

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Japanese (6JA02) Paper 2

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Overall the paper was similar to previous years and candidates showed evidence of having been very thoroughly prepared by their teachers, particularly on the topics and texts.

The reading passage was about Mt. Fuji being declared a world heritage site. Most candidates were able to read the passage and respond appropriately using **correct Japanese**. The most challenging question was perhaps (b), where a considerable number of candidates missed the general nature of the question (indicated by the present tense as well as wording) and incorrectly answered **富士山**. Please note that (unlike in the AS paper) there are no marks for quality of language in the A2 paper, so candidates do not have to go out of their way to manipulate the grammar or include complex grammatical structures to score marks in this section.

The translation was about sixth formers who were invited to a creative writing workshop at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. It was very pleasing that most candidates made a fair attempt at this translation, using passives and relative clauses appropriately. Some words in English which potentially have dual meanings (e.g. discipline, presented, drafted, work) caused **difficulties of interpretation**. In particular, work was often incorrectly translated **仕事**, which made the translation difficult to understand.

Candidates are encouraged to think about the meaning of the English and convey the overall meaning in Japanese. **Candidates who write Chinese are reminded that writing an unknown word in Chinese characters doesn't always make it Japanese**. A significant number of candidates wrote “**牛津**” rather than “**オックスフォード**”.

As mentioned above, candidates were generally very well prepared for their topics and texts essays, although centres need to focus on the importance of structuring the answers and writing in paragraphs. Candidates are also reminded that they must be able to write correctly on **genko yoshi**. Problems in this area persist from year to year.

Candidates generally covered the recommendation of places to visit aspect of question 3 (a) well, but often were unable to write about the main industries in their chosen region, and thus lost marks. Fewer candidates chose question 3 (b) about the main agricultural products, but those who did so clearly chose this question as they felt confident that they had detailed, relevant knowledge and produced some exceptional answers.

Questions 4 (a) about the ageing society, question 4 (b) about the use of leisure time and question 5 (a) about the Japanese new year customs attracted a large number of answers by candidates who had seemingly not studied in preparation for the exam, and thus whose responses were lacking in factual detail, or a personal opinion with no detailed explanation. Candidates are reminded that at the A level they are expected to write essays which demonstrate skills of detailed factual knowledge, rigorous analysis and reasoned argument.

Question 6 (a) about the good points and bad points of a story from **どんどん読めるいろいろな話** produced some good responses, with candidates clearly stating their points and justifying them from the text. A small minority of candidates answered this question on short stories that are not in the book and thus scored a mark of 0: candidates must be careful to prepare the correct texts.

Both question 7 (a) and 7 (b) on the Hoshi Shin'ichi text were popular. In particular candidates used their imagination and creativity to answer the question about the main character, as depending on which text they chose, it is not always clear as to who / what is the main character. The fact that the answer in some cases was not obvious seemed to encourage the candidates into a higher quality of thinking, debate and writing, which was pleasing. A small number of candidates misunderstood question 7 (a) to "What did you learn from the text?" rather than "What did the main character learn from their experiences as described in the text?"

Question 8 (b) was considerably more popular than question 8 (a), with many candidates choosing the final scene as the most memorable. The best candidates gave two or three detailed reasons as to why this was their favourite scene.

In all the texts, most candidates start by writing an outline (あらすじ) of the text to introduce it. This is expected and is indeed correct, but they should take care that it does not become too long. Some outlines took up more than three out of the four pages of genko yoshi given in the exam paper, and if this is the case, candidates will lose marks as they have not provided a detailed and sufficient response to the rest of the question.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>