

MALAY (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0546/02
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

- In reading tasks, candidates are recommended to read the text at least twice before starting to answer the questions.
- Questions do not need to be answered in full sentences, but the language used should be Malay and not in SMS/text message language.
- 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 all the exercises, candidates should leave time to check their answers after writing for appropriateness and accuracy.

General comments

Some candidates did very well on this paper. As before, it is worth reminding candidates of the importance of reading the questions properly and several times before answering them. The questions need to be answered with precise details, in such a way as to show understanding of both the question and the text. This, however, does not mean that questions need to be answered in full sentences. There were one or two candidates who did not attempt any questions at all, or attempted one or two questions only.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

Most candidates obtained full marks in this section.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Almost all scored full marks.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Most candidates scored full marks. However a handful of candidates answered **Question 13** and **Question 14** incorrectly.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Candidates found this more challenging.

Candidates were asked to answer the questions next to the illustrations. The questions all began with *Di mana...where?*

In the first illustration, the swimming pool was not easily identified by some, and so Examiners agreed that as long as candidates answered where the friend need to take the bus, for example at the bus station, at a given place etc. then a mark could be awarded. However, some candidates chose to describe the bus (e.g. the number of the bus), instead of answering the question – where?

The same applies to the third question *Di mana rumah anda?* Where is your house? Some candidates lost marks because they chose to describe the house; for example, the big house painted in green or the house with the number seven on the door. This did not answer the question. Surprisingly these kinds of answers came from candidates who had good language skills but they did not read the questions properly.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

Most candidates had no problems understanding the text and could answer most, if not all, of the questions. The questions where candidates had problems were **Question 21** and **Question 22**.

Exercise 2 Question 25

Most candidates did very well in this exercise. Candidates were required to write about a country they wished to visit, why they wanted to go there, what they would do there and with whom, and for how long. Candidates were also asked to write about their preparations for this trip. Many wrote about China, Japan, Korea and countries nearer home. While they answered the questions, they did so very briefly and sometimes fell short of the number of words required. They also did not offer much more than what was asked of them. The question said the answers must include, which means that there could be other information as well which could be awarded marks. When candidates offered only what was asked of them, and the essay was less than 100 words, they were unable to access the full mark range.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

These questions based on a text about a cultural show in London required candidates to say whether the given statements were true or false. In addition, for false statements, candidates needed to provide the right information. Quite a number understood the rubric and answered the questions well. Some just ticked the box without providing the correct answers for false statements.

In **Question 29**, many candidates clearly did not understand the word '*serta-merta*' – immediately. Yes, Kurt Spengler was going to visit Malaysia, but NOT immediately as he was going to save up first to buy tickets.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

This final exercise proved to be the most difficult. In **Question 32**, a handful answered (incorrectly) Alan Wong – manager of the hall. The majority of candidates answered the other questions correctly except for **Question 37** and **Question 38**.

It is worth repeating advice given before that candidates must not take chunks out of the text without really understanding the context.

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Paper 0546/03

Speaking

Key Messages

- Examiners must familiarise themselves fully with the contents of the Teachers' Notes booklet.
- 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 2011, a wide range of performance was heard by the Moderator. 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:

- Errors in awarding of marks: Some Examiners did not perhaps prepare carefully for the examination, particularly for the Role Plays section where candidates were awarded 'half'/0.5 marks for tasks, for example, 1.5 and 2.5. This is evidently unacceptable as the guidelines for awarding marks for this section is clearly outlined in the Teachers' Notes on page 12.
- 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(s) 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. Some Centres with more than two Examiners, however, did not carry out any Internal Moderation and this stretched the time of the normal moderation process.
- Missing MS1 (computer-printed) Mark Sheets: the Moderator's 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.

- Missing examination details and labels on cassettes/CDs: Some Centres did not put any details or labels on cassettes/CDs making it very difficult for the Moderator to find the recordings. This is even more difficult for Centres with bigger numbers of candidates.
- There were also Centres which did not adhere to the instructions specified by CIE with regard to sample selection, especially the bigger Centres. A number of Centres still sent all their recordings without carrying out any sample selection. In addition, some Centres did not spread the sample selection evenly where moderation was more often than not unavailable for the weaker candidates. Some only submitted recordings of one Examiner and failed to include recordings of the other Examiner(s) as part of the sample selection.

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/muffled 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. There were also some background noises which affected the moderation process badly. 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, for example, the recording must not be paused/stopped during an individual candidate's examination. Some Centres, unfortunately, did not spot check their recordings before submitting them to CIE as some elements of the examination were not available for moderation as the recordings were incomplete or stopped abruptly.

Timings

Timings were usually good (15 minutes per candidate). 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 Conversations section. There were, however, a small number of Centres in which candidates were over-prepared and only focused on the same topic, for example, "My Self", "My Family" and "My School". 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 Examiners vary questions between candidates. If candidates are over-prepared, it becomes difficult for the 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.

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

Unfortunately, there were also candidates who did not make any preparations for the Conversations section; for example, on occasion the Examiners posed the topic without warning to the candidates and the candidates then had to speak on the topic without any prior research on it. This then seriously disadvantaged candidates and hence affected their mark bands.

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

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.
- In Question 2, candidates should not copy out the prompt, as this would use up some of their word allowance.

General comments

In letter writing exercises, candidates are advised not to spend much time on salutations. It is not a good use of the word limit to ask after each other's welfare and to write a long closing address. Candidates should remember that answering the points from the rubrics is the most important task.

For questions which require candidates to continue a story, successful candidates do not repeat the rubric, so that they have 140 words available for their own story.

Comments on specific questions

The majority of the candidates chose to answer **Question 1(b)**.

Question 1(a) required the candidates to write about a sport events in their town. They needed to write about the kind of sports activities, the number of participants and audience, details of a sportsperson who took part and their own views on the benefits of sports.

Responses to this question were generally good. Many wrote about badminton, football and athletics. They were also imaginative enough to either create their own sports idol or have famous sports personalities participating in the event in their town. A small number of candidates wrote about the event in the future tense, which was incorrect.

Question 1(b) required the candidates to write a letter to a friend about a visit to a museum while holidaying in a foreign country. The letter needed to include the location of the museum, who took them there, what was interesting in the museum and what they learnt from the visit.

The majority of candidates understood the rubric and wrote about a visit to a foreign country which included a visit to a museum. However a handful of candidates wrote about a visit to a museum in their own country and a communication mark was lost.

Many wrote interesting accounts of what they saw in the museums, and the most successful candidates elaborated some of their points to use the word allowance to the full. Some candidates deprived themselves of marks by writing less than the word limit, as they seemed not to know how to elaborate on what they had seen and learnt at the museum, opting instead to write about going for a drink or snack after the visit, which was not part of the task requirement.

Question 2 was a more imaginative kind of essay and required the candidates to be more creative. This question asked candidates to continue the story of Mary's search for her brother Johan, who went missing after going out to find firewood.

Candidates must be commended for their imaginative accounts of why and how Johan got lost and how Mary and her other siblings made the effort to find him. Successful candidates used plenty of adjectives describing feelings, but weaker candidates tended to repeat themselves, using worried, frightened and tired several times.

A handful chose to treat this story as only a dream, which was an unusual approach.