

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Japanese (6JA01) Paper 1

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Overall Comments

The paper was similar to that of previous years. It is pleasing to see that candidates seem to be well prepared for all aspects of the paper, but particularly for the continuous writing question. Centres should prepare their students for this qualification taking into consideration the level of knowledge required, particularly in responding to the continuous writing question.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to give the correct hiragana for *はじめました* and *もり*, although *はやし* and *き* were sometimes offered as incorrect answers. *変わる* proved difficult for candidates, with quite a few blank answers and quite a few *へん*. *あるく* was generally known, although some candidates put *はしる*. *かかり* also challenged some candidates who offered *いと* as an incorrect answer.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to answer *れきし* for the first question, but many of the other words challenged some candidates. Candidates should practise in class and focus on defining and learning words through the medium of Japanese, rather than solely relying on English – Japanese translations in their vocabulary books.

Question 3

This question was generally well tackled, although in (b) and (c), candidates often chose the correct grammatical form (eg the *て* form for (c)), but semantically the wrong verb. Candidates need to be reminded to look at both the meaning and the grammatical form of the words offered.

Question 4

Question (b) proved difficult for some candidates, although whether this was because that sentence was particularly difficult to read or whether it was just because candidates found the “no information” option hard was difficult to say. Questions (c) and (e) were well received by the majority of the candidates. Centres need to remind their candidates that they should use all three of the *同じ*, *違う* and *インフォメーションなし* options.

Question 5

Most candidates attempted to answer all the reading comprehension questions, which was pleasing. Question (e) was probably the most challenging, with many candidates answering 「校長先生は国産の材料で給食を作ろうと思ったからです」. Overall, there was strong evidence that candidates had been very well prepared for this type of question by their teachers, although candidates should be reminded that they should answer these questions in full sentences in order to be able to access the marks for quality of language. For example, a large number wrote *黒いでした* for (d) (i), and whilst this was given credit for content, it would not have contributed to the quality of language mark.

Question 6

It was pleasing that even candidates who had evident difficulties with the first four sentences had kept on trying and picked up some marks in the second half of the sentence. 市 challenged a few candidates, with many writing “prefecture”. Most candidates found interpreting the subject of the second sentence demanding, and in the fourth sentence 山の手線 was often unknown.

どうやって富士山の写真をとりましたか also proved slightly difficult, with candidates often offering the singular (photograph) where a plural was needed. The convention for naming mountains, namely Mt. Fuji was unknown to a few candidates. A number of candidates translated 聞いてみました as “hear” or “listen”, which led to translating “ask” for 聞いて. The last sentence also proved hard for candidates, who often missed the future meaning, and thus interpreted これからも as “from here” or “from Mr. Fuji”.

Question 7

Candidates performed really well in question 7, for which they are to be commended. In particular, the majority of candidates made a good effort to answer all four of the bullet points, and to try not only to answer it but to expand and elaborate their content as well. Given that there are 28 marks available for content (by far the largest number of marks available on this paper), this is an excellent strategy, and teachers are encouraged to continue preparing future candidates in the same way.

In terms of the quality of language, most candidates attempted to use a good range of grammar and in particular kanji, which was pleasing. Accuracy remains a problem, with many candidates unable to form て forms correctly, or even forgetting the past tense of the i adjective, which they would have studied in their GCSE course. It is a judgement call for each school to make, but on the whole, it may be worth considering teaching fewer grammatical structures for productive use, but to a higher degree of accuracy.

Candidates need to make sure that they address the letter to the correct person (this letter was often addressed to エマさん), that they do not write お元気です about themselves, or sign off their own names with the さん after it. The use of the two kanji 会う and 合う was often confused. Candidates should also further practice on the conventions of using 原稿用紙 and its punctuation.

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