

MALAY (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0546/02
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

- On reading tasks, candidates are recommended to read the text at least twice before starting to answer the questions.
- Although some comprehension questions can be answered with phrases from the original text, candidates should avoid excessive copying beyond what is necessary to answer the question..
- On the long writing task, candidates who write fewer than 100 words may find that they do not cover all the communication points.
- On all the exercises, candidates should leave time to check their answers after writing for appropriateness and accuracy.

General comments

Again, it is encouraging to note that the number of candidates has increased for the 2011 session. As usual there was a good performance for this paper, and as usual most scored almost full marks for **Section One**. **Section Two** and **Three**, however, demanded written answers to comprehension pieces as well as short writing exercises, and here many stronger candidates appeared to lose marks because they did not study the texts with sufficient care before answering and did not check their answers again.. Marks for communication were also sometimes lost because candidates produced essays short of the required 100 words. Although there might seem to be more than enough time, it is worth reading the texts and exercise rubrics at least twice before attempting to answer.

Although hardly any candidates took completely irrelevant information from the text for their answers, It is worth reproducing here a reminder from the previous year's Examiner Report:

"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 lengthy chunk of text copied out from the passage will not be rewarded with a mark."

I am, however, happy to note that almost all candidates wrote in the Malay language as opposed to Indonesian Malay. The overall performance was impressive, and Centres and candidates are to be congratulated on their efforts.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks for this exercise. A handful went astray on **Question 4** or **Question 5**.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Almost all scored full marks.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Again, most candidates scored full marks.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Candidates were required to write to a friend about a visit to the zoo; what animals they saw, what they did and what the weather was like.

Most candidates gave the required account of the visit to the zoo, some at great (and unnecessary) length while some gave only the minimum description but still answered the questions as required. However, it must be noted that while there were candidates who could write a good account, carelessness occasionally denied some full marks. For example in 16a – the question is “What animal did you see?” Some candidates wrote that they saw many animals, without naming the animals.

Question 16b posed another problem to weaker candidates. Surprisingly, some candidates do not know the phrase for taking pictures in Malay. Some wrote *menggambarkan*, *ada banyak gambar*, which are all wrong. The correct terms should be *mengambil gambar* or even *menangkap/tangkap gambar/foto*. Some did not know the correct classifiers for animals or photographs.

Question 16c was generally better done, and any description of weather - sunny, hot, did not rain, beautiful weather, etc - was accepted.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

This section began the process of discrimination, although most candidates coped extremely well with the questions. Some weaker candidates were clearly working on the basis of guesswork by offering random words or phrases from the text, and some mixed up the answers to **Question 19** and **20**.

Exercise 2 Question 25

Most candidates did very well in this section, answering the question guided by the prompts. The majority wrote about their sports idol, Datuk Lee Chong Wei, and about the attributes which made him such a likeable personality. They described his attitude in the badminton court and his perseverance. They also wrote on what they would do to emulate their idols. Many wrote about singers such as Justin Bieber. A few wrote on Tun Dr Mahathir, the fourth prime minister of Malaysia, and a handful wrote about Barack Obama and Bill Gates. While the essays were, as ever, enjoyable there was a tendency to repeat content: for example, some candidates used the same language to explain why they liked a certain character and again in how they wanted to emulate the character. This seems a waste, as these candidates could have gained more marks by being more creative and giving more information about what they could do to follow in the footsteps of the person they admired. Having said that, a general observation was that many candidates wrote very short essays, shorter than the required 100 words. Even if they write well, this sometimes meant that they denied themselves full marks.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-30

This is a multiple-choice exercise and as such did not require candidates to produce answers in written Malay. The majority of candidates coped extremely well. The few candidates who had problems faltered on **Question 27** and **Question 30**.

Exercise 2 Questions 31-39

While many scored full marks for this section, there were two particular questions here on which some candidates had difficulty. As emphasised before, candidates should take care to read the text at least twice to make sure they understand it before attempting to answer the questions. In **Question 34** for example, it is clearly stated in the text that Abdul Aziz himself solved the problems but some wrote that it was the caretaker.

MALAY (Foreign Language)

Paper 0546/03

Speaking

Key messages

- Careful preparation by Examiners is essential.
- Examiners should adhere to the role play tasks as set out in the Teachers' Notes.
- If an element of a Role Play task is omitted, an appropriate prompt may be given.
- Examiners should make a clear distinction between Test 2 and Test 3.
- Failure to adhere closely to the set timing may disadvantage candidates.
- Examiners should vary the topics covered and should not ask all candidates the same series of questions.
- Candidates should be asked both expected and unexpected questions.
- To achieve the highest possible mark candidates do not have to be of native speaker standard.

