



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE A-Level
Japanese (6JA02)

Unit 2: Understanding, Written Response
and Research



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Summary

Students appear to have been well prepared for all aspects of the paper, with many detailed and articulate responses in Section C: Topics and texts. Section B: Translation was also well tackled.

Question 1

Most students attempted most of the reading comprehension questions in Section A: Reading and Writing. The incorrect answer of 「大海を泳ぐくじらのように力強くなってほしい」 was often given for (e). The other section that proved challenging was (I), with many students failing to make it clear that both regions had experienced earthquakes.

Question 2

Although most students tackled the whole passage, the grammar of active versus passive, or the forms of passive as compared to the causative or the potential often caused confusion. A surprising number of students put the opening sentence into the present tense, despite the text clearly saying “2016”. Expressing the correct degree of uncertainty in “This gave me a glimpse into what the future of art and design might be.” was also difficult. In the final sentence, the word “leaving” was sometimes translated as 出て or 去って, which did not convey the correct nuance of the English.

Question 3 (a)

This question was very popular, and most students were able to give specific details about special places in the regions they have studied – the dates when temples or castles were built and so on.

Question 3 (b)

Many students knew what was produced in their region, but were weaker on explaining how these products were currently changing and analysing why these changes might be taking place.

Question 4 (a)

Many students only wrote about bullying in schools, and failed to discuss what strategies society as a whole is putting in to stop bullying. The analysis was often also very weak, with personal opinions purely stated.

Question 5 (a)

Hardly any students mentioned the various different days which make up Golden Week, and few also seemed to be aware of community events which would traditionally have taken place. Most students answered purely from personal experience and did not show a sufficient level of factual knowledge or critical analysis to score high marks.

Question 5 (b)

Most students were able to describe what happens during 花見, but fewer were able to analyse the meaning it holds for Japanese adults today.

Question 6 (a)

Most students were able to give at least one good reason for recommending their chosen text, and offer detailed opinions with justification.

Question 6 (b)

This question was not very popular, but those who tackled it gave a variety of creative and interesting answers. Sometimes their language skills let them down and they were unable to express their more complex ideas.

Question 7 (a)

Many students seemed not to know what the word 工夫 meant, leading to a number of disappointing responses which did not address the question that was asked. Students are advised against answering a question if there is any doubt in their minds over the meaning of one or more words in the question.

Question 7 (b)

Most students were able to name a couple of good points of the piece, with details and justification. Students were in general poorer at giving negative points about the piece, and sometimes this section was omitted all together.

Question 8 (a)

A distressingly large number of students lost marks on this question as they did not write about the personality strengths and weaknesses of the main character, instead mentioning the good and bad points of the story as a whole. They may have missed the word 主人公 in the question.

Question 8 (b)

Most students seem to have understood the question and had an opinion on the relationship between the dog and the young man in the story, but few were able to express it with clarity and justification.

Advice

- Use kanji wherever you can, particularly in the translation.
- Make sure that the A2 grammatical structures – eg causatives and passives – are clearly differentiated from each other, and learnt with their associated particles.
- If you choose a region of Japan or contemporary Japanese society for your topic, you are expected to know specific facts and figures to back up any points you make.
- If you don't know one or more of the words in a question, see if you can answer another question instead.
- Make sure you read the question carefully and answer the specific question that was asked in the examination – too many students lost marks for missing out the “bad points” in essays which asked for good points and bad points.

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