



MAJLIS PEPERIKSAAN MALAYSIA  
*Malaysian Examinations Council*



# REPORT AND INSIGHTS MUET 2024





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(198201009396)

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ISBN: 978-629-498-669-5

First Published 2026

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# MUET SESSION I 2024 (800)

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

For Session 1 2024, 38 205 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+	2.01	2.01	0.40	0.40	0.85	0.85	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
5.0	C1	14.14	16.14	2.95	3.35	8.09	8.94	0.14	0.15	0.61	0.61
4.5	B2	26.36	42.51	8.28	11.63	16.73	25.67	0.90	1.05	6.65	7.26
4.0		34.15	76.66	23.38	35.01	33.26	58.93	6.40	7.45	34.09	41.35
3.5	B1	17.81	94.47	39.54	74.55	24.66	83.59	23.33	30.78	41.76	83.11
3.0		4.78	99.25	19.93	94.48	11.67	95.26	50.55	81.33	14.41	97.52
2.5	A2	0.68	99.93	4.21	98.69	4.47	99.73	17.07	98.41	2.37	99.89
2.0		0.07	100.00	1.27	99.96	0.27	100.00	1.56	99.97	0.11	100.00
1.0		0.00	100.00	0.04	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.03	100.00	0.00	100.00

## PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

### Answer keys

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	B	11	C	21	C
2	C	12	A	22	B
3	C	13	B	23	A
4	C	14	C	24	B
5	C	15	E	25	C
6	A	16	D	26	B

7	B	17	B	27	C
8	C	18	A	28	A
9	A	19	A	29	C
10	A	20	B	30	A

## PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

### General Comments

MUET Paper 2, Session 1 of 2024 was generally received well. The questions were reported to be pitched appropriately according to the levels of the tasks (Part 1 & Part 2) and were relevant to the scope of the candidates' daily life, and/or general knowledge around the area. Aligned with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) standards, these topics were pitched at A2-B1 for Part 1 and B1- B2 for Part 2, thus students at the intended level should be able to access the words. The question papers were appropriate, reliable and the general consensus was that the difficulty of the papers was uniform across the board.

### 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 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 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, negotiating to arrive at a consensus.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Tend to writing out full sentences for both Parts 1 and 2.
- Difficult 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 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 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>B</b>	11	<b>A</b>	21	<b>D</b>	31	<b>C</b>
2	<b>A</b>	12	<b>B</b>	22	<b>B</b>	32	<b>D</b>
3	<b>A</b>	13	<b>C</b>	23	<b>G</b>	33	<b>A</b>
4	<b>C</b>	14	<b>C</b>	24	<b>C</b>	34	<b>C</b>
5	<b>C</b>	15	<b>B</b>	25	<b>F</b>	35	<b>C</b>
6	<b>A</b>	16	<b>B</b>	26	<b>E</b>	36	<b>D</b>
7	<b>C</b>	17	<b>B</b>	27	<b>B</b>	37	<b>D</b>
8	<b>A</b>	18	<b>C</b>	28	<b>C</b>	38	<b>A</b>
9	<b>C</b>	19	<b>C</b>	29	<b>B</b>	39	<b>B</b>
10	<b>B</b>	20	<b>C</b>	30	<b>A</b>	40	<b>B</b>

### **PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)**

#### **General Comments**

Overall, the tasks are appropriate and pitched at the intended CEFR level, namely, Task 1 is at A2 to B1 levels and Task 2 at B2 to C1 levels. Task 1 and Task 2 comply with the MUET writing test specifications where it intends 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 is on a topic that candidates can easily relate to – “cooking competition.” The rubric is clear, and the context has been provided. There is no ambiguity in the email and the notes given for candidates to respond to are clear.

### **Task 2**

Task 2 is also a topic that candidates should easily relate to, on a current topic “Education on mental health is necessary in the 21st century.” Candidates are evaluated on their ability to write a discursive or argumentative essay as stipulated in the MUET writing test specification. The topic is considered suitable for pre-tertiary level students, and it measures candidates’ content and linguistics knowledge as well as their academic writing skills.

## **EXPECTED ANSWERS**

### **Task 1**

The task requires candidates to respond to four main notes given in the question in the form of an email. The email was from Cindy, who informed Nora about participating in a cooking competition and sought advice on choice of dishes and presentation of the dishes in an interesting way.

A suitable header should be given followed with a correct salutation (Dear Cindy). A simple opening remark such as “Great to hear from you” or “How are you” is expected.

Note 1 required candidates to provide a suitable greeting, opening remarks and acknowledging that Nora was indeed busy and provide sufficient development. Note 2 required the candidates to express enthusiasm and give encouragement to Cindy who will be taking part in a cooking competition. Note 3 expects candidates to offer help by suggesting two dishes suitable for afternoon tea. Finally, note 4 requires candidates to offer advice on presenting the dishes interestingly and comment on the idea of buying recipe books to accomplish the interesting presentation.

Candidates can give their responses indicating the same intended meanings and not limiting themselves to the given notes. Candidates are expected to provide a proper closing remark and accurate sign off at the end of the letter. Candidates are expected to structure their responses coherently, with clear paragraphs for each part of the four notes. Appropriate register should be noted, i.e., candidates should use a friendly and supportive tone suitable for a communication between friends. Candidates also need to demonstrate a good command of vocabulary and grammar, with minimal errors.

### **Task 2**

The task requires candidates to express their opinion based on the statement – “Education on mental health is necessary in the 21st century” in at least 250 words. A context for the statement was given to assist candidates in understanding the task. The statement is direct and clearly worded. The question demands candidates to have knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, organisational skills as well as the ability to express opinion to fulfil the task satisfactorily. While some candidates who haven’t previously contemplated the issue on mental health may struggle with their response, those who have acquainted themselves with mental health topics would likely be better equipped to provide a suitable answer.

In Task 2 candidates were expected to make a stance; agree, disagree, or have a partial stand when attempting the task. The candidates should address the main keywords in the question, namely 'Education' and 'Mental health' in a 5-paragraph essay. A relevant lead in, clear stand and thesis statement should be written in the introductory paragraph while for the body paragraphs, the candidates should be able to establish a clear link between the key words through logical reasoning and relevant, mature examples. The candidates were also expected to display their ability to write using correct vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and proper cohesive devices.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

### Task 1

Most candidates were able to respond according to the context given. 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 answers well and use effective cohesive devices. However, candidates with Low English Proficiency (LEP) provided irrelevant answers and simple or no expansions to the notes.

Overall, candidates' task fulfilment scores fell within the range of MUET Band 2.5 (CEFR A2) to Band 4.0 (CEFR B1). This was primarily attributable to incomplete responses and the use of the English language. A significant number of candidates committed grammatical inaccuracies in their sentences, including errors in verb tense, inconsistent use of past, present, and future tenses within paragraphs, incorrect verb forms, subject-verb agreement errors, and wrong use of singular and plural words. Additionally, inappropriate word selection and omissions led to fragmented and disjointed sentences. In addition, while planning and presentation generally met satisfactory standards, the quality of responses often failed to meet the desired benchmarks. Many scripts contained brief and simplistic answers, lacking depth and thorough development.

### In terms of strength:

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 followings are the strengths noted:

<b>Appropriate format</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates are aware that they had to respond using 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, correct salutation, suitable opening and closing remarks and sign off.</li> </ol>
<b>Opening &amp; closing remarks</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most candidates provided the correct salutation with the correct name of the receiver (e.g. Hi Cindy, Hello Cindy) Some candidates gave opening remarks which are typical when writing to friends. (e.g., hope that you are fine, how are you?)</li> <li>2. Some of the common closures in the scripts were "good luck, break a leg, hope you will win and bye."</li> </ol>
<b>Responses to main notes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates were aware that they had to respond to all the notes given in the question. There was a clear attempt to respond to all the 4 notes.</li> <li>2. Most candidates also attempted to respond to the notes with some expansion, signalling their awareness to elaborate their answers.</li> <li>3. For Note 2, an example of a good elaboration is <i>"I'm excited to know that you are going to take part in the cooking competition. As far as I know, you are the best chef, and your signature dishes are simply scrumptious. I'm sure you're going to ace this competition."</i></li> </ol>