General comments

This Speaking Test was common to all candidates, whether Core or Extended, and, as in 2010, a wide range of performance was heard by the Moderators. 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, an increase in the number of clerical errors has been noticed by the Moderator. 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 the Moderator 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 in the usual way, but ensuring that the work of all Teacher/examiners is covered.

- Missing examination details and labels on cassettes/CDs. Some Centres did not put labels on cassettes/CDs making it very difficult for Moderators to make sense of the recordings, even more difficult for Centres with a bigger number of candidates.
- There were some Centres, especially some larger Centres, which did not adhere to the instructions specified by CIE with regard to sample selection. A number of Centres still sent all their recordings without carrying out any sample selection or internal moderation. As a result, the moderation process took longer than usual.

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.

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. Some were too long and became quite tedious for candidates. 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 the Moderator 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.

However, there were also Examiners who did not abide by the instructions given by CIE, especially in the Role Plays section where some Examiners created their own tasks. This further confused candidates who in actuality prepared themselves well for the examination but lost marks as they struggled to follow the Examiners' own newly created tasks.

There were also Examiners who performed without professional ethics by feeding answers to the Role Play tasks to candidates who obviously did not prepare themselves for the examination. This is an extremely important aspect of the examination which Centres must address so as to ensure fairness to all candidates.

Unfortunately, there were also Examiners who were not as prepared as the candidates for the Conversations section, for example, one Centre awarded marks for the Topic Conversation section when no series of questions were posed to candidates at all. This means that the Examiners did not make any preparations and as a result confused candidates who were expecting to be asked questions on their chosen topics.

Application of the mark scheme

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

MALAY (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0546/04
Continuous Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should take care to write between 110 and 140 words for each question.
- Credit is not given for accuracy or communication beyond 140 words on each question.
- All communication points must be covered.
- SMS or text language must not be used
- In Question 2, candidates take care to follow the instructions in the rubric, and should not go outside the scenario specified.

General comments

It is worth mentioning that most candidates this year showed little familiarity with classifiers, even common ones. There was a handful that resorted to SMS or text language, which cannot be counted and translated into marks.

In both pieces of writing there was a serious lack of understanding of the difference between *kami* and *kita*. They both mean 'we' but the difference is that while one (*kami*) excluded the person spoken to, the other (*kita*) included the person you are talking to. Most candidates did not show they understood this.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) **Question 1a** required the candidate to write a letter to a friend, inviting him or her to a party to celebrate the homecoming of a brother from overseas. Candidates were required to mention who else was coming to the party, why the brother was overseas, and what food and activities were being prepared for the party. Most candidates answered this question as many could relate to planning a party, and some would have siblings studying or working overseas.

Many wrote about inviting a friend who was also a common friend of the brother and their classmates as well as close relatives and family members. Many too wrote about their brother's favourite food that he must have missed while being away. Many said their brothers were pursuing their studies overseas while some wrote about their brothers working abroad.

In the essays, generally most did not write lengthy essays, and several wrote short of the required number of words, that is 110 – 140 words, running the risk of failing to cover the communication points.

- (b) **Question 1b** required candidates to write a letter to a friend detailing a holiday together in a village. Candidates were required to describe the village, tell about activities to be done there and advise the friend on what to bring for the stay.

Many wrote and followed and answered the points given describing the village and the location as well as some attractions there. They also wrote about activities such as swimming, camping, cycling and bathing in the river. They wrote about essentials to bring for the holiday. However, there was a handful who, possibly through carelessness, clearly wrote about a stay in a city such as Singapore.

Question 2

This question required candidates to continue a story about Alice and her friends who went fishing at a lake. They saw something floating in the water and Alice tried to reach for this object but fell into the water. This was an opportunity for candidates to use their imagination and be creative in their writing.

While most candidates wrote the story and continued the story after Alice fell in the water, others rewrote the whole scenario or repeated the beginning of the story. This not only wasted time but also meant that candidates denied themselves the marks.

Most understood the language in the story but some did not understand the word 'terapung-apung' (floating) and took it to mean an object. Some wrote at length about the rescue effort, repeated themselves while doing so. Some wrote some very imaginative pieces about Alice being dragged into a world under water, and a love story with her rescuer.

These are always a pleasure to read.