

Examiners' Report /
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Japanese (5JA03) Paper 01

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Examiner Report

This unit draws on vocabulary and structures from across the four specified common topic areas. The examination consisted of a number of short texts, notices or short news reports in Japanese with a variety of question types. Candidates 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, candidates coped well with the exam format. However, it was felt that many candidates would benefit from familiarising themselves with the multiple choice 'x' answering method. Teachers should encourage them to follow strategies which will prevent duplicate answers in one row and no answers in another row. When confronted with spaces to be filled in, such as in questions 2 and 9, it was felt that many candidates did not read the questions properly and failed to notice that some of the answer boxes were already filled in. Teachers need to be aware that it is increasingly important for candidates to write their answers fully and clearly.

Overall, the paper followed a 'peaks and troughs' of difficulty pattern which was spread out throughout the paper. Teachers should remind candidates that more difficult questions no longer appear towards the end of the paper and more accessible ones at the beginning. Candidates must be encouraged to attempt to answer all questions throughout the paper.

It was felt that the most candidates performed well in questions 1 and 2. Generally, candidates were well prepared for kanji questions this year. In question 3, candidates were tested on the meanings of kanji. In question 8, candidates were tested on the pronunciation.

Many candidates struggled in the grammar section of the paper in question 4. Teachers should encourage them to follow strategies such as realising that a final verb should come before a full stop. Candidates should also pay attention to various tenses. Common confusions were *です* and *でした*, and *まで* and *ぐらい*. Teachers should remind candidates to write correct letters as indicated in the rubric.

Generally, candidates performed well in questions 5, 6 and 7. Candidates should be reminded to write their answers clearly using capital letters.

In the final question, candidates generally coped well. 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. Despite the clear layout, some candidates did not give two points to gain the 2 marks in questions (f) and (h). Some candidates failed to write their answers fully and lost vital marks. For example, 'manga' on its own is not sufficient for question 9(f) as the text clearly stated he **collected** manga.

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