

Examiners' Report

GCE O Level Malay (7626)

June 2006

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The majority of candidates found the paper fairly accessible and a good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks. The examination paper, as a whole, was of a comparable standard to those of previous years. The overall performance of candidates showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language was very good.

Congratulations to candidates who did very well on this paper. However, there are still several areas of concern which need to be addressed by both teachers and students as these are problems that occur from year to year.

I cannot stress enough the importance of reading through each passage, at least twice before attempting to translate them. While most candidates grasped the main ideas and translated them well, many others showed lack of comprehension of the text and will often translate literally or transliterate the text. However, I am very pleased to note that this year nobody tried to summarise any of the passages. The danger of doing this is that many important points are left out.

Another important area that should be mentioned is that of prefixes and suffixes. Many candidates still do not know the use and more importantly the importance of prefixes. Prefixes and suffixes in Malay can change the meaning of words, and in exam papers based on translation, the appropriate usage of these is essential.

The translation from Malay into English also needs to be reviewed as the quality of English of some candidates needs to be improved, common mistakes include mixing tenses as well as literal translations. Wrong usage of tenses can cost a lot of marks.

Question 1 - Translation from Malay into English

This passage about a family reunion deals with past, present and future events. While more able candidates responded well to the demands of the tasks, less able candidates got confused with all the different tenses and treated present, past and future events independently as if they were of no relevance to each other.

While some candidates translated correctly *Perhimpunan keluarga* as family reunion, get together, some translated it as assembly. A noticeable mistake was the translation for *ibu saudara* (aunt) *bapa saudara* (uncle), *datuk nenek* (grandparents) and *sepupu* (cousins). Many translated *ibu saudara* as mother of relatives, uncles as father of relatives, grandfather as father of mother etc.

Question 2 - Translation from English into Malay

The candidate was asked to translate a passage about a family planned holiday to London, which nearly ended in disaster because of the forgetfulness of the son.

Here, I would like to stress the importance of prefixes in the Malay language. Take this line for example, where they planned to stay with their friends - the word for stay or live is 'tinggal' but many translated this as meninggal - which means - to die: 'di mana mereka bercancang untuk meninggal dengan kawan-kawan mereka' which means 'where they planned to go and die with their friends'.

I am glad to note that the description of the following feelings were well translated:

- Well
- Anxious
- Worried
- Angry

Question 3

Candidates dealt well with the five sentences. Again prefixes and suffixes are very important here to convey the meaning of the sentences.

Question 4 - Essays

Choice D a letter to a friend, asked to inform your best friend about a school trip describing a funny incident. Even though some candidates described the funny incident as well as the trip very well, other wrote very lengthy essays detailing the trip with only a short description of the funny incident. It would have been better to have the funny incident as the main feature of the essay instead of something that just came to mind.

Choice C appealed to the creativity and power of imagination of most candidates. And those who did this topic did it very well. Many described the most horrible things that could happen to their family and how they woke up sweating but relieved knowing that it was only a nightmare.

A handful with active imagination also described scenes which are extraordinary in nature, with creatures and monsters which were well described. Certainly it is obvious that their imagination were fed by horror movies.

Candidates did well in arranging their sequence of events well. However, they also need to address the problem with prepositions. Many cannot differentiate between 'ke' and 'kepada', 'dari' and 'daripada', 'pada', etc.

Choice B, asked the candidate to give a personal opinion and discuss about studying outside the classrooms. Only a few chose this option but those who did obtained very high marks. There was some excellent writing because of their originality and overall structure and cohesion.

Choice A, preparing a surprise birthday party to your mother and father. Was the most popular option and many candidates did well in this question, a lot of thoughts and personal experiences were put into their essays. Some candidates clearly wrote about their own experience in organising an event such as this. This topic summons the use of expressions of feelings such as 'happy', 'excited', surprise' and 'touched'. Some described lavish preparations from hiring favourite bands and singers to dinners at posh restaurants.

Overall, essay topics which allow candidates to use their imagination are well received and popular. Their contents make up for some grammatical errors and poor language.

GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	70	55	41	36	31

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.
