



MAJLIS PEPERIKSAAN MALAYSIA  
*Malaysian Examinations Council*



**REPORT AND INSIGHTS**

# MUET 2023



## **PENERBITAN PELANGI SDN. BHD.** (89120-H)

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ISBN:

Cetakan Pertama 2025

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# MUET SESSION 1 2023 (800)

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

For Session 1 2023, 33 330 candidates sat the test.

The percentages 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 are as follows:

Band	CEFR Level	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
		%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
5+	C1+	1.11	1.11	0.17	0.17	0.81	0.81	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
5.0	C1	12.67	13.78	1.89	2.06	12.45	13.26	0.20	0.20	0.37	0.37
4.5	B2	28.35	42.13	6.27	8.33	27.01	40.27	1.03	1.23	6.44	6.81
4.0		37.61	79.74	19.25	27.58	38.36	78.63	5.57	6.80	37.16	43.96
3.5	B1	16.61	96.35	37.54	65.12	15.71	94.34	22.31	29.11	42.80	86.76
3.0		3.35	99.70	25.63	90.75	4.23	98.57	51.90	81.02	11.46	98.22
2.5	A2	0.29	99.99	6.82	97.57	1.32	99.90	16.44	97.45	1.69	99.91
2.0		0.01	100.00	2.33	99.90	0.10	100.00	2.48	99.93	0.09	100.00
1.0		0.00	100.00	0.10	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.07	100.00	0.00	100.00

**PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)**

**Answer Key**

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	C	11	A	21	B
2	A	12	B	22	A
3	B	13	B	23	B
4	A	14	B	24	B
5	C	15	B	25	C
6	A	16	A	26	A
7	C	17	E	27	B
8	C	18	C	28	B
9	C	19	B	29	C
10	C	20	A	30	A

## **PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)**

### **General Comments**

On the whole, it was seen that the majority of the candidates were now familiar with the MUET speaking format. Furthermore, the quality of the candidates' performance was more or less consistent with the previous MUET, which was dependent largely on their mastery of the language. The questions were relevant to the scope of the candidates' daily life, and/or general knowledge around the area. Aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards, these topics were pitched at A2-B1 for Part 1 and B1-B2 for Part 2. The general consensus was that the difficulty of the papers was uniform across the board. Moreover, the test did the job of discriminating the proficiency of the candidates, especially with regard to the difference in requirements of tasks between Part 1 and Part 2.

### **Specific Comments**

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to develop points well, providing an in-depth discussion that was sustained and displayed maturity of thought
- Able to make connections between the task and their personal experiences, as well as current issues and general knowledge (for candidates who were better read)
- Able to use the preparation time to write notes in point form rather than creating full sentences and used the presentation time to elaborate on the notes
- Able to display 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
- Able to show a high level of confidence and fluency in their presentation and discussion
- Able to connect their points to the points raised by their peers in a way that made the discussion logical and cohesive
- Easily intelligible and showed good interaction skills such as responding to viewpoints raised, initiating new topics for discussion, drawing conclusions from differing perspectives, and negotiating to arrive at a consensus.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses were summarised as follows:

- Prone to writing out full sentences for both Parts 1 and 2
- Unable to sustain communication once they had read aloud their last written sentence. More capable limited users may try to restate the main ideas, or to list some new ones, but would normally be unable to develop the points well.
- Lacked vocabulary and complexity in language structures. Many of these candidates were unable to string together a group of words to create simple accurate sentences.
- Speech was frequently marked by unsuccessful groping for words, hesitations and lack of confidence
- Could not respond immediately to the viewpoints raised by the others and the group discussion was marked by mere taking of turns (as opposed to turn-taking)

- The offerings of these less proficient candidates were also often not connected properly to the offerings made by other candidates, or even to the development of the task. This was usually because these less proficient candidates were more concerned with transmitting their points, rather than developing their points with the other points as raised by their peers.

The most common recurring problem that many candidates faced, regardless of their linguistic ability, was the lack of ability to connect the responses to the required task. Candidates were also reported to repeat their ideas, especially when they lacked the proficiency to elaborate. There was also the issue of the lack of general knowledge in some of the candidates, and this could also be seen in some of the candidates who were more proficient. It can be surmised that the less read or informed candidates are on current issues, the less the quality of their task fulfilment. Nevertheless, this problem is a strategic one, and can be remedied with better understanding of question requirements, and logical, organised thinking.

### PAPER 800/3 (READING)

#### Answer Key

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

## PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

### General Comments

Overall, the tasks are appropriate and pitched at the intended CEFR level; Task 1 is at A2 to B1 levels and Task 2 is at B2 to C1 levels. Task 1 and Task 2 comply with the MUET writing test specifications as both tasks intend to assess candidates' ability to communicate in writing in the context of higher education, in a less formal and a more formal writing genre respectively.

### Specific Comments

#### Task 1

Task 1 tests the candidates' ability to respond to the information given in the email about Bob asking Salim to join him for a 10 000-step walk during the weekend. The task demands the candidates' ability to analyse and respond to the keywords found in the given email. In their reply to the email, candidates are to respond to the four notes accordingly. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between the given information are the requirements.

#### Task 2

Task 2 examines how well the candidates respond to the task, develop and link ideas as well as present their viewpoints on 'Kindness is a quality that is gradually disappearing among us today'. Kindness is a subject matter that the candidates are familiar with, thus, should be able to relate to. However, Task 2 itself can be very challenging as it demands high critical thinking skills from candidates. It tests their ability to make a stand, write an effective thesis statement, present relevant viewpoints and provide justifications for the stand taken.

## EXPECTED ANSWERS

#### Task 1

The task requires candidates to reply to an email sent by Bob. The task requires candidates to provide accurate and relevant information based on the four notes given in the email. An email format is required, and the minimum word count is 100 words. The email must be written in a concise manner and accurately respond to the notes given. An opening remark followed by responses to the notes in the body paragraph and an appropriate closure are expected. Candidates need to use appropriate linkers and apt vocabulary. The expected voice is one of clarity, consistent and yet friendly. Irrelevancies and inaccuracies of information and vague responses due to missing point of reference are not tolerated. No new information should be given; outside than what is provided in the question. When a candidate fails to respond to the notes given in the question, it is considered that the candidate has failed to fulfil the task in an adequate manner.

Candidates are expected to reply to an email to Bob by responding to the four notes given. They are also expected to provide an address, date, salutation, opening and closing remarks, and a sign off in their responses. There are eleven parts to the answer which are:

- Opening remark / salutation / name of receiver (Hello Bob! I hope that you are fine.)
- Responding to Bob's enquiry about Salim and his family's wellbeing
- Responding to whether Salim has completed the essay given by Miss Tan
- Expressing gladness that Bob has gone for the 10 000-step walk or stating that walking is fun
- Responding to Bob's enquiry about exercising



- Giving a remark about Bob's dislike of swimming or exercising is important to stay healthy
- Suggesting two exercises with elaboration
- Accepting Bob's offer to join in the walk
- Closing remark (See you soon Bob.)
- Signing off (Salim).

Candidates are required to provide relevant elaborations for the notes. Apt vocabulary and simple to complex structures are required for a response to be placed in a higher band.

Candidates are expected to give logical connection to their responses by making use of appropriate linkers. Candidates are also expected to use the correct register in replying to the email. Irrelevancies and inaccuracies of information should not be present in the response to the email.

The correct subject which is 'giving suggestions for exercising and joining Bob for a 10 000-step walk', is required for the correct point of reference to be stated in the response. In cases where there was no subject clearly and correctly stated in the response, the response is deemed as vague, and that the candidate has failed to understand the message in the email. All the ensuing responses will then be considered as irrelevant to the task. Or, in cases where there was no link to information found between the notes and expansion, it is taken to mean that the candidate has failed to understand the task fully. Candidates are also expected to use the phrases or words provided in the notes or some other words which carry the same ideas/contexts to the notes.

