

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Japanese
(5JA03/01)
Paper 3: Reading and Understanding in
Japanese

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Publications Code 5JA03_01_1606_ER

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GCSE Japanese (2016)
Unit 3 Reading and Understanding in Japanese
Examiner's 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. Candidates 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, candidates coped well with the exam format. Teachers should continue to encourage candidates to familiarise themselves with the 'x' answering method and follow strategies which will prevent duplicate answers in one row and no answers in another row. When answering questions by writing letters as in question 6, candidates must ensure their letters are clearly written, and 'B' and 'E' for example are distinguished. Some work still need to be done for questions which requires candidates to fill in spaces such as questions 2 and 9. Teachers should encourage candidates 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. Teachers should also 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.

Overall, this year's paper followed 'peaks and troughs' of difficulty patten which was spread out throughout it. It was felt that the most candidates performed very well in Q1 and were confident with recognising place names in both *hiragana* and *katakana*. However, a surprising number of candidates struggled in Q2. Many candidates thought 一年生 was people with one year experience rather than the first years. Similarly, a number of candidates failed to recognise 小学校 in (d). Teachers should ensure the topic is covered thoroughly in the future.

In Q3, candidates were tests for the meaning of *kanji*. It was clear that many candidates were prepared for this type of question and it was generally well answered except for (iii) 近所 and (iv) 自分. Teachers must ensure candidates are aware of the difference between 私 and 自分. In Q4, candidates were tested on the basic grammar. It was generally well answered and candidates were aware of differences between various particles. However, many failed to recognise it was a negative sentence and chose を rather than も in (v). As mentioned above, candidates should be reminded to write their answers clearly using capital letters.

On the whole, candidates performed very well in questions 5 and 6. However, a surprising number of candidates did not recognise 教会 in Q5(v). Many candidates were familiar with the topic and did very well in Q7. In Q8, candidates were tested on the pronunciation of *kanji*. This year, many candidates struggled with this question and failed to recognise 切る and 売る in particular. Teachers are strongly recommended to find strategies to improve candidates' abilities to read *kanji*.

In the final question, candidates coped well on the whole. However, some failed to understand the context of the passage and fabricated answers based on a single word. Teachers must find strategies to improve candidates' comprehension skills. A surprising number of candidates did not recognise 料理 and 家庭科室 which meant they did not understand what the notice was about. Many candidates thought the notice was addressed to 'Mina' because they failed to understand 新入生のみなさん. Despite the clear layout, some candidates did not give two points to gain the marks in (c). Similarly, they should read the question carefully as Asia is not a country. When answering questions like (i), candidates must remember to write their answers in full. For instance, simply writing 'write name' is not enough to gain the mark as it is not describing what you should do in detail. Teachers should make it clear to candidates that they are required to write their answers in detail and in full sentences.

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>