

March 2015 MUET (800)



OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 48,708 candidates took the March 2015 MUET.

The performance 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 is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage								
6	1.56	1.56	0.30	0.30	0.48	0.48	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02
5	12.71	14.27	4.70	5.00	6.38	6.86	1.17	1.18	2.96	2.99
4	31.94	46.21	26.70	31.70	19.29	26.15	15.91	17.09	22.31	25.30
3	24.07	70.28	46.00	77.70	33.78	59.94	66.42	83.51	48.28	73.58
2	21.90	92.17	19.43	97.14	31.45	91.39	14.38	97.88	24.24	97.82
1	7.83	100.00	2.86	100.00	8.61	100.00	2.12	100.00	2.18	100.00

RESPONSES OF CANDIDATES

PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

General comments

PART I

The task demands the ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The text is an excerpt from a radio programme that discussed *Overconsumption of Sugar*. This is a topic that candidates are familiar with and could relate to. The items ranged from short-answer questions, to table completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to listen and follow a talk on *The Human Brain*. The items were multiple-choice questions whereby candidates needed to assess every option before choosing the best answer.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; a news item and two announcements. The first announcement is on *The Setting Up of History Galleries in Schools*. The second is a news item on *The Setting Up of a Consumers' Squad* and third is a public announcement on *The Need to Change Our Wasteful Habits*. The items consisted of short-answer questions.

Specific comments

PART I

Answers ranged from some correct to incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts could either be due to writing more words than is required, inability to rephrase correctly, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information and wrong information. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

The following are some examples of the candidates' incorrect attempts:

Question 1

- incomplete answer – *weekly programme*
- wrong answer – *health awareness programme*

Question 2

- incomplete answer - *food consultant*
- wrong word leading to distortion – *senior full consultant*
- wrong information - *doctor*

Question 3

- wrong plural form – *values of exercise*
- wrong spelling – *value of exersice*
- wrong answer – *importance of exercise*

Question 4

- wrong spelling - *overcomsumption of sugar*
- missing preposition (of) – *overconsumption sugar*
- wrong answer – *sugar in our diet*

Question 5

- exceed word count – 24 teaspoons of sugar a day
- wrong singular form – 24 teaspoon of sugar daily

Question 6

- wrong spelling – *hiden sugar*

PART II

Answers were mostly correct and the candidates attempted to answer all the questions. However, for question 9 and question 10, quite a number of candidates wrote full answers instead of the given letters leading to some candidates incorrectly spelling out the words from their chosen answer.

PART III

Answers ranged from a few correct answers to inaccurate attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly writing more words than is required, poor comprehension of the short text, poor paraphrasing, grammatical and spelling errors. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

Majority of the candidates failed to answer questions 15 to 20.

The following are some examples of the candidates' inaccurate attempts:

Question 15

- wrong noun form – *respect culture heritage*
- wrong verb form / wrong answer – *instill a sense of patriotism.*
- wrong answer – *research into historical events*

Question 16

- wrong answer – *the documented history*
- missing article (the) – *the identity of school*

Question 17

- wrong word form (singular) – *protect the right of consumers*

Question 18

- subject-verb agreement – *give generous discounts*
- wrong adjective leading to distortion – *gives them general discounts*

Question 19

- wrong pronoun – *change our wasteful habits*
- distortion of information – *change to energy-efficient light bulbs*

Question 20

- wrong percentage – *use 16% less energy*
- distortion of information – *are much cheaper*
- giving two advantages – *last longer and save energy*

PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

General comments

The questions in all the booklets tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications which cover accuracy in using the language, speaking with confidence, using varied vocabulary and expressions as well as presenting relevant ideas and adequate content while displaying maturity throughout the discussion.

Specific comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Responded well to the task
- Made notes (instead of writing full sentences) during the preparation stage.
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Able to refer to specific current issues reported in the media
- Fluent, confident and were able to use words, phrases and idioms effectively to convey ideas.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Lacked planning and organisation.
- Hesitant in speech with frequent pauses
- Lacked vocabulary to express opinion(s)
- Grammatical errors were evident
- Failed to elaborate on their ideas; the elaboration, if any, was usually limited, too simple, and disconnected which appeared superficial and disorganised
- Lacked general knowledge of current issues

PAPER 800/3 (READING)

Answer keys

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	C	16	B	31	D
2	B	17	C	32	A
3	B	18	A	33	D
4	C	19	C	34	C
5	A	20	C	35	D
6	B	21	A	36	C
7	A	22	C	37	B
8	A	23	B	38	D
9	A	24	A	39	A
10	B	25	C	40	A
11	B	26	B	41	B
12	B	27	A	42	C
13	C	28	A	43	C
14	B	29	C	44	A
15	B	30	D	45	B

PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

General comments

Both questions met the test specifications and measured the language ability of prospective university students. The questions demanded knowledge of the topic, maturity of thought, analytical and critical thinking, organisational skills and the ability to express opinions.