### Task 2

The task requires candidates to present a response to the statement 'Kindness is a quality that is gradually disappearing among us today' in not less than 250 words. Candidates are required to make a stand and provide two or three well-developed ideas to support the stand made with convincing argument or discussion with relevant examples. Accurate use of language with a combination of simple to complex structures are demanded to achieve a high band for this task.

A discursive or an argumentative essay is expected, in which the function of the language used here is to explain or justify a particular stand held in relation to the statement given. Candidates are expected to engage in a mature discussion of the topic.

Candidates are also expected to:

1. Define the key words in the given statement (preferably)
2. Make a clear stand on the issue (to agree, disagree or agree to a certain extent)
3. Write a clear thesis statement to indicate the direction taken
4. Write an argumentative or discursive essay about why and how kindness is disappearing gradually among us today. If the candidate disagrees with the statement, they must prove otherwise.
5. Provide three points (or at least two) and develop them with reasonable depth
6. Explain or justify viewpoints with appropriate examples
7. Treat the subject with a certain level of maturity: No unsubstantiated claims or sweeping statements should be made

8. Organise ideas in paragraphs, showing evidence of planning and knowledge of the conventions of academic writing
9. Sustain the stand and maintain a consistent and convincing tone throughout the response.

In terms of language, candidates are expected to:

1. Use a variety of sentence structures
2. Use varied and appropriate vocabulary
3. Use appropriate cohesive devices or connectors to link sentences
4. Write no fewer than 250 words
5. Observe the mechanics of writing, ensuring effective use of language as required by the task.

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS**

### **Task 1**

It is noted that majority of the candidates were able to fulfil the task requirements for this question. However, the quality of responses leaves much room for improvement. In general, most candidates understood the task and were able to respond to it according to the format of writing an email using an appropriate register. Most candidates could write a correct salutation; however, not many test takers were able to start the email with suitable opening remarks. Apart from that, test takers also managed to establish the context of the email (joining for a 10 000-step walk and suggesting exercises). Candidates had also responded to all four notes in different paragraphs at varying lengths and degrees of success, as well as ended the task with appropriate closing remarks and a sign off. The majority of the candidates wrote the sender's email address and the subject of the email (format), even though this part was optional. However, some of the subjects written were either vague, inaccurate or left blank.

The majority of test takers were able to respond to Note 1, giving some kind of reasons why Salim had not managed to complete his essay writing. The reasons given were mostly simple but adequate.

Note 2 was also elaborated on by many candidates. Many test takers attempted to make comments on the 10 000-step walk done by Bob, but the comments fell short. The comments were either vague (unclear reference made to the 10 000-step walk) or inaccurate (inaccurate number of steps).

The same thing happened in Note 3, in which many test takers simply ignored making comments on Bob's experience with swimming or plans to exercise to stay healthy. Only a small number of candidates responded to it with varying degrees of success. The failed attempts were mainly due to unclear references or inaccurate responses.

The majority of candidates expanded on the suggestion for exercises at length, providing adequate and relevant suggestions. However, there were some expansions of ideas, despite their length, were full of irrelevancies.

Note 4 was moderately elaborated on with some degrees of success. There were also minimally written responses from some candidates. Candidates also had the tendency to combine the response for Note 4 with the closing remark before signing-off. Failed attempts were mainly due to vague references or inaccurate responses, such as declining the invitation to join Bob instead of agreeing to join.

Planning was evident when candidates managed to respond to each note in separate paragraphs and according to the prompt provided. All candidates attempted the task and on average, most candidates managed to give expansion to each note. In terms of language and organisation, responses were let down by candidates' inadequate mastery of good or basic sentence structures and lack of appropriate vocabulary.

On average, most candidates managed to give elaboration on each task/note given. However, the responses differ in quality. Some candidates were able to develop ideas sufficiently, but some merely responded to the prompt in one sentence.

### STRENGTHS

Almost all candidates, including the weaker ones attempted Task 1. There was an attempt to respond to all the notes given in the question paper. The following are the strengths noted:

Format	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates were aware that they had to respond to the question in an email format.</li> <li>2. Paragraphs were used effectively to differentiate the four notes given.</li> <li>3. Most candidates were able to write the email using appropriate header, suitable opening and closing remarks and signed off.</li> </ol>
Opening remarks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most candidates provided the correct salutation with the correct name of the receiver (e.g., <i>Hi Bob</i>).</li> <li>2. Some candidates started the response by providing general remarks which are typical of writing an email to friends (e.g., <i>I hope that you are fine, How are you?</i>).</li> </ol>
Note 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates' responses were generally simple (e.g., <i>All of us are fine or We are fine</i>).</li> <li>2. Most students were able to respond correctly in a simple manner (e.g., <i>No, I have not finished my homework because I was busy</i>).</li> </ol>
Note 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates were aware that they needed to respond to the situation where Bob went for the 10 000-step walk with his parents. Attempts were noted in many scripts, but some were not able to respond clearly, or the point of reference to 10 000-step walk was missing (e.g., <i>I am happy that you went for a walk with your parents</i>).</li> <li>2. Almost all candidates were able to respond accurately to Note 2. Elaborations and examples of exercise were given.</li> </ol>
Note 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many candidates did not respond to 'going for swimming class and staying healthy' as it was not prompted in the question paper. Few candidates managed to respond to it in a simple manner (e.g., <i>I am sorry you did not like swimming</i>).</li> <li>2. Most candidates were able to provide correct responses on suggesting two exercises. Candidates could relate to this note and therefore, elaborations given were relevant and adequate in nature. Apt words describing these exercises were also noted (e.g., <i>burn calories, strengthen muscles, panoramic scenery, and breathe in</i>).</li> </ol>

Note 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many candidates responded to this note in a simple manner. Elaborations were mainly simple but relevant. (<i>e.g., I will join you for the walk as I am free this weekend</i>).</li> <li>2. Some candidates were able to provide points of reference in their responses (<i>e.g., 10 000-step walk</i>), which shows that they have been guided by their teachers.</li> </ol>
Closing remark	Candidates were aware that they needed to provide a closure to their responses. Common phrases used were ‘write soon, see you soon and take care, good luck’.
Sign off	Generally, most candidates were aware that they needed to sign off as ‘Salim’.
Other strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates demonstrated the ability to respond to all prompts given.</li> <li>2. Candidates developed responses wherever possible.</li> <li>3. Candidates were able to use appropriate and precise vocabulary (<i>e.g., sorry to hear..., have been busy, in the pink of health, looking forward</i>).</li> <li>4. Candidates were able to use the correct tone for the email – a friendly tone.</li> <li>5. Paragraphs were used effectively to differentiate the notes.</li> <li>6. The awareness of providing the correct salutation and signing off with the correct name was evident in this session.</li> <li>7. All candidates, irrespective of language abilities, attempted Task 1.</li> </ol>

#### WEAKNESSES

In terms of weaknesses, it was noted that many test-takers who did not address the task appropriately and adequately had the following problems:

- Most limited and low English proficiency candidates did not develop the notes. They merely responded to the notes, often giving information out of context or with no specific subject reference.
- Most candidates gave limited and modest responses for the task. This is because most of them only addressed most parts with the main parts missing or just the simplest parts in a simple manner. Paragraphing was also sometimes lacking, where candidates wrote their email in one paragraph only.
- The convention or format of email writing was not adhered to. Frequently, the format, though not mandatory, was missing, incomplete or inaccurate.
- There were also vague salutations or none at all, minimal responses and no proper closure or sign-off.
- Some candidates ended the email without a signature block (here, a name)
- Inappropriate tone and failure to address all the given notes were noted.

