

MALAY (Foreign Language)

Paper 0546/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The level of performance achieved by candidates in this Reading and Directed Writing paper remains impressive. However, it is worth reminding candidates of the importance of answering questions with precise details, in such a way as to show understanding of both the question and the text (though this does not mean that questions need to be answered in full sentences). The following is an extract from the June 2005 Principal Examiner's report which remains pertinent: 'candidates should be reminded that where comprehension questions require answers in written Malay, it is up to them to find the precise answer in the text and, where necessary, rephrase it in such a way that it answers the question. Candidates who expect the Examiner to locate the required answer within a chunk of text copied out from the passage will not score'.

As usual, the vast majority of candidates attempted **Section 3** and, of course, **from June 2007 all candidates will be required to attempt all three sections**. Pleasingly, this year there was very little interference from Indonesian Malay seen in candidates' scripts.

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 *bulu tangkis* seemed unfamiliar to some.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Almost all scored full marks.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Most candidates scored full marks. Where this was not the case it was probably through careless reading of the questions and/or text

Exercise 4 Question 16

Candidates were required to describe what Saroja saw on the way to Faridah's house. The map featured a bridge, a river, a park or forest, a roundabout, a mosque. Instructions to get there would include straight ahead, turn left etc. Many candidates coped well with this task, but a surprising number did not know the term for 'roundabout' (*bulatan*). It was intended that candidates should write in the third person, but answers written from Saroja's point of view were also accepted.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-23

The vast majority clearly had no problems understanding the text and coped extremely well with the questions. The only question to cause any particular problems was **Question 18**. Examiners were looking for something along the lines of 'confirmation that they could stay there for four nights'.

Exercise 2 Question 24

Most candidates performed very well in this exercise, which required them to write about activities that they enjoy doing at the weekends. Many described valuable time spent with family and friends. Some candidates, however, wrote about a trip to a neighbouring country, an outing or a particular event, e.g. special, one-off activities, and not the activities one takes part in every weekend: it was not clear whether this was through carelessness – not reading the question properly – or because they had not understood the wording of the question.

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. **Question 29** caused the most problems with some candidates opting for D.

Exercise 2 Questions 30-35

As intended, this final exercise on the question paper, proved to be the most difficult. In **Question 30**, the fact that both Cik Mashitah's family and she, herself, were interested and active in Internet activities was not enough to score both marks. **Question 33** also caused some problems, usually because candidates did not read the question carefully enough. The question referred specifically to a particular radio programme, namely Keluhan Remaja, but candidates often used details relevant to other programmes in their answer. There was a similar tendency in **Question 35**.

MALAY (Foreign Language)

Paper 0546/03

Speaking

General comments

The Speaking test was common to all candidates who had followed both a Core and an Extended curriculum course and a wide range of performance was heard by the Principal Moderator.

Generally, the candidature displayed good to excellent communication skills and the standard was highly satisfactory.

Administration

A number of clerical errors had gone unnoticed in Centres and were corrected by the Principal Moderator. Centres are kindly reminded to check carefully both the addition of marks for each candidate on the Summary Mark Sheet (WMS) and the transfer of the total mark from the WMS to the MS1 mark sheet. Centres are also reminded to insert the name of the Examiner in the box provided for that purpose on the WMS and to ensure that the sheet is signed. This signals to CIE that the mark sheets have been checked thoroughly and mistakes amended or avoided. It also means that constructive feedback on how to improve the conduct and assessment of the Speaking test can be directed to the appropriate person.

Some Centres did not return the WMS as instructed while others did not return the MS1 mark sheet. In some cases not all of the columns on the WMS mark sheet had been completed. All paperwork should be checked by Centres before being returned to CIE as instructed, so that the moderation process can be carried out smoothly and fairly.

Where Centres have more than six candidates, a sample of six candidates must be selected and submitted to CIE for moderation. It is not necessary, nor desirable, for such Centres to submit recordings for all candidates.

Quality of recording

The quality of recording was satisfactory in most Centres. However, in a few instances poor recording quality made moderation difficult. Centres are reminded of the importance of finding a quiet location in which candidates can be examined, away from the noise associated with school canteens, playing fields or car parking spaces, all of which can affect candidate performance.

