



Examiners' Report June 2016

GCSE Japanese 5JA04 01

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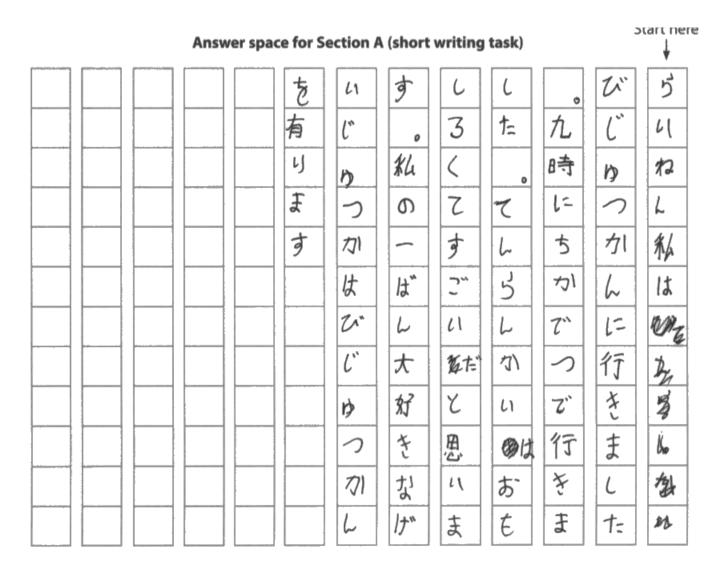
Introduction

Candidates had clearly been very well prepared for this examination. Generally, it was pleasing that most candidates were conscious that they needed to write more rather than less, and using the grammatical structures they had been taught. Most candidates tried both sections A and B, but some candidates only tried section B (presumably they did not follow the instruction to start the paper from the back), which was a shame as they lost all 20 marks available in section A. 1 hour is a very short time: please advise candidates to use their time strategically so that they write something for both section A and section B.

Question 1 (a)

This question was not that popular, although still chosen by a fair proportion of the candidates. Details about the exhibition were generally well communicated, but the name of the artist (particularly if transcribed into katakana) proved more problematic. Few candidates were able to expand their opinions beyond the simple おもしろかったです、楽しかったです.

This is the work of a medium ability candidate.





The candidate has made an effort to address the bullet points in the question but very basic information about the exhibition is given – an opinion is given using few adjectives. It was given a mark of 4 for communication and content, as the main points have been covered, but there is little evidence of the ability to go beyond a minimal response.

Clearly, the candidate is able to use basic Japanese sentences correctly and so was given a 5 for knowledge and application of language.

This candidate is going to find it much easier to pick up an extra 2 or 3 marks by expanding the content, rather than by trying to incorporate harder grammatical structures, so that would be a good focus for teaching.



It is good to address the bullet points given in the question directly. To gain more marks, try to expand more on each bullet point. Separate the two bullet points into two discrete paragraphs.

This piece was awarded more marks than the previous piece.

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Answer space for Section A (short writing task)



Results lus Examiner Comments

Compared to the previous piece, one can immediately see that the candidate has written more on each bullet point. The fact that the two bullet points have been separated into two paragraphs also helps.

The communication and content was given 8, 'detailed response', 'description, opinion and expansion', 'reasonable attempt to link the piece into a whole'.

The knowledge and application of language was given 7 – it would have been an 8 with more kanji. The candidate clearly knows how to link both i and na adjectives, and how to write a 'because' clause. One small step to expand their grammatical range further may be to teach i adjective plus と思います next.



Use some kanji in your writing!

Start here

Question 1 (b)

This was the most popular question, chosen by the majority of the candidates. It was particularly pleasing that many were able to use \sim ませんか to issue an invitation. One criticism is that most candidates chose to write about 'going on holiday' rather than 'going on holiday in the countryside.' Whilst it is accepted that at GCSE level candidates will incorporate previously learnt material into their writing and re-use material practised in class, they should nevertheless make some attempt at answering the question posed in the examination paper. For example, saying ハイキング, キャンプ or どうぶつ in this question should not have been exceedingly difficult for medium to strong ability candidates.

