

# Action Research Final Report 2014

Noriko Aoyama

1. Title: Improving Speaking and Writing Ability in Communication English I

2. Context:

- (1) Level: 1<sup>st</sup> year of senior high school
- (2) Class Size: 1 class with 40 students (36 girls, 4 boys)
- (3) Textbook: All Aboard! Communication English I (Tokyo Shoseki)
- (4) Problems:

The subject of Communication English started in 2013. According to the education guideline, students develop a positive attitude to communication and improve English competence to understand and tell information and ideas. In other words, we need to give students opportunities to communicate with others. However, I focused on reading, using a textbook last year. I taught the textbook, and that was my biggest problem. This year, I decided to change my lessons to improve students' communicative competence.

3. Goal:

My main goal is to improve students' English communication ability, especially speaking and writing ability. In order to achieve this goal, I'd like to give a lot of opportunities to communicate with classmates. Also, I want students to keep the motivation to learn English.

4. What I did

Teaching Activities

- (1) Performance tests in May, October, and February
  - a. the place where they want to go
  - b. Japanese *kawaii* culture
  - c. small talk about one out of six topics :  
favorite convenience store, favorite animal, favorite annual event, prefecture where they want to go, last night's dinner, favorite singer
- (2) Writing activities in May, June, and November
  - a. A letter to a junior high school teacher
  - b. Fun Essay about Japanese *kawaii* culture
  - c. Fun Essay about their favorite pictures
- (3) Small Talk since September

(4) Conversation Strategies booklet

Introducing conversation strategies with the booklet

(5) Pair work and group work

(6) Talking with Taiwanese students in English for one period

Research Activities

(1) Questionnaires in April, July and March

(2) Self-evaluation after each performance tests

(3) Video-taping 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> performance test

(4) Checklists for conversation strategies

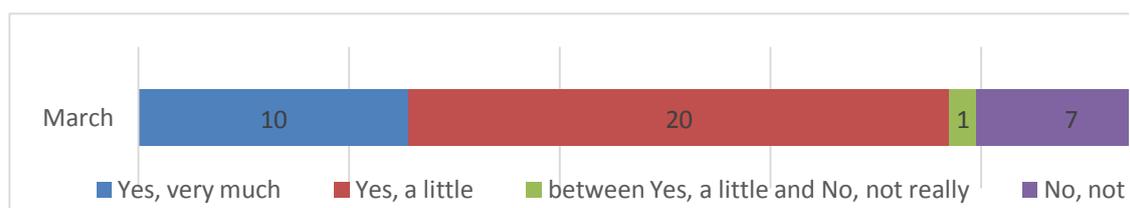
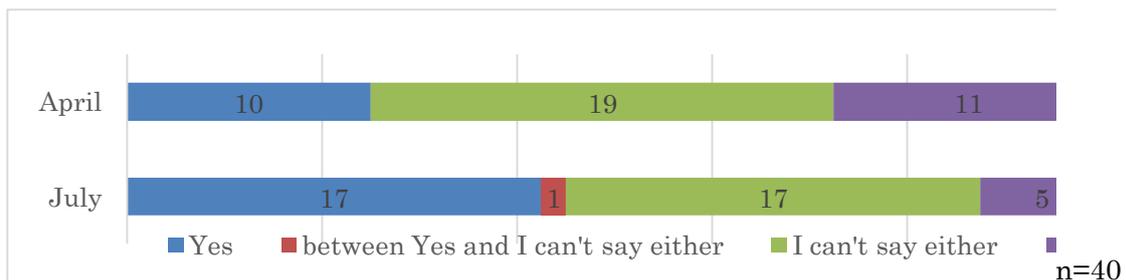
(5) Grammar quiz in March

