

2009 HSC Classical Hebrew Continuers

Sample Answers — Written Examination

This document contains 'sample answers', or, in the case of some questions, 'answer may include'. These are developed by the examination committee for two purposes. The committee does this:

- (a) as part of the development of the examination paper to ensure the questions will effectively assess students' knowledge and skills, and
- (b) in order to provide some advice to the Supervisor of Marking about the nature and scope of the responses expected of students.

The 'sample answers' or similar advice, are not intended to be exemplary or even complete responses. They have been reproduced in their original form as part of the examination committee's 'working document'. While the handwritten notes have been typed for legibility, no further editorial change or addition has occurred.

Section I — Prescribed Text – Tanakh

Part A — Torah

Question 1 (a)

Sample answer:

The subject is God and the object is the woman.

Question 1 (b)

Sample answer:

The words could be understood to describe the type of relationship man was lacking. The creation of the animals was not sufficient to accompany man (in verse 19). The translations differ according to the understanding of the word נָגַד. It could be understood literally, to stand against or alongside, and hence the meaning would be an accompanying helper, a partner. It could also be understood figuratively to mean proper, fitting, compatible.

Answer could include::

It should also be noted that of the three given translations, only the 3rd translation maintains the grammatical form of כּ to preserve the simile.

Question 1 (c)

Sample answer:

The word צַלַע could mean side or rib. The meaning of ‘side’ is supported by Rashi’s commentary. The meaning ‘rib’ is supported by verse 24 that mentions other corporeal terms – בָּשָׂר, עֲצָמוֹת – flesh and bone.

Question 1 (d)

Sample answer:

Verse 24 is different from the rest of the extract as it is not part of the narrative of the sequence of events. It is rather a comment on the event. Whereas the preceding verses consist of *wayiqtol* (vav consecutive, imperfect) that expresses the continuity of events in the past, verse 24 uses *yiqtol* (imperfect) and *weqatal* (vav consecutive, perfect) aspects to express the present state of affairs. Verse 24, therefore describes a common custom, unlike the previous verses that describe past events.

Answers could include:

Furthermore, verse 24 starts with the words עַל כֵּן marking it as a result of all the preceding. It is almost as if someone is commenting on the story or interpreting it.

Question 2 (a)**Sample answer:**

Root פקח; *binyan niph'al*, aspect *wayiqtol* (vav consecutive, imperfect); meaning to open.

Question 2 (b)**Sample answer:**

The use of the same root consecutively in the form of infinitive absolute and a verbal form is common in the *Tanakh* to emphasise a message.

Question 2 (c)**Sample answer:**

The possible meanings are that humanity will become like God or they would be like the great angels, judges or any superior powers. The word אלהים is a plural form, but often describes God as a single entity. In some cases (such as in verse 5) this can cause a difficulty as both understandings are possible.

Question 2 (d)**Sample answer:**

The term ‘naked’ and the term ‘cunning’ are almost identical words in Hebrew (differing by one vowel only). This feature is not translated and serves a few aims in the narrative:

- It frames the narrative, starting and ending with the same word.
- It shows how the cunning of the snake is the reason for the nakedness (awareness) of man and woman.
- It contrasts man and woman who are described as ערומים at the opening of the narrative (chapter 1 verse 25) and the snake in the following verse (chapter 3 verse 1). Using a similar word to describe both makes the reader compare the two.
- To sum up, the two words are used as a word play, which is lost in translation.

Answers could include:

The snake can be seen as ‘naked’, ‘transparent’, a fact that further demonstrates man and woman’s innocence.

Question 3 (a) (i)**Sample answer:**

The term *nephilim* means literally the fallen ones. According to the *targum* they are called so since they were the sons of the fallen angels. It is possible to link them to *bnei ha'elohim* as some commentators see these as the fallen angels (their fathers). The term *bnei ha'elohim* literally means the sons of God/gods (אלהים as the name for God) or the sons of rulers/judges (אלהים as a plural form). Yet others maintain that these are human figures, the descendants of Seth, in contrast to the descendants of Cain who are called 'the sons of man'.

Question 3 (a) (ii)**Sample answer:**

These figures might be introduced here as the reason behind the flood. It demonstrates the degradation of the generations from creation. It could also explain the existence of evil in the world. The creation narrative does not explain how evil exists in a world of one creator and the introduction of divine negative figures could explain that.

