



B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

2012 HSC Classical Hebrew Continuers 'Sample Answers'

When examination committees develop questions for the examination, they may write 'sample answers' or, in the case of some questions, 'answers could include'. The committees do this to ensure that the questions will effectively assess students' knowledge and skills.

This material is also provided to the Supervisor of Marking, to give some guidance about the nature and scope of the responses the committee expected students would produce. How sample answers are used at marking centres varies. Sample answers may be used extensively and even modified at the marking centre OR they may be considered only briefly at the beginning of marking. In a few cases, the sample answers may not be used at all at marking.

The Board publishes this information to assist in understanding how the marking guidelines were implemented.

The 'sample answers' or similar advice contained in this document are not intended to be exemplary or even complete answers or responses. As they are part of the examination committee's 'working document', they may contain typographical errors, omissions, or only some of the possible correct answers.

Section I — Prescribed Text – Tanakh

Part A

Question 1 (a)

Sample answer:

It was a royal garment, colourful, striped or with pictures. It was long, coming down to the palms of the hand and feet. It was made of fine wool or silk.

Question 1 (b)

Sample answer:

Firstly he brought bad reports of his brothers, showing that he either did not trust them or did not admire them. (If they knew, then more than likely they would have disliked him.)

The brothers were definitely jealous of Joseph because he was Jacob's favourite (*ben zaken*) and because he was given a special gift of *ketonet pasim*. As a consequence, the brothers were unable to speak peacefully to Joseph.

Jacob favoured Joseph and demonstrated his love by giving him the special garment. He treated Joseph as his *ben zaken* – the son of his old age.

Question 1 (c)

Sample answer:

The first dream – the sheaves – demonstrated how sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. Implying that the brothers would bow down to Joseph. The brothers reacted by questioning him harshly that this would really happen and their hatred of him intensified.

The second dream showed the sun and moon, and eleven stars bowing to Joseph. He told his father and brothers – the implication being that his parents as well as brothers would one day bow to him. Jacob rebuked him for this audacity.

The two dreams are similar in that they describe Joseph as a leader to whom the family will bow down. However, the second dream, which describes the sun, moon and stars, has an extended interpretation to include his parents.

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

Joseph concludes with an explanation of how he came to be in Egypt and in prison to emphasise that he was an innocent victim and so that the *sar hamashkim* should plead his case and support his eventual release. Yissa Rosh: an idiom meaning ‘to single out’ or ‘give special consideration’.

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

The first reference describes the restoration of the *sar hamashkim* to his former position. The second reference describes the execution of the *sar ha-ofim*. In both these phrases the word *yissah* is used. In the first case it means to lift up, ie to elevate or restore the person to his previous office. In the second case *yissah* is taken more literally and means that his head will be removed ie he will be killed and this can be seen in the second case by the additional word **בַּעֲלֵי־יָד**.

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

וַאֲשֶׁר – here the *vav* has a *sheva* which is the normal vocalisation with a noun.

וְהָיוּ – here the *vav* has a *qametz* which is used when connecting a pair of words with some similarity, or when the conjunction stands immediately before the tone syllable, that is, the accented syllable.

וַאֲשֶׁר – here the *vav* is a *patach* and goes by the rule that it should match the composite vowel (in this case *hataph patach*) following.

Question 3 (b)**Answers could include:**

Pharaoh (verse 9), the ruler of ancient Egypt, held the power of life and death over his subjects and servants (verses 9 and 10). For their wrongdoing they would be punished severely (verses 9–10) by being imprisoned and even executed.

Pharaoh also had the power to grant amnesties. He ordered Joseph’s release from prison in spite of the fact that he had been imprisoned on a charge of rape (verse 14).

Once Joseph is released there is a sense of urgency to bring him before Pharaoh, but first he had to be made more presentable and so he had his hair cut and was given a change of clothes. This was to honour and show respect to the monarch (verse 14).

Pharaoh secured the kingdom to find interpreters for his dreams. Use of the third person in speaking to the king.

Question 4 (a) (i)**Sample answer:**

שׁוּב שׁוּבָה *Qal/Pa'al* Infinitive construct with suffix

Question 4 (a) (ii)**Sample answer:**

נָגַשׁ וְנָגַשׁ *Hiphil* Imperfect with vav consecutive

Question 4 (b)**Sample answer:**

The name of the altar means ‘God is peace’, or ‘God – all is well’ or ‘God has greeted me here’. Altars were named after the events they commemorated and the event here is that Gideon had seen God, who told Gideon that he should not be afraid for he would not die.

