A. The following sentences come from an essay that won special recognition in a national essay writing contest in Japan. It was written by a senior high school student. However, the essay has been scrambled.

- What is the main idea of the essay?
- Is there a summary statement?
- Can the essay be reconstructed into a halfway decent pattern?

日本人でよかったのです。Glad to Be Japanese

1. 気分転換と、自分が何をしたいのかを考える、自分探しの旅だった。

   For a change of pace, this trip was taken so that I could think about what I wanted to do with my life and thus understand myself.

   Right now, at this very moment, thousands and tens of thousands of children are suffering from hunger and war.

2. たった今、この時でさえ、何万人、何十万人という子どもたちが飢餓や戦争に苦しんでいるのだろう。

3. 比較の中でしか幸せを感じられないことに、納得していないけれど、私はあえて言おう。「日本人でよかった！」と。

   I’m not really convinced that I can only feel happy when I compare myself to my Cambodian friend, but I’m glad that I’m Japanese.

4. カンボジアは長い内戦を終え、ようやく復興しつつある国だ。

   Cambodia was finally rebuilding after a long civil war.

5. そして、だからこそ、一生懸命に学び、平和の尊さを伝える地球人として生きて行かなければならぬと思っている。

   Therefore, I believe that I must study hard and live as a globally-conscious person who passes on her values of peace.

6. この平和な日本で、私はもう一度、学び直そうと思った。

   Here in peaceful Japan, I’ve decided to return to school and begin again.

7. プノンペンで仕事をしている知人を頼って、私は日本を脱出したのだ。

   I broke away from Japan through the help of someone I knew who was working in Phnom Penh.

8. 私がそんなふうに思うようになったのは、二年前の春、カンボジアに旅したのがきっかけだった。

   My feelings were triggered by a trip I made to Cambodia two years ago in the spring.
9. 世界中のどの子どもたちも、親を選ぶで生まれてこれないと同時に、祖国も選んで生まれてこれない。

10. 日本に帰国する時、友人は最後に、「いっぱい勉強するんだよ。」と言ってくれた。

11. その頃の私は、進学した高校で、初めて味わった挫折感の中で生きていくのさえ嫌になっていた。

12. あの国の人々にとって役立つ人間となって、再びあの地を踏むために

13. 今考えると、なんと贅沢な悩みなのだろうと思うのだが、その時の私は、自分の親も、自分を取り巻く社会も、日本も、大嫌いだったのだと思う。

14. 私は日本に生まれたから教育を受けられ、平和な生活ができるのだと思、痛感している。

15. カンボジアで出会った多くの人々は、毎日を懸命に生きていた。

16. 「日本人でよかったでしょ？」とカンボジア人の友人が、プノンペンの街を歩きながら私にこう言った。

No child can choose his or her own parents, and at the same time they cannot choose the country in which they are born.

When it was finally time for me to go home to Japan, my friend said to me, “Study hard.”

At that time, I was upset with my life in high school, and I really didn’t want to go on living.

Once I feel I can become more helpful to the people in that country, I’d like to set foot there again.

Thinking of this now, I realize how spoiled I was with my troubles, but back then I hated my parents, the society around me, and Japan.

I feel strongly that because I was born in Japan, I was able to go to school and live a peaceful life.

Many people that I met in Cambodia were doing the best they could to survive everyday.

As we walked together through Phnom Penh, my Cambodian friend asked me, “Aren’t you glad you’re Japanese?”
B. Here is the Japanese essay in its original translated form:

Glad to Be Japanese

No child can choose his or her own parents, and at the same time they cannot choose the country in which they are born. Right now, at this very moment, thousands and tens of thousands of children are suffering from hunger and war. I feel strongly that because I was born in Japan, I was able to go to school and live a peaceful life. Therefore, I believe that I must study hard and live as a globally-conscious person who passes on her values of peace.

