



Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Japanese (9JA0)
Paper 1: Translation into English, reading
comprehension and writing

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Publications Code 9JA0_01_2506_ER

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Introduction

In this series, there was a significant increase in the numbers entered.

Learners appeared well prepared for all aspects of the examination. Most learners coped well with the translation and reading comprehension. In Section C, Q5 to Q9, many learners showed pertinent evidence leading to convincing conclusions. Some lacked links to the written texts or didn't seem to know what the specification was asking for. They then relied on their opinions and descriptions rather than answering questions with analysis and development from research.

Section A: An unseen passage to be translated from Japanese to English,

Question 1

Most learners tackled the entire passage. However, the correct answer rate for question (1) was relatively lower than for the other questions.

In this series, it was slightly more challenging for grammatical points, for example, focusing on tenses and using the right pronoun in English in the relative clause 何分ぐらい止まるのか分からないので. Also, many learners didn't follow the official spelling rule of proper nouns. Many learners couldn't translate 部下 correctly. One of the Japanese language features is that subjects will often be omitted until the topic is changed, so following what is written from whose point of view is key to keeping the translation on the right track. Please remember successful translation should be understood by an English speaker who doesn't understand its original language. For example, 困る was used twice in the separate parts in the passage; learners should think about how they would express this in the different situations.

Section B: Question 2 to 5 are reading assessments based on a variety of text types and genres. Learners must respond to a series of comprehension questions from multiple-choice and open-response formats.

Question 2

This question was a multiple-choice question about a girl's interest in Sumo wrestling. The questions were generally tackled well.

Question 3

This was a multiple-choice question. The text was about a telephone booth for people who lost their loved ones in the Tsunami in 2011. Option A and E were often chosen incorrectly, probably because learners were unfamiliar with the words like おか and 亡くす in the text.

Learners should read the question carefully as word rephrasing and grammar reversing from the text tend to be asked.

Question 4

This was an open-response style section, which learners generally tackled well. They were once again reminded of the instruction in the specification, ‘you must not copy whole sections where the question requires them to manipulate the language to give an accurate response to the question.’ However, a minority of learners still offered answers directly lifted from the text, and these couldn’t be credited. For example, the question word どうしてですか is asking the reason why, so manipulating the verb from the text is needed.

Question 5

This was the literary text and an open-response section, which learners generally tackled well. The hardest part was (c), where some learners referred to the reason ‘because the boy was trying not to fall asleep’. Where learners did give incorrect answers, often these did not fit logically with the question asked on the paper. Again, drill learners into looking carefully at the question words such as どうして、どうやって、どんな+Noun, and to give an answer that logically fits with that question word – for example, if the question word is “how”, to not answer “because...”.

Section C: Choose one question from Q6 to Q9, reading and writing based on an aspect of the learner’s chosen research subject. Learners read a text and then answer a question, incorporating information and ideas from both the text and their research.

Question 6

The question was about the family home and the effect on human relations. Most learners were able to use some details from the text to support their argument, but fewer offered facts or figures from their research and put forward their point of view simply from their opinions and suggestions. There are various facts and information about this topic, researching the changing pattern of family structure, sizes, roles for each member etc from either official or public sources is always helpful to develop the discussion.

Question 7

The question was about the impact of a shortage of volunteers on maintaining traditional festivals. On this topic, learners had clearly done their research and were often able to give sufficient details about other festivals as examples. The majority of the learners successfully referred to what the project leaders said about the day of their festival. However, it seems that some found it difficult to link the content to what was written in the main text and draw a conclusion. Reading the text carefully and finding the points of discussion to link the question, then planning the essay structure before starting to write, is very important.

Question 8

This question was about the benefits of having special events for the mental health of the elderly. Learners had done their research well and showed facts and figures about the ageing population in Japan. Some learners successfully showed good links such as ‘improving physical health could support their mental health’, with some facts and statistical data from their research.

Some argued that it is best to plan special events like シニア運動会 to increase interaction with other people, whereas others argued that there should be more individual support for coping better with their everyday lives.

Question 9

This question was about whether planning small local energy plants is the best way to ask people to live with less energy. Most learners had done adequate research to develop the argument. Although the text contains many points of discussion, (such as renewable energy, waste utilisation, and local initiatives with profits from the generator), some learners focused only on the arguments from their research, ignoring what the text passage says.

Summary for Q6 to Q9, the essay section

Based on their performance on this paper, learners are offered the following advice:

The research mark occupies half of the marks in the essay. Some learners who may have practised writing with past papers brought convincing evidence. They should prepare to spend enough time examining the evidence. Also, they should indicate in their essay that they have used the content of the text in a way that makes it clear that they have used it as a reference, for example, 本文でも述べられているように..., etc.

Additionally, to create a smooth essay, use accurate linking and follow the standard rules of writing in the grid papers.

Most learners were able to complete the paper in the time available. We did, however, see several very brief essays, reviews of the text, including criticising the context rather than developing and arguing from a critical point of view. This wouldn't build up the essay effectively and suggests that some learners had not planned the structure and timing well. It is important to read the text carefully and write an essay based on the questions in the comments. Please advise learners to make an essay plan and decide how they are going to incorporate the material from their research, so that they don't offer unnecessary evidence which dilutes the point they claim to be arguing. This eventually reflects on their time management, impacting their ability to complete a strong essay.

Additional notes for future information.

Please note the following changes for Paper 1 are applicable for the first assessment in 2026.

- Question titles will now appear in English
- Questions and rubrics will now appear in English
- Answers must now be in English

N.B. **Sample assessment material for first teaching** has already been changed to the new style, so please refer to it.

