



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

Modern Hebrew

MHEB2

(Specification 2675)

Unit 2: Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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Unit 2

General Comments

This year saw the second year of the new style A2 examination. All students were clearly at ease with the new format of the examination. There were some outstanding responses. There was also a small percentage of poor papers.

All students completed the paper within the time allowed. Some questions were partially answered. This was clearly due to a lack of knowledge rather than a lack of time.

In Section 3, there were no students who attempted to answer both questions in their selected topic areas.

Many students wrote far more than the required number of words for their Section 3 essays, while only a few wrote under the required number of words. The majority of those who wrote at length gave either irrelevant information or repeated the same points in their essays. Teachers should stress that long answers are not necessarily awarded higher marks.

The work of several students was outstanding but, as every year, there were also a few less able students who clearly had neither sufficient ability in the target language nor enough knowledge of the topics to perform well in Section 3.

This year, again, a number of students who sat the exam clearly did so only because they were native speakers, assuming that they would be able to answer the questions in Section 3 without any preparation. This, of course, resulted in very poor responses. Both students and teachers must be aware of the requirements of the specification before students attempt to sit the exam.

Section 1

This year the subject matter of the passage seems to have been one with which students readily identified. Almost all students answered well the questions in Section 1 (a). A large number of students gave too much information or unrelated information in their answers. Teachers are urged to remind their students that a full but concise answer is needed.

This year, for the first time in an 'A' level exam, Part 1(b) did not only test textual understanding, but also the understanding of vocabulary and interpreting words from context. This exercise proved to be a little more challenging for students, although most gave a satisfactory response.

Section 2

This section contained a passage for translation into Hebrew. There is little doubt that this year students found the passage readily accessible. As always, there were examples of near perfect translations but also some of a lower standard from less able students. The passage for translation provided an appropriate challenge.

Section 3

It seems that both teachers and students are now at ease with the reduction in the number of topics from 6 to 4. This year saw, again, an increase in the number of students who answered questions from the literary topics. It seems that the greater choice which teachers now have in choosing literature for the study of the literary topics encourages selection of these subjects.

The wide range of ability among students was evident in this section. At times there was a marked difference between the students' standard of language as demonstrated in Sections 1 and 2 and that of the pre-prepared essays presented mainly in the non-literary part of Section 3.

This year there were quite a number of answers to questions from the literary section that simply narrated the story rather than dealing with literary analysis. The result was that students were awarded very few marks, if any, for these questions. Teachers are reminded to teach their students how to assess what the question asks and give them the literary terminology which will enable them to use their knowledge and give focused answers. There were, however, fewer generic essays of the kind some teachers teach to students as part of teacher-led exam preparation.

It was unfortunate this year that very few of those who chose to answer questions from topic 5 demonstrated a good knowledge of these subjects. The students who answered question 1 of topic 5 (the preferred question of the two) had clearly not evaluated the breadth of response required by this question. Teachers should ensure that students are taught to read and evaluate questions before making their choices.

Answers to the questions on topic 6 suggested, again, that many students had prepared essays in advance. Students did not evaluate the question but rather wrote everything they knew about the community/ethnic group of their choice. That included, in many cases, a lengthy historical account, which was completely superfluous to the question. Teachers are reminded that by preparing an answer in advance they actually hinder their students rather than help them.

As previously stated, being a native speaker of the target language did not guarantee a good performance in this section.

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.