

Characteristics of the New 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.

● Summary of linguistic competence required for each level & corresponding levels of new and old tests

Level	Summary of linguistic competence required for each level	Corresponding levels of new and old tests
N1	The ability to understand Japanese used in a variety of circumstances.	Approximately the same level as the old Level 1 test, but designed to measure slightly more advanced abilities.
N2	The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations, and in a variety of circumstances to a certain degree.	Approximately the same level as the old Level 2 test.
N3	The ability to understand Japanese used in everyday situations to a certain degree.	Positioned at a level bridging the old Level 2 and Level 3 tests. Newly established
N4	The ability to understand basic Japanese.	Approximately the same level as the old Level 3 test.
N5	The ability to understand some basic Japanese.	Approximately the same level as the old Level 4 test.

* Please see Page 6 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.

Score report

Examinees receive a Score Report that shows pass or fail, scores of scoring sections and total score (scaled scores) as well as reference information. (See Page 5 for scoring sections.)

The reference information indicates the percentages of correct responses* for each component (ex. Vocabulary and Grammar) according to three levels, A, B and C, when a scoring section has multiple components (ex. Language Knowledge [Vocabulary/Grammar]). This allows examinees to learn how well they performed in each component and plan for their future Japanese-language study.

* The percentage of correct responses is the ratio of correctly answered questions to the total number of questions in each component. The reference information indicates "the number of questions answered correctly," which differs from scaled scores. It is not used to determine pass or fail.

Score report (Sample: For N1-N3)



Criteria

- A: Number of correct responses is 67% or higher
- B: Number of correct responses is between 34% and 66%
- C: Number of correct responses is less than 34%

Scoring sections (scaled scores)

- N1, N2, N3.....Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) → "Vocabulary" and "Grammar"
- N4, N5.....Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) • Reading → "Vocabulary," "Grammar" and "Reading"

Reference information (percentages of correct responses)

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."