

# FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

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Paper 0521/01

Reading

## Key Messages

- Candidates should not copy the texts directly into their answers but answer in their own words.
- Candidates should pay attention to the marks available as this gives a clue to whether the answers required are simple ones or complex/detailed ones with multiple points to cover.
- Candidates should note the exact wording of the question and respond precisely to what is being asked.
- **Question 2** answers require comparison and contrast between text 1 and text 2, using arguments linked with appropriate connectives.

## General comments

Overall, candidates performed very well on this paper and there were many positive features in their responses. Many candidates showed their ability to scan, analyse and evaluate relevant information from the texts for each question with a clear and appropriate style of language in their answers. Many candidates demonstrated excellent use of vocabulary, complex sentence structures and accuracy in punctuation and spelling.

Some candidates copied the texts directly into their answers rather than paraphrasing them and writing in their own words. Answers requiring a more detailed argument should be presented in a more developed and organised way, grouping the ideas and using appropriate connectives.

Candidates should also be reminded to use an appropriate and consistent style and register of language for their answers, rather than mixing different styles of language.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

Generally, all of the sub-questions were answered very well. Many candidates understood the questions well and answered them accurately. Questions requiring simple and straightforward answers, such as **1(a)**, **1(b)**, **1(d)**, **1(e)**, **1(g)** and **1(h)** presented few problems to the majority of the candidates.

In **1(c)**, some candidates did not give sufficient detail to score maximum marks. To score two marks for this question, there should be two clear points made: what 'Gabae' (가배) means and where it originates. The majority of candidates identified the origin of the word (the weaving competition amongst the court ladies in Silla days) but some candidates did not specify that 'Gabae' means 'the middle, centre'. Candidates are reminded that they should pay attention to the marks available, as indicated in brackets ( ) at the end of each question or part question, and also to the wording of questions.

A number of candidates found questions **1(f)** and **1(i)** challenging. **Question 1(f)** asked candidates to explain why people used the expression '더도 말고 덜도 말고 한가위만 같아라' in line 26 of the text, and the meaning of the expression. The answers should include that 추석 is the season of abundance, not only in terms of abundant food available due to the harvest season but also in people's relaxed and generous attitude in sharing food/drink/life. This expression means that people wished everyday would be like 추석 in many aspects of life.

In **Question 1(i)**, some candidates only explained what ‘원놀이’ is but didn’t explain why this game was ideal for the candidates. 원놀이는 a type of mock trial, therefore it provides an opportunity to test the candidates’ wisdom and judging skills for their future role, and candidates can gain experience and learn through this game.

Most candidates answered question 1(j) well, explaining what ‘반보기’ means and what things are done at ‘반보기’. Most answers were presented in a cohesive way with clear points.

## Question 2

The majority of candidates successfully linked and explored the common themes of the two texts, compared the texts and answered the question as instructed. Many candidates answered the question correctly, with good use of their own words, with appropriate expressions and complex syntax. However, some candidates used limited language and didn’t establish good linkage between groups of ideas. Some arguments were repetitive and were lifted directly from the text.

To be able to score fully for **Question 2**, candidates should explore the various aspects of the two famous Korean festivals (‘추석’ and ‘정월 대보름’): when the festivals take place, the origins of the names of the two festivals, the meaning of the two festivals, what games people played and with what purpose, the food and drink consumed during these festivals, traditional customs, etc.

These and other ideas should be identified, grouped with clear comparison/contrast, and linked effectively, with a sense of purpose, rather than merely offering list-like notes.

# FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

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Paper 0521/02

Writing

## Key Messages

In order to do well on this paper, candidates should:

- construct an argument that relates to the question
- have a clear structure for the writing
- present evidence to support their arguments
- use appropriate language for the subject
- check and proofread their work

## General Comments

As in previous years, candidates were given one choice from four titles for the discussion and argumentative essay in Part 1, and another choice from four titles for the narrative or descriptive essay in Part 2. Many candidates have read the titles carefully before choosing one and planned their ideas for the introduction, main part and conclusion in some detail. It is important to spend time on planning one's essay to build a logical structure.

There were many excellent discussion and argumentative essays, where candidates focused on one main idea statement and supported any generalisation with appropriate and relevant details, examples, facts, and evidence, either from personal experience or other sources. These essays were well-structured, fluently argued and presented a balanced viewpoint with a range of ideas in support of both sides of the argument. Meanwhile, for some less successful essays, candidates did not explain their points effectively, if at all. Facts were inaccurate, out of date, or irrelevant. Some candidates even resorted to quoting chunks of information attributed to famous writers, without offering any explanation or analysis.

Therefore, to make a successful composition, candidates should engage the reader from the beginning, move the argument forward in a straight line, and stop at a good point. They should address the specific demands of the question and develop their argument in a logical way in relation to the question. Also they should substantiate and justify their ideas with relevant examples. For some less successful essays, some sentences in a paragraph were not related to the topic sentence other essays changed direction so many times that the reader became lost.

