



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



CAMBRIDGE
International Education

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Ordinary Level (2026)**

**Japanese
(Syllabus 3919)**

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides details of the Ordinary Level Japanese syllabus for candidates in **Singapore**. This syllabus is available in October/November only.

Note: Centres and candidates should note that the use of dictionaries is not permitted in this assessment.

AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are the same for all students. The aims are set out below and describe the educational purposes of following a course in a language at Ordinary Level.

- To develop the ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication in countries where the language is spoken.
- To form a sound base of skills, language and attitudes required for further study, work and leisure.
- To offer insights into the culture and civilisation of the countries where the language is spoken.
- To develop a fuller awareness of the nature of language and language learning.
- To encourage positive attitudes towards foreign language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations.
- To provide enjoyment and intellectual stimulation.
- To complement other areas of study by encouraging skills of a more general application (e.g. analysis, memorising, drawing of inferences).

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The examination will assess candidates' linguistic competence and their knowledge of contemporary society by requiring them to:

- understand and respond to the spoken language drawn from a variety of sources and ranging from short to longer extracts
- understand and respond to texts written in the foreign language, drawn from a variety of sources and ranging from short to longer texts
- communicate in the spoken language
- communicate in writing to narrate events, give factual information and express and justify ideas and points of view.

ASSESSMENT

All candidates take Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Paper 1		Paper 2		Paper 3		Paper 4	
duration	weighting	duration	weighting	duration	weighting	duration	weighting
1 hour 30 minutes	33%	1 hour 15 minutes	33%	approx. 40 minutes	17%	approx. 10 minutes	17%

AVAILABILITY

This syllabus is available in October/November only.

DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS

PAPER 1: Writing (1 hour 30 minutes) (30 marks weighted to 60 marks)

All candidates must attempt both exercises.

- Exercise 1 (10 marks): candidates are required to write a composition in Japanese of between 260 and 300 characters. The composition must describe the story depicted in a series of 6 pictures given on the question paper.
- Exercise 2 (20 marks): Essay. Candidates are offered a choice of five topics and must choose one of these. Between 350 and 400 characters are required.

PAPER 2: Reading (1 hour 15 minutes) (45 marks weighted to 60 marks)

The test will be in three sections.

Section 1 (10 marks)

Tested by a variety of short items, such as notices, signs, instructions, messages, advertisements, etc. – multiple-choice questions.

Section 2 (25 marks)

Tested by a variety of longer, more complex texts – filling in blanks and true or false questions.

Section 3 (10 marks)

Tested by a long complex text – short items including conversion between kanji and hiragana and open-ended comprehension.

PAPER 3: Listening (approx. 40 minutes) (30 marks)

All questions requiring written answers are to be answered in Japanese. The aim of this paper is to test candidates' listening comprehension and therefore they are not penalised for incorrect or inaccurate language unless it makes their answers ambiguous.

Section 1 (15 marks)

Candidates hear short recordings, sometimes involving two speakers, which are tested by visual and written material using multiple-choice questions. The recordings contain largely factual information about travel, weather, opening times, facilities available, food, etc. and candidates identify main points.

Section 2 (15 marks)

Candidates hear recordings of two longer and more complex conversations/interviews. They listen for main points and detail. Some of the questions are objective, some require short answers in the target language.

PAPER 4: Oral (approx. 10 minutes) (60 marks weighted to 30 marks)

- **Test 1: Topic Presentation/Conversation (approximately 5 minutes, 30 marks)**
- **Test 2: General Conversation (approximately 5 minutes, 30 marks)**

MARK SCHEMES

Paper 1: Writing

Question	Answer	Marks	
1	Content – 5 marks	10	
	5		A very good answer with appropriate value given to each picture.
	4		A good answer mentioning each picture with sufficient coverage.
	3		A good answer but ignores a picture or has some repetition.
	2		A sound answer but lacking breadth.
	1		A minimum of content.
	0		No content of merit.
	Grammar and Structures – 5 marks		
	5		Very good use of grammar and complex structures with only minor errors.
	4		Very good use of grammar with an attempt at complex structures.
	3		Good use of grammar and comprehensible.
	2		Fair use of grammar and comprehensible despite errors.
	1		Barely comprehensible with faulty use of structures.
	0		No content of merit.

