2011 Japanese-Language Proficiency Test

Test date: Sunday, December 4
Levels offered: Five levels from N1 to N5

The application deadline is approximately three months before the test date. For details including application method and deadline, please check with the local host institution in the country/area where you plan to take the test.

Official website

The Official Worldwide JLPT Website offers a great deal of information about the test registration process, cities and institutions hosting the test as well as a detailed description of the new JLPT and sample questions for each level. Please take a look to find out more about the test. Information is available in Japanese, English and Chinese.

http://www.jlpt.jp/

Local host institution

(Test Guide (including Application Form) is available at the institution below.)

Guide to the 2011 Japanese-Language Proficiency Test

Japanese-Language Proficiency Test

http://www.jlpt.jp/
What is the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test?

The largest Japanese-language test in the world

The JLPT (Japanese-Language Proficiency Test) is a test for non-native speakers of Japanese which evaluates and certifies their Japanese-language proficiency. The test is simultaneously conducted twice a year* in Japan and various locations overseas. The JLPT began in 1984. While at the beginning just 7,000 people applied to take the test in 15 countries and areas worldwide, by 2009 the number of examinees had risen to as many as 770,000 in 54 countries and areas around the world. Currently, it is the largest Japanese-language test in the world.

* Until 2008, the JLPT was administered once a year in December. Since 2009, it has been administered twice a year in July and December. In some cities overseas, the July test is not administered and only the December test is held.

Cities where the JLPT was administered:

- Japan: 33 prefectures
- Korea: 22 cities
- Total of 206 cities in 54 countries and areas around the world

Serves a variety of purposes

According to the Survey of Overseas Organizations Involved in Japanese-Language Education conducted by the Japan Foundation every three years, the number of students studying Japanese outside of Japan grew from 127,000 in 1979 to 3.65 million in 2009.

Along with the increase in students, the number of JLPT examinees has increased. Today, people of various ages, from elementary school students to working individuals, take the JLPT. In addition, the JLPT is used not only to measure ability but also for a variety of purposes, including employment screening and evaluation for pay raises and promotions as well as to recognize qualifications.

Breakdown of examinees

- Elementary-school student (primary education)
- Middle-school or high-school student (secondary education)
- University or graduate-school student (higher education)
- Student at other educational institution (language school, etc.)
- Employed (company employee, public servant, educator, self-employed, etc.)
- Other
- No response

Reasons for taking the JLPT

- Necessary for admission into university or graduate school in my own country
- Necessary for admission into university or graduate school in Japan
- Necessary for admission or as proof of proficiency for other educational institution in my own country
- Necessary for admission or as proof of proficiency for other educational institution in Japan
- Useful for my work or will be useful in obtaining employment, securing salary increase or promotion in my own country
- Useful for my work or will be useful in obtaining employment, securing salary increase or promotion in Japan
- To measure my own level of proficiency for reasons other than listed above
- Other
- No response

Cities where the JLPT was administered (December test in 2009)

Number of examinees and cities where the JLPT was administered

- Japan: 33 prefectures
- Korea: 22 cities
- Total: 768,113 examinees in 206 cities in 54 countries and areas around the world

* Respondents: Overseas examinees taking the December test in 2009 (valid samples: N=423,961) in 170 cities in 52 countries where the Japan Foundation administered the JLPT.
The new JLPT started in 2010.

Over the course of the JLPT’s nearly three decades of history, the number of Japanese-language students has increased and their reasons for studying and using Japanese have become more diverse. In July 2010, the JLPT was revised to meet this changing environment. The new JLPT (new test) incorporates those revisions while inheriting content from the previous test (old test).

### Four key points of the new JLPT

**Point 1**

Increased focus on communicative competence

The new test emphasizes not only (1) knowledge of Japanese-language vocabulary and grammar but also the (2) ability to use the knowledge in actual communication. Thus, it measures (1) through the Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) test section and (2) through the Reading and Listening test sections. The new test comprehensively measures communicative competence in Japanese through a combined assessment of these sections.

* As with the old test, the new test is a multiple-choice exam that is scored by computer. There is no test section where applicants’ speaking or writing abilities are directly evaluated.

**Point 2**

Five levels offered; examinees can select the right level

The new test offers five levels (N1, N2, N3, N4, N5). Each level has different test items in order to measure each examinee’s Japanese-language proficiency as accurately as possible.

The old test offered four levels (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4). The new test adds one new level that falls between Levels 2 and 3 in the old test; with a total of five levels, the new test allows examinees to select the level that is right for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Summary of linguistic competence required for each level &amp; corresponding levels of new and old tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>The ability to understand Japanese used in a variety of circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations, and in a variety of circumstances to a certain degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations to a certain degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>The ability to understand basic Japanese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5</td>
<td>The ability to understand some basic Japanese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Please see Page 8 for details of linguistic competence required for each level.

