

MALAY (Foreign Language)

Paper 0546/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

As usual, the level of performance achieved by candidates in the Reading and Directed Writing paper was extremely impressive. Most candidates showed good understanding of the texts and questions. However, there are areas which still need to be addressed. For instance, candidates should be advised that where they lift indiscriminately from the passage rather than selecting the information necessary to answer the question, they will not be rewarded. The importance of reading the questions carefully should also be highlighted to candidates as every year marks are lost through carelessness.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks for this exercise. Where candidates dropped a mark it was usually on **Question 4** where the picture of the house was immediately associated with a residential area.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Almost all scored full marks. Pictures and text proved very clear.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Although most candidates scored full marks, many who dropped a mark stumbled on **Question 15** – they were confused as to whether payment was or was not needed for entrance to the museum.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Candidates were required to write a simple note in Malay giving a friend instructions on how to get to their (the candidate's) house. These instructions needed to be in accordance with a series of pictures (transport: a number 8 bus; time: 15.30; the stop: by the mosque). While the majority of candidates adhered to the rubric, used the pictures as a guide and thus scored full marks, a few did not read the question properly and lost marks accordingly.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-23

The vast majority clearly had no problems understanding the text and coped extremely well with the questions. In **Question 18(b)**, which asked when Nora was lost, Examiners accepted both 'on Saturday' and 'during a trip to the night market'. Although most candidates answered **Question 20** correctly, a few concentrated on the colour of the ribbon in Nora's hair.

Exercise 2 Question 24

Most candidates performed very well in this exercise, which required them to write about their ambitions and how they might achieve these. Candidates did not seem to have problems understanding the requirements of the question and the majority had plenty to say on this subject.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 25-29

This was a multiple-choice exercise and as such did not require candidates to produce answers in written Malay. The majority of candidates coped extremely well. Weaker candidates had problems with **Question 28** (some answered that Osman could not wait to start work as the manager of the company) and **Question 29** (some seemed unfamiliar with the four qualities stated, i.e. hardworking, good-looking, arrogant and lazy).

Exercise 2 Questions 30-35

As intended, this final exercise on the question paper, proved to be the most difficult. Weaker candidates had a tendency to answer questions by lifting large chunks of text from the passage, rather than selecting the detail necessary to answer the question. This approach is not rewarded as it does not prove to the Examiner that the candidate has understood either the text or the question.

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Paper 0546/03

Speaking

General comments

This Speaking Test was common to all candidates, whether Core or Extended, and, as in 2006, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators. However, the majority of candidates displayed excellent levels of competence and their range of communication skills was extremely good. They had been appropriately prepared for the test and were familiar with its requirements.

Administration

Regrettably, Moderators reported an increase in the number of clerical errors. The following administrative problems were encountered:

- Missing MS1 (computer-printed) Mark Sheets: the Moderator copy of the MS1 Mark Sheet must be included with the materials for moderation to allow Moderators to check that totals have been correctly transferred from the Oral Examination Summary Mark Sheet.
- Transcription errors: some Centres recorded different marks on the MS1 Mark Sheets from those recorded on the Working Mark Sheet (Oral Examination Summary Mark Sheet). It is **essential** that all clerical work is completed with care and Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to check that Total Marks are correctly transferred to the MS1 Mark Sheet.
- Errors in addition of marks: Centres are reminded that they must ensure that the addition of each candidate's marks is checked before transfer to the MS1 Mark Sheet.
- Centres are reminded of the need to include the name of the conducting Examiner in the space allowed for this purpose on the Working Mark Sheet (Oral Examination Summary Mark Sheet).
- Incorrect candidate numbers: it is crucial that names and numbers on all documentation are correct.
- Use of more than one Teacher/examiner per Centre: where large Centres wish to use more than one Teacher/examiner, permission to do so must be requested from CIE well before **each** Oral examination session. Where permission is granted, internal moderation procedures will need to be put in place in the Centre to ensure that candidates follow a single rank order. Such Centres will then submit a recorded sample of 6 candidates, across the range, in the usual way, but ensuring that the work of all Teacher/examiners is covered.