Question	Answer	Marks																								
2	<p>Content –10 marks</p> <p>The assessment of the content of the composition is based on its overall structure, the consistency of the opinions, the differentiation of facts from opinions, and the inclusion of candidates' personal experiences and their interpretation of them.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>9–10</td> <td>Very good content, well structured, with paragraphs, reads fluently.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7–8</td> <td>Good content with evidence of planning.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5–6</td> <td>Some good content but with repetition or too short.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3–4</td> <td>A sound composition but lacking breadth.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1–2</td> <td>A minimum of content.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>No content of merit.</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Grammar, Structures and Kanji Usage – 10 marks</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>9–10</td> <td>Very good use of grammar and complex structures with only minor errors as well as good knowledge of the kanji syllabus.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7–8</td> <td>Very good use of grammar with an attempt at complex structures with evidence of the kanji syllabus.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5–6</td> <td>Good use of grammar and comprehensible with good knowledge of basic kanji.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3–4</td> <td>Fair use of grammar and comprehensible despite errors.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1–2</td> <td>Barely comprehensible with faulty use of structures.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>No content of merit.</td> </tr> </table>	9–10	Very good content, well structured, with paragraphs, reads fluently.	7–8	Good content with evidence of planning.	5–6	Some good content but with repetition or too short.	3–4	A sound composition but lacking breadth.	1–2	A minimum of content.	0	No content of merit.	9–10	Very good use of grammar and complex structures with only minor errors as well as good knowledge of the kanji syllabus.	7–8	Very good use of grammar with an attempt at complex structures with evidence of the kanji syllabus.	5–6	Good use of grammar and comprehensible with good knowledge of basic kanji.	3–4	Fair use of grammar and comprehensible despite errors.	1–2	Barely comprehensible with faulty use of structures.	0	No content of merit.	20
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Mark Schemes

Paper 4: Oral

Table A – Mark Scheme for Communication

This assesses the candidate's response in terms of comprehension of the Examiner, immediacy of reaction/response, and successful transmission of messages (including presentation of material in the topic).

Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A spontaneous interchange between candidate and Examiner. • Candidate responds fully and confidently to all question types. • Most points justified and explained. • Very consistent performance. Not necessarily of native speaker standard. 	14–15
Very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally understands questions first time, but may require occasional rephrasing. Can respond satisfactorily to both straightforward and unexpected questions. • Often develops own ideas and opinions and provides justifications. 	12–13
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds well to straightforward questions; sometimes responds well to unexpected questions. • Communicates essential elements and can expand occasionally. • Expresses opinions with some simple justifications. 	10–11
Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually responds well to straightforward questions; has difficulty with unexpected questions and needs some rephrasing. • Communicates most of the essential elements. • Can convey simple, straightforward opinions. 	7–9
Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has difficulty with many straightforward questions, but still attempts an answer. • Communicates simple pieces of information. 	4–6
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently has difficulty understanding the questions and has great difficulty in replying. • Communicates a few facts. 	1–3
	Communicates no relevant information.	0

Table B – Mark Scheme for Language

This assesses the linguistic content of the candidate's answers in terms of complexity, accuracy and range of structures, vocabulary and idiom.

Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very accurate use of a wide range of structures, vocabulary and idiom with occasional errors in more complex language. • Not necessarily of native speaker standard. 	14–15
Very good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of mostly accurate structures and vocabulary. 	12–13
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good range of generally accurate structures, varied vocabulary. 	10–11
Satisfactory*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate range of structures and vocabulary. Can use past and future tenses accurately. Some ambiguity. 	7–9
Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some manipulation of structures and awareness of verbs, though often faulty and/or incomplete. Shows elementary, limited vocabulary. 	4–6
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows very limited range of structures and vocabulary. 	1–3
	Nothing coherent or accurate enough to be comprehensible.	0

* Candidates who do not show that they are able to use past and future tenses accurately cannot be awarded a mark in the Satisfactory band or above for Language.