

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

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 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. 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 answers in another row. When answering questions by writing letters as in question 6, students 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. Teacher 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. Teachers should also remind students that more difficult questions do not 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.

Overall, this year's paper followed 'peaks and troughs' of difficulty patterns which was spread out throughout it. It was felt that most students performed very well in Q1 and were confident with recognising names in both *hiragana* and *katakana*. However, in Q2 many did not recognise the weather. Teachers should ensure the topic is covered thoroughly in the future so that students can recognise words such as あめ and くもり. A surprising number of students did not recognise countries in *katakana* such as イタリア in (ii).

In Q3, students were tests for the meaning of *kanji*. The most students were well prepared for this question and it was generally well answered except for (iv) 料理 and (v) 物理. In Q4, students were tested on the basic grammar. It was generally well answered but surprising number of students did not see と after じゅんじゅん and put は instead of と in (i). Similarly, many got the tense wrong in the last sentence and put でした instead of です in (v).

On the whole, students performed very well in questions 5 and 6. However, a surprising number of students did not recognise 漢字 in Q5. As mentioned above, students should be reminded to write their answers clearly using capital letters. Many students did very well in Q7. However, students should be careful not to mix up *Tokyo* and *Kyoto* in (v).

In Q8, 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. Some students struggled with 安い and were confused with 古い.

In the final question, students coped well on the whole. However, some failed understand the context of the passage and fabricated answers based on a single word. Teachers must find strategies to improve students' comprehension skills. A surprising number of students did not recognise common words such as おんせん and 旅館 and could not provide appropriate translations in English. Teachers should remind candidates simply writing Japanese words in alphabets such as *onsen* in (c) and *ryokan* in (g) will not be accepted as correct answers. Despite the clear layout, some students did not give two points to gain the marks in (h). When answering questions like (f), (h) and (i), students must remember to write their answers in full. For instance, simply writing 'internet' is not enough to gain the mark in (i). Similarly, 'go to hot spring' is not sufficient for (f). Teachers should make it clear to the students 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:

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