My feelings were triggered by a trip I made to Cambodia two years ago in the spring. At that time, I was upset with my life in high school, and I really didn’t want to go on living. For a change of pace, this trip was taken so that I could think about what I wanted to do with my life and thus understand myself.

Thinking of this now, I realize how spoiled I was with my troubles, but back then I hated my parents, the society around me, and Japan. I broke away from Japan through the help of a friend I knew who was working in Phnom Penh. As we walked together through Phnom Penh, my Cambodian friend asked me, “Aren’t you glad you’re Japanese?” Cambodia was finally rebuilding after a long civil war. Many people that I met in Cambodia were doing the best they could to survive everyday. When it was finally time for me to go home to Japan, my friend said to me, “Study hard.”

I’m not really convinced that I can only feel happy when I compare myself to my Cambodian friend, but I’m glad that I’m Japanese. Here in peaceful Japan, I’ve decided to return to school and begin again. Once I feel I can become more helpful to the people in that country, I’d like to set foot there again.
C. The following short essay was written in English by a Japanese ESL university student. Please read it and consider the following:

- What is the thesis of the essay? Can you discern what prompt the instructor gave to produce this response?
- Does the student express her opinions clearly and concisely? Does she provide adequate supporting statements?
- Is there anything that betrays the student’s national origin, or could you imagine this kind of writing coming from a native English speaker as well?

I think school uniform is not always necessary and important for students. They can express themselves by their clothes. Without school uniform, we can rather easily find what kind of person he or she is by looking his or her clothes. Wearing favorite clothes is one of the ways to express our personality. On the other hand, school uniform is the same as other student’s, so we tend to seem the same as others. Some say that school uniform is important to unite students as students of a school, and that if they wear their favorite clothes, they will wear too freely and make people who see it uncomfortable. I think, however, the same thing can be said to school uniform. Nowadays, many students wear their school uniform in rather free style; they don’t wear it the way schools require. Until they wear it the good way, it is meaningless. So I think students should be allowed to wear their favorite clothes and express their personality, rather than wear meaningless school uniform.
D. The following essay was written by the same student one week later, using the same prompt. This time, however, she was asked to write in her L1 language, Japanese. The translation was provided by the author of the research study.

- What are the key differences in the student’s writing and organizational style?
- Does the student express herself better in this version? Is her thesis more or less discernable? Does she provide better support for her ideas?
- Does this version of the essay provide any new information that the L2 one doesn’t? Does this make a significant improvement?

I do not think the clothes students wear at school should necessarily be school uniforms. I would rather think the clothes students choose and like to wear are better because they show each student’s individuality. These clothes represent what students like; in other words, they are one way to show part of their individuality.

Many people think we should have school uniforms because the uniform is the symbol of a school and free choice of clothing runs the risk of students’ dressing too roughly. In fact, however, there are many students who wear uniforms not the way the school or society expects them to but sloppily. Students’ clothes are sloppy regardless of whether they wear school uniforms or choose their clothing freely, and sloppy clothes are caused by students’ inner problems.

Furthermore, students can hardly adjust to high or low temperature in school uniforms. They also get into trouble when their uniforms become stained. In this respect, free choice of clothing is convenient. Students can choose what to wear depending on the temperature, their physical condition, and feelings on a particular day. They also do not have the problem of what to wear the next day after they get their clothes dirty.

For the above reasons, I think we should admit free choice of clothing for students at school instead of imposing school uniforms.
I.1 (Japanese, written one week after L2):

私は学校での制服が制服である必要性はないと思います。むしろ生徒が自分で選んだ自分の好きな服装のほうが、生徒1人ひとりの個性があらわれていると思います。というのも、服装は自分の好きなもの、すなわち個性の一部を表すことができる1つの手段だからです。

制服はその学校の象徴であるし、生徒に服装をまかせると乱れててしまうおそれがあるため、やはり制服はあったほうがよいと考える人もたくさんいます。しかし実に制服を学校や世間に求める着方ではなく、だらしなく着ている生徒がたくさんいます。服装が乱れてしまうかどうかは制服であるか自由な服であるかではなく、生徒の内面の問題です。

