

MARCH 2017 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

In March 2017, 67,384 candidates sat for the test of MUET.

The percentage of the candidates for each paper, 800/1 Listening, 800/2 Speaking, 800/3 Reading, 800/4 Writing and the subject, 800 MUET, according to bands is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
6	7.28	7.28	0.12	0.12	0.92	0.92	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.04
5	17.83	25.11	3.86	3.98	9.72	10.64	1.93	1.94	5.59	5.63
4	26.86	51.97	27.74	31.72	23.92	34.56	24.95	26.89	29.12	34.75
3	18.54	70.51	49.45	81.17	33.41	67.97	59.36	86.25	44.65	79.40
2	19.83	90.34	16.70	97.87	25.76	93.73	12.67	98.92	18.88	98.28
1	9.66	100.00	2.13	100.00	6.27	100.00	1.08	100.00	1.72	100.00

MARCH

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

PAPER 800/1 (Listening)

General Comments

PART I

The task demands the ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The listening text is a talk by a celebrity chef, Nadia Lim, who is sharing about the different packages of her healthy meal plans. The items ranged from short-answer questions, to table-completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to listen to an interview with a corporate trainer on the benefits of travelling. The items were of multiple-choice questions whereby candidates are needed to assess every option before choosing the best answer.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; a conversation, and two news items. The conversation is regarding *a parent's concern of his son joining the Needlework Club*. The first news item is on *Ravi, an honest taxi driver who was rewarded for his honesty*, and the second news item is on *how students studying abroad can contribute to the nation when they return home*. The items consisted of short-answer questions whereby the candidates are required to answer within a five-word limit for each question.

Specific Comments

PART I

Answers ranged from all correct answers to all incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts could either be due to writing more words than is required, inability to rephrase correctly, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information or wrong information. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

The following are some examples of the candidates' incorrect attempts:

Question 1

- wrong preposition – *love on cooking*
- wrong answer – *passion to cook*

Question 2

- wrong answer – *a disaster*
- wrong spelling – *first original receipie*

Question 3

- exceed word limit – *write her cook book*
- wrong verb form – *writing a cook book*
- wrong answer – *win the competition*

Question 4

- the word 'Food' is omitted – *Classic Bag*
- wrong answer – *Classical Food Bag*

Question 5

- wrong word leading to distortion – *idea for couples*
- wrong answer – *two adults*

Question 6

- wrong answer – *Quick and easy-to-cook recipes*
- wrong word choice – *Busy and single persons*

PART II

Answers ranged from a few correct answers to all incorrect attempts. The objective questions seemed to be the easiest for the candidates as most of them could answer all the questions correctly. For Question 9 and Question 10, candidates are required to write the letter of the answer.

PART III

Answers ranged from a few correct answers to all inaccurate attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly writing more words than is required, poor comprehension of the short text, poor paraphrasing, grammatical and spelling errors. This section proves to be the most difficult for most candidates as only a handful of them managed to answer all the questions correctly.

The following are some examples of the candidates' inaccurate attempts:

Question 15

- wrong word leading to distortion – *persuade his dreams*
- subject-verb agreement error – *do what he love*

Question 16

- wrong verb form – *is associate with girls*
- exceed word limit – *is better for boys not to do needlework*
- wrong preposition – *is associated for girls*

Question 17

- wrong word form – *a retire teacher*
- the word 'last' is omitted – *his passenger*
- the word 'retired' is omitted – *a teacher*

Question 18

- wrong word form – *three hundreds ringgit*
- wrong word choice leading to distortion – *a certificate given by Irene*

Question 19

- the word 'as' is omitted – *serve agents of change*
- distortion in meaning – *serve as agents of chain*

Question 20

- distortion in meaning – *achieve excellence and top scores*
- exceed word limit – *achieve excellence and be top scorers*
- wrong answer – *be top scholars*

PAPER 800/2 (Speaking)

General Comments

The questions in all the booklets tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications which cover accuracy in using the language, speaking with confidence, using varied vocabulary and expressions as well as presenting relevant ideas and adequate content while displaying maturity throughout the discussion. The booklets were manageable, and could be mostly categorized as moderately easy to moderately difficult.

Specific Comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Fully utilise the time given to them in both tasks.
- More proficient candidates were able to develop the points well, providing an in-depth discussion that was sustained and displayed maturity of thought.

- Ability to use complex structures accurately, as well as high command of vocabulary.
- Not only convey their own views but to justify, convince and persuade.
- Showed a high level of confidence and fluency in their presentation and discussion.
- Candidate could understand what was being said and could respond, impromptu, to viewpoints raised.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Prone to writing out full sentences for Task A, and would generally be unable to sustain communication.
- Unable to string together a group of words to create simple accurate sentences.
- Unsuccessful groping for words hesitations and lack of confidence.
- Many grammatical errors in their language use also hampered intelligibility.

