

## Japanese B

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 25	26 - 43	44 - 58	59 - 72	73 - 87	88 - 100

#### Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 23	24 - 39	40 - 54	55 - 71	72 - 86	87 - 100

### Higher level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

A good range of work was submitted. The photographs were generally well chosen by the teachers, but there were some photos with no captions. Please note that photographs must always be accompanied by a title or a caption to help the candidates with their presentations.

The time allocation is 10 minutes in total, but some recordings ran over 15 minutes. Teachers need to ensure that the time limit specified in the Guide is adhered to, and also guide the candidates to the allocated timeline for their presentations.

A few centres still followed the format of the individual orals that existed in the previous curriculum. Please note that there is no longer a 'general discussion' part in the current curriculum.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Productive skills

Most candidates spoke fluently, using a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures with a degree of authenticity in pronunciation, intonation and register.

### Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Most candidates responded to the questions with spontaneous answers and ideas. Some could produce detailed responses using richer variety of vocabulary words and expressions.

There were some candidates who spoke too colloquially. Please note that this is an examination and a formal register need to be applied throughout.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Please ensure that the photographs chosen for the individual oral is relevant to Japanese culture. Please also encourage candidates to discuss Japanese culture from various aspects during their presentations, and draw these aspects out in the subsequent discussion part if needed.

Please make clear to candidates, well in advance of their individual orals, the timings given for each part of the examination: Part 1 is 3-4 minutes, Part 2 is 5-6 minutes.

Future candidates should be well informed that they need to use a formal language rather than informal one as this is an examination.

Please ensure that the individual oral examination is conducted in a place without any background noises.

## Standard level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

All schools uploaded their IA recordings, photographs and forms electronically.

Please direct the candidates to introduce their names, centre and candidate number in Japanese at the beginning of the oral examination. Please also make sure that the comments on the 2/BIA form justify the mark which was given according to the individual oral assessment criteria.

Majority of the centres followed the correct IA procedures in terms of time allocation and the 2 part structure. However, there were still some centres in which the Part 3 general discussion was included. Please note that 'Part 3 general discussion' is no longer part of the individual oral examination.

The photographs were generally well chosen by the teachers, but there were some photos with no captions. Please note that photographs must always be accompanied by a title or a caption.

A wide range of work was submitted from the very weak to excellent. At the very weak end, please make sure that the teacher's main aim is to keep the candidate talking.

Some candidates demonstrated 'near-native' speaking proficiency, and these candidates should have been encouraged to take the B HL.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Productive skills

Most candidates spoke using a range of vocabulary, but simple grammatical structures. It is pleasing that the candidates generally showed enthusiasm when talking about the topic of their individual orals. However there were some candidates who struggled to speak for 3-4 minutes.

### Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Most candidates were eager to participate in the discussion in Part 2, therefore they responded to the questions with spontaneous answers and some could produce detailed responses. However, in most samples, the interaction remained in an exchange of simple questions and answers without any development of the topic or the message. Such exchanges did not lend themselves to the highest marks in Criterion B.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Authentic conversations need to be held during the course so that it can be achieved successfully in the Part 2 of the examinations. Please encourage the stronger candidates to develop their opinions and engage in a sustained discussion. Please give the weaker candidates sufficient opportunities to speak.

Please encourage candidates to speak using a wide variety of sentence structures.

Please make clear to the candidates, well in advance of the individual oral examinations, the timings given for each part of the Individual Oral: Part 1 is 3-4 minutes, Part 2 is 5-6 minutes.

Please ensure the quality of the microphone used is of a high quality so that both the candidate and the teacher can be heard clearly.

## Higher level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

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

### General comments

Please note that the Written Assignment component has undergone review, and a new Written Assignment specification and assessment will be in place from the May 2015 session onwards. Please see the *Language B Guide (first examinations 2015)* for details.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work submitted was generally suitable. The text chosen were very wide ranging, and teachers and candidates are encouraged to continue to choose a wide range of literary texts, following the candidates' interest.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### Criterion A: Language

Candidates were generally able to write using a good range of language. Some candidates who chose to do creative writing (an alternative ending to the story, for example) did not quite have the richness of language to successfully carry out their task.