	<p>4. Similarly, many were able to respond to Note 3 – (“suggest two”) afternoon tea dishes for the cooking competition with elaboration in varying quality. Answers ranged from simple to lengthy descriptions of two dishes. For example, a simple, direct response was, <i>“I would like to suggest to you to make fried rice and dessert such as cream puff and others.”</i></p> <p>A more detailed response was, <i>“I suggest you to prepare our traditional dishes, Kuih Badak Berendam and Puteri Ayu. These two dishes are simple to prepare despite of they are delicious and mouth-watering.”</i></p>
<b>Organisation</b>	Most candidates presented their answers using appropriate paragraphs. These paragraphs were arranged according to the notes given in the question. So, reading candidates’ answers were rather easy without the use of proper transitional signals. There was a clear direction in the way answers were presented
<b>Sign off</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generally, most candidates were aware that they must sign off the email with the correct name, Nora.</li> <li>2. This is a remarkable improvement when compared to previous sessions where many candidates used their own names, hence creating inaccuracies in their answers.</li> </ol>
<b>Other strengths</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates demonstrated the ability to respond to most 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. All candidates, irrespective of language abilities, attempted Task 1.</li> <li>5. Candidates were aware that they must pay attention to other parts of the email where responses are needed.</li> </ol>
<b>Language use</b>	<p>Generally, candidates used less formal language which is considered apt for the task. Simple vocabulary and sentence structures were noted in most of the answers.</p> <p>Example of good language are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use appropriate vocabulary (e.g., <i>intriguing, creative, scrumptious</i>)</li> <li>2. Use correct simple to complex structures. (e.g., <i>‘Your mum’s cheesecake is scrumptious and mouth-watering and I am very sure you can learn a lot from her to compete in the cooking competition because I remember you told me that she was a well-known chef before she retired a few years back.’</i>)</li> <li>3. Use cohesive devices. E.g., <i>“Moreover, on the other hand, next, however, In fact.”</i></li> <li>4. Use idiomatic expressions E.g., <i>“in the pink of health”, “break a leg.”</i></li> </ol>

### In terms of weaknesses:

<b>Format</b>	Few students missed out on the subject at the header. This omission created a major problem in some of the scripts where the point of reference to notes 2, 3 and 4 was absent. When “cooking competition” was not mentioned anywhere in the answer or when candidates just wrote “competition” only, responses to notes 2,3 and 4 become unclear. The suggestions for note 3 and 4 could be preparation for evening tea only. If the subject matter appeared in the header (cooking competition), many candidates would have fared far better in their performance for Task 1. It was also seen that some candidates were not able to provide a clear, relevant subject when the attempt was made. (“happy for you” or “good luck”).
<b>Wrong names</b>	A few candidates signed off the email using their own names or scribbled the name ‘Nora.’
<b>Wrong subject reference or missing subject reference</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Missing point of reference was a glaring issue for Task 1, resulting many candidates from obtaining good marks for content. For instance, in responding to Note 2 (“Great!..”), on the idea of Cindy taking part in a cooking competition for the first time, some candidates failed to clearly state ‘taking part/ joining/ participating in a cooking competition’ in their answers. This omission resulted in vague, unclear responses. (e.g., <i>That’s great! I’m so proud of you. I’m sure you will be excellent since your hobby is cooking since you were a kid, right?</i>).</li> <li>2. Likewise, in responding to Note 4 (“Tell Cindy”), on the idea whether buying recipe books is helpful in getting ideas to present her dishes in an interesting way, most candidates missed the main point of reference which is ‘presenting dishes.’</li> <li>3. Many candidates missed the idea of presenting dishes in an interesting/creative/ intriguing way too.</li> </ol>
<b>Language use</b>	<p>Many candidates struggled with the use of the English language. Weak candidates struggled presenting their responses clearly as they were not able to use correct vocabulary and sentence structures. Example of errors made are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Grammatical mistakes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Everyone at home are doing well.</i></li> <li>– <i>I’m hope you are fine too</i></li> <li>– <i>We went to Pulau Langkawi after my examination and we did enjoyed our trip at there.</i></li> <li>– <i>That’s mean everyone will tastes your food at the competition</i></li> <li>– <i>You can be better and improved your life for the betterment after this</i></li> <li>– <i>She teaches me to be a hardworking people</i></li> <li>– <i>That great to hear</i></li> <li>– <i>I look forward to meet you tommorow</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Vocabulary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>I will never give up to see you</i></li> <li>– <i>You teaches me not to give in with my dreams</i></li> <li>– <i>My mum’s food has become a solid prove that we can be success if we make it too</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol>

**3. Spelling mistakes**

- *sugest*
- *disshess*
- *sugestion*
- *affordable*
- *delicius*
- brade
- intarne
- soury
- helpfull,
- prefesional
- recepe book

**4. Wrong word choice**

- masterchef at the social media
- thank you for send me your email
- I thing is a good idea to buying recipe book...
- To present your dishes in an extravagant way
- You should make cookies for this competition because afternoon tea must be soft dish.
- ...your food will let the judges taste heaven.
- I'm so cloud nine...
- If you want to present you food in a different way
- Friend rice...you can add chess on...

**5. L1 Interference**

- Clean mouth after eat rice (refer to dessert/pencuci mulut)
- Soup mushroom
- Banana fried

**Task 2**

Generally, candidates are aware of the requirement of the task. Candidates generally showed a fair planning in their answers. Most gave an introduction, three points and a conclusion. Conventions of writing was seen in most scripts including the weaker ones. Points were developed with some details and examples, although most of the discussion were modest in nature.

Specifically, most of the candidates were able to compose an essay consisting of five paragraphs: Introduction, Body 1, Body 2, Body 3, and Conclusion. Some of the information in the introduction paragraphs was too generic or predictable in nature. For example, making sweeping statements such as "*Mental health issues is a serious problem nowadays*" or "*Modern life make many people suffer from mental health issues.*" The stance was occasionally expressed in the first body paragraph rather than the introduction. There were some who started the essay with a stand, and others who produced short introductions and abrupt endings. In some cases, there were some who even copied the rubric as their introduction. Candidates also tend to leave out the thesis statement in the introduction paragraph although some attempts were seen; both successful and unsuccessful.

In terms of cohesive devices, candidates were able to use some variety of cohesive devices appropriately. The use of linkers was evident among the candidates (First and foremost, secondly, next, lastly, in conclusion, in a nutshell). It was also noted that the LEP candidates had the tendency to write uneven paragraphs, some were quite long while some were quite short. Probably it was due to their lack of sufficient knowledge about the topic. Repetition of ideas or sentences were also seen in the candidates' essays, especially the phrase taken from the rubric *"Education on mental health is necessary in the 21st century."*

With regards to the content, only a small number of candidates were able to justify the stand and propose convincing reasons and examples to support their stand. Generally, a majority of the candidates were able to describe the reasons for people to suffer from mental health (*parental expectations, workplace stress, school stress, social media bullying, etc.*). Problems were seen when the candidates were not able to show why education is necessary in this context and provide strong and relevant examples to support their claim. This inability to carry forward the discussion, linking the two key words in the question (education and mental health) caused many scripts to be awarded a low band. The crux of the discussion which is "why education is necessary to combat mental health issues" was not given due treatment causing the answers to be partial in nature or in some cases, veering-off the correct path.

Many LEP candidates misunderstood the phrase 'mental health' in the stimulus, equating *"mental health"* to *"mental health issues."* Hence, many candidates used the phrase "mental health" loosely, creating distortions. For example, *"Many people have mental health as they are stressed."*

For this session, it was more common to see an off-tangent essay because most of the poor proficiency candidates discussed *"the reasons for people to suffer from mental health."* Meanwhile, modest proficiency candidates tend to provide sweeping statements, touching slightly on the keywords and overgeneralising ideas. For example, candidates would merely restate the statement given in the stimulus at the end of each paragraph which focussed totally on why people suffer from mental health. Thus, the link to the task was only seen at the end of each paragraph while the point discussed was on the reasons only. A few high proficiency candidates were able to provide strong reasons and show how education can overcome mental health issues. They were also able to remain consistent with their stand besides providing convincing elaboration and real-life examples to support their arguments.

It was also noted many candidates did not attempt Task 2 completely. Some wrote only one or two short paragraphs. However, these candidates did not face too many difficulties in attempting Task 1. Therefore, marks awarded for Task 1 and Task 2 varied substantially both for content and language.

To sum up, candidates' performance for Task 2, please note the following comments:

#### **In terms of strength:**

1. It was noted that candidates attempted the task. Most of them agreed to the statement given which was *'Education on mental health is necessary in the 21 century'*
2. Points given by the candidates mainly were simple and predictable such *'we can help a lot of people, counselling teachers have to give talk to all students because they have mental break downs and we need to spread awareness.'*
3. Elaborations were generally simple, lacking depth and maturity.
4. Conventions of writing were seen in most scripts. Candidates have been guided to write essays and this can be clearly seen in their writings. Most scripts had an introduction, a stand and thesis statement. Planning of paragraphs were also noted whereby each paragraph had a topic sentence and explanation.

5. There was a conscious effort by the candidates to present their viewpoint although many struggled with presenting their ideas confidently and using language effectively. Conclusion was also given though they appeared short or just ended abruptly. For example, many just reiterated their stand and repeated the thesis statement. Some gave suggestions to conclude their discussion.
6. Discourse markers were noted in most of the scripts. These have helped for the points to be developed separately and eased the reader's task of understanding the essays. This also shows that candidates planned their work.