Graphical Observations on Weakness:

Format	Some candidates failed to provide a header for the email.
Opening remarks & Note 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weak candidates gave distorted responses such as ‘<i>I am in the well</i>’.</li> <li>2. Some candidates gave an inaccurate response to Note 1. Instead of stating that Salim has not finished his homework, the candidates responded, ‘<i>Yes, I have finished the essay given by Miss Tan.</i>’.</li> </ol>

Note 2	The point of reference for Note 2 was missing in many responses (10 000-step walk).
Note 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates focussed on the note given in the question paper only and did not include the link to the note.</li> <li>2. Some candidates also spent too much time writing lengthy elaborations on the two exercises. This was due to the familiarity of the task and candidates got carried away. Thus, writing lacked focus and the responses often had elements of irrelevance.</li> </ol>
Note 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Although Note 4 was simple, responses ranged from brief to inaccurate answers. For example, some candidates just responded in one sentence (<i>e.g., Yes, I will be happy to go the walk with you</i>).</li> <li>2. The point of reference (10 000-step walk) was sometimes absent. (<i>e.g., Yes, I will join you</i>).</li> <li>3. Some answers were inaccurate (<i>e.g., No, I can't join you</i>).</li> </ol>
Closing remarks/sign off	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Closing remarks were simple and predictable (<i>e.g., write soon, bye and take care</i>).</li> <li>2. A few candidates signed off wrongly as they gave some other names instead of 'Salim'.</li> </ol>
Language use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor language proficiency hampered many candidates' attempts to respond to Task 1 in a clear manner. Although they understood the task, they were not able to elaborate and describe their ideas in an effective manner.</li> <li>2. Language errors ranged from wrong spelling, word choices, and forms of words, to tenses, singular/plural issues, subject-verb agreement and inconsistent use of pronouns.</li> <li>3. Structural errors were serious among weaker candidates. Meaning was often blurred due to string of words with no coherence.</li> </ol>

### Task 2

Generally, in responding to Task 2, some candidates showed understanding of the topic and the keywords provided. Candidates who agreed with the given statement stated a few reasons why the quality of kindness had disappeared, presented examples to illustrate their points of view and established links to the task. Those who had disagreed with the statement managed to discuss otherwise. Several situations were given by the candidates to show that acts of kindness were still practised by many.

On the other hand, the modest candidates were only able to give reasons as to why acts of kindness had disappeared in their responses, but did not manage to give relevant examples to support their discussions. The poorer candidates fared even worse, with many responses went off on a tangent, the popular one being the importance of building a caring society.

Many of the candidates gave a minimum of three main points, but the arguments were often insufficient, lacked depth, immature and superficial, as well as poorly linked, with little conviction in the writing. Most candidates responded insufficiently or modestly to this task primarily because they were not able to elaborate and substantiate their ideas due to insufficient content knowledge and weak language proficiency. Arguments to support their stand were general, tainted with grammatical errors and often distorted. Their arguments were often shallow and not convincing. The vocabulary and the sentence structures were also of limited variety and not precise. As such, sentences were often distorted, with some almost incomprehensible, and therefore, meaning did not come through. This may be because of their lack of vocabulary and content

knowledge on current issues. Their arguments and elaborations were therefore often insufficient, superficial, loose, repetitive, vague and lacking depth and maturity.

Candidates were expected to use a variety of simple and complex sentences, appropriate vocabulary, cohesive devices and organisational patterns. There should be evidence of planning and ideas should be organised logically using appropriate transition markers and linkers. Thus, proper paragraphing is required. Minor language slips are acceptable.

Candidates generally showed fair planning in their responses. Most provided an introduction, three points and a conclusion. Conventions of writing were seen in most scripts, including those by weaker candidates. Candidates took a stand and provided a thesis statement. Points were developed with details and examples, although most of the discussions were modest in nature.

### STRENGTHS

In terms of strengths, many test-takers were able to write their essays with the correct conventions of academic writing. It is also observed that:

- Most candidates took a stand and were consistent throughout the essay.
- Candidates were able to provide a thesis statement and topic sentences representing the main ideas.
- The better candidates were able to give well-organised, informative and comprehensible writing.
- Maturity of thought was evident as they were able to substantiate their points through facts mainly.
- Some candidates displayed good ability in managing simple sentence structures and demonstrated good control of complex structures.
- There was evidence of planning and organisation, as reflected in the use of paragraphs to structure their answers.
- Candidates were able to convey and develop three points.
- Candidates were able to use relevant ideas, explanations and examples to develop main ideas.
- Keywords from the given statement were included in the response.
- Relevant real-life examples were used.
- Relevant and current issues were included to support their discussions.
- Good cohesive devices were used.
- The lexicon used in Task 2 ranged from everyday vocabulary to basic vocabulary. Although it was a rare occurrence, some candidates were able to use the vocabulary appropriately. The words chosen were quite apt.

### WEAKNESSES

In terms of weaknesses, there were a few major concerns with Task 2 namely:

- The majority of candidates encountered difficulties in establishing evidence to show how acts of kindness were shown by the society or had disappeared. Even if they were able to provide examples to illustrate the act of kindness, the discussion lacked depth or was insufficiently elaborated.

- Some candidates failed to identify the actual task and proceeded to discuss the information in the instructions rather than the statement provided. Even if they were able to link, the weaker candidates provided shallow arguments and made sweeping statements.
- The element of maturity in thoughts was not clearly evident.
- Some weaker candidates failed to display the correct conventions of writing and the responses given were mostly irrelevant and not linked to task. A stand was not made, and no thesis statement was written in the introductory paragraph.
- In addition, some candidates were heavily influenced by their first language in the aspects of sentence structures and vocabulary.
- One recurring error observed in most responses was punctuation problems—there were no full stops and no commas, making sentences long-winded.
- There were attempts went off on a tangent such as:
  - The importance of building a kind society
  - The effects of being kind
  - The benefits of kindness
  - Ways to be kind and general explanations of kindness.
- It was also noted that candidates were taught to provide quotes by randomly mentioning famous personalities and linking them to unrelated or unknown quotes (e.g., Gandhi said kindness makes man).
- Candidates also quoted studies or research in a loose manner (e.g., studies have shown that 60% of young adults...).
- There were also others who merely gave suggestions on how to be kind or how to build a caring society. Some responses misunderstood the task entirely and focussed on irrelevant topic, concrete buildings; which demonstrated of a lack of understanding of the task requirements.

# MUET SESSION 2 2023 (800)

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

For Session 2 2023, 43 060 candidates sat the test.

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

Band	CEFR Level	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
		%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
5+	C1+	1.40	1.40	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
5.0	C1	13.41	14.81	1.88	2.08	4.12	4.29	0.12	0.14	0.26	0.26
4.5	B2	30.74	45.55	5.81	7.89	12.91	17.20	0.68	0.82	4.57	4.83
4.0		40.48	86.03	18.49	26.37	34.10	51.30	5.00	5.82	30.11	34.94
3.5	B1	12.57	98.60	38.57	64.94	28.55	79.86	25.61	31.42	47.65	82.59
3.0		1.34	99.94	26.06	91.00	13.87	93.73	52.58	84.01	15.72	98.31
2.5	A2	0.06	100.00	6.89	97.89	5.72	99.45	14.48	98.49	1.66	99.97
2.0		0.00	100.00	2.05	99.94	0.54	99.99	1.47	99.95	0.03	100.00
1.0		0.00	100.00	0.06	100.00	0.01	100.00	0.05	100.00	0.00	100.00



## PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

### Answer Key

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	B	11	C	21	C
2	A	12	A	22	C
3	B	13	C	23	C
4	C	14	C	24	C
5	B	15	A	25	B
6	A	16	E	26	A
7	B	17	C	27	A
8	B	18	C	28	B
9	B	19	B	29	B
10	A	20	A	30	B

## PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

### General Comments

The questions were designed to be clear and worded simply and concisely to facilitate comprehension. There were pitched at the targeted levels according to Parts 1 and 2, and thus candidates at the intended level should be able to access the words. The questions were relevant to the scope of the candidates' daily life, and/or general knowledge around the area. Aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards, these topics were pitched at A2-B1 for Part 1 and B1-B2 for Part 2. The general consensus was that the difficulty of the papers was uniform across the board. Moreover, the test did the job of discriminating the proficiency of the candidates, especially with regard to the difference in requirements of tasks between Part 1 and Part 2.

