

FIRST LANGUAGE THAI

Paper 0518/02
Reading and Directed Writing

Over all impression

This year, candidates, in general, have done rather well. Some examples of impressively high marks were achieved, and some Centres entered candidates who proved strong across the board. Most noticeably, the quality of writing, in general, has improved compared to last year's performance.

Part 1 - Question 1

Here, in general, candidates well understood the task – to summarise from the two given texts according to the questions asked. They were able to use appropriate register and lexis; however, the skills of selecting appropriate information and presenting it at a sufficient level of detail need to be reinforced. In addition, candidates need to demonstrate that they can summarise with their own words as far as possible. Quite a number of weak candidates copied excessively from the texts – perhaps under the impression that indiscriminate copying was required, rather than selecting and organising information to support their points. Although this year candidates in general did better than last year, it is worth emphasising that they should not use the text for summary as a springboard to the production of their own opinions: they need to understand that summary is not the same as an essay. Two further points about technique are important: the relevant information required for the task needs to be edited to be as clear as possible; however, this information does not necessarily have to be organised in the same order as in the original text.

Part 1-Question 2

This part, generally, was satisfactory. Strong candidates showed that they know how to use emotive and factual language well. They tended to give signposting to reader so that the text read smoothly and cohesively. Moreover, the language used was appropriate to the task – some of strong candidates' writing was almost at the same level as professional writing. Weaker candidates tended to produce material that was either too factual, or used emotive language that did not manage to persuade the reader. Care needs to be taken with text organisation when writing: many weaker candidates tend to assume that the reader knows what to expect, and they do not start at the beginning with the idea of introducing the book. Thus, in some cases, the reader found out only towards the end why the writer wanted to write. Moreover, some did not even give enough detail to allow the reader to judge how interesting the book was.

Part 2 Question 1

In this part, candidates perhaps have scored the most out of the three questions on this paper. In general, they wrote with a real sense of understanding of the tone and the task given. The letters written by stronger candidates talked about the 2 blind couples with substantial and appropriate information to allow the reader to understand their lifestyles, their personalities and their philosophy. Also, they gave the reader a sense of opinion and reflection by the candidate: with admiration, or at least consideration, of the lives and worldview of each couple. In addition, strong candidates managed to bring in their relationship to their own parents on the occasion of Valentine's day: in many cases this, when done successfully, felt genuine and, at times, included some quite powerful writing. The task assigned here seems to have appealed to the majority of candidates.

Conclusion:

It has been a pleasure to see candidates' achievement, and, most especially, the improvement in the quality of writing this year. However, for weak candidates it will, above all, be useful to understand the basics of summarising: careful reading, selection of information, adaptation to the new task, and the production of new texts with clear and precise information in the right register.

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Paper 0518/03
Continuous Writing

General Comments

This year, in comparison with the Centres inside the country, those situated outside the borders of Thailand seem to have improved slightly in performance. The examiners were moved to wonder if the internal situation in the approach to the examination session in Thailand might have affected candidates' concentration and preparation: Centres and candidates deserve all credit for the standard achieved.

This year sentence structure remains an area of concern: there is still interference from English sentence patterns. Paragraph unity, spelling and hand-writing of candidates also need improvement. However, there are several positive points this year as well: good essay construction, with encouraging attempts by candidates to write well-rounded texts and to show genuine creativity in the ideas they express. Many candidates also seemed to choose well in selecting Question numbers appropriate to their age and experience.

Most of the candidates who obtained good marks used comparatively simple language, but with clear structure and presentation of content. Those who obtained lower marks often failed to communicate effectively: in some cases text tended at times to be incoherent, with superfluous use of adjectives and adverbs. This was particularly so in the case of candidates at Centres in Thailand.

Comments on Specific Questions

The questions offered this year afforded a good choice to candidates. There were only two, out of the nine, which some candidates appeared to find particularly challenging, and where they might, perhaps, have done better to make a different selection. These were Questions **1** and **3**. Some candidates found these hard to handle appropriately. The former concerned the Sufficiency Economy of the present King of Thailand and the second included a verse which reflected the hardness of life in a big city such as Bangkok. Questions involving verse can demand a lot in terms of interpretative skills, and candidates should only select them if they feel appropriately prepared. At the same time, Question **1** proved quite popular, and suited those candidates who were able to show an ability to express an academic or theoretical viewpoint.

The five questions which proved most popular were as follows: **1, 2, 4, 8** and **9**.

Questions **2** and **8** were concerned with the direct experience of teenagers, and offered candidates the opportunity to base their writing on their own opinions and attitudes. This was clearly the kind of writing that many candidates were accustomed to: a quarter of the candidates chose Question **2** and, and nearly a fifth chose Question **8**.

Those candidates who chose Questions **4, 5, 6** and **9** offered the candidates a chance to use imagination in generating answers: their success, as on **2** and **8**, depended on their ability to express themselves in a clear and structured manner within the requirements of the question and the syllabus. In this respect, the published mark scheme is a valuable indication of the type of writing required.