

Japanese A: literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 17	18 - 32	33 - 45	46 - 58	59 - 71	72 - 83	84 - 100

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 16	17 - 30	31 - 43	44 - 56	57 - 69	70 - 81	82 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

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

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Procedures were correctly followed; the timing of the orals, the guided questions and the associated paperwork.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The works submitted were suitable. Many schools used the same poets, but may also benefit from making further use of the wide range of authors offered by the syllabus.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

There was a generally high standard of knowledge and understanding, and candidates generally performed well under this criteria.

Criterion B

Most candidates were well prepared, but would benefit from paying further attention to their personal involvement with and appreciation of a given poem. Poetry should not be studied as a formula or set of inflexible rules, and this understanding would help candidates' performance under this criteria.

Criterion C

Most candidates organised their thoughts well and were able to cover the main points within the set time. Some schools would benefit from practicing the organisation of a writing activity under timed conditions in order to ensure that their work is properly organised, and of an appropriate length for the task.

Criterion D

Most candidates had a sound knowledge of the work being discussed and gave a good account.

Criterion E

It is important for teachers to focus on creating an exploratory discussion through the questions that are posed to the candidates. The use of closed questions will only allow students to respond with a brief answer. There were just a few schools which followed the IB prescription for this component to an excellent standard.

Criterion F

Quality of language ranged from adequate at one extreme to excellent at the other extreme with some very enjoyable presentations.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Schools need to ensure that all candidates have sufficient practice in organisation and timing and teachers need to plan carefully for the discussion session in order to draw out the most interesting literary responses. Candidates should be encouraged to respond to the individuality of a poem and not rely on a standard procedure.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

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

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

There are no problems for most candidates. It is important, however, to include the guiding questions, and not to exceed the allowed two guiding questions.

Additionally, it is important to choose an extract of between 20 and 30 lines. The limit of 40 lines from the previous curriculum is not appropriate to this task.

In order to analyse and comment on the text, every five lines should be numbered so as to facilitate the commentary.

Eight minutes of commentary and two minutes of added questions is a challenge to control properly, however, it has been done rather well.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Generally, this was handled well. However, candidates should analyse the extract itself rather than a complete work. As there is a time limit of eight minutes, the focus should be firmly set on a detailed analysis of the extract; failing this, the analysis will be less persuasive.

Furthermore, some candidates should focus on creating a structure to their commentary. Even though the time frame is relatively short, it is preferable to have an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

What is important here is analysing the **extract**, not the entire work; the IOC should be based on an analysis of the extract. Moreover, candidates should quote references from the extract; otherwise their argument will lose its persuasive power.

Criterion B

There is a significant difference between candidates when it comes to this criterion, in terms of the awareness that candidates express in the analysis of the author's style. At SL, an in-depth, detailed analysis of the rhetoric is not required. Specific and significant aspects of the rhetoric used should be indicated, and their effects stated.

Criterion C

For this criterion, again, there is a great difference between candidates. Those who are able to achieve the highest marks in this criterion provide a well-structured commentary with introduction, body and conclusion. Others immediately start with an analysis of the text and finish with an analysis of the final lines without really concluding their commentary.

The extract should at least be situated in context and the importance of the extract explained by way of a brief introduction.

Criterion D

Most candidates are able to use correct language. However, some use informal structures (～だ, ～である). As this is a formal commentary, more polite, formal language should be used.

There are also candidates who are not able to correctly read the kanji in the extract. As these are texts that they have already studied, it should be ensured that the students are familiar with this. Care should also be taken in the correct reading of the author's name and / or characters in the text.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates generally understand the content of the texts well. However, some would benefit from focusing on the author's rhetoric and structure. The teacher could explain and make students prepare these important aspects.

Moreover, and in order for students to get used to the IOC, the teacher should allow some opportunities for practising the format of the exam beforehand in order to make good use of the eight minutes of commentary

Higher and Standard level written assignment

HL component grade boundaries

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

SL component grade boundaries

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

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

The number of procedural mistakes has been reduced since last year, however, it should be ensured that candidates are aware of how to draft a reflective statement.

