

**Subject:** Japanese

**Level:** 3

**Standards:** 91553, 91556

## Part A: Commentary

It is essential that candidates analyse the questions. Candidates who underlined key words in the questions, for example, 'what,' 'why,' 'how,' 'consequences,' and began their answers by paraphrasing key words in the questions then citing specific examples from the various texts to support their answers, achieved higher grades than those who simply wrote information from the texts and did not directly address the question. Unpacking these requirements enabled candidates to select relevant information and show higher-level thinking skills and a thorough understanding of the intent of the texts.

Text headings and images are all essential parts of the text and can give key, important information to understanding the context, audience, content, and purpose.

Questions are marked holistically, and concise, comprehensive answers that cover the necessary information without embellishment, constitute a successful response. Repeating the same information in a separate section of the question is not necessary.

Candidates are discouraged from relying too heavily on prior knowledge or invented detail, as the standards require meaning to be drawn from the texts themselves.

## Part B: Report on standards

### 91553: Demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended spoken Japanese texts

#### Examination

The examination included three questions and candidates were required to respond to all three. All questions required candidates to apply their understanding of extended spoken Japanese texts. The questions covered the requirements of the 2022 assessment specifications, which were that candidates would listen and respond to recordings of three spoken texts with a total duration of up to 45 minutes, which they would hear as a whole and twice in sections. Candidates could make notes in the listening notes spaces provided.

#### Observations

While there were a number of high-level responses, there were also some gaps in basic vocabulary knowledge, notably the days of the week, time, numbers, words for airport, agriculture, and older brother. Confusion between チーズ and ちず, and えいが and えが好き, was unfortunate, where consideration for the context would have made the meaning clear. Some candidates wrote words in Japanese and then translated them into English. This is not necessary. Awareness of tense was important, and a number of candidates confused past and present for example, recycling information in Question One.

There were a variety of approaches to the question requiring comment on how language was used. Question One asked about the 'change in tone' of the conversation between the two speakers, 'tone,' being the key word and sometimes misunderstood or ignored. Successful candidates talked generally about the connection between language and the evolving topics of the conversation, explaining how the initial conversation was slightly confrontational which then became more friendly as more information between the speakers was shared. The best responses looked at the linguistic patterns used.

Candidates generally understood the context but were not always able to use information given to make a point and answer the questions. For example, in Question Two, some candidates were unable to explicitly relate information about Mari's older brother to the advantages or disadvantages of a virtual tour. Candidates who were able to glean information from the text about distance, travel times, climate, food, and souvenirs, as well as Mari's older brother's experience, were able to use this information to build a comprehensive response.

The need to understand key words used in the questions was important to elicit responses at Excellence level. For example, the key word in Question Three, 'consequences' was not well considered. The text did not explicitly give the consequences, but rather required the candidates to extract them from the story. Candidates generally could relate the events of the story and what happened, but they did not go one step further and gather the information to explain the effect the actions had on Sarah and her relationship with people and events.

### **Grade awarding**

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote brief responses based on the text, with some key points identified and communicated
- showed some understanding of Curriculum Level 8 language.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- wrote responses with little detail from the text
- wrote responses based on opinion and not based on the text
- wrote responses based on general knowledge not relevant to the questions
- showed misunderstanding of the purpose of the texts and/or the questions.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- provided detailed responses based on the text, including showing understanding of some complex Curriculum Level 8 language
- used details from the text to guide, inform, and justify inference and opinion
- demonstrated the ability to explain and justify inference, which was sustained across most parts of a question
- provided inference that was partly supported by clear and well worded information and examples from the text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- provided full, detailed responses demonstrating a deep understanding of complex language and grammar at Curriculum Level 8, including nuances
  - used details from the text to guide, inform, and justify inference and opinion
  - demonstrated the ability to explain and justify inference, which was sustained across multiple parts of a question
  - provided inference that was well supported by clear and well worded information and examples from the text.
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## **91556: Demonstrate understanding of a variety of extended written and/or visual Japanese texts**

### **Examination**

The examination included three questions and candidates were required to respond to all three. All questions required candidates to apply their understanding of written and/or visual Japanese texts. The questions covered the requirements of the 2022 assessment specifications that candidates would read and respond to three written texts, which may develop a line of argument relating to concrete and abstract matters of social interest.

### **Observations**

Candidates generally showed a good understanding of vocabulary. Some candidates, however, confused しげん and しぜん in Question One. There were some good translations of the word for ていねいに to fit the context in Question One, but this was not always the case when choosing meanings for words that have a wide range of applications.

Linking information was important. Candidates who read the texts carefully and noted and used key words gave comprehensive answers. For example, understanding the timeframe in Question One and acknowledging that the teacher in the text was asking to check on the progress of the student given that the assessment was due the following day. In Question Two, most candidates were able to understand Nina's problem and her aspirations but did not make the link between her description of the training programme courses and the subsequent success or otherwise of those who underwent the courses.

There were quite sophisticated responses that showed a clear connection with the text. For example, in Question One many candidates successfully identified the website as 'fake news' and linked this to the advice given by the teacher, and in Question Three linked mental and cognitive well-being to being a member of the poi club.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed a clear understanding of Curriculum Level 8 vocabulary and kanji
- demonstrated an understanding of some of Curriculum Level 8 language features
- wrote responses that demonstrated either some understanding of the text (the gist) or understanding of some of the text
- provided isolated pieces of information from the text to communicate the general meaning.
- did not always directly address all of the question in their response.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- wrote responses that did not address the questions
- wrote responses that showed they had little or no understanding of Curriculum Level 8 vocabulary, kanji, or language features
- were unable to communicate the general meaning of the text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- provided responses that identified some or most of the key points of information in the text
- provided responses that selected and used relevant ideas and information to explain or justify their answers
- provided responses that demonstrated a clear understanding of Curriculum Level 8 vocabulary, kanji, and language features
- supplied sufficient ideas and information from the text to communicate some or most of the meaning of the text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated a thorough understanding of Curriculum Level 8 vocabulary, kanji, and language features
  - directly addressed the questions and provided responses that demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the text
  - communicated some or most implied meaning from the text, according to their own understanding
  - wrote responses that provided relevant supporting detail from the text to justify or fully justify their conclusions.
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