

## Japanese A Literature

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 17	18 - 32	33 - 43	44 - 56	57 - 69	70 - 82	83 - 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 16	17 - 30	31 - 42	43 - 55	56 - 67	68 - 80	81 - 100

### Higher level and Standard level internal assessment

#### HL Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30

#### SL Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

#### General

This session, most of the centres appropriately used the digital upload system on IBIS. This is a very convenient system for both centres and examiners, and all instructions on how to use the system can be found on the OCC.

Please ensure that both parts of the HL IA examination is conducted continuously and recorded without breaks.

Some centres evidently printed out hard copies of the 1/IARF forms, completed them by hand then scanned them for upload. While this is acceptable, please note that the new 1/IARF form allows the teachers to write their comments directly in Japanese on the Pdf, and this method is likely to be more efficient for both teachers and examiners.

Most of the centres scanned the extract and the guiding questions correctly. However, a few extracts were not attached with the guiding questions. It is recommended that teachers write their guiding questions on the same sheet as the extract.

### **Individual oral commentary (HL and SL)**

Most of the works used were chosen from the prescribed list of authors (PLA) and, appropriate range of genres selected. The works chosen had sufficient complexity of style and content suited to close analysis.

The teachers' comments on the 1/IARF generally reflected the candidates' performances very well, suggesting teachers listened to them again after finishing the recordings. This is good practice and is to be encouraged.

Most of the teachers appropriately asked subsequent questions after the commentaries. However, some did not do this. The subsequent questions is a requirement set out in the Guide, and is also important in providing candidates the opportunity to show further knowledge and understanding of the extracts.

The quality and number of guiding questions in general were appropriate. However, some focussed on fine details or a particular interpretation of the extract. It is important to keep in mind that the purpose of the guiding questions is to offer candidates a starting point for organizing the commentary.

Most of the teachers chose appropriate extracts from the works studied in Part 2 and the length was also appropriate. However, some of the teachers seemed not to be aware that from this session, the suggested length of each extract is 20-30 lines. Candidates only have around 10 minutes for the commentary portion of the examination. Therefore, it will become difficult to provide the subsequent questions if the extract is overly long. It is highly recommended that the lines of the extracts are numbered to be aware of their lengths, and for ease of reference for candidates during the examination.

### **Discussion (HL only)**

After the candidates completed their oral commentaries, most teachers lead them into the discussion immediately without stopping the recording, which is appropriate. However, some teachers had already announced which works the discussion would be based on when the oral commentary started. It is essential that candidates are not informed of the choice of work for the discussion until after they have completed their oral commentary.

Most of the teachers gave candidates the opportunity to show their ability to engage in independent literary discussion of a second Part 2 work, and had prepared the questions to allow the discussion to commence smoothly.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Higher Level

**Criterion A:** Most of the candidates showed good knowledge and understanding through their careful interpretation of the poem. However, some candidates still performed unsatisfactory because they only presented their knowledge and understanding of the poem or poets and did not show independent interpretation supported by well-chosen references to the poem.

**Criterion B:** Most of the candidates showed a certain level of ability in relation to this criterion. Candidates were expected to show their appreciation of the writer's choices, such as language, structure and style, and to give a valid interpretation of the poem. The candidates' performance in this criterion could be improved if teachers and candidates discussed more about the details of the work in class. The high achievement of some candidates clearly reflected the validity of this exercise - they commented on the effectiveness of the writer's techniques including an account of the use of stylistic devices and their effects on the reader.

**Criterion C:** Most of the candidates demonstrated the ability to structure their commentaries. However, some candidates' commentaries were only 5 to 6 minutes long. Such cases reflected a lack of knowledge and understanding, as well as the fact that they had not been trained sufficiently as to how to construct a commentary, simply expressing their understanding or knowledge of the poem without integrating supporting references for their ideas.

Candidates should also be made more aware of the relationship between the introduction and the main body of their commentaries, as the introduction plays an important role in putting into perspective the candidates' views of the extract.