For SL, care should be taken to follow the requirements of the assignment. It should be noted that 1,200–1,500 words in English equates to 2,400–3,000 Japanese characters, however some candidates, above all self-taught ones, are not well acquainted with this rule. Candidates should be well informed by the IB Coordinator and / or Language A teachers.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Generally, candidates did well with their assignments. Care should be taken, however, to clearly define the subject which will also allow for a focussed conclusion. When it comes to the reflective statement, this should demonstrate **development** through the interactive oral. Candidates may set out what they have discussed during the oral, but should also explain how their idea has developed.

The choice of subject is also very important. If candidates have not chosen their subject well, their argumentation, analysis and conclusion may become unclear. It is also important to include good references to support the argument, and to appropriately reference both direct and indirect quotes.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

The key word here is **development**. Candidates should demonstrate a development as brought about through the interactive oral. Just describing the contents of the interactive oral is not sufficient, and candidates need to demonstrate a development of ideas.

Some candidates apparently wrote their reflective statement as an in-class test, which is not required.

Criterion B

Most candidates have a good understanding of the work they have chosen. Generally, they have studied the works thoroughly, including historical, cultural and social elements. However, candidates should analyse the work thoroughly in light of their subject and maintain focus on the subject chosen.

Criterion C

There are two extremes here. The candidates who gain the highest marks under this criterion are those who are well aware of the style and rhetoric of the author. The teacher should explain how to analyse these important elements in class.

Criterion D

Added weight can be given to an argument by making use of quotes from the work. All references and quotes, both direct and indirect should be appropriately referenced. The character limit was adhered to.

It could benefit candidates to practice citing important elements of the work in order to provide a convincing argument.

For SL, self-taught candidates often are not aware of the rule of how to count Japanese characters compared to English words, which meant some candidates wrote a very short essay. Candidates should be well informed about this by the IB Coordinator and / or Language A teachers.

Criterion E

Generally candidates have practised this area well and are able to write a good essay. The level of language is also good, with a few exceptions. Nevertheless, candidates should be careful not to make basic mistakes. To prevent these, the essay should be carefully reread before submission.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The teacher should carefully read the Guide and the assessment criteria so that students can produce satisfactory essays. Teachers could give regular essay assignments so that candidates can prepare thoroughly for the WA.

Teachers could also have a discussion with the candidates to enable them to choose a satisfactory subject. The choice of subject is of course based on the supervised writing exercise, but candidates can reasonably develop their subject in order to write their essay better, which is why the teacher's role is such an important one.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 14	15 – 17	18 - 20

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

The main area that proved difficult for many candidates was how to adapt their general learned knowledge to the specific requirements of the passage that they were responding to. In some cases, lack of adequate practice suggested a lack of confidence in the organization of the commentary.

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

Many students seemed to have learned about literary convention in detail and had understood the key ideas in writing a commentary and were aware that the overall understanding of a passage was important. For some students, their organisation indicated that they had been well prepared with many practice sessions.

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

The poetry commentary was attempted by approximately half of the candidates. A superficial reading might have suggested that it was easily accessible and that may have tempted some students to choose it, even though they may not have a particularly strong affinity with poetry. There were a few very good responses, but the majority who chose this, had difficulty relating the general principles of literary convention to the specific demands of the text. It seemed as if they had learned about rhetoric but they had a set idea about its usage and lacked the flexibility of interpreting their ideas to the text. In the extreme cases, some students simply listed all the examples of rhetoric to show that they could recognize them, but did not integrate their effectiveness into the commentary.

The prose commentary generally elicited a good quality of response but it is important for some candidates to remember that they should not simply summarize each section of the passage, but should add some literary insights.

For both commentaries there were a number of responses that lacked adequate organization and some scripts came to a sudden conclusion in a rush of hurried writing.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should encourage their students to read widely especially for poetry and to discover their own enjoyment in doing such reading. Then they will be able to respond on a more personal level; bringing their feelings as well as their logical ideas into the interpretation of a passage. Encouraging students to write their own poetry will help them to gain both pleasure and greater awareness.

Some schools need to give their students much more timed practice in doing this paper so that the candidates know how to choose the more suitable question for themselves, to plan and organize their response and arrive at a logical conclusion within the time given.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 – 11	12 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

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

A number of candidates experienced difficulty in organizing their ideas, integrating comments on literary convention and responding to the Guiding questions within the framework of a commentary. Consequently many of the commentaries were very short. Also around 10% of the candidates just answered the Guiding Questions as A and B without having an overall connecting commentary.