Question 3 (b)**Sample answer:**

Verses 8–10 describe Noah in ideal terms. He is described as *Tamim* a word that means whole, and has the connotation of perfect, innocent, pious. He is also described as *Tsadic*, righteous and he finds favour in the eyes of God. Furthermore, he is walking in the ways of God. He also has three sons, and that is another mark of divine favour.

This ideal description contrasts with verses 11 and 12. Noah's righteousness stands in sharp contrast to the corruption of mankind in general.

In verses 11–12, the verb שחת is mentioned three times. This verb means to be corrupt, and has connotations of decadence, perversion, destruction and damage. It is specially used to denote sexual immorality and idolatry (hints again to the narrative in verses 1–4). It therefore stresses the evil behaviour of the people. The verb שחת is in sharp contrast to the words *tamim* and *tsadic*, which describe Noah. The situation is so bad that the whole land is full of *hamas*, crime. Again this word evokes meanings of immorality, violence, oppression, outrage etc.

In verses 11–12 we hear that **all** flesh is corrupt, and the land is full of evil. These general terms sharpen the distinction between Noah and his generation.

Section I (continued)

Part B — Nevi'im

Question 4 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

ויקמה he raised it

קם *hiphil, wayiqtol* (vav consecutive, imperfect) pronominal suffix 3Fs

Question 4 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

וישלח he sent away

שלח *piel, wayyiqtol* (vav consecutive, imperfect)

Question 4 (b)

Sample answer:

A central idea found in the extract is the idea of the covenant, which forms the basis of the relationship between God and Israel. The extract specified that the covenant between Israel and God was made in public. The *Torah* it was believed was given by God and handed down to Moses. Joshua may have written down some verses eg the last 8 verses of Deuteronomy. The laws were announced and then written on a stone. The stone was displayed to serve as a witness in case the Israelites did not follow the agreed laws of the covenant. The Israelites had the choice either to obey the laws of the covenant and benefit from divine blessing, or to disobey and bear the consequences. Joshua chose Shechem as a city, connected to the patriarchs. The link to the patriarchs is further emphasised through the mention of the field that was bought by Jacob and the burial of Joseph's bones in it. Burial was therefore done in an ancestral grave.

Question 5 (a)***Sample answer:***

The TWO infinitives are:

- לִאמֹר (binyan = Pa'al or Qal)
- לְהִלָּחֵם (binyan = Niphal)

Question 5 (b)***Sample answer:***

According to the commentary the verb means to inquire of God. This was done through the *Urim VeTummin* on the high priest's breastplate.

Question 5 (c)***Sample answer:***

The passage reflects the tribal structure of Israel. Names of two of the 12 tribes, who cooperated to defeat the Canaanites are mentioned – ie Judah and Simeon – as part of the whole nation. The nation functioned as a religious and military unit. Their enemies might be considered tribal or a diverse population, as the term Canaanite is explained by the commentary as a general name for all nations in the land of Israel. The other name that is mentioned in the extract is Perizite. According to this extract the leader of the Canaanites/Perizites was Adoni-Bezek, a name meaning 'the lord of Bezek', hence it denotes a royal role for him. There is further reference to the system of political leadership in Adoni-Bezek's words that refer to the 'kings' (leaders) of the other 70 nations. This contrasts the Israelites as a tribal/political system with God as its supreme leader (verses 1, 2, 4) with the description of the Canaanites as a monarchy.

Question 6 (a)

Sample answer:

In the book of Joshua, the Israelites are described as loyal to God and attentive to the elders following Joshua's death. In Judges, there is a religious decline following the death of Joshua and the elders of Israel. While Joshua and the elders were alive there was no idolatry and the other nations could not harm the Israelites. However, after Joshua's death the Israelites worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth which resulted in their oppression by their enemies. Idolatry increased. Once Joshua and the elders had died, lack of leadership made the resistance to Canaanite influence even weaker.

Question 6 (b)

Sample answer:

The text states that he was buried in his hereditary portion. Proper burial was considered extremely important. The commentary explains that ideally people wished to pass away in the company of their family and be buried along with other members of the family.

Section I (continued)

Part C — Ketuvim

Question 7

Sample answer:

The evidence for the maintenance of Jewish identity in exile is found throughout the extract:

- the exiles see Judah as their homeland (verses 2–3)
- the exiles maintain a social structure distinct from their neighbours, including family structure and religious positions (Priests and Levites) (verse 5)
- the community is willing to donate towards the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (verses 4, 5 and 11).

