

# Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE

GCE Japanese (8624/9624)

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Summer 2007

Publications Code UA 019296

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## AS Unit 1 (6661) Reading and Writing

The AS level paper was broadly similar to previous years, and most candidates performed satisfactorily or better. It was pleasing to note this year that most candidates had attempted the whole of the Japanese to English translation, and that in addition the standards of translation produced were better.

Question 1 was generally well tackled. In 1 (a), some weaker candidates were unable to read “たいいく”, although most of the candidates were able to read “かん”. On part (b), はしって was a common error.

Question 2 was completed by almost all candidates. Some candidates lost marks as they never used the “?” symbol. It is important for candidates to know that this is a true / false / no information exercise, not a true/false exercise.

Question 3 was again generally well attempted, with the stronger candidates scoring well. (d) produced a lot of problems, as ideally the volition form was required (がんばりたい was also accepted) and it was hard to cue this on the paper, so the majority of candidates failed to pick up on this. “を” was a common error for (e). (f) was generally well tackled. As always, the te form in (g) produced many incorrect variations, although most candidates did seem to know that a te form was required. The te form I (i) was better attempted. In part (j), many candidates seemed to know that a dictionary form was required, but なぐ was offered by many candidates as an incorrect answer.

Most of the stronger candidates attempted question 4, although the accuracy with which candidates write kanji characters is not very high. 冬 was often given as an incorrect answer for さむい. The best answered kanji was 終わり、although the いとへん produced a lot of problems with inaccurate formation.

Question 5 was generally well attempted, including the comparative for (d).

Most candidates knew what they had to do for question 6, but there were many incorrect answers. Teachers would be well advised to do more work with candidates on this type of question.

The stronger candidates attempted question 7, and made an attempt to produce good, clear Japanese sentences. Many candidates are still losing marks on content as they try to copy out the passage, rather than respond to the question in their own words. (b) was generally well answered; (a) and (c) caused more problems. Only the strongest candidates were able to respond to (c) by giving an opinion and a reason.

It was pleasing to see that most of the candidates attempted the translation all the way through. The first two sentences were generally well handled, and many candidates also took the opportunity to make the two sentences one to make the English less repetitive and flow better. The 青年のふね caused huge problems, as candidates did not know the vocabulary item せいねん. A lot of candidates were unable to spell “Cambodia”. Most candidates failed to understand that the picture books had original writing in Japanese, and that the pieces of paper with the Cambodian translation on were stuck over the Japanese, before the picture books were sent to Cambodia. Having said that, to their credit, they got back into the translation at the beginning of the next paragraph. おどり was a vocabulary item

unknown by many candidates. 文化 also produced a lot of problems. The last paragraph was generally tackled well, although many unlikely translations for 世界中 were offered, including "middle earth". Candidates need to be encouraged to think logically about what they are writing using their common sense.

The essay question about the 新幹線 seemed to please candidates. Most responded appropriately to the bullet points given, although they need to be encouraged to try to be creative, to expand their answers, and to write the whole of the page. An answer 7 lines long is not going to score highly, even if it has covered all the bullet points. The incorrect use of 原稿用紙 was noticeable, and candidates need more practice on this. The grammar was generally pleasing, with many candidates making a real effort to use the new grammatical structures they had learnt during their AS year.

## AS Unit 2 (6662) Reading and Writing; Topics and Texts

The A2 paper was broadly similar to previous years, and produced no surprises or difficulties for candidates. However, it was noticeable that many candidates answered on the old topics and texts (注文の多い料理店 and おみやげ).

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SPECIFICATION HAS BEEN UPDATED AND TEACH THE APPROPRIATE TOPICS AND TEXTS.

On passage 1, native speaker candidates are reminded to write in sentences. Many candidates lost marks on question 1 as they missed out the 文部科学省の大臣や職員. Questions 2 and 4 were generally well answered. 広島県に勤めています was often offered as an incorrect answer for question 3. Many candidates offered a definition rather than an example for question 5; they need to read the questions carefully. Questions 6 and 7 produced no significant problems; many candidates lost marks on question 8, as they answered from their own knowledge (eg 音楽です) rather than from the passage. Question 9 proved extremely hard: errors centred around (1) not recognising it as a yes/no question, (2) not recognising the comparative and (3) not picking up on the implied attitude in the original passage.