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

Those students who had adequate practice were able to write a commentary of satisfactory length and content.

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

In the poetry commentary, many candidates read the passage with a literal logical interpretation, taking the words at face value rather than interpreting the thought lying behind the words. These were the less imaginative responses, and possibly showed insufficient practice at reading poetry.

In the prose commentary, the contents were well understood by almost everyone. The best students observed that the overall structure of the essay is rhetoric and were able to weave their answers to the Guiding Questions into an excellent response. Some of the less successful students had difficulty identifying any literary conventions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be given several timed practice sessions of sitting the Japanese paper and should be able to write at least 4 pages within the time given, as this quantity is necessary for them to cover the major points of a passage and answer the Guiding questions. All schools must note that the response to the guiding questions is part of the commentary, and students must not answer them as if they were two separate questions. All schools must use the IB Japanese Paper provided.

Higher and Standard level paper two

HL component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 – 8	9 – 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

SL component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 – 11	12 – 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 – 25

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

Most candidates answered the question well, however, there were some candidates who were unable to grasp the sense of the question. In these cases, the responses were unclear.

Many candidates were unable to write kanji correctly. As a minimum the Kyōiku Kanji must be written correctly, and HL candidates should also be able to write the Jōyō Kanji correctly. Many SL students should ensure they can distinguish between the polite form and informal form.

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

Most candidates understood the content of the works well, and provided a good analysis of the works in order to answer the question.

Additionally, the essay structure was usually well laid out. Candidates compared the results of the analysis of the works and demonstrated differences and similarities. Some candidates first analysed one work and then another, whilst others analysed the works by their important elements. Both strategies are good and were correctly applied.

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

Question 1

Many candidates opted for this question, and there were difficulties observed despite the question being clearly explained. The question requires an analysis of the significance of a gesture and / or a movement of the characters, however, many candidates analysed their behaviour and / or actions. In these cases, criterion B was affected and even criterion A and C were influenced, because these two criteria also require elements of the “question concerned”. Very few candidates correctly understood the meaning of this question, despite the fact that the words “身振り” and “動作” are clear.

Question 2

Analysing a physical or psychological journey is a good, clear topic and most candidates handled this well. The influence of the journey was analysed well, but the characteristics of a journey were not always well explained.

Question 3

Many candidates answered this well, although some confused the “flow of time” with “time” itself. Apart from this the question was dealt with well.

Question 4

The question requires an analysis of the author’s position. Some essays clearly showed the political and / or ideological position taken by the author. In these cases, the question adapts suitably and is thus dealt with well. No SL candidates chose this question.

Question 5

Nobody chose this question.

Question 6

This question was only answered on the SL examination. This is a question that requires an analysis of the author's rhetoric in order to give a persuasive argument. The question states “a hyperbole etc.”, which means candidates can analyse a variety of rhetorical elements. This question was well answered.

Question 7 and 8

Nobody answered these questions on either level.

Question 9

This question was only answered by SL students. Candidates should analyse phonemes and musical elements of the poems. These are obvious rhetorical elements that draw on candidates' imaginations. This was well dealt with.

Question 10

Here the analysis focuses on supporting parts of the plays. This is a very important element of the plays, which candidates had taken firmly on board. The question was well answered.

Question 11

This question was well answered, where good analyses were given where plays had a climax, several climaxes, and also in the case of modern plays that do not really have a climax at all.

Question 12

Only HL candidates chose this question. There are several strategies the authors use in the plays to try to convey past events of the characters – gestures, movement, words, etc. These are very interesting elements to analyse and this was very well done.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As candidates tend to use computers to a greater extent than in the past, they become increasingly unable to write kanji correctly. The teacher could give a small, daily kanji quiz so that candidates are able to remember them properly.

The teacher should regularly set essay assignments and explain in class how to write a good essay.

As some subjects are repeated fairly regularly, the teacher could analyse these subjects together with the candidates in order for them to prepare these thoroughly.

On the other hand, the teacher should encourage candidates to analyse works from a range of different angles so that they are able to adapt to any type of subject.