**In terms of weakness:**

1. For Task 2, it was found that the quality of the responses ranged from limited to satisfactory only. A considerable number of candidates veered off-topic and wrote essays that were not aligned with the statement given. For example, many wrote on *why people suffer from mental health issues*. Other off tangent answers are:
  - (i) the advantages and disadvantages of mental health.
  - (ii) the advantages and disadvantages of education.
  - (iii) the advantages and disadvantages of technology.
  - (iv) the importance of mental health
  - (v) the importance of education
  - (vi) describing mental health in general
2. Many candidates failed to provide examples on how "*education can overcome mental health issues or otherwise.*" This is an indication that many candidates did not have any inclination on what education on mental health issues.
3. Many candidates also ended up giving advice or providing suggestions on how to overcome mental health issues in general. For example, "*exercising, eating right and talking to someone.*"
4. Answers lacked elaborations or depth. The response may begin with the main idea, followed by two liner explanations, a simple example and then moving on to the next point.
5. Candidates sometimes contradicted their stand made in the introduction. For example, they may agree to the statement given but in the middle of the discussion, they would change their stand.
6. Thesis statement and stand sometimes were not present in the essay and the examiners had to infer.

# MUET SESSION 2 2024 (800)

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

For Session 2 2024, 38 570 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+	0.73	0.73	0.17	0.17	1.21	1.21	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
5.0	C1	8.32	9.05	1.83	2.00	7.68	8.89	0.12	0.13	0.30	0.30
4.5	B2	21.58	30.63	5.66	7.66	14.95	23.84	0.62	0.75	4.31	4.61
4.0		35.63	66.25	17.91	25.58	32.15	56.00	4.22	4.98	27.07	31.67
3.5	B1	23.22	89.47	38.65	64.23	25.63	81.63	20.02	25.00	43.58	75.26
3.0		8.90	98.37	26.63	90.86	13.12	94.75	48.77	73.78	20.52	95.78
2.5	A2	1.47	99.83	7.24	98.11	4.86	99.61	23.56	97.34	4.04	99.82
2.0		0.16	100.00	1.81	99.91	0.39	100.00	2.59	99.93	0.18	100.00
1.0		0.00	100.00	0.09	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.07	100.00	0.00	100.00

## PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

### Answer keys

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	B	11	B	21	B
2	A	12	B	22	A
3	B	13	C	23	A
4	A	14	A	24	C
5	C	15	C	25	B

6	A	16	D	26	A
7	A	17	B	27	C
8	B	18	B	28	A
9	C	19	B	29	C
10	B	20	A	30	C

## PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

### General Comments

The question is designed to be direct and worded simply and concisely to facilitate comprehension. There were pitched at the targeted levels according to Parts 1 & 2, and thus students 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 CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) 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 exam did the job of discriminating the proficiency of the candidates, especially with regard to the difference in requirement of task 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, negotiating to arrive at a consensus.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Tend 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.
- Difficult 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.
- Unable to 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 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 keys

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

## 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 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 genre 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 make a stand, write an effective thesis statement, present relevant viewpoints and provide justifications for the stand taken.

### **Specific comments**

#### **Task 1**

The stimulus is a letter from Ms Lim, a member of the Food Sharing Foundation which plans to give away food items to the needy in Ms Suzana's neighbourhood. Based on the stimulus, a reply is expected from Ms Suzana to support the foundation's plan. The topic on 'giving away food items' is somewhat familiar to candidates. The language used is within most candidates' grasp, which is pitched at CEFR A2 to B1 level. Hence, the level of difficulty for Task 1 is suitable for candidates of varied proficiency levels.

#### **Task 2**

The task requires candidates to express their opinion based on the statement given, "*Young generation today is obsessed with beauty standards*", in at least 250 words.

A context for the statement was given to assist candidates in understanding the task. The statement is direct and clearly worded. Pitched at CEFR B1 to B2 level, the question demands candidates to have knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, organisational skills as well as the ability to express opinion, to fulfil the task satisfactorily. The subject-matter, *beauty standards* is common to most candidates. The context provided has assisted many candidates in understanding the statement given in the question paper (*'people paying too much attention to their appearance'*). Thus, the difficulty level of Task 2 is viewed to be appropriate in gauging candidates' language proficiency at the tertiary and pre-tertiary level..

### **EXPECTED ANSWERS**

#### **Task 1**

The task requires candidates to write a reply to a stimulus – a letter written by a member of the Food Sharing Foundation, Ms Lim, who is asking for support from Ms Suzana, in the foundation's plan to give away food items to needy families in Ms Suzana's neighbourhood.

Candidates were expected to respond to the letter by using all the four notes collocated in the letter in at least 100 words in an appropriate style. The responses were to be written accurately and concisely, using appropriate semi-formal tone in a letter format that should contain a salutation and opening remark, content paragraphs, a closing remark and a sign-off.

The candidates were required to elaborate on the four notes given according to the context mentioned in the stimulus. They needed to be aware of the context including thanking Ms Lim's Foundation for collecting food and giving them to the people in the neighbourhood; helping families facing financial problems by providing them with proper meals at home, suggesting items to be included in the food box, indicating the best location for the families to collect the boxes, giving an affirmative response about the neighbours' willingness to participate in the event and suggesting two ways on how the neighbours could help in the event.

#### **Task 2**

The task requires candidates to present an opinion in response to the statement "*Young generation today is obsessed with beauty standards.*" in not fewer than 250 words. Stance in relation to the statement is to be stated either clearly or implied.

Candidates could agree, disagree, or have a mixed stance, and should provide relevant points of at least three or two to justify opinions and substantiate them with elaboration and relevant examples. Responses should focus on:

- Stance – Agree: Why and/or how the young generation is obsessed with beauty standards.
- Stance – Disagree: Why and/or how the young generation is not obsessed with beauty standards.
- Stance – mixed: points from “agreement and disagreement”.

All keywords cannot be changed, and justification must be given as to why and/or how the young generation (YG) is or is not obsessed (OB) with beauty standards (BS). A good essay should provide justification and specific examples of beauty standards and their obsessions. The voice should be assertive, yet persuasive enough to engage and compel the reader to agree with the writer. The use of language should be consistently accurate and appropriate to the task, content, and intention. Moreover, clarity as well as coherence of expression and vocabulary should be used appropriately to express meaning and convey thoughts clearly. Ideally, three well- developed points should be given in support of the stand, and the essay should be written in no fewer than 250 words..

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES’ ANSWERS

### Task 1

Generally, most candidates were able to respond to Task 1 in varying quality. Most of their responses range from modest to satisfactory. Generally, majority of the candidates were able to use the correct format of a formal letter writing, managed to use the simplest parts correctly (Salutation, closing statement and signing off). They were able to begin and close the letter using suitable phrases. Candidates were able to at least address two of the notes correctly with modest attempts to expand notes given. Most candidates expanded Note 3, when talking about the suggestions on items to be included in food box and the best location to collect the box, reasonably well. This is probably due to the familiar context in which they are writing in.

Most candidates also demonstrated good planning with a salutation, content paragraph, a closing remark and a sign-off. Quite a number, however, missed to give an opening remark following the salutation but this did not affect the overall quality of their answer. Based on the candidates’ answer, most of them were aware of the need to respond to the notes collocated in each paragraph of the letter. As such, most candidates were able to write a reply to the letter by responding to the main notes in the letter in varying quality.

### In terms of strength:

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 followings are the strengths noted:

<b>The use of appropriate format</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates are aware that they had to respond using letter format.</li> <li>2. Paragraphs were used effectively to differentiate the four notes given.</li> <li>3. The use of a header, correct salutation, suitable opening and closing remarks and sign off were seen in most scripts.</li> </ol>
<b>Correct opening remark</b>	Most candidates provided the correct salutation with the correct name of the receiver ( <i>e.g. Hi Miss Lim</i> ).

