

March 2014 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 38 299 candidates sat for the March 2014 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	0.10	0.10	0.18	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
5	2.47	2.58	1.06	1.24	3.85	4.05	0.37	0.38	0.42	0.42
4	12.89	15.47	8.52	9.76	13.92	17.96	4.10	4.48	7.65	8.08
3	19.53	35.00	33.15	42.91	27.06	45.02	33.35	37.83	30.58	38.66
2	38.94	73.94	42.23	85.15	36.30	81.33	53.57	91.40	47.77	86.43
1	26.06	100.00	14.85	100.00	18.67	100.00	8.60	100.00	13.57	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 *Preserving Important Historical Sites*. The topic is contemporary. The items ranged from short-answer questions to flow-chart completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task demands the ability to follow an interview on *Hiking in Taman Negara*. The items were of the multiple-choice type.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; a documentary and two news items – the first was a documentary on *The smart fork*, the second on *The probability of Malaysia facing water shortage*, and the third on the *New image of the pet industry in Malaysia*. The items were of the short-answer question type.

Specific comments

PART I

The answers ranged from some correct to incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly due to writing more words than is required, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information, wrong information and no attempt. The following are some examples:

Question 1

- Wrong verb form – *are preserve; are being preserve; were preserved*; wrong answer given, e.g. *are deemed protected*

Question 2

- Wrong answer – *cultural site*

Question 3

- Wrong information – *more employment*
- Wrong verb form – *increase job opportunities, increased job opportunity*

Question 4

- Wrong information – *nature*

Question 5

- Wrong information – *Gunung Nilu National Park, Gunung Blue, Gunung Bulu*

Question 6

- Wrong information leading to distortion – *pen air and cave site; early settlements; evidence of early settlements*

PART II

The answers ranged from some correct answers to some incorrect attempts.

PART III

The 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, spelling errors, meaningless text and no attempt.

Many candidates had difficulty stringing words together to answer Questions 15 – 20.

Question 15

- Inaccurate expression – *help slow bite during meal, clam bites during meal*

Question 16

- Wrong part of speech – *to fast, to quickly*

Question 17

- Wrong choice of verb – *conduct water rationing*
- Wrong information – *favourable of rain*

Question 18

- Wrong information – *water comes to us easily, water bill so cheap*

Question 19

- Wrong information – *are wealthier with disposable income, become wealthier, better quality pet*

Question 20

- Distortion of information – *become one-stop pet, offer veterinary service*

PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)**General comments**

The question papers tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications.

Specific comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to respond well to the task
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Able to refer to specific current issues reported in the media
- 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:

- Hesitant in their speech
- Limited vocabulary in expressing themselves
- Failed to elaborate on their ideas; the elaboration, if any, was usually limited, too simple or disconnected ideas 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	C
2	B	17	A	32	D
3	B	18	A	33	D
4	C	19	A	34	D
5	C	20	C	35	C
6	A	21	B	36	A
7	B	22	C	37	C
8	B	23	A	38	B
9	C	24	A	39	A
10	B	25	C	40	B
11	C	26	C	41	B
12	C	27	B	42	A
13	A	28	B	43	B
14	A	29	B	44	B
15	A	30	C	45	D

PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

General comments

Both questions meet the test specifications and measure the language ability of prospective university students. The questions demand knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, analytical-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 *Number of Youths Visiting the Dentist* and *Reasons for Visiting the Dentist*. Two visuals were presented; one, a bar chart on the number of youths visiting the dentist, and a table depicting the reasons for visiting the dentist. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between given information are the requirements. The topic is evergreen, and 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 the trend of owning the latest technological gadgets among young people is a healthy development* is sought. A clear, consistent, authoritative voice is expected here. The task is challenging and the subject matter known to all.

