

# FIRST LANGUAGE MALAY

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Paper 0696/01  
Reading and Directed Writing

## Key messages

Candidates should:

- look for implicit and explicit meanings and messages that the writer is trying to convey in Text A
- read the story more than once to understand the theme and the messages that the writer is trying to convey
- make targeted use of the information provided in Texts B and C for **Question 2**.

## General comments

Overall, many candidates were able to answer well.

In **Section 1**, candidates should be prepared to read between the lines to deduce the information required, as some questions will require implicit understanding. Candidates should not simply copy chunks from the text and hope that answers the question.

In the questions where candidates are asked to explain what the writer was trying to convey when using certain phrases, candidates need to explain the implicit meaning.

Candidates should also learn to use prefixes and suffixes and use of the correct prepositions.

Spelling errors and usage of the wrong prefix that did not change or alter the meaning of the word are often ignored.

In **Section 2**, information is provided in the texts. Candidates need to select the information they want to include and manipulate it to meet the demands of the task. Candidates should write in their own words.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) The question asked for two examples. Candidates answered this question well.
- (b)(i) The ideal answer to this question was the father was worried that Munah is not married although she is nearly 25 years old. However, only the strongest candidates were able to demonstrate that they understood the meaning of '*bayang jodoh*'. Weaker candidates copied the sentence from the text entirely, which did not demonstrate that they understood the question.
- (ii) The second part of the question asked what line 9 tells readers about what Munah feels about her father's concern and worry.  
There were several acceptable ways to answer this question. One could read into the way Munah made a face and pulled her lips in a sulking manner, which shows Munah's anger and annoyance at something that she had heard many times from her father before. She did not like it; it was a question which she wanted to ignore. It could also be interpreted as Munah feeling fed up with her father's concern.

- (c) The correct answer to this question was one that shows the uncertain future. She worries that the catch is becoming less and less, thus less income for both Munah and her father. Although most candidates answered correctly, answers were sometimes constructed with incorrect grammar. For example, the question asks, '.... *Apakah yang merisaukan tentang masa depan mereka?*' Some candidates used the verb '*risau*' incorrectly, for example '*selain daripada kesihatan ayah, Munah merisau*'. A correct form would be '*Munah risau tentang*' or '*Yang merisaukan Munah*'.
- (d) This question asked for proof that Munah does not place much importance on how she looks. There were two answers to this question and as the question asks for proof, candidate could answer with either.  
**Either:**  
She does not spend money on make-up, **or** she just uses home-made face powder before going to sleep.  
Most candidates answered this question well.
- (e) The stronger candidates were able to mention more than one emotion felt by the father. Ideally, the answer should be while the father believes that Munah was the best person to inherit his business, he feels sad watching Munah having to work hard in the hot sun.
- (f) Most candidates answered correctly. Candidates did not need to elaborate about what her dream is.
- (g) To understand the question and be able to answer, candidates needed to know the meaning of '*bongkah*' – big bulk of rocks by the sea.  
This implies that Munah is not easily moved. Whatever decision she has made cannot be influenced by other people. No one can change her decisions or plans. She is stubborn and will not give up her business for anything. She will not admit that she has any feelings or relationship with Sahak. All of these imply that she is stubborn and will not be moved.
- (h) (i) There were two answers to this question, which asked how Munah will ensure that her father's legacy will be continued. Candidates needed to focus on Munah's efforts, not Sahak's role in her decisions or business. Several candidates were confused and gave Sahak's role in his business.  
(ii) The correct answer needed to show Sahak's involvement in Munah's business. Many candidates answered well. Some weaker candidates were confused by Sahak's activities and answered that Sahak markets fresh fish online or Sahak sells to the villagers
- (i) (i) Many candidates answered correctly.  
(ii) Most candidates answered correctly, saying that what happened was that someone had deliberately cut off the ropes tying the barrels. Candidates did not need to say what happened as a result of the ropes being cut off.

The following questions required candidates to explain what the writer meant when using these phrases. Weaker candidates found this challenging, but stronger candidates were able to show that they had understood the implicit meaning.

- (j) (i) Candidates needed to understand the word '*rakus*' and express the harsh, burning sensation of the strong sun.  
(ii) The answer needed to allude to the fact that the surrounding land was eaten up by the strong, relentless pounding of the waves.  
(iii) The phrase implies the strength of the wind and the impact/effect it had on the coconut palms, twisting the palms with its ferocity.
- (k) (i) This implies the uncertainty of death, when God will take you back.  
Some candidates found it hard to convey the uncertainty. They simply stated that her father would die, which was not enough to be awarded the mark. The word '*entah*' implies he does not know when he will die, could be tomorrow, could be day after tomorrow HE will come and fetch me. In other words, her father knows that he is dying but just does not know when.

