

FIRST LANGUAGE JAPANESE

Paper 0507/02

Reading and Directed Writing

Key Messages

In order to do well in **Part 1** of this paper, candidates need to:

- ensure that the content is relevant to the question, and focussed on the theme of the 2 passages.
- ensure that their composition is coherent and includes a brief introduction and conclusion.
- show a confident grasp of the issues, taking ideas from the passages and developing them to relate to the task set.
- produce a clearly structured argument.
- display accurate grammar, well-formed sentence structures, effective linking between sentences and paragraphs, appropriate style for the genre with consistency throughout the prose, and good knowledge of kanji.
- observe the word limit

Part 1, Question 1

Candidates should produce a succinct summary of passages A and B. The summary should compare the different approaches taken to the common theme running through the two passages. The summary should be written in coherent prose, with a brief introduction and conclusion.

Part 1, Question 2

Candidates should respond to the passage by producing a piece of directed writing in the form stated in the question. The composition should compare and describe the similarities and/or differences between the approaches taken to the common theme described across the two passages, and the personal experiences and opinions of the candidate. Candidates need to support their arguments with a brief logical discussion, preferably providing a concrete example.

In order to succeed in **Part 2** candidates need to display a confident grasp of grammar and vocabulary situated in a context and as practical tool for communicating a message.

General Comments

Candidates performed exceptionally well this year. They seemed well prepared for the format and structure of the examination, with most using the time efficiently and successfully completing all questions in Parts 1 and 2.

The majority of candidates performed competently in Part 1. They were able to describe the main messages in passages A and B, with the majority producing adequate summaries of the differing approaches to the theme. In **Question 1**, the best answers summarised the common theme in passages A and B succinctly and contrasted different approaches between them using coherent prose. The work of weaker candidates was characterised by reliance on lifting sections directly from the passages without paraphrasing; this group of candidates also needed to improve their skills in analytical writing.

In **Question 2**, candidates were asked to give their opinions on the given theme. Lower-scoring candidates tended to give a more emotional reaction and needed to produce writing with a clearer structure. In contrast, stronger candidates supported their opinions with concrete examples, using interesting and original ideas to develop a strong case with clear and logical arguments.

Candidates at this level are expected to compose coherent discourse using longer sentences and structured paragraphs. Once again this year, there was a general tendency towards shorter, simple sentence structures and a lack of conjunctive expressions was seen. Among weaker candidates the following issues were observed: missing particles, erroneous use of particles, unfinished sentences, inconsistent sentence-ending styles, and idiosyncratic syntactic structures as well as lexical and semantic errors.

Regular exposure to a selection of good prose across genres may help to enhance candidates' writing skills and improve in these areas.

Part 2 questions test grammatical, lexical and semantic knowledge, and the majority of candidates coped with these competently.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

This produced a range of performance, on the theme of *English as an official corporate language*. The strongest answers went beyond a mere summary, developing the material through clear logical and coherent discussion. The structure of such compositions was clear and well thought-out, showing evidence of good pre-writing planning. They included a brief introduction and conclusion and compared the views and approaches described in passages A and B, often displaying high language proficiency and originality. Stronger candidates constructed arguments which arose naturally from the two passages, and made a clear case for their chosen option using excellent grammar and wide vocabulary. The best answers also managed to keep within the word limit, by avoiding repetition and circumlocution.

In some compositions, a more limited range of sentence structures and vocabulary was seen, but in most cases candidates still managed to communicate messages sufficiently using very simple but accurate language. Even the lower-scoring compositions showed some good paragraphing skills, accurate basic grammar, and effective use of conjunctive expressions.

Some weaker candidates did not manage to complete the task and others were unable to keep to the word limit.

Question 2

This question tests the ability to write creatively and communicatively in a given genre. The task this year was to write a brief article on the facts and approaches of protagonists in passages A or B to submit to a readers' column in a newspaper. Candidates were expected to: describe their personal response to any aspect of the articles on English as an official corporate language; explain the reasons for their responses using examples to support their argument; identify challenges and make suggestions for a solution.

In general this year's candidates responded to the question positively and enthusiastically. For example, candidates chose the stance of either A or B and explained reasons why they adhere to that particular approach, describing the similarities and/or differences to their own experience or a relevant situation that they are aware of. Many candidates wrote how relevant the topic is to their own lives. Stronger candidates argued for an ideal approach to handle politically sensitive cases and how the current situation can be improved. They provided concrete examples to support their arguments in a logical and convincing manner.

Part 2

Questions 3-17 test the candidates' linguistic knowledge, which forms the basis of communicative writing. The candidates' ability to express their messages in a variety of ways is tested through rephrasing and paraphrasing, using appropriate words, grammar, expressions, etc.

Part 2 consists of four subsections. The questions test:

- 1) Semantic and grammatical knowledge
- 2) Lexical and semantic knowledge
- 3) Synonyms and *Kanji*
- 4) Grammatical knowledge and relevant metalanguage

In this section, the majority of candidates demonstrated good lexical and grammatical knowledge and a good command of kanji.