This is an example of a candidate who does not have the most extensive range of language, but who has nevertheless made an effort to address the question.

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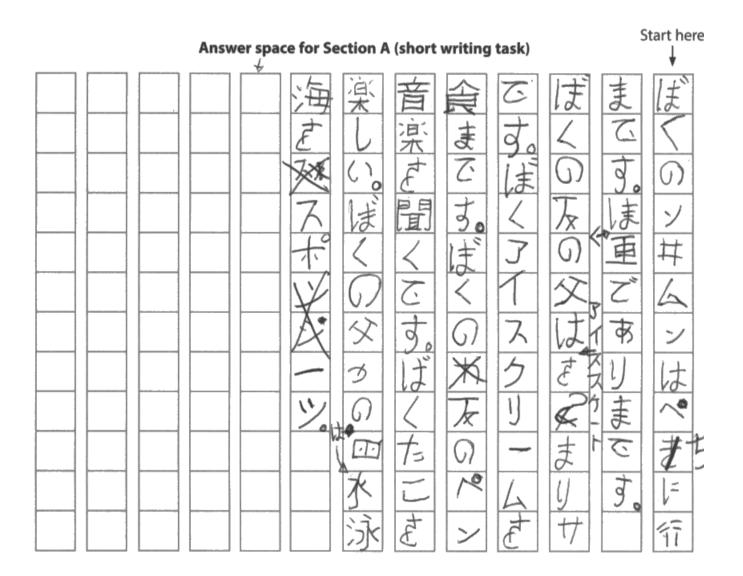


This candidate has done well to look up the word 'countryside' in the dictionary and then copy the kanji out. The candidate has also done well to run through their GCSE vocabulary and come up with 'mountain', 'hiking', and 'swimming' as appropriate to a holiday in the countryside.



Do be careful with looking up the words 'excited' or 'exciting' in the dictionary – it is grammatically very complicated, and almost every candidate who looks it up uses it incorrectly.

This has been included as an example of the work produced by a very weak candidate.





This piece was given 1 for communication and content (the candidate has written something, plus there is a 水泳 and 海 at then end) and 2 for knowledge and application of language. The candidate would have been better off drilled to write very, very simple sentences just using ですand すきです.

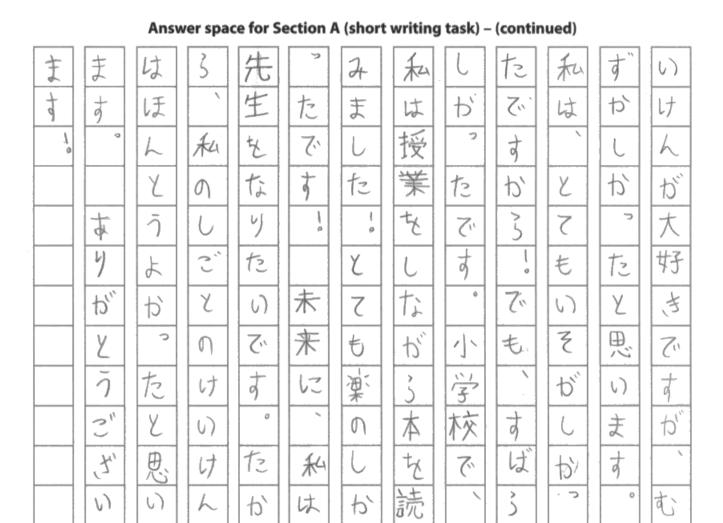


The long vowel line in katakana goes down when you are writing down – remember this point when you are copying it out of the dictionary.

Question 1 (c)

Not many candidates chose this question, but those who did clearly did so as they felt confident that they had specific knowledge to display. One common problem was that candidates did not know the word for work experience, and wrote about しごと or アルバイト instead.

This is the work of a very strong candidate – this piece was given 9 for both marking criteria.



Answer space for Section A (short writing task)







The content is strong, with a good use of a tari tari sentence to describe the candidate's activities at the primary school, and a good, expanded explanation (she wants to become a teacher in the future so work experience at a primary school was useful) as her opinion.

