

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Japanese (5JA03)
Paper 1 Reading and Understanding in
Japanese

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GCSE Japanese

Unit 3 Reading and Understanding in Japanese

Examiner Report

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

In general, students coped well with the exam format. However, it was felt that many students 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. When confronted with spaces to be filled in, such as in questions Q2 and Q9, it was felt that many students did not read the questions properly and failed to notice that some of the answer boxes were already filled in. Teachers need to be aware that it is increasingly important for students to write their answers fully and clearly as the Mark Scheme is strictly adhered to.

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

It was felt that the most students performed well in Q1 and were confident with recognising city names in both *hiragana* and *katakana*. However, a surprising number of students lost marks in Q2. Many did not recognise いもうと and こうちゃ. Teachers need to make sure that students know the differences between あね, いもうと, あに and おとうと. Also, between こうちゃ and おちゃ.

In Q3, students were tested for the meaning of *kanji*. The most students were well prepared for this question and it was generally well answered except for 鉄道 in part (v). In Q4, students were tested on the basic grammar. Most students did very well in this question although teachers should encourage them to learn ...から...まで as a phrase.

Many students were familiar with the topic in Q5 and performed very well. However, a surprising number of students only indicated an answer for part (i) despite the word 'two' being highlighted in the question. Students are strongly recommended to look at the mark allocation carefully.

On the whole, students performed well in questions Q6 and Q7. Students should be reminded to write their answers clearly using capital letters. In question 8, students were tested on the pronunciation of *kanji*. It was clear that many students were prepared for this type of question and it was generally well answered.

In the final question, students coped well on the whole. However, some failed to understand the context of the passage and fabricated answers based on a single word or pictures. Teachers must find strategies to improve students' comprehension skills. Despite the clear layout, some students did not give two points to gain the 2 marks in part (g). Teachers should also encourage students to answer questions in detail and in full sentences. Some students did not recognise key words such as 県 and 森. Similarly, many did not recognise しんごう, こうつう, あんぜん and ねこ.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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