

2000 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre Hebrew

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Hebrew

Modern Hebrew

2 Unit General

Speaking Skills

The results for the speaking paper were generally very good. The candidates were equally divided in their choice of pictures. However in the reading, most candidates chose the first passage.

(1)(a) 1. Generally, the vocabulary used by candidates was very rich. Of special interest was their ability to describe in excellent language, the appearance of the people and what they wore. They did, however, have some difficulty in accurately describing the birthday scene. Only very few candidates were able to describe the table and its contents (the white tablecloth and candles); and very few mentioned that a birthday cake was present.

(1)(a) 2. The candidates understood the question and gave a few reasons why the family was celebrating the birthday party in the garden.

(1)(a) 3. The candidates answered this question very well.

(1)(b) 1. All the candidates knew how to converse on the subject of supermarkets and described the picture well, especially the clothes that the people wore and their general appearance. However, there were fruit and vegetables, eg cucumbers, apples etc. arranged on the tables but the candidates did not name them.

For this answer, the markers expected to receive what would be the daily routine of a storeman in the supermarket. Most candidates ignored his daily routine and focussed on how the storeman feels in the supermarket rather than what he does.

(3)(b) Some candidates experienced difficulty in understanding the question but most managed to provide logical arguments as to why they wanted to remain in Israel for two months instead of two weeks.

(3)(c) The candidates enjoyed answering this question and gave convincing reasons for staying with the friend rather than the uncle. The question demanded a sound knowledge of the imperfect and this proved very challenging for some candidates.

(3)(d) Some candidates did not know how to translate the expression 'swimming events' and spoke generally about the advantages of visiting Australia at the time of the Olympics without relating this to the swimming events in particular.

The most common mistakes related mainly to grammar and syntax, eg singular and plural, agreement of adjectives with nouns, confusion between adjectives and adverbs. Many problems occurred in the correct use of prepositions. There were difficulties in the use of the imperfect, mainly in conditional clauses. There were problems with the correct use of verbs and their conjugations in the various tenses. Candidates did not recognise the rule of the definite article.

Listening Skills

The passage was easily understood by all candidates. Candidates answered the questions with ease. Some candidates experienced difficulty in part (f) where they wrote that he fell and did not comment on the injuries that he actually sustained, as the question required.

2/3 Unit (Common)

Speaking Skills

In general, the level of speaking was very high and the speeches were very good. It was obvious that candidates devoted much time, thought and research into the topic and that they had thoroughly enjoyed their preparation for the examination.

Literacy Skills

Generally, the level of responses was very high, as candidates understood the passage well and experienced little difficulty in answering the questions.

Written Examination

Question 1 – Creative Writing

Marking Scheme

content	5 marks
vocabulary	2 marks
grammar and spelling	2 marks
structure	1 mark
TOTAL	10 marks

Topic A was well handled. In topic C, some candidates did not refer specifically to the word ‘problems’, and they therefore wrote about the advantages of living in a big city. Most candidates did not write the title of the essay they had chosen to write about. Some did not realise that they had to write an essay and not answer a question, and therefore, their work lacked the necessary structure. All candidates’ work demonstrated good language skills, rich vocabulary and appropriate knowledge.

Question 2 – Unseen Comprehension

Candidates understood the passage, however they did not always give all necessary detail in their answers. In part (c), most candidates did not relate to what the narrator said after hearing about the ad from his wife when he got home. Most candidates only answered half of the question in part (e). The answer should have included photos and a letter.

Section II – Literature

The candidates understood the literature they had studied well. The answers in Hebrew reflected a good knowledge of the language. However, their weakness lay in recognising the literary devices used by the poets and their contribution to the poems.

Question 3 – Poetry

(a)(i) All candidates analysed the poem very well.

(a)(ii) No candidates chose to answer this question.

(b) Candidates were asked to answer two questions, each worth 5 marks.

(b)(i) Most candidates defined the ballad correctly as a narrative, ie describes historical events that are usually heroic in nature and include elements of the mysterious and the unexpected, with some truth to it. They did not include enough details about the real historical event that took place or about the background of the poem.

(b)(ii) This part was poorly answered by most candidates. They were expected to write about the special structure of the poem, eg short stanzas in rhythmic verses suitable for singing and other characteristics of a ballad.

Question 4 – Prose

(a)(i) Some candidates did not pay attention to the fact that they were asked to only write about Hannah Senesh's first days in Israel. They therefore wrote about her plans for the future which she wrote about in her diary on 01/11/1940 instead of concentrating on what she wrote on 23/09/1939. They neglected to write about her difficulties regarding the Hebrew language and her mood swings that developed as a result of comparing what she had in Hungary, her homeland, with what awaited her in Israel.

(a)(ii) No candidates attempted this question.

(b)(i) Most candidates wrote that he wanted to go to the funeral because he thought it would be more interesting, but they did not write in sufficient detail why he thought Ahad Haam was a special figure.

(b)(ii) Candidates had to describe the character of Moshe the Palmachnik. The best responses included reference to four major points: Moshe's childhood, his relationship with his parents, his activities in the youth movements and his patriotism.

The latter was described in depth but his relationship with his mother and his behaviour towards his father were not described sufficiently.

(c) This question was answered well by most candidates.