There are several harder grammatical structures - と思います、~たり~たり、ながら.

To improve this candidate's work further, she should be encouraged to learn some harder kanji compounds for high frequency words, such as 勉強、意見、本当に.



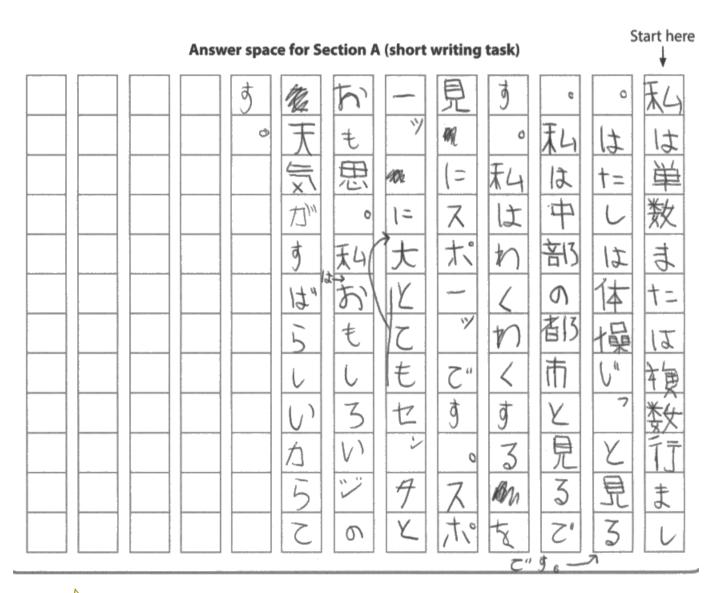
Try to make good use of linking words (そして、でも、だから) to link the piece into a coherent whole. Having a few of these words at your command greatly improves your work.

Remember to indent one square for a new paragraph.

Question 1 (d)

This question was not tackled by many candidates. Often they wrote only the briefest of responses and failed to expand further.

This is an example of a weak candidate who has over-relied on copying out of the dictionary.



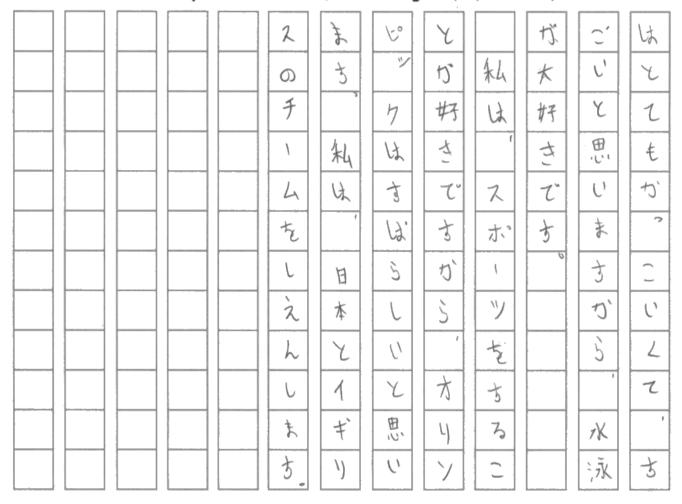


This piece was awarded 3 for communication and content, as you can just about make out that they are going to watch the gymnastics and they are excited. The sentence about the weather is also comprehensible, but it is not clear how this relates to the rest of the passage. The knowledge and application of language was given 2 as it only occasionally communicates.



Use the dictionary sparingly – try to write most of your piece using vocabulary you know.

This candidate has tried hard to include the information asked for in the question: the second paragraph could be longer.



Answer space for Section A (short writing task)







This candidate was awarded full marks for knowledge and application of language. The communication and content was awarded 8, as the second bullet point is considerably shorter than the first bullet point and could have been expanded further.



Try to write roughly the same amount for each bullet point.

Question 2 (a)

Question 2 (a) was the most popular question in section B, but candidates often failed to focus on the cultural aspect of this question, particularly for the second bullet point. They tended to simply write about going to town or eating in a restaurant, for example.

This is a typical example of a candidate who has not addressed the question, but is writing a general piece, presumably something similar to what they have done in class before.





