

## JLPT Frequently Asked Questions

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### **1. About the test**

#### **What sort of test is the JLPT?**

The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test is held in Japan and abroad to evaluate and certify Japanese-language proficiency of non-native speakers.

#### **Are there any special qualifications needed to take the JLPT?**

The JLPT is open to all non-native Japanese speakers.

#### **Can elementary school or junior high school students take the JLPT?**

Yes, they can. There are no age restrictions for the JLPT.

#### **I have a physical disability. Can I take the JLPT?**

Yes, you can. We make special testing accommodations for examinees with disabilities. You will need to submit "Request Form for Special Testing Accommodations" along with their application form upon registration.

#### **How often is the JLPT going to be administered?**

Twice yearly, in July and December. Outside Japan, the test may be held only in July or December in some cities. Please check "[List of Overseas Test Site Cities and Local Host Institutions](#)" for the test schedule in your city.

#### **When will the JLPT be held in 2017 ?**

In 2017, the tests will be conducted Sunday, December 3 at Langara College (Outside Japan, the test may be held only in July or December in some cities.

### **Where can we take the JLPT?**

You can take the test in major cities all over Japan. If you are planning to take the test outside Japan, you can find cities where the test is offered by connecting to the Japan Foundation website and selecting the country you intend to be in for examination day.

### **Can I apply to take only some sections instead of all sections?**

No, you cannot.

### **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 institution conducting the test in the country/area where you plan to take it. Registration methods differ by country. Please contact the local institution. If you cannot apply for the test by yourself, please ask a friend or acquaintance in the country/area where you want to take the test for help with registration.

### **Who conducts the JLPT?**

The Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services.  
Japan Educational Exchanges and Services conducts the test in Japan, and the Japan Foundation conducts the test overseas with the cooperation of local host institutions.  
In Vancouver, the JLPT is co-hosted with Langara College. .

## **2. Levels**

### **Do all examinees take the same test and their level determined based on their scores?**

No. Test questions differ according to level. Different questions are provided to measure the Japanese-language competency of examinees as accurately as possible. Please choose a suitable level when taking the test.

### **How should I decide which level to take?**

Please refer to "[Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level.](#)" In addition, you can check specific levels by going over "[Sample Questions.](#)" If you have taken the old test through 2009 or have information about it, this can give you an idea of what to expect, since the current test corresponds to the old test in terms of passing lines.

<Reference> Level correspondence between current and old tests

<b>N1</b>	Approximately the same level as the old level 1 test.
<b>N2</b>	Approximately the same level as the old level 2 test.
<b>N3</b>	Positioned a level bridging the old level 2 and level 3 tests.
<b>N4</b>	Approximately the same level as the old level 3 test.
<b>N5</b>	Approximately the same level as the old level 4 test.

**When the JLPT was revised in 2010, the form of test items was changed or newly added. How were current test levels matched with old test levels?**

Based on statistical analysis, the passing line for the current test is designed to match that of the old test. This means that examinees with the Japanese-language competence to pass Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the old test can pass N1, N2, N4 and N5 in the current test. The passing line for N3, a level added in 2010, is designed to fall between Levels 2 and 3 of the old test, based on statistical analysis of the Japanese-language competence required to pass these levels.

**I passed Level 3 in the old test. Which test level should I take with the current test?**

Because Level 3 in the old test is basically the same level as N4 in the current test, taking the one-level higher N3 test is suggested. N3 is a newly introduced level that falls between Level 2 and Level 3 in the old test. You might try N2 if you wish to try a slightly more difficult level. Please review "[Sample Questions](#)" to find out which level would better suit you.

**What is the level N3?**

N3 is the newly established level when the JLPT was revised in 2010. When compared to the old test's levels, N3 falls between Level 2 and Level 3. Many of those who passed Level 3 of the old test have commented that "Level 2 is difficult to pass." To respond to this

situation, N3 was created as a level between Level 2 and Level 3 of the old test. Please refer to "[A Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level.](#)" N1 and N2 are levels where learners can listen to and read "Japanese used in a variety of circumstances." N4 and N5 are levels where learners can listen to and read "basic Japanese" that is studied in class. N3 is a level that falls between N1/N2 and N4/N5 and bridges the gap.