FIRST LANGUAGE JAPANESE

Paper 0507/03
Continuous Writing

Key Messages

On this paper candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas:

1. Material presented should be relevant, appropriate and accurate.
2. The structure should be coherent and cohesive in particular with regards to paragraphing and sentence structure and candidates should include an introduction and conclusion.
3. The style should be appropriate to the audience and should include a varied range of vocabulary and sentence structure.
4. Candidates' work should be accurate, particularly regarding grammar, punctuation, and usage of *Genkō Yōshi*.

Candidates should also ensure that they adhere to the specified word limit.

General Comments

There was a good performance this year on this paper, with candidates demonstrating originality, creativity, and competence in their compositions. Candidates who did particularly well tended to opt for a topic that enabled them to show a wide range of both general and technical vocabulary and required an analytical or argumentative approach. Typically, they used a wide range of vocabulary and employed complex sentence structures. In general, successful candidates chose a subject that was suitable to their linguistic level and personal style of writing.

Weaker candidates generally opted for imaginative stories and free narrative as in **Questions 1** and **9** of this year's paper and were able to produce an interesting piece of writing which was highly readable. Characteristically they expressed an emotional response to the given theme, using a simple style with limited variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Some candidates produced a composition with clearly defined three or four sub-parts, including an introduction, content, and conclusion using a style appropriate to the genre and to the content. This type of strategic writing approach is highly effective in reaching the higher marking bands for this paper at all levels of linguistic competence.

Some candidates skilfully employed the traditional Japanese four-part discourse structure to maintain coherence in an authentic Japanese style. This discourse structure consists of the following four parts: KI (Introduction of a topic), SHÔ (Development on the topic), TEN (Surprise Turn – a literary device unique to Japanese composition), and KETSU (Conclusion). This approach is most effective in a prose with social, emotive, or literary contents as in **Questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8**.

A few candidates distinguished themselves in terms of originality, use of *Kanji*, and appropriateness of lexical choices

Comments on specific questions

Nine titles were given to elicit the candidates' imaginative, descriptive or argumentative responses in an appropriate style. Candidates need to remember to keep the content relevant to the chosen topic in all cases. Candidates are also encouraged to plan the content and overall structure before they start writing.

Question 1

ある朝、突然姉が切り出した。「私、あの人と結婚するの。」「ええっ、本気?」と私は叫んでしまった。彼氏は農家の長男だ。お洒落と買い物にしか興味のない姉が、畑にいる姿なんて想像もできなかった。ところが、、、(この続きを書きなさい)。

This is an imaginative piece of writing and thus, coherence, creativity, and effective story-telling skills are essential. Not all candidates seemed to realise that the story must follow naturally from the lead-in section given in the question itself using the same style and register.

Candidates who chose this topic generally told a story about his/her own experience and performed satisfactorily. Some opted for a more imaginative story, but did not manage to create a coherent story with a clear ending.

Question 2

「言論の自由」について、社会的な利点と問題点を比較しながら、自分の意見を述べなさい。

Questions 2, 4, 5 and 8 required candidates to indicate their standpoint first, and then to develop analytical and logical arguments in a consistent manner. This requires an appropriate three-part discourse structure, which consists of an Introduction, Content and Conclusion. The candidates who chose these topics tended to be stronger in language use and in writing skills.

Question 3

あなたにとって「こころが安まる」とはどういうことですか。具体的な例をあげて書きなさい。

This title required candidates to display their creativity and effective use of language to express personal opinions. Successful candidates discussed the concept of 'peace' or 'peaceful feelings' drawing examples from social affairs or personal experience.

Question 4

「公共物の汚損及び破壊」問題の解決策について、具体的な例を挙げながら考察しなさい。

Question 5

「人種差別のない社会」を実現するために、私たちにどんな事ができるか、またそれを推進するにはどうすれば良いか、具体的な提案を交えて意見を述べなさい。

Question 6

「正直に」という表現を文中のどこかで使用して文章を書きなさい。

Questions 6 and 7 required candidates to produce a clear and succinct explanation of an idiom/proverb. Successful essays often started by defining or paraphrasing the given expression or by describing it with an example from a familiar situation. These were then followed by a coherent discussion and exemplification of the use of the idiom/proverb.

Question 7

「意気揚々」という四字熟語について思うことを書きなさい。

Question 8

「原子力発電を廃止すべき」という考え方について、まず肯定か否定かを述べ、具体的な例をあげながら自分の意見を論理的に述べなさい。

Question 9

下の絵を見て、物語を自由に書きなさい。どのような視点から書いてもよいです。
(i.e. picture of a female wheelchair athlete).

This requires creative writing, using a visual stimulus. Candidates were expected to describe vividly what they saw in the picture and to develop the material by supplying an original story or by discussing issues arising from the photo. The interpretation is entirely open to the candidates.