

FIRST LANGUAGE MALAY

Paper 0696/01
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

Candidates should:

- look for implicit and explicit meanings and messages that the writer is trying to convey in Text A.
- read the story more than once to understand the theme and the messages that the writer is trying to convey.
- make targeted use of the information provided in Texts B and C for **Question 2**.

General comments

Overall, many candidates were able to answer well. In general, performance was better in **Section 2** than in **Section 1**.

In **Section 1**, candidates should be prepared to read between the lines to deduce the information required, as some questions will require implicit understanding. Candidates should not simply copy chunks from the text and hope that answers the question.

In the questions where candidates are asked to explain what the writer was trying to convey when using certain phrases, candidates need to explain the implicit meaning.

In **Section 2**, information is provided in the texts. Candidates need to select the information they want to include and manipulate it to meet the demands of the task. Candidates should write in their own words.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) An example of an ideal answer was that she was regretful because of her own shallow knowledge about her own country; she did not even know about Tenom Coffee, which is the product from one of the states in her own country. Weaker candidates answered that there's a lot more that she does not know. This was an incomplete answer.
- (b) (i) Almost all candidates answered correctly that Idariah's ambition which she failed to realise was to become a teacher. To be complete, the answer needed to have at least 'to become a teacher', or 'she wanted to be a teacher'. 'Teacher' on it's own was not sufficient.
- (ii) The question asks why (Idariah did not realise her ambition). The correct answer was: her parents were worried that she might be sent to schools in the far flung corners of the country, to some remote areas. Some answered saying her parents wanted her to work in the city – which was also correct. Answers that were rejected were 'she wanted to enrich her experience' or 'she wanted to work in the city'. This showed that the candidates did not understand the question properly.
- (c) Many answered part of this question correctly. There were two answers in the text that indicated her anxiety. Those who answered well wrote that Idariah kept asking questions about the trip, about the distance and how long it would be before they would arrive in Tenom. Some candidates missed out on an additional mark because they did not provide an answer related to work. Idariah

had planned to arrive early in Tenom because she wanted to be mentally prepared and familiarise herself with a place that she has never visited before.

- (d) Most answered this question correctly. The question had several possible answers. Most answered that the journey consisted of going uphill and downhill on lots of winding roads. Some also wrote that the roads were in bad shape and in disrepair, which was accepted. Some answered that it was three hours long, but a more acceptable answer would be, it was a long journey.
- (e) Most candidates partly answered this question. Most answered that the driver smiled because Idariah gave a positive reaction about the coffee tasting natural (unlike coffees she had tasted before). To get the second mark, candidates needed to mention that Sariman was not sure that Idariah was going to like it, and when she did, he was happy.
- (f) Most candidates partly answered this question. They answered that she was glad to see people are living peacefully, without rushing here and there (compared to living in the cities). Some noted that the residents still have good manners and are courteous. To gain another mark, candidates should have answered that Idariah was happy to see lush green fields instead of buildings.
- (g) Most candidates answered this question correctly. The question asks what brought back memories to Idariah when she went to a school in Tenom. Most answered that it was being greeted with thunderous applause. Those who did not get the mark answered that it was Idariah who gave a thunderous applause.
- (h) Most candidates answered well, pointing out that the students listened to her throughout her talk attentively, without making any noise, not nudging each other or moving. This was a satisfactory answer for one mark. An element of respect for the teacher was also considered correct. In order to give an excellent answer, candidates should have mentioned that the students showed interest in what she was talking about, by asking lots of questions.
- (i) Most candidates answered that Idariah encouraged them to use their local dialect in their writing, in a manner where readers can understand them. To get both marks, candidates must also answer that she encouraged them to write about their own history.
- (j) (i) The question asks for the attitude of the person who uttered the words to Idariah. To answer this question, the candidate must know the meaning of the phrase 'Now you know!' and the manner and tone in which it was said. The attitude of the person who uttered the phrase is one of arrogance, one who thinks he/she knows better, one who thinks poorly of Idariah.
- (ii) Many candidates tended to take literally what the phrase says; like trapped wind that could not be released, referring to an earlier reference of being in pain. Only a handful answered why that phrase was used to reflect Idariah's feelings. If one reflects back to Idariah's ambition to be a teacher, which was quashed by her parents' objections, one can understand her feelings. She was unable to release or voice out her frustrations at that time – she wanted to be a teacher, but she had to listen to her father's advice. So, she kept that frustration in, which actually hurt her. It was a bottled up feeling that was never allowed to be expressed openly.
- (iii) The phrase 'a cliché answer for tourists' showed Idariah's thirst for more knowledge about Tenom. When Idariah asked Sariman, the driver, 'what is there in Tenom' Sariman replied 'Tenom coffee', which Idariah regards as a common answer that a local would give to a tourist. But Idariah is not a tourist. She wants to know more than that. She knows something about Tenom, but she wants to know more.
- (iv) Some candidates did not understand the word '*disogokkan*' coming from the word '*sogok*' (to bribe). To answer the question why the writer used the word '*disogokkan*' when talking about the journey to Tenom, candidates needed to remember what the driver said about the roads and the hilly nature of the roads and journey; it was uphill and downhill, the roads were winding and in bad condition. So, it was quite a challenging drive. However, the writer then describes the colour, the beautiful scenery along the way. This beautiful scenery was like a bribe to anyone travelling the treacherous road to make them feel that the journey was worth taking.
- (v) Most candidates answered this question well. The phrase 'Idariah was rained on (bombarded by) with lots of questions'. Candidates answered that the image portrayed that the students were keen,