PAPER 800/3 (Reading)

Answer Key

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	C	16	A	31	D
2	C	17	B	32	A
3	B	18	C	33	B
4	C	19	B	34	A
5	A	20	B	35	A
6	A	21	B	36	D
7	A	22	C	37	D
8	C	23	B	38	C
9	A	24	A	39	A
10	C	25	C	40	D
11	C	26	A	41	D
12	C	27	A	42	A
13	A	28	C	43	B
14	A	29	C	44	B
15	B	30	A	45	B

PAPER 800/4 (Writing)

General Comments

Both questions met the test specifications and measured the language ability of both pre-university and prospective university students. The questions demand knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, analytical-critical thinking, organisational skills and the ability to express opinion.

Question 1

The task demands the ability to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. It demands the ability of the candidates to analyse the *number of Malaysians travelling abroad in Figure 1* and link the *events that influenced the travel* given in Table 1. The task tests candidates' ability to analyse and compare information effectively with two visuals.

Question 2

The task demands the ability to address and express an opinion on an issue of common knowledge to most candidates. Depth and maturity of thought is required of the candidates to present a discussion on the topic '*Respect for elders is lacking among youngsters today*'. If the candidates understood very clearly the needs of the question itself, then they should be able to produce an argumentative and not just a descriptive piece of writing. Candidates must indicate in the discussion whether they agree or disagree to the statement. They can also provide partial stands as long as relevant and consistent viewpoints are clearly presented.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Specific Comments

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Able to present the overview
- Made comparison and linked the information in both figures
- Analysed and synthesised data and presented key features
- Wrote within the word limit
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Unable to present the correct overview and conclusion
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information (do not provide data/trend word)
- Lack synthesis as candidates analysed both figures separately
- Included irrelevancies and assumptions
- Unable to link the information in the visuals given
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Correct format and convention
- Presented a clear stand
- Presented clear and relevant ideas
- Provided relevant examples whereby the ideas were developed satisfactorily
- Used appropriate vocabulary and varied sentence structures

WEAKNESSES:

- Lacked planning and organisation
- Unable to present opinion and simplistic response of ideas
- Elaborated the ideas immaturely
- Lacked relevant explanations and concrete examples
- Used simple vocabulary and repetitive sentence structures
- Made simple grammatical errors
- Misunderstood the task (tend to write on the benefits of having competition to make us healthy)

Specific Comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to write to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a report of not more than 200 words. The task demands the candidates to analyse the number of Malaysian travelling abroad in Figure 1 and link the information to events that influenced the travel given in Table 1.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to present a discussion on whether respect for elders is lacking among youngsters today, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion and to discuss whether the candidates agree, disagree or convey a mixed stand on the topic given. Candidates have to state what their opinions are, explain why they have that opinion and show that they have examined and evaluated other possibilities in this regard. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held, providing at least three relevant points as well as justify and substantiate it with elaboration and examples.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The task requires the candidates to analyse, synthesise, and organise information from the visuals into a coherent piece of writing within 200 words. Accuracy and conciseness of information as well as correctness of language of reporting and logical connection of information between the visuals are the requirements of the task.

There should be an introduction, an overview, analysis and synthesis of key features, as well as a conclusion in the report. The candidates are expected to give a complete introduction of the two visuals displayed followed by a clear, appropriate overview that shows the link between the information in the visuals.

When presenting the report, the candidates are to be selective and analytical so as to highlight and compare the number of Malaysians travelling abroad in certain months (Figure 1) with the number or type of events for those months (Table 1). This entails skills, which include highlighting significant key features as well as analysing, and synthesising the information.

In terms of language, the candidates are to observe of the mechanics of report writing and to write the report in a formal tone using accurate and appropriate language, as well as precise and apt words. The report must not only be clear, concise, coherent and cohesive, but it must also be written within the specified number of words.

Question 2

The task requires the candidates to give an opinion or to make a stand based on the statement given. Logic, depth and maturity of thought on whether respect for elders is lacking among youngsters today are sought. A discursive or argumentative voice is expected in the writing.

The candidates have to state their opinion and support it with logical explanations and examples. They also need to be clear on the opinion held and be consistent with it. In answering the question, three angles of discussion may be adopted. Candidates may hold the opinion that the respect of respects is lacking among the youngsters today or disagree with the statement, or partially agree with it.

Whichever opinion or stand the candidates take, they are expected to justify their viewpoints by giving logical reasons, explanations and examples to show why and how respect for the elders is lacking

among youngsters today. Should they disagree with the statement, they have to justify their stand convincingly. In terms of development of ideas, the elaborations should not only be convincing and clearly linked to the topic, but they should also support the stand. Furthermore, the voice should be assertive, yet persuasive enough to engage and compel the reader to be in agreement with the writer.

The use of language should be consistently accurate and appropriate to the task, content and intention. Moreover, clarity as well as cogency of expression and vocabulary should be used appropriately to express the subtleties of meaning. Ideally, three well-developed points should be given in support of the stand and the essay should be written in not fewer than 350 words.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

There were fewer above average than below-average performers and their voices faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly, much worse, could not present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. Examples of distortions/inaccuracies/assumptions in answers:

- **Erroneous interpretation**

The June is 140 000 increase back to before this month April and May.

The travelling activities influenced the events

- **Irrelevancy**

Another than the month is September Muslim people want to go to Makkah and pray to our god.

- **Assumption**

In December, apparently school has ended for that year and because of cheap flight promotions, they took part in travelling.

