

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE Japanese (1752/1753)

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Paper 01

General Comments

Candidates appeared well prepared with excellent strategies for coping with the more demanding questions towards the end of the paper. The quality of the recording was good and the pace appropriate for the level. The pictures caused fewer problems than in previous years and seem to have been understood for what they were by all candidates

Question 1-14

With the exception of a few candidates who were uncertain about which picture represented 'cricket' these questions were well answered. The least well-known item of vocabulary was apparently いす.

Question 15-20

Here too candidates seemed familiar with the vocabulary required and even the more advanced level of understanding required for question 20 did not cause many problems.

Question 21

Candidates appeared well prepared for this question and on average scored a higher mark than in previous years.

Question 22

Many candidates lost marks through trying to write numerals or numbers in Japanese when Arabic numerals are adequate (e.g. times and telephone numbers). The least well answered section was that requiring a sum of money. Many candidates seemed unaware that 2 marks require 2 answers and failed to circle two sections in the 'jobs done' question.

Question 23-25

The name of the teacher caused problems although the mark scheme allowed for many spelling variations. Other spelling difficulties were caused by 'clarinet' for question 25a). In their answers for question 24 many candidates were too vague and did not give clear evidence of having understood the text.

Paper 02

While most teacher-examiners clearly tried to elicit the best and the widest range of Japanese from their candidates there were sadly a significant number who did not rephrase/repeat or who did not allow the candidates sufficient time to respond fully. In addition to this an increasing number of teacher-examiners fail to follow the conversation sequence on page 16 of the Teacher-Examiner Handbook and this can cause problems for grading the candidates' performance. Confusion over LT3 forms led to further difficulties but everything possible was done to ensure that the candidates were judged fairly. Candidates need to know how to ask for repetition or slower Japanese delivery from the teacher-examiners. This year the most difficult question appeared to be *いつ* and double questions such as *いつだれと* also confused some candidates. Almost all candidates were happy to use a small range of adjectives such as *いい、おもしろい、つまらない* but beyond that they found it difficult to describe things and descriptions in the past tense cause problems for many. While fluent in the present affirmative, many candidates stumbled or made significant errors in the negative and the past tenses. Expressing opinions was managed successfully by only the most able candidates although many middle range candidates produced good *から* 'because' sentences, particularly in their prepared topic. Sports, entertainment, hobbies, food and drink were the most popular conversation areas and where teacher-examiners followed the guidelines, candidates were often very less sure of themselves on their second and third topics and needed more help and support to give of their best. Congratulations to the teacher-examiners whose patience and expertise allowed these candidates to show what they could do.

Paper 03

General Comments

Candidates appeared well prepared with excellent strategies for coping with the more demanding questions towards the end of the paper. In these latter questions, however, some candidates found it difficult to 'read for gist' and others clearly found reading anything other than straightforward *hiragana* very challenging.

Question 1

Candidates did well on this question and there appeared to be no part which was more difficult than any other.

Question 2

Candidates did less well on this question and it is possible they were confused by pictures for tea and coffee. Other sections were answered well.

Question 3.

This question was much better answered in previous years and students seemed better prepared for this type of answer format. However it was noticeable that many still seemed unsure about *ないでください* and *てもいいです*.

Question 4

A higher number of candidates scored full marks this year; the two *kanji* most commonly confused were *階段* and *教室*.

Question 5

Once again this question proved the most demanding and it seems that many candidates missed the *左から* instruction at the top of the answer. Several candidates lost marks by mis-copying.

Question 6

The answer key was adjusted to take into account the large area a *市* can cover and many candidates scored full marks on this question.

Question 7

The text was challenging for some but many candidates gave excellent responses. Surprising errors occurred in the reading of *四国* with at least 50% of candidates being unaware that this was one of Japan's four main islands and in *百万* which almost 60% failed to 'translate' accurately. A large number of candidates did not recognise the character for tree, *木*, nor did they understand that *本* was included here as a counter for trees.

Paper 04

General Comments

Candidates appeared well prepared with excellent strategies for coping with the more demanding questions towards the end of the paper. The format of the paper seemed familiar to most candidates but there were more candidates who failed to reach Q4 this year.

Question 1

This question was well answered by 99% of candidates who seemed very happy to write down 5 items and who, on the whole, seemed better able to write these than in previous years. As in the past spelling was not an issue and mixed *kana* were acceptable.

Question 2

The slightly different style of the questions confused some candidates but those who went for the simplest sentences in their answers scored well. Particles continue to cause confusion and having to give directions was obviously not something that some candidates were well practised at.

Question 3

Once again there were candidates who lost marks by failing to format their answers correctly, principally by missing out the date (any date!). Otherwise many candidates answered the questions well and added interesting additional information. It appeared that the stimulus was understood by all who tackled the question and most candidates were able to use the material in the stimulus to help them with their answers.

Question 4

A larger number of candidates than usual did not attempt this question; those who did tended to go for the option which involved describing a place and then saying what they do there. It was evident that some candidates could not read the katakana telling them what that place was. However, even the less able candidates appeared to be able to put together some simple sentences in answer to one or other of the questions and very few candidates tried to answer both questions this year. Several were confused about what tense to use and many compositions involved a mixture of tenses. Another problem tended to be a good start which tailed off into repetition or went off the topic as the candidate did not appear to have planned what he/she would write before starting. More able candidates showed admirable command of the *て* form, skill in joining adjectives and also a good facility with conjunctions. Particles were problematic for all with the uses of *に* and *で* causing most difficulty.

Statistics

Overall Subject Grade Boundaries 1752

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Overall subject grade boundaries	100	78	67	56	46	38	30	23	16	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	75	63	51	40	33	26	20	14	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	40	34	28	22	18	14	10	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	35	30	25	20	16	13	10	7	0

Paper 4 Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Paper 4 grade boundaries	55	42	36	30	24	19	15	11	7	0

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