

FIRST LANGUAGE MALAY

Paper 0696/01
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

Candidates should:

- look for the implicit and explicit meanings and messages that the writer is trying to convey in Text A
- read the story more than once to understand the theme and the messages that the writer is trying to convey
- make targeted use of the information provided in Text B and Text C for **Question 2**.

General comments

Overall, many candidates were able to answer the questions well.

In **Question 1**, candidates should be able to read between the lines of Text A to deduce the information required, as some questions will require implicit understanding. Weaker candidates sometimes copy chunks from the text, in the hope that this will answer the question.

Candidates do not need to copy out the question in their answers.

In questions where candidates are asked to explain what the writer is trying to convey when using certain phrases, candidates need to explain the meaning in their own words.

The strongest candidates took care to use prefixes and suffixes accurately and used correct prepositions. In **Question 1**, if a candidate makes spelling errors or uses the wrong prefix, then as long as this does not change the meaning of the word or prevent understanding, their answer can still be credited. In **Question 2**, the content mark will not be affected, but it will have an impact on the mark for language.

For **Question 2**, information is provided in Text B and Text C. Candidates need to select the information they want to include and manipulate it to meet the demands of the task. Candidates should write in their own words. Candidates should avoid using irrelevant parables in their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) The question asked why Lolani's mother took his phone away from him.

Most candidates answered correctly that Lolani was playing with his phone when he was supposed to be finishing his homework. If candidates only said that he was playing games on his phone or that he did not finish his homework, the answer was considered incomplete.

(b) Candidates were asked what Lolani did to show that he was disrespectful of his mother. This was a two-part question.

Acceptable responses either reproduced the utterances by Lolani to show his displeasure at being asked to hand over his phone, or paraphrased by saying that he raised his voice. In addition, they

mentioned that he briskly walked away to his room. Candidates who said only that he answered back, but did not say how he answered back, were not awarded the marks.

(c) Candidates were asked to explain the statement ‘Lolan’s mother is firm but at the same time she understands the problems faced by Lolan’.

This question was worth two marks. The first mark was for the explanation of her firm nature when dealing with Lolan: she takes away Lolan’s phone to make him focus on his homework, she wants him to make an effort, she wants him to know that in life there are challenges. The second mark was for how and why she understands the problems that Lolan is facing: her sympathy and understanding of the difficulties faced by a young teenager studying online, while handling a difficult subject about Computer Science.

The strongest candidates dealt with both of these aspects. The majority answered the first part only.

(d) According to Lolan’s mother, how has education changed during the time of the pandemic?

Most candidates managed to answer this question well. There were several possible ways to give the two required points, for example students studied online, there was no more physical attendance at school, there were no more question-and-answer sessions with the teachers, parents took over the role of teachers, taking pictures of homework to post to teachers.

(e) This question asked why Lolan’s mother purposely ignored and did not turn to Lolan when he called out her name.

Most candidates answered this question correctly, explaining that Lolan’s mother wanted Lolan to realise that he had done wrong, and wanted him to apologise. A small number of candidates answered wrongly that Lolan’s mother was cooking and did not hear him.

(f) This question asked why Lolan’s mother placed so much hope on Lolan compared to the rest of her children.

Most candidates answered this question correctly by saying that Lolan was the eldest child and as such he was the one that would one day carry the responsibilities (of looking after the siblings) when both parents die. Another possible answer is Lolan was the child she hoped will be a role model to his siblings.

(g) How did Lolan’s mother advise him to change his behaviour/attitude? Explain.

Only the strongest candidates gave a complete answer for two marks. Their answers included Lolan’s mother’s advice for her son not to cry that easily and to be strong, and that he should listen to her advice and be independent as she will not be around forever for him.

(h) This question asked candidates to give examples of how things have changed between Lolan’s mother’s school days and the present day.

Most candidates answered this well. It was obvious that during her time there were no gadgets to distract her. The other answer was that she was living in a hostel and was subject to lots of rules and discipline.

Candidates who did not receive the marks answered that as a teenager she lived in a hostel and had to *beratur untuk makan* and *beratur untuk mandi*. These answers were rejected because the word *beratur* and *peraturan* are not the same.

(i) This question asked for quotes (*petikan*) from the text to show that Lolan’s mother had teaching experience.

Although many candidates did not understand the word *petikan* in the question, they paraphrased the quotes and this was considered acceptable. The quotes that examiners were looking for were:

Mengajar anak sendiri tak sama mengajar anak orang lain. (Cepat juga marah menyirap ke urat sarafku.)

Mengajar anak satu hal. Memahamkan mereka apa yang diajarkan satu hal lagi.

Pasal subjek komputer tu, nanti mak ajar Lolan cara belajarnya.