- **Inaccuracy**

The number of Malaysians...increase in January 15 000 to February 18 000 (there was no increase in January)

Generally, the response for Question 1 was modest. However, there was some form of structure in their report as the majority of the candidates had written the report in three paragraphs. The first paragraph consisted of an introduction, which was sometimes incomplete followed by an overview, which was at times inappropriate or inaccurate. The analysis and synthesis, which were mostly modestly presented, were written in the second paragraph while the conclusion was in the last paragraph. Very often, there was no conclusion within the 200-word limit.

STRENGTHS:

- Provided an introduction though incomplete (*omission of Figure 1*)
- Attempted to provide an overview
- Attempted to analyse information though with little success
- Presented overall trend
- Used comparative and superlative forms of adjectives (e.g. more than, less than, the most, the least, highest, lowest)
- Used language of comparison (e.g only, except for)
- Used conjunctions or transition markers in sentences to link information (e.g when, although, as, because, due to, however)

WEAKNESSES:

- Lacked the ability to fully understand the requirements of the task
- Wrote beyond word count
- Wrote irrelevant introduction
- Provided inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information

- Presented own opinion
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Gave inaccurate data
- Omitted data in analysis
- Poor language control
- Wrong subject reference which distorts the meaning

Question 2

Most of the candidates were in agreement with the statement provided in the question. However, not much was elaborated to explain why and how respect for the elders is lacking among youngsters today (i.e. if the candidates agree with the stand). There were hardly any concrete examples or convincing explanations to justify their viewpoints. Moreover, many of the candidates failed to develop their points adequately.

Most of their ideas lacked maturity. In some essays, the main idea was vague, as it was not stated clearly in the supporting paragraphs. The supporting points were also weak and simplistic. Many a time, they were not clearly linked to the main point presented of 'the elders'.

Other than that, some of the ideas were disorganised. There were overlapping and repetition of points in the supporting paragraphs. At times, the ideas presented were inconsistent with the stand or were contradictory to it. The opinion or stand given may be in agreement with the statement in the question but the ideas were divided. Thus, their writing lacked clarity, focus and coherence.

In terms of language, quite a number of the candidates had the same problem (structural and lexical errors) as mentioned earlier for Question 1. In addition, they had limited range of vocabulary and had used inappropriate and inaccurate words. Some even resorted to use Malay words or direct translation words from their mother tongue to English in their writing. Inconsistency in the use of pronouns, especially singular and plural forms of the pronoun, was also seen in their writing. About 90% of the candidates used the relative pronoun "that" for people when it should be "who".

Only a small percentage of candidates could fulfill the requirements of the task competently by giving logical, convincing explanations and concrete examples as well as linking their viewpoints between 'respect' or 'disrespect' and 'the elders'. Most of the essays had form and structure. As seen in the writing, many candidates had given an introduction with opinion or stand in their first paragraph of their essay, and presented some points in the supporting paragraphs, as well as ended the essay with a conclusion. Although a number of the candidates had poor or modest control of the language, they labored stoically to fill up one or two pages of writing in hope to get some marks for their effort.

JULY 2017 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

In July 2017, 61 666 candidates sat for the test of MUET.

The percentage of the candidates for each paper, 800/1 Listening, 800/2 Speaking, 800/3, Reading 800/4 Writing and the subject, 800 MUET, according to bands is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
6	6.40	6.40	0.09	0.09	0.56	0.56	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02
5	21.88	28.28	3.10	3.19	6.70	7.26	1.14	1.14	3.48	3.50
4	25.36	53.64	21.47	24.66	19.24	26.50	16.16	17.30	23.83	27.33
3	15.03	68.67	48.59	73.25	32.08	58.58	58.15	75.45	42.59	69.92
2	17.70	86.37	22.82	96.06	31.75	90.33	23.14	98.59	26.99	96.91
1	13.63	100.00	3.94	100.00	9.67	100.00	1.41	100.00	3.09	100.00

JULY

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

PAPER 800/1 (Listening)

General Comments

PART I

The task demands the ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The listening text is a *talk on social networking*. The items ranged from short-answer questions, to table-completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to listen to an *interview between a host of a TV programme and a parent who shares her experiences in taking care of her son with autism*. The items were of multiple-choice questions whereby candidates are needed to assess every option before choosing the best answer.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; two documentaries and a short talk. The first documentary is on *the eating habits of birds*. The second piece is on a *travel documentary and advice*

to travelers. Finally, the short talk is on *non-verbal communication*. The items consisted of short-answer questions whereby the candidates are required to answer within a five-word limit for each question.

Specific Comments

PART I

Answers ranged from all correct answers to all incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts could either be due to writing more words than is required, inability to rephrase correctly, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information or wrong information. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

The following are some examples of the candidates' incorrect attempts:

Question 1

- article 'a' is omitted – *little odd*
- exceed word limit – *quite weird and a little odd*

Question 2

- wrong word form – *risks and dangerous*

Question 3

- wrong word choice – *overseas friends*
- wrong answer – *international school friends*

Question 4

- wrong answer – *Help to make new friends*
- wrong word form – *Choose new friends*

Question 5

- wrong word choice – *Decrease face-to-face interaction*
- exceed word limit – *Can reduce face to face interaction*

Question 6

- wrong word form – *Cyber bully*
- wrong answer / distortion – *Cyber bullying*

PART II

Answers ranged from all correct answers to all incorrect attempts. The objective questions seemed to be the easiest for the candidates as most of them were able to answer at least four out of six answers correctly. For Question 9 and Question 10, candidates are required to write the letter of the answer.