Question 8

Sample answer:

Verse 8 refers to the returnees from exile. They are all summoned to Jerusalem and whoever does not come will be excommunicated and their property will be taken. They are treated this way since they are called to Jerusalem to renew the covenant and if they are not present while the covenant is made, they cannot be part of the religious community.

Question 9 (a)***Sample answer:***

The period described in the book of Ezra is 520–450 BCE. Judah is a Persian province called *Eber-HaNahar* (across the river). As it is a Persian province, there are soldiers and officials in Judah; some officials are from the Judean royalty such as *Sheshbazzar*.

There were two main groups of people, the returned exiles and *Am Haaretz*. The returnees had genealogical entitlements to the land and to estates, and were organised in groups such as tribes or professions. *Am Haaretz* had no such titles; they included Assyrian deportees and Israelites who came south to Jerusalem for security.

Of the 50,000 people who came back from exile, about 42,000 were officials and the rest were slaves. The returnees were clearly a wealthy group, and obsessed with the Jewish religion, whereas *Am Haaretz* were idolatrous.

It is told that in *Tishrei*, they all went up to Jerusalem to start rebuilding the altar. In the second year of the return they were going to rebuild the Temple using imported materials, yet this was disturbed by the rivalry between the two groups. *Am Haaretz* maintained old traditions, including idolatrous ones, and were poor. They objected to the renewal of Torah and were not accepted by the returnees. They tried to stop the rebuilding of the Temple by writing letters of complaint to the Persian authorities.

The existence of the two groups created rivalry and social difference. The Torah group (Ezra, the returnees) won the right to continue rebuilding the biblical Temple, held by Zerubabel, Haggai and Ezra. Ezra's work was to separate the two groups completely and reduce the influence of *Am Haaretz* on the returnees. This was done through isolating them and banning marriage with non Jewish women. The Torah was used as a Persian legal document that could not be contravened.

Question 9 (b)***Sample answer:***

The theological implications and outcomes of the return from the exile are expressed in the book of Ezra in four ways.

The return from exile implies the power of God over the nations. God is the force that makes Persia allow the Jews to return. The return proves that God has saved Israel and forgiven them their sins. The rebuilding of the Temple and returning the Temple vessels further demonstrates the divine presence amongst the people, and in the land.

The return from exile meant that the Temple was rebuilt and the three main holidays (*Sukkoth*, *Pesach*, *Shavuot*) could be celebrated properly, including the ascending to the Temple mountain and the offering of sacrifices. It also meant that the daily sacrifices and personal sacrifices could again be offered. The communication between God and Israel through worship was renewed.

The rebuilding of the Temple also meant that institutions like the Priesthood, the Levites, the Psalmists could again function. A further decision was to be made about who could function in the Temple.

On the social level, a theological distinction was made between the returnees and the people of the land who saw themselves as followers of the same god and part of the same religion. The Book of Ezra rejects this stance and makes a theological decision to exclude the 'people of the land' from the Jewish religion. This is further stressed through the concern about intermarriage, which concludes the book. Intermarriage is conceived of as a source of idolatry and foreign religious influence.

Section II — Prescribed Text – Mishna

Question 10 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

Rabban Gamliel states that the *Shemoneh Esreh* be recited daily. Rabbi Joshua says a digest of the *Shemoneh Esreh* be said daily. Rabbi Akiva gives two opinions. If he is fluent, he says the full *Shemoneh Esreh*, but if not, he need only say the digest.

Question 10 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

The purpose of this Mishna is to determine the *halachic* obligation regarding daily prayer, whether this extends to the full *Shemoneh Esreh* or only an abridged version. In the days of the Mishna, people prayed by heart, but many were not proficient enough to master the *Shemoneh Esreh*. The Mishna demonstrates different opinions on this matter.

Question 10 (b)

Sample answer:

מעין שמונה עשרה refers to a digest of the full *Shemoneh Esreh*. This abridged version has two possible definitions.

- (1) That each intermediate blessing is abridged to the opening and closing formulas. According to this view, the first three and last three blessings are said in their entirety.
- (2) A second opinion is that the 13 intermediate blessings are condensed into one single, inclusive blessing. However, the first and last three blessings must still be recited in full.

Question 10 (c)***Sample answer:***

The *Shemoneh Esreh* was originally composed of 18 blessings as instituted by Ezra and his *Bet Din*. It was composed, according to tradition, either by the patriarchs or as a substitute for Temple sacrifices. It is suggested that a 19th blessing was added by Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh and his *Bet Din*. This extra paragraph was a blessing against the *Minim* (Heretics) and *Malshinim* (Informers). There are other views as to which blessing was the '19th' and in which period of history it was added.

