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Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCE

Japanese 9JA0

Paper 3: Listening, reading and writing

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Introduction

Given that candidates had lost a lot of teaching time due to the school closures during the pandemic, they demonstrated a high degree of learning new material, including a good range of grammar, kanji and vocabulary. Some of the skills tested in this paper – listening and summary – are also new to this specification, and there was ample evidence that both candidates and teachers had worked extremely hard to cover these new areas.

Question 1

This question tested listening skills through a series of multiple choice questions. The topic was on a school which had made a “no bullying” declaration. The recording used relatively simple grammatical structures, but some candidates nevertheless seemed to have more difficulty with this question than question 2. Perhaps it was because there was more reading to do in order to understand all 4 options given in each question. Please advise candidates in the future to read through the options and make sure they understand them before playing the recording.

Question 2

This question was also a multiple choice question on the theme of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Candidates may have been helped by their general knowledge of the tsunami, the information studied in class, and their own research, but on the whole candidates seemed to find this set of questions relatively accessible. The 以上、以下 and ぐらい in (i) required some thinking through.

Question 3(a)

This question was about a famous sportswoman, and required short answer responses. Most candidates were able to attempt the entirety of this question. In (i), some candidates failed to understand the question word どんな and simply wrote 空手の選手です。(v) also caused some difficulties, with candidates mixing up the purpose of the trip to Tokyo with what happened at the airport on return.

Question 3(b)

This question required a guided summary according to six bullet points. This question was generally tackled well. The only difficulty was that many candidates heard and wrote おじに instead of おじぎ. This is an example of where a good knowledge of vocabulary will help candidates, as they are much more likely to transcribe a word which they hear correctly if it is their vocabulary and they recognise it.

Question 4

This question again required short answer responses, and was on the theme of child poverty in Okinawa. Candidates were generally able to respond well. In (a), 夏休みの間、給食がないので was often given as a wrong answer. Candidates need to make sure that what they write

down is a logical answer to the question posed, not just something relevant that they hear on the recording.

Questions 5(a) and 5(b)

These were two related pieces of text, both on the theme of changing the start of the school year to September. The perspective in the spoken text in 5(a) was in favour, and the perspective in the written text 5(b) was against. Candidates were expected to note four opinions for each, which most were able to do very competently. Please note for the teaching of future candidates that they must write down the opinions, not simply facts.

Question 5(c)

This question requires candidates to write an evaluation of both of the viewpoints presented in 5(a) and 5(b). Most candidates had good writing skills, and were able to put together a well structured piece using a good range of grammar and vocabulary. Please do continue to encourage candidates to set out their work in logical paragraphs.

Where candidates lost marks, this was because they fundamentally misunderstood the nature of the task. Candidates are not expected to write an essay on the theme using their own ideas; neither will they score highly if they simply repeat what the speaker/writer has said. They are required to **evaluate** the points made by the speaker/writer. It may be useful to give candidates the marking criteria, and make them mark their own or a peer's work - or indeed some good / bad examples that the teacher has made up - to help them understand this point. So for example, "Morimoto san says that a September start to the academic year is important in enabling more Japanese students to go and study abroad. I agree, because currently too few Japanese students go abroad to study. Moreover, by going abroad they will acquire important 21st century skills such as better English and cross cultural understanding", would count as an evaluation of Morimoto san's perspective. Similarly, "Hayashi san says it is too lonely/sad to have school entrance photographs without cherry blossoms. I agree tradition is important, but I am sure that a new tradition could be established with equally pretty autumnal flowers" was an interesting evaluation offered by some of the strongest candidates.

Finally

If candidates write in pencil and then erase their work, please encourage them to erase it completely and thoroughly, aiming to leave no smudges. Smudging causes a significant deterioration in the quality of the scan. Alternatively, candidates may use pen and simply cross out any erroneous work.