Incorrect responses were that Lolan's mother had to check and supervise studies and homework. This would apply to parents in general, and is not evidence of teaching experience.

(j) Candidates were asked to explain what the writer was trying to convey from the use of the phrases.

Weaker responses only paraphrased the phrases, without attempting to explain what the impact/purpose of the phrases was.

(i) *Menahan empangan air mata* – to resist the flow of tears, to try not to cry (to release the the resevoir of tears from the eyes. Some candidates referred back to the story by saying that Lolan resisted from letting his tears flow in front of his mother. Some candidates answered that Lolan was crying, but the word *menahan* means that he was resisting.

(ii) *Azamku tumbuh dalam hati* – my spirit grew in my heart. The writer was trying to convey Lolan's mother's hopes, determination and aspiration that started to grow in her as she watched Lolan. She started to feel encouraged that Lolan will succeed in life.

(iii) *Dunia tanpa sempadan* – world without borders. Successful candidates referred back to the part of the text where it showed Lolan's mother's concern about Lolan spending too much time on the internet. She was concerned about the cyber world where Lolan, as a teenager, could roam freely without much control and supervision, with the risk of bad influences.

(iv) *Menghela nafas panjang* – to let out a sigh of relief. To be able to answer this question, candidates needed to understand the part of the story where, after the trouble with Lolan and his unfinished homework, his younger sibling came to the mother and informed her that he had completed his homework. It was a sigh of relief. Answers that included the concept of being happy, with a feeling of calm setting in, were accepted. Candidates who did not gain a mark answered *bernafas panjang* – a long breath. This did not explain the meaning of the phrase in context.

(v) *Diam menikus*. This was answered correctly by the strongest candidates. It was not acceptable to just answer that Lolan did not speak, because it did not explain the word *menikus*, from the word *tikus* (mouse), which implied he did not say anything because he was scared, he knew he did something wrong. The ideal answer was *Dia tidak berkata apa-apa/tidak bercakap sebab dia takut, dia tahu dia bersalah* (he did not say anything, he did not speak because he was scared as he had done something wrong).

(vi) *Matanya mula berkata* – his eyes turned glassy showing that he was about to cry (again). The answer 'his eyes look like glass' on its own was not enough to be awarded the mark.

(vii) *Pandanganku tertumpah lama* – this is the lingering look that Lolan's mother gave when she looked at Lolan – it reflects the hopes, love and aspirations that she has for him. Examiners accepted answers that said she looked at him for a long time.

(viii) *Hanya mata sahaja bagai berbicara* – this related to the concept that parents had to deal with their own work and their children's education during the time of lockdown during the pandemic. Jazlan, Lolan's father, after a long day at work, asked how his wife was coping with the children. She told him about juggling the schoolwork and housework. He did not answer verbally, but through his eyes, he conveyed his feelings, he understood what she was trying to say.

The ideal answer was *Jazlan faham apa yang ibu lolan berkata, dan walaupun dia tidak menjawab, ibu Lolan faham apa yang dia ingin katakan menerusi pandangannya* (Jazlan understood what his wife was saying and although he did not say a word, Lolan's mother knew he understood, from the look that he gave her. He need not say anything, but they understood each other).

(ix) *Menepuk dahi* – to slap one's forehead. This act reflects the feeling of despair, helplessness. To understand why Lolan's mother did this, one must understand what she had gone through dealing with children's homework throughout the day. And just as she thought everyone had done their homework and she was about to go to sleep, another child appeared at her door, announcing that

he had forgotten to do his homework. She was feeling despair, but she knew she had to help the child.

An ideal answer was: *Ibu lolan berasa kecewa sebab dia penat dan sekarang terpaksa menolong anaknya membuat kerja sekolah* (Lolan's mother felt despair because she was tired and now had to help her son with his homework).

Some answered that she was angry – this answer was not correct.

Question 2

Candidates were given two texts on the topic of Artificial Intelligence and were asked to write about the benefits of AI, the negative effects of AI and how AI should be used in a way that would be of benefit to us, especially to students.

Most students answered all three elements of the question, appropriately drawing their answers from the texts. The better responses were written in a way that avoided simply lifting whole chunks from the text and placing them in the answer; candidates who received higher marks managed to use the information but express it in their own way, to create a coherent and flowing response.

Strong responses developed and explained the points rather than just listing them. Occasionally, candidates contradicted themselves. Candidates are advised to re-read what they have written to check that the flow of ideas is coherent and not contradictory.

Some candidates were ambitious in their use of compare and contrast phrases, such as *kalau dilihat dari sudut/perspektif yang berbeza* (if looked from another perspective) or *hal ini dikatakan demikian* (this is said that way). Those that used these phrases successfully made sure that the content immediately following them was indeed logical to the phrase.