PART III

Answers ranged from a few correct answers to all inaccurate attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly writing more words than is required, poor comprehension of the short text, poor paraphrasing, grammatical and spelling errors. This section is relatively the most challenging part for most of the candidates as only some managed to answer all the questions correctly. A big number of candidates could not answer Question 17 correctly because the singular form of the noun 'experience' is written in the stem while the plural form 'experiences' is used and heard in the listening text.

The following are some examples of the candidates' inaccurate attempts:

Question 15

- distortion in meaning – *crash the food*
- wrong answer – *crush the bird food / crush the fruits*



Question 16

- inaccurate answer – *easy to digest in mouth*
- wrong answer – *easily digestible*

Question 17

- wrong preposition – *was different with their expectation*
- subject-verb agreement error – *were different from their expectation*

Question 18

- distortion in meaning – *choose a good country*
- wrong word choice – *choose your country well*

Question 19

- distortion in meaning – *great each other*
- exceeds word limit – *greet each other and say thank you*

Question 20

- wrong answer – *use non-verbal communication*
- wrong word choice – *show hand signals*
- inaccurate answer – *use their hands*

PAPER 800/2 (Speaking)

General Comments

The majority of the questions were pitched appropriately for the level of the test takers, and that the topics were reasonable, debatable and had a balance of fact-based and opinion-based discussion.

Specific Comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to use the time given to them for both Tasks A and B.
- Able to display maturity of thought in their presentations and discussion, and were able to connect the task to their personal experience.
- Displayed the ability to use complex structures accurately, as well as a high command of vocabulary, to not only convey their own views but to justify, convince, and persuade.
- Showed a high level of confidence and fluency in their presentation and discussion.
- Task B was usually highly interactive as the candidate could understand what was being said and could respond, impromptu, to viewpoints raised.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Prone to writing out full sentences thus unable to sustain communication once they had read aloud their last written sentence.
- Lack of general knowledge in some of the candidates.
- Displayed their comparative lack of proficiency through their lexical choices and simpler, less complex language structure.
- Displayed their discomfort and lack of confidence in using the language by showing markers such as jerky speech with false starts and –reliance on a limited amount of phrases.
- Candidates would not be able to utilise turn-taking and conversations strategy, and would merely take turns speaking, often pass to each other.



PAPER 800/3 (Reading)

Answer Key

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	A	16	A	31	D
2	C	17	A	32	D
3	B	18	B	33	A
4	A	19	B	34	B
5	C	20	A	35	C
6	C	21	B	36	B
7	B	22	A	37	D
8	A	23	A	38	C
9	C	24	C	39	D
10	B	25	C	40	A
11	C	26	A	41	C
12	A	27	B	42	A
13	C	28	B	43	C
14	B	29	C	44	B
15	B	30	B	45	B

PAPER 800/4 (Writing)

General Comments

Both questions met the test specifications and measured the language ability of both pre-university and prospective university students. The questions demand knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, analytical-critical thinking, organisational skills and the ability to express opinion.

Question 1

The task demands the ability to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. The candidates must be able to interpret the information given in the visuals by analysing *student enrolment of four universities in 2015 in Figure 1* and link this information to *factors influencing student enrolment in Table 1* effectively. The task also demands the candidates' ability to provide meticulously accurate data and the connection of the gathered data with the other visual given in the task. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between given information are the requirements.

Question 2

The task demands the ability to address and express an opinion on an issue of common knowledge to most candidates. Depth and maturity of thought is required of the candidates to present a discussion. The question requires candidates to discuss on whether *only children over the age of seven should be*

allowed to use modern gadgets. If the candidates understood very clearly the needs of the question itself, then they should be able to produce an argumentative and not just a descriptive piece of writing. Candidates must indicate in the discussion whether they agree or disagree to the statement. They can also provide partial stands as long as relevant and consistent viewpoints are clearly presented.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Specific Comments

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Able to present the overview
- Made comparison and linked the information in both figures
- Analysed and synthesised data and presented key features
- Wrote within the word limit
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection
- Comparisons were made not only between the information in Figure 1 and Table 1 but also between that within Figure 1 and Table 1 respectively

WEAKNESSES:

- Unable to present the correct overview and conclusion
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information (do not provide data/trend word)
- Lack synthesis as candidates analysed both figures separately
- Included irrelevancies and assumptions
- Unable to link the information in the visuals given
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing
- Used a mixture of present and past tense
- Writing beyond word limit

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Correct format and convention
- Presented a clear stand
- Presented clear and relevant ideas
- Provided relevant examples whereby the ideas were developed satisfactorily
- Used appropriate vocabulary and varied sentence structures

WEAKNESSES:

- Lacked planning and organisation
- Unable to present opinion and simplistic response of ideas
- Elaborated the ideas immaturely
- Lacked relevant explanations and concrete examples
- Used simple vocabulary and repetitive sentence structures
- Made simple grammatical errors
- Misunderstood the task (candidates interpreted 'traditional male role' as clothes, food, festivals)



Specific Comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. It demands the ability of candidates to analyse in Figure 1 and link to the factors given in Table 1 and write a report of not more than 200 words. It also requires the candidates' ability to provide accurate data from Figure 1 and link it to the *factors influencing student enrolment* Table 1.

