

November 2013 subject reports

Indonesian ab initio

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 29	30 - 44	45 - 60	61 - 72	73 - 83	84 - 100

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

On average the candidates performed well. A few did quite poorly whereby communication and comprehension were only partially effective or sustained. At the same time quite a few (about 50% or more) did exceptionally well in which communication was effective or even very effective, and comprehension/interaction were mostly to consistently sustained. They were able to express themselves in a comprehensible, generally fluent and logical manner. Errors rarely interfered with communication.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive skills. Most candidates demonstrated the general ability to produce effective communication. They were able to form simple sentences to express themselves using varied range of vocabulary and simple structures. There were attempts to formulate more complex grammatical structures, though these did not always turn out successfully. Pronunciation and intonation issues were rare and grammatical mistakes did not usually interfere with the overall understanding of the message. However, a few excellent performers were able to use more complex structures accurately. They were also able to further express their thoughts with relevant details.

Some repeated mistakes were on:

1. Word order, i.e.
 - Structural word order, e.g., ada tidak sekolah, ..ada tidak mobil
 - Noun phrase word order, e.g., dingin makanan, saya topic adalah
2. Negation, e.g., Halmahera tidak besar kota.
3. Affixes, e.g., harus mencoba berhenti asap, Saya suka mengerjakan dengan nomor-nomor.
4. Superfluous use of 'adalah', e.g., Sayur-sayuran adalah segar. Rumah saya adalah 15 menit ...
5. Transfer of English structure: Saya menemukan bahwa ...

Some candidates seemed to have developed good communication skills to express themselves fluently using varied vocabulary. However, their utterances were strongly marked with informal pronouns (aku, kamu) and diction (kayak gitu, bilang, bikin, gede, udah, aja, ama).

There was a tendency to lapse to English in certain cases for lack of vocabulary, e.g., Airnya sangat fresh. Ini depend kondisi ...

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills. Almost all candidates generally demonstrated sustained performance in the Interaction area. Most of the time, they understood the teacher's questions and were able to respond to the teacher's questions accordingly. I was pleasantly surprised by many candidates' good ability in pragmatism, for example, the use of proper kin term to address the teacher in the right context. In addition, candidates seemed to be equipped with interactive strategy skills, e.g., requesting clarification or repetition in appropriate way when they did not understand the question.

Further comments

It is good to know that candidates have been equipped not only with linguistic skills but also pragmatic and strategy skills which together add up to the candidates overall proficiency in the language. I would recommend that teachers allow extra time to focus on the area of mistakes mentioned above to raise the awareness of candidates on the problems in these areas. Perhaps teachers can write some handout containing explicit grammar explanation on these specific areas would be helpful, followed by contextual, communicative exercises. Likewise, teachers can also point out the differences of dictions and pronouns used in formal vs. informal contexts.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

On average the candidates demonstrated a good performance. A few demonstrated a mediocre performance while about a third performed excellently. In general, most of the writings were comprehensible; in addition, some were also quite analytical in their reflection. Almost all candidates did well in the area of register and formal requirements, indicating that they were prepared well for this task.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Description. Almost all candidates were able to provide sufficient information about the topic they were to write about. At the very least some relevant information was provided, so they received 1-2 marks in this section (unless in the case of language difficulty whereby the information was simply hard to understand).

Criterion B: Comparison. This is one of the areas where performances varied. Most attempted to address this criteria, identifying differences and similarities across cultures. Some did so in more complete and coherent ways than others. However, there were also some works that did not include actual comparisons, rather, in this section they presented further descriptions of the topic they were addressing.

Criterion C: Reflection. This is another area which distinguishes strong candidates from weaker ones. While there are three points that they have to address, some only provided partial responses. The most difficult point seemed to be regarding what someone from the target culture find different about the topic in your own culture. This point may be very challenging for candidates whose language proficiency is not strong enough to express hypothetical situation. The other challenging point in this section was to analyze the reasons for the identified cultural gaps. Even if they were able to highlight the similarities and differences between cultures, reflecting on why such differences exist was not easy for some. Nevertheless, in general candidates were able to present good and sensible insights in this section.

