

FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

Paper 0521/01
Reading

Key Messages

- To score full marks in **Question 1**, the answers should contain clear, precise and well-constructed sentences.
- Pay attention to the marks available to be sure whether answers required are simple ones or complex/detailed ones with multiple points to cover.
- **Question 2** answers require comparison and contrast between the text 1 and text 2. Thoughts and ideas should be organised and written in a cohesive fashion using relevant connectives.
- To score full marks for language/style/organisation, candidates should present their answers in syntactically more complex sentences, not in bullet points or a list of notes.

General comments

Overall performance in the examination was good. Most candidates demonstrated their comprehension of the texts and tasks. Many candidates showed their ability to scan, analyse and evaluate relevant information from the text for each question with a clear and an appropriate style of language for their answers.

However, some candidates did not present their answers in full sentences. Candidates should be made aware that answers presented in such a style (e.g. bullet points, a list of notes or syntactically too simple sentences) will have a negative impact on the marks available for language.

Candidates should pay attention to the marks available for each question in order to know how much information is required to answer fully. Some questions require a simple answer indicated by 1 mark available, but some require more complex answers with many points to be made.

Candidates should also be reminded that they should use a relevant and consistent style of language for their answers, rather than mixing different styles of language.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Generally, all of the sub-questions were answered well. Questions requiring simple and straightforward answers, such as 1(b), 1(e) and 1(i) were answered very well. However, some answers to more stretching questions such as 1(k) sometimes lacked adequate explanation or discussion. **Question 1(k)** asked candidates three things: firstly, to find an expression which contrasts with the expression '개천 건너 주택가 골목에서는 고기 굽는 냄새가 났다.', which means 'We can smell the cooking meat from the alley of houses across the brook.' Secondly, what these expressions symbolise. Thirdly, what the writer's intention was with these expressions. Some candidates answered only partially and did not address all three points. The contrasting expression to '개천 건너 주택가 골목에서는 고기 굽는 냄새가 났다.' is '보리밥에 까만 된장, 그리고 시든 고추 두어 개와 조림 감자' which means 'barley rice with black bean paste, and a couple of withered chillies and boiled down potatoes'. '고기 굽는 냄새' symbolise wealth/riches and '보리밥에 까만 된장, 그리고 시든 고추 두어 개와 조림 감자' symbolises poverty. The writer intended to contrast these two expressions in order to emphasise the poor and miserable situation/condition the 행복동 family is in.

Another example of a question on which some candidates did not manage to score fully was **Question 1(l)**. This question asked candidates to explain the writer's 'dual intention' of having the main character as a dwarf. Two marks are available for this question, and therefore candidates should be aware that they have to cover two different points, as indicated in the question as 'dual intention'.

Question 2

The majority of candidates successfully linked and explored the common themes of the two texts and compared and answered the question as instructed. Many candidates answered the question correctly with good use of their own words and complex syntax. However, some candidates did not fully understand the question and did not manage to produce cohesive, clear and organised answers. Candidates should select and analyse what is relevant for the question, and address the sub-questions fully. A few candidates did not use a good summary style with an orderly grouping and good linkage of ideas. Candidates should be reminded that their responses are assessed on the quality of the language as well as the content.

Question 2 (a) asked candidates to compare the symbolic meaning of 'Happiness Village (행복동)' and 'Desolate Sandbank (황폐한 모래톱)' which are the backdrops of the two texts, and how these words were used in their characteristics/techniques. The answer should include that the writer uses irony when he places the family living a terribly poor and stressful life in a place called 'Happiness Village'. Also in text 2, powerless people are living a miserable life on a small island. Their backdrop 'Desolate Sandbank' directly indicates the miserable situation the people in that island are in. They are not only despondent victims of the storm but also their spirits are crushed by an unjust authority.

Question 2 (b) asked candidates to describe the common features and differences between the two texts, in candidates' own words, looking at the background and the theme of the two texts. Various aspects of these two texts could be compared and contrasted: they share common features such as dealing with social injustice, the misery and suffering of the weak caused by lawful legal measures and people in power. They try to resist but fail. The two texts also differ in many ways: some of the differences are that text 1 is set in a city where industrialisation is taking place whereas text 2 is set in a rural area. People in text 1 resist in a very passive way but in text 2 people resist aggressively/proactively. Text 1 portrays the poverty of the inner city which is hidden behind the glory of city redevelopment and depicts the defects of capitalist society. Text 2 depicts the miserable life of peasants who are suppressed by unjust authorities and shows an unfair reality. Many candidates understood that the writer of text 1 depicted 산업화 (industrialisation) as having a negative side to it as well, but some candidates understood it only as positive.

FIRST LANGUAGE KOREAN

Paper 0521/02

Writing

Key messages

To do well on this paper, essays should be accurate, use a wide range of vocabulary and structures, be well organised and coherent, with well-developed ideas. Essays should focus entirely on the given question.

General comments

As in previous years, candidates were given a choice of 4 titles for the discussion and argumentative essay and 4 titles for the narrative / descriptive essay. The essays were each marked out of 25, comprising a maximum mark of 12 for style and accuracy and a maximum of 13 for task achievement. The best essays are fluent and well-structured, with candidates at pains to keep the title in their sights throughout, using the beginning or the end of each paragraph to state how the material contained in the paragraph advanced their argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The topics in this section were generally familiar to the candidates. The quality of writing was generally good among the candidates, who structured their responses effectively and used detailed examples and supporting arguments.

- (a) Nowadays there are more nuclear families (smaller family units). Do you think the traditional value of family should be kept?
This was the least popular question with too few responses to give general comment.
- (b) Telling lies is a bad thing. Discuss.
This was the most popular question. Many responses demonstrated a good structure and effective supporting arguments and examples.
- (c) People use animals to develop medicines or to do research on the human body. What do you think about it?
This was another very popular topic. Generally, responses to this question were well structured and effectively argued.
- (d) Industrial action in the public sector, such as public transport or hospitals, should be limited as it affects our daily lives.
Candidates who wrote responses to this question generally demonstrated a sound use of language and successfully used specific examples.

Section 2

Again, the topics covered in this part are generally familiar to the candidates. The candidates showed more detailed description overall compared to past exams. As in previous sessions, writing a story proved more popular than description.

- (a) Describe the most memorable scenery. This was a moderately popular question and responses were generally good.

(b) Imagine you are a pet. Describe your owner from the pet's point of view.
About a quarter of the candidates chose to answer this question. Some candidates wrote excellent pieces of writing. There were many interesting descriptions of the owner. Occasionally candidates produced more narration than description, which was not asked for in the question. It is important that candidates consider exactly what the question is asking before attempting it.

(c) Write a story about a dangerous and challenging thing.

This was the least popular question. In general, candidates wrote about an event. Responses were generally characterised by a lack of build-up of character and lack of climax. Practice in building character and creating climax would be useful here.

(d) Write a story that begins with 'I saw him/her today as well. I have been seeing him/her for a month now at the same time and in the same place.'

This was, by far, the most popular question. Candidates wrote generally straightforward stories with satisfactory identification of features such as setting and atmosphere. The opportunities for appropriate development of ideas and climax were often missed. It is suggested that work on developing the structure of story further (e.g. a link between event and characters) would improve performance.