

# 1995 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

## MALAY

In 1995 118 candidates presented for the examinations in Malay. All of these candidates presented for the 2/3 Unit (Common) Paper and 48 presented for the 3 Unit Examination.

### 2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

#### Section I : Reading Skills

##### Question 1

This question required candidates to read two passages and then to answer a set of questions, some of which focused on aspects of the individual passages and others on the over-arching theme of the modern family and the contrast between traditional family values and materialism.

Although the language level of both passages was well understood, some fundamental distinctions were missed by many candidates.

In Passage A, for example, it was Dr Anwar's mother who had encouraged him, as a boy, to pursue his schooling, whereas his father had seen little value in it. Several candidates merely said he was encouraged by *his family*.

Passage B, which was based on an advertisement composed of pictures plus text was generally better understood, although, once again, some fine distinctions were often missed. For example, the focus of the advertisement was actually the mobile phone, with the infra-red cooker as the *free gift*. Some candidates reversed this concept and/or focused on the cooker, with little or no mention of the phone.

When asked to comment on the *techniques* used in the advertisement, several candidates focused solely on the pictorial layout, making no mention of the language style or *message*.

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### Section II : Writing Skills

#### Question 2

Here candidates were asked to imagine themselves in the year 2050, not because it was envisaged as a year of particular significance, but merely because doing so required them to project themselves some time into the future.

Some candidates assumed that 2050 was a misprint for 2020, presumably linked with Malaysia's Vision 2020. Others did not appear to project themselves into the future at all, but merely described the world as it is at present. The question required some attempt at balancing, or at least at recognising the issues of increasing material benefits with the *quality of life* or *values of life*, not the material *standard of living*.

Most candidates limited their societal context to Malaysia itself. Very few addressed the issues in a wider or global context, or gave examples of the tensions they might foresee between material advances and quality of life in the world as they think it may be in the middle of the next century.

### Section III : Contemporary Issues

#### Question 3

The majority of candidates answered 3(a), with only 18 out of 118 answering 3(b).

In general, neither question was particularly well done, with many candidates not appearing to understand fully the literary terms they were asked to discuss.

Question 3(a) was the better answered, as candidates were able to define **Konflik batin** inner conflict in one person and to show how the story developed around this inner conflict.

The best stories to use for this were **Tanah, Kucing** and **Ingin Melihat Rambut Menantu; Runtuh** and **Mereka Tidak Mengerti** were also selected by several students but these stories do not focus as strongly on **Konflik batin**.

Those who chose **Sekapur Sirih Segaluk Air** tended to find themselves discussing the conflict between father and son rather than *inner conflict*.

Question 3(b) required candidates to discuss the use of *flashbacks* in both the stories Gila Anak Jantan and Runtuh.

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Many concentrated on change in the characters' personality over a period of time, but did not show how the women in each story reveal this change via their memories - i.e. via flashbacks.

### Question 4

Most candidates focused on *mother love* as something important and proved its existence by reference to stories such as **Kucing**, **Budi Yang Tak Terbeli** and **Runtuh**. They also drew on their own relationship with their mother.

Weaker candidates limited themselves to the content of the stories and did not show how mother love was the main factor in maintaining the family.

## 3 UNIT

### Part A : Poetry

#### Questions 1 and 2

The majority of students chose Question 2 and discussed the poetry of Usman Awang. A very small number misread the question and tried to discuss both parts.

In the better answers for both Questions 1 and 2 candidates discussed the way in which the theme was presented through the poems by discussing content and poetic techniques, e.g. symbolism, tone, imagery. Weaker students used only content to show how the theme was presented. A few chose an umbrella theme but then really discussed several different themes.

Students should be careful to choose poems appropriate to the question and to make sure that they do not confuse different poems and discuss them as one.

### Part B : Novel

#### Question 3

This was by far the more popular question. The better candidates were able to discuss Salamah's character, at the same time showing how the author used Salamah to help develop the themes, and giving an insight into the other characters. Her role was seen as being representative of women during the Revolution, with her positive character traits being seen as exemplary.

Less developed answers concentrated on characterisation only and discussed her role in her own family rather than in the novel.

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### Question 4

Only four candidates chose this question dealing with symbolism, but they handled it well, discussing the novel's characters as being representative of the people of Indonesia during the Revolution. A variety of symbols were chosen and explained in terms of theme and message.

### **Listening Skills**

This aural comprehension was generally well handled, although a large number of candidates failed to grasp the real significance of Intan's relationship with her stepmother, and particularly the fact that she had borrowed money to sit for her STPM.

The significance of Intan's dream was usually well understood; not all candidates, however, acknowledged that the bus she was in was actually taking her back to her village where her reception was likely to be far different from that in her dream.

The spaces provided for answers were meant to be an indication that lengthy answers were not required. Notwithstanding this, several candidates wrote copious responses, often merely repeating phrases from the passage but adding little or nothing to the answer required.