**Criterion D:** Most of the candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the content and the implication of the work under discussion. The teachers' questions were appropriate and covered a wide range of key aspects of the works. The candidates' responses were also well thought-out and valid, and showed a good degree of confidence and engagement with the works. However, still, few discussions reached the level of an authentic literary exchange.

**Criterion E:** The questions by the teachers were well focused and related to the works. Therefore most of the candidates were able to remain calm and show good knowledge and understanding of the works. Some excellent candidates showed a strong independent mind in their responses to questions such as whether the main character develops or not, or whether the works deals with fundamental human truths, and so on.

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of switching their thoughts and concentration to the discussion directly after they finish their oral commentary.

**Criterion F:** Most of the candidates expressed themselves clearly, fluently and concisely. But some candidates were nervous and could not show their ability sufficiently. Some forgot how to construct a commentary, or spoke too fast, while others repeated the same sentences. Still, a few candidates comfortably used literary terms and a wide range of vocabulary as well as adopting an appropriate register.

### Standard Level

**Criterion A:** Most of the candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the extracts and were able to contextualize them in relation to the work from which they were taken. But some candidates still performed poorly, because they only mentioned what they knew about the works and/or the authors in general and did not show good understanding of the extracts themselves. Some candidates also mainly gave a summary or mentioned the plot of the texts and did not connect them with the extracts itself properly.

**Criterion B:** Most of the candidates showed quite a good level of ability in relation to this criterion. It was expected that the candidates showed their awareness about the effects of literary features, and candidates should be trained more so that they are able to comment on these more fully. This criterion requires more of a candidate's own appreciation and analysis as well. Therefore, if they paid more attention on how to communicate their ideas based on the precise examples chosen, their commentary skills would be improved.

**Criterion C:** Most of the candidates demonstrated their ability to structure their commentaries well. However, some candidates' commentaries were not long or purposeful enough. In these cases, the candidates only answered the guiding questions or failed to support their understanding with appropriate references from the extracts. Therefore, it is important candidates are taught not to simply express or itemize their knowledge and/or understanding of the extracts but to also pay attention to constructing and presenting their ideas persuasively and meaningfully to the listener.

Candidates should also be more aware of the relationship between the introduction and the main body of their commentaries as the introduction plays an important role in putting into perspective the candidate's views of the extract.

**Criterion D:** Most of the candidates expressed themselves clearly, fluently and concisely. However, some candidates were nervous and could not show their ability sufficiently. Those candidates tended to lack vocabulary and idiom to express their own ideas properly. Some candidates also spoke a bit too fast. They should be more aware that they are delivering their ideas to an audience. Only a few candidates were comfortable using literary terms.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

In some recordings, teachers read out the guiding questions and let the candidates answer them. This is not appropriate. Teachers following this practice should note that candidates are not required to address the guiding questions and no mark will be deducted if they do not address the questions.

It is highly advisable to provide one question to elicit knowledge and understanding and the other question to elicit analysis of the writer's choices. This will help candidates to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria.

A commentary should be well structured. It should not be delivered as series of unconnected points nor take the form of a narration or a line-by-line paraphrase of the extract.

Candidates should be taught more about how to express their appreciation of the extract and work. The teachers should provide plenty of occasions for the candidates to discuss important passages / extracts of texts during the course. It may also be good exercise to ask candidates score their commentaries themselves using the assessment criteria.

When candidates present their commentaries, they should be aware that they need to leave some time for the teacher to ask subsequent questions. Otherwise the maximum length of assessment is exceeded.

The candidate should be trained more on how to show their appreciation of language, structure, technique and style, which the writer uses in works of literature.

The candidates should be trained to be able to use accurate, clear Japanese in their oral examinations. This does not necessarily mean they must use "da" or "dearu", as requiring them to use these forms can easily make them nervous and then they are not able to show their ability fully.