**I heard that N4 of the current test is basically the same level as Level 3 of the old test. In what ways are they the same?**

The passing standard is basically the same. Those who could pass Level 3 of the old test will likely pass N4 of the current test. However, please note that test sections and scoring sections are different.

**I heard that N1 of the new test is a little more advanced than Level 1 of the old test. Does this mean N1 is harder to pass than Level 1 of the old test?**

No. The passing standard is basically the same for N1 and Level 1. Those who could pass Level 1 of the old test will likely pass N1 of the new test.

### **3. Test sections, test times and test questions**

**Does the JLPT include a conversation or composition test?**

No, neither is currently included.

**What are test sections and test times?**

Please refer to our Tab marked 'Schedule'

**Why is the test section "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) • Reading" for N1 and N2 divided into two sections -- "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary)" and "Language Knowledge (Grammar) • Reading" -- for N3, N4 and N5?**

Because there are fewer test items in vocabulary and grammar that can be included in levels N3, N4 and N5, placing Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) and Reading in the same section may inadvertently provide hints for answers. In order to avoid such a situation, two separate test sections -- "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary)" and "Language Knowledge (Grammar) • Reading" -- are offered for N3, N4 and N5.

**What kinds of questions are in the JLPT?**

They are summarized in "[Composition of test items.](#)" "[Sample Questions](#)" covers all question patterns for all levels. Please take a look at it.

### **Are all JLPT answers computer scored?**

Yes, the JLPT uses a multiple-choice computer-scored answer sheet. There are four choices for most questions, although some "Listening" questions have only three choices.

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The last question in "Listening" for N1 and N2 has a note saying, "この <sup>もんだい</sup> 問題 には <sup>れんしゅう</sup> 練習 はありません。(No practice available for this question.)" What does this mean?

Other "Listening" questions have examples to help examinees understand the form and how to answer. The last question does not have this kind of example with which to practice.

### **Does the JLPT include questions that require cultural knowledge of Japan?**

No question specifically asks cultural knowledge of Japan. Some questions may refer to cultural aspects, but all questions can be answered without cultural knowledge.

### **Can I keep the test paper after I take the test?**

No, you cannot take the test paper with you. If you do, you will automatically fail the test.

### **Who owns copyrights of the JLPT test questions?**

Test question copyrights are held by test organizers, the Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services.

## **4. Studying for the test**

### **Are questions of past tests published?**

Exactly the same test questions are not published. However, "[Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Official Workbook](#)" was published in March 2012. It includes test items taken from actual tests conducted in 2010 and 2011, and have almost the same number of test items as the actual test. Sample questions based on past test questions will be published regularly in the future. The publication schedule will be announced on the official JLPT website.

## **Why is "Test Content Specifications" no longer available after the 2010 revision of the JLPT?**

We believe that the ultimate goal of studying Japanese is to use the language to communicate rather than simply memorizing vocabulary, *kanji* and grammar items. Based on this idea, the JLPT measures "language knowledge such as characters, vocabulary and grammar" as well as "competence to perform communicative tasks by using the language knowledge." Therefore, we decided that publishing "Test Content Specifications" containing a list of vocabulary, *kanji* and grammar items was not necessarily appropriate. As information to replace ["Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level"](#) and ["Composition of test items"](#) are available. Please also refer to ["Sample Questions."](#)

In addition, since levels of the current test correspond to those of the old test through 2009 in terms of passing lines, old test questions and "Test Content Specifications" for the old test can provide useful information.

## **Can I listen to audio of listening comprehension question examples?**

Yes, you can. You can download audio files from ["Sample Questions."](#)

In addition, the following books come with audio CDs.

- "New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Guidebook: An Executive Summary and Sample Questions, N1-N3 edition (945 yen, tax included)
- "New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Guidebook: An Executive Summary and Sample Questions, N4-N5 edition (840 yen, tax included)
- "Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Official Workbook (N1/N2/N3/N4/N5)" (735 yen for each level, tax included)

## **5. Scores and determination of pass or fail**

### **How can I receive test results?**

The Scoring Sections and range of scores are shown in ["Scoring sections and range of scores for each level."](#)

**In test results, "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary)" and "Language Knowledge (Grammar) - Reading," which are separate test sections in N4 and N5, are combined as one scoring section. Why is this?**

Because many areas of "Language Knowledge" and "Reading" in N4 and N5 at the basic stage of Japanese-language learning overlap or cannot be easily separated, we believe

giving a combined score for "Reading" and "Language Knowledge" better suits the characteristics of the learning stage, rather than giving a separate score for "Reading" by itself.