This candidate seems to have totally missed the first bullet point, although with this level of linguistic ability, the candidate should have been able to write at least a basic description of the city and its cultural life.

Credit for content was given for the second bullet point (shopping and restaurant trip), although if a candidate is aiming for the highest grade, it is good if all the bullet points can be related to the main theme (i.e. the activities you enjoy should also ideally be related to the cultural life of the city in some way).



Remember to use katakana for words of foreign origin.

Remember that there are two different 'o's お and を. Make sure you know when to use each one.

Make sure you use an essay plan.

This example shows how a candidate with slightly weaker language can still achieve a good mark on communication and content.

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いなけんざです、それでは、	した。科のひけんでは、アンシャブ語を話したりしま	で語の手紙を書きたり、プ	プソシャブ語の水んしゆう	1 人です。	アデールさんはとするもいかしゅの名はアデールです。	12 1

Answer space for Section B (longer writing task)





The knowledge and application of language was given 6 and the accuracy was given 3.

However, the communication and content was given 12, as the candidate really has tried very hard to give a detailed response to the stimulus. The candidate has lots of ideas – visiting a temple, followed by a meal, followed by a concert, followed by learning the language – and all of these ideas have at least one follow on sentence giving more detailed information.



Start here

Try to think of an original idea if you can, and write as much as you can, even if you aren't always confident with your language. Your interesting ideas will still get marks for communication and content.

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Answer space for Section B (longer writing task)





The content in particular is very impressive. The candidate has used the language they know to maximum effect to address the bullet points. The piece includes narration, description, opinion and expansion, and there is excellent lining of the piece into a whole. It helps that the candidate chose a rather unusual destination (Greece) and found a couple of specific things to mention about this location: this interested the reader and made the piece stand out from other candidates' work.



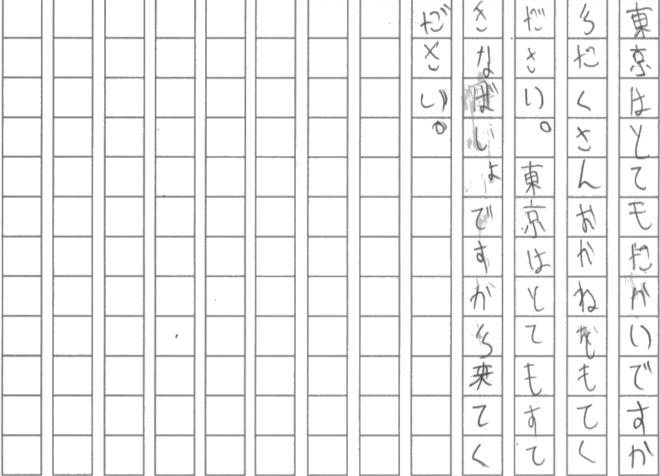
This candidate has probably looked up a few words in the dictionary, but probably only a very few – remember that lots of difficult words from the dictionary don't make a good piece of writing.

Start here

Question 2 (b)

It was clear that many candidates had to look up the word 'region' to answer this question.

This candidate has some knowledge of a couple of places in Tokyo, and has used this to good effect to interest the reader.



Answer space for Section B (longer writing task)





This response was given a mark of 11 for communication and content. All three of the bullet points have been covered, but it requires significant effort to find this coverage, as the piece is not clearly set out in separate paragraphs. Perhaps the weakest section is the one which includes details about what visitors should do when they visit the region.

