of four to six people each
Interviewers: multiple
Timing: first interview
Note: Varies between employers

Procedure

1. Self-introduction
   
   Allocation of roles
   
   Discussion
   
   Presentation

Important

- Take care with your choice of words during the discussion. (→ Job Hunting Manners ② Manners to Make a Good Impression ① P46)
- Try to avoid changing your opinion too often, or conversely being stubborn and trying to force your opinion upon others.
- Allocate the time carefully.
- Appearing too negative or too forceful during allocation of roles and during the discussion can count against you.
- Group discussion is not a debate. The idea is to work together to create consensus within the group.

- S-wave
- L-wave
- N-wave
- EW-wave
- V-wave

(2) What are the 3 musical elements? Choose from the following options.

- Rhythm, melody, harmony
- Beauty, joy and grandiosity
- Strength, length and melody

(3) Of the administrative divisions in Japan, the one with the largest area is Hokkaido, but which prefecture has the second largest surface area? Choose from the following options.

- Akita prefecture
- Heisei prefecture
- Aomori prefecture
- Nagano prefecture
- Gunma prefecture

(4) During economic growth, what is the decrease of primary industry and the increase of secondary and tertiary industries called?

- Venture business
- Bubble economy
- De-industrialization
- Advanced industrial structure
- Double economic structure

[Answers]: (1) S-wave. (2) A wave. (3) Hokkaido. (4) Advanced industrial structure
Group interview

General
Group interviews are often used when dealing with a large number of applicants, as a way of eliminating underperforming applicants and identifying those suitable for a one-on-one interview. In a group interview, there is usually less time available to each applicant to respond to the interviewer. Also, unlike the one-on-one interview, applicants in a group interview are effectively competing amongst themselves to progress to the next stage.

Procedure
The interviewer devises a set of questions based on the application forms and resumes. The same questions are posed to each applicant in turn.

Important
- Remember: first impressions are very important!
- Speak clearly and confidently. Do not mumble your words.
- Prepare answers to common questions that are short and to the point.
- Prepare a spoken description of your qualities and attributes that lasts for about one minute.
- Be polite and respectful while other candidates are speaking.

One-on-one interview

One-on-one interview
Compared to a group interview, the one-on-one interview allows the interviewer more time to directly assess your qualities and personal characteristics. The one-on-one interviewer will analyze your responses and examine your attitude and demeanor, your expression, and your use of language.

Procedure
The interviewer prepares questions based on the application form and resume. Often, the interviewer will want to hear further information supplied on your application form and examine your attitude and demeanor, your expression, and your use of language.

Important
- Re-read your application form and resume and make sure that you are familiar with everything you have written.
- Think back over the responses you have given in previous interviews.
- Be prepared to talk about your qualities and the skills you can contribute to the organization.
- Be prepared for questions about whether you are genuine about wanting a job at the company.
- Make sure you are neat and focused.

Format
Applicants: two to six
Interviewers: multiple
Timing: first and second interviews
Note: Varies between employers

Interview process

1. Arrival at the venue
   Never be late. Be sure to arrive at the venue 15 minutes before the set time so that you can be calm for the interview. Be sure to switch your mobile phone off before going into the building. In winter, take off your coat before going inside.

   → You should assume that the interview starts at the reception. At the reception desk, be sure to clearly state the name of your school, your name, and that you have come for the interview. Do not forget to thank the person who directs you to your destination, and be sure to light bow to any company employees you pass along the way.

2. Reception
   Wait quietly until you are called in for the interview. Put your belongings at your feet rather than on the table. Avoid talking to other students or going in and out of the waiting room frequently, even if you have wait for a long time.

3. Waiting room
   Knock on the door two or three times. When you are told to come in, you should say “Excuse me” and enter the room. Be sure to open and close the door quietly. After entering the room, politely bow once to the interviewer(s) and walk to the side of the prepared seat, then state your school name, department, and the your name, in a cheerful manner, and politely bow again. When the interviewer asks you to sit down, say "Thank you" and sit down.