さらに制服はあまり温度調節ができず、また汚れてしまった時が大変です。その点自由な服装であれば、その日の気温や体調、気分によって服装を選ぶことができるし、汚れても次の日着ていくものに困るわけではないので便利です。

以上のような理由から、学校での服装は制服と決めるのではなく、生徒に任せた自由な服装を認めたほうがよいと思います。

E. The following essay was written in English by a Chinese ESL student. Please read it over and consider these points:

- Rhetorical style (Suggestive or emphatic? Reader-responsible or writer-responsible? Deductive or inductive?)
- Clarity of thesis and supporting statements
- Cohesion and conciseness
- Overall writing skill
- Telltale writing/grammatical features, if any, that give away the writer’s cultural/national identity

Competition

A new group of students has just enrolled in the University. Can you imagine the moment when they received their notices of admission from various colleges all over the country? One of my middle school classmates, before she got her notice, was anxiety-ridden. She couldn’t fall asleep and she lost her appetite. She felt dizzy all day long and her blood pressure went up. Lying in bed, she said she was dying. Just then, the admission came. She jumped out of bed with joy. All her illness was gone. Was it curious? She was glad because she could at last enjoy the happiness after her painstaking work; she was happy because she was to receive a high education, because winner was she of many rivals.

It is not easy to enroll in college, but it is lucky that the competition for it is open to every youth, which is entirely different from the former system. During the year of 1972-76, there was also competition for enrollment. But it was a competition in power of privilege rather than in power of knowledge. The college students then came from workers, peasants and soldiers who were recommended by their working units without examination. It opened the green light for some of those who abused their privilege. Thus the colleges were the gathering places for students coming from all walks of life, having even different records of formal schooling. How could a teacher teach in such a class? But he could do nothing but to bear everything unfair. It
was the time when intellects were criticized, when exams and learning were neglected, when our
country was in trouble. The meaning of the word competition was distorted. It was humiliating
to think about it.

Since the reformation of the education system in 1977, the situation has completely
changed. Every middle school graduate and all young people under the age of 25 get a chance to
take a nationwide examination. The competition is tense. Only 7-12 percent can be admitted
and their records must be above a certain level. Competition encourages the young to study,
increases their passion and interest in science and brings result and victory of the stronger. But it
also is tragic for the weaker. A young girl who had a strong sense of self respect failed 3 times
in competition. She was so depressed and shamed that she committed suicide by drinking DDT.

Competition between pupils has expanded to that between teachers, schools and even
parents of those who take part in competition. Every parent hopes his children will be successful,
and yet they are afraid that the children will be ruined by endless exercises and hard work. So
they are the “King” of the family and are given the best treatment. His mother buys him meat
and milk powder, her mother offers her sausage and chocolate, another serves fish and malt.
Especially when the exams are drawing near, there is even a “nutrient crisis” in the market.

Competition for college study even worries some very young students. From primary
school, one is trying to get good marks so as to enter the best secondary schools where is the first
step of the ladder to Qing Hua, the first class university. At an early age, one is told to study
harder and harder and forbidden from playing. A lively deer becomes a silent sheep. They are
deprived of a teenager’s innocence and fun.

This is the case. Though the competition brings about some deleterious effects, I’m
afraid the situation may not be changed for the time being. Our country suffered a lot during the
ten-year cultural revolution and now we’re supply the lack. Thus high advanced and technology requires skilled and expert men, and yet a large population surely makes the competition tight. Not merely through college education, however, one can make achievements. There are many other ways of making contribution. There may also be competitions at every trade and profession. Where exists human beings, competition exists. But as everybody knows, “where there is a will, there is a way.” The enemy of success of self-abandonment. I really hope that the weaker will become stronger. And I believe with the development of the society, time will finally make up the abuse.