Question 4 (c)**Sample answer:**

All three verbs (שָׁפַד, וְהִנֵּחַ, קַח) are imperatives, implying that the angel was superior to Gideon (a mortal man) – and therefore able to give him orders.

Question 5**Sample answer:**

Abimelech went and asked his own family, the people of Shechem, if they would prefer to be ruled by one man or the seventy sons of Gideon. He also reminded them that he too was a son of Gideon. (T)

The people of Shechem were won over by Abimelech and they gave him seventy shekels from the temple of Ba'al Berith. (T)

With this money, Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows to assist him. He then killed the seventy men. It was really 69, since of the sons of Gideon, Jotham, the youngest survived. Then the people proclaimed Abimelech king. (T and C)

Question 6 (a)***Sample answer:***

The play on the words **הַמִּזְרֹר הַמְּבֹרָתִים** can be translated as ‘mass upon mass’ referring to the thousand Philistines Samson had just killed. However, it could also be translated as ‘donkey of donkeys’, referring to the donkey whose jawbone Samson had used to kill the Philistines.

Question 6 (b)***Answers could include:***

The words refer to Samson acting as a judge for 20 years. One might have expected these words to be written at the end of his career, not as placed here in the middle of the story. However, they are placed here to teach us that Samson was chosen to lead Israel because of his successful raids against the Philistines. As this point in the story marks the end of the first successful phase in Samson’s career, the words ‘And Samson judged Israel for twenty years’ are placed here. From this point on, the chapters describe the rest of Samson’s life including his demise.

Question 7***Sample answer:***

Haman was speaking to his wife and friends when he said ‘All this means nothing to me’ as long as Mordechai was sitting at the palace gate.

‘All this’ refers to his great wealth, his many sons, his promotion by the king, and the fact that he had been invited to a party/feast courtesy of Queen Esther.

Question 8

Answers could include:

- The king was surrounded by servants – night and day.
- The court kept accurate records surrounding the events in the life of the king.
- The king had guards on the doors to his quarters in order to protect him.
- The life of the king was sometimes at risk due to treason.
- The king had extensive power to reward those who supported him.
- The court-appointed officers such as Haman – were personal appointments of the king – to run the affairs of state.
- Courtiers, such as Haman, sought approval from the king, for major policy decisions eg the execution of Mordechai.
- The king was able to reward his supporters in a public way to demonstrate the king's (the nation's) gratitude for their loyalty. In the case of Mordechai he was to be placed on the king's horse, in royal garb, led through the streets of the capital city and be acclaimed as a man worthy of receiving honour from the king. In addition, a royal crown was placed on the head of the horse ridden by the king, after which no-one else may ever ride that horse. A leading courtier would lead the horse through the streets proclaiming to one and all – 'This is what happens to a man whom the king wishes to honour'.
- Use of a crown by the monarch.
- The king has sleepless nights and cares about his subjects, if they require or deserve a reward.

Section I — Prescribed Text – Tanakh

Part B

Question 9

Answer may include some of the following:

The Bible provides many religious messages through its understanding of historical events.

For example, in the case of Joseph, as recorded in Genesis 39:1–2, Joseph finds himself enslaved in Egypt. This is a depressing and distressing situation, one might even say, hopeless. Yet the Biblical text explains that ‘God is with Joseph’ implying (a) that God is a personal God, taking an interest in the individual affairs of human beings, even lowly slaves, and (b) suggesting that with God’s presence and assistance Joseph might extricate himself from his current position and ascend the ladder of personal success. This offering of ‘hope’ in drastic or tragic situations is a theme repeated many times throughout the Bible, most particularly when the people of Israel were exiled from their national homeland and all but gave up hope of a return to their land. Yet the prophets again and again sought to inspire the Jews that God would always be with them and as such a return to the land was inevitable, even if not imminent.

The second text, also from the Joseph saga, describes how Pharaoh assumed that Joseph had special gifts since he was able to interpret Pharaoh’s dream in relation to the pending famine. However, Joseph’s response to Pharaoh, that his ability was a God-given gift, teaches us to acknowledge the awesome power and influence of God in our world, particularly as a source for good and blessing. It suggests that our talents and perhaps even our temperament are reliant on God, to whom then we should pray, and upon whom we should always feel reliant.

Text 3, Judges 6:7–10, relates to the ongoing struggle of the Israelites to establish themselves in Israel following the partial conquest of the land under Joshua. The constant struggle with neighbouring tribes and peoples was understood in the Biblical context not just as a sign of strength versus weakness, but rather the singularly religious message of righteousness versus sin. When the Israelites were obedient to God’s demands, they would find themselves successful in battle (and in life generally) – when, however, they disobeyed God’s wishes, primarily by worshipping foreign gods, they would be punished and become subject to foreign powers. The text reminds the people that God has the power to deliver (providing the Israelites deserve to be delivered), for He did exactly this when He brought the Israelites up out of the slavery in Egypt in earlier times.

