

Examiners' Report /
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Japanese (5JA02) Paper 01

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Publications Code UG032579

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Examiner Report

In general, the candidates who took the speaking component had a good understanding of the Japanese language and the culture behind it. Candidates from the whole spectrum of abilities should be commended for the hard work they had clearly put in to preparing for the speaking examination. Throughout the examination (in both task 1 and task 2) candidates were given credit for all attempts to communicate with the teacher examiner in Japanese. Many teacher examiners clearly responded well to the needs of the candidate – allowing time for a response, re phrasing questions, giving an example answer, speaking more slowly, and generally encouraging the candidate through the potentially difficult experience of the speaking examination. How disappointing, therefore, that some teacher examiners confused candidates by moving onto the next question too quickly, asking a question to elicit information that had already been given or interrupting the candidate.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that candidates generally performed better, and seemed more relaxed, during task 1. Generally, candidates were well prepared for their presentation or picture based discussion. It is, therefore, rather worrying that many candidates were then hindered by the teacher examiner failing to ask either enough questions or questions that would enable the candidate to display the widest range of vocabulary and structures.

Across both tasks it was clear that candidates were generally confident at responding to key question words such as *どこ、だれ* and *どうして* but many candidates struggled with *どう、どんな* (for example *どんな先生ですか・どんな食べ物でしたか*) and *いつ*. As last year, time frames were sometimes unclear with confusion arising between *きょう・きょねん・ことし* and *しゅうまつ・しょうらい*. Although many teacher examiners did give candidates opportunities to use the past and future tenses there were candidates who were not given explicit opportunities to do so, and did not do so of their own accord.

The most successful candidates felt confident to take their time to expand their answers giving numerous opinions and reasons. They used more complex structures, such as *たりたり、ことが* and *まえに・あとで*, confidently and frequently. Positive and negative opinions were also expressed throughout the examination and *くて* and *くない* were frequently used. As last year, where candidates employed *とおもいます* this added weight to their opinions and justifications. These candidates were also not afraid to ask for clarification or repetition – both of which are normal parts of communication. They also used the range of tenses confidently and accurately.

Whilst many teacher examiners have embraced the format of the new speaking exam there are a significant minority who need to read the specification and ensure that the requirements are met. Disappointingly, as in 2011 there were numerous errors with

- Task length – especially task 1
- Choice of topic(s) from the two given in the specification
- Clarity of recording
- Completion of the form by both the Teacher examiner and the candidate
- Centres submitting recording on tapes

It follows, therefore, that if all teacher examiners complied with the very clear guidelines that candidates would benefit very significantly.

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