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FIRST LANGUAGE THAI

Paper 0518/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The standard this year was relatively good. It is hoped that a consideration of what characterised the work of the most successful candidates will help Centres in their preparation for future examinations. Stronger candidates were able to write confidently and convincingly, their writing was persuasive and displayed a clear sense of audience. They showed an awareness of the different skills required by the various types of writing and were able to handle each task competently and efficiently, be it the summary/comparison, letter or conversation. They knew how to paraphrase, using their own words and not copying *whole chunks* from the texts and they also knew which tasks required imagination or creativity. In addition, they wrote with a high level of accuracy and fluency and with appropriate usage and register. They were also aware that colloquialisms were not appropriate in tasks like the first and second ones on the Paper.

It is crucial that candidates read carefully and then follow the instructions given on the Question Paper. Mostly, candidates did do this, but there were some who, in **Question 2**, wrote about shadow-puppetry rather than bamboo-tube puppetry; and in **Question 3** some candidates spent so much time setting an elaborate scene they had no time to write the required dialogue.

Spelling is still an issue – although there were few examples of candidates whose spelling was atrocious, there were a number who needed to improve their spelling in order to do themselves justice in this examination.

Candidates should also be reminded of the importance of good time management. It was a pity that a small number of candidates, who put in a fairly good performance on **Questions 1** and **2**, did not manage to answer **Question 3** in the time allowed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Summary and comparison

This was the question that candidates found the most difficult. Although there were some good performances, in general candidates did not do very well. The more successful candidates were able to demonstrate the skills required for a good summary – they understood how to sieve and extract the important information from both texts, avoiding excessive detail, and were able to paraphrase, that is summarise the text by rewriting the information in their own words. For instance, when mentioning the stories used in both kinds of puppetry, they realised they did not need to include every story in both texts. Instead they highlighted the popular ones, and the same applied to the use of instruments, other characteristics, the descriptions, the origins, etc. More successful candidates used linguistic devices to indicate when they were about to compare similarities or differences and they expressed their points clearly and precisely, grouping the similarities and differences logically. Less successful candidates did not put much thought into doing this and the rambling nature of their summaries made them difficult to follow. Some candidates simply presented a list of items copied from the text or presented whole chunks of information from the text without digesting it. Candidates should also be reminded that their personal opinions, however interesting, should not be included in an exercise of this nature.

Question 2*Personal letter*

On the whole, candidates attempted this task with a considerable degree of success. They wrote in an appropriate style – personal letter – addressing the intended recipient appropriately, choosing language that was personal and yet correct. However, there was a very small minority who used a lot of slang and colloquial language in this context. The majority of candidates knew how to put across the necessary information – they were able to rearrange the information given in the text about bamboo-tube puppetry in an interesting and persuasive way in order to appeal to the intended recipient. As a result, a lot of the letters read like the ‘genuine article’.

Question 3*Conversation*

Candidates did relatively well on this question, certainly finding it easier than **Question 1**, though they did not do as well as they did on **Question 2**. The good candidates tended to know when to add information to support their case and how to rearrange and engineer the information in a persuasive and convincing way. Weaker candidates spent a lot of time setting the scene and giving details about the individuals taking part in the dialogue, but did not dedicate enough ‘space’ to the dialogue itself. Another point to be mentioned is that though writing a conversation requires a more informal style of writing than one would use in, say, a letter, candidates should still avoid language which is vulgar and derogatory.

<p>Paper 0518/03</p>

<p>Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

Once again the standard of writing was very mixed, though this year it was noticeable that there were fewer good to outstanding answers than there have been in the past.

Candidates had a good selection of titles to choose from and no title favoured or disadvantaged any particular group of candidates. The open-ended nature of the titles meant that candidates had the opportunity to express their opinions, draw on their own experiences and use their imagination.

The most successful candidates were those who displayed a confident and accurate use of language. Their writing was fluent, they used a variety of sentence structures and a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. Spelling was accurate, paragraphs were linked and well planned. These candidates addressed the topic relevantly throughout and held the interest of the reader.

In average answers, language use was largely accurate with mistakes tending to occur when attempts were made to use more sophisticated structures. A range of vocabulary was in evidence though it was not always used precisely. Sentences showed some variation of length and type. Spelling of simple vocabulary was correct, but complex words caused problems and punctuation was not consistently accurate. Although the candidate was aware of the need to use paragraphs, these were not strongly linked and the overall structure of essays lacked balance and order. The writing was mainly relevant but the sense of audience was not strong.

The weakest candidates tended to produce work which contained frequent errors, sometimes resulting in a blurring of meaning. Vocabulary and sentences were simple and there was not much variety. Paragraphing was rather haphazard (e.g. indeterminate length, not always sequenced, unnecessarily short or long). The weight of error and awkwardness of style was such as to detract from the content.

The following are specific areas requiring attention:

- sentence separation
- punctuation
- use of paragraphs.

Teachers should remind candidates of the need to write legibly in the examination. Examiners do their best to decipher untidy handwriting but cannot award marks to what they cannot read.