

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Japanese (6JA01) Paper 1

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Overall Comments

It is evident that candidates are being very thoroughly prepared for this examination by their teachers and working hard to learn the necessary vocabulary, kanji and grammar. The general standard achieved by candidates was very good.

Question 1 required candidates to write the pronunciation of kanji. Most candidates knew 選ぶ, although quite a few wrote せん. The number who did not know 便利 was surprising. 集める proved the most challenging question in this section.

Question 2 required candidates to match two halves of sentences. (a) was the hardest, whilst (d) and (e) were relatively easy.

Question 3 was a gap fill: if they are struggling with this question, candidates have a tendency to put down the hardest looking kanji compound. This year this happened in (c), where many candidates put down 動物 or 経験.

Question 4 required candidates to choose the 5 correct statements from a bank of statements, and was generally very well answered.

Question 5 required answering short comprehension question in Japanese. It was very pleasing that most candidates attempted all of these questions.

In (a), some candidates lost the mark as they did not make it clear that it was the last flight for the Boeing 747, and made it sound like all flights in Japan were ceasing. (d) and (f) were easy. Quite a few candidates did not seem to grasp that the answer to (e) could be as simple as もらいました and erroneously copied out much longer sections of the text. In (h), some candidates missed out on the mark as they simply said that more passengers were carried, without mentioning that the flights had become cheaper. Many candidates did not score highly on the quality of language marks, as they only copied out sections of the text. Candidates need to be reminded to answer in their own words.

Candidates tried very hard on the translation, and most understood the first couple of sentences about Tokyo being awarded the 2020 Olympics and the opening ceremony. However, many struggled to go for the most natural English and use a passive to translate the opening sentence. A surprising number muddled up am and pm in the second sentence. The でしょう in the third sentence, indicating here a logical deduction, was missed by many candidates. The range of meanings and usage でしょう can have might be usefully covered with candidates. There were also quite a few careless errors on translating the 17 日まで as 'from the 17th.' As usual, katakana proved problematic, with マジパン often being translated as magic bread, although the examining team did have some sympathy with this error. Many candidates, however, were inconsistent in whether they translated the figure as being singular or plural. The これからも was often translated as 'from this'.

Many candidates produced very pleasing pieces of writing for the last question. Most candidates were careful to answer the bullet points, and to try to expand each one. Candidates should not start with long, rambling introductions, as if they do this, they will run out of space to write the main body of their essay. Sometimes they did not answer the second bullet point about why some Japanese high schools might forbid part-time work, but

gave their reasons for why they disagreed with this policy. However, candidates were generally very well prepared to state and justify their own opinion for the fourth bullet point. To improve their work further, candidates should work to make their piece link well and flow smoothly. It was also noted that candidates often confused the kanji and usage of 始める and 初めて.

Overall the standard achieved by candidates is very good, and shows solid progression in the one year they have had since sitting their GCSE. It is a delight to be able to read their work and reward them for their learning.

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