**Point 3**

More accurately measures Japanese-language competence

The new test adopted a new scoring method to more accurately reflect examinees’ Japanese-language competence in scores. Scores are calculated as “scaled” scores instead of raw scores.

Scores in the old test were raw scores calculated by the number of questions answered correctly. It is inevitable that the level of difficulty of the test changes slightly from session to session no matter how carefully questions are designed. Depending on test difficulty, this sometimes results in different scores for the same competency when raw scores are used.

With scaled scores of the new test, how individual examinees answer particular questions (which questions are answered correctly and incorrectly) is reviewed and scores are calculated based on scales for each level. The same scale is always used for the same-level test. Therefore, regardless of difficulty of tests at different times, examinees with the same proficiency have the same score.

As outlined here, scaled scores can more accurately and fairly indicate Japanese-language competence at the time of tests.

* Please see the Official Worldwide JLPT Website (www.jlpt.jp) for details of scaled scores.

**Point 4**

Insights on Japanese-language activities that can be performed

A survey is being conducted on what Japanese-language activities (listening, speaking, reading, writing) successful examinees of each level believe they can do. The result will be titled "Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Can-do Self-Evaluation Report" and released as an interim report in July 2011 and the final report will be due out in March 2012. Examinees and others will be able to refer to this report to get an idea of "how people who successfully passed this level are able to use Japanese in academic, living and work situations."
Scoring sections and range of scores

With N3, two test sections, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary)” and “Language Knowledge (Grammar) Reading,” are restructured as two scoring sections, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)” and “Reading.”

With N1 and N2, one test section, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) Reading,” is divided into two scoring sections, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)” and “Reading.”

Please compare the two tables from left to right to see how test sections and scoring sections correspond. With N1 and N2, one test section, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading,” is divided into two scoring sections, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)” and “Reading.”

With N3, two test sections, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary)” and “Language Knowledge (Grammar) - Reading,” are combined as one scoring section, “Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading.”

With all levels, the “Listening” test section and scoring section are identical.

These differences by level are to ensure a more accurate measurement of an examinee’s Japanese-language competence according to the characteristics of individual study stages.

Test sections and test times, scoring sections and range of scores

The table below shows the summary of the linguistic competence required for each level. This table outlines what is expected of examinees for each level of the new JLPT in terms of Reading and Listening. The linguistic knowledge needed to execute the behaviors described will be required by the examinees to pass their respective levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Test sections and test times</th>
<th>Scoring sections and range of scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading: 110 min, Listening: 60 min</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar): 0 – 60 points, Listening: 0 – 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading: 105 min, Listening: 30 min</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar): 0 – 60 points, Listening: 0 – 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading: 70 min, Listening: 30 min</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar): 0 – 60 points, Listening: 0 – 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading: 60 min, Listening: 35 min</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar): 0 – 120 points, Listening: 0 – 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) - Reading: 25 min, Listening: 30 min</td>
<td>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar): 0 – 120 points, Listening: 0 – 60 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ability to understand Japanese used in a variety of circumstances.

• One is able to read settings with logical complexity and abstract settings on a variety of topics, such as newspaper editorials and critiques, and comprehend both their structures and contents.
• One is also able to read written materials with profound contents on various topics and follow their narratives as well as understand the intent of the writers comprehensively.
• One is able to comprehend clearly presented materials such as coherent conversations, news reports, and lectures, spoken at natural speed in a broad variety of settings, and is able to follow their ideas and comprehend their contents comprehensively. One is also able to understand the details of the presented materials such as the relationships among the people involved, the logical structures, and the essential points.

The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations, and in a variety of circumstances to a certain degree.

• One is able to read materials written clearly on a variety of topics, such as articles and commentaries in newspapers and magazines as well as simple critiques, and comprehend their contents.
• One is also able to read written materials on general topics and follow their narratives as well as understand the intent of the writers.
• One is able to comprehend clearly presented materials such as coherent conversations and news reports, spoken at nearly natural speed in everyday situations as well as in a variety of settings, and is able to follow their ideas and comprehend their contents. One is also able to understand the relationships among the people involved and the essential points of the presented materials.

The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations to a certain degree.

• One is able to read and understand written materials with specific contents concerning everyday topics. One is also able to grasp summary information such as newspaper headlines.
• In addition, one is also able to read slightly difficult writings encountered in everyday situations and understand the main points of the content if some alternative phrases are available to aid one’s understanding.
• One is able to listen and comprehend coherent conversations in everyday situations, spoken at near natural speed, and is generally able to follow their contents as well as grasp the relationships among the people involved.

The ability to understand basic Japanese.

• One is able to read and understand typical expressions and sentences written in hiragana, katakana, and basic kanji.
• One is also able to listen and comprehend conversations about topics regularly encountered in daily life and classroom situations, and is able to pick up necessary information from short conversations spoken slowly.

