

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Japanese(1752/1753)

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Examiners' Report

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Paper 1 - Listening and Responding

The paper followed the now familiar pattern and once again there was a clear indication that the 'peaks and troughs' of difficulty allowed the weaker candidates to make an effort through to the end scoring not only on the early Q1-10 but also on Q20 -22. As always, candidates with a good grasp of basic vocabulary found the early questions accessible but Q14 proved challenging. Candidates need reminding to listen to the whole conversation before making up their minds as to the correct answer. In the past questions involving counters e.g. Q16 have proved tricky but this year most candidates seemed well able to cope with this type of question. Q17 also caused difficulties for many candidates particularly at the end of the passage where の前に was involved. As in previous years the mark schemes awarded a mark for each correct link so candidates were able to score on the parts of the passage they understood readily. Q18 was marked sympathetically with mixtures of numbers allowed. A fair proportion of candidates found it difficult to distinguish between the numbers of adults and of children for whom the reservation was being made. Q19, a trough question, proved less testing than in the past, as this is a vocabulary area reassuringly familiar to most candidates. Once again candidates proved less adept at answering the questions in English, many appearing to offer answers to the wrong question word or the wrong question. In Q22(a) some candidates answered the question "Which days of the week will she work?" rather than the question set. In 20(b) many candidates gave Miss Yamada's answer rather than writing about what Mr Sato had been told about Miss Yamada. There were also a wide variety of vague and irrelevant answers for Q21(c). Q22(c) proved difficult with candidates trying many different ways to describe the location of the sports centre - all answers that appeared to refer to B1 were given credit but vague answers like 'underground' were not.

Paper 2 - Speaking

Candidates performed consistently well on their prepared topic but the two unprepared topics were sometimes thin by comparison. Successful candidates had clear methods for responding to questions taking the clues from the question; these candidates also asked for repetition when they had apparently not clearly understood. Weaker candidates resorted to mumbled responses or silence, not realising, perhaps, that even a しりません or a わかりません might be appropriate and gain some credit. Candidates were credited for all attempts to speak Japanese. Teacher examiners were not always sympathetic to the needs of the candidates: interrupting, speaking too fast or too slowly, asking a question the candidate had already answered, asking どうして at inappropriate points were again all hurdles for less able candidates to overcome. Sympathetic teacher examiners helped candidates to gain more marks by keeping the conversations simple and giving concrete examples when the candidate appeared to have lost the thread of the question. Candidates should be encouraged to use adjectives and adverbs to 'colour' their answers, and a simple 'から' on the end of many answers would greatly enhance the level of communication achieved.

Paper 3 - Reading and Responding

More able candidates obviously read ひらがな、かたかな and the basic 漢字 fluently and were thus able to move reasonably quickly through the first four questions scoring particularly well on Q4 this year. Over the past two or three years there has been something of an increase in the number of candidates unable to cope with the simple vocabulary requirements of the first few questions and this year a surprisingly large number scored very poorly at this stage of the paper. Q5 proved much more challenging and it appeared that once again many candidates did not give themselves time to consider the answers carefully, rushing to write down the nearest answer and move on. The たり form was tested for the first time here and this was obviously not familiar to many candidates. Candidates are clearly becoming familiar with the format for Q6 however as answers were more consistently correct this year despite a greater amount of reading being required for each mark. For the 'answer in English' candidates have most difficulty with Q7(a), being unable to recognise the name of the prefecture and give it in English. 'Mountain mouth' and other translations were not acceptable. Q7(d) also caused some difficulties but marks were given for any approximation to correct spelling so candidates were not disadvantaged when working from かたかな to English.

Paper 4 - Writing

Most candidates competently answered Q1. Weaker candidates still seem to have difficulty with *かたかな* but readable words were given a mark even if both scripts or the incorrect script was used.

Several candidates used the letter format to answer Q2 but were not penalised so long as they had fulfilled the tasks required. For this exercise short simple sentences giving the information asked for are all that are required and candidates should guard against trying to make their answers too long or complicated, introducing errors of grammar, which may impair communication.

The format for Q3 is now well understood although some candidates are still losing marks by writing outside the box of squares allocated for the answer. Post cards only have finite size and writing outside the box may not be credited. A surprisingly large number of candidates still forget to write the date. This year candidates proved more adept at fitting the task to the required format realising the reply had to be written to their teacher (although some omitted his name). Again many students added extra information beyond that asked for. The most difficult question proved to be the one about why they were not at school, which many candidates failed to justify with a reason. As in previous years, this question provided a lot of *漢字* which candidates were able to use to good effect both in their answers to both this question and to Q4.

Candidates were evenly divided in their choice of essay *ア* or *イ* in Q4. This year only a very few candidates tried to write both essays despite clear instructions to choose one. A high proportion of candidates was well prepared and wrote good essays using the set *漢字* appropriately and showing knowledge of the various grammatical structures in the syllabus. Less able candidates stuck to simple sentences but managed to show a good vocabulary range none the less. Even some of the weakest candidates, who were only happy with one or two verbs, notably *行きます*, managed to say something. With regard to content: candidates who chose *ア* were often not quite clear what activity they were writing about but sympathetic marking allowed for any activities that could conceivably precede sports day and credited good grammar, structures and vocabulary from the whole essay; those who chose *イ* were very good at describing the famous but often failed to say what the famous person did thus failing to score a full quota of content marks.

Statistics

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1752

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	77	66	55	45	37	29	21	13	0

(NB each paper is worth 25% of the total)

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1753

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	73	62	51	41	33	25	18	11	0

(NB each paper is worth 33% of the total)

Paper 1 Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 1 grade boundaries	50	35	30	25	20	16	12	9	6	0

Paper 2 Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 2 grade boundaries	20	17	15	13	11	9	7	6	5	0

Paper 3 Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 3 grade boundaries	50	36	31	26	21	17	13	9	5	0

Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 4 grade boundaries	55	43	36	29	23	18	14	10	6	0

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