

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students were well prepared for the oral examination and handled all three parts of the assessment with confidence. In contrast to the past years, the range of topics for the report chosen by the students was exceptionally wide and hardly any two students selected the same topic. As in previous years, students who scored well were those who were able to lead an interesting dialogue and maintain it in the 'role-play', conversation and the discussion following their report. This year there were fewer errors in sentence structure or vocabulary.

Overall, lower scoring students demonstrated a lack of confidence in using the basic linguistic elements such as gender forms, personal pronouns, tenses and a limited range of vocabulary. Even if no mistake was made, hesitation in choosing the correct words, and the resulting pauses, adversely affected the flow of the conversation and the development of the topic, thus influencing the final mark.

### Part 1 – General conversation

During the conversation, most students discussed three topics and were able to expand on at least one of them. The more successful students were able to conduct a free-flowing, interesting and relevant conversation and showed initiative in expanding the dialogue. The vocabulary used was more extensive, and the linguistic errors less frequent, than in previous years.

Only a few students were not confident in their choice of appropriate words and sentence structures. This resulted not only in a slow and hesitant delivery but also in awkward, or even incorrectly structured sentences. Such students had difficulty in expanding within the allocated time on even one subject and the conversation tended to lapse into a series of questions and answers.

### Part 2 – Report and discussion

When several students choose the same topic teachers should encourage them to take up different aspects related to the topic. Of concern were the cases in which students are drilled, because the discussion requires the student to interact spontaneously.

Most reports were well structured, having an introduction, a list of points presented in a logical sequence and a concluding summary. The students spoke in clear and flowing language with appropriate intonation and body language. Occasionally a student would deliver a report too fast making the content difficult to follow and understand. Some students' deliveries suggested reports had been learnt by heart and were rather rushed – a very fast delivery may result in a lower mark and should be discouraged by teachers. It was apparent that those students who learned the report by heart struggled to perform in the discussion following the report. They found it difficult to discuss the topic and to advance any ideas beyond those already spelled out. Others did not expand on the report, and did not have the initiative to bring up original ideas and arguments to support their point of view.

### Part 3 – Situational role-play

The most popular choice was Situation No 3: 'Convincing your parent to allow you to organize your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party' and discussing the arrangements. Some students had chosen Situation No 1: 'Apologising for a change in plans and making other arrangements' but only very few opted for Situation No 2: 'Assisting an undecided friend to choose between two courses of action'.

Most students were able to participate successfully in the role-play and even enjoy the experience. Many students were able to introduce new ideas and actively advanced the conversation. Some did not show initiative by introducing new arguments as they repeated their own views without trying to convince the partner. Often a student would attempt to compromise on a contentious argument so that the conversation would reach a quick conclusion, and this would force the assessor to take the lead.

### GENERAL COMMENT

Most students performed well. There has been an improvement in applying appropriate vocabulary to writing tasks, the use of words in an incorrect context was rare, and there were considerably fewer spelling mistakes.

Most mistakes were made in handling the various linguistic elements, particularly using the correct gender form. For example, in the letter for a job application by Shira, many alternated between the feminine and masculine forms. There were mistakes in using the verb declensions. Some of these mistakes made it difficult to decide whether a given sentence related to the past or the future. Mistakes in using prepositions were also quite common.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Paper 1

##### Processing spoken information

Students were able to discern the relevant information required for completing the task and were familiar with the discourse conventions. Most could identify with Shira and wrote a proficient job application letter. The quality of these varied from reasonable to very good. Very few did not grasp the demands of the task, and used irrelevant information or invented their own. The letters were well structured, starting with an introduction, followed by the body of the letter made up of paragraphs with logically connected phrases and concluding with the customary greetings.

#### Paper 2

##### Part A – Writing in Hebrew

Out of the six given topics, the most popular was to write a diary entry following a class reunion, which was chosen by more than 50% of the students. Other students chose to write an article describing their experiences as a volunteer in an old people's home, and to convince a friend to join a sports club (who watches TV excessively) was also fairly popular. Very few elected to write on the other three topics – a critical review of a play, world energy problems and a discussion of the merits or disadvantages of including embarrassing personal details in articles about famous people.

The diary entry was popular because it was perceived as the easiest but most of the diary entry pieces were very ordinary. Students were content to produce a descriptive activity report and only a few included personal impressions or attempted to interest the reader.

The best pieces were from students who chose the article on volunteer work as they were able to describe interesting encounters, and expressed their feelings and thoughts about working with aged people and the importance of volunteer work. Also worthwhile was some student's work on convincing a friend as they were able to argue the merits of a sport activity over the health dangers of sedentary life habits.

##### Part B – Reorganising written information

Most students identified the information essential for completing the task and wrote well-structured reports. The very best reports were those where students were able to contrast the economic benefits versus the environmental problems of the project for and against building a commercial complex in the Gamlah nature reserve.

#### Paper 3

##### (completed by interstate students)

All the responses were in English, and were of a high standard. Students provided an in in-depth analysis topic of their choice. They knew the resources well and used them to support their assertions with relevant quotations and examples. Without exception, the written pieces were appropriate to the chosen topics and students adhered to the task requirements. Overall, they used the language effectively and expressed themselves well.