

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Japanese (6JA02) Paper 2

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There was a pleasing rise in standards this year, particularly in section C, topics and texts. Fewer candidates seem to have simply walked into the examination with no preparation for this section, and the candidate responses showed good knowledge of Japan and its culture, with some excellent essays also offered.

The reading comprehension in section A, about Ms. Yamazaki, an astronaut, was very well tackled, with many candidates scoring well over 10 of the 14 marks available. It was pleasing that many candidates understood the metaphoric use of language tested in (f).

Part (c) was possibly the hardest, perhaps because candidates did not know the word きっかけ.

Section B, translation, is the section which candidates often find the hardest, and this year was no exception, although it was pleasing to see that most of the candidates made some kind of attempt at this passage. They need to take care over basic issues such as transcribing 'Cooper's Hill' consistently into katakana, or not missing out the words '19 year old' describing Josh Shepherd. Similarly in the third sentence, 'written records of the event' was often incorrectly translated using the word レコード. A surprising number of candidates did not know the meaning of the word 'noon', and the last Monday of May was often incorrectly translated using the word 先週. The phrase 'stay on my feet' also produced a lot of problems. The parts that were easiest were in the middle – most candidates were able to use a ことがある structure to translate 'Josh has run the race quite a few times before.'

In question 3, (b), to introduce a historic place or two was the more popular question, with many candidates displaying impressive historical factual knowledge about the buildings they chose to write about. Generally speaking (a) was more poorly done, with candidates writing about how English would be used more widely in the run up to the Olympics, rather than displaying detailed, specific knowledge of the international relations of their region.

A similar problem arose in question 4 (a), where some candidates just wrote bland essays about their mobile phones as examples of Japanese technology. On the other hand, some candidates displayed an impressive range of knowledge spanning everything from Paro, the care giving robot, to technology used in bullet trains.

Where candidates chose the festival for question 5, they generally did well, again displaying evidence of having studied their chosen festival in some detail. Candidates who chose (a) sometimes lost marks either because they did not describe the entrance and graduation ceremonies as they take place now, or because they simply wrote a very personal response to the proposed change to the autumn for the beginning of the school year, and gave little academic content.

For question 6, (a) and (b) were equally popular and equally well tackled. When tackling literature questions, an outline of the story (あらすじ) is needed, but candidates should take care that this does not expand to three out of the four pages of genko Yoshi, or else they will lose marks on developing the specific answer to the question posed in the examination paper. For (a) in which authorial intention was asked for, to score a top

mark for content, candidates would have to write at least 2 (preferably 3) points, each backed up with evidence from the text.

For question 5 (a) was the more popular, but again sometimes candidate essays were not focussed on the actual question posed in the examination paper. A 'multi-purpose' essay covering all aspects of the text and past questions is unlikely to score highly for content.

There were many interesting and original answers to both parts of question 6, and it is pleasing to see that candidates are clearly reading and appreciating this more modern piece. Some of the answers to (b) in particular were outstandingly strong in relating the short story to contemporary Japanese society and young people's views within it.

Overall candidates show much evidence of being prepared very thoroughly for this examination by their teachers, and on working hard themselves, particularly in learning difficult facts and kanji for their chosen topics and texts.

Grade Boundaries

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

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