

2026年度

# I r G 小論文問題 Question sheet

## 注意 Notes

1. 試験開始の指示があるまでこの問題冊子を開いてはいけません。

Do not turn the page until the start of the examination is announced.

2. 解答用紙はすべて黒鉛筆または黒芯のシャープペンシルで記入することになっています。鉛筆またはシャープペンシル・消しゴムを忘れた人は監督に申し出てください。(万年筆・ボールペン・サインペンなどを使用してはいけません。)

The answer sheet must be completed with either a black pencil or a black mechanical pencil. If you have forgotten to bring either of them and eraser, please notify the proctor. (Do not use other types of writing implements, such as a fountain pen, ballpoint pen or felt-tip pen.)

3. この問題冊子は8頁までとなっています。試験開始後、ただちにページ数を確認してください。

The question sheet consists of 4 pages. Right after the start of examination, check that you have all the pages.

4. 解答用紙にはすでに受験番号が記入されていますので、あなたの受験票の番号であるかどうかを確認してください。

Your examinee number is already printed on your answer sheet. Confirm that the number is the same as the number printed on your admission card.

5. 解答は解答用紙の指定された解答欄に記入し、その他の部分には何も書いてはいけません。

Please ensure that you write only in the specified boxes on the answer sheet. Do not write anything in other parts.

6. 解答用紙を折り曲げたり、破ったり、傷つけたりしないように注意してください。

Do not fold, tear or damage the answer sheet.

7. この問題冊子とメモ用紙は持ち帰ってください。

You may keep the question sheet and memo paper.

Both *Global contexts* and the *Reading* refer to child poverty in the midst of wealth. *Global contexts* introduces the *UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 18* (2023). The *Reading* comes from the editorial of *The Mainichi* (23 January 2023). Read both *Global contexts* and the *Reading* and answer the questions in English. Write around 20 to 30 words for the answers to Question 1 and 2, and around 300 to 350 words for the answer to Question 3. The answers should be written in the proper space on the answer sheet.

***Global contexts: UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 18* (2023)**

When parental poverty is inherited by their children, the state is called “reproduction of disparity”. Educational disparity has been one of the major global issues that is not only seen among developing countries but also in developed countries. The *UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 18* (2023) reviews the status of child poverty in 43 high income and upper middle-income countries of the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It provides data and assesses the progress — or lack of progress — that these countries have made towards eliminating child poverty to meet the challenge of the SDGs. The top ranked countries — those with the lowest rates of child income poverty combined with greatest success reducing child poverty — are Slovenia, Poland and Latvia. The US, France and the UK ranked at the bottom. While Japan ranks 8<sup>th</sup> from the top, recent surveys point to the fact that increasing number of families seem to think it “natural” or “inevitable” that the family’s income dictate access to education.

***Reading: “Japan’s schools must help children overcome disparity to pursue dreams”, The Mainichi* (23 January 2023)**

In a 2021 survey by the Cabinet Office targeting second-year junior high school students, the more impoverished a student’s family was, the poorer their understanding of classes was in many cases. If students fail to acquire academic skills, they may find it difficult to move on to higher education. This often leads to them being unable to land a job they desire, or descending into poverty. This vicious cycle must be eliminated. As parents in Japan spend more and more on

cram schools and other off-campus education for their children, students' academic ability increasingly depends on their parents' economic power. It is essential to establish a system that provides a way for students to boost their academic skills even if their parents cannot afford to pay for extra education.

A number of private groups across Japan provide support to students from struggling families free of charge. A Saitama Prefecture-based group called "Sai no kuni kodomo-wakamono shien network" (Support network for children and youth in Saitama Prefecture), for example, has given lessons to such children since 2010 under an initiative backed by the prefectural government and other entities. The group's staff visit needy families and build relationships of trust with them, before they start giving the children lessons with close attention. Shozo Tsuchiya, 37, head of the network, pointed out, "Children in unstable family environments are preoccupied with things other than study, and they cannot even think about their own futures. Unless people around them understand their circumstances and those of their families and reassure them, there's no way they can acquire academic skills." While such private-sector activities deserve respect, they do not exist in some regions. And even if there are such groups, not all children in need of support can attend extra lessons. It is the role of schools, which are responsible for public education, to guarantee learning opportunities to each and every child.

Yet schools nowadays lack the capacity to pay close attention to children in needy households. Unlike in the past, schools apparently have less interaction with students' families, thereby failing to understand the circumstances faced by each child. Students who are no longer keeping up with their classes tend to be left behind while their family circumstances are neglected. Behind this problem lies the simple fact that teachers are just too busy. After criticism grew over the government's relaxed education policy in the 2000s, the number of classes and learning content were boosted. To meet the needs of the times, teachers are pressed to cope with English conversation classes and information and communications technology (ICT). They are also busy outside classes, dealing with club activities and paperwork. They clearly cannot afford the time to take extra care of children.

To break the chain of disparity, it would be helpful to strengthen schools' functions with larger budgets and staff sizes. In Japan, however, public spending on

education and childrearing is low compared to other countries. It has been pointed out that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's traditional stance of leaving the responsibility on households has played a role in this dismal state of affairs. For children, the presence of adults who provide empathetic support both in learning and everyday life is important. But according to a survey by the Cabinet Office, the poorer the family was, the more reluctant or unable their children tended to be to seek advice from others when they were in trouble. It is crucial to create an environment where all children can paint a future of their dreams without fear. For that to happen, politicians must fulfill their responsibility to improve schools' potential.

Q1. According to the *Reading*, what support do private groups in Japan provide to students from struggling families?

Q2. According to the *Reading*, what measures could be taken by schools in Japan to break the chain of disparity?

Q3. The *Reading* concludes that in order to overcome educational disparity, “It is crucial to create an environment where all children can paint a future of their dreams without fear.” Consider what you can do to overcome educational disparity arising from child poverty in Japan. Choose A) or B) from Scenario 1, and C) or D) from Scenario 2, and answer this question by combining the perspectives from both positions.

Scenario 1:

Imagine yourself as being either A) a staff of a private group providing support to students from struggling families or B) an elementary school teacher.

Scenario 2:

Imagine yourself as being either C) a politician (either national, prefectural or local level) or D) a government official (either national, prefectural or local level).

【以下余白】