Occasionally, Centres had stopped a candidate's recording in the middle of the examination: once an examination has started, recording must be continuous. Even more worrying are the rare occasions when a blank cassette is submitted to CIE. Equipment should be tested before the first Speaking test is conducted and recordings spot-checked to ensure that all is satisfactory before the moderation sample is submitted to CIE.

No more than three candidates must be recorded on each side of a C90 cassette and cassettes must be clearly and correctly labelled before they are despatched to CIE in order to avoid confusion and facilitate the smooth running of the moderation process.

Duration of tests/Missing elements

In many Centres, Examiners had clearly prepared their own roles carefully and conducted Speaking tests in a very professional manner. As a result, candidates sounded relaxed and appeared to enjoy their tests.

However, some cases of overlong examinations were heard. Each candidate must complete 2 Role plays (an A and a B Role play), 1 Topic conversation lasting 5 minutes and 1 General Conversation section also lasting 5 minutes. Where these timings are exceeded, the risk is that candidates become tired and/or confused and their performance, and hence their marks, will suffer.

Particular care should be taken to ensure that all sections of the Speaking test are carried out. Some Centres disadvantaged their candidates by omitting some sections or failing to give candidates the opportunity to complete all elements of a particular section. For example, in the Role plays, Examiners must ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to complete each task fully as marks cannot be awarded to candidates for what is not attempted.

Application of the mark scheme

Generally, marking in Centres was close to the agreed standard. Nonetheless, some adjustments were deemed necessary. Where Centres required bigger adjustments, it tended to be because of the following reasons:

- failure to complete all tasks in the Role play section;
- short Topic conversation and/or General conversation sections.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Centres should ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to attempt all elements of each Role play task. Because marks can only be awarded for completion of the tasks set by CIE, Examiners are reminded of the importance of keeping to the prompts provided in the Teacher's Notes booklet and on the Role play cards. Where necessary, candidates can be prompted back to the task at hand.

Candidates should also be reminded that where tasks include the requirement to greet and/or thank, this contributes to the marks available for the task and should not be omitted.

Examiners are also kindly requested to introduce the Role play situations by reading out the short introduction provided and also to signal the move from the Topic (prepared) Conversation to the General Conversation, e.g. let's move on to more general matters now. These small details help both candidate and Moderator.

Topic (prepared) conversation

Some really interesting and enriching topics were presented by candidates. As an "icebreaker", this part of the test seemed to relax candidates and boost their confidence. In particular, some remarkable performances were heard on topics such as "My School" and "My Holiday", which provided candidates with ample opportunities to display their ability in Malay at IGCSE level.

Centres are reminded that they should advise candidates to avoid "Myself" as a topic as this can become too general, leaving little further material for the Examiner to explore in the General conversation section.

The Topic conversation is not intended to be a test of factual knowledge and Examiners should avoid the use of technical terms as well as the use of "foreign" words such as "games" and "you".

General (unprepared) conversation

A wide range of performance was heard. Examiners are reminded of the requirement to cover at least two or three topics in this section of the test and to encourage candidates to use a range of structures and time frames in order to achieve a varied conversation.

MALAY (Foreign Language)

Paper 0546/04
Continuous Writing

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

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

With option (a), it was pleasing that so many chose their mother or father as someone they admired. A few wrote about their football idols, such as Beckham or Ronaldinho, while one or two wrote about friends for whom they felt particular admiration. The question was well tackled by candidates, who seemed comfortable writing about people close to them.

Option (b) required candidates to write a letter to a hotel about the loss of personal items during a stay there. Many adopted the formal style appropriate for a letter to the manager of a hotel and used 'anda'. However, a not inconsiderable minority used 'awak', which was not deemed acceptable in a letter of this sort. A handful of letters were written in a very abrupt style indeed.

Question 2

In this question, candidates were provided with the first two lines of a story and asked to provide a continuation. Ideally, their answers should have provided an explanation for the light and a description of what happened to Alan and Kim.

Candidates produced some very imaginative answers, often based on science fiction stories from the movies or novels, which showed evidence of careful planning. The most successful answers were those where candidates took their lead from the information provided in the first few lines and used the characters of Alan and Kim to develop the story. Unfortunately, many went their own way, discarding Alan and Kim and and/or making no effort to explain the light in the sky.