

JAPANESE

Paper 8281/01
Speaking

General comments

In general, the Examiners are to be congratulated on their efforts to ensure that the examinations are conducted in the appropriate manner and that the candidates are given the opportunity to do their best. The Candidates are also to be commended on their preparedness and attempts to express themselves on all manner of topics. The recordings from most Centres were generally audible and labelled nicely – thanks to all Centres where these jobs were done professionally.

It would be helpful if the Examiners indicate where the Topic conversation ends and the General conversation begins, and this also provides a reminder of timing.

All Examiners should be aware that one mark sheet (the Working Mark Sheet) is intended as a working document, on which the marks should be completed at the time the test is conducted, as specified in the Marking Instructions – please check all additions. The total marks should then be transferred accurately from the Working Mark Sheet(s) to the Internal Assessment Mark Sheet (MS1). The Examiners need to ensure that they send the Working mark Sheet and the MS1 with the despatch of the cassette(s) or CD(s).

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Presentation

This year, there was once again a wide range of topics chosen by candidates. Candidates had prepared a variety of suitable topics, Japanese modern cultures, young society, history, media, etc. Also, indeed, some candidates prepared some photographs to present, which shows their enthusiasm. Some candidates clearly had a good feeling for the target language and were able to express not only their knowledge about the language, but also concepts of Japanese culture and so on, fluently in spoken Japanese. Examiners and candidates are reminded that they are expected to give a presentation of no more than 3½ minutes on a specific topic.

Section 2

Topic conversation

Most candidates had clearly practised for this topic in order to respond as much as they could to show their knowledge in answer to the Examiner's questions. Some candidates managed to have a discussion on their topic with the Examiner naturally. The Examiner should remember to let the candidate speak as much as possible in order to score higher marks in the limited time. Examiners are also reminded that, as part of this conversation, the candidate will be required to seek information and the opinions of the Examiner and needs to be given every opportunity to do so.

Section 3

General conversation

The majority of candidates were able to communicate very well with their Examiners this year again. The Examiners should remember to avoid asking the candidate's background in detail. Instead, the conversation should move on to a more mature conversation discussing more abstract and/or current issues within the general topic areas. The Examiner must remember to prompt for questions in this section as well, in order not to deprive candidates of the opportunity to score marks for seeking information and opinions.

Candidates are reminded that if the Examiner prompts them for questions and candidates say none, they have deprived themselves of a possible five marks.

JAPANESE

Paper 8281/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

Although some candidates found the paper this year challenging, the majority of candidates coped well and some achieved excellent results. This showed that the candidates and the Examiners worked as hard as possible to be able to achieve a very high standard. In particular, the candidates showed strong abilities of comprehension and also used Kanji which are not in the syllabus in their writing. It was noticeable that some candidates mixed up tenses and also polite and plain forms. Candidates are reminded to check their writing before they hand in the paper. The candidates are not expected to write Kanji which are not in the syllabus, and therefore 歌舞伎 and 宝塚 could be written in Hiragana. A very few candidates did not manage to answer Passage Two Exercise 2 and thereby did not succeed in earning relevant mark points.

Some candidates used a pencil again this year, but they should use a black or dark blue pen. Candidates are also reminded to write neatly – responses which are illegible cannot be marked.

Please ensure that the Attendance register is despatched with the papers.

Comments on specific questions

Passage One

Question 1

- (a) 2
- (b) 3
- (c) 1
- (d) 2
- (e) 1

The majority of candidates got 4 or 5 marks. Some candidates made mistakes in either (b) or (d) and most of the candidates made a mistake in (b). Please make sure that the candidates use only one tick or a cross in the correct box.

Question 2

- (i) e.g. わたしの名前は、田中といいます。
- (ii) e.g. いしゃによって、びょうきがなおりました。
- (iii) e.g. くすりを飲んだら、げんきになりました。
- (iv) e.g. おんがくを聞きながら、お風呂に入ります。
- (v) e.g. 雨がふったので、出かけませんでした。

Again this year, most candidates managed to make use of their knowledge of Japanese well. In (ii), a few candidates took the meaning as "drop in on the way home". In (iii), the majority of the candidates understood the meaning, but they made mistakes connecting になる depending on whether they used いる adjective or な adjective, and there were particularly more mistakes when the candidates chose to use いる adjective. In this exercise, the candidates are tested on their use of grammar as much as vocabulary, and therefore the candidates need to use the grammar correctly.

Question 3

- (a) 1603年に京都で女の人が始めました。
- (b) 女の人達がはでな着ものを着た／男の人のようになったりしていた／女の人どうしておどったから です。
- (c) はじめのかぶきは女の人だけで、わかしゅうかぶきは若い男の子だけでした。
- (d) 社会の人にわるいえいきょうをあたえたからです。
- (e) 少年達が女の人を着ものを着て、うたったり、おどったりしました。
- (f) 今のかぶきのかたちのもとになったからです。
- (g) じゅうようなやくをしているはいゆうのむすこ達がつづけました。
- (h) 外国人や天のうが見ました。
- (i) 若くてハンサムなかぶきはいゆうがテレビや映画にも出るようになったからです。
- (j) イヤホンを使って英語でせつめいを聞くことができるからです。

In general, the candidates performed well in this question. However, some candidates' answers were too long and this seemed to be caused by a lack of consistency with tenses. A lot of candidates used a wide range of kanji in their answers and there was a high standard of structures in Japanese, particularly in **Questions (a) and (j)**, which were well achieved by the candidates. However, a very few candidates explained Kabuki in general, which is not the correct answer for this question.