4. Entering the interview room
   Be sure to place your bag at your feet and sit with good posture without leaning against the back of the chair. Use polite language and accurate Japanese and answer questions concisely and in a manner that is easy to understand, while making eye contact with the interviewer. In the case of a group interview, you should pay attention to other students when they are being asked questions.

5. During the interview
   When the interview is finished, stand up, thank the interviewer(s) for taking the time to interview you. Walk to the door, politely bow again, and say “Goodbye.” Close the door quietly as you leave the room.
   In winter, do not put your coat back on until you are about to leave from the main entrance. You may also switch your mobile phone back on.

6. Leaving the room

Bowling etiquette and posture

Full bow
This is the standard form of bowing in Japan, used to make a request or express appreciation.
Angle = 30°
Eyes fixed on the ground about one meter away

Half bow
Used to acknowledge a colleague, for example when passing in the corridor.
Angle = 15°
Eyes fixed on the ground about three meters away

Seated posture
How to sit with good posture
- Sit tall—stretch your back out
- Do not use the backrest
- Sit forward in your seat
- Placement of hands and feet
- Women: Keep legs together and place hands on the knees
- Men: Have legs slightly apart, clasped hands together and rest on thighs
- Try to keep your hands and feet still during the interview
Responding to questions

The questions at the interview are often the same as the questions on the application form. Your answers must be consistent with the information provided on the application form. For this reason, it is important to read through your application form before you come to the interview.

The interviewer may also ask you for background information to supplement the details on your job application. Prior to the interview, you should prepare a number of answers to potential questions that you are likely to encounter.

You should also make sure that you have done your self-analysis and industry and company research so that you are equipped to answer any other questions that the interviewer may ask you. Remember that you only have a short time to promote yourself to the interview panel. For maximum impact, try to keep your answers concise and to the point.

Practice structuring your answers in three parts:

- Main point
- Evidence (events or situations that demonstrate the main point)
- Relevance to employer

Typical answers to interviewer questions

- What did you work hard on when you were at university?
- I put a great deal of effort into improving my cross-cultural communication skills.
- I tried to hone my language skills by engaging with people of different nationalities, cultures and backgrounds, both on Facebook and in real life.
- This experience has given me excellent communication skills. I believe that I can use this for XXX at your company.

Typical interview questions

- Have you ever used our products? What did you think of it/them?
- I tried to hone my language skills by engaging with people of different nationalities, cultures and backgrounds, both on Facebook and in real life.
- This experience has given me excellent communication skills. I believe that I can use this for XXX at your company.

[Preparing for the interview]

- Practicing on your own
  Use your mobile phone or other device to take video of yourself answering a question. Watch the video and observe your eye contact, clarity of speech and use of language.
- Mock interview
  Ask a friend or the university career counselor to act as interviewer in a mock interview situation.
  An interview is an objective evaluation of your suitability for the job. So where possible, you should enlist the help of a third person to observe your performance and provide you with suggestions for improvement.

Job Offers to Joining a Company

Act according to your plan until you join a company

Until you receive a job offer from a company of your choice, you should persevere in your job hunting activities. You should understand the flow of the process from receiving a job offer to entering a company, and act in deliberate fashion.

Flow of the process from receiving a job offer to entering a company

1. **Job offer**
   - After the final screening process, a job offer is issued by the company notifying the applicant that it would like to hire him/her. In many cases, the first notification is by telephone, and then a “formal offer letter” is sent. If you have already accepted a job offer from another company or you have no intention of entering the company in question, you should be honest and decline the offer as soon as possible.

2. **Submitting a declaration**
   - After receiving a job offer, you will be asked to submit a document confirming your intent to join the company. This document is called a “declaration.” Companies that host a social gathering for those who are offered employment may ask you to sign/affix your seal on the document at the gathering. Be careful not to miss the deadline if you are mailing the document, which may cause the job offer to be canceled. This “declaration” is not legally binding, so you can continue your job hunting even after submitting the document. Be sure to check the hiring schedule of each of the companies that you have chosen, so that you don’t have to repeatedly decline job offers more than necessary.