In some weaker responses, candidates relied on using parables such as *sebagai aur dengan tebing* (like the bamboo and the riverbank – to show solidarity), *tak tumbuh tak melata – tak sungguh orang tak kata* – to imply a gossip that is being spread in the community) and many more. These were placed in the answer without a clear idea of why they were being used, and so they detracted from the overall quality of the response.

The overall advice for this type of question is:

- choose the information from the text that supports what is required by the question
- consider how to express the information in a way that creates a flowing response. This will almost certainly mean re-phrasing the information
- expand and develop the points
- use linguistic devices appropriately in the context of the response – do not include them if they do not add value to the response
- structure the response in paragraphs
- re-read the response at the end to ensure that there are no contradictions or confusing elements, and to check for spelling, punctuation and grammatical accuracy.

FIRST LANGUAGE MALAY

Paper 0696/02
Composition

Key messages

Candidates should:

- read all the questions before selecting which to answer
- study the syllabus and mark scheme prior to the examination to ensure that they understand the requirements of the tasks
- keep in mind to write between 300 and 400 words
- be aware of the target audience of each task and ensure the use of appropriate register and tone throughout
- respond well to the question asked, demonstrating fluency, well-developed ideas and adequate control of grammar, idiom, vocabulary, spelling, discourse marker (*penanda wacana*) and sentence completion.

General comments

In **Section 1**, the most popular question was **Question 1(a)**, which asked candidates to write a discursive essay on the topic '*Living in a big city*'. Most candidates responded well, presenting balanced viewpoints with clarity, sound understanding, and relevant supporting arguments. The stronger responses demonstrated a thoughtful consideration of both advantages and disadvantages, structured effectively with cohesive transitions. **Question 1(b)** was also widely attempted. Candidates were required to write an article for a school magazine, inspired by a Malay proverb highlighting how life experience or travel enriches one's knowledge and perspective. Stronger candidates produced well-developed ideas with clear, structured paragraphs. They employed descriptive language and often included personal insights, enhancing the authenticity and engagement of their writing. **Question 1(c)** presented the statement '*Global warming has no solution. Do you agree?*' and drew a fairly even distribution of agreement and disagreement. Most candidates showed a reasonable grasp of the topic and were able to construct logical arguments. Those who achieved high marks demonstrated clear viewpoints supported by factual evidence, while weaker candidates tended to lack depth or had inconsistent arguments. **Question 1(d)** was the least popular. The prompt, which was based on a Malay proverb, required candidates to reflect on how early influences shape an individual's future. However, many candidates found it challenging to interpret the proverb accurately and to present a clear, coherent response.

Overall, stronger candidates demonstrated linguistic maturity and effective structuring of ideas. Their writing reflected a good command of persuasive techniques such as emotive language, rhetorical questions and anecdotal evidence. Candidates are reminded that in discursive writing, it is essential to present a well-balanced argument with relevant examples and clear transitions to enhance logical flow. While most candidates constructed sound arguments, some responses lacked cohesion. A few essays contained scattered ideas or shifted stance midway, which affected the overall coherence of their arguments. Candidates are advised to plan their responses carefully to ensure consistency in their viewpoint and progression of ideas.

In **Section 2**, high-scoring responses offered vivid and engaging narratives or descriptions which successfully conveyed atmosphere, mood and sensory details using rich imagery and stylistic features such as similes, metaphors, and personification. These candidates showed the ability to 'paint with words,' drawing the reader into the described scene. However, some candidates struggled to meet the descriptive requirement, often slipping into narrative or failing to fully engage the five senses. To improve, candidates should focus on describing not just events, but the feelings, settings, and nuances of the moment using appropriate figurative language. In narrative writing, many candidates were able to relate a coherent storyline with a clear beginning, climax, and resolution. Stronger narratives demonstrated character development, dialogue, and an effective use of tension. Weaker responses tended to list events with minimal elaboration or

lacked emotional depth and setting. Direct speech was generally well used when included, though a number of responses lacked proper punctuation or paragraphing in dialogue. Candidates are encouraged to develop story arcs thoughtfully and enrich their writing with well-crafted descriptions and character insights.