Question 2

The question requires candidates to discuss whether only children over the age of seven should be allowed to use modern gadgets. Candidates are expected to agree, disagree or take a mid-stand on the issue. They are also expected to provide reasons for the agreement or disagreement and further explain their view. The question was straightforward and candidates should be able to respond correctly.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The task requires the candidates to analyse, synthesise and organise information from the visuals into a coherent piece of writing within 200 words. Accuracy and conciseness of information as well as correctness of language of reporting and logical connection of information between the visuals are the requirements of the task.

There should be an introduction, an overview, analysis and synthesis of key features, as well as a conclusion in the report. The candidates are expected to give a complete introduction of the two visuals displayed followed by a clear, appropriate overview that shows the link between the information in visuals.

When presenting the report, the candidates are to be selective and analytical so as to highlight and compare *student enrolment of four universities in 2015 in Figure 1*. Apart from that, they have to link the enrolment or percentage of postgraduates or undergraduates (Figure 1) with the factors that influenced the student enrolment of the universities (Table 1). This entails skills which include highlighting significant key features as well as analysing and synthesising the information.

In terms of language, the candidates are to observe of the mechanics of report writing and to write the report in a formal tone using accurate and appropriate language, as well as precise and apt words. The report must not only be clear, concise, coherent and cohesive, but it must also be written within the specified number of words.

Question 2

The task requires the candidates to give an opinion or to make a stand based on the statement given. Logic, depth and maturity of thoughts are sought. A discursive or argumentative voice is expected in the writing.

The candidates have to state their opinion and support it with logical explanations and examples. They also need to be clear on the opinion held and be consistent with it. In answering the question, three angles of discussion may be adopted. Candidates may hold the opinion that only children above the age of seven should be allowed to use modern gadgets, or disagree with the statement, or partially agree with it.

Whichever opinion or stand the candidates take, they are expected to justify their viewpoints by giving logical reasons, explanations and examples to show why only children below or above the age of seven

should be allowed to use modern gadgets, or there should be no age limit. In terms of development of ideas, the elaborations should not only be convincing and clearly linked to the topic, but they should also support the stand. Furthermore, the voice should be assertive, yet persuasive enough to engage and compel the reader to be in agreement with the writer.

The use of language should be consistently accurate and appropriate to the task, content and intention. Moreover, clarity as well as cogency of expression and vocabulary should be used appropriately to express the subtleties of meaning. Ideally, three well-developed points should be given in support of the stand and the essay should be written in not fewer than 350 words.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

There were fewer above average than below-average performers and their voices faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly, much worse, could not present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. Examples of distortions/inaccuracies/assumptions in answers:

- **Wrong subject reference**

Group A had 90% postgraduates students enrolment...

University A is higher than University B in postgraduates...

- **Illogical responses**

University A is the highest one who had postgraduates...

Student enrolment are correlation by the factors.

- **Distortion**

10% of University A want to undergraduate students

- **Assumption**

Reputable academic staff is the most/biggest factor influencing enrolment in the universities

Majority scored average and below while not many belonged to the top range. This shows that many candidates have yet to master the writing skills in English. For the poor language performance, the difficulty arose from poor knowledge of the required tasks, inability to present the required key features accurately and inability to link Figure 1 and Table 1.

Most of the answers presented were first draft reports as there were some cancellations of words in their writing. However, there was some form of structure in their report as the majority of the candidates had written the report in three paragraphs. The first paragraph consisted of an introduction which was sometimes incomplete (as the information in Table 1 was omitted), followed by an overview which was at times inappropriate or inaccurate. The analysis and synthesis, which were mostly modestly presented, were written in the second paragraph while the conclusion was in the last paragraph. Very often, there was no conclusion within the 200-word limit.

STRENGTHS:

- Provided an introduction though incomplete
- Attempted to provide an overview
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used comparative and superlative forms of adjectives (e.g. more than, less than, the most, the least, highest, lowest)
- Used language of comparison (e.g only, except for)
- Used conjunctions or transition markers in sentences to link information (e.g when, although, as, because, due to, however)



WEAKNESSES:

- Lacked the ability to fully understand the requirements of the task
- Wrote beyond word count
- Wrote irrelevant introduction (wrote the rubrics or general statements about investments)
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing
- Poor language control

Question 2

Most of the candidates were in agreement with the statement provided in the question. However, not much was elaborated to explain why only children over the age of seven should be allowed to use modern gadgets (i.e. if the candidates agree with the stand). There were hardly any concrete examples or convincing explanations to justify their viewpoints. Moreover, many of the candidates failed to develop their points adequately.