Question 1

The task demanded the ability to analyse, synthesise and organise information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. It is on the *Quality of service provided by 100 security guards of a private college after attending courses*. Two visuals were presented which were both tables; *Table 1* shows the *Respondents' rating of level of satisfaction* and *Table 2* shows the *Courses offered for security guards*. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between given information are the requirements. The topic is evergreen, and the input is predominantly current.

Question 2

The task demanded the ability to address and express an opinion on an issue of common knowledge to most candidates. Depth and maturity of thought to present a discussion on how *Tragedies Can Be Avoided if People Take Preventive Actions*, is sought. A clear, consistent, authoritative voice is expected here. The task is challenging and the subject matter is known to all.

Specific comments

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Understood task
- Showed planning and organisation
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Exceeded word count
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Understood task
- Kept to the 350-word limit
- Showed planning and organisation
- Presented an opinion
- Conveyed and developed three points
- Provided relevant examples
- Used appropriate vocabulary and varied sentence structures

WEAKNESSES:

- Task was poorly interpreted
- Lacked planning and organisation
- Unable to present opinion
- Unable to develop the ideas presented
- Lacked relevant examples
- Used simple vocabulary and repetitive sentence structures
- Made simple grammatical errors
- Interference of L1 vocabulary and sentence structures

Specific comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to write about the respondents' rating of satisfaction level on eight aspects of services provided by the security guards and to link the information to the courses offered for security guards. Candidates are to write their report in 150 to 200 words. The overview is 'Generally, the respondents' rating of level of satisfaction is affected by the number of security guards who attended the courses.' In conveying the required information, candidates are required to integrate and interpret the data correctly, present an overview, highlight the key features in relation to the overview and to link the key features to information contained in the tables.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to present a discussion on whether *many tragedies can be avoided if people take preventive actions*, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion and to discuss whether the candidates agree, disagree or convey a mixed stand whether tragedies can be avoided if people take preventive actions. Candidates have to state what their opinions are, explain why they have that opinion and show that they have examined and evaluated other possibilities in this regard. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held, providing at least three relevant points as well as justify and substantiate it with elaborations and examples.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The language test is that of analysing, interpreting and synthesizing required information in the non-linear texts related to the *respondents' rating of level of satisfaction* and *number of security guards who attended the courses*. A report format is sought and the maximum word count is 200 words. The report has to be concise, yet compact and accurate. An overview should be conveyed, followed by key features in support of the overview. Logical connection of data, use of appropriate linkers, and appropriate vocabulary to highlight the number of courses offered to the security guards is expected. A comparison of number of the respondents' rating of satisfaction level such as *highest, lowest, most, least, more, fewer, only, equal number*, etc. is a requirement.

The expected voice is one of clarity and consistency. Irrelevancies, inaccuracies of data and assumptions made are not tolerated. No new information, outside that which is given in the question, is required. Correct point of reference (the respondents, number of courses, level of satisfaction) is required for the award of marks. In cases where there was no reference or incomplete reference of categories involved, it is deemed that the candidate has failed to understand the message in the tables. Similarly, in cases where there was no link to the information found in the table, it is deemed that the candidate has failed to understand the requirements of the task.

Question 2

A discursive essay is expected in which the function of the language used here is to explain or justify a particular opinion held in relation to the context given. Candidates have to state what that opinion is and to support it with appropriate reasons and examples. The arguments must be substantial in order to convince the reader.

Candidates have to be clear on the requirements of the task. In considering whether many tragedies can be avoided if people take preventive actions, candidates may express opinions such as *to avoid car accidents - wear seatbelts and follow the speed limit; to avoid crimes - learn martial arts, lock doors before leaving the house; to avoid fire - turn off lights and stove before leaving the house* etc. among others as relevant points.