### Specific Comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to develop the points well, providing an in-depth discussion that was sustained and displayed maturity of thought
- Able to make connections between the task and their personal experiences, as well as current issues and general knowledge (for candidates who were better read)
- Able to show a high level of confidence and fluency in their presentation and discussion
- Able to connect their points to the points raised by their peers in a way that made the discussion logical and cohesive

- Able to use the preparation time to write notes in point form rather than creating full sentences and used the presentation time to elaborate on the notes
- Able to display 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
- Easily intelligible and showed good interaction skills such as responding to viewpoints raised, initiating new topics for discussion, drawing conclusions from differing perspectives and negotiating to arrive at a consensus

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses were summarised as follows:

- Prone to writing out full sentences for both Parts 1 and 2
- Lacked of vocabulary and complexity in language structures. Many of these candidates were unable to string together a group of words to create simple accurate sentences
- Speech was frequently marked by unsuccessful groping for words, hesitations and lack of confidence
- Unable to sustain communication once they had read aloud their last written sentence. More capable limited users may try to restate the main ideas, or to list some new ones, but would normally be unable to develop the points well
- Could not respond immediately to the viewpoints raised by the others and the group discussion was marked by mere taking of turns (as opposed to turn-taking)
- The offerings of these less proficient candidates were also often not connected properly to the offerings made by other candidates, or even to the development of the task. This was usually because these less proficient candidates were more concerned with transmitting their points, rather than developing their points with the other points as raised by their peers.

The most common recurring problem that many candidates faced, regardless of their linguistic ability, was the lack of ability to connect the responses to the required task. Candidates were also reported to repeat their ideas, especially when they lacked the proficiency to elaborate. There was also the issue of the lack of general knowledge in some of the candidates, and this could also be seen in some of the candidates who were more proficient. It can be surmised that the less read or informed candidates are on current issues, the less the quality of their task fulfilment. Nevertheless, this problem is a strategic one, and can be remedied with better understanding of question requirements, and logical, organised thinking.

## PAPER 800/3 (READING)

### Answer Key

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

## PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

### General Comments

Overall, both tasks are appropriate and pitched at the intended CEFR level, namely, Task 1 is at A2 to B1 levels and Task 2 is at B2 to C1 levels. Task 1 and Task 2 comply with the MUET writing test specifications as both tasks intend to assess candidates' ability to communicate in writing in the context of higher education, in a less formal to a more formal writing genres respectively. For Task 1, candidates are expected to respond accordingly to a given letter based on guided notes. Task 2 is on a subject matter that the candidates were familiar with, thus, able to relate to. The requirement of Task 2 is clear but very challenging as it demands high critical thinking skills from candidates. It tests their ability to take a stand, write an effective thesis statement, present relevant viewpoints and provide justifications for their position.

### Specific Comments

#### Task 1

In Task 1, the candidates are expected to write a reply to Dyna's letter, providing information about her plan to get a pet and seeking suggestions for which pet to get. Candidates are required to read the letter as well as the four notes given for each paragraph carefully and respond appropriately. The context, task and lexical items are familiar to most, if not all, test-takers. The language used in the letter and notes is appropriate and familiar to candidates of varying language proficiency as the language is pitched at CEFR A2 to B1 levels. Task 1 was moderately challenging, and the rubric clearly outlined the task requirements. The use of language in the instruction and question is appropriate for the level and nature of the test. The four notes given were also simple and clear. All in all, the task contained mostly high-frequency words and

candidates should be able to comprehend the task. Language and terms used were generally suitable for a letter to a friend. All candidates, regardless of language ability, should be able to understand the letter and the notes provided in the question paper.

### Task 2

The task requires candidates to present a response to the statement ‘Skill-based education is a ticket to unlimited opportunities in life’ in not more than 250 words. Candidates are required to make a stand and provide two or three well-developed ideas to support the stand made with convincing argument or discussion with relevant examples. The question was written in simple direct language. On word level, misinterpretation should not happen as the language used is clear-cut. At sentence level, low proficiency candidates will find this task to be a real challenge, as candidates’ understanding of the keyword ‘skill-based’ may differ. Some may have limited idea of what skill-based education is. However, the real challenge may lie in the test takers’ knowledge of this topic rather than in the terms and language used in the task. The instructions for the tasks are very direct and absolute. Candidates should be able to understand the task. Although the topic is relevant and appropriate for all levels and backgrounds of the target groups, it requires candidates’ critical thinking and maturity to discuss the question effectively and convincingly.

## EXPECTED ANSWERS

### Task 1

The candidates are expected to write a reply to Dyna’s letter. They are required to read the letter as well as the four notes given for each paragraph carefully and respond appropriately. Candidates are also required to organise their writing coherently and cohesively with clear reference to the notes and links given in the letter. The response should be at least 100 words in length and written concisely and clearly with appropriate register (i.e. semi-formal). Responses should have clear elaborations and the tone should be friendly. Candidates must pay attention to language use, correct tenses, appropriate linkers and apt vocabulary.

### Task 2

Task 2 is open for discussion and arguments, and is rather simple if candidates are able to focus on the keywords of the statement and question given. The candidates are expected to state their opinion as to whether they agree, disagree or partially agree that ‘Skill-based education is a ticket to unlimited opportunities in life.’ They are required to present three points with proper development to support their stance.

Candidates who disagree with the statement are expected to provide real-life and convincing examples of how skill-based education provides unlimited opportunities in one’s life. The nature of the task clearly requires candidates to have a stance and to be able to defend that stance throughout the essay. The challenges to the candidates are to stay consistent with a stance, discuss all keywords given in the statement, to justify viewpoints with relevant and apt examples and focus the discussion on the correct subject. In conclusion, these are challenging feats for the candidates. Accurate use of language with a combination of simple to complex structures is demanded to achieve a high band for this task. Mechanics of writing are to be observed, and effective use of language is also a demand of the task.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

### Task 1

Generally, answers were modest in nature. Candidates had a fair understanding of the task. They were able to respond correctly and accurately to the notes, including the opening and closing statements. Simple elaborations were observed in many responses. Most candidates demonstrated a commendable understanding of the format of the answer required, i.e., they provided the correct format for the letter, which included the address of the sender, opening remarks, closing remarks and a signature. Planning, especially paragraphing, was evident in most responses. The notes given guided the candidates to plan and present their responses in an orderly manner.

