



The JLPT has over 20 years of history. In this time, the number of people studying Japanese has increased and their reasons for learning and using the language have also changed. In order to accommodate these changes, the test has been revised. The new test incorporates improvements while building on the old test.

Key points of the new test!

1. Increased focus on communicative competence

The new test places importance not only on a learner's (1) knowledge of the Japanese language including vocabulary and grammar but also on their (2) competence at using the knowledge in practical communication. The test measures (1) through a section called "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)" and (2) through two sections called "Reading" and "Listening." By using these sections in combination, the new test comprehensively measures Japanese communicative competence.

*Answers are machine-scored, as with the old test. The new test does not include sections to directly measure speaking and writing proficiencies.

2. The number of levels is increased to 5; examinees can select a more suitable level

The old test had four levels (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4). The new test has five levels (N1, N2, N3, N4 and N5); the N3 level is newly established (Table A). It is comparable to a level between Level 2 and Level 3 in the old test. Increasing the number of levels allows examinees to select a suitable test level.

Table A [A Summary of Linguistic Competence Required for Each Level & Corresponding Levels of New and Old Tests]

Level	A 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.

3. The scoring method was revised to ensure a more accurate measurement of Japanese-language proficiency

Scores from the old test were "raw scores" calculated by the number of correctly answered questions. The new test uses "scaled scores," where the same competency gains the same score in any session by adopting an equating method. With scaled scores, the same scale is always used to calculate scores for the same-level test. This scoring method can show you the degree of improvement in competency compared to previous test results. It also facilitates setting goals for the next test.

4. What you can do in Japanese is easily visualized

We will conduct a survey on Japanese-language activities (reading, speaking, listening and writing) that successful examinees of individual levels THINK they can do. The survey results will be published as the "Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Can-do List" (tentative). The list will help successful examinees and others around them to have a better idea of "what can be done in academics, life and work situations with skills of a particular level."

Guide to Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) in 2010

How has it changed?

—Four key points of
the new JLPT—

- 1 Increased focus on communicative competence
- 2 The number of levels is increased to 5; examinees can select a more suitable level
- 3 The scoring method was revised to ensure a more accurate measurement of Japanese-language proficiency
- 4 What you can do in Japanese is easily visualized

The New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Begins in 2010

Answers to your questions!

New test FAQ

Q How will test sections and times change?

A Changes are summarized in Table B. Test sections are roughly divided into three areas including: "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)," "Reading" and "Listening." With Levels N1 and N2, "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)" and "Reading" are treated as one test section. With Levels N3, N4 and N5, "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary)" and "Language Knowledge (Grammar)-Reading" are treated as two separate sections.

Table B [Test sections and Test times]

Level	Test sections and Test times		
N1	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) · Reading 110min		Listening 60min
N2	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) · Reading 105min		Listening 50min
N3	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary) 30min	Language Knowledge (Grammar) · Reading 70min	Listening 40min
N4	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary) 30min	Language Knowledge (Grammar) · Reading 60min	Listening 35min
N5	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary) 25min	Language Knowledge (Grammar) · Reading 50min	Listening 30min

Q How should I decide which test level to take?

A Differences among the five levels of the new test are summarized in "A Summary of Linguistic Competence required for Each Level" in Table A. You can also refer to "Corresponding Levels of New and Old Tests" in the same table. You can also check your level by looking at questions in the "New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Sample Questions" on the Official Worldwide JLPT Website.

Q How can I receive test results?

A The Scoring Sections and range of scores are shown in Table C. Please note that with Levels N4 and N5, "Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)" and "Reading" are graded as one section.

Table C [Test results]

Level	Scoring Sections	Range of scores
N1	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar)	0~60
N2	Reading	0~60
N3	Listening	0~60
	Total Score	0~180
N4	Language Knowledge (Vocabulary/Grammar) · Reading	0~120
N5	Listening	0~60
	Total Score	0~180

※Scores are scaled using equalization.

While the "Listening" section score/total score was 100/400 in the old test, in the new test the proportion increases to 60/180.

Q How is pass or fail determined?

A A determination of pass or fail cannot be made if you do not take any section of the test; please take all required sections. To pass the test, examinees are required to have (1) the minimum acceptable total score and (2) a minimum acceptable score in each Scoring Section.

Q Can I pass by studying the way I have been doing? Should I change the way I study?

A Continuing to study in your accustomed manner should not lead to any problems. However, considering that the new test places importance on both knowledge of the Japanese language and the competence to use the knowledge for practical communication, we suggest using the "New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Sample Questions" available on the Official Worldwide JLPT Website. The Sample Questions cover all question styles for all levels, and they will help you prepare for the test.

Q When will the new tests be held?

A In 2010, the new tests will be conducted on Sunday, July 4 and Sunday, December 5. However, certain countries/areas will only offer the test in December and not in July. Please check the Official Worldwide JLPT Website for July test availability.

※For the first (July) test in 2010, Levels N1, N2 and N3 tests will be administered. Tests of all levels from N1 through N5 will be offered from the second (December) test.

What sort of test is the JLPT?

■ Objectives and Eligibility

The JLPT will be held worldwide to evaluate and certify proficiency in Japanese of non-native speakers.

■ Outline

The Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services have jointly conducted the test since 1984. Outside Japan, The Japan Foundation (in Taiwan, Interchange Association) administers the test in cooperation with local institutions. Inside Japan, Japan Educational Exchanges and Services administers the test. In 2009, approximately 770,000 people took the test in 54 countries/areas around the world.

■ Notification of Test Results

- 1) All examinees in each level will receive Score Reports.
- 2) Successful examinees will receive Certificates of Proficiency.

I would like to know more about the new JLPT!

Please access the Official Worldwide JLPT Website. You will find lots of information on the site. The New Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Guidebook as well as Samples Questions (with audio) is also available for download.

Official Worldwide JLPT Website
<http://www.jlpt.jp/>

The JLPT is co-sponsored by the Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services.