FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

Paper 0521/01
Reading

General comments

Candidates' performance overall was satisfactory. A small number of candidates produced exceptionally high standard work and most candidates demonstrated their comprehension of the texts and tasks.

Most candidates used a clear and an appropriate style of language for their answers and wrote in full and syntactically complex sentences, a noticeable improvement on previous years. As a result, candidates were able to achieve higher scores for their accuracy of language, style and organisation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In general, all of the sub-questions were answered satisfactorily. However, some candidates failed to demonstrate that they had understood the questions fully and addressed questions only partially. For example, **Question (f)** asked what 'face full of venom' meant and why the grandmother (paternal) had such a face. Some candidates answered either what the face meant or gave the reason for it, but not both.

Most candidates struggled to answer **Question (a)** correctly. The question was what 'wearing an armband and rampaging' meant. The answer was that the character had been given a position of authority and was showing off his power and misusing it. A common answer, that he was working for the communist party, was not adequate.

Most candidates answered **Question (g)** correctly. However, a few candidates gave literal dictionary meanings of the words 'a debt of gratitude (   )' and 'enmity (   )', rather than giving an explanation of what they meant within the context of the text.

Question 2

Most candidates successfully linked and explored the common themes of the two texts and answered the questions as instructed. However, some candidates did not pay attention to the main instruction here, which required candidates to compare texts 1 and text 2. These candidates based their answers on text 2 only, and gained relatively low marks as a result.

A few candidates did not use a good summary style with orderly grouping and good linkage of ideas. Candidates should be reminded that their responses are assessed on the quality of the language as well as on the content.

Question (b) asked how the conflict arose and developed in the two texts. Many candidates answered correctly with good use of their own words and complex syntax. However, some candidates failed to provide relevant answers based on the two texts, but instead gave their own views or opinions, for which they may not be credited.

FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

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Paper 0521/02

Writing

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General comments

Overall, candidates' performance on this component was in line with last year. Candiates were a little more spread and, while there continued to be some strong perforamnces at the top end of the grade range, there were some weaker candidates too.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 Discussion and argument

The majority of candidates had a similar range of ideas and opinions on the four topics in this section of the question paper, from which they choose one. Those who could develop a logical and persuasive argument could be awarded more marks than those who had less control over their material.

Question 1(a): *Discuss the influence on our lives of technology in science*

This was the second most popular question in this section, attempted by around one third of candidates.

Question 1(b): *What are the advantages and disadvantages of standardised education for all compared with special education for the gifted?*

Candidates were asked to give their opinion on this issue, which is of particular interest in Korea currently. Just over 10% of candidates chose this option.

Question 1(c): *'Rich people are happier than poor people'.* Discuss this statement, indicating whether you agree or disagree with it.

This was the most popular topic in this section, answered by just under 50% of candidates.

Question 1(d): '*By the year 2022, Korea's ageing population will mean that people over 65 make up 14% of the total.' Discuss some of the issues that this will give rise to and measures to cope with it.*

This question was the least popular in this section with candidates, but was nonetheless answered by just under 10% of them.

Section 2 Description and Narration

Many candidates tackled their chosen essay in this Description and Narration section well. They produced work of a similar level and quality in terms of content and plot. Candidates' ability to write a descriptive essay had improved considerably, reflected for example in some detailed and atmospheric descriptions of the scene at the train station (**Question 2(a)**). Candidates are advised to pay close attention to structure and development: a number of candidates simply listed points they were describing rather than organising them effectively. Many candidates who chose to produce a narrative were able to build an effective story, well-structured with an appropriate event, and climax. There were, though, still a few examples of work with a plot that was relatively weak and an implausible conclusion.

Question 2(a): *Describe the train station at the busiest time of the day*.

This was the second most popular title with candidates, just over a third of whom chose to answer it.

Question 2(b): *Choose a historical place and describe it in relation to a historical figure*.

This was the least popular topic with candidates and just a small number chose to write about it.

Question 2(c): *Everybody makes mistakes in life. Write a story about the mistakes you would rather forget.*

This title offered candidates a good deal of scope. However, a relatively small number chose to answer it.

Question 2(d): *Write part of a story that begins as follows: 'For a few days, the newspapers and milk piled up in front of the house...'*

This was the most popular topic in this section with candidates – just under half chose to write about it.

Candidates' use of language was at a similar level this session to last year.

There were just a small number of spelling or punctuation mistakes overall. The Examiner drew attention in particular to those listed below:

(i)   '되다 to become' and its conjugation. It will be 되고, 되니까, 되어서/돼서, 되지 않다, 되잖아요, etc. Candidates should be careful with the spelling of the verb stem when it is combined with different verb endings.

(ii)   'negative form verb stem'+지 않다' and 안 + verb. Some candidates confused the spelling −지 않다 and 안 -.

(iii)   spacing between words, e.g. particles (조사) such as −이/가, 한테, 로, 으로부터, 에서 etc., and copula (이다), e.g. 이어서, 이니까, etc., should be attached to the noun (no space between these two), and verb endings (verb pattern) such as 어서, 니까, 으므로, 으로서, 을지라도, 어도 되다, etc. should be attached to the verb stem. Some candidates did not seem to be sure about this.

These are minor mistakes and they did not interfere with the meaning of the writing. However, since they are minor mistakes, candidates are advised to make time in the examination to check closely in order to rectify them before submitting their work.