5. Results:

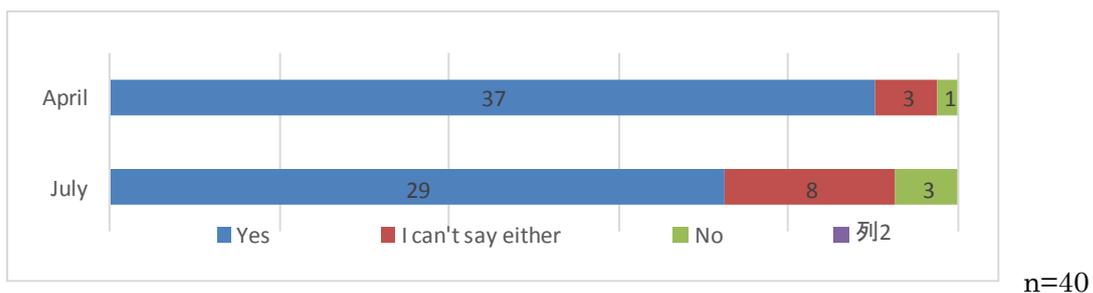
(1) Students' feelings about English

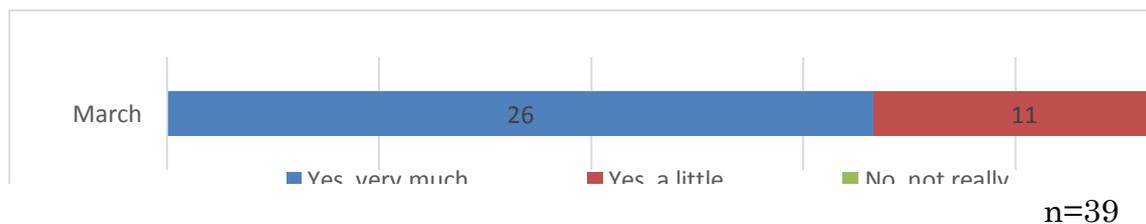
I asked the following two questions in every questionnaires. I changed the response options in March, so unfortunately I can't simply compare the results.

① Do you like English?



② Do you think English is difficult?

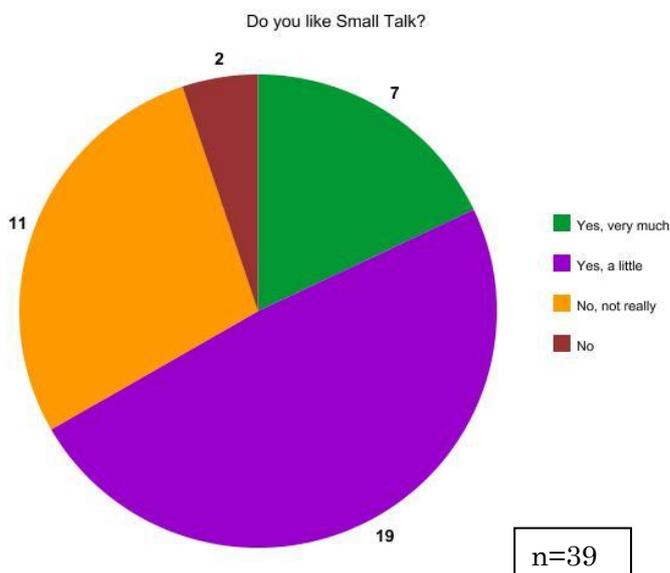




(2) Small Talk

I have introduced Small Talk in class since September. I also introduced conversation strategies in Small Talk. I made a booklet of conversation strategies and taught them one by one. I asked two questions related to Small Talk in March.

① Do you like Small Talk?



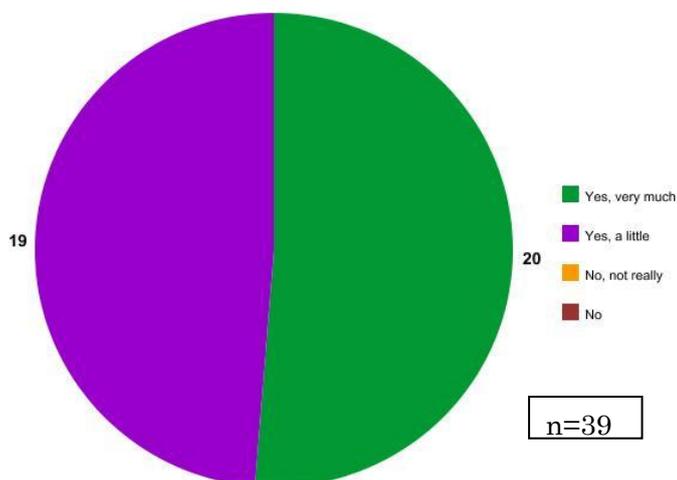
<Reasons for “Yes, very much.”>

- I can improve my English ability little by little.
- I can have longer conversation with the conversation strategies booklet.
- I can improve a communicative competence.
- I enjoyed talking.
- I have less time for other activities.
- It’s so much fun!
- I checked what I couldn’t say in Small Talk, so I could learn a lot of expressions.