Finally, the Book of Esther relates the story of Esther, Mordechai, Ahasuarus and Haman – on the surface a secular story about politics and intrigue, racism and attempted genocide. Yet there are undercurrents here of a religious dimension. For example, implied in this text is the reason why Mordechai refused to bow down to Haman – perhaps because a Jew bows down only to God. No human being can be compared to God nor should be venerated to the extent that it almost becomes like worshipping another person. This may well relate to the concept found at the outset of the Bible, that all human beings are made in the image of God, and as such while a human being should respect all other people, they do not need to worship others, for they themselves are in a sense their equal, even if they are of a different religion or status in life.

These are but a few examples from the Bible where regular stories and historical events provide serious ongoing religious messages for the reader.

Section II — Prescribed Text – Mishna

Question 10 (a)

Sample answer:

One view is that regardless of the fact that the mishna used the word *sho'alin*, 'request', the intent is the 'mentioning' (*mazkir*) of the rain from *Shemini Atzeret*, according to Rabbi Yehoshua. The second view is that this refers exclusively to the request for rain in the *Shemoneh Esreh*. In this case both Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua agree that the request for rain only begins close to its season.

Question 10 (b) (i)

Sample answer:

Literally, 'he who passes before the Ark' is the technical term for the one leading the prayer service or *sheliah tzibbur*.

Question 10 (b) (ii)

Sample answer:

Literally, 'the last one' or 'latter one' refers here to a technical term, ie the person who leads the *musaf* or additional service.

Question 10 (b) (iii)

Sample answer:

Literally, 'the first one' refers to a technical term, ie the one who leads the morning service or *shaharit*.

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

Rabbi Yehudah answers the question by ruling that one should continue to pray for rain until the end of Pesach, even though this seems to contradict his earlier ruling of changing the prayer formula on the first day of Pesach. The Talmud explains that these are the views of two different *Tannaim*, who disagree regarding Rabbi Yehudah's precise opinion. Rabbi Yehudah's view opposes that of Rabbi Meir, who, based on a verse from the Book of Joel, rules that one retains the prayer for rain in the *Shemoneh Esreh* (*ve-tane tal umatar*) until the end of the month of Nisan.

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

This is a euphemism for when bad things DO happen, whereas the line in Hebrew literally means, 'for all the trouble which will NOT befall the community'.

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

Being called upon to pray that the rains may fall:

- He instructed the people to bring in the *tanurei pesach* (the Pesach ovens) so that they would not dissolve in the rain – this instruction reflected his complete confidence in himself that his prayers would be answered.
- He drew a circle, stood within it and prayed for rain.
- First when it lightly drizzled and then when it absolutely poured, he asked God to bring a more acceptable, blessed and generous type of rainfall.
- On being asked to stop the rain, he told people to go out and see if the *even ha-toim* had been washed away. (The *even ha-toim*, or the Rock of Wandering, was a large stone in Jerusalem where people would assemble if they were searching for lost objects. Some called this rock the *even ha-to'en*, the Rock of the Claimer.) He then advised everyone that just as it is impossible for a rock to be washed away, so it is impossible to pray against an excess of rain.
- He brought a thanksgiving offering and made a prayer to cause the rains to cease.
- He faced strong disapproval from Shimon ben Shetach for over-confidence, bordering on arrogance. Shimon ben Shetach felt that in general it is not proper for a righteous person to be so confident of the effects of his prayer that they would be automatically answered.
- Also for disrespecting God.

Question 12

Answers could include:

The Mishna is a body of literature that was compiled, edited and then written down around 1800 years ago. It refers to most aspects of Jewish law as they applied in the centuries leading up to its redaction by Rabbi Judah the Prince. The language used is Palestinian Hebrew with Aramic and Greek influences; the style of literature is terse; and the content is largely halakhic or of a legal nature.

It is for these reasons that commentary is essential. Firstly to make sense of terminology that would otherwise be unclear to the reader. Secondly to clarify the meaning of the text, where much of it is written in a kind of mishnaic shorthand, an abbreviated style that assumes prior knowledge of mishnaic and Biblical literature. Thirdly to explain the various arguments between the tannaitic scholars, often enabling the reader to have an insight into which arguments finally became accepted as normative Jewish law or halakha.