### **How are scores for each question allocated within individual scoring sections?**

Some tests use a system of totaling pre-determined points for correct answers to calculate scores. The JLPT uses a scaled score system based on "Item Response Theory" and does not total allocated points of correctly answered questions. Please see [the more detailed explanation about scaled scores](#).

### **The scores I received are different from what I thought I would get. Can I have them confirmed?**

Individual examinees' scores are calculated not only mechanically but also strictly checked by specialists. As clearly stated in the Test Guide, we do not accept any inquiries regarding an individual's test results.

The JLPT uses "scaled scores." Scaled scores are calculated based on "answering patterns" of each examinee, not on "the number of questions correctly answered."

Therefore, scores in the results may be different from what you thought. Please see [the more detailed explanation about scaled scores](#).

### **I received my results and know my scores. How do I find out where I stand among all examinees?**

There is a chart ("Cumulative Distribution of Scaled Scores") in the materials of each test time of "[Past Test Data](#)." You can find out where you stand among all examinees who took the same test by using the scaled scores given in the Score Report and this chart.

※From the JLPT held in July 2016, a percentile rank is indicated on the certificate of examinees who passed the test overseas (excluding those who were exempt from the Listening section), showing the percentage of examinees with a score lower than yours in the six latest tests, including the one you took.

### **Can we compare the scores of the current test and the old test through 2009?**

Since the content of the current test and the scoring method are different from the old test, the scores from the current test cannot be compared to those of the old test.

### **How is pass or fail determined? How many scores do I need to pass?**

Examinees pass the JLPT when they take all required test sections and (1) have a total score to be at or above the Overall Pass Mark and (2) all scores of scoring sections are to be at or above the Sectional Pass Marks. 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.

Scoring sections of N1-N3 and N4-N5 are different. Overall pass marks and sectional pass marks for each level are shown in the table below.

Level	Total score		Scores by Scoring Sections					
			Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)		Reading		Listening	
	Range of scores	Overall pass marks	Range of scores	Sectional pass marks	Range of scores	Sectional pass marks	Range of scores	Sectional pass marks
<b>N1</b>	0~180 points	100 points	0~60 points	19 points	0~60 points	19 points	0~60 points	19 points
<b>N2</b>	0~180 points	90 points	0~60 points	19 points	0~60 points	19 points	0~60 points	19 points
<b>N3</b>	0~180 points	95 points	0~60 points	19 points	0~60 points	19 points	0~60 points	19 points

Level	Total score		Scores by Scoring Sections			
			Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) · Reading		Listening	
	Range of scores	Overall pass marks	Range of scores	Sectional pass marks	Range of scores	Sectional pass marks
<b>N4</b>	0~180 points	90 points	0~120 points	38 points	0~60 points	19 points
<b>N5</b>	0~180 points	80 points	0~120 points	38 points	0~60 points	19 points

※The above standards were adopted beginning with July test in 2010 (December test in 2010 with N4 and N5).

**Why does passing the test require (1) the minimum acceptable total score and (2) a minimum acceptable score in each scoring section?**

This is to evaluate if learners have a certain level of ability in all three elements, "Language Knowledge," "Reading" and "Listening."

**What will happen if I don't take a test section?**

Examinees will be judged to have failed if they miss a required test section. Although they will receive a Score Report, it will not show scores for any test section, including those that have been taken.

**If my score does not reach the minimum required in a Scoring Section, can I take only that section again and pass the JLPT if I get an acceptable score?**

No. A judgment of pass or fail is made only for examinees who take all sections each time the test is given. Therefore, pass or fail cannot be determined if you take only a section where you previously failed to achieve a minimum score. You will pass the JLPT when you take the test for all sections on a subsequent occasion and earn (1) the minimum acceptable total score and (2) a minimum acceptable score in each Scoring Section.

## **6. Test results (Score Report and Certificate of Proficiency)**

### **When and how do I receive test results?**

A Score Report will be mailed to all examinees. In Japan, Score Reports for the July test will be sent in early September and Score Reports for the December test will be sent in early February. To examinees outside of Japan, Score Reports will be sent via local host institutions, and examinees will receive a report for the July test in early October and a report for the December test in early March. If you do not receive a report by the end of the scheduled month, please contact the local institution in the city where you took the test.