<Reasons for “No.”>

- I’m afraid of silence. I like talking with other people, but I’m not good at it.
- I cannot continue a conversation. I prefer same partner. I’m not good at talking.

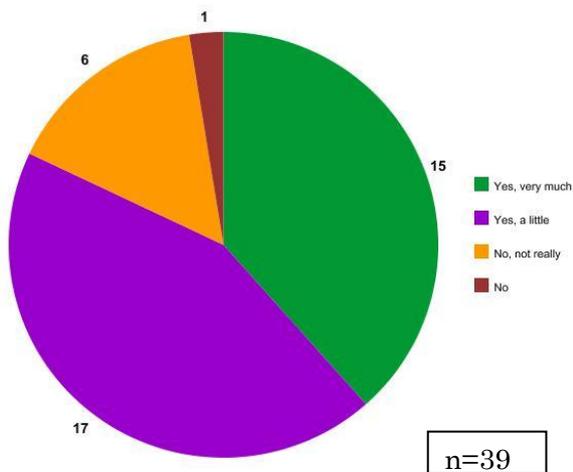
② Do you think conversation strategies are useful?



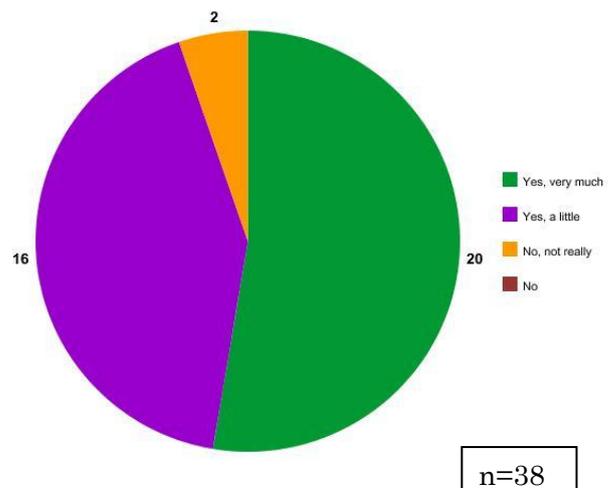
### (3) Pair work and group work

I introduced a lot of pair work and group work in regular class activities. For example, they checked answers with their partner before checking in class. I put a model dialogue on the handout, so students talked in English. I asked the following questions to know how they felt about pair work and group work.

① Do you like pair work and group work?



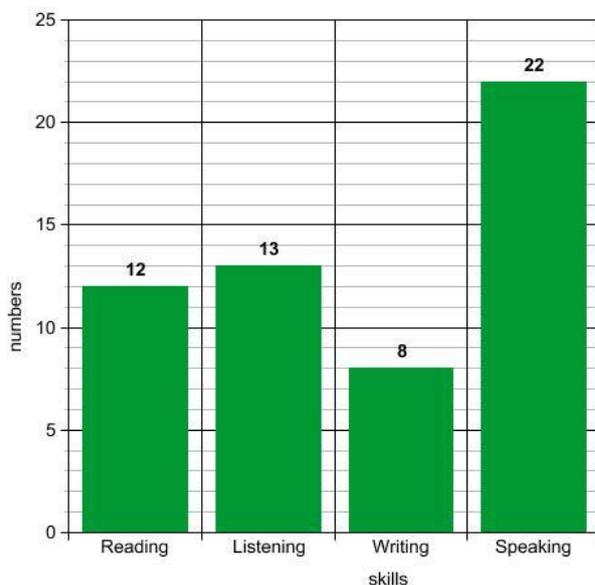
② Do you think pair work and group work are effective in learning English?



### (4) Improved skills

I asked the following questions to know what skill the students thought improved. Multiple choices were allowed. I also asked them to write what they have gotten better at through English lessons.

① Which skills do you think improved through this class?