## Higher level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates did well in their Written Assignments. However, some failed to choose a well-defined topic and this produced an average result as it made it difficult for the candidates to analyse the works and construct arguments. There were also candidates who did not select good examples to support their ideas. The content of the reflective statement was not always consistent.

Some candidates failed to record the number of characters. This should be noted on the coversheet or on the assignment itself.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

**Criterion A:** Some candidates failed to demonstrate development of their understanding of cultural and contextual elements through the interactive oral. However, on the whole, there was evidence that the interactive oral activity helped candidates to shape their ideas for the Written Assignment.

**Criterion B:** Most candidates displayed a good understanding of the works and their chosen topic, as well as reflecting an awareness of the contexts of historical, social and cultural issues.

**Criterion C:** Candidate performance varied greatly in this criterion: where candidates were aware of the author's rhetoric, they did well. Otherwise, there was virtually no effective analysis of the author's choices. On the whole, performance in this criterion appeared to be the weakest.

**Criterion D:** Most candidates performed well, and their ideas were persuasively organised and developed. Nonetheless, there were some candidates who failed to include good examples from the works discussed.

**Criterion E:** In general, candidates used appropriate language in their assignments. However, in some cases, candidates made unnecessary mistakes because they failed to check their scripts properly before submission.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should be completely familiar with the new programme so as to avoid any unnecessary mistakes. Please read the Literature Guide very carefully.

As the choice of topic is very important in producing a meaningful assignment, teachers should make sure they help candidates in their choice of topic, helping them to define what they want to state, question or argue etc.

## Standard level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, works used for the Written Assignment were well chosen, and selected from the prescribed literature in translation (PLT) list. However, in some cases, there was not a clear understanding of the role of the reflective statement.

Topics chosen for Written Assignments were generally more focused than in previous years as a result of the supervised writing stage, which is encouraging.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

**Criterion A:** The length of the Reflective Statement was generally appropriate but the quality of this piece of work was very variable. While some were excellent statements which adhered to the requirements set out in the Guide, others were simple bullet points which seemed to have been learned in class discussions. These were not successful. Development through the interactive oral, in particular, was not apparent in some Reflective Statements.

**Criterion B:** Most candidates demonstrated good understanding of the work studied. The performance might be described as 'adequate' at the very least, and 'excellent' in the best examples.

**Criterion C:** Candidates who appreciated the author's choices achieved a good mark. However, there were a large number of assignments where this was not the case. Candidates who had Written Assignment topics that were sharply focussed usually performed better in this criterion (as well as in Criterion D).

**Criterion D:** In general, candidates knew how to structure an essay, but the examples from the works were sometimes poor.

**Criterion E:** On the whole, most candidates had a good level of language. However, there was a large variation in the candidates' ability.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Where there are many candidates in a class, teachers could try varying the candidates' topics, even if they are based on the same works.

Teachers should ensure that they guide the candidates in the choice of topic, which must be clearly focussed and not too wide as such assignments rarely score high marks.

Since the character limit is 2,400-3,000, this should be used to best effect. Teachers should set in-class essay writing activities so that candidates are better prepared.

It is very important to provide a good conclusion; candidates should avoid pointless generalizations, or moralising statements, in their conclusions.

## Higher level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Candidates tended to take a narrow focus and comment only on the obvious points without taking an overview of the passage and considering wider aspects. The majority of the candidates chose the poetry option which was unusual but this may have been due to the title of the two works since Wedding March (the poem) may have seemed more accessible than Siberian Story (the prose).

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

In some centres, there had clearly been considerable practice and candidates produced a polished and well-rounded response, with a good understanding of the role of literary convention. However, in other centres, this was rather sloppy and superficial.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Prose:** The strongest candidates could visualise the confined environment of the passage and understand the style of the author's particular way of writing the passage, without any strong emotion. There was just one exception to this and it was a crucial point to comment on but only very few candidates took account of it.

