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Edexcel

Examiner's Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Japanese (1JA0)

Paper 4F: Writing in Japanese

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Introduction

All concerned with this exam are by now familiar with the demands of the tasks set and know what they need to do to meet those demands. There is, therefore, no need for general comments, as most of what the examiners felt should be communicated to teachers and candidates alike has been said in past years.

Task content

Each task in this paper, even Q1, has more than one element to be addressed. To achieve as many content marks as possible, candidates should ensure they have dealt with each point, even if only cursorily. Equally, some of the bullet points (BP) are included with a particular grammatical focus in mind, so candidates can be sure that there will be a chance to use a ~たい form (Q2) as well as a chance to narrate an event in the past tense (Q3).

Q1 (12 marks, no option)

To gain a high mark, candidates needed to fulfil both parts of the task, ie describe AND give opinion. Many candidates did both very well. Some gave a very short description, whilst others seemed unclear about the meaning of 'public transport'. There was frequent confusion between でんしゃ and じてんしゃ, and of those who chose to locate the scene on a bus, several were unable to write バス accurately. Although the transport to those familiar with Japan was clearly not a bullet train, the examiners were happy to accept しんかんせん.

Q2 (16 marks, choice of two topics)

Option (a) – Using your Japanese

Fewer candidates chose this than option (b), but it was far from being an unpopular choice. Many had a good range of foods to draw on for BP4, although spelling caused problems in some cases. (A key word for this task – レストラン – also proved problematic for some.) Whilst many scored well on Communication and Content (CC), the use of を as a 'default' particle in some scripts meant that the Knowledge and Application of Language (LKA) was often lower.

Option (b) – Doing sports together

The best marks went to the scripts that used a basic, correct sentence for each BP, with the addition of a ~たい form for the last BP. In BP4, the activity had to be something Japanese: おりがみ was a common answer, whilst カラオケ gained marks here too. As for BP3, it was apparent that writing common words like スポーツ and サッカー still needs more practice. The comment for (a) above about particle use applied to this option too.

Q3 (20 marks)

Option (a) – Weather

Descriptions of the weather were often good, the vocabulary for temperature and seasons clearly being well known. However, describing the weather in the past (BP3) was not so successful as many struggled to put ~い adjectives into the past tense. Whilst many had interesting stories about occasions when the weather caused a change of plan (this increasing the CC mark), there was often confusion over time words, meaning that a sentence would start, for example, 来年 and end 行きました. This, of course, affected the LKA mark. Most candidates did well on BP4, including a reason for their choice (often a negative comment about UK weather!), although some just said りょこうします which did not answer the question.

Option (b) – Being friends

Many candidates gave good descriptions of what they and their friends had in common; just as many told about their differences. Use of the past tense in BP2 was more successful than in the equivalent BP for option (a); examiners were generous towards candidates' interpretation of the word 'event'. In BP3 stronger candidates used ~たり, although not always with complete success. (As always, the formation of the ~て form was problematic.) Some candidates went to great pains to try and express the concept of 'having time on your own', but they should remember that the examiner knows what the task is! Leaving a square empty to indicate a new BP is sufficient.

Q4 Translation (12 marks)

- (a) Most candidates managed to score at least 1 mark here.
- (b) Some candidates seemed confused about the meaning of 'good at'; spelling of ギター was often a problem, despite it being a relatively easy instrument to spell.
- (c) Most candidates were able to supply two adjectives here.
- (d) Some candidates managed to convey the meaning fairly successfully; whilst がっこう and バンド were often well done, 'practice' was designed to stretch those at the higher end of the ability range.
- (e) Some decided to make these two sentences, which was perfectly acceptable. Many decided it was easier to 'see' rather than 'meet' the pianist.