The strongest essays displayed high levels of linguistic accuracy, fluency, and complexity. Most candidates demonstrated a good grasp of sentence structure and vocabulary, though common issues persist:

- confusion between *kami* and *kita* in first-person plural contexts
- incorrect application of affixes, e.g. *melari* instead of *berlari*, *mencakap* instead of *bercakap*
- frequent errors in the use of *di* and *ke* as prepositions vs. affixes (*di mana* vs. *dimana*, *ke sana* vs. *kesana*)
- spelling mistakes and use of loanwords from English (e.g., *pikir*, *kost*, *tradition*, *transportasi*) – candidates should use proper Malay equivalents such as *fikir*, *kos*, *tradisi*, *pengangkutan*
- use of informal or spoken Malay unsuitable for formal writing (*mau*, *taktau* instead of *mahu*, *tidak tahu*)
- pluralisation errors, e.g., *masyarakat-masyarakat* and *ramai pekerjaan*
- long, unpunctuated sentences; incorrect or missing punctuation for questions, quotations, and proper nouns.

Candidates are encouraged to revise grammar rules, enrich their vocabulary through wider reading, and pay close attention to formality and clarity in their writing.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

(a) Candidates were expected to express their views about life in big cities after watching a documentary, focusing on the advantages of urban living, the reasons behind increasing urbanisation, and the negative impacts of overcrowding. Successful candidates showed a clear understanding of these ideas and presented thoughtful reflections supported by relevant examples. Their writing demonstrated a balanced perspective, explaining both the benefits and drawbacks of city life. They explored the causes of urban growth – such as job opportunities and better facilities – and reflected on the consequences, including environmental issues and social challenges. Their language was clear, engaging, and showed a personal connection to the topic. Less successful candidates struggled to expand on their ideas or repeated points without offering deeper insight. Some gave overly general statements or focused only on one part of the question, such as listing advantages without considering the negative effects. In weaker responses, the reasoning lacked clarity, and the overall message was less convincing due to limited vocabulary or vague expressions.

(b) This question required candidates to reflect on the meaning of the proverb by exploring how travel and life experiences can broaden one's perspective. Candidates were expected to write an article for a school magazine, offering insights, personal reflections or examples to support their views. Successful candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of the proverb and responded with well-developed content. They were able to explain how exposure to different environments, cultures, and experiences can shape one's thinking, values, and maturity. Strong responses often included relevant anecdotes, comparisons between rural and urban settings or reflections on personal growth gained through travel. The tone was thoughtful and informative, and the language used was varied, precise, and expressive, keeping the reader engaged. Less successful candidates tended to interpret the proverb too literally or focused narrowly on travel without linking it to personal development or broader perspectives. Some responses were overly descriptive or repetitive, lacking deeper reflection or insight. In weaker scripts, vocabulary was limited, and ideas were not clearly connected, which affected the overall impact of the writing.

(c) Many candidates handled this argumentative essay well, clearly stating whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that global warming has no solution. They were able to present strong and relevant arguments supported by appropriate examples, such as the use of environmentally friendly technology, steps taken by governments to reduce pollution, or the importance of public awareness and education. These responses were coherent, with ideas logically linked from one point to the next, making their overall argument convincing and easy to follow. However, less

successful candidates often gave vague or general statements about environmental issues without focusing on the central question. Some simply described the causes or effects of global warming without clearly stating their opinion or discussing whether solutions are possible. Others lacked depth in their reasoning and did not support their views with concrete evidence or examples, which made their arguments less persuasive. In some cases, the essays ended without a strong conclusion, leaving the impression that the candidate had not fully addressed the task.

(d) This question required candidates to reflect on the truth of the proverb *Bagaimana acuan, begitulah kuihnya*, and to present their opinion on whether a person's upbringing and early influences determine their future. Many candidates responded well to this question and clearly stated their position. Strong candidates explained how factors such as parenting, education, home environment and early life experiences play a key role in shaping a person's values, behaviour, and life direction. These responses were thoughtful, supported with clear examples – such as the influence of good role models or early exposure to discipline and responsibility – and showed an understanding of the long-term impact of one's early environment. Their arguments were logically developed and persuasive. On the other hand, weaker candidates struggled to interpret the meaning of the proverb and wrote off-topic or too generally. Some focused only on parenting without discussing how early experiences affect the future, while others repeated ideas without elaborating or providing evidence. A few candidates acknowledged that people can change despite their early influences but did not develop this counterpoint effectively. These weaker responses lacked clarity and did not fully explore the implications of the proverb.

Section 2

Question 2

(a) & (b) Strong candidates produced well-developed, logically sequenced descriptions enriched with vivid details and imagery. Their effective use of precise and expressive vocabulary allowed the reader to clearly sense the atmosphere. The responses were coherently structured, and the appropriate use of literary devices enhanced the imagery and sustained the reader's engagement.

(c) & (d) Successful candidates crafted engaging plots that sustained the reader's interest through effective tension-building and a well-executed climax. Several essays also featured impactful twist endings. Character development was generally convincing and realistic. Overall, many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of narrative structure and wrote effectively; minor lapses were negligible due to the strong overall coherence and flow of their writing.