### STRENGTHS

Almost all candidates including the weaker ones attempted Task 1. There was an effort to respond to all the notes given in the question paper. The following are the strengths noted:

Format	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Candidates were aware that they had to respond to the question in a letter format.</li><li>2. Paragraphs were used effectively to differentiate the four notes given.</li><li>3. Most candidates were able to write the letter using an appropriate header, suitable opening and closing remarks, and signed off correctly.</li></ol>
Opening remarks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Most candidates provided the correct salutation with the correct name of the receiver (e.g., <i>Hi Dyna</i>).</li><li>2. Some candidates began their response with general remarks that are typical of writing a letter to friends (e.g., <i>I hope that you are fine, How are you?</i>).</li></ol>
Note 1	Candidates' responses were generally simple (e.g., <i>I miss our tea time chat too</i> ).
Note 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Many candidates responded to the statements in the paragraph. An example is 'Yes, keeping a pet is exciting'.</li><li>2. Most candidates responded in a straightforward manner to the note provided (e.g., <i>Now that you are studying from home, you can take care of your pet</i>).</li></ol>
Note 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Many candidates responded briefly, stating that the parents' ideas were interesting.</li><li>2. Most candidates responded to Note 3, and the most common suggestions given were cats, dogs, hamsters, fish and sugar gliders. Most candidates were able to provide explanations for these suggestions.</li></ol>
Note 4	Many candidates responded to this note in a simple manner. Elaborations were generally basic but relevant (e.g., <i>I will be happy to see you next weekend to talk more about keeping a pet</i> ).
Closing remark	Candidates were aware that they needed to provide a closure to their response. Common phrases used included: ' <i>write soon, see you soon and take care, good luck</i> '.
Sign off	Generally, most candidates were aware that they needed to sign off as 'Suzy'.
Other strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Candidates demonstrated the ability to attempt most or all the notes given.</li><li>2. Candidates elaborated their responses wherever possible.</li><li>3. A few candidates were able to use apt expressions.</li><li>4. Candidates used the correct tone for their response – a friendly tone.</li><li>5. All candidates, regardless of language ability, attempted Task 1.</li></ol>

## WEAKNESSES

In terms of weaknesses, candidates who did not address the task appropriately and adequately exhibited the following issues:

Format	Some candidates included an email header.
Opening remarks/ Salutation Note 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weak candidates provided unclear or distorted responses.</li> <li>2. Many candidates wrote the opening remarks after responding to Note 1 (e.g., <i>I miss our tea time chat too. How are you?</i>)</li> <li>3. Some candidates used the wrong name for salutation.</li> </ol>
Note 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distorted or vague answers included: <i>Agree!</i> <i>I agree with you, being a pet...</i> <i>Actually, I agree with your idea.</i></li> <li>2. Many candidates missed the idea of studying from home, as it was not established in their responses. Weak candidates also provided inaccurate or distorted responses such as: <i>Pet can cherish our day whenever we feel bored at home.</i> <i>Pets give good company.</i> <i>Pet can accompanying your when you are far from home.</i></li> </ol>
Note 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many candidates responded to Note 3 briefly and simply. Elaboration became irrelevant when excessive details about pets and their care were included.</li> <li>2. Some candidates spent too much time writing lengthy elaborations on the games to play with pets, causing their writing to lose focus and clarity.</li> <li>3. Vague and inaccurate responses were also observed, such as: <i>I suggest a bird. (given in the question)</i> <i>You can pet a cat. (distortion)</i></li> </ol>
Note 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Although Note 4 was simple, most responses lacked a clear point of reference. Many merely stated 'Yes' or 'I agree'.</li> <li>2. The idea of talking about pets was often omitted.</li> <li>3. Sometimes, incorrect responses were provided, such as: <i>I can't wait to see you. (time is not given)</i> <i>Lets meet at the café. (no time mentioned)</i> <i>You can tell me more about your pet. (implies that Dyna already owns a pet)</i> <i>I will tell you about my cat. (misaligned focus)</i></li> </ol>
Closing remark and Sign off	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Closing remarks were simple and conventional (e.g., <i>write soon, bye and take care</i>).</li> <li>2. Some candidates made errors while signing off (used a different name).</li> </ol>

Language use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor language proficiency hampered many candidates' attempt to respond to Task 1 in a clear manner. Although they understood the task, they were not able to elaborate on their ideas effectively.</li> <li>2. Language errors ranged from incorrect spelling, inappropriate word choices, wrong word forms, tenses, singular/plural usage, subject verb agreement and inconsistent use of pronouns.</li> <li>3. Structural errors were serious among weaker candidates. Meaning was often blurred due to incoherent word structures.</li> </ol>
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## Task 2

Candidates generally understood the requirement of the task. They attempted to respond to the task, although some did not manage their time properly and could only write a few sentences. Candidates generally showed fair planning in their responses. Most gave an introduction, three points and a conclusion. Writing conventions were seen in most responses, including those of weaker candidates. Candidates made a stand and gave a thesis statement. Points were developed with details and examples, although much of the discussion lacked depth.

### STRENGTHS

In terms of strengths, many test-takers were able to write their essays with the correct conventions of academic writing. Some of these strengths included:

- Most scripts had an introduction, a stand and a thesis statement. Paragraph planning was evident, with each paragraph containing a topic sentence and an explanation.
- There was a conscious effort by candidates to present their viewpoints, although many struggled with ideas and language. Conclusions were also provided though they are often short or abruptly ended. Many candidates reiterated their stand and repeated the thesis statement. Some offered suggestions to conclude their discussions.
- Discourse markers were observed in most responses. These helped organised points separately and made it easier for readers to understand the responses. This also indicated that candidates had planned their work.

### WEAKNESSES

In terms of weaknesses, there were a few major concerns with Task 2, namely:

- Candidates struggled to express their ideas effectively. Many repeated examples. For instance, the idea of skill-based education only revolved around photography and automobile industries. Limitless opportunities were linked to jobs and money. Hence, the discussions were mundane and lacked creativity.

- Many candidates failed to provide examples of skill-based education. Perhaps, they did not fully understand and resorted to write in a general manner during the discussion. Thus, the discussion was shallow and poorly addressed the task.
- Many candidates ended up giving advice or providing suggestions on why parents should send their children to skill-based education. The response often began with the main idea, followed by two simple explanations or examples, and then moved on to the next point.
- Answers lacked elaborations or depth.
- The responses went off on a tangent, focused merely on the benefits of skill-based education.
- Candidates sometimes contradicted their stand made in the introduction or, many times, their stand was not clear in the introduction.
- The thesis statement was sometimes not present.
- Many candidates displayed a modest use of the English language. Sentences were generally simple, and the vocabulary used was simple. Weak candidates made significant language errors, resulting in many incomprehensible sentences. Direct translation from L1 to English was also noted. Spelling errors were frequent.
- Candidates were often taught to provide quotes by randomly mentioning famous personalities and loosely linking them to unknown quotes.
- Candidates also quoted studies or research in an inconsistent manner.



# MUET SESSION 3 2023 (800)

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

For Session 3 2023, 71 077 candidates sat the test.

The percentages 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 are as follows:

Band	CEFR Level	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
		%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
5+	C1+	1.26	1.26	0.17	0.17	0.21	0.21	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00
5.0	C1	17.24	18.50	1.93	2.09	3.58	3.78	0.35	0.39	0.38	0.38
4.5	B2	34.06	52.56	6.00	8.10	10.96	14.74	1.59	1.98	4.97	5.35
4.0		29.52	82.08	20.28	28.38	31.44	46.18	6.32	8.30	29.91	35.27
3.5	B1	12.83	94.91	40.07	68.45	31.34	77.52	18.55	26.85	44.18	79.45
3.0		4.42	99.33	24.10	92.55	15.94	93.46	45.30	72.15	17.03	96.48
2.5	A2	0.61	99.94	5.91	98.46	6.05	99.51	24.61	96.76	3.37	99.85
2.0		0.06	100.00	1.48	99.93	0.49	100.00	3.17	99.93	0.15	100.00
1.0		0.00	100.00	0.07	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.07	100.00	0.00	100.00

**PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)****Answer Key**

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	A	11	A	21	A
2	B	12	B	22	C
3	C	13	C	23	B
4	A	14	A	24	A
5	B	15	E	25	C
6	A	16	A	26	B
7	C	17	D	27	C
8	A	18	A	28	C
9	B	19	C	29	A
10	A	20	A	30	B

## **PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)**

### **General Comments**

The questions were relevant to the scope of the candidates' daily life, and/or general knowledge around the area. Aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards, these topics were pitched at A2-B1 for Part 1 and B1-B2 for Part 2. The general consensus was that the difficulty of the papers was uniform across the board. Moreover, the test did the job of discriminating the proficiency of the candidates, especially with regard to the difference in requirements of tasks between Part 1 and Part 2.