As mentioned above, almost all candidates performed equally well in the area of register (criterion D) and formal requirements (criterion F). They were aware of the requirement to write in formal register and seemed to have received adequate training in meeting the formal requirements. A few candidates did not do well in adhering to the proper bibliography format.

Criterion E: **Language**. This is also yet another area that varies among candidates. The candidates, whose language proficiency was not that strong, really had difficulties in expressing themselves in clear and coherent manner. Especially since the tasks require some level of analysis and abstraction, (instead of factual description) candidates were challenged to express more complex ideas in complex sentences. In this respect, there were quite a few instances where their language faltered. It appeared that they were addressing the questions stipulated by the task; however, language inaccuracies greatly impede meaning.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be given more practice on the language of comparison. While conceptually they may know how to identify cultural differences and similarities, they may not have sufficient language to express them appropriately. There are many formulaic comparison devices that teacher could have them practise. In this regard, some other formulaic expressions on how to start the discourse in the Reflection section can also be taught.

In regard to bibliography, providing proper models followed by specific practice on producing the proper format would also help candidates.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 23	24 - 28	29 - 32	33 - 40

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As can be expected, the main area of difficulty for the candidates, similar to previous years, was the vocabulary related questions. In particular, the most challenging format is the filling in the blanks with suitable words (Text B: questions 16-18, and Text D: questions 33-37). Although it does not seem that the text itself (i.e., an interview format) is very difficult, and the vocabulary items are quite basic (except for 'kedutaan', which means embassy), the task of filling in the blanks is always the hardest. Over the years, I found that students always performed poorest in this type of task. Most students mainly guessed randomly; only very few students indicated true understanding in their answers.

Another area of difficulty was matching vocabulary in Text C (questions 21-24). Except for question 23 (merambat = menjalar), the words in those questions should have been familiar to candidates at this level. It could be that the text overall presents most difficulties to the candidates as compared to the other texts. The open-ended questions (25-27) which usually students did well on, proved to be quite challenging for half of the candidates.

Lastly, many candidates also made mistakes on questions 1-2 from Text A. The text and the questions were pretty simple and straightforward, yet, they had to read the details in the text very carefully in order to answer correctly. It appeared that many thought since the text seemed to be quite easy, they did not spend enough time to scrutinize the text and the questions.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most candidates managed to provide correct responses to the open-ended questions (except some in text C as stated above), True/False, as well as identifying the text genre. Their ease in answering these questions gives good evidence that the candidates have successfully learned the strategy of finding some significant details from the text, especially those of direct and factual types.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

It appeared that text A posed least problems for the candidates. However, many did not answer questions 1-2 correctly. Question 1 asked about the main idea of the text. Without careful reading, candidates would easily be attracted to option B. Hot Plate, because this phrase appeared in the text so many times; whereas the correct answer, i.e., eatery, was not explicitly stated in the text, thus, had to be inferred. Likewise, question 2 requires the ability to read the text carefully and make inference in order to get the details straight, since the answers are not copied verbatim from the text. This proves that candidates need to have more training in making inference.

They did very well on the open-ended questions (3-5) as expected when dealing with very simple and straightforward factual questions.

Similarly, in text B, many candidates did well with the open-ended questions 14-15. They also did fine with the T/F questions in both texts A and B. Of the mistakes made in these sections, many were due to selecting/checking the wrong box for T/F, while providing the correct quotes. I wonder if these were due to carelessness or comprehension problem.

Questions on vocabulary were as usual challenging, however, of the three questions (16-18), students managed to get one question, i.e., 18, correct. This could be due to the fact that students had been taught (and used often in practice) the functional phrase for expressing opinion, 'menurut ...' (according to ...).

In text C, again there were no difficulties with the direct open-ended questions (19-20), however there were quite many candidates got questions 25-27 wrong. Even though the questions seemed to be direct and factual ones, there were a few things that candidates may have found problematic. Question 25 contains the word 'tepatnya' (=exactly) that specified the required answer. Rather than asking 'where' in general, the question asked for exact location of the incident. Question 26 may be problematic for the candidates because the key word 'kerugian' (loss) was new/not familiar to them. The issue with question 27 may lie in the word

'utama' (main). Rather than asking about causes of fire in general, question 27 asked specifically for the main cause for the fire.