eager to know and asked lots of questions, one after another. It showed the enthusiasm of students who were thirsty for knowledge.

- (vi) Most candidates answered correctly by saying that the word 'warna' reflects the uniqueness of the local dialect as each district or area has their own 'colours' (dialect).

SECTION 2

The question asked candidates to write about the issue of increasing fake news and how to stop this.

Content

Guided by information in both texts, most candidates did well. Some expanded and elaborated on the points given, linking them well. They drew information from both texts to write about how the worrying issue can be resolved.

Candidates should use their own words to write the report and not just copy out chunks from the texts. A successful approach was to gather all the reasons why there is an increase in fake news nowadays. Then use one's own words to link the reasons together, using appropriate joining words such as *walaupun*, *oleh kerana itu*, *selain daripada itu*.

Language

Idioms and expressions, when chosen carefully and appropriately, can enhance a piece of writing. However, it is important not just to use them for the sake of it, and candidates should not feel that they need to include as many as they can think of.

In general, the most frequent language errors were in the use of prefixes and suffixes. Some candidates also found it difficult to use appropriate punctuation.

FIRST LANGUAGE MALAY

Paper 0696/02
Composition

Key messages

Candidates should:

- read all the questions before selecting which to answer
- study the syllabus and mark scheme prior to the examination to ensure that they understand the requirements of the tasks
- keep in mind to write between 300 and 400 words
- be aware of the target audience of each task and ensure the use of appropriate register and tone throughout
- respond well to the question asked, demonstrating fluency, well-developed ideas and adequate control of grammar, idiom, vocabulary, spelling, discourse marker (*penanda wacana*) and sentence completion.

General comments

In **Section 1**, the most popular questions were **Question 1(a)** and **1(d)**. **Question 1(a)** asked candidates to write a discursive essay for a class discussion on the topic: 'The idea of staying abroad for a year'. Most of the candidates were able to present both sides of the discussion with good understanding, sound knowledge, and clarity.

Question 1(d), an argumentative question, asked: 'School plays a more important role than parents in producing a responsible person; Do you agree?'. The candidates' responses were equally distributed between agreeing and disagreeing. Most of them wrote with good understanding, sound knowledge and clarity.

Question 1(b) asked the candidates to write an article to be published in a school blog. The question read 'The importance for school leavers to gain work experience while waiting for exam results'. Strong candidates were able to write well, giving clear expression with good details and understanding.

The least popular choice among the candidates was **Question 1(c)**. The question read 'The pen is mightier than the sword; Do you agree?'.

Overall, many strong candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding of the language, giving carefully defined, logical and well-constructed sentences. They clearly expressed their view on the question with convincing explanations which included facts, opinions and some complex ideas. Their writing demonstrated persuasive techniques, such as emotive language and information, successfully.

If candidates choose to write a discursive essay, they should clearly present a balanced discussion of the issue by presenting both sides with equally relevant explanations and examples. They should make sure there is a cohesive progression of each point being presented by using transitional wording leading into the next paragraph.

Most of the candidates were able to provide evidence and support for their ideas. Some candidates wrote clear and persuasive statements providing examples, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Although the majority of the candidates wrote well-structured essays, some candidates were inconsistent in their arguments. For example, there were candidates who presented both sides of the argument, with scattered arguments which were not well developed and balanced. Some had lost their way by the end of their response, as they started off agreeing with the given topic and concluded by disagreeing.

In **Section 2**, candidates who achieved very good or good marks for content wrote essays featuring an outstanding description or narration which engaged the reader throughout.