**Poetry:** About half the candidates chose this option, and although their comments on literary conventions were satisfactory, they did not grasp the humour of the passage or the tongue-in-cheek cynicism/realism of the poet and its relation to real life. There was a tendency to take the poem at face value and interpret it quite negatively but this missed a key point of the passage.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Practice and study of a wide variety of sources will provide candidates with a rich source of information and knowledge which will provide greater depth of thought when writing commentaries. This will avoid the superficial and stereotypical response that was seen in many scripts.



## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Most candidates lacked social and historical background of the Second World War and hence found it difficult to fully appreciate the thoughts and feelings in the poetry passage.

Many candidates did not understand that they had to write a commentary within which they responded to the two guiding questions. Instead they simply answered the guiding questions (a) and (b) without any sense of the totality and this created an unsatisfactory piece of work that did not score well. There was also a tendency to write superficial commentaries without giving detailed analysis.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

In some centres, there had clearly been considerable preparation and practice, and candidates were able to organise and develop their ideas and produce a good commentary. Good structuring helped some candidates even where they had not fully comprehended the passage.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Prose:** Candidates who chose this option were clearly comfortable with the main father-son relationship and dealt with it well. They could also understand the literary conventions but the difficulty arose in connecting these two elements. They were only able to superficially grasp why the author had used a particular rhetoric and what effect it created.

**Poem:** This passage contained many metaphors and although candidates commented on them, there was a lack of depth in what they stated and little connection with the feelings of the poet.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Much more practice in writing commentaries on a variety of themes is recommended so that candidates gain experience and wider social knowledge.

As has often been remarked in the past, there were still many kanji errors, and practice in "joyo kanji" should be made a priority.

It must be made clear that in this new syllabus, a coherent written commentary is required and not just an answer to two questions.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates had difficulty in addressing the specific requirements of the questions. They had good knowledge of the works, but were unable to give a clear response to the question.

The idea of "comparison" is a new requirement in Paper 2 as of the May 203 session. Some candidates did not provide a good comparison of the works.

Some candidates were unable to write even simple kanji.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of the works. They were also aware of the background to the works.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Question 1:** This question may have appeared easy to deal with on the surface, but it was very difficult to be specific if candidates did not choose the elements to discuss effectively. Therefore, the discussions and conclusions seen in some scripts were very vague.

**Question 2:** Generally, this question was handled well.

**Question 3:** A large number of candidates chose this topic. The question required candidates to analyse the way in which characters are created - not the characters themselves. Most attempted to explore the traits of the characters rather than the "method" used. It is important that candidates read the question carefully in order to achieve high marks.

**Question 4:** This question was handled quite well.

**Question 7:** This question was generally handled well.

**Question 8:** Rhythm and rhyme are very important elements of a poem, so candidates were well prepared in discussing this convention.

**Question 10:** This question was handled well.

**Question 11:** This question was also handled well.

**Questions 5, 6, 9 and 12:** These questions were not chosen by the candidates.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should ensure candidates are fully conversant with the content of the assessment criteria, particularly the element of comparison. They should also set plenty of essays as homework using past topics, so that candidates are well prepared.

As there are candidates who are unable to write even simple kanji, teachers should give them short kanji tests on a regular basis.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates made poor choices of question to respond to. For example, they had studied prose fiction, but chose a topic on drama. As questions are formulated to focus on key conventions for each of the genres, opting for a question from genre different to the works studied in class is unlikely to result in high marks.

In some cases, candidates attempted to give an explanation of the works without addressing the actual question, so their conclusion was unconvincing.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates had good knowledge of the works and explained them well. Most had an understanding of “comparison” and were therefore able to produce sensible conclusions. Most seemed aware of how to write an effective essay.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Please see HL section.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should set plenty of exercises that are similar to the examination to ensure candidates are well prepared. The important thing is to respond clearly to the actual question. Teachers should be sure candidates are fully aware of this requirement.

As there were a lot of candidates who were unable to write kanji, even basic kanji, they should be set regular kanji tests and exercises.