The structure of the *Amidah* is that of Praise, Petition and Thanksgiving. Specifically, the opening three blessings praise God, the intermediate blessings are petitions for the daily needs of the individual and community, and the final three blessings thank God for His divine benevolence.

The *Shemoneh Esreh* is also called the *Tefillah* (The Prayer) or *Amidah* (The standing prayer) and is recited on Sabbaths and Festivals as well as weekdays. On those holy occasions the petitionary blessings are reduced to one – a central blessing concerning the sanctity of the day.

The prayer was originally recited silently by each person, then it was repeated by the reader (the exception to this being the evening service).

Question 11 (a) (i)**Sample answer:**

Techiyat HaMetim refers to blessing number 2 of the *Amidah* and speaks of the resurrection of the dead.

Gevurot Geshamim, meaning the power of rain, refers to the recital of *Mashiv Haruach*.

The reason for the insertion of *Mashiv Haruach* in this blessing is because rainfall is as miraculous as the resurrection of the dead.

Another view – both resurrection and rainfall bring life to the world.

Question 11 (a) (ii)**Sample answer:**

Birkat Hashanim refers to the blessing for prosperity in the *Amidah*.

Shoalim Hagshamim refers to the prayer *Veten Tal Umatar* (The prayer for rain) which is said during winter time in Israel.

The reason for its insertion into this blessing is due to the fact that prosperity and sustenance rely on rainfall.

Question 11 (a) (iii)**Sample answer:**

Chonen Hada'at refers to the blessing for knowledge.

Havdalah is the paragraph inserted on a Saturday night after the end of the Sabbath or at the close of a festival to 'distinguish' between the holy day(s) and the working days.

It is inserted into this blessing, for the ability to distinguish between holy and profane is dependent upon having knowledge, discernment and intellectual ability.

Question 11 (b)**Sample answer:**

Both rabbis are discussing the placing of the *הַבְּדִלָּה* insertion into the *Amidah*. R. Akiva reasons that it should stand alone as an independent fourth blessing. R. Eliezer suggests by contrast that it should form part of an already existent blessing, namely the blessing of thanksgiving ie beginning with the word *MODIM*. Neither of these views became the accepted *Halakhic* practice.

Question 12 (a)***Sample answer:***

The Mishna is discussing who can form a *Zimun*. It appears that doubtful cases such as a *Shamash*/waiter who attends a meal and eats a *Kezayit* of food, and/or a *Kuthite*/Samaritan who is part of the company may nevertheless be included in the *Zimun* for the purpose of full Grace After Meals. The *Nochri*/Non-Jew is excluded.

Question 12 (b) (i)***Sample answer:***

Literally ‘as one’ – here it means ‘together’ referring to three or more people eating a meal as one company.

Question 12 (b) (ii)***Sample answer:***

Literally ‘to invite’. Here it has a technical meaning where one man calls on a minimum of two others to bless God for the food that has been eaten. This is known as a *Zimun* and is the introduction to the *Birkat HaMazon*.

Question 12 (b) (iii)***Sample answer:***

Kezayit means literally ‘like an olive’. Its technical meaning is a measure of food which when eaten forms the minimum amount requiring a blessing.

Section III — Unseen Text – Tanakh

Question 13 (a)

Sample answer:

Elisha was bowing to the ground in prayer.

Question 13 (b)

Sample answer:

The child was the son of the Shunammite.

Question 13 (c) (i)

Sample answer:

בעד (in verse 33) means ‘upon/against/on’

Question 13 (c) (ii)

Sample answer:

עד (in verse 35) means ‘until’ / ‘up to’

Question 13 (d)

Sample answer:

Elisha arose, lay on the child, put his mouth over the child’s mouth, his eyes over the child’s eyes, his palms over the child’s palms, stretched himself and warmed the child. He then returned and went around the house, went up and stretched himself. The child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Question 14 (a)***Sample answer:***

The king cried and mourned for Absalom, his son. He covered his face and shouted aloud from grief.

Question 14 (b)***Sample answer:***

The people sneaked or ‘stole’ into the city, coming in quietly since the king was mourning. They did not celebrate the victory as they would normally have done. This was done either from empathy with the king’s grief over his son or from fear of the king’s reaction. The king’s behaviour is condemned since it humiliated and disappointed the people who fought for the king. Mourning for his rebellious son meant that he dismissed and shamed his supporters.