3 Unit (Additional)

Speaking Skills

The standard of candidates' language was generally very high. Use of grammar and syntax were very good and vocabulary was very rich. Candidates understood the questions well and answered accordingly. With some candidates, it was necessary for examiners to interrupt in order to direct them to important points. In these cases, the examiners felt there was a need to refer to an optional question, which was question 4.

Candidates understood the story but did not analyse some of the characters in sufficient detail, eg Lemlo, and did not explain in detail why Jumbo was called a traitor.

Written Examination

Section I – Prescribed Texts

Question 1 – Poetry

It was clear that candidates had studied the literature thoroughly and were familiar with the poetry.

(a)(i) Most candidates did not know the exact details given in the poem about the background of those who belonged to the youth movement. They did not explain who the teacher was that was mentioned in the poem and did not explain the poet's cause for writing this poem and publishing it in the newspaper.

(a)(ii) Candidates were supposed to write about the poet's attitude to the events described in the poem. This question was handled appropriately. Candidates were expected to write about the anger, protest and irony that the poet expressed towards the youth and illustrate their answer with examples. This was well done.

(b) Candidates had to write about the use of universal themes and techniques and how these were reflected in two of the poems they had studied. Most candidates quoted the right poems and analysed them properly referring to the question. However, many ignored the second part of the question that referred to 'techniques' and overlooked important techniques such as structure and punctuation.

Question 2 – Prose

(a)(i) Candidates wrote about the content of the story rather than specifically describing the world of the blind woman. They did not write about her sensitivity and the fact that she had to develop other senses to help her deal with her condition. Nor did they mention that people did not take into consideration the fact that a blind woman can be intelligent.

(a)(ii) Candidates had difficulty interpreting the quotation given in the question. They did not elaborate on the reasons why the member of the kibbutz made his statement, eg the storyteller realised that the boy did not agree with the values of the kibbutz members from a religious point of view.

(b) Some candidates mentioned 3 different stories. They referred to relevant characters, but did not explain why these characters were seen as different by the others.

Section II – Writing Skills

Candidates showed a good understanding of the topics and had a rich vocabulary. However, most candidates did not structure their essay appropriately, eg some didn't include an introduction or a conclusion. They repeated ideas and did not develop them fully.

Classical Hebrew

2 Unit General

The paper as a whole was well received by candidates who seemed to be well prepared for this particular examination. The passage on Ruth in Question 2 posed some difficulty where candidates identified the town of Boaz as being in Damascus and not Bethlehem.

Candidates are advised to read all questions carefully and to note specific instructions to answer questions in Hebrew, ie Question 10(a).

The copying of large sections of the Hebrew text reproduced in the paper is not an appropriate response to any question. Many candidates did not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the Hebrew phrase in Question 2(f).

Candidates were able to identify the Torah laws governing all aspects of pastoral life of Ancient Israel. The questions dealing with the Kings section were well answered by most candidates both in the original Hebrew and in the translation.

The questions relating to Exodus posed few difficulties for the majority of candidates with the exception of question 9(c) which demanded some interpretation from the candidates. In question 9(e), many candidates incorrectly associated the miracle of the serpent with Moses' apparent mistrust of the Israelites. The best responses demonstrated knowledge of the religious rites of the ancient Egyptians.

2/3 Unit (Common)

The majority of candidates answered the questions very well. Question 5(c)(i) proved challenging to almost all candidates. The correct answer was that *rehayim* suggests two millstones grinding against each other.

The Mishnah section was also well answered by the majority of candidates with the exception of question 11(a) where some candidates did not grasp the significance of *pirhe* in relation to the priests. Similarly the following question confused some candidates who were unable to answer correctly that the priests sang songs of praise and psalms. Some candidates erroneously stated that this referred to the recital of the books of Daniel and Job or to the parade of animals before the High Priest.

As in previous years the Unseen and especially the parsing section discriminated well. In question (g), few candidates identified correctly what David had done for the people or what they had done against the king.

3 Unit (Additional)

The standard of responses of the candidates sitting the 3 Unit examination was very high.

As with the 2/3 Unit (Common) examination, every section of the paper was well handled by most candidates. The section that posed some difficulty was the Unseen which again acts as an excellent discriminator of the candidates' skills in using Hebrew vocabulary and knowledge of grammar to identify and analyse a passage of unseen biblical text.

The questions on Rashi were answered in an excellent manner, as in past years.

The calibre of candidates this year was very high and the section of the Unseen, which caused most errors, was again the parsing.

The Talmud question posed no problem at all to the vast majority of candidates. It is obvious that all candidates were very well prepared in this discipline.

Question 4 offered a choice to candidates whether to write on the subject of the Exodus (a) or the Omride dynasty (b).

In part (a), candidates generally demonstrated that they had studied the historical background of the Exodus period in great detail. Their responses were very good and candidates wrote extensively. It was pleasing to see that many candidates had not limited their study to Shanks alone but their responses showed a much deeper insight into the subject demonstrating their reading of such historians as Ben Sasson and a knowledge of what is contained in the better encyclopaedias.

The candidates who attempted part (b) also seemed to have an intimate knowledge of how the relationship between Israel and Judah developed during the Omride dynasty. They traced the relationship back to a period before Omri when much strife and tension existed between the two states. This condition was brought to a close by the alliance of the two great houses brought about by the marriage of Athaliah to Joram Crown Prince of Judah and son of the righteous Jehosaphat.