Able to respond to most notes	<p>Most candidates attempted to respond to all the notes given in the prompt though the quality of these responses varied from limited effort to satisfactory. For this session, the success and quality of the responses for Task 1 depended heavily on the clarity of the point of reference: Note 1 (Replying to Ms Lim's enquiry about Suzana's well-being and thanking Ms Lim for the foundation's plan to give away food items to people at Suzana's neighbourhood)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates' responses were generally correct. (e.g., <i>I am fine / I am in the pink of health</i>).</li> <li>2. Responses lacked clarity due to missing key words which are <i>"giving away food items and my neighbourhood."</i></li> <li>3. Answers were generally simple. For example, <i>"I appreciate that your Food Sharing Foundation plans to give away food in my neighbourhood."</i></li> <li>4. A better response was <i>"I have received your letter about giving away food items to the neighbourhood. I think it is a fantastic idea and I would like to thank you on behalf of the neighbourhood."</i></li> </ol> <p>Notes 2 (Acknowledging that the foundation's project will ensure the needy at Suzana's neighbourhood will get proper meals)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Answers were generally simple. For example, <i>"It is an amazing program to share food with my neighbourhood because I know this program can help families that are facing financial problems."</i></li> <li>2. Some answers lacked development although the responses were accurate. For example, <i>"It is great that we can finally work things out to provide those families with proper meals."</i></li> </ol> <p>Notes 3 (Suggesting suitable food items to be put in the food box and the best location for distributing the food boxes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The note requires the candidates to establish three key words (giving away food items, my neighbours and poor family). Not many candidates were able to give a clear answer as key words were missing. Some candidates were able to respond correctly. For example, <i>"I would recommend that the food box to be prepared based on the food pyramid."</i></li> <li>2. Note 3 requires the candidates to suggest at least two food items. Answers were predictable. For example, <i>"I suggest including in the food box instant food, for example tom yum noodles and also coffee."</i></li> <li>3. Note 3 also requires the candidates to suggest a location for the neighbours to collect the food boxes. Answers given came with some development. For example, <i>The best location to collect the boxes is the neighbourhood' surau; ...at the playground in our neighbourhood where everyone knows the place; ...the badminton hall in our neighbourhood that has a big place...</i>)</li> </ol> <p>Note 4 (Informing Ms Lim that the neighbours will take part in the project and suggesting two ways they can help)</p> <p>Only a few candidates responded to these notes accurately, and in a simple manner. Elaborations were mainly simple but relevant. (<i>My neighbours and I could help in transporting and giving out the food boxes</i>)</p>
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<b>Provided suitable closing remark</b>	Candidates were aware that they need to provide a closure to their response. The common phrases used were <i>“Looking forward to hear from you soon or Have a nice day.”</i>
<b>Able to give correct sign off</b>	Generally, most candidates were aware that they must provide a sign off which is <i>‘Ms Suzana’</i>
<b>Able to organise ideas using appropriate paragraphs</b>	Most candidates presented their answers using appropriate paragraphs. These paragraphs were arranged according to the notes given in the question. So, reading candidates’ answers were rather easy without the use of proper transitional signals. There was a clear direction in the way answers were presented

#### In terms of strength:

<b>Format</b>	A few candidates responded using the email format.
<b>Wrong names</b>	Some candidates signed off the letter using their own names. Some candidates did not state the correct names of the sender. The names were misspelt such as, Suhana, Su, Suzane, Sazana. A few candidates signed off the email using their own names or simply scribbled a name that did not look like the name <i>‘Suzana’</i>
<b>Missing point of reference, distortions, and inaccurate answers</b>	<p>Missing point of reference was a glaring issue for Task 1, resulting many candidates from obtaining good marks for content. Candidates failed to provide the context for their responses in the opening paragraph using Note 1 – ‘thank her’. For instance, their responses were either incomplete (e.g. <i>“Thank you for the plan to help my neighbourhood”</i> – <i>what plan or distorted (“Thank you for our foundation’s plan to help the neighbourhood”)</i>). However, the context for the responses was noted when three keywords were identified and written accurately and clearly – help the needy/ families with financial problems, my neighbourhood and food box. Quite a few candidates managed to establish the context for their responses.</p> <p><b>Note 2</b></p> <p>Many candidates missed out on Note 2 due to the missing point of reference in Note 2. Candidates responded to Note 2 by merely using pronouns such as <i>“It is a great project”</i> or <i>“It will provide the families (which family?) with proper meals.”</i></p> <p>Some attempts to present ideas and elaborate, however, were unsuccessful due to the misplacement of the phrase ‘Great!’ right before the idea of ‘many families are facing financial problems’, which resulted in a distortion.</p> <p><b>Note 3</b></p> <p>Some responses were inaccurate where non-food items were suggested such as cutleries (fork and spoon), toiletries (toothbrush, tooth paste, soaps, sanitary pads, diapers or ‘pampers’), medicine, notepad, money, clothes, and towels, as well as cooked meals such as fried rice, chicken rice, pizza, and packed food. In many responses where the point of reference for the project/plan was unclear in preceding sentences and the idea of (food) box was missing, the suggestions were not awarded although the food-items were correct as the context for the suggestions was not established.</p> <p>Inaccurate responses for ‘the best location’ were mainly due to more than one best location given or vague location (i.e., near café at the neighbourhood).</p>

	<p><b>Note 4</b></p> <p>Many candidates missed out on Note 4 due to a few reasons. Answers such as <i>“they will be happy to help”</i> or <i>the neighbours will help</i>” were considered vague as point of reference to my neighbourhood was not established earlier in the answer.</p>
<b>Language use</b>	<p>Most candidates had modest to limited proficiency of the English language. Errors were found in many scripts. The following are examples of errors:</p> <p><b>1. Spelling errors</b></p> <p>Spelling errors are prevalent among less proficient candidates and the errors recur throughout their essay, which affect the quality. Some spelling errors detected are: ‘verry’, ‘kompleks’, ‘ather’, ‘neighborhood’, ‘cuality’, ‘cuantity’, ‘projet’, ‘fase to fase’, ‘rise (rice)’, ‘chilrend’, ‘convinient’, ‘registration, and residencial’.</p> <p><b>2. The use of unclear phrase</b></p> <p>Poor sentence structures and grammatical errors were also detected. For example: ‘thank for inform’, ‘this is can help’, ‘help another people’, ‘media sosial’, ‘you is a well’, ‘get a some meals’, ‘to the next the life’, ‘a proper meals’, ‘more easier’, ‘more healthier’, ‘to organized’, “We can put many food and drink to the food box, It will be a great deed”.</p> <p><b>3. The use of cohesive devices</b></p> <p>Many of the candidates are not able to use cohesive devices well. For example, <i>Beside that, In the other hand, In my view, From my opinion, More over, According of that, Last one.</i></p> <p>Many of these candidates have problems with subject-verb agreement, like <i>There are many thing we can give....., ‘I was hoping the food donation will be smooth.....’, ‘One of the way to help is.....’, ‘I very thankful ....., ‘Let me suggest two names of place....’, ‘I has been plans something...’</i></p> <p><b>4. Inappropriate vocabulary</b></p> <p>Wrong word choices in candidates’ essays make reading difficult. For example ‘<i>They must be happy to except the food</i>’, ‘<i>It is better then we give them money</i>’, ‘<i>Yes i am very find here</i>’, ‘<i>Covid 19 has effect their financial</i>’, ‘<i>We can also give them desert</i>’, ‘<i>They would like to joint</i>’, ‘<i>humanity tolerancy / oil cookings / ketchup sauce / tin sardens, Iam fine.., ‘It’s great and i had...., ‘Yes i am very happy..’</i></p> <p><b>5. Wrong use of prepositions</b></p> <p>Examples of incorrect use of prepositions are: ‘<i>I can’t wait to join and meet you at there</i>’, ‘<i>We can include sugar and milk to the boxes</i>’, ‘<i>We can collect the food in the field</i>’, ‘<i>They have financial problem due to pandemic on past two years</i>’, ‘<i>We can promote this program to social media</i>’</p> <p><b>6. Grammar errors</b></p> <p>Examples of grammar mistakes are: ‘<i>They faces financial problem</i>’, ‘<i>The program teach me to be a thankful person</i>’, ‘<i>We can distribute all the box at the centre</i>’, ‘<i>We can donate many type of foods</i>’, ‘<i>There is many people will like to join</i>’. In some cases, there are also interference of L1 detected, for example, ‘<i>Media sosial</i>’, ‘<i>Rekreasi</i>’, ‘<i>Sosial</i>’, ‘<i>when we can start this programme?</i>’</p>

## Task 2

Generally, candidates are aware of the requirement of the task. Conventions of writing was seen in most scripts including the weaker ones. Points were developed with some details and examples, although most of the discussion were modest in nature as candidates were not able to accurately focus on the actual requirement of the task which is to justify whether the young generation today is obsessed with beauty standards or otherwise. Their lack of ability to link two key words (beauty standards and obsessed) has caused many candidates to perform modestly for this session. Many candidates strayed away from the task by discussing why beauty is important or the effect of paying too much attention to appearance.

Despite the weaknesses noted in understanding the requirement of the task, most candidates were able to compose an essay consisting of five paragraphs: Introduction, Body 1, Body 2, Body 3, and Conclusion. The stance was occasionally expressed in the first body paragraph rather than the introduction. There were some who started the essay with a stand, and others who produced short introductions and abrupt endings. Weak candidates copied the rubric as their introduction. Candidates left out the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph.

It was also noted that candidates with low english proficiency had the tendency to write uneven paragraphs, some were quite long while some were quite short. Probably it was due to their lack of sufficient knowledge about the topic. Generally, the points that were given to support the statement were predictable such as “peer pressure, social media influence, fear of missing out, pretty privilege and career opportunity”. Candidates also struggled to provide strong and relevant examples to support their claim. Most of the examples given were “dieting, plastic surgery and make-up.”

For this session, it was more common to see off-tangent essays because most of the poor proficiency candidates did not have sufficient knowledge to deal with the task.