Alternatively, candidates may disagree by giving points such as *tragedies can be a result of natural disaster; it was fated; due to sabotage* etc. All justifications must be supported by evidence, and argued in a persuasive voice. A minimum of three points, in support of the opinion, is expected, and to be written in **not fewer than 350 words**.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

There were fewer above average than below-average performers and their voices were faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly. Worse, some could not even present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. Examples of distortions/inaccuracies/assumptions in answers:

- **Wrong use of words**

*Staff in manner of greeting rate 5 very satisfied, but **decrease** in rate in manner of asking for identity to 4.*

- **Distortion**

The highest ranking of courses.

- **Irrelevancy**

The security guards cannot communicate in English.

- **Assumption**

Manner of greeting is important in security guards.

- **Vagueness**

For work ethics course in the aspect of ability to enforce regulations seem quite satisfied with the rating.

- **Description**

English at workplace has low rating.

- **Inaccuracy**

Over 98 security guards attended the work ethics course.

Most answers were only a partial fulfillment of the task. A low percentage of candidates conveyed the required overview, which is the point of reference for the analysis and synthesis of the required information. This goes to show that candidates need further training in answering Question 1.

STRENGTHS:

- Provided title and a clear introduction
- Showed planning and organisation
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection
- Clear and complete analysis highlighting the respondents' rating of satisfaction level on eight aspects of services provided by the security guards
- Linked information on rating of satisfaction level to the number of security guards who attended the courses.

WEAKNESSES:

- Unable to write title and introduction
- Constructed a poor overview
- Exceeded word count
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

On average, the task was modestly attempted. Candidates understood the demand of the question and were able to relate to the topic, i.e. to address the issue and to give an opinion on the statement. However, many were not able to state and present their opinion satisfactorily. Satisfactory or competent answers discussed three points with elaborations to justify how taking preventive actions can help avoid tragedies.

Modest answers barely developed the opinion held on how many tragedies can be avoided by taking preventive actions. Ideas put forward were often simplistic generalisations. Many ideas were vaguely expressed, invariably due to poor command of vocabulary and structures.

Example:

'We have to think before making decision...think whether it is good or not...'

In the poor answers, ideas were shallow and immaturely developed, and there was a tendency to use vague-sounding words. Language also ranged from modest to poor mastery. Structures and vocabulary lacked variety, basic grammatical errors of subject-verb agreement, wrong vocabulary, run-on sentences, wrong prepositions, omission of articles, wrong use of articles, missing words, and wrong spellings.

Overall, what is lacking in the essays are maturity of ideas and adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.

July 2015 MUET (800)



OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 60,077 candidates took the July 2015 MUET.

The performance 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 is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage								
6	0.51	0.51	0.12	0.12	0.43	0.43	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01
5	4.30	4.82	3.35	3.47	5.66	6.09	2.64	2.68	2.51	2.52
4	23.11	27.93	21.68	25.15	14.92	21.00	21.31	23.98	17.02	19.54
3	21.71	49.64	44.02	69.17	29.23	50.23	55.33	79.31	43.09	62.63
2	35.11	84.76	24.10	93.27	37.51	87.74	17.24	96.55	32.99	95.62
1	15.24	100.00	6.73	100.00	12.26	100.00	3.45	100.00	4.38	100.00

RESPONSES OF CANDIDATES

PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

General comments

PART I

The task demands the ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The text is a talk on *Setting Up a Study Group*. This is a contemporary topic. The items ranged from short-answer questions, to table-completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to listen and follow a talk on *The Benefits of Coconut Water*. The items were of multiple-choice questions whereby candidates needed to assess every option before choosing the best answer.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; two news items and a report. The first news item was on *How Careful Are We When We Brush Our Teeth?* The second news item was on NASA's Space Discovery and the third is a report on Red and its Significance. The items consisted of short-answer questions.

Specific comments

PART I

Answers ranged from some correct to incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts could either be due to writing more words than is required, inability to rephrase correctly, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information and wrong information. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

The following are some examples of candidates' incorrect attempts:

Question 1

- wrong answer – *do assignments, achieve higher class, high mark*
- wrong spelling – *achive better mark*

Question 2

- wrong answer – *determine to succeed*
- wrong word form – *meeting organisation, meetings are organised, how meetings organised*

Question 3

- wrong information – *purposeful, resourceful, limit the number*
- exceed word count – *focused, committed and hardworking*

Question 4

- insufficient information – *the place*
- wrong information – *the target, how long was the person*

Question 5

- wrong word form – *whose going to chair meeting*
- wrong information – *the problem, the purpose of meeting*

Question 6

- wrong information – *a role, everyone tasks to compete, everyone the task*

PART II

Answers were mostly correct and the candidates attempted to answer all the questions. Most candidates managed to obtain at least three correct answers.

