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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Japanese (6JA02) Paper 01

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This year students demonstrated that they had worked hard in preparation for the examination on all aspects of the course, and have been very well prepared by their teachers. There were some detailed and very well thought out essays in Section C, topics and texts.

Section A was about Rin Kobayashi, a young haiku poet. The reading comprehension questions were generally well done, although a surprising number of students got (c) wrong and put either from nature or from his grandmother. The other question that was slightly difficult was (f), where some students only put down part of the answer, and failed to put down sufficient detail to make a fully convincing answer.

The translation in Section B was about Trinity School in Croydon acting as a team base for the French team during the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Generally speaking, getting the subject to match the verb, and in particular using 'てあげる' or 'てくれる' type of grammar correctly was difficult for many students. This led to many translations in which it was unclear who was doing what with / for whom, which meant that the meaning was not communicated. Many students did not know the English word "squad" and also seemed unsure of "passing practice", where passing was often translated as 合格する. The last two sentences about the excitement of having international players at the school and feeling party of the Rugby World Cup were generally well done.

Only the essay questions which attracted a sizeable number of responses will be commented on below.

Q3(a) about planning a travel itinerary to a part of Japan was generally well done, with the very strongest students being able to bring in detailed knowledge about temples, castles, cities or other sites they had studied.

Q4(a) about ひきこもり was better tackled than similar questions have been in the past, with students offering at least some explanation of why the phenomenon is seen. Many, however, did not seem to know specific facts and figures (such as how many ひきこもり there are in a particular region / Japan, when the phenomenon first came to prominence etc.) which was a striking contrast with the specific, detailed knowledge students offered for Q3(a).

Q5(b) about the snow fall in Japan suffered from similar problems, although here some students did demonstrate knowledge of average snowfall in different regions of Japan and so on. Many students failed to score highly as they simply wrote a personal memoir of enjoying life in the snow.

Q6(a) was generally well tackled, with students being able to offer not only a detailed description of their favourite scene, but also why it was so.

For Q7, both (a) and (b) were equally popular, with many students being able to comment on what the 'Short short' stories make us think about scientific development and humankind's relationship to the planet and so

on. Many students did well in linking their chosen piece to contemporary life and society.

Parts (a) and (b) were also equally popular for Q8. In (b), many students wrote quite detailed responses about how Christmas was the season of love, or how New Year signalled a new start in life. Some pieces were quite pleasing, and overall the quality of responses was very pleasing.

