

JAPANESE LANGUAGE

Paper 8281/01

Speaking

General comments

The majority of candidates were well prepared and it was evident that they had a very good knowledge of the target language. They demonstrated their strengths in responding to a wide range of questions. Mixed tense questions and questions requiring manipulation of grammar enabled candidates to perform at their very best. In the Topic Conversation and General Conversation candidates need to ensure that they ask at least one spontaneous question which is required in these sections. If they do not do so they may be prompted at the end of the conversation by the Examiner.

Most candidates adhered to the specified time limits. In the General Conversation some candidates exceeded the time limit which should not be longer than 9 minutes. It would also be helpful to both candidates and the moderator if there was a clear transition at the beginning of each section.

The recording at most centres was audible and the labelling of CDs and cassettes was clear.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Presentation

This year some candidates chose difficult topics in order to demonstrate their abilities in the language and succeeded in performing very well. The majority of candidates had researched and prepared very well and produced interesting presentations and each presentation was varied. Candidates need to ensure that they do not exceed the 3½ minutes allowed and that their presentation is on a specific topic which demonstrates their knowledge of the contemporary society or cultural heritage of Japan.

Section 2

Topic conversation

There was clear evidence that the candidates had prepared thoroughly for this section enabling them to demonstrate a high level of communication skills. They were able to respond well to very wide-ranging questions including those which required them to provide further information and details about their topics.

Section 3

General conversation

The majority of candidates were able to communicate very well orally with their Examiners. The performance of some of the stronger candidates was very impressive and the conversation sounded completely natural. Even when faced with rather technical or complicated questions most candidates seemed to be able to respond at an appropriate level.

Questions which included mixed tenses and different verb provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate comprehension, accuracy and feel for the language. Candidates were generally good at providing opinions but need to ensure that they also seek opinions in the sections where this is required and teachers may remind them if they do not do so spontaneously. It would also be more appropriate for candidates to address the examiner using their name and *さん* or *先生* rather than *あなた*.

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Paper 8281/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The overall level of performance this year was extremely good. Most candidates engaged well with the texts and tasks and produced full sentence answers which contained a variety of vocabulary and used appropriate grammatical structures. The minority of weaker candidates also made a good attempt at the questions. Generally, candidates were able to organise the required information in their own words and the quality of language was usually satisfactory. Certain advanced grammatical structures and expressions were occasionally used inappropriately.

In a few cases candidates wrote longer answers than required. They should ensure that their answers fit on the lines provided on the question paper. Candidates also need to make sure that the information they give in their answers is taken from the text and not from their own knowledge.

Comments on specific questions

Passage One

Question 1

More than half the candidates scored full marks. The most common mistake that candidates made was in **Question (c)** choosing answer 2 よくけんかすること. Several candidates made a mistake in one of **(a)**, **(b)** or **(e)**.

Candidates need to ensure that they read the instructions carefully. There were some candidates who used ticks for the answers instead of drawing circles.

Question 2

- (i) e.g. 私は、今、本を読んでいます。
- (ii) e.g. 私にとって、日本語はむずかしいです。
- (iii) e.g. すしが食べられますか。
- (iv) e.g. 今年、大学生になりました。
- (v) e.g. 本は、ここにあるはずです。

Again this year, the majority of candidates managed to create specific grammatical short sentences in this section. Candidates should ensure that they write short sentences which correctly demonstrate the relevant grammatical point. Long sentences are not required in this section. Candidates also need to check that they have used appropriate particles correctly spelled.

In **(ii)**, によって was used by a few candidates.

In **(iii)**, candidates were asked to write a sentence using a potential form. The most common mistake in this exercise was that some candidates wrote a passive sentence which is very similar in Japanese.

Question 3

- (a) きまった仕事をつづけてするだけのさんぎょうロボットと、人のようなかたちをして、人と同じようなことができるロボットがあります。
- (b) (i) 友達や家族として思われています。／人間といっしょに生かっします。
(ii) ロボットとなかがいいまんが、本、映画がたくさんありますから。

- (c) たくさんの人が人気アニメなどを見て、本物を作りたくなりましたから。
外国にはロボットの人気アニメがありませんでしたから。
- (d) 人間と同じかんたんな仕事ができるようになりました。
人間とコミュニケーションが取れるようになりました。
- (e) 家事をします。
お年よりの世話をします。／めんどろをみます。
- (f) 生きているのより、世話はかんたんでねだんが安いからです。
- (g) あぶない所や人間がひつうような所へいくかわりに行くレスキューロボットやうちゅうロボットです。

Most candidates coped very well in this exercise, particularly with regard to the quality of language which was excellent this year. Candidates need to ensure that they provide more than one answer for the questions which require this.