Specific comments

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Understands task
- Plans and organises
- Lists/states key features
- Analyses data
- Presents overview
- Presents overall trend
- Uses appropriate vocabulary
- Uses correct structures
- Provides logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Writes beyond word count
- Limited information
- Inaccuracies
- Irrelevancies
- Assumptions
- No overview
- No link to table
- Choppy sentences
- Description/commentary
- Unclear statements
- Inability to reconstruct information
- No report writing skills
- Lacks conciseness
- Distortions
- Hanging sentences
- Repetitions
- Vague statement
- Missing data
- Limited vocabulary
- Informal tone

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Understands task
- Keeps to 350-word limit
- Planning and paragraphing
- Has an opinion
- 3 points conveyed with some development
- Relevant examples
- Appropriate vocabulary
- Sentence variety

WEAKNESSES:

- Ideas not developed, shallow treatment of topic
- Unable to present reasons and illustrations
- Lacks ideas
- Poor interpretation of task
- Rambles, no focus
- Poor vocabulary
- Unable to express opinion satisfactorily
- Inappropriate vocabulary and structures
- No unity and organisation of ideas
- Weak arguments
- Lacks variety in vocabulary and structures
- L1 vocabulary
- Transfer of L1 structures
- Non-committal voice
- Basic grammatical errors

Specific comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to *analyse and interpret a bar chart and a table on the number of boys and girls visiting dentists over four periods 1971-1980, 1981-1990, 1991-2000 and 2001-2010 and to link the information with the appropriate reasons for visiting dentists over the given specified periods*. Candidates are to write their reports in 150 to 200 words. The overview is *the number of youths visiting dentists correlated with the number of reasons for the visits during the periods 1971-1980 and 2001-2010*. 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 an opinion on whether *the trend of owning the latest technological gadgets is a healthy development or not*, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion on whether the trend of owning the latest technological gadgets is a positive or negative one and to show the impact this trend has on youths. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held. 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.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The language test is that of analysing, interpreting and synthesising required information in the non-linear texts related to *the number of boys and girls visiting dentists and their reasons for visiting dentists*. 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 visits made is expected. A comparison of the number of boys and girls visiting dentists, and periods of visits made, such as the *highest, lowest, most, least, more, fewer, only, equal number, in the 1971-1980 period*, 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, besides of that given in the question, is required. Correct point of reference (the period, number of boys/girls/youths, reason) is required for the award of marks. In cases where there was no reference or incomplete reference of categories involved, it is taken to mean 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 taken to mean that the candidate has failed to understand the requirement of the task.

Question 2

A discursive essay is expected in which the function of the language use 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 good ones in order to convince the reader.

Candidates have to be clear on the requirements of the task. In considering whether the trend of owning the latest technological gadgets among young people is a healthy development, candidates may express opinions such as *strengthen family ties, improve study habits, enable teenagers to be more efficient, improve study performance*, etc. among others, as relevant points.

Alternatively, candidates may disagree by giving points such as *a waste of resources, leads to unhealthy behaviour, leads to poor communication habits, become anti-social, involvement in crime or illegal activities*, etc. Strong justification must be made 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 faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly, much worse, could not present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. Examples of distortions/inaccuracies/assumptions in answers:

- **Wrong use of words**

*The **no** of boys shown the **highest** number of them visiting the dentist because of extracting teeth and filling cavities while the **no** of girls **least** visiting the dentist only for filling cavities in 1971-1980.*

- **Distortion**

This visuals presented medical and cosmetic affected the no of youths visiting the dentist.

- **Irrelevancy**

Beautiful and dazzling teeth started from a better teeth and hygiene and care.

- **Assumption**

Teeth problems caused by a lot of sweet food intake.

- **Description**

Some see the dentist for medical reason and others are for cosmetic reason.

- **Vagueness**

The bar chart show and explain about the no of youths visiting the dentist.

- **Inaccuracy**

The higher percentage is girls is its percent in years 2001-2010 meanwhile the lowers percentage is also girls in years 1971-1980.

- **Distortion**

In 1971-1980 the percentage boys is 30 meanwhile the girls is 26.

- **Inaccurate language**

In 1971-1980 boys got the high no with 30 persons compare than the girls that got 286 person.

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 clearly indicates that candidates require further training in answering Question 1.