- (ii) Candidates needed to read into the action of the daughter sitting so close to the father – what does that action imply? It implies that she is not just physically close, but she is also emotionally close. The writer uses this phrase to show the close relationship between father and daughter.
- (iii) This phrase implies that Munah is not academically inclined, unlike her siblings, but she is not stupid either. Many candidates answered that Munah is not clever, without mentioning her siblings. This was accepted.
- (iv) The writer did not imply that Munah did not want to answer her father's question, rather the writer is showing that Munah has heard the question before and there is no urgency to give a quick reply. Alternatively, it shows her annoyance or anger, and she does not know how else to answer the question.
- (v) This phrase simply implies that her hard work will be rewarded. Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (vi) The phrase implies that Munah was loss for words. After realising what had happened to her barrels of mussels, she was too stressed, angry and sad to say anything. Most candidates answered correctly.

## SECTION 2

### Content

This question asked candidates to write an article for a school magazine about online education and the role of parents. Candidates needed to read Text B and Text C, and answer using the information contained in the text, but expressed in their own words.

Stronger candidates managed to identify the information they wanted to use and then express it in a succinct way, avoiding lifting long sections from the original texts. Weaker candidates could identify the information they wanted to use, but tended to simply copy the text in their answer, which did not demonstrate their understanding.

The question told candidates to start the essay with '*Ibu bapa mempunyai peranan yang penting dalam pembelajaran secara dalam talian anak-anak mereka.*' Some candidates unfortunately overlooked this.

### Language

Idioms and expressions, when chosen carefully and appropriately, can enhance a piece of writing. However, it is important not just to use them for the sake of it, and candidates should not feel that they need to include as many as they can think of.

In general, the most frequent language errors were in the use of prefixes and suffixes. Some candidates also found it difficult to use appropriate punctuation.

# FIRST LANGUAGE MALAY

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Paper 0696/02  
Composition

## Key messages

Candidates should:

- read all the questions before selecting which to answer
- study the syllabus and mark scheme prior to the examination to ensure that they understand the requirements of the tasks
- keep in mind to write between 300 – 400 words
- be aware of the target audience of each task and ensure the use of appropriate register and tone throughout
- respond well to the question asked, demonstrating fluency, well-developed ideas and adequate control of grammar, idiom, vocabulary, spelling, discourse marker (*penanda wacana*) and sentence completion.

## General comments

In **Section 1**, the most popular questions among the candidates were **Question 1(b)** and **1(d)**. **Question 1(b)** asked candidates to write a discursive essay on the topic of children’s career choices. Most of the candidates were able to present both sides of the discussion with good understanding, sound knowledge, and clarity.

For **Question 1(d)**, the question was ‘We need to reduce our dependence on technology. Do you agree?’. The candidates’ responses were equally distributed between agreeing and disagreeing. Most of them wrote with good understanding, sound knowledge and clarity.

The least popular choice among the candidates was **Question 1(c)**. The question read ‘Young people aged 16 should be allowed to vote in elections. Do you agree?’.

There were many strong responses, where candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding of the language, producing carefully defined, logical and well-constructed sentences. They expressed their view on the question clearly, using convincing explanations which included facts, opinions and some complex ideas. Their writing demonstrated persuasive techniques, such as emotive language and information, successfully.

If candidates choose to write a discursive essay, they should present a balanced discussion of the issue by presenting both sides with relevant explanations and examples. They should make sure there is a cohesive progression of each point being presented by using transitional wording to lead into the next paragraph.

Most candidates were able to provide evidence and support for their ideas. Some candidates wrote clear and persuasive statements providing examples, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Although most of the candidates wrote well-structured essays, some weaker candidates were inconsistent in their arguments. For example, there were some candidates who presented both sides of the argument, but their arguments were scattered, not well developed or balanced. Some had lost their way by the end of their response, as they started off agreeing with the given topic and concluded by disagreeing.

In **Section 2**, candidates who achieved very good or good marks for content wrote essays featuring an outstanding description or narration which engaged the reader throughout.

