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**Summer 2024**

**Pearson Edexcel GCSE**  
**In Japanese (1JA0)**  
**Paper 4H: Writing**

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## Introduction

The format of this exam is now familiar to all and there were many excellent responses, both in terms of content (CC) and language (LKA). Failure to address a bullet point (BP) was rare, although in a couple of places on the paper more attention should have been paid to the wording of the question. As can be expected at this level, use of 原稿用紙 was generally correct, with 'small letters' and punctuation in the right place.

Some useful reminders for candidates/teachers:

- Try to make as clear as possible the difference in katakana between ソ・ノ・ン and シ・ツ. This was of particular importance in 1b BP3: オンライン.
- Time adverbs (and how to spell them) are essential. Using a future time adverb with a past tense verb (or the other way round) leads to 'ambiguity' (LKA). A common error is also to write 先年 instead of きょ年.
- The inclusion of 'common kanji' is referred to within the CC section of the mark scheme and so candidates should practice writing kanji that will be needed whatever the topic (people, time adverbs, basic verbs).
- There is no need to include any kind of introduction or title for any of the tasks. Whilst good language in this part **is** credited (as LKA), it is unlikely to lead to a higher CC mark.
- For questions 1 and 2, remember to indicate the option that you have chosen. A surprisingly high number of candidates failed to do this.

### Q1 (20 marks, choice of two options)

The best responses to this shorter writing task addressed each BP in turn, writing roughly the same amount for each point.

#### Option (a) – Places to go

This was by far the more popular option for Question 1. Most candidates were able to write easily about a long trip they had recently made (Japan was predictably the destination of choice!), and for BP4 said they wanted to go on the しかんせん on their next trip. Any form of transport was accepted, even if it seemed unlikely that this would be a new experience; however, it was not possible to achieve full marks for CC if the form of transport given in BP4 had already featured in BP2.

BP1 was a good example of candidates either not reading or not understanding the point correctly: it asks about places 'you **like** to visit' not '**want** to visit'. This point was intended to elicit some interesting adjectives (historical, quiet, lively, etc.) or phrases (beautiful scenery, tasty food, cultural activities, etc.) rather than simply name a city or country. It was disappointing how many candidates could not spell りょこう correctly. Some resorted to トラベル (fine), but this occasionally changed into トラブル!

## Option (b) – Going shopping

Candidates who chose this option often had good reasons for their purchase in BP2 and why they liked (or not) online shopping in BP3.

For BP2, examiners were looking for some indication of the recent purchase being 'unusual' in some way; as with BP1 in Q1a, this was a detail that not all candidates noticed.

Although this may have seemed quite challenging, many candidates came up with good ideas such as buying an item of clothing in a colour that usually they do not wear, or buying themselves something that normally a parent would buy for them.

BP3 did not actually ask for a reason for an opinion of online shopping, but most assumed that one was needed: buying things online was commonly seen to be *べんり* and/or *はやい*.

Some candidates took the opportunity for this BP to use a linguistically complex structure, comparing online purchases with purchases made in a shop.

## Q2 (28 marks, choice of two options)

Nearly all candidates made sure they had dealt with each BP and took note of the opportunity the task gave for using a variety of tense frames (past in BP2, future in BP4).

### Option (a) – The future of sport

BP1 gave candidates across the ability range the chance to talk, even simply, about their sporting interests. Football was by far the most popular sport chosen, with only a few choosing to talk about a Japanese sport, such as *相撲* or *剣道*. The more creative answers came up with amusing stories of terrible PE lessons for BP2 (often involving injury!), but it was important here to use a past tense (if not used elsewhere) and not just give a generic description of these lessons. Every band in the LKA descriptors makes mention of 'successful references to past...', so not including a past tense will inevitably lower the LKA mark awarded.

The 'why' question in BP3 was the most challenging aspect of this task, but it was good to see how well candidates dealt with this, mentioning advantages such as positive effect on health, bringing people together, the chance to make friends. Every candidate was able to say *スポーツは大切だと思います*, showing how well they have been prepared for this exam. It was good also to see that candidates did not try to express 'plays an important role in society', realising that it was an unnecessary part of any answer.

Inevitably the Paris Olympics were a common choice of event for BP4.

### Option (b) – What makes a good friend?

This was the more popular of the two options, but was perhaps not as 'easy' as some perhaps thought at first glance.

In addressing BP1 many candidates produced a rather uninteresting description of their best friend, often relying on adjectives such as *楽しい* and *おもしろい*, without giving any explanation of how they were fun or interesting. Some who gave a physical description needed to say explicitly what the reason was for liking the friend; being tall is not usually enough to explain a friendship. BP3 was the most challenging part of this question, especially within the limits of GCSE- level language. However, many managed it very well: I see my friends every day, I cannot talk to my parents, my parents are always busy, and similar reasons. There was also a chance to increase the LKA mark by using a comparison structure.

The final BP was designed to allow candidates to show off their command of structures to express a future plan/intention and most did this very well. Writing 'surprise' in katakana did, however, give rise to several variations in spelling.

### Q3 Translation (12 marks)

Although the translation was not very long and for the most part the vocabulary was not too demanding, it still had a few more challenging sections. The descriptors in the MS show that candidates do not have to produce a perfect translation to gain some marks, so it is always possible for students across the ability range to attempt some, if not all, of the text. Candidates should check the Japanese against the English if they have time: several versions had complete sentences missing.