



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

Modern Hebrew

MHEB1

(Specification 2675)

Unit 1: Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Now that the 2h 30 minute exam is well established, it is possible to say with confidence that losing half an hour of examination time seems to have made no difference to the students. They all completed the paper within the time allowed. There were some outstanding responses and these were clearly the work of native speakers. There was a higher percentage of less able students this year.

Section 1: Short Response to Passages

Most students scored well on this section.

Part (a1, b1)

The multiple choice questions were answered well by most students. The majority scored moderate (50%) to high marks and a very few scored full marks on this part of the paper. There were more students this year who scored full marks in part (b1), with the remainder answering just one question incorrectly. Only 5% of students made more than one error on this part, which was a definite improvement on last year.

Part (b)

This question illustrated that the majority of students found the passage quite accessible. Although there were students who wrote the answers in their own words, there were still many answers which were copied from the text. This included the copying of partial sentences or using sentences which ended in the wrong place. Teachers are encouraged to instruct students to give full but relevant answers. Out of 30 marks, 20 were given for Response to Written language (AO2) and the other 10 were given for Knowledge of Grammar (AO3). Teachers should remind students that it is very difficult to award AO3 marks to students who just 'copy and paste'. Those who used their own words (wholly or partially) were awarded marks for their effort.

Section 2: Translation into English

This year students found this section very challenging. Although the majority were familiar with most of the vocabulary, at times they were challenged by the combinations or blends of these words. Students were also less familiar with the correct term or nuance in English. Many of the words that proved challenging for students were those which, though close to the Hebrew, had more than one meaning in English. When a word had more than one possible translation, students interpreted the word incorrectly. Teachers should encourage students to consider the different possibilities within the sentence when making their choices. A high proportion of students failed to 'listen to the English' when translating. They translated the Hebrew words literally, not noticing when this did not make sense in English. Teachers should ensure they instruct students to re-read their translation.

An additional matter of concern this year was the clear lack of knowledge in relation to Israeli geography and culture. It was disappointing when students translated "the Mediterranean Sea" as "the Pacific Ocean" or "the Atlantic Ocean" or "the Black Sea" or suggested that it "stretches from the border with Lebanon in the north to the Gaza strip in the south.....and has a fundamental influence on life in Israel...". Teachers are urged to teach their students more about Israeli culture and geography, particularly as it is actually part of the syllabus.

There were also students who tried to paraphrase rather than produce an accurate translation. In these cases students were rewarded where the translation did not deviate very much from the general sense of the passage.

There were a number of students who were unable to understand the passage well enough to give a coherent translation. Some students made spelling mistakes in their English. They were not penalised, however, except for their more serious mistakes.

Section 3: Response to Stimulus

This section clearly showed the ability of students to express themselves freely. The stimulus subject matter was, no doubt, one with which students strongly identified and fired their imagination. The majority of students dealt with all aspects of the question very well, with only a few concentrating solely on the issue of work. Teachers are encouraged to remind their students of the need to read the question/stimulus very carefully, ensuring when planning, that they have dealt with all aspects of the question.

In this section there were also some outstanding examples of excellent responses using rich and vivid language as well as the appropriate register. Many students wrote much more than the required number of words. In some of these cases, however, there were repetitions and ambiguities. There were only two candidates who failed to write the minimum number of words required. Teachers are also advised to emphasise to their students that longer answers are not necessarily awarded more marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.