Questions 28 also proved to be difficult. This may be due to the unfamiliar word/s in the correct options (e.g., the word 'rimbun') and the lack of ability to make inference.

In text D, almost everyone got the answer correct on question 29. Identifying text genre seems to have been mastered well. The rest follow what have been described above, i.e., no problem with direct open-ended factual question and big problem with filling-in-the-blanks question formats.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates seemed to be able to handle literal questions, especially those that pertain to main ideas and some important details. Most of the problems/mistakes seemed to be related to inferential questions and/or unfamiliarity with key words, in the text as well as in the questions. This is an ongoing common issue in language learning. Perhaps giving more extensive reading would help in enriching their vocabulary. On the inference skills, however, teacher can aim to provide more practice in this area by creating questions that require students to pay attention to details while wording them in such a way that students do not always look at the text's wording verbatim.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Similar issues to previous years, candidates who did not perform well were due to difficulties in basic structure/syntax, i.e., phrase and sentence formation. For example, a common mistake is in the formation of noun/adjective phrase: *Saya favorit aktivitas**, should have been *Aktivitas favorit saya* (my favorite activity). *Baru teman-teman** should have been *teman-teman baru* (new friends). *Sangat indah tempat** should have been *Tempat (yang) sangat indah* (very beautiful place).

There was strong transfer/interference from their native language as they translate the English word of phrase formation when producing Indonesian expressions, e.g., they use the word 'saja' (=just, only) instead of 'baru' (just now) in sentences like *Aku pindah saja**, which

should be *Aku baru pindah* (I have just moved). *Liburanku selesai saja** which should be *Liburanku baru selesai* (My vacation was just over). They used 'tentang' (about, concerning) in ... *tentang 2 jam naik bis** (concerning 2 hours by bus), while they should have used 'kira-kira' 2 jam naik bis (about 2 hours by bus).

Another problem area is the over generalization of 'ada/adalah', which is misinterpreted as auxiliary (to be) as in English, e.g., *Orang adalah menyenangkan* (People are pleasant). *Jakarta ada ramai* (Jakarta is crowded). *Pesta itu adalah menarik sekali* (The party is very interesting). In this case, the use of 'adalah' is not necessary and grammatically wrong. It should have been dropped as it is only used if we specifically want to define something e.g., *Jakarta adalah ibukota Indonesia* (Jakarta is the capital of Indonesia).

Although for the most part candidates were able to communicate their ideas that corresponded and were relevant to the task, they did so mostly in simple construction and/or structure. There were attempts to produce complex constructions, however with some errors resulting in less clear or coherent sentences. E.g., there are emerging attempts to construct compound sentence using 'yang' (albeit unsuccessfully). *Warung yang saya membeli makanan** (The eatery from which I bought food) should have been *Warung di mana saya membeli makanan*. *Kota yang saya tinggal** (The city where I live) should have been *Kota di mana/tempat saya tinggal*. *Pertunjukan bahwa saya tonton** (The performance which I saw) should have been *Pertunjukan yang saya tonton*.

Another area of difficulty not uncommon at this level is passive voice, e.g., *Bapak dijemput* saya* (Father was picked up by me), should have been *Saya dijemput Bapak* (I was picked up by father) or *Bapak menjemput saya* (Father picked me up).

Lingkungan sehat (to live in healthy environment). *Saya menghilang** (I disappeared) telpon. It is supposed to be: *Saya kehilangan* (I lost my phone)....

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

As mentioned above, the majority of candidates were able to communicate their ideas quite well. In most cases, the content of their writing address and respond to the requirement of the task very well. They generated various rich ideas that were interesting and relevant to the task. It is good to note that the candidates seemed to pay careful attention to the details of the questions. They also seemed to have had sufficient training and preparation in terms of writing various text types such as notes/cards to friends, invitation, simple review, diary, email. They were mostly familiar with these text formats and able to produce such texts accordingly.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A

Both questions in this section were straightforward and required candidates to produce factual information appropriate at the ab initio level.

More candidates opted for question 1, which asks them to write a card to their friends about their recent move, detailing a few aspects of the move such as location, atmosphere of the new city, its youth activities and reasons they like or dislike the place. These matters are very close to the candidates' personal situation and experience; most of them have had the experience moving to a new place. Thus, it is only natural that they are drawn to this task as compared to the other one. Most candidates were able to address these specific points well and although there were problems with language/sentence structures with the weaker candidates, the message/content was still largely comprehensible. The stronger candidates were able to give more elaborate accounts on their experience.