The focus of the essay is on why only children above the age of seven should be allowed to use modern gadgets or otherwise. However, many candidates gave advice and suggestions on what parents should do if they allow their children to use modern gadgets or on why parents should not allow their children to use modern gadgets. Furthermore, quite a number of candidates wrote solely on the advantages and disadvantages of using modern gadgets for teenagers or people in general. All these are not the main focus of the essay.

In some essays, the main idea was vague as it was not stated clearly in the supporting paragraphs. The supporting points were also weak and simplistic. Many a time, they were not clearly linked to the main point presented or 'age group of the children'. Other than that, some of the ideas were disorganised. There were overlapping and repetition of points in the supporting paragraphs. At times, the ideas presented were inconsistent with the stand or were contradictory to it. The opinion or stand given may be in agreement with the statement in the question but the ideas were divided. Thus, their writing lacked clarity, focus and coherence.

In terms of language, quite a number of the candidates had the same problem (structural and lexical errors) as mentioned earlier for Question 1. In addition, they had limited range of vocabulary and had used inappropriate or inaccurate words. Some even resorted to use Malay words or direct translation of words from their mother tongue to English in their writing. Inconsistency in the use of pronouns, especially singular and plural forms of the pronoun, was also seen in their writing (e.g. the candidates used "we" in the beginning of the sentence and then changed to "they" in the second half of the sentence). About 90% of the candidates used the relative pronoun "that" for people when it should be "who".

Only a small percentage of candidates could fulfill the requirements of the task competently by giving logical, convincing explanations and concrete examples as well as linking their viewpoints between 'the age group of children' and 'modern gadgets'. Most of the essays had form and structure. As seen in the writing, many candidates had given an introduction with an opinion or stand in the first paragraph of their essay, and presented some points in the supporting paragraphs, as well as ended the essay with a conclusion. Although a number of the candidates had poor or modest control of the language, they labored stoically to fill up one to two pages of writing in hope to get some marks for their effort.

NOVEMBER 2017 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

In November 2017, 46 035 candidates sat for the test of MUET.

The percentage of the candidates for each paper, 800/1 Listening, 800/2 Speaking, 800/3 Reading, 800/4 Writing and the subject, 800 MUET, according to bands is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
6	8.31	8.31	0.16	0.16	0.21	0.21	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
5	20.85	29.16	4.50	4.66	6.86	7.07	1.83	1.85	4.22	4.23
4	23.18	52.34	27.59	32.25	23.08	30.15	21.93	23.78	28.94	33.17
3	14.65	66.99	47.17	79.42	31.96	62.11	59.71	83.49	40.24	73.41
2	17.84	84.83	18.00	97.42	28.69	90.80	14.98	98.47	23.74	97.15
1	15.17	100.00	2.58	100.00	9.20	100.00	1.53	100.00	2.85	100.00

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

PAPER 800/1 (Listening)

General Comments

PART I

The task demands the ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The listening text is a *talk on a country called Bhutan and their people's way of life*. The items ranged from short-answer questions, to table-completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to listen to a *talk given by a medical doctor talking about his experience climbing up a mountain*. The items were of multiple-choice questions whereby candidates are needed to assess every option before choosing the best answer.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; two short talks and part of an article. The first talk is on the *three types of bees and their functions*. The second talk is on *popular gifts on Mother's Day*. Lastly, the article is on *electric cars*. The items consisted of short-answer questions whereby the candidates are required to answer within a five-word limit for each question.

Specific Comments

PART I

Answers ranged from all correct answers to all incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts could either be due to writing more words than is required, inability to rephrase correctly, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information or wrong information. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

The following are some examples of the candidates' incorrect attempts:

Question 1

- distortion in meaning – *different of countries*
- wrong spelling – *success / happinest*

Question 2

- exceed word limit – *fishing is forbidden and killing is discouraged*
- wrong word form – *Not hurting animals*

Question 3

- wrong answer – *laptops / tablets / handphones*
- wrong spelling – *gadjets*

Question 4

- incomplete answer – *to be happy / being happy*

Question 5

- inaccurate answer – *role models to others*
- wrong word form – *being a role models*
- wrong spelling – *roll modal*

Question 6

- wrong spelling – *avoiding unhealthy food*
- wrong answer – *and unwasting foods and schools*

PART II

Answers ranged from all correct answers to all incorrect attempts. The objective questions seemed to be the easiest for the candidates as most of them were able to answer at least four out of six answers correctly.

PART III

Answers ranged from all correct answers to all inaccurate attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly writing more words than is required, poor comprehension of the short text, poor paraphrasing, grammatical, spelling errors, and writing gibberish responses. This section is relatively the most challenging part in the listening test for the candidates as only a handful of them managed to answer all the questions correctly.

The following are some examples of the candidates' inaccurate attempts:

Question 15

- wrong spelling – *workers and droms / dhrones*
- wrong answer – *worker bees and men bees*
- gibberish responses – *andreous / boquires / reddrots*

Question 16

- giving more than one answer – *cleaning and protecting the hives*
- gibberish responses – *seen the garden example flowers*
- omission error – *searching food*

Question 17

- wrong answer – *mobile devices / newest technological*
- wrong spelling – *bouchers*

Question 18

- omitting possessive pronoun – *busy life*
- wrong answer – *their busy live*

Question 19

- wrong answer – *opponents*
- wrong word form – *owners*
- wrong spelling – *sepport on cars*

Question 20

- omitting object – *charge in minutes / charge them fast*
- wrong answer – *charge battery in one minute*

PAPER 800/2 (Speaking)

General Comments

On the whole, the questions were suitable for Pre-U students. Questions for both Task A & B were appropriate for assessing MUET candidates, within their understanding and general knowledge. Candidates were able to discuss and interact with each other. There was a balance of easy to difficult questions.

