



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE AS

Japanese (6JA01)

Unit 1: Understanding and Written Response

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Summary

Students gave evidence of having been thoroughly prepared by their teachers for the examination across all areas of the syllabus.

Question 1

Question 1 required candidates to write the pronunciation of given kanji. In this section, (b) was perhaps the hardest, although some candidates also lost marks for confusion between ろ and る in (a) and あ and お in part (d).

Question 2

Question 2 required candidates to choose the 5 correct statements from a bank of statements. These were generally well done, although the verb 足りない in (c) appeared difficult for some candidates.

Question 3

Question 3 required candidates to find words to match given definitions in the text. Candidates always find these questions hard, so it was pleasing that most candidates attempted most of these questions. (a) 思い出 proved to be the hardest, with (b) 使って and (d) まじめ also causing some difficulties. Candidates could be encouraged to practice defining words through the medium of Japanese, rather than always using English translations to learn the definitions of words in Japanese.

Question 4

Question 4 required candidates to match the two halves of sentences. Of these, (b), (c) and (d) caused most difficulties. Candidates could be encouraged to look at the grammatical features of the sentences rather than just the vocabulary to help them.

Question 5

Question 5 required candidates to write short answers in Japanese. Candidates often got (c) wrong, saying ネパールに持って行くテントです in error. (f) also caused difficulties, with candidates writing 森の中にとけこむ色ですから and so on. The candidates who were aware that there were 5 marks for quality of language in this section showed great creativity in showing off the grammatical structures they know. It was disappointing that more candidates were not aware of the need to include AS grammar in their answers, as there were some easy opportunities such as 2015 年に起きた地震. Candidates are also reminded that they must answer in full sentences – quality of language marks will not be awarded to candidates who answer in single words.

Question 6

The translation proved difficult this year. Some candidates were thrown by the katakana word サミット in the first sentence. Similarly, リーダー was sometimes taken to be ‘readers’. The first sentence had a date and a simple past tense in Japanese, so it should have been reasonably easy to translate this in the simple past in English, but many candidates struggled with the tense. The connectives such as また and その中で also proved hard for candidates in this passage. Even candidates who had struggled with the first paragraph, however, got back into the task in the second paragraph, and the vast majority of candidates understood that high school students had cooked for the participants at the summit, and that they thought up menus using local ingredients. A very large number of candidates failed to spot that 3 月 was March, and offered translations involving “3 months ago” or “a period of 3 months”. Similarly, trying to use “considered” for 考えました made it sound in English as though the high school students had thought about, but then on reflection rejected, the use of local ingredients. In the last paragraph, getting the time sequence of events was hard in the first sentence. Some candidates failed to spot that the last 2 sentences were all in speech brackets, so that both of these comments were all the words of the headteacher. Candidates would do well to focus on the translation of と話しました、と言いました and so on.

Question 7

The continuous writing task asked the candidates to write about a trip on the bullet train. Candidates generally gave reasonable responses to their own image of the bullet point. Sometimes their answer to where they wanted to go in Japan was weaker, as they seemed unable to give a reason as to why they might want to visit a particular location in Japan. The third bullet point about the advantages of travel was generally well tackled, with candidates showing evidence that they had thought about this point previously. The last bullet point was marked generously: some candidates latched onto the word まもる and wrote about environmental protection. Some candidates stated the problem without offering solutions, although others did offer a range of solutions. Surprisingly few candidates suggest using social media in any way. All candidates seemed aware that they should be writing using a range of vocabulary, kanji and grammar: the range of language used by candidates is good, but the quality is sometimes poorer. Particular problems include the accurate formation of te / ta forms, and sometimes forgetting GCSE grammar such as the conjugation of i adjectives. The kanji pair 速い / 早い were often confused, and the particle に in に乗る was often wrong. In addition, candidates often confused ~たい and ~てほしい.

Advice

- Do continue to keep learning kanji.
- Work on accurate formation of hiragana and katakana letters as well as kanji.
- Do practise learning vocabulary through the medium of Japanese (ie defining new Japanese words in Japanese) as well as learning the English translation of new words.
- Remember to answer the reading comprehension questions in Japanese, and to add ambitious grammar where you can.
- Do review the grammar of giving and receiving phrases, and of how to ask other people to do things for you or that you want them to do.

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