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Examiner's Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Japanese (1JA0)

Paper 4F: Writing in Japanese

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Introduction

The format of this exam is by now well-established and candidates should be able to approach the various tasks with confidence. This summer, schools were provided with Advance Information which gave some indication of the topic areas that might come up in the exam; further support was given by an additional choice of question for the shorter writing task, Question 2.

Below are comments, where necessary, on how each task this summer was handled, together with advice for future cohorts:

Question 1: photo and opinion

- simple sentences such as がっこうです、がくせいがいます、みんなはうれしいです would have been sufficient for the photo description. There was no need for detail such as 'on the roof' or 'they are jumping'.
- candidates should aim to describe the photo either by saying 'X_があります・います or 'noun は adjective です'.
- opinion can simply be given using すき (じゃない) です. The addition of a reason – it could have been as simple as くらいです – will help to increase the LKA score, as will a から after the reason.
- the mark scheme for this question only mentions hiragana, so there is no need for any other script (even if technically 'wrong').

Question 2: shorter writing task

- candidates should bear in mind that there is no need to use the language of the task: in 2a, the word 'help' was unnecessary for the answer, as was 'hold the club' in 2b.
- similarly, the use of 'will' in the task is simply there to make the English sound natural, not an indication of a (non-existent!) future tense.
- a simple sentence in answer to each bullet point (BP) is enough. Any idea, as long as it could conceivably be an answer, is fine. Thus, for BP2 of Q2(a), えいごをはなします (there may be English-speaking visitors to the festival) or for BP1 of Q2(b), ひるやすみにえいがをみます. Four similar length sentences will easily fulfil the task.
- the mark scheme refers to 'hiragana and katakana' for this task, so candidates should ensure they can write the commonest katakana words accurately. It might be a good idea to have a 'backup' hiragana word for each lexical category, e.g. みず instead of コーラ、やきゅう instead of サッカー, etc.

- some basic kanji, such as those used for dates/days of week, would be useful, but not essential for this task.
- some linking phrases, such as だから、それから、それに would help to fulfil the demand in the mark scheme for 'minimal linking'. So in Q2(b) (BPs 3-4) アニメがおもしろいです。だから、アニメがみたいです。(There is no need to answer the points in order.) Of course, one linked sentence would be more likely to achieve a score of 7-8 (LKA).
- whilst correct use of particles is naturally to be encouraged, candidates should not be so concerned about the accuracy of these that they fail to write anything. The mark scheme explicitly allows for error, and even if the intended meaning is not got across, an LKA score of 6 can still be achieved.
- there will always be one BP that signals to the candidate that a ~たい form should be used, thus ensuring a 'successful reference[] to [a]future event[]'. Candidates generally coped well with this structure this year.

Question 3: longer writing task

- the same approach of simple sentences for each BP should be enough to achieve maximum marks on this task. Candidates should aim to write about two sentences for each BP, adding some details (such as adjectives and opinions) where possible. The amount of 原稿用紙 given should be enough.
- as has been said in these reports previously, there is no need to write any introduction (such as 幸子ちゃん、元気? for 3(b)). This will help candidates to complete the task within the space given.
- candidates should remember that there is no need to tell the truth! It may well be that students in reality have more than one hobby (Q3b), but if the task asks about 'your main hobby', then it is easier to discuss one as required.
- one difference between task 2 and task 3 is the additional need for a past tense, as clearly stated in the mark scheme. In 3(a), it was possible to use an implied past tense, such as 私はさいきん毎週の土曜日におばあさんと日本語で話しています, but candidates would be advised to use a form that is **clearly** in the past to answer the past BP in order to meet the requirements of the mark scheme.
- the most challenging part of each task is the 'why it is important to...' BP, and it is pleasing to see that candidates are all prepared for this now. At this foundation level in 3(b), がいこくごはたいせつです would be enough to start the answer (without any need for the nominalization べんきょうすること・のは...); the reason does not have to be 'deep'; it can be as simple as, for example, 日本に行きたいです (から) or がいこくの友だちができます (から) .
- in 3(b), it was important to note that the activity needed firstly to be something that could be classed as an 'activity' (in the sense of 'pastime/hobby'), not just,

for example, going shopping or travelling to France; it also had to be a **new** activity, or a clear development of one aspect of the hobby, such as learning to do butterfly stroke (within the hobby of swimming).

Question 4: translation into Japanese

- most candidates were successful at gaining full marks for (a) and (b), but less so on the more complex sentences from (c) onwards.
- it is important to note that the sentences do not have to be totally accurate to achieve full marks; the mark scheme, for example, only states that rōmaji will be ignored, but makes no mention of katakana or kanji, so answers written totally in hiragana will be given full credit, even if katakana would 'normally' be expected, e.g. 'television' in (e).
- candidates need to be familiar with basic past and negative forms (verbs and adjectives), as well as non-past, in order to be able to manage the harder sentences.
- regular practice of simple sentences including the more 'obvious' particles would help improve performance on this task.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a few general comments about common errors on this year's paper:

- 日本, not 本日
- greater care with katakana words that have a long sound, as this is regularly written in the wrong direction on 原稿用紙
- on Q3, one space left blank to indicate a new paragraph will help the writer keep ideas separate (as well help the examiner)
- greater accuracy when using the ~たり form. Whilst opinions vary on what is 'correct' usage of this form, a sentence such as 日本語ではなしたり、まんがをよみます (Q3a) is not generally viewed as accurate.