Specific Comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Made use of the preparation time to make short notes of main points which they would then elaborate
- Able to fully utilise the two-minute presentation time given to provide in-depth and mature treatment of the topic
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Able to link current issues and personal experiences to the topic being discussed
- Fluent and confident and were able to use words and phrases and idioms effectively to convey their ideas
- Able to use complex structures accurately, as well as a high command of vocabulary, to not only convey their own views but to justify, convince and persuade

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Did not relate their task/points to the situation given
- Lack command of basic structures
- Lack appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning and some resorted to using L1 when presenting ideas. Some merely mentioned the main ideas/points as they could not develop or elaborate on their ideas well. This had led to superficial and disorganised presentation
- Many global errors, i.e sentence structures/grammar
- Lack general/prior knowledge of current issues. Hence, their presentation was monotonous and lacked maturity of thought
- Lack confidence and participation especially in Task B. So repetition of the same ideas/points in Task B was common. As a result, they were not able to respond directly to the viewpoints raised by other group members. Some could not even respond well to ongoing discussion and were merely stating memorised phrases

PAPER 800/3 (Reading)

Answer Key

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	C	16	B	31	D
2	B	17	C	32	D
3	C	18	B	33	C
4	B	19	C	34	B
5	B	20	A	35	A
6	B	21	A	36	B
7	B	22	A	37	D
8	A	23	B	38	C
9	A	24	B	39	C
10	C	25	A	40	A
11	A	26	C	41	A
12	C	27	B	42	D
13	C	28	A	43	A
14	C	29	B	44	D
15	B	30	C	45	B

PAPER 800/4 (Writing)

General Comments

Both questions met the test specifications and measured the language ability of both pre-university and prospective university students. The questions demand knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, analytical-critical thinking, organisational skills and the ability to express opinion. Overall, both questions were challenging yet they are based on candidates' real-life situation, as well as cover the MUET syllabus specifications. Subjects touched are of those candidates can relate to.

Question 1

The task demands the ability to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. The candidates must be able to interpret the information given in the visuals. The task also demands the candidates' ability to provide meticulously accurate data and the connection of the gathered data with the other visual given in the task. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between given information are the requirements.

Question 2

The task demands the ability to address and express an opinion on an issue of common knowledge to most candidates. Depth and maturity of thought is required of the candidates to present a discussion. Candidates must indicate in the discussion whether they agree or disagree to the statement. At the same time, they can also provide partial stands as long as relevant and consistent viewpoints are clearly presented.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Specific Comments

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Able to provide a title and an introduction
- Able to present the overview
- Made comparison and linked the information in both figures
- Analysed and synthesised data and presented key features
- Wrote within the word limit
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Unable to present the correct overview and conclusion
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information (do not provide data/trend word)
- Lack synthesis as candidates analysed both figures separately
- Included irrelevancies and assumptions
- Unable to link the information in the visuals given
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Correct format and convention
- Presented a clear stand
- Presented clear and relevant ideas
- Provided relevant examples whereby the ideas were developed satisfactorily
- Used appropriate vocabulary and varied sentence structures

WEAKNESSES:

- Lacked planning and organisation
- Unable to present opinion and simplistic response of ideas

- Elaborated the ideas immaturely
- Lacked relevant explanations and concrete examples
- Used simple vocabulary and repetitive sentence structures
- Made simple grammatical errors
- Wrote off-tangent essays focusing on the good or harm of the Internet in general

Specific Comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. It demands the ability of candidates to analyse *the amount of sales in Figure 1 and link to the strategies taken by the respective stores given in Table 1* and write a report of not more than 200 words. It also requires the candidates' ability to provide accurate data from Figure 1 and link it to the strategies taken to increase the amount of sales in 2015 and 2016.

Question 2

The question requires candidates to discuss whether rules and regulations are meant to promote discipline. Candidates are expected to agree, disagree or take a mid-stand on the issue. They are also expected to provide reasons for the agreement or disagreement and further explain their view. The question was straight forward and candidates should be able to respond correctly using at least 350 words. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held, providing at least three relevant points as well as justify and substantiate it with elaboration and examples.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The task requires the candidates to analyse, synthesise and organise information from the visuals into a coherent piece of writing within 200 words. Accuracy and conciseness of information as well as correctness of language of reporting and logical connection of information between the visuals are the requirements of the task.

There should be an introduction, an overview, analysis and synthesis of key features, as well as a conclusion in the report. The candidates are expected to give a complete introduction of the two visuals displayed followed by a clear, appropriate overview that shows the link between the information in visuals.

When presenting the report, the candidates are to be selective and analytical so as to highlight and analyse Figure 1 on *Amount of sales of Malaysian Online Stores in 2015 and 2016* and link this information to Table 1 *on the strategies taken to increase the amount of sales* effectively. This entails skills which include highlighting significant key features as well as analysing and synthesising the information.