### **Specific Comments**

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to develop the points well, providing an in-depth discussion that was sustained and displayed maturity of thought
- Able to make connections between the task and their personal experiences, as well as current issues and general knowledge (for candidates who were better read)
- Able to display 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
- Able to show a high level of confidence and fluency in their presentation and discussion
- Able to connect their points to the points raised by their peers in a way that made the discussion logical and cohesive
- Able to use the preparation time to write notes in point form rather than creating full sentences, and used the presentation time to elaborate on the notes
- Easily intelligible and showed good interaction skills such as responding to viewpoints raised, initiating new topics for discussion, drawing conclusions from differing perspectives and negotiating to arrive at a consensus.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses were summarised as follows:

- Prone to writing out full sentences for both Parts 1 and 2
- Speech was frequently marked by unsuccessful groping for words, hesitations and lack of confidence
- Could not respond immediately to the viewpoints raised by the others and the group discussion was marked by mere taking of turns (as opposed to turn-taking)
- Unable to sustain communication once they had read aloud their last written sentence. More capable limited users may try to restate the main ideas, or to list some new ones, but would normally be unable to develop the points well
- Lacked vocabulary and complexity in language structures. Many of these candidates were unable to string together a group of words to create simple accurate sentences.
- The offerings of these less proficient candidates were also often not connected properly to the offerings made by other candidates, or even to the development of the task. This was usually because these less proficient candidates were more concerned with transmitting their points, rather than developing their points with the other points as raised by their peers.

The most common recurring problem that many candidates faced, regardless of their linguistic ability, was the lack of ability to connect the responses to the required task. Candidates were also reported to repeat their ideas, especially when they lacked the proficiency to elaborate. There was also the issue of the lack of general knowledge in some of the candidates, and this could also be seen in some of the candidates who were more proficient. It can be surmised that the less read or informed candidates are on current issues, the less the quality of their task fulfilment. Nevertheless, this problem is a strategic one, and can be remedied with better understanding of question requirements, and logical, organised thinking.

### **PAPER 800/3 (READING)**

#### **Answer Key**

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	<b>B</b>	11	<b>A</b>	21	<b>G</b>	31	<b>B</b>
2	<b>C</b>	12	<b>C</b>	22	<b>D</b>	32	<b>C</b>
3	<b>A</b>	13	<b>C</b>	23	<b>A</b>	33	<b>C</b>
4	<b>A</b>	14	<b>B</b>	24	<b>C</b>	34	<b>D</b>
5	<b>B</b>	15	<b>B</b>	25	<b>E</b>	35	<b>C</b>
6	<b>B</b>	16	<b>B</b>	26	<b>F</b>	36	<b>B</b>
7	<b>A</b>	17	<b>A</b>	27	<b>A</b>	37	<b>B</b>
8	<b>B</b>	18	<b>C</b>	28	<b>C</b>	38	<b>B</b>
9	<b>C</b>	19	<b>C</b>	29	<b>D</b>	39	<b>A</b>
10	<b>A</b>	20	<b>B</b>	30	<b>C</b>	40	<b>A</b>

## PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

### General comments

Overall, both tasks are appropriate and pitched at the intended CEFR level. Task 1 is at A2 to B1 levels while Task 2 is at B2 to C1 levels. Tasks 1 and 2 comply with the MUET writing test specifications as both tasks intend to assess candidates' ability to communicate in writing in the context of higher education, in a less formal and a more formal writing genre respectively.

Task 1 features topic that candidates can easily relate to. The rubric is clear, and the context is explicitly provided, leaving no ambiguity regarding the sender or the objective of the email. Candidates are assessed of their ability to respond to an email based on the provided context and notes.

Task 2 also presents a relatable topic: 'Modern society has taken freedom for granted'. Candidates are assessed on their ability to write a discursive or argumentative essay that adheres to the conventions of academic writing. The topics for both tasks are appropriate for tertiary-level students, and assess their background proficiency, linguistic proficiency and academic writing abilities.

### Specific comments

#### Task 1

The difficulty level of Task 1 for this session is suitable for assessing candidates' actual proficiency in English. For Task 1, the language used in the stimulus corresponds to the B1 level and does not include technical jargon making it accessible to candidates at this level and above. The vocabulary used in the stimulus consists of common English words frequently encountered in daily life. The instructions in the task are clear and straightforward. The use of notes in the question which candidates should respond provide clear guidance to candidates on the parts of the email they are required to address. The topic of admiring a person is familiar, providing all candidates with an opportunity to respond to the task.

#### Task 2

Context for the statement was provided to assist candidates in understanding the task. The statement is direct and clearly worded. The question requires candidates to have knowledge of the topic, maturity of thought, organisational skills, as well as the ability to express an opinion to fulfil the task satisfactorily. The subject-matter 'freedom' is a common word, but the phrase 'taken for granted' may not be familiar for some candidates, particularly those with lower language proficiency levels. Thus, the task may be more challenging for candidates with limited understanding of the phrase 'taken for granted', which may affect their overall response. As such, Task 2 may be especially challenging for some candidates.

### EXPECTED ANSWERS

#### Task 1

The task requires candidates to respond to four main notes provided in the question through an email. The email is from a friend, Gary, who asked Zaki about his semester break and the activity he engaged during the break. Gary shared his activity during the semester break, which involved writing an article for a school magazine. The article was about his idol, Datuk Lee Chong Wei. Gary also asked Zaki about the person he admired the most and the lessons he had learned from the idol. Additionally, Gary asked if Zaki wanted to join him for lunch the next day. Zaki has to agree and suggest a time and place for the lunch.

Candidates are required to write their response to the email in at least 100 words in an appropriate style. In conveying the required information, candidates are expected to integrate and interpret the message of the email correctly and appropriately.

Candidates are required to use appropriate linkers and apt vocabulary. The expected tone is clear, consistent and friendly. Irrelevant and inaccurate information, as well as vague responses due to missing points of reference are not acceptable. No new information should be included, responses must remain within the scope of the question. Failure to respond to the notes given in the question, is considered an inadequate attempt to fulfil the task.

In Task 1, candidates are expected to respond to the task in the form of an email. In the reply, candidates are required to provide information in the following order:

- A proper salutation and opening remarks before responding accurately to the notes.
- Note 1 requires candidates to give a positive response about the semester break and describe the activities they did during the break. Candidates should elaborate further on these activities.
- Note 2 requires candidates to state a person Zaki admired the most and provide reason(s) for their choice. Candidates are also expected to respond to the preamble of Note 2; Gary writing an article for the school magazine or Gary writing about Datuk Lee Chong Wei.
- For Note 3, candidates are expected to describe the lessons Zaki learned from the person he admired and to provide relevant and adequate expansions for the description. Candidates must convey the idea of learning rather than merely describing the person. As for the preamble for Note 3, candidates should respond to the lessons Gary or Zaki could learn from Datuk Lee Chong Wei.
- For Note 4, candidates are required to respond affirmatively to Gary's invitation to meet for lunch and suggest a logical time for lunch and a suitable location for the meeting.
- Candidates should end the email with a proper closing remark and an accurate sign-off as Zaki.

Candidates are required to provide relevant elaborations for all the notes. Suitable vocabulary and the use of simple to complex structures are essential for a response to be placed in a higher band.

