

Examiners' Report  
June 2014

GCSE Japanese 5JA04 01

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## **Introduction**

It is clear that both teachers and candidates work extremely hard to prepare for this paper, and that candidates have learnt to express themselves in writing in Japanese. Many candidates have succeeded in learning not only the hiragana and the katakana, but basic kanji as well. Candidates are able to use a range of vocabulary and sentence patterns to describe situations, narrate a short story, and give simple opinions on their experiences.

## Question 1 (a)

Question 1 was generally answered well by candidates, particularly the description of the rooms and hotel facilities. Candidates were able to bring together vocabulary from various topic areas such as describing what is in a room, sports, food and so on, to provide sufficient details to describe the hotel. Sometimes it was not clear which part of the writing was a description, and which part of the writing was a recommendation of the hotel.

This is an example of a less successful response.

Answer space for Section A (short writing task)

Start here ↓

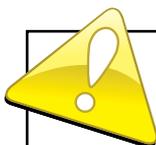
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### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This piece was given 3 marks for Communication and Content, as it is short, not easy to read, with minimal description and no opinions. Credit was given for ホテルの部屋きれいです, ひろいへや and ひろいこわ.

It was also given 3 for knowledge and application of language, as the sentences are short and repetitive (mainly using です). The candidate was, however, given credit for knowing basic Japanese word order, and a good attempt at copying out 部屋 from the dictionary.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

It is possible to practise and have some pre-prepared model sentences, which you would feel confident in using.

### Question 1 (b)

Candidates were strong at explaining some of their family Christmas traditions, whether that was the food, decorating the tree, opening the presents or going to a Church service. Sometimes they were unable to, or forgot to, say where and with whom they spent Christmas. With this question there also was a tendency to use a lot of katakana words, which were not necessarily written accurately.

This is a piece of work by a candidate with a reasonably strong grasp of GCSE Japanese, although not at the very top end of the candidature. The candidate has worked hard to produce a piece of this length.

**Answer space for Section A (short writing task)**

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**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

The Communication and content was given a mark of 6, 'Most of the task complete, although there may be some omissions'. The second bullet point has been answered in detail, but unfortunately the first bullet point seems only to have been addressed as an after-thought, and with the added misspelling of the word 'house', it was considered that the first bullet point was not adequately addressed. There is an opinion in the 'daisuki desu', and an attempt at linking by using 'demo'.

The Knowledge and application of language is good, with a range of harder grammatical structures such as the 'tari tari' structure, a 'koto ga dekimasu' and an i-adjective link. This piece also illustrates a fairly typical error by candidates, which is that a 'tari tari' structure is used, but the underlying ta-forms may be incorrect.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Do learn and include some kanji. You know you are likely to write kanji such as 'suki' and 'tanoshii', so it is worth making an effort to have these ready to use.

### Question 1 (c)

This question was reasonably popular with candidates. There was a tendency to perhaps over-use 'pre-learnt' material; some of the answers looked as though they were responses to previous years' GCSE questions, rather than questions on this year's examination paper.

This is an example of work by a stronger candidate.

**Answer space for Section A (short writing task) - (continued)**

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Answer space for Section A (short writing task)

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**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

The piece was given 8 marks for Communication and Content. There is evidence of description and opinion, and a reasonable attempt to link the piece into a whole.

It was given 9 for Knowledge and Application of Language, for the range of more difficult grammatical structures used, for example *と思います。* and *食べるまえに* ie 'Wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures, including some complex items.'



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Do learn the conventions for writing on squared Japanese paper - the full stops at the tops of lines look very awkward in this piece.



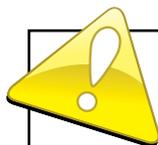


## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

It is clear that this candidate has carefully read the bullet points, and set out to cover each bullet point systematically, which is highly commendable. This piece was given 7 marks for Communication and Content, as relevant information is conveyed, although there are omissions. The Communication and Content mark could have been improved by giving further information, for example not just 学校に本がよみます but 学校のとしょかんで本をよみます。としょかんはしずかです。としょかんは大きいです。ひる休みに友だちとしょかんに行きます。There should be a paragraph change before the パオロア in line 6, and putting a paragraph change in may have helped the candidate to see that she had only written 4 lines on the first bullet point, and think as to whether she could write a bit more.