#### Criterion B: Content

This is generally the criterion on which candidates score the poorest marks. There must be use of the literary work, and make a good connection with the text to score highly on this criterion.

#### Criterion C: Format

Most candidates were excellent at formatting their piece of work. A wide range of formats (letters, diaries, introductions to debates etc.) were chosen, and candidates seemed comfortable in using the appropriate conventions for their chosen text types.

#### Criterion D: Rationale

The rationale still causes difficulty for candidates. Please see page 42 of the Guide for what the rationale should contain.

### Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

If the text is short and still in copyright (ie not easily available on the internet), it would be very helpful to have a photocopy of the text attached whenever possible.

Please persuade candidates that the rationale is not an outline of the story. The rationale needs to clearly state their aim in producing this piece of writing, and how this aim was achieved (giving a clear reference to how the literary text was used).

Please guide candidates to study Criterion B: Content very carefully, and make sure that what they write does have a strong connection with the literary text, and that they make good use of the text.

Careful consideration should be given to which literary text to choose, and how the candidate might use this text in their assignment. The level of difficulty of the text is an important factor in this consideration, as if the text is very difficult and the candidate has not fully grasped the extent of thought behind it (perhaps only reading the story, but not noticing implicit meanings), this can lead to poor outcomes in the use the candidate can make of the literary text in their written assignment.

Having said that, there was good evidence that candidates had generally understood the texts well, and teachers are commended for their very thorough teaching and preparation of candidates.

## Standard level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

### General comments

Please note that the Written Assignment component has undergone review, and a new Written Assignment specification and assessment will be in place from the May 2015 session onwards. Please see the *Language B Guide (first examinations 2015)* for details.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of work submitted this year was much greater than last year: it was very pleasing to see that teachers are searching for a much wider range of sources than the environmental theme which predominated in 2013. The work produced by candidates varied from the satisfactory to excellent.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### Criterion A: Language

Candidates generally do well on this criterion. They demonstrate the ability to write using a range of vocabulary, kanji and grammatical structures.

### Criterion B: Content

This is criterion on which candidates do least well. The ablest candidates sometimes lose marks as they do not use the sources but rather do a piece of creative writing. The key question for this criterion is how well the candidate has used the sources: candidates need to be reminded of this and be given practice on reading and using sources.

### Criterion C: Format

Candidates have no problem formatting their work appropriately.

### Criterion D: Rationale

The rationale continues to pose problems for candidates. They must explain what they are writing (eg a letter of apology) and for whom (the target audience), but they must also say how they used the sources. (Criterion D, for the maximum 3 marks, states "The rationale is clear and directly linked to the sources"). It is often impossible to award the 3, as no mention of the sources has been made.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Do please continue to take great care over the selection of sources. Please be careful over length, difficulty of language and also whether each source can in fact be used by candidates in some way. For Japanese B SL, it is perfectly acceptable for the teacher to gloss the kanji etc. The sources should also be varied from each other in the text types that they are - there seems to be some misunderstanding that all three sources must be of the same text type. This is not the case. Please choose varied text types - eg newspaper article, diary, letter etc. It cannot be over emphasized that the candidates' performance in this task is very highly dependent upon the teacher's choice of texts.

Please remind candidates (particularly the most able) that they must base their assignment on the sources - it is not a creative writing exercise in which they make up all the details in their heads.

Please remind candidates that the rationale must be directly linked to the sources - ie "I used source A for statistics on the problem, source B to understand the impact of the problem on the local population, and source C for possible solutions."

Candidates must respect the word limits, both for the assignment and the rationale. There were quite a few instances of assignments being too short (which results in a 1 mark penalty), and also some cases of the assignment being too long (in which case the work over the word limit is not read or marked).

Dictionary induced errors are seen in the WA, as students are allowed to use reference materials. Please teach dictionary skills, and guide candidates away from over-dependence on a dictionary.

## Higher level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 27	28 - 36	37 - 44	45 - 53	54 - 60

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

Some candidates failed to answer all questions. It seemed reading all required texts and answering every question within limited time were challenging to some of them. Passage D, in particular, appeared demanding for some candidates.

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

Answering open-ended questions in basic words were done well. Moreover, the candidates were well prepared to paraphrase answers in simple words in Japanese.