STRENGTHS:

- Title is provided
- Clear introductions
- Paragraphing
- Length – within word count
- Logical link – associating visiting the dentist with their reasons

- Clear and complete analysis highlighting the number of boys/girls visiting the dentist for a given period, trend among boys and girls in visiting the dentist
- Links information on reasons for visiting the dentist with the numbers visiting the dentist

WEAKNESSES:

- Missing title
- Incomplete introduction – not including the years in the chart, not including the specific periods for the visits in Table 1
- No introduction
- Missing/ poorly constructed overview
- Poor analysis of Table 1/Figure 1
- Inclusion of irrelevant information and assumptions
- Wrong use of trend words depicting movement (*drastically, a little bit*)
- Wrong use of preposition (*on, by, with, for*)
- Distortions and assumptions
- Poor synthesis
- Writing beyond stipulated word count

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 illustrations of the impact the healthy or unhealthy trend of owning the latest technological gadgets has on the young people.

Modest answers barely developed the opinion held on the impact the trend has on the young. 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 control. 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 spelling.

Example:

'All of technological is very good in our life. One of our produce is mobile phones. It is very infortant using to contacts our family, friends and jorbs. In the long life, used mobile phones is very dangers because killing body systems'

'Nowadays, in our global era, when technology only in our hand, its become hot potatoes that need to discuss. For a current discussion is about are latest technological gadgets that youth owned is healthy development?'

Overall, the essays lacked maturity of ideas and adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.

July 2014 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 64 701 candidates took the July 2014 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	0.50	0.50	0.29	0.29	0.05	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
5	4.13	4.63	1.45	1.74	2.71	2.76	1.19	1.20	0.81	0.81
4	12.30	16.93	8.97	10.71	14.69	17.45	11.64	12.84	10.10	10.92
3	14.29	31.22	29.36	40.07	31.88	49.33	49.40	62.24	35.35	46.26
2	29.88	61.10	36.89	79.96	35.52	84.85	30.50	92.74	40.14	86.40
1	38.90	100.0	23.04	100.00	15.15	100.00	7.26	100.00	13.57	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 you can improve your self-esteem*. The topic is contemporary. Items ranged from short-answer questions to flow-chart completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task requires the candidates to listen to a talk on *Online Shopping*. Items were of the multiple-choice type.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow a mixture of texts; (1) a text on *the experience of a Turkish student in Malaysia*, (2) part of an excerpt from a talk on *corn cultivation in Malacca*, and (3) news item on a *checkout gadget designed to speed up and improve customer service in supermarkets*. There are six questions in this section; two for each listening text. Items were of the short-answer question type.

Specific comments

PART I

Answers ranged from some correct to incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts were due to writing more words than is required, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information, wrong information and no attempt. The following are some examples:

Question 1

- wrong pronoun – *feels about yourself*
- wrong reflective pronoun – *ownself/ your self/ yourselves/ your sell*
- distortion – *feel/ fell yourself/ feel ourself*
- spelling error/distortion – *feed/ fill/yourselfs*

Question 2

- no plural form used – *make friend/ have better relationship*
- exceeded the 3-word limit – *make friends and relationships (distortion)*
- wrong spelling – *make fiends/ fiends*
- fragmented structure – *make friends/ relationship*
- irrelevant/ wrong response given – *find new friends/ make new friends*

Question 3

- missing plural form – *don't focus on shortcoming/ write three thing positively/ say positive thing*
- missing preposition – *think positive aspects*
- use of gerund – *saying something positive/ by saying something positively/ starting thinking positive aspect*
- exceeded the 5-word limit – *don't focus on your shortcomings*

Question 4

- missing plural form – *try new thing*
- fragmented structure/ irrelevant/ wrong responses given – *trying your thing/ try you think*

Question 5

- missing article/ specific reference – *make plan/ stick to plan*
- use of plural form – *make plans and stuck it*
- irrelevant/ wrong response given – *stick with your plan/stick on your plan*

Question 6

- use of plural form/ wrong agreement – *tutor classmates/ tutor a classmates*

PART II

Answers ranged from some correct answers to some incorrect 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, spelling errors, meaningless text and no attempt.

Many candidates had difficulty stringing words together to answer Questions 15-20.