There were some excellent descriptions and narratives. The best candidates carefully established context and engaged the reader through a coherent, controlled and complete story. Some effective characterization and setting and details were used to create sense of place and atmosphere. Some of the successful narratives had a 'twist' at the end, included vivid characters, a climax and a touching story. In order to create images in the reader's mind, candidates need to use a wide range of vocabulary, focusing on expressions that reflect the emotions of the narrator pertinently.

Most of the candidates kept the length of essay between the recommended 350–500 words for each composition. Candidates need to remember that a long essay is not necessarily a good one, but too short an essay will naturally lack depth and logic. There were some cases where candidates wrote the wrong question number, and others who wrote two sets of essays and then crossed out one of them. Therefore, in order to produce a high quality essay, candidates should think carefully prior to selecting the questions, and then focus solely on that particular title without waste of time.

A few candidates did not answer one of the questions at all and therefore could only score half the possible marks. Candidates are advised to attempt a second question even if they have very few ideas to start with.

Some less successful essays tended to rely on a limited number of simple words and to use the same expressions repeatedly. For example, some would write only a list of brief dialogues without any background

narratives. Furthermore, to enhance the quality of the Korean writing the candidates need to be careful when using the following expressions:

- formal written styles (~다 체) rather than the spoken style (~요 체) for the argument
- confusion between ‘때’ and ‘떼’
- subject-verb agreement
- overly informal expressions in a formal essay like ‘무지 중요하다, 되게 못 됐다’
- Anglicisms
- overuse of the expression ‘~인 것 같다’
- use of slang in an argumentative essay like ‘악플, 초딩, 디게’

### **Comments on Specific Questions**

#### ***Section 1: Discussion and Argument***

- (a) This was the least popular question in this section. This question expected the candidates to explain their opinions on the following statement: ‘Humans are species with a peaceful heart’. A persuasive essay would argue for or refute this statement with specific examples that support the candidate’s view. Most candidates who answered this question were of the opinion that humans are not peaceful but competitive and greedy and they gave historical examples (wars and conflicts and other cruel events) to support their opinions. Outstanding essays used philosophical and psychological background to discuss human nature, showing an understanding of the relationship between society and the individual, and using this to explain why humans have been creating conflict throughout history.
- (b) This question expected the candidates to discuss the matter of dual citizen’s obligatory military service which was recently one of the most debated topics in Korea. Many candidates concluded that it would be perfectly natural for a dual citizen to give up one of their citizenship without exploring further why the issue of giving up dual citizenship to be exempted from military service is causing the current controversy. There were some excellent arguments which pointed out that an individual may later suffer from an identity crisis if they give up their nationality just to be exempt from military service. Whatever the candidate’s viewpoint, a successful, persuasive essay can be produced by explaining the reason behind a controversy/debate at the social rather than the individual level.
- (c) This was the second most popular question in this section. However, a lot of the essays were written around simple assumptions like ‘dictatorship = communism’ or ‘dictatorship = king’. Furthermore, essays that merely gave examples of Hitler or North Korea to conclude that dictatorship is bad or conversely essays that solely focused on economic growth as the basis to conclude that dictatorship is a positive thing, were too simplistic to score very high marks. However there were also many excellent essays which used specific historical cases to logically argue that economic growth cannot justify the amount of suffering caused by a dictatorship and/or discussed cases of countries which claim to support democracy but are in fact dictatorships.
- (d) This question was chosen by the largest number of candidates. Most of the students agreed with the statement ‘The word impossible is not in my dictionary’ and developed their thoughts along how one should think of ways to overcome the limits. However, some essays were not at their full persuasive potential when only personal experiences were used as an example such as the candidate’s studies or grades. It would be much more effective to persuade the reader by using historical cases and examples.

#### ***Section 2: Description and Narration***

- (a) As the topic was ‘my birthday’, this question deals with a subject matter very familiar to candidates. However, it is not enough to simply offer descriptions of places and lists of events in a chronological sequence. It is more effective for candidates to also express their emotions felt on their birthday: their feelings of joy and excitement for example at a surprise party by friends or receiving a wonderful gift, etc.

- (b)** The least number of candidates chose this question. This shows it can be quite challenging to portray a trustworthy figure or an evil figure. However, there were some really well-written essays in which candidates created an imaginary situation and the description of a character's evil or kindness were exaggerated to give a sense of tension to the reader. If the description stops at just describing the character's physical aspects from head to toe, it is too vague and difficult to understand why that character is trustworthy or wicked. The description comes to life only if particular traits, habits or attitudes of a character are described
- (c)** This was the most popular question in this section. Most of the candidates developed the story with the theme of 'love'. The writing can be more moving to the reader if candidates delicately capture the moment of that lost chance rather than telling an obvious story in full from beginning to end. Some outstanding stories showed dramatic development of emotions. Some essays brought a lasting impact to the reader by finishing with a twist.
- (d)** This was the second most popular question. Some candidates used the mystery thriller novel genre to offer a series of gruesome events but very little else. Horror stories too need logic in their structure. If anything, a mystery thriller requires an even greater proportion of human relationships and intricacies in the story. It cannot be a good mystery thriller if the story is over-exaggerated or if there is a lack of logic affecting the flow of the story. This is part of the reason why there were relatively few well written stories despite a lot of candidates having chosen the question.