To further exemplify candidates’ performance for Task 2, please note the following comments:

### In terms of strength:

1. A few candidates could respond to Task 2 satisfactorily. They had a basic understanding of the subject and could give modest to satisfactory explanations. Their answers showed planning somewhat. Candidates were able to give the reasons why the young generation today is obsessed with beauty standards and provide relevant examples of the how and the why.

An example a good introduction:

*In today’s modern time, the young generation is bombarded by highly raised standards concerning almost all aspects of their lives. The ultimate reason for this could derive from the understanding that the competition to stand out is extremely strong which boils down to the stereotypical mindset of moulding themselves into perfection. Nonetheless, rather than being challenged to be fully equipped with life skills and culminate a well-rounded portfolio, this question is compelled to enhance their physical appearance, digging a grave hole into the hyper-fixation on “beauty standards.”*

2. For paragraphing, most candidates adhered to the element of paragraphing. Each paragraph carried a new point and elaboration, thus, making reading easy.
3. Most candidates were able to compose an essay consisting of five paragraphs: Introduction, Body 1, Body 2, Body 3, and Conclusion. They also demonstrated their ability to properly formulate a thesis statement, topic sentence, and conclusion.

4. Candidates were able to use some variety of cohesive devices appropriately. The use of linkers was evident among the candidates. Some examples include *First and foremost, secondly, next, lastly, in conclusion, in a nutshell*.
5. Candidates were able to state their stand on the statement given, either in the introductory paragraph or in the second paragraph of the essay.
6. Better candidates were able to write more than the number of words required for the essay.

#### In terms of weakness

1. Some candidates did not write their stand on the topic and their thesis statements were missing. Many failed to adhere to the convention of academic writing for writing the introductory paragraph. For example, some failed to make a clear stance, write a thesis statement to show the focus for their subsequent paragraphs and gave a very brief lead-in or lead-in is totally absent
2. Candidates with poor English proficiency had the tendency to write uneven paragraphs, some were quite long while some were quite short. This could be due to their lack of sufficient knowledge about the topic.
3. Not many candidates could follow the task requirements closely and present a good discursive essay with good illustrations followed by some real and convincing examples. There was a clear struggle to sustain discussions.
4. Candidates should cite three points with explanations and illustrations on whether “Young generation today is obsessed with beauty standards.” Instead, they wrote about “The importance of being beautiful”. For example, they wrote, *‘There are three reasons why I agree on this matter which are being beautiful makes it easier for me to be employed, respected, and have confidence’..*
5. Some candidates vaguely expressed their ideas, probably due to poor command of the language, insufficient vocabulary, and poor knowledge of the English structure. Examples of errors made are as follows:
  - a. **spelling errors:** unable to accurately write words like ‘standard’ (standard), ‘beauty’(beauty), ‘appearance’(appearance), ‘generation (generation)’ and ‘obsessed’(obsessed) accurately although the words were stated clearly in the rubrics.
  - b. **wrong word form:** could not differentiate between ‘beauty’ (noun) and ‘beautiful’ (adjective), ‘skill’ and ‘skilled’, ‘life’ and ‘live’, ‘difficult’ and ‘difficulty/difficulties’ or ‘peace’ and ‘piece’
  - c. **singular / plural forms:** tendency to pluralise words such as *social medias, peoples, informations, knowledges, childrens, educations* and others.
  - d. **inconsistent or mismatched use of pronouns:** ‘his’, then followed by ‘them.’
  - f. **punctuations errors** – not sure when to use full stops, commas, and capital letters.

# MUET SESSION 3 2024 (800)

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

For Session 3 2024, 79 119 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+	5.09	5.09	0.29	0.29	0.70	0.70	0.07	0.07	0.01	0.01
5.0	C1	25.94	31.04	2.53	2.81	9.65	10.35	0.52	0.58	1.11	1.12
4.5	B2	31.18	62.22	8.08	10.89	20.25	30.61	2.70	3.28	11.49	12.61
4.0		25.57	87.79	22.36	33.25	36.98	67.59	12.68	15.96	42.21	54.83
3.5	B1	9.61	97.41	38.96	72.21	20.64	88.23	39.06	55.02	34.90	89.72
3.0		2.39	99.80	22.02	94.23	8.04	96.27	39.35	94.37	8.88	98.60
2.5	A2	0.20	99.99	4.60	98.83	3.42	99.70	4.96	99.33	1.36	99.96
2.0		0.01	100.00	1.13	99.95	0.30	99.99	0.62	99.96	0.04	100.00
1.0		0.00	100.00	0.05	100.00	0.01	100.00	0.04	100.00	0.00	100.00

## PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

### Answer keys

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	B	11	A	21	B
2	A	12	C	22	B
3	C	13	A	23	B
4	C	14	C	24	A
5	A	15	D	25	C
6	B	16	E	26	B

7	C	17	C	27	B
8	B	18	C	28	B
9	B	19	A	29	B
10	A	20	A	30	A

## 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 CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) 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 exam did the job of discriminating the proficiency of the candidates, especially with regard to the difference in requirement of task 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, negotiating to arrive at a consensus.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are 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 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.

- 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 encountered, 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 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 keys

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

### PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

#### General comments

The overall quality of the questions in the test meets the standards expected of pre-university level writing assessments. The questions are well-crafted, straightforward, and appropriate for the maturity level of prospective university students. They are designed to test not only language proficiency but also critical thinking, organisation, and the ability to express opinions clearly and effectively.

The test questions are appropriately pitched to assess candidates' knowledge of contemporary issues and their ability to engage with these topics in a meaningful way. The inclusion of tasks that require both analytical thinking and the ability to communicate ideas coherently ensures that candidates are adequately challenged.

Both tasks in the test are relevant to current interests, such as recycling and donations, making the content engaging and thought-provoking. These topics also help candidates relate the test material to their own experiences, encouraging reflective and evaluative thinking.

Task 1 of the writing test requires candidates to respond to an email. This task is designed to assess the candidates' ability to write in a less formal context, with a focus on communication skills appropriate for everyday situations, such as professional or academic exchanges. The simplicity and clarity of the question (giving away unwanted items) make it well-suited for the target group of pre-university students. The task requires candidates to demonstrate the ability to organise their thoughts and respond appropriately to a given situation, showing understanding of the context and the recipient. This task is of moderate difficulty and is entirely appropriate for students at the pre-university level, as it aligns with real-world situations, they may encounter in both academic and professional environments. The task is relatively straightforward and does not demand a high level of depth or critical analysis. This makes it an appropriate task for testing basic writing competencies such as tone, clarity, and structure.

Task 2 is an extended essay in which candidates are asked to express their opinion on the statement: "Students should take a gap year before enrolling in universities." This question is an good example of how a writing task can encourage deep reflection, critical thinking, and the ability to present balanced arguments. The statement challenges candidates to consider both the potential advantages and disadvantages of taking a gap year and demand a thoughtful analysis of the issue. This task provides a platform for candidates to evaluate their own perspectives on education, personal growth, and life choices, while also encouraging them to consider broader implications for society. The question focuses on personal reflection, which makes it particularly engaging for pre-university students, who are at a stage in their lives where they are making significant decisions about their future educational and career paths. The task also promotes analytical and critical thinking, as students must assess the pros and cons of a gap year and then clearly express their stance on the issue. The rubric provides helpful guidance to ensure that students remain focused and organised in their response, allowing them to develop their arguments coherently.

Overall, Task1 and Task 2 adhered to the test specification and are suitable to determine candidates' writing skills. The topics for both tasks are suitable and are able to measure candidates' subject knowledge, linguistic knowledge as well as academic writing skills.

### **Specific comments**

#### **Task 1**

The stimulus is an email from Danny, written to his friend, Nina, asking for some advice pertaining to his intention to give away some personal items. A response from Nina is expected based on the four notes collocated in each paragraph of the email. The context and topic on '*giving away personal items*' is familiar to most candidates. Each paragraph carried sufficient information only. Thus, candidates would not have been overwhelmed with unnecessary information which they might have to process within a limited time frame. The opening paragraph related to the first prompt focused on '*a trip to a zoo*', which can be considered as an overly familiar topic. The subsequent paragraphs were related to '*giving away personal unwanted items*' which again can be labelled as a common topic. The challenge faced by candidates was making sure that the '*point of reference*' for notes 2, 3 and 4 were stated in their response. Using general terms such as '*old stuff, unwanted items, and things*' to refer to '*old clothes, toys, books, caps and comics*'

has caused some candidates to lose marks as their answers were considered ‘vague.’ The language used for Task 1 is within most candidates’ grasp, which is pitched at CEFR A2 to B1 level. Hence, the level of difficulty for Task 1 is suitable for candidates of varied proficiency levels.

## Task 2

The task requires candidates to express their opinion based on the statement – “*Students should take a gap year before enrolling in universities*” in at least 250 words.

