

FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

Paper 0521/01
Reading

Key Messages

- Write clear, precise and well-constructed sentences in answer to **Question 1**.
- Write in your own words without copying directly from the text.
- Look at the mark allocation (between brackets on the question paper) to see whether the answers required are simple ones or complex/detailed ones with multiple points to cover.
- Question 2 answers require comparison and contrast between Text 1 and Text 2.

General comments

Overall performance in the examination was good. Most candidates demonstrated comprehension of the texts and tasks. Many candidates showed an ability to scan, analyse and evaluate relevant information from the text for each question and were able to use a clear and appropriate style of language in their answers.

Candidates should pay attention to the marks available for each question in order to know how much information is required to answer fully. Some questions required a simple answer for 1 mark, whilst others needed more detailed answers covering a number of points.

Candidates should be encouraged to use a consistent style of language for their answers, rather than mixing different styles. Some candidates who copied directly from the text, rather than using their own words, were able to identify the relevant information correctly but could not score well because of the copying.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Generally, all of the sub-questions were answered well. Questions requiring simple and straightforward answers, such as **1(a)**, **1(b)**, **1(g)** and **1(h)** were answered very well. **1(i)** was generally answered well, stating how 'I' and 'you' differ from one another in detail. Some answers to more stretching questions such as **1(j)** and **1(k)** did not contain the necessary explanation or discussion.

Candidates should pay attention to the detail of the question given. For example, **Question 1(c)** asked candidates to identify when the author felt 'proud to be a teacher'. Here good answers included 'When the teacher was able to talk about other things outside the textbooks', 'when the author is able to talk to students as a human to human, not as a professional who passes on information', or 'when the children, with a twinkle in their eyes, face the teacher with innocence and curiosity'.

Question 2

The majority of candidates successfully linked and explored the common themes of the two texts, compared and answered the question as instructed. Many candidates answered the question correctly with good use of their own words and complex syntax. However, some candidates did not fully understand the question and failed to produce cohesive, clear and organised answers. Candidates should select and analyse what is relevant for the question, and address the sub-questions fully.

Question 2 is based on the two texts, and candidates are required to compare and contrast, and to find common and different views. It does not ask for candidates' own opinions. Some candidates, though they were able to structure their argument well, used material outside the texts which could not be credited.

Question 2(a) asked candidates to compare the two texts and write what was common in the two teachers' attitudes towards students. The answer should include, for example, that the relationship between a teacher and a student should be as one human being to another; both teachers regret the fact that they can only

pass on simple knowledge; they would like their students to be confident in their lives in this competitive society; they would like to give hope and encouragement to the children who are academically weaker.

Question 2(b) asked candidates to summarise elements of Korean education and society which are common to both texts. In relation to education, appropriate content would be, for example, that the classes are exam oriented; that only knowledge is required for exams and that there is too much rote learning; success is measured only in relation to scores and grades; children are stressed and tense all the time because of scores and grades; on the other hand there is an increase of students who do not pay attention during the lessons as they have given up on going to university. With regard to the reality of society, society divides winners from losers; people are evaluated only by achievement of their goals, therefore, the society becomes selfish and individualistic.

Candidates should organise their content by presenting arguments logically, using appropriate connectives and conjunctive adverbs.

FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

Paper 0521/02

Writing

Key Messages

- Construct an argument that focuses on the question, using evidence to support your argument.
- Structure your writing clearly.
- Use appropriate language for the subject.
- Check and proofread your writing.

General Comments

Candidates must choose one from four titles for the discussion and argumentative essay in **Section 1**, and another one from four titles for the narrative or descriptive essay in **Section 2**. For **Section 1**, discussion should be logical and consistent, and may require complex argument. Writing out the task title will help candidates focus on the question being asked and avoid writing irrelevant material.

It is important to spend time planning the structure of the writing. This should be well organized and developed systematically. Some excellent essays were fluently argued, and presented a balanced viewpoint including a range of ideas in support of both sides of the argument. However, some less successful essays, despite having addressed a few relevant points, were repetitive and had weak conclusions.

Therefore, for a successful composition, candidates should address properly the specific demands of the question and show their knowledge and understanding in relation to the topic. It is also good to substantiate and justify ideas with relevant detail.

Some successful responses in **Section 2** created imaginative, vivid scenes, focusing attention on details, reflecting the emotions of the narrator. Others needed to plan their stories carefully using straightforward narratives, character development and effective endings. In order to create images in the reader's mind, candidates need to use a wide range of vocabulary and focus on expressions that reflect the emotions of the narrator.

Most of the candidates wrote the required number of words (between 350–500 words for each composition). There were, however, some rather short answers. A logical argument focusing on the main points can achieve an excellent answer without excessive length. Some less successful essays tended to rely on a limited number of simple words and to use these repeatedly.

To enhance the quality of their Korean writing, candidates need to be careful when using the following expressions:

- consistent narrative (plain) ‘-다’ styles
- correct spelling especially ‘안’ and ‘않’
- the subject-verb disagreement
- overly informal expressions like ‘기회를 날렸다’
- overuse of the plural ‘-들’
- overuse of subjective words without logical basis: ‘상상조차 하기 싫다’ ‘있을 수 없는 일이다’

Comments on Specific Questions

Section 1: Discussion and Argument

- (a) This question ('there will be fewer jobs for younger people if more people work through to older age') was the least popular, perhaps because of a lack of knowledge and ideas on population ageing and the causes of youth unemployment, and the relationship between the two. Most candidates did not provide a balanced argument but just listed examples or gave a one-sided argument.
- (b) No candidate chose to answer this question ('Commercial advertisements targeting children below the age of 16 should be banned. Discuss your view of the statement.').
- (c) Most candidates chose to answer this question, 'The main function of the school is to prepare its students for their lives ahead, not to make them study for the next level of exams.' It is easy to think that arguments on school and education are straightforward because of the candidates' personal experiences. However, few candidates were able to provide relevant examples to support their argument.
- (d) 'A nation must utilise its own resources and products rather than relying on foreign imports.' Discuss your views on the statement. This question was the second most popular question. Good answers did not restrict themselves to arguments such as 'import is good' or 'import is bad'. A good argument was that there was a vicious circle of problems where the increase in the import of foreign agricultural produce had led to the gradual decline of Korean agriculture and the dependence of Koreans on foreign food.

Section 2: Description and Narration

- (a) 'Choose and describe a tragic natural disaster.' This was the second most popular question. The sinking of the South Korean ferry Sewol in April was very relevant to this title and many of the candidates' answers related to that incident. Candidates who provided a vivid description of the situation scored high marks.
- (b) The question asked candidates to imagine a celebration or a remembrance and describe what they could see and hear, and how it affected them. This was not a popular title. Some candidates described a specific situation describing the circumstances of the celebration and its emotional effect.
- (c) 'Write a story using the theme "destiny"' was the most popular question. Rather than limiting the story to a simple chance encounter or a love story, a candidate should attempt to move the reader emotionally by leading 'destiny' to a twist, a conflict or a climax in the story. Encouraging students to read short stories will improve their ability to create a good plot.
- (d) 'Write an episode about being in trouble for failing to complete a task within the given time frame.' In narrative questions, essays showing strong story-telling power got high marks. A good story-teller is able to create 'a logical tension' in the reader's mind giving the impression of reality, and the reader is driven by intense curiosity to guess the next stage of the story.