Summary of linguistic competence required for each level

Test Composition and Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level

Level Test sections and test times Scoring sections and range of scores

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Test Composition and Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level

Level Test sections and test times Scoring sections and range of scores
The new test measures an examinee’s level of knowledge of Japanese-language vocabulary and grammar as the Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) test section and his or her ability to use that knowledge in actual communication as the Reading and Listening test sections.

The new test measures examinees’ “communicative competence required to perform tasks.” For this purpose, all test item formats of the old test were reviewed and revisions were made. Test item formats of the new test include those directly inherited from the old test, those incorporating partial changes and those newly adopted starting with the new test. Below, test item examples mainly of new format items are described.

Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) Test sections

1) Level of knowledge of Japanese-language vocabulary and grammar
2) Ability to use the knowledge (1) in actual communication

Three test sections

Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)  Reading  Listening

Test item examples: Read the text and answer the question.

Test item on determining the appropriate answer in a sentence. Test item also found in the old test.

Test item on reading while comparing and matching multiple texts in order to understand. New test item.

Test item on sentence composition, while taking several test items into consideration. Instead of focusing only on the particular sentence, sentences before and after the sentence and overall text need to be carefully read to answer. New test item.

Answer: 1 3 2 2 3 4 4 2 5 1

Answer: 1 3 2 4

* A test item type is a group of test items having the same format. Please see the Official Worldwide JLPT Website (www.jlpt.net) for the composition of test item types for each level. The website also has sample questions of all test item types for all levels.
**Test Registration Process: Taking the Test Overseas**

Find a test site city and local host institution in the country/area where you would like to take the test. A list of cities where the test is offered and local host institutions is available on the Official Worldwide JLPT Website (www.jlpt.jp).

Check with the local host institution to find out how to register and obtain a Test Guide (Application Form)

July test: March - April
December test: August - September

Carefully read the Test Guide, register for the test and pay the registration fee according to the instructions of the local host institution.

Receive a test voucher from the local host institution

July test: Early July
December test: Early December

Take the test

July test: Around September
December test: Around March

Receive the test results from the local host institution

* Above is the general process for overseas. Details may differ by country/area. Please inquire at your local host institution. In addition, some cities overseas will only offer the test in December and not in July. Please check the Official Worldwide JLPT Website (www.jlpt.jp) for July test availability.

**FAQ**

Q1 Are any special qualifications needed to take the JLPT?
The JLPT is open to all non-native Japanese speakers. There are no age restrictions for the JLPT.

Q2 When will the JLPT be held?
Twice yearly, in July and December. In 2011, the tests will be conducted on Sunday, July 3 and Sunday, December 4. However, some cities overseas will only offer the test in December and not in July. Please check the Official Worldwide JLPT Website (www.jlpt.jp) for July test availability.

Q3 At the time of registration, I will not be in the country/area where I want to take the test. What should I do?
Please make sure to apply with the local host institution conducting the test in the country/area where you plan to take it. Registration methods differ by country. Please contact the local host institution. If you cannot apply for the test yourself, please ask a friend or acquaintance in the country/area where you want to take the test for help with registration.

**How should I decide on which test level to take?**
Please see the summary of linguistic competence required for each level on Page 6 and corresponding levels of new and old tests on Page 3. In addition, test item examples listed on the Official Worldwide JLPT Website (www.jlpt.jp) can help you determine which level is appropriate for you.

**How is pass or fail determined?**
In order to pass the JLPT, (1) the total score needs to be at or above the point required for passing (overall pass mark) and (2) the scores of each scoring section need to be at or above the minimum point required for passing (sectional pass mark). If there is even one scoring section where the score is below the sectional pass mark, examinees are determined to have failed, no matter how high the total score he/she might have.

Overall pass marks and sectional pass marks for each level are shown in the table below. N1, N2 and N3 have three scoring sections each: (1) Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar), (2) Reading, and (3) Listening. N4 and N5 have two scoring sections each: (1) Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) + Reading, and (2) Listening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total score</th>
<th>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) + Reading</th>
<th>Listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>N3</td>
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<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When and how will I receive my test results?**
All examinees will receive their own Score Report. Successful examinees will receive a Certificate of Proficiency. For examinees outside of Japan, the Score Reports will be sent via the local host institution. Examinees will receive their report for the July test in mid-September and in early March for the December test. If you do not receive your report by the end of the month, please contact the local host institution in the city where you took the test.

**Book Information**

New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Guidebook: An Executive Summary and Sample Questions for N1, N2 and N3
- BS, 129 pages, 1 CD included
- Price: 2,280yen (+tax)
- Publisher: Bonjinsha Inc.
- ISBN: 978-4-89358-735-0

New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Guidebook: An Executive Summary and Sample Questions for N4 and N5
- BS, 87 pages, 1 CD included
- Price: 2,280yen (+tax)
- Publisher: Bonjinsha Inc.
- ISBN: 978-4-89358-735-0

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