PART III

Answers ranged from a few correct answers to inaccurate attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly due to writing more words than is required, poor comprehension of the short text, poor paraphrasing as well as grammatical and spelling errors. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

Majority of the candidates had difficulty stringing words together to complete items 15 to 20.

The following are some examples of the candidates' inaccurate attempts:

Question 15

- inaccurate information – *have unbelievable experience with doctor, accidentally swallow a whole toothbrush, accidentally experience using toothbrush*

Question 16

- wrong information – *to locate the toothbrush, to dislodge the toothbrush*

Question 17

- wrong information – *rock which is a bomb, for aliens, causing excitement among scientists*

Question 18

- wrong information – *in two years time, two years in mission*

Question 19

- wrong information – *pathetic nature, nature and success, competitive nature effect opponent*

Question 20

- wrong information – *higher level of hormone, high level of hormone, high level male grows*

PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

General comments

The questions in all the booklets tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications which cover accuracy in using the language, speaking with confidence, using varied vocabulary and expressions as well as presenting relevant ideas and adequate content while displaying maturity throughout the discussion.

Specific comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Responded well to the task
- Made notes (instead of writing full sentences) during the preparation stage
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Discussed details by providing relevant examples
- Fluent and confident and were able to use words and phrases and idioms effectively to convey their ideas

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Lacked planning and organisation
- Hesitant in speech with frequent pauses
- Lacked vocabulary to express opinion
- Made grammatical errors
- Failed to elaborate on ideas; the elaboration, if any, was usually limited, too simple, and disconnected which appeared superficial and disorganised
- Lacked general knowledge of current issues

PAPER 800/3 (READING)

Answer keys

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	C	16	C	31	B
2	A	17	B	32	C
3	B	18	B	33	D
4	B	19	A	34	C
5	C	20	A	35	B
6	C	21	B	36	D
7	A	22	C	37	B
8	A	23	B	38	B
9	B	24	C	39	C
10	C	25	C	40	C
11	B	26	B	41	C
12	A	27	C	42	A
13	C	28	B	43	C
14	B	29	A	44	D
15	A	30	C	45	A

PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

General comments

Both questions met the test specifications and measured the language ability of prospective university students. The questions demanded knowledge of the topic, maturity of thought, analytical and critical thinking, organisational skills and the ability to express opinion.

Question 1

The task demanded the ability to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. It is on the *Tiger population in three countries in 2000, 2005 and 2010* and *Actions taken to protect tiger population*. Two visuals were presented; a bar chart and a table. The bar chart shows the *size of the tiger population in Myanmar, India and Indonesia in 2000, 2005 and 2010*. Whereas the table depicts the *actions taken to protect tiger population in the respective three years*. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language, and logical connection between given information are the requirements. The topic is evergreen, and the input is predominantly current.

Question 2

The task demanded the ability to address and express an opinion on an issue of common knowledge to most candidates. Depth and maturity of thought to present a discussion on whether the *Media is an Educational Tool* is sought. A clear, consistent, authoritative voice is expected in the essay. The task is challenging and the subject matter is known to all.

Specific comments

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Understood task
- Showed planning and organisation
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Exceeded word count
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Understood task
- Kept to the 350-word limit
- Showed planning and organisation
- Presented an opinion
- Conveyed and developed three points
- Provided relevant examples
- Used appropriate vocabulary and varied sentence structures

WEAKNESSES:

- Task was poorly interpreted
- Lacked planning and organisation
- Unable to present opinion
- Unable to develop the ideas presented
- Lacked relevant examples
- Used simple vocabulary and repetitive sentence structures
- Made simple grammatical errors
- Interference of L1 vocabulary and sentence structures