## Task 2

The task requires candidates to write either an argumentative or a discursive essay. Candidates are expected to take a stance; agree, disagree or adopt a partial position when attempting the task. Candidates should address the main keywords in the question, 'Modern Society', 'Freedom' and 'Taken for Granted' in a 5-paragraph essay. The introductory paragraph should include relevant lead in, clear stance and a thesis statement while the body paragraphs should establish clear links between the three keywords, supported by logical reasoning and relevant, and mature examples. Candidates are expected to display their ability to write using correct vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and proper cohesive devices. They should also organise their ideas logically while maintaining focus on the connection between the keywords.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

### Task 1

Candidates were required to respond to an email from Gary who 1) enquired about Zaki's semester break, 2) sought information on the activities that Zaki did during the break, 3) informed Zaki about him writing an article for the school magazine and about Datuk Lee Chong Wei (LCW) being the person Gary admired the most, 4) asked Zaki about the person he admired the most, 5) told Zaki that he has learned things from Datuk LCW, 6) asked Zaki what he learned from the person he admired the most and 7) asked Zaki if he would like to meet him for lunch and to name the place and time for the meeting. Candidates were expected to respond to all the notes given (including providing the salutation/opening remark, closing remark and sign-off) as stated in the question. Candidates were also expected to expand the notes with additional information relevant to the context and organise them accordingly.

Most candidates were able to respond according to the context provided. Candidates with a High English Proficiency (HEP) were able to expand their ideas and provide additional elaborations on the notes. They were also able to organise their responses well and use effective cohesive devices. However, candidates with Low English Proficiency (LEP) provided irrelevant answers and simple or no expansions to the notes. Candidates also made errors in providing a suitable time for lunch. Some suggested times, such as 4:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. in the evening, were not logical for lunch.

Planning, especially paragraphing, was evident in most responses. The notes guided the candidates to plan and present their responses in an orderly manner. Email format was present in most responses.

### STRENGTHS

Almost all candidates, including the weaker ones, attempted Task 1. There was an attempt to respond to all the notes given in the question paper. The following are the strengths noted:

Format	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Candidates were aware that they had to respond to the task in an email format.</li><li>2. Paragraphs were used effectively to differentiate the four notes given.</li><li>3. Most candidates were able to write the email using an appropriate header, correct salutation, suitable opening and closing remarks and sign off.</li></ol>
Opening & closing remarks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Most candidates provided the correct salutation with the correct name of the receiver (e.g., <i>Hi Gary, Hello Gary</i>).</li><li>2. Some candidates started the response by providing general remarks which are typical of writing to friends (e.g., <i>I hope that you are fine, How are you?</i>)</li><li>3. Common phrases used such as <i>'Write soon, Take care.'</i>, <i>'Take Care and stay safe'</i>, <i>'Hope to hear from you soon and Keep in touch.'</i></li></ol>
Responses to main notes	Most candidates were aware of the need to respond to all the notes given in the task. There was a clear attempt to address all four notes by most candidates.
Providing relevant and adequate development to all sub-notes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Candidates attempted to provide elaborations for all the notes, whether through a-one-liners or a few sentences. This has helped candidates add depth to their responses and demonstrate their knowledge of the topic, the person I admire the most.</li></ol>

	<p>2. Lengthy elaboration not only demonstrated candidates' general knowledge, but also their language ability. For example:</p> <p><i>One of the most striking qualities I have learned from this person is resilience. In the face of adversity and challenges, he demonstrated an unwavering ability to bounce back, transforming setbacks into opportunities for growth. Witnessing his resilience has taught me the importance of perseverance, encouraging me to confront life's hurdles with a tenacious spirit.</i></p>
Clear point of reference	Point of reference was clear.
Organisation	Responses given were paragraphed accordingly. Thus, even without proper transition signals, it was not a challenge to indicate where candidates were heading to in their writing. There was a clear direction, and most candidates followed the sequence of paragraphing as given in the question.
Sign off	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generally, most candidates were aware that they needed to sign off appropriately (<i>Your friend, Zaki</i>).</li> <li>2. Most candidates were aware that the name appearing in the sign-off must be the name given in the question paper. This is a remarkable improvement compared to previous sessions, where many candidates used their own names, resulting in an inaccurate response.</li> </ol>
Other strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates demonstrated the ability to respond to all prompts given.</li> <li>2. Candidates developed responses wherever possible.</li> <li>3. Candidates were able to use the correct tone for the email – friendly tone.</li> <li>4. Paragraphs were used effectively to differentiate the notes.</li> <li>5. All candidates irrespective of language abilities attempted Task 1.</li> <li>6. Candidates were aware that they needed to pay attention to other parts of the email, even these were not highlighted in the four notes provided.</li> </ol>
Language use	<p>It was noted that candidates were able to use simple sentence structures and vocabulary for Task 1. Examples of good language include:</p> <p><b>Impressive word/phrases:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the weather</li> <li>• Right as rain</li> <li>• Inconsolable</li> <li>• Rejuvenated and invigorated</li> <li>• Keep at bay</li> <li>• Let your hair down</li> <li>• Vigorous</li> <li>• Adrenaline-pumping</li> <li>• Exhilarating</li> <li>• I await eagerly</li> <li>• I cannot content my excitement</li> <li>• I am willing to give it a go</li> </ul> <p><b>Idioms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A whale of a time</li> <li>• A stone's throw away</li> </ul>



## WEAKNESSES

In terms of weaknesses, candidates who did not address the task appropriately and adequately had the following issues:

Format	Fewer candidates missed out on the header of the email.
Wrong names	Some candidates did not state the correct names of the receiver and sender. The names were misspelled as Zaky, Zack, Zakie, Garry and Garr. A few candidates signed off the email using their own names.
Wrong subject reference or missing subject reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some candidates made an incorrect subject reference for Note 1 'Great.' They referred to how they felt during the semester break instead of describing the semester break itself. A few candidates also used this word to describe themselves.</li> <li>2. Missing subject references commonly occurred for Note 2 (e.g., candidates wrote, 'Wow! Congratulations!' without giving any explanation) or for Note 4 (e.g., 'Yes, that is a great idea' without mentioning the meet up)</li> </ol>
Response to main notes and subnotes	It was noted that many candidates did not address parts of the email that required responses, even though these parts were not prompted in the question paper. For example, they did not express that Gary was writing an article and respond to the idea of learning values/lessons from Datuk Lee Chong Wei or from the person they admired the most. It is evident that many candidates approached the task in a mechanical manner, focusing only on answering the notes that were given in the question. By responding to all parts of the email where a response can be given, candidates would be able to provide a complete reply.
Development of the notes	These lengthy developments could sometimes be irrelevant.
Unclear/vague context/distortions	<p>Examples of distortions with their correct responses are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The person that admire me</i> – correct response is <i>the person that I admire most</i></li> <li>• <i>I am working part time now</i> – correct response is <i>I worked part time</i></li> <li>• <i>I was busy writing the article</i> – correct response is <i>you were busy writing the article</i></li> <li>• <i>No, I cannot meet you</i> – correct response is <i>I am free to meet up</i></li> <li>• <i>Let's meet for dinner</i> – correct response is <i>lunch</i></li> </ul>

Language use	<p>Many candidates struggled with the use of the English language. Weak candidates had difficulty presenting their responses clearly as they were not able to use the correct vocabulary and sentence structures. Examples of errors made are as follows:</p> <p><b>Wrong choice of words and phrases</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I just at home speeding time.</i></li> <li>• <i>Recharge my body battery.</i></li> <li>• <i>I am a natural lover.</i></li> <li>• <i>Residential area.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lest meet.</i></li> <li>• <i>Long time not meet you</i></li> <li>• <i>It a good person</i></li> <li>• <i>On 1pm</i></li> <li>• <i>I sugges a place</i></li> <li>• <i>Your title is good</i></li> <li>• <i>My was semester break</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of grammar/structure errors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>He is my admire</i></li> <li>• <i>I have a lot activities doing at my semester break</i></li> <li>• <i>I love she because I love to sing to</i></li> <li>• <i>I have person admire the most too</i></li> <li>• <i>My person I was admire</i></li> <li>• <i>I admire the most him because</i></li> <li>• <i>It very great time for me</i></li> <li>• <i>He always keep trained himself</i></li> <li>• <i>How struggle to be singer</i></li> <li>• <i>She the top number one singer at Malaysia</i></li> <li>• <i>She is a good attitude with her fans</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of spelling errors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gudluck for your article</i></li> <li>• <i>Exampel</i></li> <li>• <i>Intresting</i></li> <li>• <i>Excitemen</i></li> <li>• <i>Outdore</i></li> <li>• <i>Sinonim</i></li> <li>• <i>Gogle</i></li> <li>• <i>Exited</i></li> <li>• <i>Quikly</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Wrongly written linkers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Instantly,</i></li> <li>• <i>Besides that,</i></li> <li>• <i>Beside,</i></li> <li>• <i>On other reasons</i></li> <li>• <i>Another than</i></li> </ul>
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## Task 2