A context for the statement and definition for the term, ‘gap year’ were given to assist candidates in understanding the task. The statement is direct and clearly worded. Pitched at CEFR B1 to B2 level, the question demands candidates to have knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, organisational skills as well as the ability to express opinion to fulfil the task satisfactorily. The subject-matter – ‘taking a gap year’ – is somewhat common and relatable to most candidates. Thus, the difficulty level of Task 2 is viewed to be appropriate in gauging candidates’ language proficiency at the tertiary level.

To sum, the questions for both task 1 and 2 were attempted although the quality of their response varied. Most candidates understood the demands of the questions and were able to address the issues and give opinions on the situations discussed. Some candidates were not able to respond to the requirements of the questions due to poor command of the language (vocabulary and structures) and misunderstanding of the question.

## EXPECTED ANSWERS

### Task 1

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

- A proper salutation and opening remarks before responding accurately to the 4 main notes given.
- Note 1 requires the candidate to talk about Nina’s trip to the Zoo. The respond logically should be positive and the answer should include the interesting part of watching the animals. For example, “*My trip to the Zoo was amazing. I had a great time watching all the animals there.*”
- Note 2 requires the candidate the express his or her sympathy or empathy to Danny who spent his weekend cleaning up his room. This is followed by expressing disagreement to the idea of sending old clothes and toys to the recycling center. Candidates need to give reasons and perhaps suggest other ways to discard the items. For example, “*I am sorry that you had a tiring weekend cleaning up your room. I disagree with your mum’s suggestion to send your old clothes and toys to the recycling center. You should give them away to some orphanages.*”
- For Note 3, the candidates should tell Danny what can be done with his story books. They need to give two suggestions. For example, “*You can donate the books to the school library. You can also sell them online.*”
- For Note 4, candidates must respond to Danny’s offer to look at his caps and comics. For example, a positive answer will be “*I would love to go to your house to look at your caps and comics collection.*” A negative answer will be “*I am not into caps and comics. So, I will have to decline your offer.*”
- Finally, candidates should end the email with a proper closing remark and an accurate sign off as ‘Nina.’

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

## Task 2

The task requires candidates to present an opinion in response to the statement “*Students should take a gap year before enrolling in universities.*” in no fewer than 250 words. Stance in relation to the statement is to be stated clearly. Candidates could agree, disagree or convey a mixed stance, and should provide relevant points of at least three or two to justify opinion and substantiate them with elaboration and relevant examples.

Candidates’ responses should focus on:

- Stance – Agree: Why students should take a gap year before enrolling in universities; How students should spend a gap year before enrolling in universities,
- Stance – Disagree: Why students should not take a gap year before enrolling in universities, how students would not benefit from taking a gap year before enrolling in universities,
- Stance – mixed: points from “agreement and disagreement”.

All keywords (students, gap year and before enrolling in universities) cannot be changed, and justification must be given as to why and/or how the students should or should not take a gap year before enrolling in universities. The context of discussion must revolve around “before enrolling in universities’, not ‘while at the universities.’ A good essay should provide justification and substantiated with specific examples and elaborations, demonstrating relevant and mature opinion. The stance and tone should be consistent and convincing throughout the essay.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES’ ANSWERS

### Task 1

Most of the candidates responded to Task 1 in an email format where the presence of the subject line, salutation, opening remark, content in response to the four main notes and lastly, the closure and the signing off were seen. Most of them were aware of the need to respond to the notes collocated in each paragraph of the email. As such, most candidates were able to write a reply to the email by responding to the main notes in the email in varying quality. Nevertheless, quite a few candidates failed to clearly address the notes, particularly note 2, 3 and 4 due to missing, incomplete or unclear point of references (e.g. note 2 – ‘clothes and toys’, note 3 – ‘storybooks’, note 4 – ‘caps and comics collection’).

Most candidates also attempted to respond to the notes by giving expansion and details, signalling their awareness to elaborate their answers. For instance, Note 2 ‘Disagree, because...’, most candidates provided reasons for the disagreement, and provided alternatives. Likewise, for Note 3 where two suggestions on what to do with the three boxes of storybooks were elaborated. However, there were some unsuccessful attempts where candidates provided options to choose one from the two given by wrongly using the words ‘either / or.’

In attempts to expand the notes given, some candidates also wrote at great length, giving superfluous information, leading to irrelevancies. It was noted that candidates from certain centres were instructed to respond to every sentence in the email which led to some irrelevancies and illogical expansions e.g. ‘*You can ask your brother or sister to help you*’, ‘*I hope you have done your cleaning*’, ‘*Did you cleaning up your room at weekend?*’, ‘*I hope your book in good conditions*’. It was also noted that some responses were brief as candidates responded to each note in one or two sentences only.

In terms of coherence of ideas and organisation, most responses were fairly organised according to the content and notes given in the email. Only few were written in a less organised manner in which content and responses to note 2, 3 and 4 were lumped together in a one long sentence or paragraph, hence, reflecting poor planning. For instance:

*“I think you can give the clothes to charity, and I want your comics, and also you can give your books to a library.”*

*“I think you can donate your clothes, books, and caps. It will be a good idea. Also, I want to see your comics soon.”*

Some answers lacked appropriate use of cohesive devices to connect ideas which result abrupt transition of ideas between and within paragraphs. Nonetheless, most candidates showed awareness of paragraphing for the different notes in their answer. One candidate failed to respond to the email in the correct format with missing paragraphing where the responses were written in the Question & Answer format, equivalent to answering in point forms.

### In terms of strength:

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 followings are the strengths noted:

<b>The use of appropriate format</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Candidates are aware that they had to respond using the email format.</li> <li>2. Paragraphs were used to differentiate the four notes given in the questions.</li> <li>3. The use of a correct header, suitable salutation, an opening remark and closing remark and correct sign off were noted in most scripts.</li> </ol>
<b>Correct opening remark</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Almost all candidates were able to provide an appropriate salutation and the correct name of the recipient, Danny.</li> <li>2. Opening remarks were also present in many scripts such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>It is great to hear from you.</i></li> <li>b. <i>Thank you for asking about my trip.</i></li> <li>c. <i>I'm glad to receive this email from you.</i></li> <li>d. <i>How are you? I hope you are in the pink of health...</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Able to respond to most notes</b>	<p>Most candidates responded to all the notes given in the prompt although the quality of these responses varied from modest to satisfactory level. The followings are examples of the correct responses noted among the candidates for each main note:</p> <p><b>Note 1</b></p> <p>A majority of the candidates were able to address Note 1 in response to, “How was your trip to the National Zoo over the weekend?”, in varying quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I had fun during the trip to the National Zoo!</i></li> <li>• <i>It was so fascinating experience for me since the last time I visited National Zoo.</i></li> <li>• <i>My trip to the National Zoo over the weekend was fantastic and definitely remarkable!</i></li> </ul> <p>Note 1 also requires candidates to respond to the statement – “I am sure you had a great time watching the animals.”</p> <p>Answer should address the idea ‘had a great time watching the animals.’</p> <p>Most candidates were able to respond correctly, either as a mere statement, or with some expansion of the note.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I had a great and enjoy time watching the animal.</i></li> <li>• <i>Yes, I had a great time watching animals at the zoo. I had the opportunity to be able to take alot of photos.</i></li> </ul>

- *The trip to the National Zoo was great and wonderful that I had saw a lot of animals and the animals were pretty beautiful and cute.*
- *Yes, I absolutely had a great time watching the animals. There were a lot of creatures that did some surprising tricks and stunts, which amazed me.*

### Note 2

Note 2 requires candidates to respond to any one of these ideas: Danny cleaning up his room over the weekend/ cleaning is tiring for Danny/ Danny found a lot of old stuff he does not need any more and express their disagreement and justification in response to, ‘Mum suggested that I send my old clothes and toys to a recycling centre. What do you think?’

Many candidates were able to respond to Note 2 in varying quality:

*Danny cleaning up his room over the weekend/ cleaning is tiring for Danny/ Danny found a lot of old stuff he does not need any more*

- *It’s good that you clean your room.*
- *I understand that cleaning process was tiring.*
- *Cleaning can definitely be exhausting as it requires you to use a lot of energy, but the results of that cleaning would totally make the energy used worth.*

*‘Mum suggested that I send my old clothes and toys to a recycling centre. What do you think?’*

- *I don’t think recycling is the best option. Giving your clothes and toys to a local orphanage would make a bigger difference. Kids there would be so happy to receive them!*
- *As for your old clothes and toys, I think it is better idea to donate them to an orphanage, rather than taking them to a recycling centre.*
- *As you mentioned that your mum suggesting that you send the old clothes and toys to a recycling centre but I do not agree because some of the stuff can be use later.*

### Note 3

Note 3 requires candidates to give two suggestions in response to “I also have three boxes of storybooks. They are all in good condition. What should I do with them? Do you have any suggestions?”

Most candidates were able to give two relevant suggestions. Most suggestions talked about donating the storybooks, selling them as second-hand items, giving away to relatives, friends, neighbours, and keeping them as personal collections. More proficient candidates usually developed their ideas, while the less proficient candidates gave suggestions with minimal or no elaborations.