In terms of language, the candidates are to observe of the mechanics of report writing and to write the report in a formal tone using accurate and appropriate language, as well as precise and apt words. The report must not only be clear, concise, coherent and cohesive, but it must also be written within the specified number of words.

Question 2

The task requires the candidates to give an opinion or to make a stand based on the statement given. Logic, depth and maturity of thought on whether rules and regulations are meant to promote discipline are sought. A discursive or argumentative voice is expected in the writing.

The candidates have to state their opinion and support it with logical explanations and examples. They also need to be clear on the opinion held and be consistent with it. In answering the question, three angles of discussion may be adopted. Candidates may hold the opinion that rules and regulations are meant to promote discipline or disagree with the statement, or partially agree with it.

Whichever opinion or stand the candidates take, they are expected to justify their viewpoints by giving logical reasons, explanations and examples to show why rules and regulations can promote discipline or how rules and regulations can promote discipline. In terms of development of ideas, the elaborations should not only be convincing and clearly linked to the topic, but they should also support the stand. Furthermore, the voice should be assertive, yet persuasive enough to engage and compel the reader to be in agreement with the writer.

The use of language should be consistently accurate and appropriate to the task, content and intention. Moreover, clarity as well as cogency of expression and vocabulary should be used appropriately to express the subtleties of meaning. Ideally, three well-developed points should be given in support of the stand, and the essay should be written in not fewer than 350 words.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

There were fewer above average than below-average performers and their voices faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly, much worse, could not present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. Examples of distortions/inaccuracies/assumptions in answers:

- **Not including data**
In 2016 Lazomba sales increase but 21Street sales maintain.
- **Wrong Subject Reference**
The Online 21Street stores is low amount
The Online Lazomba is very increase in 2016
- **Distortion**
21Street used the same strategies in 2015 and 2016 such as accepts cash on delivery, presents attractive webpage and offers competitive prices shows they have not improvised their strategies and only choose to maintained them.

Generally for Question 1, the candidates did not fare very well in this paper. Majority scored average and below while not many belonged to the top range. This shows that many candidates have yet to master the writing skills in English. For the poor language performance, the difficulty arose from poor knowledge of the required tasks, inability to present the required key features accurately and inability to link Figure 1 and Table 1.

Most of the answers presented were first draft reports as there were some cancellations of words in their writing. However, there was some form of structure in their report as the majority of the candidates had written the report in three paragraphs. The first paragraph consisted of an introduction which was

sometimes incomplete (as the information in Table 1 was omitted), followed by an overview which was at times inappropriate or inaccurate. The analysis and synthesis, which were mostly modestly presented, were written in the second paragraph while the conclusion was in the last paragraph. Very often, there was no conclusion within the 200-word limit.

STRENGTHS:

- Provided an introduction though incomplete (*omission of Figure 1*)
- Attempted to provide an overview
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used comparative and superlative forms of adjectives (e.g. more than, less than, the most, the least, highest, lowest)
- Used language of comparison (e.g. only, except for)
- Used 'trend' words (e.g. increased, decreased, rose, dropped)
- Used conjunctions or transition markers in sentences to link information (e.g. when, although, as, because, due to, however)

WEAKNESSES:

- Lacked the ability to fully understand the requirements of the task
- Wrote beyond word count
- Wrote irrelevant introduction (wrote the rubrics or general statements about investments)
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing
- Poor language control

Question 2

Most of the candidates were in agreement with the statement provided in the question. However, not much was elaborated to explain how rules and regulations can promote discipline (i.e. if the candidates agree with the stand). There were hardly any concrete examples or convincing explanations to justify their viewpoints. Moreover, many of the candidates failed to develop their points adequately.

The focus of the essay is on rules and regulations are meant to promote discipline or otherwise. However, many candidates gave advice and suggestions on what parents should do to instill discipline in their children or on why parents should have rules and regulations at home. Furthermore, quite a number of candidates wrote solely on the benefits, the advantages and disadvantages of rules and regulations for children, school children, the workplace, a country or people in general. All these are not the main focus of the essay.

In some essays, the main idea was vague as it was not stated clearly in the supporting paragraphs. The supporting points were also weak and simplistic. Many a time, they were not clearly linked to the main point presented. Other than that, some of the ideas were disorganised. There were overlapping and repetition of points in the supporting paragraphs. At times, the ideas presented were inconsistent with the stand or were contradictory to it. The opinion or stand given may be in agreement with the statement in the question but the ideas were divided. Thus, their writing lacked clarity, focus and coherence.

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Only a small percentage of candidates could fulfill the requirements of the task competently by giving logical, convincing explanations and concrete examples as well as linking their viewpoints between ‘rules and regulations’ and ‘discipline’. Most of the essays had form and structure. As seen in the writing, many candidates had given an introduction with an opinion or stand in the first paragraph of their essay, and presented some points in the supporting paragraphs, as well as ended the essay with a conclusion. Although a number of the candidates had poor or modest control of the language, they labored stoically to fill up one to two pages of writing in hope to get some marks for their effort.