Question 2 is selected by fewer candidates. The task, i.e., writing an invitation for dinner to a friend is in itself not a difficult task. Overall, those who selected this question did well in addressing the points required since they are all factual and straightforward information. However, only a few selected this task perhaps because the candidates did not readily see its relevance in their daily life as to why they would need to write an invitation to a friend. Normally, they would just call, text or email their friends about this. Perhaps if the task was to write an email inviting a friend, it may have been more appealing.

Section B

There were three types of task that candidates could choose from in this section, i.e., to write an article for a school bulletin, to write a diary entry.

Question 5 was the most popular choice, 57% candidates selected it. Those who did question 5 did well if they understood all the details required in the task and address them accordingly. They were able to narrate their past experience both about the journey home as well as most memorable things during their stay. In addition, they were also able to extend an invitation for a future holiday. The language required for this task format (email) is not very complex as they can write in a relaxed, informal style to a friend, in addition, they are used to writing emails in their daily lives. Similar to question 3, those who did not perform well, did so because they failed to read the question carefully. For example, instead of writing to the friend who hosted them during the vacation, they wrote to another friend talking about their holiday experience. In some other instances, they did not address the requirement to describe their journey home from the vacation.

As usual, the diary entry (question 4) was a popular choice as always. The diary format is one that is familiar to the candidates' day-to-day situation; it is a personal topic about themselves and they can use the simple informal language register. It is good, however, that this time the task required candidates to address specific problems, rather than merely describing one's experience and/or feeling. This requirement distinguished the strong candidates from the

weaker ones (who failed to address the 'conflict' issue depicted in the setting/scenario of the task.

Question 3 was selected mostly by the strong candidates only; around 8% attempted this task. Understandably, writing an article, albeit for a school bulletin, is more challenging as they need to adhere to the particular format that an article calls for. In addition, it also requires the use of formal register with its complex morphological system in Indonesian. At the same time, the candidates could express likes and dislikes without much problem since this is a common everyday life topic. Most of those who did this question, performed excellently in meeting all aspects of the requirements including language, format as well as content. Some did not perform well in this question because they failed to read the question carefully. For example, instead of writing the review about the performance, they reviewed the school in general. This indicates problems with comprehension skills as they read and address the task.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Similar to previous years, many of the recurring issues point to the transfer from English. Many of the writing sounds like direct translation from English, most glaring errors occur with the noun or adjectival phrases. Some attempted to produce more complex structures; however, their language faltered and resulted in ungrammatical sentences. However, since the topics were mostly simple ones, most of the message could still be understood. Giving more practice in noun and adjective phrases won't be too difficult, since the rule is pretty straightforward. Nevertheless, this issue maybe a developmental one, that will take time for students to get it right when writing under time pressure such as in the test situation (they may understand the rule, but still need time to produce carefully). With the emerging of complex structures, it may worth giving more exposure and focused instructions on how to form such structures using various devices, such as 'yang' as well as verbal morphologies. These forms also move students to more formal registers which they require to use when writing to the elderly and those of higher social status. While the topics may remain at personal and immediate environment, perhaps the format of the writing exercises can be geared more toward formal registers, such as more practice on writing news bulletins, notes to their teachers, personal statements to apply for a scholarship, etc. I'd also recommend addressing the overuse of 'adalah'. It should be a quite simple endeavour to point out to students that 'adalah' is not equal to 'to be' in English. In most cases, Indonesian does not require auxiliary verbs in its sentence. Thus, unless one attempts to make specific statement to define something, 'adalah' is not necessary/used.

Further comments

Overall, the candidates performed very well in this paper this year. Their work demonstrated the ability to communicate their ideas clearly within the general framework of the tasks. A small number of candidates struggled in expressing their ideas in written form due to basic/foundational problems in structure/grammar. Linguistic inaccuracy rarely interferes with meaning, although in general, the grammar and structures used were of simple

forms/constructions. However, in many cases, there were attempts to use more complex ones; some were more successful than others.