The Knowledge and Application of Language mark for this page would be in the 5 - 6 range. The syntax is basically correct in short, simple sentences. On this page there are no attempts at longer, more complex sentences, and the mark could be improved by including some more ambitious grammatical structures.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

- Do include some kanji if you can.
- Do set out your work in paragraphs.

## Question 2 (b)

This question was very popular. Sometimes the reasons the candidate enjoyed the festival were difficult to find, particularly if these were buried amongst the details of activities at the festival. Candidates need to make sure that they have covered all three bullet points in their answers.

This is the work of a reasonably strong candidate.

Some schools are now teaching candidates to start each bullet point on a new page (as this candidate has done), and if the teacher feels this would help candidates, this is a perfectly acceptable practice.

Answer space for Section B (longer writing task) – (continued)

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Answer space for Section B (longer writing task) – (continued)

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Answer space for Section B (longer writing task)

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## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

The Communication and content was given a mark of 12. Clearly each bullet point has been addressed and expanded (detailed response to the stimulus), although perhaps more could have been written on each of the bullet points. For example, on the first page, both the types of music and shops could have been described. Again on the first page, the '毎年おまつりに行きます' may have been better as the second sentence as part of the overall introduction. This would have made the flow better, perhaps hitting the 'excellent linking of the piece into a whole' in the 13 - 15 mark band for Communication and Content.

There is a real attempt to use a range of grammatical structures on the middle page, and the Knowledge and Application of Language was given a mark of 9. (There are some GCSE kanji, such as 料理 missing, which is why it was not given a 10.) The accuracy was given a 5.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Notice how this candidate has used linking words such as **でも、そして、だから、しかし** to link one idea to the next and make the piece flow.

## Question 2 (c)

Not many candidates chose this question, but those who did generally wrote reasonably well. There were many creative and imaginative answers. The only problem was that some wrote as though they had been doing the job for weeks, rather than it being a reflection after the first day, as required by the task.

This is the work of a weak candidate. It shows all the signs of lots of incorrect dictionary use. Presumably the おげきでか。 was written from memory, and this candidate may well have scored better by keeping going on material that they had learnt in class and was in their active knowledge, for example しごとは いしゃです。 しごとは げつようびから きんようびまで です。 しごとは 8じから 5じまで です。 くるまで びょういんに いきます。 びょういんは おおきいです。 しごとはおもしろいです。 しごとは すきです。 etc.

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Answer space for Section B (longer writing task)

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## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

The Communication and Content was given a mark of 3 'Very limited, rarely comprehensible to a native speaker.'

The Knowledge and Application of Language was also given 3 marks as 'Language is basic and sometimes inappropriate to the task'. There is no use of non-target language, which would have put it into the 1 - 2 mark band, and there is also some evidence that the candidate has some idea about basic word order, in for example the sentence which starts 私の仕事は and ends with かかるで、

The Accuracy was given a mark of 2 - 'frequent misspellings' and 'frequent incorrect verb forms.'



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Do your best to compose your own sentences from the Japanese you know, before you reach for your dictionary.

## **Question 2 (d)**

This question was not chosen by many candidates. Those who did choose it were generally able to express their excitement at finding a blog about their craft and giving their opinions, but were weaker on describing something they themselves had recently made.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this paper, candidates are offered the following advice.

- Candidates must answer each bullet point, for both the short answer and the long answer questions.
- Please encourage candidates to try to write about the same amount for each bullet point. If candidates wish to start a new page for each bullet point (each paragraph), that is fine.
- Please encourage candidates to plan their work, organise it, and write in logical paragraphs.
- The conventions for the use of 原稿用紙 should be taught. In particular, please emphasise the need for correct punctuation.
- It is very pleasing that candidates are attempting to use a wide range of grammatical structures. Please continue to remind candidates of the importance of accuracy (eg of the forms), and of using the structures they want to include in appropriate places.

## Grade Boundaries

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