

FIRST LANGUAGE JAPANESE

Paper 0507/02
Reading and Directed Writing

Key message

For Part 1, Question 1

1. Candidates should summarize passages A and B succinctly, making a comparison between the two and describing the difference in their approach to a common theme.
2. Candidates need to give their own opinion as to which of the two approaches they agree with and to what extent.

For Part 1, Question 2

1. Candidates need to compare and describe the similarities and/or differences between personal experience and the situations described in A and/or B concerning a common theme.
2. Candidates need to support their arguments with a brief logical discussion, preferably providing a concrete example.

For both questions the relevance of the content is of paramount importance. Candidates should ensure that their composition is coherent and includes a brief introduction and conclusion. A confident grasp of issues must be demonstrated using accurate grammar, well-formed sentence structures, effective linking between sentences and paragraphs, appropriate style for the genre with consistency throughout the prose, and good knowledge of kanji. The word limit must be strictly observed. Good time-management is essential.

General Comments

Candidates generally performed well although with varying levels of accuracy and fluency. Most candidates completed all the questions in Parts 1 and 2, demonstrating good time-management and familiarity with the exam format.

Many candidates expressed their ideas and opinions coherently, making suggestions or stating opinions, which were supported by concrete examples and logical argument. Some candidates also demonstrated originality and developed interesting ideas. Fewer candidates, however, were able to develop a very clear case for their arguments. Many candidates wrote fluently when expressing emotions, but only a few were able to write analytically and logically.

Candidates at this level are expected to compose a coherent discourse using longer sentences and structured paragraphs. However, there was a general tendency towards shorter, simple sentence structures and lack of conjunctive expressions. Missing particles, unfinished sentences, inconsistent sentence-ending styles, and idiosyncratic syntactic structures were also observed among weaker candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

Stronger candidates gave a succinct summary of the two passages, including a brief introduction and conclusion. When comparing the main points of the passages they demonstrated a good grasp of the contents and were able to make a clear case for their preferred option, using excellent grammar and wide vocabulary. In contrast, weaker candidates developed the material in a more limited way and used less varied sentence structures and vocabulary but managed to communicate messages sufficiently using very

simple but accurate language. Such essays demonstrated good paragraphing, accurate basic grammar and an effective use of conjunctive expressions.

Question 2

Candidates generally responded to this question with a sense of immediacy and involvement. For example, candidates chose the stance of either A or B and explained reasons why they chose that educational system and approach, describing the similarities with and/or differences from their own experience. Stronger candidates argued for an ideal approach to education and the development of effective education system, providing concrete examples in a convincing manner.

Part 2

In this section the majority of candidates demonstrated good lexical and grammatical knowledge and a good command of *Kanji*.

FIRST LANGUAGE JAPANESE

Paper 0507/03
Continuous Writing

Key message

On this paper candidates must demonstrate competence in the following areas:

1. Material presented should be relevant, appropriate and accurate.
2. The structure should be coherent and cohesive in particular as regards paragraphing and sentence structure and candidates should include an introduction and conclusion.
3. The style should be appropriate to the audience and should include a varied range of vocabulary and sentence structure.
4. Candidates' work should be accurate as regards grammar, punctuation, and usage of *GenkôYôshi*

Candidates should also ensure that they adhere to the specified word limit.

General Comments

Many candidates produced competent and original compositions. In general, successful candidates chose a subject that was suitable to their linguistic level and personal style of writing. Such a choice of topic helped many candidates to gain high marks by producing a readable and interesting composition in a style that was appropriate to the genre and content.

Stronger candidates tended to choose topics which required analytical and argumentative approach. Such candidates typically used a wide range of vocabulary and employed complex sentence structures. Further, they were able to write coherently using a clear three-part (Introduction-Content-Conclusion) structure. Some candidates skilfully employed a traditional Japanese four-part discourse structure to maintain coherence in an authentic Japanese style.

Stronger candidates' essays demonstrated relevance of contents to the chosen topic, clarity of arguments, coherence, grammatical accuracy, and paragraph links. A few candidates distinguished themselves in terms of originality, use of *Kanji*, and appropriateness of lexical choices.

Weaker candidates, in general, opted for imaginative stories and free composition in a simple style.

Comments on specific questions

Nine titles were given to call for the candidates' imaginative, descriptive or argumentative responses in an appropriate style.

1. There are various encounters in life. Some of them may have strong influence on you. For example, a book that you picked up at a shop in town can change your life for good. (Continue the story from here).
2. Give your opinion about "vegetarianism". Write convincingly, supplying the reasons and evidence for your argument, or explicating the background of your opinion.
3. What does "peace" mean to you? Explain your thoughts clearly using concrete examples.
4. Consider possible causes for "lack of self-esteem" and suggest solutions.

5. What sort of Green Activities can candidates do to reduce the effects of global warming? Should they promote them? Write your opinion, suggesting a possible solution.
6. Write a composition using the word “hope” somewhere in the prose.
7. Write your thoughts about the expression “*iccho-ittan* (having advantages and disadvantages)”.
8. State whether you agree or disagree with the idea, “No one can live entirely alone”, and explain the reason why. Discuss logically and coherently giving concrete examples to support your opinion.
9. Express your response to the following photo. You can choose any viewpoint.

Candidates who chose Topic 1 generally performed satisfactorily. They tended to discuss a book that gave them aims, dreams and aspirations to shape their future. Some opted for an imaginative story, but did not manage to create a coherent story with clear ending.

Topics 2, 4, 5 and 8 required candidates to first indicate their standpoint and then to develop analytical and logical arguments in a consistent manner. Candidates who chose these topics tended to be stronger in language use and in writing skills.

Topic 3 required creativity and effective use of language to express personal opinions. Successful candidates discussed the concept of “peace” drawing examples from social affairs or personal experience.

For topics 6 and 7 a clear and succinct explanation of an idiom/proverb was required. These should be followed by a discussion about the idiom/proverb in a coherent manner. Successful essays explained how idioms may be paraphrased in more ordinary language, and proverbs can be explained taking an example from daily-life situations.

Topic 9 required creative writing from a visual stimulus. The candidates who chose this topic wrote competently about their own (or imagined) recollections of a loving father and their relationship with him.