



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Japanese (1JA0)
Paper 4F: Writing in Japanese

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Introduction

The format of this exam should by now be familiar to all. For general comments about improving student performance, based on common errors that crop up every year, teachers are advised to read the report on the 2024 exam.

A few further things to note about this year's paper:

- Commonly misspelt words this year included: とうきょう (Q2b)、アルバイト (Q3a) frequently written in hiragana, ギター (Q3b), レストラン (Q4e).
- In question 3b, markers were lenient over the spelling of katakana words that are perhaps not obvious from the English: レッスン、イベント.
- Teachers should ensure that their students are alert to the difference between 'Japanese' as a language and the same word as an adjective. This applied particularly to the translation question (Q4). (Candidates were not penalised twice for the same error.)

Q1 (12 marks, no option)

Many candidates described the photo by saying 人がたくさんいます or 日本人が二人います, then たのしいです. Such simple sentences are exactly what is expected at this level; there was no need to try to write 'Liverpool' in katakana, for example. In fact, as the mark scheme (MS) for this question makes no mention of katakana at all, even 'football' could be written in hiragana. There was, of course, no expectation of candidates being able to express 'watching sport'; many candidates dealt well with this by saying something like 友だちとスポーツを見ます。たのしいです。The katakana word here could have been avoided by substituting a sport written in hiragana, eg やきゅう.

Q2 (16 marks, choice of two topics)

In this task a simple sentence for each bullet point (BP) is enough, although many wrote more than this. Teachers can remind students that there is no need to waste space on further greetings; what is already given on the page is sufficient.

Option (a) – Lost property

A problem for some candidates with this task was the katakana needed for BPs 2/3 (ホテル). (The communication and content – CC – mark grid for this question specifically mentions the use of katakana.) There were also many different ways given to express 'mobile phone': some candidates played safe with でんわ, whilst others used katakana options (スマホ、モバイル).

Option (b) – A local tour

This option was more popular than (a). There is no real difference in the level of difficulty between the two options, but perhaps candidates were more familiar through classroom practice with the kind of things asked in the BPs for (b). From the rubric given, it should be clear that the tour needs to happen soon, but candidates were not penalised for using time adverbs in the more distant future.

In Q2, candidates tend to score higher for CC than they do for linguistic knowledge and accuracy (LKA). In order to gain a higher LKA mark, an attempt should be made to include some linking, even at a simple level: for example スマホは小さくて、かわいいです or 日本の食べものは好きですから、レストランに行きたいです。

Q3 (20 marks, choice of two topics)

As with Q2, it is sufficient to address each BP simply, although in the case of Q3, it would be better to try and write two sentences. Candidates should always check in which BP different tenses are needed; this year again, past in BP2 and future in BP4. Successful reference to different time frames is an important factor when examiners are deciding on a mark for LKA.

Option (a) – Earning money

Given the high numbers of teachers and lawyers that came up as an answer to BP1, it seems likely that many candidates were happy to use a job they knew how to say rather than tell the truth! Many developed this point by saying what they (or the parent) thought of this job. For BP4 many candidates gave a job they wanted to do, rather than where they wanted to work, but this was accepted as a valid response.

Option (b) – Music

As with question 2, the (b) option was more popular with candidates, perhaps because in this case it was a more personally relevant topic. For BP2, examiners were lenient when judging how ‘memorable’ the lesson was - many candidates either sang in front of class or played the piano with the teacher – but it was important that the incident took place in a lesson setting, rather than at a bigger musical event.

Q4 Translation (12 marks)

On the whole, the translation task was dealt with well by candidates. The vocabulary seemed to be largely familiar, the only real problem for many candidates being ‘classroom’; クラスルーム was accepted, as long as written in katakana. For sentence (e), dividing into two sentences was accepted.

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