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FIRST LANGUAGE THAI

Paper 0518/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

In general, the performance of candidates was good, with many showing both skill and flair in their approach to the question paper. The subject matter of the two texts which were the stimulus for **Questions 1** and **2** seemed to appeal to candidates, who are teenagers themselves, and this may have been a factor. In particular, many candidates rose to the challenge of **Question 2**, producing interesting and persuasive arguments which were a pleasure to read.

Strong candidates showed they knew how to make effective use of the texts, selecting the required information and presenting it in a convincing manner. Their answers were well organised and thoughtful. They outlined the steps of their argument clearly for the reader, backing up each statement with evidence. They had no problems understanding and interpreting the texts and were successful in conveying the required information in their own words. Register and vocabulary were appropriate and they wrote fluently in accurate Thai.

It was clear that in some cases, very good candidates were not able to do themselves justice because they were not aware of the key requirements of each of the questions. Candidates need to be reminded that the techniques to be employed when writing a summary are quite different to those for writing an appeal for public support. Weaker candidates, in particular, had a tendency to include their own ideas in the summary.

Candidates should also be reminded to exercise care in their choice of vocabulary. Colloquialisms and informal lexis were often used inappropriately. Problems with spelling were also much in evidence in the work of weaker candidates and some had difficulty spelling even simple words.

Time management appeared good in general, and the majority of candidates answered all three questions in the time allowed. Only a few did not complete all the answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Summarise two texts

In general, candidates performed well on this question. They demonstrated that they knew how to select information from both texts, and express it in their own words. Candidates who copied out chunks of the text including all the detail of the original did not score highly. It is important that candidates realise that a key factor when writing a summary is to select the relevant information and leave out unnecessary detail.

Question 2

Argue a case

The most interesting work was seen in response to this question. In general, candidates coped well and were able to come up with a number of interesting pros and cons.

The best work came from candidates who made good use of the two texts and were able to argue a strong, persuasive case based on the information supplied. However, weaker candidates tended to be didactic in style with not enough evidence to support their arguments and as a result their answers were not convincing.

Question 3*Write an appeal*

It was pleasing to Examiners that the majority of candidates were able to select appropriate information from the text and use it to try and persuade the reader to make a donation.

As touched on in the **General Comments**, in this question it was vital that the language used should appeal to the reader's emotions. Some candidates omitted such language altogether or made a half-hearted attempt which could not be considered effective. Even less effective were those appeals which resorted to threats.

Weaker candidates also found it difficult to re-organise the information in the text to suit their purpose. This may in part have been because they did not understand some of the terminology relating to environmental issues. Because they were unsure as to the meaning of certain words, they were then unsure of how to use or interpret them correctly in their answers.

In the case of the weakest candidates, poor reading competence proved a real stumbling block. Some had clearly not understood the text, to the extent that a few thought Canada was the name of a person rather than a country.

<p>Paper 0518/03 Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

Although the usual wide range of performance was in evidence, Examiners are pleased to report that in general the standard of work produced by candidates in the examination was higher than last year. They were particularly impressed with candidates' critical thinking skills and their creative ability.

The nine titles covered a wide range of topics which meant there was something to suit every taste. The open-ended nature of the titles meant that candidates had the opportunity to express their opinions, draw on their own experiences and use their imagination. The most popular question was **Question 1** 'My family' and the least popular was **Question 9** which related to a Thai proverb. No title seemed to favour or disadvantage any particular group of candidates.

One important factor that should be emphasised to candidates is the importance of planning before starting to write. This is particularly important in the writing of discursive essays. Here plans helped candidates to check whether they had enough varied argument to ensure that they could write a complete essay and to consider whether their ideas were in a convincing order. A plan was also important for a narrative, for example, to remind candidates where a descriptive passage could be inserted or how to build atmosphere and tension and to build up to a climax. Where planning did not take place there was a tendency for narratives to degenerate into a succession of events. There was a particular problem where candidates spent too long over the introduction to the story and then ran out of time to write a satisfactory conclusion.

Another issue to be brought to candidates' attention is length. There was a tendency for some candidates to write at very great length and the quality of their work suffered as a result. Candidates should know how much they can sensibly write in the time allowed and should keep broadly to the limits suggested in the examination paper.

The most successful candidates were those who displayed a confident and accurate use of language. Their writing was fluent, they used a variety of sentence structures and a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. Spelling was accurate, paragraphs were linked and well planned. These candidates addressed the topic relevantly throughout and held the interest of the reader.

In average answers, language use was largely accurate with mistakes tending to occur when attempts were made to use more sophisticated structures. A range of vocabulary was in evidence though it was not always used precisely. Sentences showed some variation of length and type. Spelling of simple vocabulary was correct, but complex words caused problems and punctuation was not consistently accurate. Although the candidate was aware of the need to use paragraphs, these were not strongly linked and the overall structure of essays lacked balance and order. The writing was mainly relevant but the sense of audience was not strong.

The weakest candidates tended to produce work which contained frequent errors, sometimes resulting in a blurring of meaning. Vocabulary and sentences were simple and there was not much variety. Paragraphing was rather haphazard (e.g. indeterminate length, not always sequenced, unnecessarily short or long). The weight of error and awkwardness of style was such as to detract from the content.

The following are specific areas requiring attention:

- Sentence separation.
- Grammatical accuracy.

Teachers should remind candidates of the need to write legibly in the examination. Examiners do their best to decipher untidy handwriting, but cannot award marks to material they cannot read.