In Mishna 4:1, without commentary one might not be aware of the meaning of phrases such as *nos'in et kapay-hen* or *ma'amadot* to name but two. Nor is it clear just from a reading of the mishnaic text, that this mishna refers to the priests blessing the people on fast days. Assumed knowledge, that the commentary advances, is that the priestly blessing and alcoholic drinking do not mix and therefore while the priestly blessing is not said on a normal day in the afternoon for fear that the priest might have drunk some wine at lunch, on a fast day there is no such fear, hence the priestly blessing may well be permitted later on in the day at *Mincha*.

Further commentary is required to explain the meaning of the word *neilah* and how its recitation is relevant to the discussion in the mishna, particularly in regard to public fasts, *ma'amadot* and Yom Kippur. On this, the commentary compares the view of the Talmud Yerushalmi (which the medieval scholar Maimonides follows and accepts as halakha) with that of the Talmud Bavli. Indeed, the Talmud Bavli explains that there is a lacuna in the mishna: 'At three periods during the year the *kohanim* raise their hands whenever they pray' (ie Shharit, Minhah and Neilah – Rashi), and in some instances 'four times during the day – in Shharit, in Musaf, and in Minhah, and in the closing of the gates' (ie on Yom Kippur). And these are the three periods: 'on fasts, and on the *ma'amadot*, and on Yom Kippur'. For these and other reasons, commentary is essential for a full understanding of Mishna.

Section III — Unseen Text – Tanakh

Question 13 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

דבר *Piel* Imperfect with *vav* consecutive

Question 13 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

נוס *Qal/Pa'al* Infinitive construct

Question 13 (a) (iii)

Sample answer:

קדש *Hiphil* Imperfect with *vav* consecutive

Question 13 (b)

Sample answer:

The significance of these words is to remind Joshua that these laws, concerning the cities of refuge, had previously been given to Moses. This confirms Joshua's authority to fulfil this command now that they were in the land of Israel.

Question 13 (c)

Sample answer:

Three points of similarity are:

- (a) they are all across the River Jordan
- (b) the cities are located east of Jericho
- (c) each city is located within tribal land belonging to the Israelites (namely Reuben, Gad and Manasseh).

Question 13 (d)**Sample answer:**

The *locative he* is the letter *he* added with a preceding *qametz* at the end of a geographical location to indicate direction towards that place. For example, הָעִירָה (verse 4) meaning ‘to the city’ or מִזְרָחָהּ (verse 8) meaning ‘eastwards’ or שָׁמָּה (verse 3) and שָׁמָּה (verse 9) meaning ‘to there’ (thither).

Question 13 (e)**Sample answer:**

The person who accidentally killed another would:

- (a) flee to a city of refuge, to escape death by an avenging family member
- (b) present himself at the entrance to the city gate
- (c) plead his case before the elders of that city
- (d) if successful with his plea, be admitted into the city
- (e) live in the city for a period of time, until he can stand trial before the assembly
- (f) remain there until the death of the current Kohen Gadol
- (g) return home after the death of the current Kohen Gadol.

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

The *Qere Ketib* is a device by which a word in the text is traditionally written in one form and yet pronounced differently. For example, in verse 8 the word אָמַרְתִּי which means ‘And I said’, replaces אָמַרְתָּ meaning ‘And he said’. In verse 11, the *Qere* is the plural form – ‘his garments’ replacing the singular בְּבִגְדוֹ – which is the *Ketib*. Verse 16 the singular form – ‘your blood’ דְּמִיָּךְ replaces the plural דְּמֵיךְ.

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

His clothes were torn and he had earth on his head.

Question 14 (c)

Sample answer:

The man responded by telling David that the Israelite troops had left the battlefield, many of them had died and Saul and his son Jonathan were dead.

Question 14 (d)

Sample answer:

In verse 2, the verb is to be taken literally – as the man fell upon his face, demonstrating respect for the king. In verse 4, the verb refers to the fact that many soldiers ‘fell’ in battle implying death. In verse 10, the man admitted killing Saul since he could see that Saul would not be able to live on after ‘his fall’ ie his injury. At the end of verse 12, the verb is used in the phrase נִפְּלֵי בַחֶרֶב meaning ‘killed by the sword’.

Question 14 (e)

Sample answer:

David reacted to the news of Saul’s death by:

- (a) tearing his clothes
- (b) lamenting, crying and fasting until evening
- (c) asking the man where he was from
- (d) asking the man how he dared to lift his hand against the king
- (e) calling on one of his servants to kill the man
- (f) stating that the man’s death was his own doing.