3. **Deciding to join a company**
   - In the end, you will decide on one company to join. If you have multiple job offers, you should consult with the career center of your university, your professors, your family members, etc., to decide which company to join as soon as possible. If you delay your declining of job offers, you not only impact the range of possible employment of other students, but you may also adversely impact the hiring of international students that come after you.

4. **Changing your status of residence**
   - In order to be employed by a Japanese company, it is necessary to change your resident visa status from “College Student” to a status that allows you to work. You should start preparing for this early so that you will be able to complete the process before the day of joining the company. See the next chapter for details.

5. **Joining a company**
   - Some companies ask you to participate in a social gathering, job offer ceremony, or training before joining the company. Be sure to check the schedules of such events.

What if you’re not able to receive a job offer?

- Don’t panic. Calmly think about possible reasons and come up with countermeasures.
- Look into fall hiring, and gather information on companies that hire employees throughout the year.
- Consider registering yourself with a temp staff or employment agency.
- You can continue job hunting even after graduating. See page 67.
Before Starting Work

Employment environment in Japanese companies

For non-Japanese nationals working in Japan, labor related laws shall apply to the laborer to secure the same working conditions as a Japanese laborer.

At the same time, duties to enter and pay taxes towards insurance systems such as roudou hoken (labor insurance) or shakai hoken (social healthcare) become obligatory.

■ Working Conditions

In principle, non-Japanese laborers in Japan shall be assured the same working conditions as Japanese laborers, including wages, working hours, retirement, and dismissal.

1. Equal treatment
   An employer (companies, etc.) shall not engage in discriminatory treatment for working conditions based on the nationality of the laborer.

2. Specifying work conditions
   An employer shall specifically state in writing the contract period, place of work, working hours, and other conditions upon establishing a work contract.

3. Remuneration
   An employer shall establish the wage and currency, and pay that amount to the laborer directly at least once per month. Also, regardless of nationality and gender, an employer cannot employ a person under the minimum wage. Moreover, taxes and insurance payment shall generally be deducted from wages before payment.

4. Working hours, holidays, and leave
   Working hours shall be up to 8 hours per day and up to 40 hours per week (however, exceptions exist depending on the structure of the industry or office). There are companies with varied working hours based on certain needs (working hours based on a week, month, or annual basis or flex time).

5. Safety and health
   An employer must work towards the prevention of work-related injuries, improving work environment and conditions, as well as conduct safety and health education and health checks for laborers in order to ascertain the safety and health of laborers.

■ Shakai Hoken (social insurance) system

In principle, non-Japanese nationals are required to enter insurance systems such as roudou hoken (labor insurance) and shakai hoken (social insurance) if they are working in Japan.

6. Workers’ accident compensation insurance
   Insurance benefits for injuries, illnesses, disabilities, or death due to job-related causes or during the commute to work. Premiums shall be borne by the employer.

7. Unemployment insurance
   Benefits for laborers in the event of loss of employment to provide for basic needs in order to facilitate reemployment.

8. Health insurance
   One-off payments paid to the insured to provide for basic needs of laborers and their families to cover medical expenses for sickness or injuries out of the workplace, childbirth, or death. Premiums shall be borne by the employer and the insured equally.

9. Welfare annuity insurance
   Insurance benefits for the old age, disability, or death of the laborer. Premiums shall be borne by the employer and the insured equally. Non-Japanese laborers who have enrolled into welfare annuity insurance for 6 months or more are entitled to claim a Lump-Sum Withdrawal Payment within 2 years of returning to his or her home country.

■ Taxation

Taxes imposed are the national "Income Tax" and the local "Municipal Tax". The employer shall deduct (withhold) these taxes from the laborer’s wages. Moreover, non-Japanese laborers must settle tax obligations (unpaid taxes, etc.) for the year before returning to their home country.

1. Income Tax
   Tax rates are imposed based on annual income between January and December, regardless of nationality. Income tax shall be deducted from monthly wages based on estimated annual gross income. Proper tax amounts shall be adjusted at the end of the year (year-end adjustment).

2. Municipal Tax
   Taxes imposed by the local government of the region the laborer is registered under as of January 1 every year, regardless of nationality. Tax amounts differ based on the previous year’s income, number of dependents, and other factors.