Many candidates seemed to have used their common sense very well to recognize meanings of words from the contexts and look for answers.

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

**Passage A** was about characteristics of Japanese food. Candidates generally did well on questions 1-4 to select titles for each paragraph. Questions 5-7 were short answer questions. Question 5 was done very well, the candidates might have used common sense about Japan being an island country, and therefore products of the sea are abundantly available. Some made careless mistake answering question 6. The question asked about "Apart from human beings what do you...". However, some candidates did not seem to have read the part, 'apart from' and answered about human beings. Question 7 was done well. Candidates must have studied the word, *mottainai*, before. Most of them did not have any trouble giving one example of that. Questions 8-11 required candidates to find synonyms. Some candidates answered question 8 *shoppai*, instead of *suppai*, which sounds similar but means different.

**Passage B** was about protecting forests and a wooden toy museum. Multiple-choice questions 12-15 posed no problem. Questions 16-18 were short answer questions. Most candidates did well. Some listed more than one answer, even though only one example was required. Question 17 included not so easy kanji compound words, such as 'import' and 'made in Japan', but many candidates recognized the words and answered the question in basic but appropriate way. Questions 19-22 were true/false with justification questions, which seemed demanding, even for some strong candidates. Moreover, many candidates wrote whole sentence(s), rather than a brief quotation, and some failed to tick the correct box for true/false even though correct justification was provided and so they did not earn a point.

**Passage C** was about promoting a town for tourism using Ninja. Questions 23-27 were choosing second half of the sentences. Some candidates failed to match appropriate second halves of the sentences. Questions 28-31 were short answer questions. Question 29 asked about Mr. Kawakami's new job. There was a wide range of answers related to his new job mentioned in the text and they were all accepted. Still, some candidates failed to answer this question correctly. Many candidates answered question 31 very well. Many candidates also did well on questions 32-35, which were multiple-choice questions.

**Passage D** was the literary text. Questions 36-39 required candidates to select appropriate words from a range of options in order to complete the summary of the text. Many candidates seemed to have found question 38 very difficult. Questions 40-44 were about finding synonyms. While many candidates did quite well, question 42 seemed challenging. If candidates did not know the word, there was no hint they could use from the context. Questions 45-48 were multiple-choice questions. Some candidates found questions 47 and 48 slightly difficult. Some chose C instead of D for question 47, and D instead of B for question 48.

**Passage E** was about smart phone and translation app. Questions 49-52 were short answer questions. Most candidates recognized katakana words and answered questions 51 and 52 very well. Question 53 task was choosing four correct statements. While three out of four statements were chosen well, some candidates chose H, instead of D. Questions 54-57 were multiple-choice, which most candidates handled well.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Please give candidates the opportunity to read a wide range of texts in Japanese in a limited time frame.

Please teach candidates how to answer true/false question. Even though correct justifications were often given, some candidates ticked the wrong true/false box. Thus, no point was earned.

Please encourage them to justify using brief quotations, instead of copying long sections of the text. Giving long answer will not help them gain the mark and additionally they waste their time copying out large sections.

Please teach exam techniques by giving candidates practice in tasks similar to the true/false and justification questions. Please do not give candidates half marks when one half or the other was missing so that they become aware of the need to complete both true/false and give justification to earn a point.

Please teach candidates to read the questions carefully and answer appropriately. If a question asks for one example, please teach them to give one example only, and not two or three. If a question starts with a question word 'who', then candidates need to write about a person, not time or place.



## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 22	23 - 32	33 - 41	42 - 45

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

There were no areas which all candidates seemed to find difficult. The weaker candidates struggled to read at the necessary speed in order to complete the paper in the time allocated.

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

Candidates appeared well prepared on all aspects of the examination.

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

**Passage A** was about how Japanese youth look up kanji they do not know. Questions 1-3 proved more challenging than expected, with "imi" often offered as a wrong answer for question 1, and "riyu" for question 3. The multiple choice questions 4-6 were well answered. Questions 7-10 required words with a specific meaning to be found in the passage. It was pleasing that hardly any candidates left this section blank. However, quite a few candidates wrote their own words rather than looking for words in the passage.