For example:

- *I have two suggestions. Firstly you can sale your books and earned more money. Secondly, you can also give give away to people who likes reading.*
- *I think you could donate your storybooks to a local library where others get to enjoy them. You could also have a yard sale and sell your storybooks to gain some profit.*

	<p><b>Note 4</b></p> <p>Note 4 requires candidates to respond to Danny's invitation to go over to his house and have a look at the caps and comics collection he plans to give away. The response can either be to accept or decline the offer, with clear references given, which are 'caps and comics collection.'</p> <p>Many candidates gave accurate responses with clear point of references to 'caps and comics collection.' Some also elaborated Note 4 in varying quality:</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I would love to come and have a look at your caps and comics collection. Let me know when I can stop by.</i></li> <li>• <i>I would be more than happy to come and take a look on your caps and comics collection because both items are what I to keep as a hobby. With those caps and comics collection, I can enhance my fashion and also increase the number of variety of those collection.</i></li> <li>• <i>Goodness, Danny, did you know that I have been eyeing your caps and comics collection? You have such an interesting variety of caps, so I would honestly love to come right this moment. However, I have a matter at hand these days but I will be free to come next weekend. I can't wait to have a look.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Provided suitable closing remark</b>	Candidates were aware that they need to provide a closure to their response. The common phrases used were "See you soon" or "Bye."
<b>Able to give correct sign off</b>	Generally, most candidates were aware that they must provide a sign off which is 'Nina'
<b>Able to organise ideas using appropriate paragraphs</b>	Most candidates presented their answers using appropriate paragraphs. These paragraphs were arranged according to the notes given in the question. So, reading candidates' answers were rather easy without the use of proper transitional signals. There was a clear direction in the way answers were presented.

#### In terms of weaknesses:

<b>Missing header</b>	Some candidates failed to provide a header for their email. (Marks were not deducted for the absence).
<b>Wrong salutation and poor opening remarks</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some candidates spelled the receiver's name wrongly, e.g., 'Dounny'.</li> <li>2. Opening remarks like "I have received and read your email / I am writing this email to respond to your question in the past email" does not carry the friendly tone which the email should have as the email is between two friends.</li> <li>3. An example of a poor opening remark is "I hope you are alive and kicking."</li> <li>4. A few answer scripts did not have a salutation.</li> </ol>
<b>Summary of errors according to notes</b>	<p><b>Note 1</b></p> <p>It was noted that some candidates did not respond the to question "How was your trip to the National Zoo...?"</p> <p>Lengthy, unnecessary elaborations for note 1 question were also seen in some of the scripts. For example:</p>

- *I had so much fun sightseeing and learning about all the animals kept there, in fact I would definitely go again if I have another chance in the future.*
- *Yes, best place to visit with family, recommended to bring and spend time with your family at National zoo.*

An example of an irrelevant response is:

*Yes, why not. I think we should go in Sunday because I must to working in Sutherland, by the way, in to the National Zoo. Before that I never go to the zoo because I not have friend, than you ask to me and I become exited.*

Note 1 also requires candidates to respond to the statement – “I am sure you had a great time watching the animals.”. Some attempts were unsuccessful due to missing keywords/ideas (great time watching the animals), irrelevancies or incomplete response:

- *Before that I never go to the zoo because I not have a friend, than you ask to me and I become exited. (Irrelevant)*
- *I finally achieved my long-lived dream of petting a Capybara ever since I saw one on the Internet. The animals are well-fed and very curious about other tourist. (petting watching animals)*
- *It was a new experience for me because it the time I really stay close and had interaction between the animals. (unclear)*

## Note 2

It was noted that candidates from some centers chose to respond to every sentence given in the email to respond to Note 2, which resulted in irrelevancies, superfluous information and illogical responses. Some merely lifted the sentences from the email. For example:

- *I am happy that you are spented your weekend to cleaning up your room. You must be tiring. You can ask you brother and sister to help you. You found old stuff and you to no need any more.*
- *That's sound interesting, as for me yesterday I spent so much time to make my room look aesthetic. It was tiring but it's fun to do. Wow, that sound such amazing, as for me too my old stuff just in my old room.*

Inaccurate responses due to the use of ‘I heard...’ was also noted. The information on ‘cleaning up the room’ was furnished by Danny himself in the email. The use of the word ‘heard’ indicates that someone else told Nina about Danny’s weekend activity and this is a distortion. For example:

- *I heard that you have done a great job cleaning your room.*
- *I heard you cleaning your room.*
- *I heard you have a lot of old stuffs in your room.*

Note 2 also requires candidates to express their disagreement and justification in response to, ‘Mum suggested that I send my old clothes and toys to a recycling centre. What do you think?’

Some unsuccessful attempts were seen due to missing point of references, incomplete, inaccurate and unclear responses. Examples are as follows:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>As for your old items, I think instead of sending it away to recycling centre, you can sell it as a second-hand item on online shopping platform, just like a thriftstore. (missing point of reference for 'clothes and toys').</i></li> <li>• <i>You don't do that! You can give the clothes to those who needs. (unclear reference to 'that' – no reference to sending the old clothes and toys to a recycling centre, and only 'clothes' was mentioned.)</i></li> <li>• <i>I think your mother has a great idea. You should give everything away. (Inaccuracy)</i></li> <li>• <i>I think your mother's idea to recycle your clothes is great... (Inaccuracy and missing one type of item, 'toys').</i></li> <li>• <i>I agree with your mum suggestion. That is such a brilliant idea. By sending your old clothes and toys to the recycling centre there is no product would be wasted. We should support recycling campaign to protect our world by reducing pollution from wasted product especially plastics. (Inaccuracy)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Note 3</b></p> <p>Unsuccessful attempts for Note 3 were mainly due to missing / unclear point of references for storybooks, vague ideas, and the incorrect use of 'either...or' which denotes one suggestion only.</p> <p>Examples of errors noted are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>You can send it to the kids at panty house. They can make a great use of it and show some love to them. (Unclear point of reference for storybooks (it/ them), and panty house??)</i></li> <li>• <i>I suggest you sell your belongings...(Inaccuracy &amp; unclear PoR for storybooks).</i></li> <li>• <i>The book can study but money can not give like buy...(vague)</i></li> <li>• <i>In regards to your storybooks, I would suggest sending them to the same orphanage as I aforementioned above ...Or you can also create a mini-storybook library in front of your house. Our neighbours or any passerby can come and read them. (use of 'Or' – indicating one suggestion only)</i></li> </ul> <p>It was also noted that quite a number of unsuccessful attempts was due to the wrong use of the term, 'pre-loved' / 'pre-love' to convey the idea of selling used items, without mentioning the word 'sell'. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I suggest you can do a preloved of the books...</i></li> <li>• <i>I suggest you to do a preloved for all your stuff...</i></li> </ul> <p><i>An example of an irrelevant response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My suggestion is you can send a shoes or beg...</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Note 4</b></p> <p>Many unsuccessful attempts were seen due to missing/incomplete point of references to 'caps and comics collection'. Some responses were also vague without any indication of either accepting or declining the invitation.</p> <p>Examples of errors are:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Really? Thank you for invite to visit your collection. If any free time, I will coming to get caps. Wait for me. (Incomplete response – only mentioned ‘caps’, missing ‘comics collection’)</li> <li>• Wow! That is really cool. I would definitely come. (Unclear)</li> <li>• Sure! I would like too. See you soon Danny! (unclear)</li> <li>• Yes, I will think I will come out to look into them. (Distortion)</li> </ul>
<b>Wrong sign-off</b>	Some candidates provided a sign-off using other names than Nina (e.g. Benjamin, Ain, Nino, Nine). A few scribbled names which did not resemble ‘Nina.’
<b>Language use</b>	<p>Most candidates had modest to limited proficiency of the English language. Errors were found in many scripts. The following are examples of errors:</p> <p><b>1. Spelling</b></p> <p>Spelling errors are prevalent among less proficient candidates and the errors recur throughout their essay, which affect the quality. Some spelling errors detected are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. thier (their)</li> <li>b. accited (excited)</li> <li>c. aminal (animal)</li> <li>d. suggestion (suggestion)</li> <li>e. wachting (watching)</li> <li>f. garage sell (sale)</li> <li>g. prefect room (perfect)</li> <li>h. libbrary (library)</li> </ol> <p><b>2. Wrong word choice</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. thank you because you want to head my suggestion</li> <li>b. *you have a memory for the clothes and toys</li> <li>c. *you should donate at opportunity house</li> <li>d. *make me want to throw up another problem in my head</li> <li>e. Reading can decrease their feeling of lonely</li> </ol> <p><b>3. Subject-verb agreement errors</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the childrens are happy</li> <li>b. I am disagree</li> <li>c. orphans and public people need it (storybooks)</li> <li>d. we must have a prefect rooms hildren is happy.</li> </ol> <p><b>4. Awkward sentence creating distortions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. I not only watching animal but try hard to speak to a monkey</li> <li>b. like to orphan natural disaster people</li> <li>c. children and young people as their that love reading storybooks</li> <li>d. As you know they really like reading story book during want to sleep</li> <li>e. because with your old toys and clothes can change to get some money</li> <li>f. It must be nice to someone who lost their favourite item because some stuff and replace it by something new</li> <li>g. It will be greateful if you donate to them</li> </ol>

