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FIRST LANGUAGE THAI

Paper 0518/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

Overall, Examiners found the standard of work to be satisfactory to good and generally appropriate to an examination at this level. The points highlighted below are intended to help ensure that this standard can be maintained in future years.

Better candidates demonstrated knowledge of appropriate form and content and were able to achieve a high standard in their writing, while the best candidates wrote with great fluency and eloquence. The work of stronger candidates was characterised by a confident and distinctive style of writing. They knew how to adopt the rules of a particular genre, yet still write in an individual and original fashion. This is not to say they allowed their own opinions to intrude or based their answers on personal experience. Rather they knew how to select information from the text and rephrase it in their own words, manipulating it to support their line of argument. Their answers were well organised, allowing the reader to follow their ideas without confusion. A clear sense of audience was apparent and the reader was never in doubt as to where the writing was going.

Language usage was also a key to success. Weak candidates, sadly, were unable to use language competently and appropriately. They tended to use informal language and in some cases a mixture of formal and informal. Candidates need to be warned that colloquial language should not be used in certain contexts. Weaker candidates also tended to rely heavily on English structures in their writing. Spelling is another area for possible improvement as a number of candidates failed to spell correctly even simple or common words.

Although the instructions were clear and left no doubt as to what was required, a small number of candidates failed to follow them, especially in relation to the last question, **Question 3**, where they chose either to write an interview instead of an article or to write an article about someone who had made an impression on them.

Time management was also problematic for a few candidates and is another element that needs to be taken into account in preparation for this examination. It was a great shame that a few good candidates did not manage to complete the whole paper. Candidates should be reminded that each answer is worth the same number of marks and advised to allocate their time sensibly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Summary based on two texts

Candidates, in general, performed rather well on the summary. The majority seemed to know what to look for in the texts and were able to make use of the information provided in a logical and appropriate fashion.

At the top end of the scale, candidates were able to manipulate the information effectively and skilfully and wrote in such a way as to make it easy for the reader to follow their line of argument. Weaker candidates, however, were not able to select information. Instead they copied whole 'chunks' from the texts and/or used their own words, but included far too much detail, resulting in very descriptive pieces. Some weaker candidates tended to express their own opinions rather than summarise the passages.

Question 2

Short passage for or against 'Ragnarog Dangerous Online Game'

This was perhaps the most challenging question on the paper. Candidates had to argue either for or against *Ragnarog Dangerous Online Game*, selecting the information to support their arguments from the two texts. The temptation to base their argument on their own personal knowledge, ignoring or hardly using the information from the texts, proved too great for some candidates. Again, candidates need to be reminded to read questions clearly, as the rubric makes it clear they must support their argument with information drawn from the two texts.

Having said this, there was much exemplary work, where candidates managed to convince the reader entirely by the clarity and authority of their argument.

Question 3

Plea for a donation

On the whole, candidates achieved relatively high marks for this question. There were some excellent answers written in persuasive and eloquent language where candidates were able to successfully combine the hard facts of the matter with an appeal to the reader's emotions.

Less successful answers tended to be heavily based on personal opinion rather than on the information provided in the text. In addition, the reader often felt that money was being *demand*ed from them, an approach Examiners felt would have little success.

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| <p>Paper 0518/03 Continuous Writing</p> |
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General comments

Once again, a wide range of performance was seen on this paper. On the whole, however, Examiners felt that the standard of work was more solid than last year.

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. There was a decided preference for the more creative and imaginative titles.

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 and linguistic errors (which distract from the overall quality of the work)
- use of colloquial language and the language of advertising
- 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.