Passage Two

Question 4

- (a) 1913年に、女だけのミュージカルグループとして作られました。
- (b) たからづかおんがく学校をそつぎょうしなければなりません。
- (c) (i) 1000人うけて50人しかうからないからです。
(ii) むずかしいしけんやめんせつをしなければならぬからです。
- (d) 朝9時から夕方5時まで、学校へ行った後、れん習があるからです。
- (e) おきやくさんによるこんでもらえるいいステージを見せたいからです。
- (f) 女として、社会人としてすばらしい人になってほしいです。

- (g) ふつうの勉強／れいぎ／ふくの着方をきびしく教えます。
- (h) やめた後も映画やステージに出ることができます。
- (i) ほとんどが女せいです。ほんとうにたからづかが大好きです。
- (j) 学校や先生が、一生けんめいいいステージを作りたいとど力しているからです。
／女だけのグループで男のやくもきちんとしているからです。

On the whole, the candidates achieved better than Passage One with this question. Some candidates managed to express their opinions in their own words very well. In **Question (b)**, people must leave Takarazuka ongaku gakkou, not enter the School. The answer is not to be a star in **Question (e)**. **Question (j)** proved challenging for candidates, perhaps because the candidates must understand the text and use their imaginations to be able to answer this question. Most candidates showed that their abilities for comprehension are very high and also that they are able to express their ideas freely in writing. However, the candidates did not score if they just mentioned the idea that singing or dancing is good, they needed to explore the ideas more deeply.

Question 5

Most candidates managed to do both **Questions (a)** and **(b)** despite having to write their answers in a limited number of letters. For **Question (b)**, the candidates are expected to write their general ideas apart from the texts, but some candidates wrote their opinions relating to both texts. A few candidates seemed to know Takarazuka and this must have made it easier for them to compare Kabuki and Takarazuka and to summarise the texts. Very few candidates were unable to attempt this exercise.

JAPANESE

Paper 8281/03

Essay

General comments

40 marks are available for the essay, of which 24 are awarded for quality of language and 16 for content. Once again, the majority of candidates were able to manipulate the target language with confidence in both grammar and vocabulary. Also, candidates managed to understand the topics correctly and detail their opinions in well-structured complex sentences. It was noticeable that more kanji words were written this year, and this showed candidates were clearly prepared for this examination. Candidates are expected to read and write kanji from the syllabus freely. More candidates produced grammatically accurate sentences than last year. However, some candidates still made simple errors with particles, and these were particularly evident where candidates tried to produce long and complicated sentences. Weak candidates needed to be given more guidance for this examination as they not only struggled to respond but found it hard to create even simple sentences. Candidates should be reminded of the need to structure paragraphs in order to examine the issue from the introduction to the conclusion clearly, and this helps the candidates themselves to be able to develop the topic they have chosen.

Again, some candidates wrote over 800 characters, and candidates should be reminded of the word limits, namely 600-800 characters. Candidates are also reminded to keep their work neat in order to avoid misunderstanding in their performances. Some candidates still use spoken language at the end of sentences and generally this is not appropriate. Also, it is not necessary to use greetings at both the beginning and the end of the essay to produce an appropriate AS level essay. A few candidates did not seem to know the difference between *そうです* and *ようです* this year, and it should be explained thoroughly even though these are challenging grammatical points for them. Unfortunately, some candidates mixed plain and polite forms. This gives the impression that they do not seem able to handle the language properly.

Topic 3 - Education was the most favoured topic amongst candidates. Candidates who chose this topic were able to argue well, pointing out their opinions. Indeed, all candidates expressed themselves excellently for Topic 3. Topic 1 - Generation gap - was the second most popular choice. In this topic, some candidates had clear ideas about the generation gap and managed to corroborate their ideas with those of their parents or grandparents, so they could come to positive conclusions. On the other hand, although some candidates were able to construct either simple or complicated grammatically accurate sentences, unfortunately the contents of their essays were rather weak. For example, very similar ideas were often repeated with different words. Topic 2 - The Media - was also popular. Most candidates seemed to have researched the Japanese media very well, and therefore it was possible for them to compare the media of their own country and the Japanese media and as a result, candidates reached a very high standard for AS level. Topic 4 - The Developing World proved to be less popular. Topic 5 - Cultural Life / Heritage was chosen by a few candidates. However, candidates did not manage to explain the reason(s) for who should maintain the culture in their countries despite showing a wide knowledge about the cultures.

Centres are reminded to ensure they despatch the Attendance Register Sheet with the examination papers.

Finally, candidates and teachers are to be commended on their hard work, it was pleasing to see such well-prepared and interesting essays.