	<p><b>5. L1 interference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>meringankan beban</i></li> <li>b. <i>to simpan old clothes</i></li> <li>c. <i>help anak yatim</i></li> <li>d. <i>simpan for your future</i></li> <li>e. <i>You can 'Derma' it to your neighbour children</i></li> </ul>
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## Task 2

Most of the candidates were able to compose an essay consisting of five paragraphs - Introduction, Body 1, Body 2, Body 3, and Conclusion. They also showed their ability to properly formulate a thesis statement, topic phrases, and a conclusion. The stance was occasionally expressed in the first body paragraph rather than in the introduction paragraph. Examiners had to draw their own conclusions about certain candidates' stance since they failed to express their stance clearly. There were some who began the essay with a stand, and others who produced short introductions and abrupt endings. In some instances, there were some who even copied the rubric as their introduction. Candidates also tend to leave out the thesis statement in the introduction paragraph although some attempts were seen; both successful and unsuccessful.

For the use of cohesive devices, candidates were able to use some variety of cohesive devices appropriately. The use of linkers was evident among the candidates (First and foremost, secondly, next, lastly, in conclusion, in a nutshell). It was also noted that the weak candidates tend to write uneven paragraphs, some were quite long while some, quite short. This could probably be due to their lack of knowledge about the topic. Repetition of ideas was also seen in the candidates' essay, especially the phrase taken from the rubric: travelling and working during gap year/ a year break.

For the content, candidates must focus on 'Students should take a gap year before enrolling in universities.' They must not change the Subject. They must mention all the three keywords (students, gap year and before enrolling in universities) and give clear justification for them. Good candidates were able to provide convincing points and arguments to support their stance (agree/disagree/partial). Some of the candidates who agreed with the statement listed a few reasons appropriately while those few who disagreed also listed acceptable reasons. Most points were supported with good elaboration and examples. This clearly signals their maturity in dealing with the topic. Nevertheless, there were a small number of them who were unable to provide responses accordingly as they had difficulty to understand the requirement of the question, misunderstood them by focusing on what to do before enrolling in universities without mentioning gap year at all or elaborated at length about travelling and working part time.

For this session, it was uncommon to see a blatant off tangent essay since most candidates were saved by stating the phrase 'before enrolling in universities' in their body paragraph, hence making their arguments relevant. However, it was also worrying because many candidates with low english proficiency were not able to develop their arguments satisfactorily. Justifications given to support their arguments were mostly simplistic, lacking maturity and sometimes rather far-fetched. They were also unable to provide clear examples to support their arguments and if they did, the examples were not effective. This resulted in their score for task fulfilment to be in the range of mid to low Band 3 only. However, good candidates were able to not only provide strong reasons and show the advantages/disadvantages of students taking a gap year before enrolling in universities, but also, they were able to remain consistent with their stand besides providing convincing elaboration and real-life examples to support their arguments.

Overall, most candidates attempted Task 2 with varying degree of success. To further exemplify candidates' performance for Task 2, please note the following comments:

### In terms of strength:

1. A clear scope of discussion consisting of a definition on key words, an interesting lead-in, a clear stand (which is consistent throughout writing) and an explicit thesis statement, were provided by many candidates.
2. Many candidates provided a thesis statement in their introductory paragraph. Some gave a general statement. For example, “.....because of some reasons.”

An example of a clear thesis statement is:

*“This makes me really think that students should take a gap year before enrolling in universities as they can rest their mind and take a time to do any research and planning about university, course and career they wanted in the future. In addition, by taking a gap year, this will give opportunity to the student to working part-time.”*

3. In terms of the content paragraphs, most candidates provided three main points although the quality of the development of these points was mostly satisfactory to modest. Modest essays tend to list down the benefits in taking a gap year and focused on how students can spend their gap year with descriptions of activities, for instance, going travelling and visiting places (i.e. to Cameron Highland, Langkawi, Port Dickson), getting a part-time job, spending time having a picnic with family and friends, going for movies with friends, sleeping and playing games, among others. As such, in terms of the justification of their opinions, it lacked depth, maturity and conviction.
4. Only a handful of candidates managed to provide satisfactory responses by giving apt reasons why students should or should not take a gap year before enrolling in universities, followed by specific examples to illustrate their points. The development also showcased the outcomes of the activities taken during the gap year and linked these outcomes to university life and beyond.
5. It was also noted that most candidates chose to agree to the statement and supported their point of view with the benefits gained by taking a gap year. Among the common reasons or benefits given for agreeing to the statement were:
  - *the opportunities to gain experience (work and travel),*
  - *to gain and improve skills (communication skill, social skill, teamwork, leadership skill),*
  - *a chance to rest and reduce stress after years of studying,*
  - *a time to bond with family and friends before going to universities*
  - *to earn some money for use when enrolling in universities,*
  - *to have clearer goals in pursuing courses of their interests*
  - *the chance to explore personal interests and passions*
6. Points that showcased candidates’ lack of maturity in responding to the task are:
  - *to enjoy with friends*
  - *to prepare documents for registration at universities*
  - *to sleep and play games*
7. Main points that disagreed with the statement commonly touched on the disadvantages when taking a gap year, which include:
  - *delayed opportunity to graduate compared to their peers/ other students of the same age*
  - *inability to cope with studies after being on long breaks*
  - *students become too comfortable with not having to study, and eventually become uninterested to enrol in universities*
  - *students feel satisfied earning money doing part-time jobs, and do not feel the need and interest to further their studies*

- *students may waste time on unproductive activities*
- *lack of structure can lead to boredom, procrastination and aimlessness.*

For paragraphing, most candidates adhered to the element of paragraphing. Each paragraph carried a new point and elaboration, thus, making reading easy.

Candidates were able to use some variety of cohesive devices appropriately. The use of linkers was evident among the candidates. Some examples include *First and foremost, secondly, next, lastly, in conclusion, in a nutshell.*

#### **In terms of weakness,**

1. In terms of weaknesses, the obvious weakness is that exceptional and outstanding essay are rare. Most candidates fall into the modest and low modest category. Some candidates did not understand the actual meaning of “gap year” thus treated the gap year as a short break that will be only for a few months or some treated gap year as a break happening for more than a year.
2. Another obvious weakness was noted from the introductory paragraph where the lead-in was not present. Quite a number of candidates started the essay with “I agree/I disagree” then continued with their first point (Introduction might be non-existent).
3. Some candidates provide vague stand. For example, “I probably/might agree”. There are also candidates who wrote 2 paragraphs of introduction and the stand with the thesis statement appeared be in the second paragraph.
4. Most candidates chose to agree with idea of taking a gap year before enrolling in a university, but their discussions were brief, lacked depth, and did not provide evidence to support their arguments. Points were predictable and lacked maturity. An example of a brief elaboration is:
 

*“Other than that, students can recharged their mental and physical health with travel. It can fill the happiness after having a SPM paper. Hence, travel before enrolling in university is another advantages of taking a gap year before enrolling in university.”*
5. Off-tangent essays were also noted. This is because the discussion revolved around “taking a gap year after enrolling in university, explaining how to survive during university life, using wrong subject like “people” or “person” instead of “students” and failing to include the key phrase “take a gap year.”

An example of an off-tangent essay is: (The ways to survive during university life)

*“My last point as a university student is you have to enjoy your high school life because when you enter university, you have to learn in new situation. You need to learn how to communicate with new friend or person, learn to do new things such as the assignments. The key to maintain a university life is you have to learn to make a good decision.”*

6. Less proficient candidates struggled in conveying ideas which sometimes did not come through and required re-reading. Superficial treatment of ideas which were less focused were common too. For example:

*“Furthurmore, students also can learn about my skills. When they going for work, they will learn something new that they did not familiar about it before. For example, they can improve their communicating skills learning a new language and build confident. I said this because working member so it will bring us to always having a conversation together. Besides that, it would help us being professional because learn how to settle with our problems since teenagers.”*

*“When entering at university, there are so many problems that happen to a student such as being stressed, tired and more. Travelling can realize our tension and remove all stress that we had on mind. Becoming a student is not easy; we should handle the study problem. So that before everything happens to a student, make sure your old burden is gone”.*

*“My opinion on the comment, student problem is money for survival. Thus, for step students go to work. For example, part-time work or full-time work for extra money makes many students survive their own study. Students have problems; parents support their study in universities. Students have PTPTN or any support company/government but the value is not relevant. The total for long study is not support.”*

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ISBN: 978-629-498-669-5



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