In responses to the descriptive questions, some candidates were able to describe the atmosphere and the situation as required by the question and they used sophisticated vocabulary and linguistic devices such as metaphors, personification, and similes. In descriptive writing, candidates should focus on portraying the scene, describing the atmosphere and emotions experienced by using appropriate sensory details. They should address the requirements of the question in vivid detail and avoid any storytelling in their writing. In addition, for the description to be effective, candidates must remember to write in a style which means that the reader can clearly imagine, through all their senses, the scenario they have described.

When responding to a narrative question, candidates need to demonstrate an ability to utilise literary devices to make their story more varied and appealing. They should explore the background of their character(s) and build tension into their story to make it more interesting. Most candidates were capable of narrating events with ease. Some wrote their story with simple narrative without any exploration of the characters, setting of the story or even tension. Others were able to develop their writing and create a story that incorporated elements of tension and a reasonable climax. Some candidates were also able to use direct speech/dialogue effectively. Others focused too much on the plot and content, forgetting detailed background illustrations and elements that appeal to readers.

Quality of Language

In both Sections, the best responses combined high levels of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. Most of the work by the candidates was characterised by a fair level of accuracy despite some clumsiness and occasional lapses in clarity of meaning. Weaker essays tended to be simple and laboured. Stronger candidates showed a firm control of the language. Where there were errors in less strong responses, they included:

- some candidates had difficulty differentiating between the words, '*kami*' and '*kita*'. For example: if a candidate is enjoying the meal with his/her family and/or friends, they should write '*kami berasa terkejut*', instead of '*kita berasa terkejut*'.
- errors in applying affixes. Many candidates attached an incorrect affix to a base word like: '*Aku memfikir banyak kali*', '*Aku berkejut apabila mendengar berita itu*', '*Aku melihat banyak jenis makanan*', '*Kami boleh membelajari teknik*', '*Saya mencakap kepada ibu saya*'.
- candidates need to be aware of the correct use of '*di*' as a preposition or as an affix; '*di mana*' is correct whereas '*dimana*' is not. Moreover, candidates should be aware of the correct use of '*ke*' as a preposition or as an affix; '*ke sana*' is correct whereas '*kesana*' is not.
- common spelling mistakes included: *pikir* (should be *fikir*), *rasah* (should be *rasa*), *mura* (*murah*), *kost* (*kos*).
- mistakes in translations such as *edukasi* (should be *pendidikan*), *subject* (should be *subjek*), *tradition* (should be *tradisi*). Candidates should know the Malay words used in Malaysia. Some candidates translated directly from English, for example '*hujan kucing dan anjing*'.
- spoken slang language that is not appropriate when writing, for example: *mau* (should be *mahu*), *taktau* (should be *tidak tahu*).
- plural sentences used incorrectly, for example '*para guru haruslah menegur sikap ramai pelajar-pelajar*' and '*ramai pekerjaan sementara yang terdapat di negara kita*'.
- long sentences without commas or full stops. There were some instances where questions were without question marks and quotations without quotation marks. There were also errors in not using capital letters for proper nouns and conjunctions either missing or wrongly used.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

- (a)** Strong candidates created a well-structured discursive essay in the correct format, with realistic information about the positive sides of the ideas, as well as the disadvantages. Successful responses were precise and straightforward while also showing humility and politeness as essay is meant to be for a class discussion.
- (b)** Successful candidates wrote a range of interesting points to convince the reader of the advantages and disadvantages. They used appropriate points and tones and presented their ideas in the format of an article. Weaker candidates tended to repeat the main ideas and presented the discussion in a one-sided way or wrote in lists of bullet points.
- (c)** This was the least popular question among the candidates and there were too few responses for a general comment to be made.
- (d)** Many candidates approached this argumentative essay well and were persuasive in presenting their point of view either for or against the school. They provided convincing explanations and evidence to support their opinions. The arguments were well developed and linked logically. Some weaker candidates merely commented on the role of school or parents in shaping a person to be responsible without giving evidence or drawing conclusions.

Section 2

Question 2

- (a) and (b)** Strong candidates were able to give well-developed and well-sequenced descriptions including a variety of interesting details, and images. The reader was able to feel the atmosphere because of the use of appropriate and well-chosen vocabulary. The structure of the response was clear and consistent. Appropriate use of literary devices helped to create a clear image and maintain the reader's attention.
- (c) and (d)** Successful candidates created an interesting plot and maintained the reader's engagement with the build-up of tension of the story and a well-managed climax. Some essays made effective use of a twist ending. Character development was reasonable and believable. Overall, many candidates were able to understand and write effectively, occasionally with some plot holes, which were negligible since the flow of the presentation was well presented.