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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE Japanese 5JA04 01

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Paper 4 (5JA04 01): Writing

As this was the first year of the examination, there were very few entries. The candidates who took this examination this year were able to write well in Japanese and achieved a good standard.

Of the short writing tasks (Section A) parts (b) and (c) were popular. On each topic, candidates were able to give several different ideas. Most students incorporated narration of a personal experience into their writing, thus were able to use grammatical structures such as the past tense,

～かったです、～と思いました、～たり～たりしました。

Parts (a) and (b) were popular for the longer writing task (Section B). Many candidates clearly had personal experiences of learning about Japanese culture, and so were able to write in detail about this. The quality of language was generally very good.

Advice for teaching future candidates

1. Candidates need to address the bullet points given in the question. Candidates aiming for a grade B and above must not only address the bullet points, but expand their answers and give further details.
2. The examiners are very concerned that many of the weaker candidates will give up on this paper, since the word-level and sentence-level questions available on the “old” GCSE have disappeared. Please encourage the least able candidates to write something - even if it is just a few words - in answer to the bullet points, and to do this on BOTH questions. Eg on this year’s Q1 (b), a very weak candidate might write something like: パリスいきました。みましたアふレtower。からきんよび、2日7月まで水よび、7日7月です。The examiners can do something with this and find some marks for the candidate, whereas if the paper is blank, the examiners have no choice but to award a 0.
3. Candidates should write in paragraphs, and be familiar with the correct use of げんこうようし 原稿用紙.
4. Candidates aiming for a grade A or A* must use a range of grammatical structures, including some harder structures. There is no change in the quality of language expected in candidates’ writing at the higher grades.
5. Please note that the time allowed for the new paper 4 is shorter than the time allowed for the old paper 4.
6. Teachers will note that the use of dictionaries is allowed on this paper. Candidates will need substantial in-class practice before the examination with their chosen dictionary, both to familiarise themselves with it and to develop dictionary skills. Teachers will no doubt be aware of the difficulties candidates have in using dictionaries appropriately, and the mistakes they can make when they are not fully aware of parts of speech, the need to transform verbs etc. It is recommended that careful attention is given in class to guide candidates in the use of dictionaries.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	50	42	36	30	25	19	14	9	4	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16	0

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