

MALAY A1

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, the assignments submitted were appropriate and were within the range and suitability of the demands and expectations of extended essays. Candidates showed a considerable range of variety in their choice of topics. The majority of candidates kept their investigations and arguments within the scope of literary aspects. The quality of most essays and accompanying remarks by teachers reflect generally consistent supervision. The standard of this year's submissions was similar to last May's.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The overall performance of candidates this session was satisfactory. The strength of most essays are the introductions, the demonstrated knowledge and understanding, the use of subject language and the formal presentation. However, a sizeable number of candidates had difficulty in formulating clear and precise research questions. This subsequently resulted in a weak investigation plan. Although there was mention of various sources of reference, the information gathered was not sufficient for a good analysis and reasoned argument. Candidates need to improve on analytical and evaluative skills in order to improve their essays as a whole.

Candidates referred to various sources, but there was no clear mention of what was sourced and how were these used to develop their arguments.

The use of appropriate subject language, though generally satisfactory, was still a problem in some of the essays. A number of candidates were unnecessarily inserting proverbs and cliché expressions sporadically in their essays. There was also evidence of rampant insertions or use of Arabic and Indonesian words taking preference over the readily available Malay terms and expressions.

Some candidates seem confused in their writing styles, using creative styles rather than straight-forward academic convention. Sprinkling the essays with figurative expressions, fancy, archaic and bombastic words to some extent caused ambiguity in putting forth their arguments. There were also cases of using popular expressions from the media without really understanding the real meaning of such phrases. "*Gejala sosia*" (social symptom) is a good example of a semantically wrong expression devised by the media, and widely used by candidates in their essays.

As was observed last year, there are still quite a number of candidates struggling when writing abstracts. There were also isolated cases of issues with formal presentation, where candidates printed slightly different titles on the cover page and on the page headers.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Attention should be given to formulating the research questions to avoid ambiguity and to prevent candidates attempting a topic too broad to address. Research objectives should be more explanatory rather than just declarative statements. If objectives were more detailed and precise, candidates would perhaps be more guided while doing their investigations. Some elaborations on the purpose and the expected result of each objective should be mentioned. The research question should be precise while at the same time representative of the idea and topic being discussed.

More comprehensive explanations of the investigations should also be encouraged. For each approach taken there must be a rationale and focus. Candidates should explain what they did to get what, and why. Please keep in mind that a systematic investigation should start with the research objective(s) and followed by a clear and precise research question(s).

Abstract writing was another problematic area. Although the abstract sits in front of the presentation, in actual case it was finalised after the conclusion had been written. The abstract should embody the whole research question, findings and conclusions. Candidates should be referred to the assessment criteria as a departure point. . Candidates should not leave hanging questions in the abstract as a teaser to provoke further reading.

Language usage is an issue that needs addressing. There should be clear understanding that the essays are an academic exercise, even if the subject under investigation is essentially creative in nature. The writing style should adhere to academic conventions (clear, precise and concise) rather than trying to recreate another piece of creative writing with superfluous figurative expressions, and verbose sentences. Candidates should try to avoid using foreign words/expression where there is a Malay equivalent.

Other comments

A number of candidates were not discretionary in the choice of works to study. Many candidates prefer to study works from new and lesser-known writers. That would be acceptable if the focus of the study were more on techniques and styles rather than themes and messages, which on most occasions were superficial in nature.

In the body of discussions, most candidates did not include a short synopsis or overview of the works studied. This often compelled the examiner to search through the coversheet. Such appendices cannot be counted as part of the essay, and the essay itself needs to satisfy all formal requirements.