

MALAY (Foreign Language)

Paper 0546/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

As usual, a very high level of performance on this Paper. Most candidates showed excellent understanding of the passages and questions and good writing skills. Where marks were lost this was usually through carelessness. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of reading questions and passages carefully before answering. Candidates seemed to have plenty of time in which to complete the examination and could also be advised to check through their work to ensure they have not made any careless errors.

Pleasingly, this year there were fewer instances of candidates lifting whole chunks of text from the passage in answer to questions in **Section 3, Exercise 2**. As has been mentioned in previous reports, where candidates adopt this approach, marks cannot be awarded as it is not clear to the Examiner whether the candidate has understood the question and/or the passage.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

The vast majority of candidates scored full marks for this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Again, the majority of candidates got full marks, but a handful chose *Wong* instead of the correct *Tan* for **Question 8**.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Question 15 caused occasional problems. The correct answer was *Betul*.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Candidates were required to leave a note telling a friend where they had gone, what they wanted to buy and at what time they would be back.

While the majority of candidates were guided by the pictures, some ignored them, particularly the time given on the clock-face, and lost marks accordingly. Candidates must use the information conveyed in the pictures to write their answers on this exercise.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-23

The only question to cause any problems was **Question 17**. A number of candidates did not seem familiar with the word *kerap(kah)* and answered that one hundred people attended, which was incorrect. The correct answer was 'once a fortnight'. All other questions were tackled extremely well.

Exercise 2 Question 24

For this question, candidates were required to write about their favourite town or region, saying why they like it and explaining what they like about it and why. There were many excellent answers. 10 marks were available for communication of information relevant to the question and 5 marks were available for language. Language marks were awarded on the basis of ticks for correct units of language. These ticks were then converted to marks with 20 ticks being equivalent to the maximum 5 marks. Candidates should be reminded that when using *banyak* (many/plenty), the nouns that follow should not be in the plural form, e.g. it is not necessary to write *Banyak buku-buku* as *Banyak buku* is sufficient.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 25-29

Most candidates handled this multiple-choice exercise very well. In **Question 26**, alternative A proved attractive to some; the correct answer was C.

Exercise 2 Questions 30-37

The majority of candidates had no problems handling this exercise which required them to write short answers in Malay. **Question 33** was the only question to cause problems with any regularity. Examiners were looking for something along the lines of *dengan cepat* and *dengan sabar*.

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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 2007, 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.
- Missing Working Mark Sheets: a copy of the completed Working Mark Sheet must be included with the materials for moderation.

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 that the maximum mark for Impression is 10 and not 15.
- 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' marks 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.
- Labelling: cassettes/cds must be clearly labelled to indicate which candidates are recorded and on which side/in which order candidates appear.

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 recording must not be paused/stopped during an individual candidate's test.

Centres are reminded that where digital audio technology is used, files must be saved as .mp3 in order to be accessible for the purposes of moderation.

Timings

Timings were usually good (15 minutes per candidate), but some Centres persist in not giving 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 judge their 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

Although, as usual, there was a high proportion of excellent performances, there were also cases where more careful reading of the questions would have resulted in higher marks.

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 5 marks are awarded for relevant communication, 15 for accuracy of language and 5 for general impression. No credit is given for anything beyond the 140th word since the rubric stipulates 130-140 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 each 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

Question (a) proved the more popular choice and many candidates wrote impressive accounts of their preparations for the surprise birthday party and how they ensured these were kept secret so as not to spoil the surprise. It was a real pleasure for Examiners to read such work. However, there are a couple of points to bring to candidates' attention.

Candidates should be reminded of the importance of keeping to the question and to the stipulated word limit. Communication marks are only awarded for information required by the rubric and can only be awarded to material that occurs within the 140-word limit. For **Question 1**, many candidates wrote long and elaborate openings to their letters. A brief 'how are you?' or 'hope you are fine' is not out of place as an opening, but many candidates proceeded to write about their busy schedules, for example in preparation for their exams. Some used up as much as a third of the word allocation writing on issues unrelated to the question which could not receive any communication marks. Such answers exceeded the word limit and candidates invariably forfeited communication marks for the relevant material they did go on to include because it occurred outside the prescribed 140 words

Unfortunately, a small number of candidates misread the question and thought they had to write an invitation to a surprise birthday party, even though the rubric clearly asked them to describe 'what food did you prepare' and 'what was her reaction' – clear references to a past event. This was a mistake made by even quite able candidates, and seemed to be a result of careless reading of the question.

Question (b), required candidates to write a letter about their eating habits and their opinions on the subject of fast food. Although less popular than **(a)**, those who picked this question handled it extremely well, either defending and justifying their intake of fast food or supporting the argument in the article about teenagers' obsession with fast food. Candidates choosing option **(b)** did not waste words on an 'introduction', but concentrated on tackling the requirements of the question.

Question 2

Question 2 required a more creative and imaginative approach. Candidates were required to write about how they coped with a friend who fell ill during a camping trip on top of a hill. They could not get a signal on their mobile phone!

Most candidates produced work that was a pleasure to read. They tackled the question efficiently, describing what they did to help their friend, their anxieties and frustrations and the problems they encountered along the way. However, a small number of candidates got sidetracked and lost marks accordingly. Such candidates described at length the plans for the camping trip, the journey up the hill and the beauty of the view from the top of the hill before dealing with their friend's illness and subsequent events. Thus by the time they came to tackle the requirements of the question they had used up a substantial proportion of the allocated words (and time). As with **Question 1(a)**, this affected scores for communication.