Question 15

- Spelling errors – *Turkies/ Turkey/ Turkishiest/ Turkey people/ Tucky/ Tukesian*

Question 16

- Missing plural form/ redundancy/ totally wrong/ failed attempt – *Malaysian smile a lot/ Malaysia people smile a lot/ Malaysian smart a lot/ student giving smily faces/ a lot of smile faces*

Question 17

- Missing the article 'a' – *popular tourist attraction*
- Distortion – *popular tourism/ popular to attack tourism*

Question 18

- subject-verb agreement/ missing point of reference/pronoun agreement/ fragmented sentence/ wrong tense – *juicy and sweet/ its juicy and sweet/ corn's juicy and sweet/ it was sweet/ corn is juicy and sweet*
- spelling errors – *it is juicy and sweat/ it is juciy and sweet*
- totally wrong/ failed attempt/ fragmented structures/ ridiculous response – *juicy and sweet with scenery/ fresh, juicy and sweet/ the juice and sweets/ jussy and sweetly*

Question 19

- use of plural form – *speeds up/ customers services*
- subject-verb agreement – *it improve and speed up...*
- missing point of reference/fractured sentence – *speed up customer service/ to improve customer service/ register purchases on spot*

Question 20

- missing plural form – *shopper purchase more*
- subject-verb agreement – *make shoppers purchase more*
- wrong main idea – *shoppers purchase more goods/ shoppers say cool*

PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

General comments

The question papers tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications.

Specific comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to respond well to the tasks
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Able to refer to specific current issues reported in the media
- Fluent and confident and were able to use words, phrases and idioms effectively to convey ideas.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Hesitant in speech
- Lacked vocabulary to express ideas
- Failed to elaborate; the elaboration, if any, was usually limited, too simple or disconnected. Responses thus, 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	A	31	C
2	A	17	C	32	C
3	A	18	C	33	B
4	B	19	A	34	B
5	A	20	A	35	D
6	B	21	B	36	D
7	C	22	C	37	D
8	B	23	A	38	B
9	C	24	C	39	B
10	A	25	A	40	D
11	A	26	A	41	B
12	A	27	C	42	D
13	C	28	C	43	D
14	A	29	C	44	A
15	A	30	D	45	B



PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

General comments

Questions meet the test specifications and measure the language ability of pre-university students. Questions demand knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, analytical-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 sales of three fast food outlets in the first quarter of 2012* and a table displaying *The promotional activities organised by the three outlets in the same period*. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between given information are the requirements. The topic is evergreen, and input 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 *the imbalance between the number of boys and girls pursuing university education creates social problems*. A clear, consistent, authoritative voice is expected in the response. The task is challenging and the subject matter known to all.

Specific comments

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Understands task
- Plans and organises
- Lists/states key features
- Analyses data
- Presents overview
- Presents overall trend
- Uses appropriate vocabulary
- Uses correct structures
- Provides logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Writes beyond word count
- Gives limited information
- Includes inaccuracies
- Includes irrelevancies
- Includes assumptions
- Does not present overview
- Does not link information
- Writes choppy, incomplete and vague sentences

- Includes description/commentary
- Writes unclear statements
- Unable to reconstruct information
- Does not have report writing skills
- Lacks conciseness
- Distortions
- Includes repetitions
- Gives incomplete data or does not provide data
- Has limited vocabulary
- Uses informal tone

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Understands task
- Keeps to 350-word limit
- Plans and organises
- Has an opinion
- Conveys 3 points
- Gives relevant examples
- Has appropriate vocabulary
- Has sentence variety

WEAKNESSES:

- Does not develop ideas, shallow treatment of topic
- Unable to present reasons and illustrations
- Lacks ideas
- Poor interpretation of task
- Rambles, has no focus
- Poor vocabulary
- Unable to express opinion satisfactorily
- Inappropriate vocabulary and structures
- Has no unity and organisation of ideas
- Provides weak arguments
- Lacks variety in vocabulary and structures
- Uses L1 vocabulary
- Transfer of L1 structures
- Has non-committal voice
- Has basic grammatical errors



Specific comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to analyse and interpret *the sales in RM of three fast food outlets in the first quarter of 2012 with the promotional activities offered*. Candidates are to write their report in 150-200 words. 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 overall view and to link the key features to information contained in the table.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to present an opinion on whether the imbalance in the number of boys and girls pursuing university education actually creates social problems, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held and state what their opinions are, explain why they have held that opinion and show that they have examined and evaluated other possibilities in this regard.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The language test is that of analysing, interpreting and synthesising required information in the non-linear texts related to *the sales in RM of three fast food outlets in the first quarter of 2012 and the influence of the promotional 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, use of appropriate linkers, and appropriate vocabulary to highlight the number of visits made are expected.