Quality of recording

The vast majority of Centres had taken great care to ensure the audibility of their samples, but work received from a very small number was inaudible in places. This was sometimes the result of poor positioning of the microphone/tape recorder. Centres are reminded of the need to check all equipment prior to the test in the room in which the examination will take place. Examiners should also remember to announce the name and number of each candidate on the recording – the candidate him/herself should not do this. Once started, the recording of each candidate should be continuous, e.g. the tape must not be paused/stopped during an individual candidate's test.

Timings

Timings were usually good (15 minutes per candidate), but some Centres persist in not examining candidates for the correct amount of time. Some tests were very short and did not comply with the requirements of the examination. Please remember to ensure that all candidates receive similar treatment in terms of timing.

Preparation of candidates

Most Centres had prepared their candidates in an appropriate way and there was evidence of spontaneous, natural conversation in the two conversation sections. There were, however, a small number of Centres in which candidates were over prepared. Centres are reminded that under no circumstances must candidates know in advance the questions they are to be asked in the examination. It is also important that the Examiner varies questions between candidates. If candidates are over-prepared, it becomes difficult for Moderators to hear evidence of the ability to cope with unexpected questions in a variety of tenses and candidates are denied access to the top bands of the mark scheme. It was pleasing, however, to note that in the large majority of Centres, Examiners did manage to engage their candidates in a lively, spontaneous and engaging way, following up leads wherever possible. Such Examiners used a variety of questions with different candidates and pitched the level of questioning according to the ability of the candidate being tested.

Application of the mark scheme

The mark scheme was generally well applied in Centres and marking was often close to the agreed standard.

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Paper 0546/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

The standard attained by the majority of candidates was as high as in recent years. Most candidates understood the requirements of each question and scored well on relevant communication. There were few rubric errors.

In this examination, candidates are expected to produce two pieces of extended writing in which they have the opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic competence in terms of complexity, accuracy and range of structures, vocabulary and idiom. The tasks within each question are structured to this end. A system of positive marking is used and rewards both accuracy and ambition. Each exercise is marked out of 25, of which five marks are awarded for relevant communication, fifteen for accuracy of language and five for general impression. No credit is given for anything beyond the 140th word since the rubric stipulates 110-140 words. Tasks carried out after the 140th word are not awarded marks for relevant communication and nor do they contribute to the mark awarded for accuracy. Candidates should be advised to write 140 words or just under in each of the two questions. Candidates should do a preliminary word count and keep a running total to avoid losing marks unnecessarily.

Candidates should be reminded of the importance of reading the question carefully and ensuring that they cover all the required elements in their answer. If they omit one or more of the tasks they will forfeit communication marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Both **(a)** and **(b)** were equally popular with candidates.

With option **(a)**, many adhered to the guidelines provided on the question paper and produced good descriptions of local holiday destinations. It is worth noting that in order to score marks, candidates should not just name places and types of activities in English, but try to describe the place/activity using action words and adjectives, e.g. avoid the term 'island hopping', but describe the activity of going from island to island.

Option **(b)** required candidates to write a letter to a friend about the move to a new house and many produced impressive accounts of their new house and its location. On this Continuous Writing paper, candidates should be advised to give numbers of things in words e.g. (three rooms, two kitchens) rather than in figures (e.g. 3 rooms, 2 kitchens). Candidates who chose **(b)** were often tempted to devote too many words to the opening of their letters and as a consequence ran the risk of not completing all the required tasks within the 140-word limit. It is probably safest to avoid any introductory remarks, but if candidates cannot be persuaded to adopt this approach they must at least keep any unsolicited pleasantries, e.g. asking after the health of friends/family, brief. Candidates should also be reminded of the need to read the question carefully: on this occasion they were required to write about a move that had taken place and not an impending move.

Question 2

In this question, candidates were asked to imagine they were out walking when they heard screams coming from the direction of the sea and to write an account of what happened next. It did not matter whether this account was in the form of a letter or a story.

Many candidates produced very impressive and imaginative answers, often with them as the hero/heroine of the day. There were also some extremely imaginative approaches with monsters and villains, while others treated the whole event as a dream.

Unfortunately, as usual, a handful of candidates either did not read the question or did not understand it and wrote about a series of unrelated and irrelevant events.

It is worth noting that many candidates are still confused by *Bila* and *Apabila*.