Specific comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to analyse and interpret the bar chart on *the tiger population in three countries in 2000, 2005 and 2010 and to link the information with the appropriate actions taken to protect the tiger population*. Candidates are to write their report in 150 to 200 words. The overview is *'The tiger population in the three countries and three years is influenced by the actions taken to protect them.'* In conveying the required information, candidates are required to integrate and interpret the data correctly, present an overview, highlight the key features in relation to the overview and to link the key features to information contained in the chart.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to present a discussion on whether the media is an educational tool, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion on why the *'media is an educational tool'* to groups of users or otherwise, and to show they have had an impact on the users. Candidates have to state what their opinions are, explain why they have that opinion and show that they have examined and evaluated other possibilities in this regard. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held, providing at least three relevant points as well as justify and substantiate it with elaboration and examples.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The language test is that of analysing, interpreting and synthesising required information in the non-linear texts related to tiger population in three countries in 2000, 2005 and 2010 and actions taken by the respective countries to protect the tiger population. A report format is sought and the maximum word count is 200 words. The report has to be concise, yet compact and accurate. An overview should be conveyed, followed by key features in support of the overview. Logical connection of data and use of appropriate linkers is expected. Appropriate vocabulary to highlight the size of the tiger population in the three counties such as the *highest, lowest, most, least, more, fewer, only, equal number*, in 2000, 2005 and 2010, etc. is a requirement

The expected voice is one of clarity and consistency. Irrelevancies, inaccuracies of data and assumptions made are not tolerated. No new information, outside that given in the question, is required. Correct point

of reference (the year, number of tigers, number of actions, type of action) is required for the award of marks. In cases where there was no reference or incomplete reference of categories involved, it is deemed that the candidate has failed to understand the message in the bar chart and table. Similarly, in cases where there was no link to information found in the bar chart, it is deemed that the candidate has failed to understand the requirements of the task.

Question 2

A discursive essay is expected in which the function of the language used here is to explain or justify a particular opinion held in relation to the context given. Candidates have to state what that opinion is and to support it with appropriate reasons and examples. The arguments must be substantial in order to convince the reader.

Candidates have to be clear on the requirements of the task. Various angles of discussion may be adopted – that media is an educational tool; not an educational but an entertainment tool; not an educational tool at all; an educational tool to a certain extent only and can be beneficial and harmful for users. In considering media as an educational tool, candidates may express points such as *improvement of research skills, breadth of knowledge, teaching and learning become easier, improving communication skills, encouraging reading, broaden experiences, integrate all subject areas, sharing information* etc. among others, as relevant points.

Alternatively, candidates may disagree by giving points such as *lead to anti-social behaviour, lead to addiction, desensitization to violence, may get misleading information, may affect language skills, exposure to bad influences, etc.* All justification must be supported by evidence and argued in a persuasive voice. A minimum of three points, in support of the opinion, is expected, and to be written in **not fewer than 350 words**.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

There were fewer above average than below-average performers and their voices were faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly. Worse, many could not even present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. Examples of wrong answers:

- **Wrong trend**

Myanmar stated the increases in number of tigers population compare to Indonesia that shows the decreased in number. Meanwhile, India did fluctuate in number of the tigers.

- **Description**

Punish poachers severely, protect the habitat of tigers, set up tiger reserves and educate public were taken by Myanmar.

- **Wrong time frame**

The rise in the number of tigers corresponds to the increased actions taken by Myanmar from 2000 to 2005.

- **Inaccuracy**

India are the steadily rise in the year 2000 with approximately 250 tigers...

Most candidates failed to produce a proper, complete and accurate overview that links all the stimuli. Many also had difficulties stringing their analyses together.

Example:

The tiger population influenced the actions taken.

The population of tigers is increasing steadily from 2000 to 2010.

Most answers were only a partial fulfillment of the task. A low percentage of candidates conveyed the required overview, which is the point of reference for the analysis and synthesis of the required information. This goes to show that candidates need further training in answering Question 1.

STRENGTHS:

- Provided title and a clear introduction
- Showed planning and organisation
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection
- Clear and complete analysis highlighting the tiger population in a given year, and actions taken
- Linked information on actions taken to protect tiger population with number of tigers in a given year

WEAKNESSES:

- Unable to write title and introduction
- Constructed a poor overview
- Exceeded word count
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

On average, the task was modestly attempted. Candidates understood the demands of the question and were able to relate to the topic, i.e. to address the issue and to give an opinion on the statement. However, many were not able to state and present their opinion satisfactorily. Satisfactory or competent answers discussed three points with illustrations of the educational aspects of the media to specified group of users.