12 students chose two skills.  
2 students chose three skills.

n=39

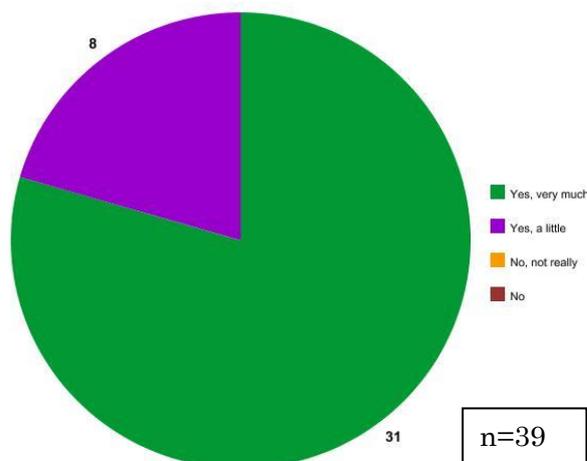
②Please write what you have gotten better at through English lessons this year.

- how to answer to questions
- memorizing words more easily than before
- communication skills such as rejoinders
- greeting in the beginning of the conversation
- asking questions (4)
- understanding English instructions
- pronunciation
- accent
- spelling
- communication with classmates

(5) Students' attitude toward the future in learning English

I asked the following question to see how the students felt about learning English after they took my Communication English I class for one year.

Q. Do you want to improve your English?



6. What I learned:

(1) Students feelings about English

In April, I was disappointed that only 10 students answered that they liked English. I cannot compare the result in April with one in March, but I'd like to highlight 30 students answered they liked English in March. At the same time, the result showed that English was difficult for most students throughout the year. Some students said that they didn't like Small Talk because they were not good at talking in English. One student said Small

Talk was difficult. I learned activities made students feel that English was difficult.

## (2) Small Talk

During Small Talk, I walked around the classroom and noticed that some pairs finished early. Others used a lot of Japanese. Overall, however, I have thought many students enjoyed Small Talk because they smiled and laughed a lot. Therefore, I was surprised at the result. The result showed more than half of the students liked Small Talk, but thirteen students didn't like it. I thought the number was quite big. I found two main reasons; they were not good at English, or communicating with classmates.

On the other hand, I learned that conversation strategies are very effective for most students from the result.

## (3) Pair work and group work

The result showed many students liked pair work and group work, and they thought pair and group work were very effective. Many students in the class were quiet, so when I asked questions to the class, only a couple of students answered. However, when I had students check answers in pairs, they were willing to do it and seemed to enjoy it.

## (4) Improved Skills

My goal this year was to improve students' speaking and writing ability. To achieve it, I introduced performance tests, writing activities, Small Talk, and so on. Twenty-two out of 39 students answered they improved speaking skill. The second top skill was listening and some students said they improved it because of my English instructions.

I also learned my lessons didn't help students' writing skill.

## (5) Students' attitude toward the future in learning English

All of the students answered that they want to improve their English, and I was very glad to know that. In November, Taiwanese students from sister school visited our school, and I asked them to come to my class. Students had a chance to talk in English, and the experience motivated them to learn English. Students also gained a positive attitude to learning English from performance tests. Here are some comments from self-evaluation of third speaking test.

- I want to speak English in my daily life.
- I should study more.
- I want to study harder so that I can speak English more.
- I want to be able to answer to any kinds of questions.
- I want to speak more fluently.

Actually, many students wrote that it was difficult to keep talking in English. Some students said they were frustrated because they couldn't say what they wanted to say. I learned those feelings also motivated students to study English.

#### 7. Future Issues:

- (1) Finding a good way of conducting performance tests in the class of 40 students.
- (2) Making Small Talk activity a fun activity
- (3) Creating a positive learning environment for pair work and group work
- (4) Analyzing the results of performance tests
- (5) Creating more effective way for writing

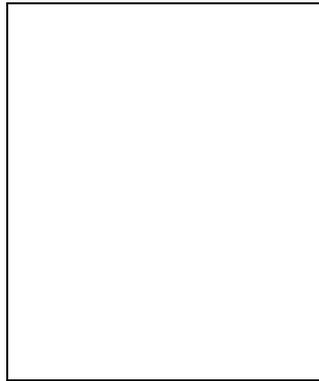
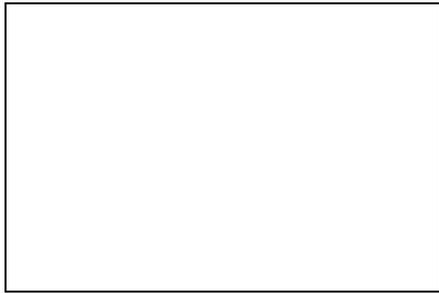
## Lesson Plan : Lesson 6 A Funny Picture from the Edo Period