**Passage B** was about a Japanese girl who had travelled to Australia to introduce rice-ball making to her homestay family. Candidates had no difficulty with question 11, which required the four correct statements to be chosen from a bank of statements. Most candidates attempted the short answer questions 12-14, which was good. Question 13 proved the hardest, with many candidates being unable to give the full details required. The multiple choice questions 15-18 were generally well attempted, with question 18, testing the communicative purpose of the passage, being the hardest.

**Passage C** was about the film director, Hisako Yamada. Many candidates lost marks on questions 19-22, "true/false with justification", as either they did not circle the true/false box, or they did not provide a justification. The short answer questions 23-26 proved difficult for some candidates, particularly in differentiating which detail from the passage should be given as an answer to which question. Questions 27-30 tested linking words. Given that this type of question had not been used in very recent past papers, candidates made a reasonable attempt.

**Passage D** was about how non-Japanese speaking children are supported in Japanese state schools. Some candidates appeared to be rushing this section, and the quality of answers was more variable. Questions 31-34 required the two halves of sentences to be matched. Questions 35-38 required the questions to be put back into the passage - this exercise proved quite challenging for

candidates. Some candidates failed to attempt the multiple choice questions 39-42. Amongst those who did, question 42 seemed to be the hardest.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be more familiar with the question type which requires words for a specific definition to be found in the passage. In particular, they should be aware that they must find the words in the passage, and not just answer in their own words.

Candidates continue to need a lot of practice in reading, to get their reading speed up.

Please make candidates aware that they need to both circle (tick) the true/false box, and provide a justification, to score the mark in the "true/false with justification" type question. Too many candidates are leaving out one part or the other in this question type.

Candidates would benefit from class activities focussing on linking words (setsuzokushi).

There seem to be a group of candidates who are comfortably scoring 45 / 45 on this paper. Please consider whether very strong candidates may more appropriately be entered for the HL paper.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 33	34 - 39	40 - 45

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

No area of the programme appeared to be particularly difficult for candidates. The weakest area was perhaps in writing an interesting, creative piece of sufficient length with many supporting details to score highly on Criterion B: Message in Section A.

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

Candidates generally appeared very well prepared on formatting their piece of writing according to the required text type. It was also clear that candidates had been encouraged to use a wide variety of complex grammatical structures, and were making a good effort to do so.

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

**Question 1** asked candidates to produce a set of guidelines as they acted as hosts to international visitors coming to a sports event. Given that this was under the heading “cultural diversity”, it was disappointing that candidates did not include more details which would demonstrate cross-cultural awareness, such as perhaps the use of gesture etc. Most candidates instead wrote about making sure the visitors had enough water to drink, or keeping an eye on your possessions that they did not get stolen etc.

**Question 2** required a diary including reflections on how human relationships in the local community had changed over the last 50 years. Many candidates lost marks under Criterion B: Message, as they did not focus on the human relationship aspect, or did not address the point about traditions which should be kept and which should be changed. A fair proportion of the answers focussed on how society had changed (eg greater use of technology) over the last 50 years.

**Question 3** produced the strongest responses overall. The task was to write a speech calling for volunteers to go and visit elderly people who are living alone. Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the problems of the ageing society in Japan. The strongest candidates were able to blend this with effective personal stories and appeals to get their message across very clearly and persuasively. Their use of rhetorical devices appropriate to a speech was generally excellent.

**Question 4** required an email to your teacher about an incident that had happened abroad, together with your reflections on it. Many candidates lost marks as they did not understand the full nuance of the question. Commonly they did not describe a specific incident that had happened. Sometimes they latched onto the “*komatta*” and wrote about how dire their experiences were. Very seldom was there a scene of excitement at a new discovery.

**Question 5** required candidates to produce a school newspaper article introducing a new app which was going to be developed for the school. Most candidates did not understand “*arayuru*” and therefore their answers focussed on a time-table app or a homework diary app. Whilst these functions were described in reasonable detail, few candidates scored in the top mark band for Criterion B: Message because they did not cover the breadth expected in the question.

**Question 6** caused some candidates difficulty, as they did not understand the word “*shinjitsu*” in the question, and thus wrote a very general piece about the meaning of friendship. Most candidates chose to approach this as a diary or an opinion piece. Often they used up most of their word-count in telling a story and left themselves only one or two lines to say “Therefore it is important that friends are truthful with each other.” This did not really fit the top mark band, “The argument is convincing” for Criterion B: Argument.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Please continue to encourage candidates to learn and use kanji. Candidates generally seem very keen to include lots of advanced grammatical structures, but some candidates who can use very good structures are writing very basic words in hiragana.