Modest answers barely developed the opinion held on the usefulness of the media as an educational tool. Ideas put forward were often simplistic generalisations. Many ideas were vaguely expressed, invariably due to poor command of vocabulary and structures. In the poor answers, ideas were shallow and immaturely developed, and there was a tendency to use vague-sounding words. Language also ranged from modest to poor mastery. Structures and vocabulary lacked variety, basic grammatical errors of subject-verb agreement, wrong vocabulary, run-on sentences, wrong prepositions, omission of articles, wrong use of articles, missing words, and wrong spellings.

Overall, what is lacking in the essays are maturity of ideas and adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.

November 2015 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 74,846 candidates took the November 2015 MUET.

The performance 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 is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage								
6	0.68	0.68	0.18	0.18	1.06	1.06	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
5	3.82	4.51	3.73	3.91	8.15	9.21	1.51	1.53	2.44	2.46
4	11.10	15.60	25.76	29.67	18.33	27.54	11.41	12.94	15.96	18.42
3	14.08	29.68	49.21	78.88	31.64	59.19	46.10	59.04	39.58	58.00
2	33.13	62.81	17.44	96.32	32.50	91.69	37.13	96.17	36.82	94.82
1	37.19	100.00	3.68	100.00	8.31	100.00	3.83	100.00	5.18	100.00

RESPONSES OF CANDIDATES

PAPER 800/1 (LISTENING)

General comments

PART I

The task demands the ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The text is a talk on *How Dissatisfied Customers React*. This is an interesting and informative topic. Information is presented in easy to follow, listener-friendly structures. The items ranged from short-answer questions, to table completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to listen and follow an excerpt on *Allowing Pets in Hospitals*. The items were multiple-choice questions whereby candidates needed to assess every option before choosing the best answer. This is the section for the majority of the candidates to obtain some marks through answering the multiple-choice options given.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow an excerpt from a talk, an advice and a news item. The excerpt was on *The Mangroves of Tanjung Piai*; the second was an advice on *How to Apply for a Scholarship*; and the third was a news item on *A Miracle at a Construction Site*. The items consisted of short-answer questions.

Specific comments

PART I

Answers ranged from some correct to incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts could either be due to writing more words than is required, inability to rephrase correctly, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, giving partially correct information, missing required information, wrong information and no attempt.

The following are some examples of the candidates' incorrect attempts:

Question 1

- wrong answer – *of poor condition, of poor material, a defective product*
- wrong preposition – *in poor quality*

Question 2

- wrong answer – *to newspaper column, to editor's column*
- wrong preposition – *in newspapers*

Question 3

- wrong answer – *is widespread, spreads the news, will inform people, will tell others*
- wrong verb form – *reach more people*

Question 4

- exceeds word count – *voice their dissatisfaction in mass media*

Question 5

- omitted preposition – *voice ^ in the media*

Question 6

- wrong verb form – *wrote to the media*
- wrong word form – *make a complain to store*
- incomplete answer – *tell family and friends ^, make a complaint ^, tell other people^*

PART II

Answers ranged from some correct answers to more correct attempts.

PART III

Answers ranged from a few correct answers to inaccurate attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly writing more words than is required, poor comprehension of the short text, poor paraphrasing as well as grammatical and spelling errors. There were candidates who made no attempts to answer some of the questions.

Majority of the candidates had difficulties in grasping and conveying low-frequency words to complete items 15 to 20.

Question 15

- inaccurate information – *the mango trees, the ferns*
- wrong spelling – *the mangroove trees, stetch of mangroves*

Question 16

- wrong information – *plant and animal life, 20 species of mangroves, migrating birds*

Question 17

- wrong word form – *time-consuming and exhausted*
- wrong choice of word – *time-consuming and quiet exhausting, time-assuming*

Question 18

- wrong verb form – *all the blanks are fill*
- wrong form of noun – *all the blank are filled*
- wrong answer – *you prepare all your documents*

Question 19

- wrong information – *injured by a metal bar, hit by a metal bar*

Question 20

- wrong verb form – *he remain relatively undamaged*
- exceeds word count – *he survived and remained relatively undamaged*

PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

General comments

The questions in all the booklets tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications which cover accuracy in using the language, speaking with confidence, using varied vocabulary and expressions as well as presenting relevant ideas and adequate content while displaying maturity throughout the discussion.