Generally, candidates were aware of the requirement of the task. Candidates tried to respond to the task although some did not manage their time properly and could only write a few paragraphs. Many spent more time writing lengthy responses for Task 1, leaving insufficient time to respond to Task 2. Candidates generally showed a fair planning in their responses. Most responses followed a conventional structure including an introduction, three points and a conclusion. Convention of writing was seen in most scripts including the weaker ones. Candidates generally made a stand and gave a thesis statement. Points were developed with details and examples, although most of the discussions were modest in nature.

Most candidates were able to compose an essay consisting of five paragraphs: An introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion. They also demonstrated their ability to properly formulate a thesis statement, topic phrase, and a conclusion. However, a few candidates had two introductions in their essays. Some introductory paragraphs contained generic, predictable or irrelevant information. Additionally, some candidates failed to express their stance, leading examiners to draw their own conclusions. Others began their essays with a stand, produced short introductions and abrupt endings. In some cases, candidates even copied the rubric as their introduction. A common issue was the omission of the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph, which led to mixed success in conveying their argument.

In terms of cohesive devices, candidates were able to use a variety of cohesive devices appropriately such as 'First and foremost, secondly, next, lastly, in conclusion, in a nutshell', was evident among the candidates. It was also observed that the LEP candidates had the tendency to write uneven paragraphs, some were quite long while some were quite short. This was likely due to insufficient knowledge about essay structures and content about the topic. Repetition of ideas was also observed in the candidates' essays, especially the phrase taken directly from the rubric: People today want total freedom without taking into consideration the consequences for their actions.

With regard to content, only a small number of candidates were able to justify their stance and propose convincing reasons and examples to support their arguments. Generally, many candidates were able to describe the reasons modern society has taken freedom for granted (e.g., freedom of technology, freedom of making friends, ignoring the sacrifices of the forefathers, abusing the law etc.). However, problems arose when candidates failed to explain how freedom has been taken for granted, often failed to link all the keywords in the body paragraphs, and to provide strong and relevant examples to support their claims. Moreover, many LEP candidates misunderstood the phrase 'modern society' in the stimulus, interpreting it as 'modernisation', 'advancement of technology', 'government', 'politician', 'parents', 'school', 'society', etc. The phrase 'taken for granted' also posed as challenging to the LEP candidates as the meaning of the phrase was seen as giving 'freedom to youngsters', 'advantages of freedom' etc. For this session, it was more common to see many essays became tangential, because focussing only on advantages and disadvantages of freedom, advantages and disadvantages of modern society, ways to appreciate freedom and presented blatant tangential points such as modernisation, technology, culture, economy etc. Meanwhile candidates with moderate proficiency could state reasons for how freedom has been taken for granted, but they struggled to explain how and why this has occurred. They tended to provide sweeping statements, touching only slightly on the keywords and overgeneralising ideas. However, higher proficiency candidates were able not only to provide strong reasons and show how modern society has taken freedom for granted, but also to remain consistent with their stand. They provided convincing elaboration and real-life examples to support their arguments effectively.

It was also an alarming situation when many candidates did not attempt Task 2 appropriately. Some wrote only three short paragraphs, two sentences, or left the paper blank. It was also observed that, by centres, candidates used an essay template to write the essay. This not only resulted in more controlled and mechanical writing conventions and use of cohesive devices but was also detrimental when the candidates assumed a one-size-fits-all approach.

Other than that, the responses given by weaker candidates were mostly in the form of one-liners or without relevant elaborations and examples. Although written in English, lexical choices and sentence structures were poor, delivering no meaning to the reader and creating confusion. For example:

*I believe modern society freedom nowadays taken for granted. People want total freedom without taking consideration for their consequence. Freedoms taken for granted is modern society total. People society modern has granted freedom.*

As shown in the above example, for weak candidates, language was the main reason why they could not write this essay. They showed no understanding of the keywords. They simply lifted the stimulus given, adding one or two words and repeating the same words.

In addition, some candidates were heavily influenced by their first language in terms of sentence structures and vocabulary, making the responses difficult to understand and fuzzy. Most of the responses had punctuation problems. There were no full stops, no commas and sentences were very long-winded. For example:

*Freedom is something that everybody has heard of but if you ask for its meaning then everyone will give you different meaning this is so because everyone has a different opinion about freedom depending on their perspectives. For some freedom means differently for some means the freedom of going anywhere they like for some means the freedom to speak up for themselves and for some the freedom of doing anything they like.*

Examples of misinterpreting the statement given in the task:

- Interpreting modern society as modern, modern city and modern technology
- Interpreting freedom as free, freedom for granted and taken freedom
- Interpreting taken for granted as taken freedom or not taking freedom, freedom being granted or not granted

## STRENGTHS

In terms of strengths, candidates were able to respond to the task using the correct conventions of academic writing:

- It was noted that candidates attempted the task. Most of them agreed with the statement given, which was, 'Modern society has taken freedom for granted.'
- The points given by the candidates were mainly simple and predictable, such as: Freedom to use social media is abused by posting rude comments, freedom of dressing is not appreciated, freedom to choose gender can be sensitive and freedom of education is not taken seriously.
- Elaborations were generally simple, lacking depth and maturity.

- Conventions of writing were evident in most responses. Candidates were guided to write essays, and this was reflected in their writings. Most responses included an introduction, a stand and a thesis statement. The planning of paragraphs was also noted, with each paragraph containing a topic sentence and explanation.
- There was a conscious effort by the candidates to present their viewpoints although many struggled to present their ideas confidently and use language effectively. Conclusions were also provided, though they often appeared short or ended abruptly. For example, many candidates simply reiterated their stand and repeated the thesis statement. Some attempted to give suggestions to conclude their discussions.
- Discourse markers were noted in most responses. These helped to separate the points being developed and made it easier for readers to understand the responses. This also demonstrates that candidates planned their work.

### WEAKNESSES

In terms of weaknesses, candidates who did not address the task appropriately and adequately exhibited the following issues:

- For Task 2, the quality of the responses ranged from limited to satisfactory. A considerable number of candidates veered off-topic and wrote essays that were not aligned with the statement given. For example, many wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of living in a modern society and why freedom is important.
- Many candidates failed to provide examples of how ‘freedom is taken for granted’. This indicates that many candidates did not fully understand the meaning of ‘taken for granted’.
- Many candidates also ended up giving advice or providing suggestions.
- Responses lacked elaboration or depth. Responses often began with the main idea, followed by two-liner explanations or a simple example, before moving on to the next point.
- Candidates sometimes contradicted the stand they made in the introduction. For example, they agreed with the statement initially but changed their stand midway through the discussion.
- The thesis statement and stand were sometimes absent in the essays, requiring examiners to infer them.
- Many candidates displayed a modest use of the English language. Sentences were generally simple, and the vocabulary used was limited. Weak candidates made significant language errors, with many incomprehensible sentences. Direct translation from L1 to English was also evident, and spelling errors were frequent.





# **REPORT AND INSIGHTS** **MUET 2023**

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