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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Japanese (5JA03)

Paper 3: Reading and Understanding in
Japanese

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GCSE Japanese
Unit 3: Reading
Examiners Report

This unit draws on vocabulary and structures from across the four specified common topic areas. The examination consisted of short texts, notices or short news reports in Japanese with a variety of question types. Students were tested on their ability to understand written Japanese through a variety of tasks which require a response, written or non-verbal, to demonstrate their understanding.

In general, students coped well with the exam format. Teachers should continue to encourage students to familiarise themselves with the 'x' answering method and follow strategies which will prevent duplicate answers in one row and no answers in another row. When answering questions by writing letters as in questions 4 and 6, students must ensure their letters are clearly written and 'B' and 'E', for example, are distinguished. Some work still need to be done for questions which requires candidates to fill in spaces such as questions 2 and 9. Teacher should encourage students to read questions properly and write their answers fully and clearly as the Mark Scheme is strictly adhered to. Similarly, they should note number of marks allocated to each subsection and write answers in appropriate spaces. Teachers should also remind students that more difficult questions do not longer appear towards the end of the paper and easier ones at the beginning. Students must be encouraged to attempt to answer all questions throughout the paper.

Overall, this year's paper followed 'peaks and troughs' of difficulty patten which was spread out throughout it. It was felt that the most students performed very well in Q1 and were confident with recognising names and drinks in both *hiragana* and *katakana*. However, a surprising number of students struggled in Q2, especially けいざい. Similarly, many candidates could not recognise the word そうじ. School subjects are one of the topics which are regularly covered in the examination and teachers are strongly recommended to ensure students are familiar with them.

In Q3, students were tests for the meaning of *kanji*. This year, they were tested on their knowledge of colours. It was clear that many students were prepared for this type of question and it was generally well answered. In Q4, students were tested on the basic grammar. It was generally well answered and students were aware of differences between various particles. As mentioned above, students should be reminded to write their answers clearly using capital letters.

On the whole, students performed very well in questions 5. It was felt that many students were familiar with the topic. Question 6 was particularly well answered and students clearly have strategies to identify various instructions. Many students found Q7 challenging due to some unfamiliar vocabularies. Many did not recognise じこ and failed to understand the gist of the message. In Q8,

students were tested on the pronunciation of *kanji*. This year, students coped very well. Mistakes were commonly made between 市長 and 市場, and 会社 and 社会. Teachers are recommended to find strategies to improve students' abilities to read kanji further.

In the final question, students coped well this year. However, some failed to understand the context of the passage and fabricated answers based on a single word. Teachers must find strategies to improve students' comprehension skills. A surprising number of students did not understand the meaning of 長男. Similarly, many failed to interpret 八人兄弟 properly and could not correctly identify the number of children in the family. As before, some students failed to write their answers fully and lost marks, for example, in (c) and (f). For instance, simply writing 'moved' is not enough to gain a mark in (c). Similarly, writing 'wrote songs' in (f) does not describe in detail why Taki is famous. Teachers should make it clear to the students that they are required to write their answers in detail and in full sentences. Students should also look at the mark allocation carefully and make sure they put enough points in each question.