Passage 2, the English to Japanese, saw an improvement in standards this year, particularly from the weakest candidates, who did make an attempt at it rather than just miss it out all together. The first two sentences were generally well attempted. Despite the words being in passage 1, some candidates struggled with vocabulary items such as "Minister of Education". Many native Japanese speakers did not know the words "fundamental" and "flexitime" in English. Many candidates missed the difference between the "why" in "why children need to learn" and "what" in "what they should learn", which was a careless error. The sentence about flexitime was often mistranslated, changing the meaning totally. The other sentence that was very hard was the quote by Cathy Jamieson, because the structure of the original was long and convoluted. Candidates need strategies for simplifying and re-writing sentences like these. The final sentence was generally well tackled, but unfortunately, many candidates missed off the と言いました at the end. They would be well advised to put this at the bottom of the page, before they start translating the quote.

In section II the standards overall were high, showing that candidates had worked hard to prepare the set topics and texts. Most candidates are able to demonstrate pre-learned knowledge and to write using good grammatical structures, but they need more practice on adapting pre-learned materials to the specific questions asked, and in structuring and organising their essays into coherent whole pieces.

I will not comment in detail on every single question below, as not every essay attracted enough answers to gain a feel of the overall performance of candidates.

1 (ア) Candidates either gave a good introduction to the city and then forgot to mention changes, or wrote about all the changes but failed to give an overall introduction to the city. They need to read the questions carefully and answer all aspects.

(イ) produced varied responses, none of which were quite what had been expected when the question was set. Some candidates chose 長野 or 愛知 or 東京 and wrote in the past about international events that had happened. Others wrote

quite generally about the need to teach the local population how to speak English.

Question 2 was not attempted by many candidates, although it was pleasing to see that a couple of schools had actually taught this topic. On question (ア), some candidates lost marks as they failed to differentiate between history and myth that has grown up around 聖徳太子

Question 3 (ア) was very popular but also generally disappointing in the quality of answers, as many candidates just produced a tirade about how poor the Japanese education system is (in their opinion). Other candidates were unduly influenced by the reading passage in section 1 and only wrote about 総合学習. Most candidates were unable to produce a well argued, reasoned essay.

3 (イ) also suffered from the same problem, with many candidates just writing that modern technology is making young people lazy and unsociable, without any attempt at a proper analysis or evaluation.

Most candidates who tackled 4 (ア) had a range of facts at their finger tips, but few of them were able to put them into a coherent essay, with a proper structure. 4 (イ) was better tackled: it was hard to produce a very comprehensive response to this question, but many candidates had good knowledge about New Year customs in Japan and were rewarded for this knowledge.

5 (ア) was generally well answered by the candidates who attempted it, with some exceptions who wrote about the main character 僕 instead of Jim. 5 (イ) produced a large number of well written, well thought out responses, including an exploration of the Christian aspect of the story.

6 (ア) did not have to be answered on 蜘蛛の糸, and candidates chose a range of texts to write about. Those who did choose 蜘蛛の糸 generally produced well written pieces about カンダタ, with a whole range of views being expressed about his nature. 6 (イ) again produced a wide variety of responses, with many candidates able to justify their opinions in detail from the text, which was pleasing.

It was disappointing in 7 (ア) that many candidates only referred to one aspect of the text when recommending it to their friends. The style required was 作文 and a few candidates wrote far too informally, in the style of an email or even in the style of spoken language. 7 (イ) was popular with candidates, and many wrote large amounts, but sometimes it seemed that they were writing an essay about the environment rather than about おーいでてこーい. Many candidates, for example, wrote about global warming, but only a couple demonstrated global warming to have any connection to the text.

Questions 8 were only attempted by a very few candidates.

#### Analysis of question popularity

1	ア	68	
1	イ	30	98
2	ア	5	
2	イ	2	7
3	ア	39	
3	イ	54	93

4	ア	45	
4	イ	30	75
5	ア	29	
5	イ	99	128
6	ア	63	
6	イ	30	93
7	ア	37	
7	イ	29	66
8	ア	8	
8	イ	0	8



# Statistics

## Unit 1 (6661) Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	60	51	43	35	27
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	180	150	120

## Unit 2 (6662) Reading and Writing; Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	140	89	77	65	53	42
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	180	150	120



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