

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Japanese (5JA01) Paper 01

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Listening and Understanding in Japanese

This unit draws on vocabulary and structures from across the four specified common topic areas. The examination consisted of a number of passages or interactions in Japanese with a variety of question types. Candidates were tested on their ability to understand spoken Japanese through a variety of tasks which require a response, written or non-verbal, to demonstrate their understanding.

In general, candidates coped well with the exam format. However, it was felt that many candidates would benefit from familiarising themselves with the 'x' answering method. Teachers should encourage them to follow strategies which will prevent duplicate answers in one row and no answers in another row. Candidates also need to be reminded to listen to the whole conversation before selecting their correct answers.

When confronted with spaces to be filled in, such as in Q 6 and Q9, it was felt that many candidates did not read the questions properly and failed to notice that some of the answer boxes were already filled in. It should be noted all written responses are now required to be answered in English. Some candidates attempted to answer parts in Japanese. Teachers need to be aware that it is important for candidates to write their answers fully and clearly as the Mark Scheme is strictly adhered to.

Overall, the paper followed the 'peaks and troughs' of difficulty pattern throughout the paper. Teachers should remind candidates that more difficult questions no longer appear towards the end of the paper and easier ones at the beginning. Candidates must be encouraged to attempt to answer all questions throughout the paper.

Most candidates performed well in Q1 and 2 although the word 二人 in Q1 and 俳優 in Q2 was unfamiliar to many. Some candidates were unfamiliar with counters and lost marks in Q3. Candidates were familiar with the topic in Q4 and it was well answered.

Most candidates scored 3 marks or above in Q5, but not many achieved full marks. Some candidates did not look at the mark allocation carefully and failed to cross the correct number of boxes.

Many candidates found Q6 challenging. A surprisingly large number failed to recognise key words such as お店 and ただ. Many did not know the meanings of お祭り and 花火. Q6(ii), however, was well answered.

On the whole, candidates performed well in Q7. However, there was evidence of candidates not listening to the whole conversation before selecting their correct answer.

Q8 was deemed accessible to most candidates. However, some candidates found Q8(iv) challenging and did not recognise 少し.

In the final question, many candidates fabricated answers based on hearing a single word correctly and did not appear to consider whether the given answer might fit the context of previous answers. There was also evidence of candidates not listening to the whole conversation before writing their answer. Many candidates did not know the difference between お寺 (temple) and 神社 (shrine) in (a) (ii). Some candidates failed to write their answers fully and lost marks. For example, for part (c) some wrote 'phone' as supposed to 'phone the calligraphy school next to his grandmother's house'. A surprising number of candidates did not know 料理, 温泉, 生花 and 書道.

Grade Boundaries

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