Please encourage candidates to study Criterion B: Message, and make sure that they write relevant and interesting ideas, with lots of supporting details. It was often disappointing that seemingly strong

candidates wrote the minimum (rather than maximum) number of words, and thus did not take the opportunity to develop their ideas as richly as they could.

Please encourage candidates to read the question carefully, and address the full details and nuances of the question. Too often they are writing about the general topic area, but not really focussing on the particular angle asked for in the question.

If candidates are writing a speech, they do not need to put a title and their name. They should just start with their chosen opening eg “Minasan, ohayo gozaimasu”.

For Section B, please emphasize to candidates that the second criterion is headed “Argument”, and so they are expected to produce some kind of argument. Whilst a wide range of approaches and text types will be accepted, the pure narration of a story with very little reflection is unlikely to score highly.

Candidates are generally very good at using the different formats required for different text types; please encourage them to continue to be so.

Please stress to candidates that they must write in paragraphs.

There were several comments on the feedback from schools that candidates find it hard to complete two questions in the time. The time limit, number of questions and word limit is not a Japanese specific decision, but a decision taken across all B languages. Therefore please train your candidates to write quickly and efficiently in the time available. They must certainly attempt both Section A and Section B.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

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

Candidates appeared to have no particular difficulties with any part of the paper. They were able to write using a range of vocabulary and sentence patterns using a variety of formats. If one minor criticism were to be made, it is that the content of what they wrote tended to be “routine”: they could be encouraged to write more creatively and interestingly.

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

Candidates appeared thoroughly prepared across all areas of the programme. Candidates were able to adapt their writing to suit specific audiences.

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

**Question 1** was to write a guide for Japanese students coming to study at your school. Candidates who tackled this question on the whole tended to write a general introduction to their school, rather than focussing on what may be of interest to overseas students and advice for how they could maximize the benefit from staying at the school.

**Question 2** required candidates to write a guide about a local seasonal event (or food) for a Japanese family. The pamphlet format was very well done. Some candidates missed the seasonal aspect required by the question.

**Question 3** was a letter of advice to a friend who had started a dangerous diet. Unfortunately, many of the weaker candidates misunderstood the question, and wrote things like “*muri na daietto wa subarashii desu ne.*” Most candidates did cover both the eating habits and the exercise aspect of this question. Only the very best candidates were able to offer both criticism of the current diet, and propose a more suitable alternative.

**Question 4** required a diary entry after having conflict with parents over internet-use. This question was not very popular, but those who tackled it generally did it well. They were able to clearly explain both the enjoyment the candidate finds in making friends over the internet, and either agreement or disagreement with their parents’ comments in regard to internet use.

**Question 5** required a description of a new app which the candidate was proposing to design to improve school life. The school newspaper format, together with a strong element of appeal for support for this new app, was generally well done. The description of the app, however, generally tended to be disappointing, with most candidates missing the details in the question - how to use technology to improve schools across academic work, school life in general, and the environment. Most descriptions of the apps did not rise above the “routine” - ie you can use this app to find out your timetable, homework and submit homework. It was disappointing that very few managed to mention even the simplest “extra” thing such as using an app would save on the amount of paper routinely given out in schools etc.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should read the specific details in the questions very carefully and make sure that their answer addresses these specific points.

Please encourage the very strongest candidates to have at least one idea which they would describe as “creative”, “interesting” or “unlikely to have been thought of by other candidates”.

Do continue to encourage candidates to use a wide variety of grammatical structures. However, accuracy also matters, so it may be worth teaching slightly fewer structures for active use, but to a higher level of accuracy.

Candidates seem to be very strong on the conventions of different text types, use of cohesive devices and use of rhetorical devices. Please continue to teach these as you are.

Candidates should set their work out in paragraphs (unless the text type is such that it would make this inappropriate).

Some candidates need reminding that a Japanese diary does not start “Dear Diary”. Some also need reminding that the date in Japanese is written month first, then date.

Please encourage the correct use of katakana.