

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Japanese (5JA03/01)
Paper 1: Reading and Understanding in
Japanese

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GCSE Japanese
Unit 1 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 notices, email, message or article 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. Teachers should continue to encourage students to familiarise themselves with the 'x' answering method and follow strategies which will prevent duplicate answers in one row and no answer in another row. When answering questions by writing letters as in Q6, students must ensure their letters are clearly written and 'C' and 'G', for example, are distinguished. Some work still needs to be done for questions which requires candidates to fill in spaces such as questions 2 and 9. Teachers should encourage students to read questions properly, and write their answers fully and clearly as the Mark Scheme is strictly adhered to. Similarly, they should note number of marks allocated to each subsection and write answers in appropriate spaces.

Students should answer all questions in English as answers in Japanese are not accepted. Students also need to be reminded to read to the whole passage before selecting or writing their answers. Teachers should also remind students that more difficult questions do no longer appear towards the end of the paper and easier ones at the beginning. Similarly, the difficulty level varies within the question. Students must be encouraged to attempt to answer all questions throughout the paper.

It was felt that most students performed very well in Q1 and coped well with words in both *hiragana* and *katakana*. Some students did not read the questions in Q2 properly and failed to notice that some of the answer boxes were already filled in. Many students did not recognise the word 'やきゅう' in Q2(iv). In Q3, students were tested on the meaning of *kanji*. In general, students coped very well with the question format and they performed well.

Many students struggled with the grammar question in Q4. Teachers should encourage them to follow strategies such as realising that a final verb should come before a full stop. Candidates should also pay attention to various tenses. Many students were confused by the differences between *でした*, *です* and *ました* in Q4(i) and (v). Many also struggled with Q4(ii).

Generally, students performed well in Q5. They were familiar with the topic and the question format. Some student found Q6 challenging. A surprisingly large number failed to answer Q6(ii) and (iv) correctly. Candidates should be reminded to write their answers clearly using capital letters. On the whole, students performed well in Q7. However, there was some evidence of students not reading the whole passage before selecting their answers.

In Q8, students were tested on the pronunciation of *kanji*. Many students struggled in this section. Teachers should make sure they should go through the pronunciation of *kanji* as well as their meanings.

In the final question, students generally coped well. However, some failed to understand the context of the passage and fabricated answers based on a single word or the picture. 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 questions (d) and (f). Some students failed to write their answers fully and lost vital marks. For example, in question (b) they were expected to say the village had the least population in Honshu. Many candidates just wrote 'small' and lost a mark. A large number of students did not recognise the word 'しんごう' in (d). Teachers should remind candidates that answers must be written in English.

Grade Boundaries

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

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