■ Welfare Program

Welfare programs refer to various systems, facilities, services, and more provided in addition to wages by the company to the employee and his or her family.

1. Housing: Rent subsidy, bachelor dorms, company housing, property accumulation savings, etc
2. Health and Leisure: Management of hospitals, clinics, exercise spots, rest homes, and other facilities, health consultations, counseling, support for cultural and physical activities
3. Other: Monetary congratulations and condolences, provision of uniform and working clothes

Lately, various welfare programs have started using a point system, and more companies have started to adopt a “cafeteria plan” where you can choose the services you need within a certain amount of points.
Manners to Make a Good Impression

**Telephone etiquette**

It is not possible to see the face or expressions of the person on the other end of the telephone, so extra care must be taken. Take care to avoid leaving the person you are speaking to with an unfavorable impression.

- When does the telephone need to be used?
  - Requests for printed matter
  - Applying for briefing sessions
  - Changing interview dates
  - Questions and inquiries pertaining to employment tests
  - Notifying the people concerned about being late for or absent from interviews and tests
  - Contacting the people concerned about job offers

**Basic Phone Etiquette**

Telephones are familiar communication tools in our daily lives. When using them for job hunting activities, you cannot talk as you would speak to your friends. Since the other party cannot see your face when you are speaking on the phone, your language and tone of voice will determine the impression that you give. Be sure to be considerate and polite.

- Avoid making phone calls early in the morning, late at night, immediately before or after start and finish times, and during lunch breaks. When using your mobile phone, make the call from a quiet place with good reception.
- Before making a phone call, you should have your notebook and calendar ready.
- You should be able to describe your name in kanji, alphabet, and katakana.
- After introducing yourself and greeting the other party, you should check to see if he or she has time to talk to you.
- You should speak clearly using an easy-to-hear voice. State your business concisely.
- Be sure to thank the other party and wait until he or she has hung up before you do so yourself.

**When Arriving Late for an Interview**

Making sure you leave yourself plenty of time when you have promised to be somewhere at a certain time is a minimal requirement for members of society. It is therefore necessary to remember that arriving late will not be forgiven, regardless of the reason. If you face arriving late owing to problems with transportation or in other such unavoidable cases, make sure that you contact the company before your scheduled time of arrival.

**Example: When arriving late for an interview**

Student: “Good morning. This is ooo ooo of ooo university. I have an interview today at 00:00. I am currently at oo Station, but there has been an accident involving a human life and the trains are not running. I expect to arrive at 00:00. I am very sorry for the trouble. What should I do?”

Company:
A: “I understand. Please try to get here as soon as possible.”
B: “I see. In that case, wait a moment while I arrange a different appointment.”
C: “This was obviously not destined to work, so let’s call an end to it. (Failed)”

**E-Mail Etiquette**

E-mail is commonly used when communicating with companies during job-hunting activities. Make sure that you observe the rules of etiquette when communicating with e-mail.

- When is e-mail used?
  - Expressing your gratitude after internships
  - Thanking people for making alumni appointments and after the visits
  - Requesting information on company briefings
  - Replying to e-mail from companies confirming appointments and providing information
  - Expressing gratitude for interviews
  - Questions regarding employment tests and inquiries, etc.

**E-mail Format**

- Title
  Use simple titles that easily express the contents.
- Address
  Write the recipient (name and affiliated department) at the top of the message.
- Self-introduction
  Start the message with a self-introduction without going straight into the details.
- Main text
  Write the main contents of the message in a simple and easy-to-understand manner.
- Signature
  Sign the end of the e-mail with your school name, your name, your e-mail address, your telephone number and all other details.

**Points to Note When Writing E-mails**

- Separate the contents into paragraphs to make sure it can be easily read
- Check everything to make sure there are no typos or missing characters before you send it.
- If you are using a free e-mail provider, make sure your e-mail address is appropriate.
- Check the name of the [Sender] displayed when you send the e-mail, and correct any nicknames, etc., that have been set.
- Use the telephone if the e-mail is urgent or if you need to apologize.
- Reply immediately to all e-mail received