The expected voice is one of clarity and consistency. Appropriate vocabulary to highlight the comparison in sales of the three outlets and linking this with the promotional activities is required. The expected voice is one of the clarity, commitment and consistency. Irrelevancies, inaccuracies of data and assumptions made are not tolerated. No new information, besides of that given in the question, is required. Correct point of reference (*key feature, sales in RM, trend, duration*) is required for the award of marks. In cases where there was no reference or incomplete reference of the outlets, duration or data involved, it is considered that the candidate has failed to understand the message in the graph and table. Similarly, in cases where there was no link to information found in the graph, it is considered that the candidate has failed to understand the requirement 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 able to convince the reader.

Candidates have to be clear on the requirements of the task, in considering if the imbalance in the number of boys and girls pursuing university education actually creates social problems. Strong justification must be made and supported by evidence, and also argued in a persuasive voice. A minimum of three points, in support of the opinion, are 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 faintly consistent. Many candidates could not analyse information contained in the table correctly, and could not present an overview of information presented in the two visuals.

STRENGTHS:

- Title is provided
- Clear introductions
- Paragraphing
- Length – within word count
- Logical link – associating visiting the dentist with their reasons
- Clear and complete analysis highlighting the number of boys/girls visiting the dentist for a given period, trend among boys and girls in visiting the dentist
- Links information on reasons for visiting the dentist with the numbers visiting the dentist

WEAKNESSES:

- Title is not provided
- Incomplete introduction
- No introduction
- Missing/ poorly constructed overview
- Poor analysis of Table 1/Figure 1
- Inclusion of irrelevant information and assumptions
- Wrong use of trend words depicting movement
- Wrong use of preposition
- Distortions and assumptions
- Poor synthesis
- Writing beyond stipulated word count

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 on how the imbalance number of boys and girls pursuing university education actually creates social problems. 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 control. 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 spelling. Overall, the essays lacked maturity of ideas and in adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.

November 2014 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 79 457 candidates took the November 2014 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	0.09	0.09	0.13	0.13	0.37	0.37	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.01
5	2.67	2.76	3.78	3.91	5.27	5.64	3.18	3.25	2.00	2.01
4	14.11	16.87	24.48	28.39	16.79	22.43	26.86	30.11	17.80	19.81
3	19.49	36.36	48.68	77.07	34.43	56.86	56.98	87.09	49.00	68.81
2	37.49	73.85	18.85	95.92	33.39	90.25	11.48	98.57	27.88	96.70
1	26.15	100.00	4.08	100.00	9.85	100.00	1.43	100.00	3.30	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 *Job Hopping*. The topic is contemporary. Items ranged from short-answer questions to table completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART II

The task requires candidates to listen to a documentary *On the Role of Flags*. Items were of the multiple-choice type.

PART III

The task demands the ability to follow two excerpts and a talk. The first was on *Overfishing in Malaysian Waters*, the second on *Development on Sense-Simulating Gadgets*, and the third on *Swamp Intelligence*. There are six questions in this section; two for each listening text. Items were of the short-answer question type.

Specific comments

PART I

Answers ranged from some correct to incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts were due to writing more words than is required, spelling errors leading to a change in meaning, partially correct information, missing required information, wrong information and no attempt. The following are some examples:

Question 1

- wrong word choice – *fewer jobs/lesser jobs/ no jobs available/ less jobs available*

Questions 2 and 3

- wrong word form – *gain wide experience/ gain more skills*
- wrong information – *get higher income/ get experience/ widen their experience/earn more pay*

Questions 4 and 5

- wrong information – *choose the work environment/ consider the work surrounding/ think about work environment/ consider the company's culture*

Question 6

- wrong information – *give up on first obstacle*
- wrong verb form – *be influenced by friend*

PART II

Answers ranged from some correct answers to some incorrect 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, spelling errors, meaningless response and no attempt.