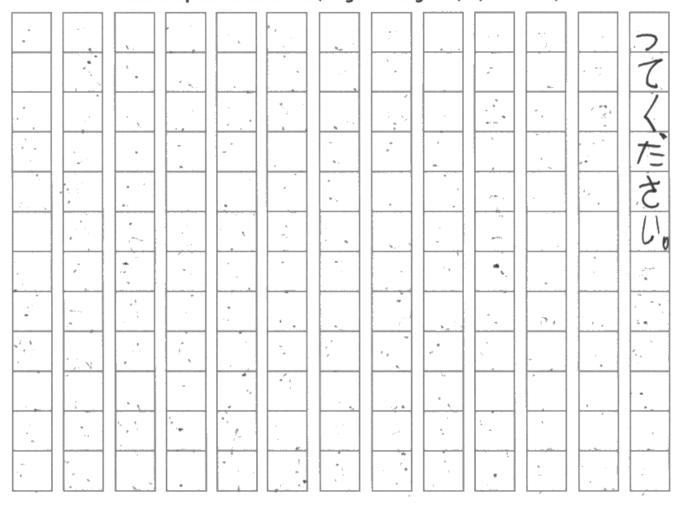
The knowledge and application of language was given 8, and the accuracy 4. A stronger candidate is likely to have included a wider range of grammatical forms (for example, the てください structure has been repeated).



Use kanji whenever you can. Set your work out in paragraphs.

Start here

It's not clear which region this candidate is writing about.



Answer space for Section B (longer writing task)





The communication and content was given 5, as there is some information conveyed, but the response is short, with some ambiguity.

The language was given a 5. This piece is a curious mixture of basic errors, with a couple of sentences using much harder structures written correctly (for example ほうがいいです、すんでいます). The accuracy was therefore given 3. The candidate could have scored higher had they used more kanji. It also seems likely that they were unfamiliar (or forgot) the verb いきます and therefore looked it up in their dictionary and then used it in the dictionary form.



Try to organise your ideas so that one flows on logically from another.

Start here

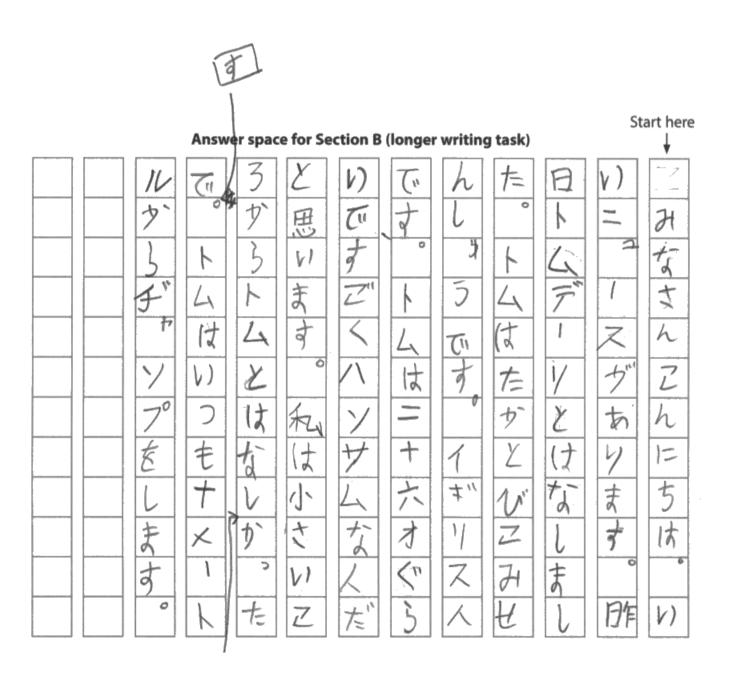
Question 2 (c)

This question was not very popular, and the transcription of the name of the athlete into katanaka caused problems.

This candidate achieved almost full marks.



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はなすことがあります	あたまかいいからい、はい	好きです。それからトイの	ちずみんなトムのことが米	か。こいいです。私の友だ	した。そしてトムはナごく	あったらきけると思ていま	イブグヤソたいのでトムと	ます。私は人人みたいなダ	きです。一週間五かりわり	私はたかとびこみが大分
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The content follows the bullet points given in the question, and is clearly set out. One point flows logically into the next.

The language is very accurate. Perhaps a few more kanji and harder grammatical structures could have been used in the first couple of pages, but on the last page there is a very good range of grammar.