Specific comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Responded well to the task
- Used wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Discussed details by providing relevant examples such as referring to a specific current issue reported in the media and personal experience
- Fluent, confident and were able to use words, phrases and idioms effectively to convey ideas

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Provided main ideas but failed to provide satisfactory elaboration
- Hesitant in speech with frequent pauses
- Lacked sufficient vocabulary and language structures
- Grammatical errors were evident
- Failed to elaborate on ideas; the elaboration, if any, was usually limited, too simple and disconnected which appeared superficial and disorganised
- Lacked general knowledge of current issues

PAPER 800/3 (READING)

Answer keys

Question number	Key	Question number	Key	Question number	Key
1	B	16	A	31	A
2	B	17	B	32	C
3	A	18	C	33	C
4	A	19	C	34	D
5	C	20	C	35	D
6	C	21	A	36	A
7	C	22	A	37	B
8	A	23	A	38	C
9	A	24	C	39	D
10	C	25	B	40	A
11	C	26	B	41	D
12	A	27	A	42	D
13	B	28	A	43	B
14	C	29	C	44	C
15	A	30	D	45	B

PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

General comments

Both questions met the test specifications and measured the language ability of prospective university students. The questions demanded knowledge of the topic, maturity of thought, analytical and critical thinking, organisational skills and the ability to express opinion.

Question 1

The task demands the ability to analyse, synthesise and organise required information from given non-linear texts into a coherent report. It is on the *Daily free time activities of secondary school and university students in 2014 and Students' rating of benefits gained by engaging in free time activities*. Three visuals were presented; one, a pie chart which shows the *Free time activities of secondary school students*; two, a pie chart which shows the *Free time activities of university students*; and three, a table depicting the *Students' rating of benefits gained by engaging in the free time activities*. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language, and logical connection between the given information are the requirements. The topic is evergreen, and the input is predominantly current.

Question 2

The task demands the ability to address and express an opinion on an issue of common knowledge to most candidates. Depth and maturity of thought to present a discussion on whether there is a *Strong Link Between Reading and Academic Success* is sought. A clear, consistent, authoritative voice is expected here. The task is challenging and the subject matter is known to all.

Specific comments

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Understood task
- Showed planning and organisation
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Exceeded word count
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the table
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Understood task
- Kept to the 350-word limit
- Showed planning and organisation
- Presented an opinion
- Conveyed and developed three points
- Provided relevant examples
- Used appropriate vocabulary and varied sentence structures

WEAKNESSES:

- Task was poorly interpreted
- Lacked planning and organisation
- Unable to present opinion
- Unable to develop the ideas presented
- Lacked relevant examples
- Used simple vocabulary and repetitive sentence structures
- Made simple grammatical errors
- Interference of L1 vocabulary and sentence structures

Specific comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to analyse and interpret the pie charts on *daily free time activities of secondary school and university students in 2014* and to link the information with *rating of benefits gained from engaging in those activities*. Candidates are to write their report in 150 to 200 words. The overview is *'The amount of time spent on free time activities correlates with the rating of benefits gained from those activities'* or *'Generally, most of the daily free time activities carried out by the two groups of students and the benefits rated by them were different'*. In conveying the required information, candidates are required to integrate and interpret the data correctly, present an overview, highlight the key features in relation to the overview and to link the key features to information contained in the charts.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to present a discussion on whether *there is a strong link between reading and academic success*, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion on the *strong link between reading and academic success*, or otherwise. Candidates have to state what their opinions are, explain why they have that opinion and show that they have examined and evaluated other possibilities in this regard. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held, providing at least three relevant points as well as justify and substantiate it with elaboration and examples.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The language test is that of analysing, interpreting and synthesising required information in the non-linear texts related to *free time activities engaged by secondary school and university students in 2014 and rating of benefits from engaging in those activities*. A report format is sought and the maximum word count is 200 words. The report has to be concise, yet compact and accurate. An overview should be conveyed, followed by key features in support of the overview. Logical connection of data and use of appropriate linkers, and appropriate vocabulary to highlight the amount of time spent and for which activity, such as the most amount of time (150 mins) was spent on surfing the Internet by university students in 2014, etc. is expected.

The expected voice is one of clarity and consistency. Irrelevancies, inaccuracies of data and assumptions are not tolerated. No new information, outside that given in the question, is required. Correct point of reference (the year, the type of students, the amount of time, the activity, the type of benefit) is required for the award of marks. In cases where there was no reference or incomplete reference of categories involved, it is deemed that the candidate has failed to understand the message in the pie charts and tables. Similarly, in cases where there was no link to information found in the pie charts and tables, it is deemed that the candidate has failed to understand the requirements of the task.