Many candidates had difficulty stringing words together to answer Questions 15-20.

Question 15

- inaccurate expression – *have high income/ population growth high demand/ higher economic*

Question 16

- wrong information – *foreign countries/ countries overseas/ other countries/ the wealthy*

Question 17

- spelling error – *gadget*
- wrong information – *development to their gadget/ need more money*
- poor expressions – *each other earn a money*

Question 18

- wrong information – *it will never stop/ it gets better/ we will never stop developing/ waiting for the next development*

Question 19

- wrong information and expression – *finding the short path/ response quickly and effectively*

Question 20

- wrong information – *pay close attention to the neighbours/ keep the group alert*

PAPER 800/2 (SPEAKING)

General comments

The question papers tested the skills stipulated in the test specifications.

Specific comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following abilities:

- Able to respond well to the tasks
- Points raised were well organised and elaborated
- Able to refer to specific current issues reported in the media
- Fluent and confident and were able to use words, phrases and idioms effectively to convey ideas.

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Hesitant in speech
- Lacked vocabulary to express ideas
- Failed to elaborate ideas; the elaboration, if any, was usually limited, too simple or 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	D
2	B	17	C	32	C
3	A	18	B	33	D
4	C	19	B	34	B
5	A	20	C	35	D
6	A	21	A	36	C
7	C	22	B	37	D
8	A	23	C	38	C
9	B	24	B	39	D
10	A	25	A	40	D
11	C	26	C	41	C
12	A	27	B	42	D
13	B	28	A	43	C
14	B	29	B	44	C
15	C	30	A	45	B

PAPER 800/4 (WRITING)

General comments

Questions meet the test specifications and measure the language ability of pre-university students. Questions demand knowledge of topic, maturity of thought, analytical-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 *Size of areas of deforestation in three forest reserves* and *Reasons for the deforestation*. Two visuals were presented; a bar chart on size of the areas of deforestation in the three forest reserves between 2008 and 2012, and a table depicting the reasons cited for deforestation. Accuracy of information, conciseness and correctness of language and logical connection between given information are the requirements. The topic is evergreen, and 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 *Playing computer games is beneficial for everyone*, is sought. A clear, consistent, authoritative voice is expected in the response. The task is challenging and the subject matter known to all.

Specific comments

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN CANDIDATES' ANSWERS

Question 1

STRENGTHS:

- Understands task
- Plans and organises
- Lists/states key features
- Analyses data
- Presents overview
- Presents overall trend
- Uses appropriate vocabulary
- Uses correct structures
- Provides logical connection

WEAKNESSES:

- Writes beyond word count
- Limited information
- Inaccuracies
- Irrelevancies
- Assumptions
- No overview
- No link to table
- Choppy sentences
- Description/commentary
- Unclear statements
- Inability to reconstruct information
- No report writing skills
- Lack conciseness
- Distortions
- Hanging sentences
- Repetitions
- Vague statement
- Missing data
- Limited vocabulary
- Informal tone

Question 2

STRENGTHS:

- Understands task
- Keeps to 350-word limit
- Plans and organises
- Has an opinion
- Conveys 3 points
- Gives relevant examples
- Has appropriate vocabulary
- Has sentence variety

WEAKNESSES:

- Ideas not developed, shallow treatment of topic
- Not able to present reasons and illustrations
- Lacks ideas
- Poor interpretation of task
- Rambles, no focus
- Poor vocabulary
- Unable to express opinion satisfactorily
- Inappropriate vocabulary and structures
- No unity and organisation of ideas
- Weak arguments
- Lacks variety in vocabulary and structures
- L1 vocabulary
- Transfer of L1 structures
- Non-committal voice
- Basic grammatical errors

Specific comments

Question 1

The task requires candidates to *analyse and interpret the bar chart on the size of deforestation in three forest reserves between 2008 and 2012* and to *link the information with the appropriate reasons given for the three forest reserves*. Candidates are to write their report in 150-200 words. The overview is *the size of deforestation in the forest reserves is influenced by the number of reasons cited for deforestation*. 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 overall view and to link the key features to information contained in the visuals.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to write a discussion on the benefits and drawbacks that playing computer games present to the player, in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion whether playing computer games brings more benefits than drawbacks or vice versa and to show the impact this habit has on the player. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held and 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.