Noriko Aoyama

1. Level: Senior High School 1<sup>st</sup> year students
2. Class Size: 1 class with 40 students (36 girls, 4 boys)
3. Textbook: All Aboard! Communication English I (Tokyo Shoseki)
4. Goal & Objectives
  - (1) Students can learn about *ukiyo-e*.
  - (2) They can understand and use passive voice.
  - (3) They can talk and write about their favorite painting.
5. Procedures:
  - Day one: activity using passive voice with ALT
  - Day two: getting information about *ukiyo-e* and reading the first half of the text
  - Day three: reading the latter half of the text (This class)
  - Day four: reviewing the whole text and passive voice
  - Day five: writing an essay about their favorite pictures
  - Day six: peer-editing and rewriting an essay
  - Day seven: error correction and writing a fun essay
6. Today's lesson plan:
  - (1) Small Talk about their favorite pictures
  - (2) Reading silently and answering T or F questions
  - (3) Checking answers with their partners
  - (4) Reading the text again and finding English words and phrases
  - (5) Checking meaning in class and in pairs.
  - (6) Checking how to use the words and phrases in different sentences
  - (7) Reading aloud the text (Slash reading)
  - (8) Practice reading in pairs.
7. Assessment
  - (1) Vocabulary and content (Term-end exam)
  - (2) Fun essay

**Pre-Reading**

What kind of picture do you have in your mind when you hear *ukiyo-e*? Please draw *ukiyo-e*.



p.56

**Comprehension**

If the sentence is correct, write T, and if it is wrong, write F.

1. Saori belongs to the art club. ( )
2. Saori made a speech about her favorite cat. ( )
3. There are a lot of fish in the picture on page 56. ( )
4. Saori thinks the picture on page 56 is funny. ( )

A: What is your answer of question No. 1?  
 B: T. How about you?  
 A: Same. / My answer is F.  
 B: OK, let's move on to question No.2.  
 What is your answer?  
 A: F. How about you?

**Vocabulary and Phrase Check 1**

Japanese	1	2	English
～に所属している (2)			
～したい (3)			
しかしながら			
～に気がつく			
何かほかのこと (2)			
おもしろい			

**Vocabulary and Phrase Check 2**

- (1) A: Let's eat curry and rice for dinner.  
 B: Oh, I had curry and rice last night. I want to eat \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) I \_\_\_\_\_ the basketball team.
- (3) I \_\_\_\_\_ that my friend was wearing her T-shirt inside out.
- (4) It's a lovely day, isn't it? I \_\_\_\_\_ go on a picnic.
- (5) This TV program is very \_\_\_\_\_. You should watch it, too.
- (6) My brother likes staying home.  
 \_\_\_\_\_, I like going out.

would like to  
 noticed  
 something else  
 funny  
 belong to  
 however

p.57 **Comprehension** If the sentence is correct, write T, and if it is wrong, write F.

1. *Ukiyoe* was very popular in the Heian period. ( )
2. Kuniyoshi used only cats for his pictures. ( )
3. Saori thinks that Kuniyoshi was one of the pioneers of Japanese manga. ( )
4. There is no humorous pictures in Edo period. ( )

A: What is your answer of question No. 1?  
 B: T. How about you?  
 A: Same. / My answer is F.  
 B: OK, let's move on to question No.2.  
 What is your answer?  
 A: F. How about you?

**Vocabulary and Phrase Check 1**

Japanese	1	2	English
版画、印刷物			
時代			
～を生み出す			
驚いた			
初めて (4)			
題材、題目			
怪物、化け物			
歴史上の			
英雄			
～の一人、一つ (2)			
先駆者			
～に知られている (3)			be
世界中の(で) (4)			
おもしろい、ユーモアのある			
驚くべき			
聞いてくれてありがとう。 (ご清聴ありがとうございました。)			

**Vocabulary and Phrase Check 2**

1. You've studied Korean for only two months, but you can speak Korean very well.  
That's \_\_\_\_\_!
2. English is studied \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Yesterday, I played the guitar \_\_\_\_\_. That was my new experience.
4. Shikoku is \_\_\_\_\_ the main islands of Japan.
5. I was \_\_\_\_\_ at the news.
6. I was born in the Heisei \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Arashi is very popular here in Japan.  
They \_\_\_\_\_ many people.