Some candidates answered using their own knowledge or opinions. They need to ensure that their answers refer to the text. In (c), for example, candidates needed to refer to the difference between Japan and the situation in other countries' of robots appearing in popular animation. A number of candidates wrote details of what robots can do which were copied from the text directly, and did not mention about the communication skills in Question (d). There were a lot of good answers which were well-structured and used a variety of vocabulary in Question (g). However, on the other hand, there were some answers which only mentioned that robots can do various jobs without explaining what they are exactly.

Passage Two

Question 4

- (a) アメリカで国を守るために、とても大きいネットワークが作られたことです。
- (b) 会社や学校に行かなくても仕事や勉強ができるようになりました。
- (c) (i) コンピュータやインターネットが高いからです。
電気がない所があるからです。
(ii) インターネットカフェができましたから。／始まりましたから。
- (d) 前や今のニュースを知ることができます。
新聞や本などでさがせないことがさがせます。
世界のいろいろなところにいる人たちと同時にコンタクトできます。
会ったことがない人でも同じきょうみを持っていると話すことができます。
- (e) よく考えないで文を書いたり、友達などのわるいことを書いたりして、トラブルになることもあります。
チャットなどあいてがどんな人かわからないこともあります。
子どものためでないサイトをかんたんに見ることができます。
- (f) 気をつけて使わないとウイルスが入るかもしれません。

The majority of candidates attempted all questions and coped very well with them. The content of their answers and the quality of language were linked very well so that candidates demonstrated both their understanding of the text and their ability to respond accurately to the target language.

Most candidates scored full marks in Questions (a) and (b). In Question (c) many candidates did not write about the cost of the Internet, and therefore received only two marks. A lot of answers used candidates' own knowledge of computers and the Internet rather than the information from the text in Questions (d), (e) and (f).



Question 5

This year a considerable number of candidates wrote answers using their own knowledge and opinions for exercise **(a)**, particularly about the use of the Internet, and therefore lost marks despite producing good writing. All candidates are required to respond to both **(a)** and **(b)**. Many candidates seemed to have strong and well-developed ideas and opinions for exercise **(b)**, and managed to express them well. Candidates need to ensure that they do not exceed the word limit for this question. Some candidates did not respond to task **(a)** which awards 10 marks for items drawn from the texts. This affected the number of marks they were able to gain in this exercise.

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Paper 8281/03

Essay

General comments

This year again, all the candidates performed very well in this examination, with some candidates demonstrating extremely high abilities in the target language. The majority of candidates had clearly learnt how to write an essay at an appropriate level for AS and, they achieved this very well. Careful structuring and planning prior to writing the essay improved the quality of performance. Careful reading of the topic questions is also important. A few candidates seemed to have missed these points and wrote something not directly related to the topics and therefore did not gain high marks even though the quality of the writing they produced was good.

It was noticeable that a number of candidates used ~でしょう where です would have been more appropriate. Although grammar was generally accurate, the plural was often used incorrectly. A number of candidates exceeded the word limit of 800 characters.

Topic 3 – Health and Fitness was the most favoured topic amongst candidates. Many candidates managed to write about not only both physical and mental health but also about what affects our health. The majority of them could connect the issues of eating habits / exercise and stress / communication at School / work constructively. Some of them even added the influence of smoking and drug problems on our health in detail. However, a few candidates just wrote about the physical side of health so that there were no arguments in their writing, and also it is not sufficient at AS level just to say that people can keep good health by eating healthily and doing some exercise.

Topic 5 – Environment was the second most popular choice. Many candidates had clearly researched this issue before the examination and also expressed their own opinions well, and as a result they succeeded in showing their strengths in writing in the target language. A few candidates did not refer to recycling at all in their essays, although they seemed to have a very good knowledge of environmental issues.

Topic 2 – In this topic, Urban and Rural Life, some candidates produced essays describing the problems in the countryside (eg young people leaving for better education or jobs) and tried to come to some conclusions as to how to deal with these problems. Other candidates compared the difference between life in the countryside and life in the town and succeeded well in pointing out the various advantages and disadvantages of the two. A number of candidates did not manage to develop the idea of why cities attract young people and how people who are left in the countryside deal with it and therefore did not provide a conclusion to their essays.

Topic 1 – Human Relationships –The majority of candidates argued that marriage is very important and that it is also important to raise children with both parents. Candidates managed to compare the advantages and disadvantages of bringing up children by married couples, unmarried couples and single mothers (not fathers!) well.

Topic 4 – Equality of Opportunity was the least popular topic this year but those candidates who chose it managed to present their arguments very well and demonstrated their abilities in the target language.