EXPECTED ANSWERS

Question 1

The language test is that of analysing, interpreting and synthesising required information in the non-linear texts related to *size of deforestation in three forest reserves between 2008 and 2012* and *reasons for deforestation*. 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 size of deforestation are expected.

The expected voice is one of clarity and consistency. Appropriate vocabulary to highlight the size and comparison of the size of deforestation in the three reserves such as *the largest, smallest, most, least, more, fewer, only, equal size, from 2008 to 2012, for the five-year period*, is a requirement. The expected voice is one of the clarity, commitment and consistency. Irrelevancies, inaccuracies of data and assumptions made are not tolerated. No new information, besides of that given in the question, is required. Correct point of reference (*the period, size of deforestation, reason*) is required for the award of marks. In cases where there was no reference or incomplete reference of the forests, duration or data involved, it is taken to mean 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 bar chart, it is taken to mean that the candidate has failed to understand the requirement 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 good in order to convince the reader. Candidates need to be clear on the requirement of the task. Various angle of discussion may be adopted; that playing computer games is beneficial for everyone, is beneficial for a certain group only, is beneficial for everyone to a certain extent only and can be beneficial or harmful for everyone. In considering playing computer games giving more benefits than drawbacks, candidates may express point such as *is educational, develops the mind, trains reflexes, trains visual ability, expands social circle, develops creativity, enhances quick thinking skills, develops decision-making skills* and *encourages multimedia tasking*, etc. among others, as relevant points. Alternatively, candidates may disagree by giving points such as *is addictive, distracting, robs people of time with family, causes anti-social behaviour, affects studies/work, leads to health problems, instills wrong values* and *causes confusion between real and virtual world*, etc. Strong justification must be made supported by evidence, and argued in a persuasive voice. A minimum of three points, in support of the opinion, are 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 faintly consistent. Many could not analyse information contained in the table correctly, much worse, could not present an overview of information presented in the two visuals. The following are the examples of distortions/inaccuracies in answers:

- Wrong word choice – ‘*unstable, rocketed, the most popular reason, falls down,*’ resulting in distortions;
- Missing unit of measurement – ‘18 000’, ‘15 000’, resulting in ambiguity;
- Wrong language of comparison – *highest, lowest*, resulting in inaccuracy;
- Missing reference – *Rafflesia forest reserve* instead of *deforestation in Rafflesia forest reserve*;

Most candidates failed to produce a proper, complete and accurate overview that links all the stimuli. For example:

Generally the size of deforestation is depends on the reasons cited for deforestation.

The overview, the Gugusan Hijau show graf not stabil, Rafflesia Valley show the graf become decrease and Meranti graf are in increase between 2008 and 2012.

Many candidates also had difficulty writing their analyses in a sentence. For example:

The analysis and synthesis is the Meranti deforestation are increase that is in 2008 15 000 hektar and become 44 000 hektar in 2012. Different between in two years are 29 000 hektar.

Most answers were only a partial fulfilment 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 clearly indicates that candidates require further training in answering Question 1.

STRENGTHS:

- Title is provided
- Clear introductions
- Paragraphing
- Length – within word count
- Logical link – associating the size of deforestation in the three forest reserves with the reasons
- Clear and complete analysis highlighting size of deforestation for a given year, trend in deforestation over the five-year period
- Links information on reasons for deforestation with the size of deforestation

WEAKNESSES:

- Title is not provided
- Incomplete introduction
- No introduction
- Missing/ poorly constructed overview
- Poor analysis of Table 1/Figure 1
- Inclusion of irrelevant information and assumptions
- Wrong use of trend words depicting movement
- Wrong use of preposition
- Distortions and assumptions
- Poor synthesis
- Writing beyond stipulated word count

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 opinions satisfactorily. Satisfactory or competent answers discussed three points with illustrations of the benefits/impacts that playing computer games have on players. 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 control. 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 spelling. Overall, the essays lacked maturity of ideas and adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.