### **Can I receive the test results by e-mail or over the phone?**

No, you cannot. We cannot respond to any inquiries regarding the test results via telephone or e-mail for any reason.

### **There is a mistake in my Score Report/Certificate of Proficiency.**

Procedures for reissuing a Score Report or Certificate of Proficiency due to mistakes in name and birthday vary by country/area where you have taken the test. If you took the test in Japan, please inquire at JLPT Application Center, and if you took the test outside Japan, please inquire at the local host institution in the city where you took the test or with the Japan Foundation.

### **■Japan**

- **JLPT Application Center**
- Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:30-17:30

- Tel: 03-6686-2974 Fax: 03-6845-2544

## ■Overseas

The Japan Foundation or local host institution [where you have taken the test](#).

### Request with the Japan Foundation

Please send the following documents by mail to the Japan Foundation.

**Reissuance application form** + Original Score Report or Certificate of Proficiency + Copy of ID (passport, etc.)

+ **Letter of proxy** (applies only if application is done by proxy)

#### Address:

The Japan Foundation Center for Japanese-Language Testing  
4-3 Yotsuya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0004, Japan

#### Does the JLPT certificate expire at some point?

The JLPT certificate never expires. Results of the old test through 2009 also continue to be valid. However, companies and educational institutions that refer to test results sometimes set a time limit on the certificate. Please inquire at individual companies and educational institutions, as necessary.

#### I have lost my Score Report/Certificate of Proficiency.

They cannot be reissued, but as a replacement, "Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Certificate of Result and Scores" can be issued. Please see "[Certificate Issuance](#)" for how to apply.

#### Are results of the new test used as a reference for entrance exams of universities in Japan?

In principle, universities in Japan use the results of "[Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students](#)" conducted by the Japan Student Services Organization as a reference. JLPT results are sometimes used for international students from countries where "[Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students](#)" is not conducted. Please inquire directly at the schools to which you are applying.

## 7. JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List

How are "[Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level](#)" and "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" different?

"[Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level](#)" shows the level of abilities required for each level of the JLPT. On the other hand, "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" indicates activities that successful examinees of each level think they "can do in Japanese." In other words, it does not refer to passing of a level's standard but is based on examinees' self-evaluation. It can be used as a reference to get an idea of "what can be done in Japanese by successful examinees of a particular level."

**Are all examinees who pass a level able to do the activities listed in "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)"?**

No. Because the list shows results of successful examinees' answers to the question "do you think you can ...," activities listed may not necessarily be possible for all those who pass the level. However, since the survey was conducted with as many as 65,000 examinees, the list is believed to show overall tendencies and set aside extreme differences by individual.

**The JLPT does not include conversation or composition. Why does "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" include descriptions of Speaking and Writing skills?**

"[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" summarizes what activities (listening, speaking, reading and writing) successful examinees of each level can do in Japanese, based on a questionnaire survey. It is not a syllabus (question outline) of the test. The list is prepared based on a survey, which also encompasses questions on speaking and writing skills, in order to provide prospective examinees and others with comprehensive information on what successful examinees think they "can do," regardless of test section or content.

**How was the Can-do survey for "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" conducted?**

Please refer to "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation Survey Reports: Final Report](#)" for details. (The reports are written in Japanese.)

**How is "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" different from "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation Survey Reports: Interim Report](#)"?**

"[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" was prepared based on a continuing survey following "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation Survey Reports: Interim Report](#)" and included a larger number of survey respondents. While the survey items are identical for both surveys, methods of analysis and result calculation differ. Please refer to an upcoming publication,

["JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation Survey Reports: Final Report"](#) for details. (The reports are written in Japanese.)

**Is Can-do for "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" the same as Can-do for "[JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education](#)"?**

No. "[JLPT Can-do Self-Evaluation List](#)" and "[JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education](#)" were prepared under different circumstances, and they differ in development purposes, methods and procedures. For Can-do for [JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education](#), please refer to the "[JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education](#)" [website](#). For relationships between the JLPT and [JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education](#), please refer to "[Reports on Association Survey on JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education and JLPT](#)."