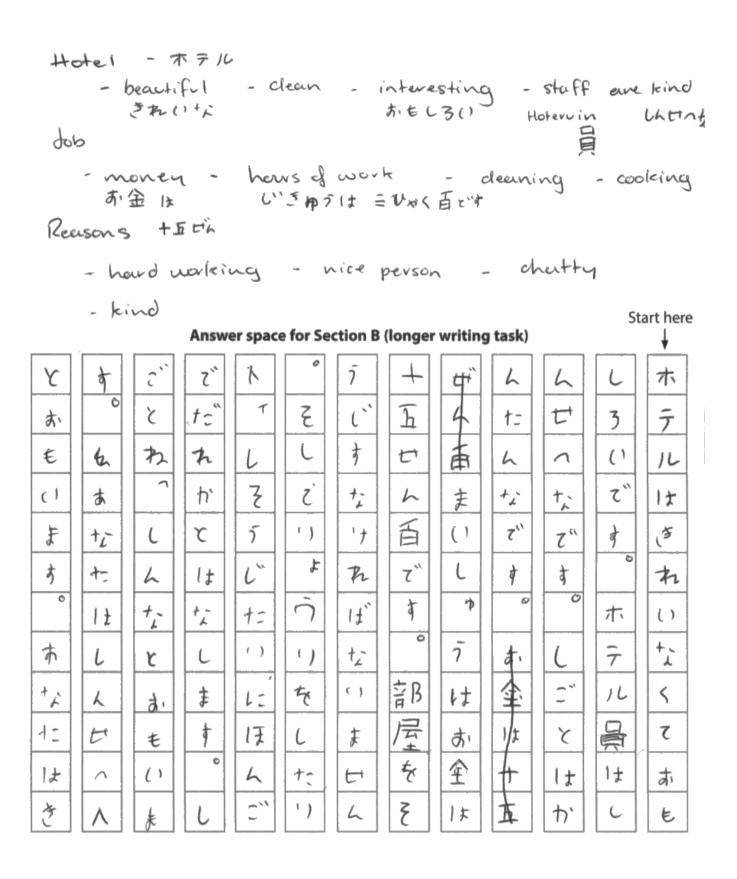


Use your dictionary carefully and selectively for a small number of words you really need but don't know. Most of what you write should come from your head rather than the dictionary.

Question 2 (d)

This question was tackled by very few candidates, but those who did responded well. They were generally good at describing the job and the hotel. There were also very good responses at persuading the friend to apply for the job.

Only the first page has been shown here, but there was only one more line after this.





The communication and content was given a mark of 9 – each bullet point has been answered and there is also a second sentence giving supplementary information for each bullet point. This fits the criteria 'begins to expand ideas' and 'ability to go beyond a minimal response.'

The candidate has attempted a range of language, but the accuracy is low with many errors. This candidate would have gained more marks by sticking to simpler language but with a higher degree of accuracy.



Remember that big numbers are complicated in Japanese – you can't say fifteen thousand just by translating 'fifteen' and 'thousand'.

Paper Summary

Based on the performance of this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- (i) To focus more on the accuracy of grammatical structures.
- (ii) To read the question carefully, and write one paragraph on each of the bullet points given in the question. For candidates aiming at the top grades, each paragraph should not only address the point, but also include expansion of some sort (an opinion with justification, a further example, a contrary viewpoint disputed, e.g.). Candidates should not rehash a 'standard' essay they have practiced in class on the topic, but should read the question and address the bullet points. This is perhaps the most significant point in helping candidates to gain more marks in the future.
- (iii) To expand their range of opinions beyond おもしろかったです、楽しかったです if they are aiming for a top grade. These two comments, particularly involving the past tense of an i-adjective, are fine for C level, and there is nothing wrong with them. However, candidates aiming for a top grade should be able to say more as a first step they should learn to add a 'because' clause to say why they hold these opinions.
- (iv) To understand the difference between 楽しいです, 楽しみました and 楽しみにしています if they are aiming for a top grade.
- (v) To write the year before the month before the day when writing dates.
- (vi) To take care over long vowels: for example Tokyo was variously written as ときょ、とうきょ、ときょう. Similar problems cropped up for the words 京都 and 旅行.
- (vii) To take care to distinguish in handwriting between ヒ and 七.
- (viii) To write in Japanese script rather than romaji.
- (ix) To learn and practice the correct use of 原稿用紙 (the squared Japanese writing paper).

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx





