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FOREIGN LANGUAGE MALAY

Paper 0546/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

In general, Examiners were impressed by the performance of candidates on this paper. Teachers are to be congratulated on the way they prepared candidates for this examination.

It was disappointing, however, that careless reading of the questions meant that some candidates failed to do themselves justice. This was a particular problem in the two writing exercises, **Exercise 4** in **Section 1** and **Exercise 2** in **Section 2**. Candidates need to be aware that however good the quality of their written Malay, marks will not be awarded for irrelevant material.

Candidates should be reminded that where comprehension questions require answers in written Malay, it is up to them to find the precise answer in the text and, where necessary, rephrase it in such a way that it answers the question. Candidates who expect the Examiner to locate the required answer within a chunk of text copied out from the passage will not score.

On a positive note, it was pleasing that candidates of Indonesian origin made a real effort to answer the questions in Malay as opposed to Indonesian Malay. While Examiners allowed some Indonesian words that would be considered acceptable in Malay, words with totally different meanings were refused.

Illegible handwriting was sometimes a problem. Teachers are asked to remind candidates that Examiners cannot award marks for answers they cannot read. Where candidates write drafts and then copy out a neat version, they must ensure they cross out rough work – in some cases it was not clear to Examiners which version of an answer they should mark. Finally, where there is a need for a candidate to copy out work in neat, rather than trying to squeeze their final version into a limited space, they should ask the Invigilator for extra paper and then attach this to their answer booklet.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks for this exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Again, all but the very weakest candidates scored full marks.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Most candidates scored full marks. No question caused particular problems.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Candidates were required to leave a note for the family with whom they were staying, saying where they had gone (zoo), how (by bus) and when they expected to return (five o'clock). There were a large number of excellent answers. Many candidates provided a lot more detail than was required – a brief answer which covers the required points will score full marks for communication.

Examiners would like to bring the following to the attention of teachers:

- Some candidates addressed the note to *ibu bapa* (meaning parents). This may have been because they did not understand that they were supposed to write to the family they were staying with at that time, and not their own family. Others wrote *keluarga Melayu* – i.e. Malay family – which, though not very imaginative, at least showed that the candidate understood they were not at home. The best approach was to mention names, e.g. uncle or auntie so and so.
- Some candidates were not familiar with the word for zoo in Malay.
- Candidates should be reminded to convey the information required by the pictures. Instead of the time shown on the clock, a handful wrote twelve o'clock, seven o'clock, etc.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-23

The vast majority clearly had no problems understanding the text and coped extremely well with the questions.

Some very weak candidates seemed only to understand a word here and there. They resorted to guesswork, copying random sentences out of the text in the hope that they would strike lucky. There was a tendency to confuse the answers to **Questions 22** and **23**.

Exercise 2 Question 24

The majority of candidates were able to produce an interesting piece of writing on the subject of their best friend. Disappointingly, a handful of candidates did not take the time to read the question properly and wrote a letter to their best friend describing themselves.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 25-29

This was a multiple-choice exercise and as such did not require candidates to produce answers in written Malay. The majority of candidates coped extremely well and no question caused particular problems.

Exercise 2 Questions 30-35

Most candidates answered the questions well and achieved high scores on this exercise. Some candidates, having more or less located the answer in the text, then copied chunks of the passage straight onto the question paper, leaving it up to the Examiner to pick out the required information. Candidates who adopt this approach do not show they have understood what they are reading and cannot score.

<p>Paper 0546/03 Speaking</p>

General comments

This paper was common to all IGCSE Malay candidates. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and, as in 2004, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators.

Generally, the candidature displayed a pleasing level of communication skills and the standard heard was very similar to that heard last year.

Quality of recording

Centres should ensure that all samples are audible. Equipment should be tested in situ before the actual test to ensure that it is in good working order. Once again, Moderators reported that sometimes microphones were poorly positioned or that there was a lot of background noise on tapes. Centres are also reminded that it is the Examiner who should announce the candidate name and number, *not* the candidate. Once the recording of each candidate has started, the tape must not be stopped – the recording of each candidate should be continuous and should last for the duration of the individual speaking test, that is approximately 15 minutes.

Preparation

In general, the examination was conducted in a very professional manner by Centres. Most Examiners had taken the time to prepare the role plays, were confident in what they were doing and were thus able to help candidates who experienced any difficulty. Centres are reminded that in the Topic and General Conversation sections the style of questioning must be such as to allow a spontaneous conversation to develop.

Timings

Timing was usually good in Centres, but there were some very short tests and also some very long tests. Neither extreme is good for candidates. Where tests are too short they will not have the opportunity to produce enough spoken Malay to access the top marks. Where tests are too long, candidates become tired and their performance suffers accordingly.

Conduct of the test and application of the mark scheme

Generally, marking in Centres was close to the agreed standard and adjustments, where necessary, were usually small. Centres requiring larger adjustments tended to fall into one of the following categories:

- Failure to complete all the tasks in the role plays (marks can only be awarded for the stipulated tasks. If these are omitted, candidates will lose out even if they complete extra tasks introduced by the Examiner).
- Short Topic and/or General Conversation sections.

It is particularly helpful to Moderators and to candidates if the Examiner indicates the transition from the Topic to the General Conversation with a phrase such as 'now we're going to talk about more general matters'.

Centres are reminded that where more than one Examiner is used, permission must be sought from the Product Manager at CIE prior to each examination session. Where Centres use two or more Examiners, internal moderation must take place and a common standard of marking must be applied across all candidates. The sample submitted should cover the work of all Examiners.

Administrative matters

Centres are reminded that all columns on the Working Mark Sheet should be completed for each candidate. The marks should then be added up carefully and all additions checked before the total mark is transferred to the MS1 Computer-printed mark sheet. A check should also be carried out to ensure that total marks have been transferred correctly. Moderators identified a number of arithmetic and transcription errors which should have been corrected by Centres before marks were submitted to CIE.

<p>Paper 0546/04 Continuous Writing</p>

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Option (a) was the more popular and there were many outstanding answers. Candidates clearly enjoyed writing to a friend to describe the preparations for a birthday party, what happened on the day and how they felt afterwards. However, a substantial number misread or misunderstood the question and wrote a letter to a friend inviting them to attend a party.

Option (b), applying for a job at a hotel, was also handled well. However, candidates need to be made aware of the different requirements for writing formal and informal letters. In particular, the use of *awak* for 'you' is not acceptable when addressing people in the context of a formal letter (using *awak* to address a friend is fine).

Question 2

Many excellent answers which responded to the question in an interesting and imaginative way. The candidate had to imagine they were about to set off on holiday with their family when they received a phone call. Most candidates wrote about receiving bad news, e.g. a death in the family or a disaster such as a tsunami striking their holiday destination. A few wrote about receiving good news.