

FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

Paper 0521/01

Reading

General comments

Overall performance in the examination was pleasing and most candidates were able to demonstrate their comprehension of the texts and tasks. However, relatively few candidates produced work in the 'Excellent' category and some candidates did not fully respond to the question, either answering inadequately or answering only part of the questions.

There was a tendency by some candidates to answer in a bullet-point/ list format and not in full sentences: even though candidates using this technique can demonstrate an ability to organise their ideas and thoughts for their answers, this style of writing tends to generate only basic sentences where more complex sentences are required and has a negative impact on marks available for language. It is better to use bullet points and lists in the planning and turn them into full, complex sentences in the final answer.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Generally, most of the sub-questions were answered adequately. Most candidates answered (a) and (c) accurately but a number of candidates had problems in answering (d). The correct answer for Question (d) is 'Households with many sons nearly disappeared'. Many candidates answered that Gobdan's household had only one son left. The expression '아들 부잣집이 허북해졌다' in the text refers households in general rather than just Gobdan's.

Some answers to **Question (f)** – where candidates had to explain how the middle-aged man saw Gobdan as bride material – were incomplete. Despite the fact that two marks were available for this question, some candidates simply answered 'He did not like Gobdan' or 'He was only interested if she would be able to produce a child'. The answer to this question should include, firstly, that he did not think about how young and beautiful Gobdan was as, and, secondly, that he was only interested in whether his wife to be would be able to produce a son, and as a result he was not particularly keen on Gobdan.

Similarly, some candidates struggled to answer **Question (l)** adequately. **Question (l)** asked candidates to explain in their own words what '당한자의 한' (sorrow of the victims) and '면한 자의 분노' (fury of the escaped) are. Furthermore, they were asked what Jang Manduk's feeling – that the two should be brought together – means. Some candidates addressed the first part of the question but not the second part. Others did not explain 'sorrow of victim' and 'fury of the escaped' at all, but gave an example of the victims and the escaped in the text. In order to warrant four marks, the answer should include the following. Firstly, 'sorrow of victims' means the sorrow of the direct victims of the Japanese, such as 정신대 할머니. Secondly, 'fury of the escaped' indicated the fury of the people who suffered unfairly while trying to escape Japanese violence. Thirdly, Jang Manduk feels that all the people who suffered directly and indirectly because of the Japanese are the victims of the violence of imperialism. Lastly, Manduk and Gobdan's tragedies are more than just personal: they reflect the tragedy of the entire Korean people who, at that time, suffered unfairness and despair and this should not be forgotten.

Question 2

This question asked candidates to summarise how the lives of Manduk and Gobdan in text 1 changed in relation to the historical situations in text 2.

Many candidates successfully linked and explored the common themes of the two texts and answered the question appropriately. However, some candidates struggled to produce a clear, cohesive and organised answer: they either only summarised Gobdan's life or Manduk's life (sometimes giving the relevant historical background, but often not) or they summarised the lives of the two characters but with no reference to the historical background.

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Paper 0521/02

Writing

Section 1 Discussion and Argument

It is pleasing to see the improvement each session brings about in the quality of writing: essays are structured better and have a clearly delineated introduction, main body and conclusion; more essays display a variety of complex sentences and/or sophisticated vocabulary.

(a) If we lived forever, would that make you happy or unhappy?

This was the second most popular question – 33% of the candidature chose to answer it. Those opting for this question offered well-structured arguments as to the reasons making them happy or unhappy with eternal life.

(b) Do you think there needs to be corporal punishment in schools?

This was the most popular question and about 52% of the candidates answered it. Again, most candidates brought relevant arguments for and against the practice and managed to convey their ideas in a coherent and organised manner.

(c) Some famous artists' works of art sell at a high price. What do you think of the commercialisation of art?

This was the least popular question and only 5% of the candidates chose to write on this topic, but those who did, could offer intelligent opinions, supported by examples and arguments in a complex and sophisticated language.

(d) Actions of individuals alone cannot change the progress of global warming. Do you agree or not?

This topic proved to be another one with limited popularity and was answered by about 9.5% of candidates. The resulting essays demonstrated that candidates who chose this topic are well-versed in the ways to combat global warming and could offer convincing reasons for and against the statement offered by the question paper.

Section 2 Description and Narration

As usual, the questions requiring narration proved to be more popular than the ones requiring a description.

(a) Describe three things you can see on the way home from school.

About 14% of candidates chose this topic and gave apt descriptions of the things that captured their attention the most on their daily journey to school and back.

(b) Choose two figures (famous or not) that represent 'good' and 'evil' respectively and describe them.

About 9.5% of the candidature chose this topic to answer. A pitfall of this question which most candidates manage to avoid was a generic essay on 'good and evil' rather than description of two people representing these concepts.

(c) Write a story about an appointment that was not kept.

28.5% chose to tackle this question and most the resulting stories were satisfactory, but some suffered from a lack of character development and/or climax.

(d) Write a story that starts with 'Today it is my first day at this school. This is my third school. (I changed schools three times already).'

This was the most popular topic in the *Description and Narration* section – about 48% of the candidates chose it. It generated mostly straightforward stories with good setting and atmosphere but in some cases the plot was somewhat bland and the opportunities for appropriate development were occasionally missed.