for the first time  
 amazing      amazed  
 all over the world  
 are known to  
 period      one of

**Summary**

Saori is talking about her (f \_\_\_\_\_) picture. The picture shows three hiragana. A lot of (c \_\_\_\_\_) make those *hiragana*. When Saori saw the picture for the first time, she was (a \_\_\_\_\_). The picture was (c \_\_\_\_\_) by Utagawa Kuniyoshi. Saori thinks that he was one of the (p \_\_\_\_\_) of Japanese manga.

**Let's read!** 156 words ÷ ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) seconds × 60 = \_\_\_\_\_ wpm

**Target : 受け身 < be 動詞 + 過去分詞 >**

This picture **was created** by Utagawa Kuniyoshi.

Japanese manga **is known** to people all over the world.

1. 日本語に合う英文になるよう \_\_\_\_\_ に適切な語句を入れなさい。

(1) This book \_\_\_\_\_ by a lot of young people.

この本は多くの若者たちによって読まれている。

(2) These cookies \_\_\_\_\_ by my father.

これらのクッキーは私の父によって作られた。

(3) Our school festival \_\_\_\_\_ last Saturday.

先週の土曜日、私たちの学校祭が開かれた。

(4) The TV Tower in Nagoya \_\_\_\_\_ 60 years ago.

名古屋のテレビ塔は60年前に建てられた。

2. 次の各組の文がほぼ同じ意味になるように( )に適語を入れなさい。

(1) Junichi took this picture.

This picture ( ) ( ) ( ) Junichi.

(2) Meg invited us to the party.

We ( ) ( ) ( ) the party ( ) Meg.

(3) People speak Spanish in Mexico.

Spanish ( ) ( ) ( ) Mexico.

(4) They serve homemade pasta at this restaurant.

Homemade pasta ( ) ( ) at this restaurant.

**Target † 1: that 節**

I think **that** he was one of the pioneers of Japanese manga.

I think that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Writing # 3 My Favorite Picture**

Class \_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your favorite picture?

Why do you like the picture?

Me	1 <sup>st</sup> partner ( )	2 <sup>nd</sup> partner( )

2. Ask follow-up questions.

Have you ever seen the picture at a museum?

Who is the painter of the picture?

When did you see the picture for the first time?

What do you especially like about the picture?

(その絵のどこが特に好き?)

Me	1 <sup>st</sup> partner ( )	2 <sup>nd</sup> partner( )

3. Please tell me more about the picture.

Me	1 <sup>st</sup> partner( )	2 <sup>nd</sup> partner( )

**Writing # 3 My Favorite Picture**

Class \_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

**First Writing** Now, let's write.



This is my favorite picture, "Waterfall." I like this picture because it's very interesting. This picture was drawn by Escher and his 1961's work. Escher is from Holland and he is a famous graphic artist. He is famous for his impossible constructions and this is one of them. If you look at this picture carefully, you will notice that water goes up! That's impossible. When I saw this picture about 10 years ago, I was very amazed. He drew many interesting pictures. You should check it out. (87words)



This is my favorite picture, "Iris in Monet's Garden." I like this picture because the color is very beautiful and soft. When I see this picture, I feel relaxed. Monet, a famous French painter, painted this picture. He was born in 1840, and he was a key person in Impressionism. He used people and places around him as subjects for his pictures. From 1883, he lived in Giverny and he loved there. He painted many pictures of his garden and this picture is one of them. (86 words)

1 <sup>st</sup> editor ( )	2 <sup>n</sup> editor ( )	3 <sup>rd</sup> editor ( )

## Second Writing

### Evaluation for Writing

#### 1. 単語数

3 points - 60 語以上      2 points- 45-59 語      1 point- 44 語以下

#### 2. 内容

3 points- なぜその絵が好きなのかよく書けている。

絵の説明が詳しく書かれており、たくさんの情報を伝えている。

2 points- なぜその絵が好きなのか書けている。絵や画家の説明が書かれている。

1 point- 絵や画家の説明が書かれている。

#### 3. デザイン

2 points- イラストや写真があり、色も使っている。工夫が見られる。1 point- イラストや写真がある。