In responses to the descriptive questions, some candidates were able to describe the atmosphere and the situation as required by the question, using sophisticated vocabulary and linguistic devices such as metaphors, personification, and similes. In descriptive writing, candidates should focus on portraying the scene, describing the atmosphere and emotions experienced by using appropriate sensory details. They

should address the requirements of the question in vivid detail and avoid any storytelling in their writing. In addition, for the description to be effective, candidates must remember to write in a style which means that the reader can clearly imagine, through all their senses, the scenario they have described.

When responding to a narrative question, candidates need to demonstrate an ability to use literary devices to make their story more varied and appealing. They should explore the background of their character(s) and build tension into their story to make it more interesting. Most candidates were capable of narrating events with ease. Some weaker responses had a simple narrative, without any exploration of the characters, setting of the story or tension. Stronger candidates were able to develop their writing and create a story that incorporated elements of tension and a reasonable climax. These candidates were also able to use direct speech/dialogue effectively. Some candidates focused all their attention on the plot, forgetting to include background or considering the appeal to readers.

### Quality of Language

In both sections, the best responses combined high levels of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. Apart from the strongest responses, most candidates demonstrated a fair level of accuracy despite some clumsiness and occasional lapses in clarity of meaning. Weaker responses tended to be simple and laboured. Where there were errors in less strong responses, they included:

- difficulty in differentiating between the words '*kami*' and '*kita*'. For example: if someone is going to the shopping mall, they should write '*kami pergi ke pasar raya*', instead of '*kita pergi ke pasar raya*'
- errors in applying affixes. Many candidates attached an incorrect affix to a base word, such as '*Bau makanan mencucuk*', '*Aku berlupa untuk membeli barang-barang*', '*Aku melihat banyak jenis makanan*', '*Teknologi mengadakan banyak kegunaan*', '*Saya mencakap kepada kawan-kawan saya*'
- the correct use of '*di*' as a preposition or as an affix. For example, '*di mana*' is correct whereas '*dimana*' is not
- being aware of the correct use of '*ke*' as a preposition or as an affix. For example, '*ke sana*' is correct whereas '*kesana*' is not.

Common spelling mistakes included:

- *mudah (muda)*, *adah (ada)*, *mura (murah)*, *kost (kos)*, *diskon (diskaun)*, *parking (parkir)*.
- mistakes in translations such as *medikasi (ubat)*, *subject (subjek)*, *technology (teknologi)*. Candidates should know the Malay words used in Malaysia, instead of using simple translation from English. For example, '*atas talian*' for online and '*media sosial*' for social media.
- using spoken slang language that is not appropriate when writing, for example: *mau (mahu)*, *taktau (tidak tahu)*, *pikir (fikir)*, *tak nak (tidak mahu)*.

Punctuation errors included:

- long sentences without commas or full stops
- questions without question marks and quotations without quotation marks
- not using capital letters for proper nouns
- conjunctions either missing or wrongly used.

## Section 1

### Question 1

- (a) Strong candidates created a well-structured discursive essay in the correct format, with realistic information about the positive sides of the ideas, as well as the disadvantages. Successful responses were precise and straightforward while also showing humility and politeness as the intended audience for the piece was class discussion.
- (b) Successful candidates wrote a range of interesting points to convince the reader of the advantages and disadvantages. They used appropriate points and tone, and presented their ideas in the format of an article. Weaker candidates tended to repeat the main ideas and presented the discussion in a one-sided way or wrote in lists of bullet points.

- (c) This was the least popular question among the candidates and there were too few responses for a general comment to be made.
- (d) Many candidates approached this argumentative essay well and were persuasive in presenting their point of view either for or against the school. They provided convincing explanations and evidence to support their opinions. The arguments were well developed and linked logically. Some weaker candidates merely commented on the role of school or parents in shaping a person to be responsible, without giving evidence or drawing conclusions.

## **Section 2**

### **Question 2**

- (a) and (b) Strong candidates were able to give well-developed and well-sequenced descriptions, including a variety of interesting details, and images. The reader was able to feel the atmosphere because of the use of appropriate and well-chosen vocabulary. The structure of the response was clear and consistent. Appropriate use of literary devices helped to create a clear image and maintain the reader's attention.
- (c) and (d) Successful candidates created an interesting plot and maintained the reader's engagement with the build-up of tension of the story and a well-managed climax. Some essays made effective use of a twist ending. Character development was reasonable and believable. Overall, many candidates were able to understand and write effectively. Where there were occasional plot holes, the impact was negligible because the flow of the story was not interrupted significantly.