Question 2

A discursive essay is expected in which the function of the language used here is to explain or justify a particular opinion held in relation to the stimuli given. Candidates have to state what that opinion is and to support it with appropriate reasons and examples. The arguments must be substantial ones in order to convince the reader.

Candidates have to be clear on the requirements of the task. Various angles of discussion may be adopted – that *reading contributes to academic success; other factors contribute to academic success; reading partially contributes to academic success*. In considering reading as having a strong link with academic success, candidates may express points such as *gaining knowledge, expanding horizon, improving memory and concentration, improving language competence, expanding vocabulary and developing learner autonomy etc.*, among others, as relevant points.

Alternatively, candidates may disagree by giving points such as *experience, goals, passion, attitude, diligence, discipline, determination, motivation, practical training, talent, skills, practice etc.*, as factors contributing to academic success. All justification must be supported by evidence and argued in a persuasive voice. A minimum of three points, in support of the opinion, is expected, and to be written in **not fewer than 350 words**.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

There were fewer above average than below-average performers and their voices were faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the pie charts and table correctly. Worse, many could not even present an overview of information presented in the three visuals. There were numerous inaccuracies and assumptions made.

- **Example of inaccuracies/distortions**

Most secondary school students attend tuition classes (150 mins)...

They used approximately 150 minutes to surf the Internet...

Their benefits were being more updated than school students...

University students have more time to surf the Internet

Most university students spent time surfing the Internet

The most preferred activity was

The highest activity during free time by secondary school students...

Secondary school students gained the highest rating level of benefits...

University students' rating of benefits gained the highest level by surfing the Internet...

Attend tuition had the most free time by secondary school students daily is 150 minutes...

There is a better understanding both are 2...

Secondary school students were healthier than university students...

Most answers were only a partial fulfillment of the task. A low percentage of candidates conveyed the required overview, which is the point of reference for the analysis and synthesis of the required information. This goes to show that candidates need further training in answering Question 1.

STRENGTHS:

- Provided title and a clear introduction
- Showed planning and organisation
- Analysed data and presented key features
- Presented overall trend
- Used appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connection
- Clear and complete analysis highlighting the amount of time spent on a given activity, and rating of benefit gained
- Linked information on amount of time spent on activities with rating of benefits gained

WEAKNESSES:

- Unable to write title and introduction
- Constructed a poor overview
- Exceeded word count
- Presented inaccurate, irrelevant and limited information
- Wrote assumptions instead of analysis
- Unable to link the information in the visuals
- Unable to use appropriate vocabulary, correct sentence structures and logical connections
- Lacked the mechanics and rigours of report writing

Question 2

On average, the task was modestly attempted. Candidates understood the demands of the question and were able to relate to the topic, i.e. to address the issue and to give an opinion on the statement. However, many were not able to state and present their opinion satisfactorily. Satisfactory or competent answers discussed three points with elaborations of the importance of reading and its contribution to academic success.

Modest answers barely developed the opinion held on the strong link between reading and academic success. Ideas put forward were often simplistic generalisations. Many ideas were vaguely expressed, invariably due

to poor command of vocabulary and structures. In the poor answers, ideas were shallow and immaturely developed, and there was a tendency to use vague-sounding words and write ambiguous structures. Language also ranged from modest to poor mastery. Structures and vocabulary lacked variety, basic grammatical errors of subject-verb agreement, wrong vocabulary, run-on sentences, wrong prepositions, omission of articles, wrong use of articles, missing words, and wrong spellings.

Most candidates were able to provide a statement of opinion in the introduction in response to the task – either agreeing or disagreeing with the statement backed up with supporting details for their stand. Most candidates were able to provide at least three main points. Ideas ranged from most to satisfactorily mature.

However, weak language users merely gave a superficial treatment of the topic with no further elaboration of ideas. Candidates with a weak foundation in language proficiency had ideas but presentation was hampered by limitations in vocabulary and grammar, resulting in unclear meaning or distortions.

Example of weak sentences:

By reading, we will be good and not do bad things like smoking or playing truant.

When teachers teach the students to read, the students will study and achieve academic success, so teachers are important.

Reading have strong significance influence on academic.

If we reading the book most day most more, we can know may informational.

Overall, what is lacking in the essays are maturity of ideas and adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.