

End-year 2011 MUET (800)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

A total of 93 869 candidates took the End-Year 2011 MUET.

The performance of candidates for each paper, 800/1 Listening, 800/2 Speaking, 800/3 Reading, 800/4 Writing and the subject, 800, according to bands is as follows:

Band	800/1		800/2		800/3		800/4		800	
	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage	%	Cumulative Percentage
6	4.07	4.07	0.27	0.27	0.09	0.09	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
5	15.58	19.64	1.78	2.05	3.47	3.56	0.39	0.40	0.79	0.79
4	23.57	43.22	11.02	13.07	17.71	21.27	3.52	3.92	10.24	11.03
3	16.03	59.24	35.37	48.44	35.10	56.37	17.78	21.71	35.77	46.80
2	20.93	80.17	36.62	85.06	34.85	91.22	49.88	71.59	38.05	84.85
1	19.83	100.00	14.94	100.00	8.78	100.00	28.41	100.00	15.15	100.00

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

PAPER 800/1 LISTENING

General Comments

PART 1

Task demands ability to discern and reconstruct required information from a given text to note form. The text is a briefing by a travel agent for a tour of a mountainous location in Ladakh, India. Items ranged from short-answer questions to table completion and multiple-choice questions.

PART 2

Task demands ability to follow a panel discussion between two speakers and a chairperson on the topic of heritage preservation. Items were of the multiple-choice type.

PART 3

Task demands ability to follow a mixture of different texts, a talk on brain fitness programme, a news report on animal rights in Switzerland and a grouse from a food vendor. Items were of the short-answer type.

Specific Comments

Answers ranged from some correct to more 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.

PART 1

Question 1

- poor listening skills – *response to demonstrations*
- Missing required information – *being attention* (for *pay attention*)

Question 2

- question requires only **one** effect
- poor grammar – *shortness in breath*

Question 3

- wrong spelling – *follow instucsion*

Question 4

- poor paraphrasing skill – e.g. *stay on your room*

Question 5

- missing the required information – *visit villages near the mountains*

Question 6

- missing the required information – *having ladakhi for dinner, experiencing dinner*

PART II

Answers ranged from more correct answers to some incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts were due to poor comprehension of the text or no attempt.

Question number	Key	Question number	Key
9	E	12	A
10	C	13	B
11	C	14	A

PART III

Answers ranged from some correct answers to more incorrect attempts. The inaccurate attempts were mainly writing more words than is required, wrong information, missing required information, spelling and no attempt.

Majority failed to answer questions 15 – 20.

Question 15

- question requires only **one** example of brain fitness exercise.

Question 16

- meaning not intact e.g. *maintain student's performance*

Question 17

- incorrect information e.g. *force nation to take action*

Question 18

- wrong spelling e.g. *touchering* (for *torturing*)

Question 19

- wrong meaning e.g. *he is responsible* (for *he feels responsible*)

Question 20

- wrong information e.g. *avoid accuse*

PAPER 800/2 SPEAKING**General Comments**

The topics for the End-Year 2011 Malaysian University English Test (MUET), Speaking paper revolve around current issues covered in the media and the everyday experience of young adults.

Specific Comments

Proficient candidates demonstrated the following ability:

- Made effective use of the preparation time by making short notes or drawing mind maps. (Task A)
- Divided presentation into two or three main points, elaborating on each point before moving on to the next one. (Task A)
- Linked knowledge of current issues to the topics discussed. (Task A & B)
- Read the question carefully and addressed the requirements of the question. (Task A & B).
- Displayed good mastery of the language, with good control of structures and a wide range of vocabulary.
- Participated actively in discussion without being prompted. (Task B)
- Listened actively to the arguments raised by the other candidates and responded or made reference to the arguments. (Task B)

The less proficient candidates' weaknesses are summarised as follows:

- Wasted preparation time by writing complete sentences on points to be raised. (Task A)
- Lacked planning and organisation; main ideas were not sufficiently elaborated and/or supporting ideas were often repeated. (Task A)
- Did not refer to current issues in their presentation. (Task A & B)
- Addressed the topic but not the requirements of the question. (Task A & B). For example, discussing the job of a gardener or toilet cleaner, instead of explaining how their jobs make a meaningful contribution to society. (Booklet 1)

Lacked command of basic structures and vocabulary; many errors in grammar.

- Did not participate actively in discussion; participated only when prompted by the other candidates or by the examiners. (Task B)
- Interaction pattern was one of 'taking turns' rather than 'turn-taking', i.e. candidates presented their ideas when it was their turn to do so without referring to the arguments raised by the other candidates.

PAPER 800/3 READING**Answer Key**

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

PAPER 800/4 WRITING**General Comments****Question 1**

Necessitates analysis and synthesis of data presented in both graphics. It requires candidates to be selective, discriminating and analytical. Candidates should analyse the data presented and make connections with input from Table 1 using correct language, highlighting trends in grocery shopping in 1985 and 2010. A clear overview of the trend is presented as points of reference, followed by highlights of the key features and synthesis with the information from Table 1.

Question 2

Necessitates mature profound thinking of the stimulus presented. Candidates should give an opinion about interest and career choice. Evidence of planning, organization and development of ideas, with examples, should be shown.

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 apt vocabulary
- Uses correct structures
- Provides logical connection

WEAKNESSES

- Writes beyond word count
- Limited information
- Inaccuracies
- Irrelevancies
- Assumptions
- No overview
- No overall trend
- No link to table
- Choppy sentences
- Description/commentary
- Unclear statements
- Inability to reconstruct information
- No report writing skills
- Not concise
- Shaky voice
- Distortions
- Hanging sentences
- Repetitions
- Vague statement
- Missing data
- Limited vocabulary
- Informal tone

Question 2

STRENGTHS

- Understands task
- Kept 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
- Not able to present reasons and illustrations
- Lacks ideas
- Poor interpretation of task
- Rambles, no focus
- Poor vocabulary
- Not able 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

Comments on Specific Questions

TASK

Question 1

The task requires candidates *to analyse and interpret the data on the changing pattern of grocery shopping in 1985 and 2010 and to link the selected data to information contained in the table about the characteristics of the shopping venues in 2010*. Candidates are to write their report in 150 to 200 words. The overall trend shown is the growing preference to shop for groceries at supermarkets in 2010 as against the other venues due to facilities offered by the supermarkets. 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 trend and to link the key features to information contained in the table.

Question 2

The task requires candidates to present an opinion on *whether one's career choice should be determined by one's interest* in not fewer than 350 words. Candidates are required to have an opinion on making career choices and to discuss whether decisions made should be guided by one's interest or be influenced and determined by other people/factors. Candidates are to give a strong commitment to the view held. A candidate has to state what the opinion is, explain why he/she holds that opinion and show that he/she has 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 changing pattern in grocery shopping in 1985 and 2010. A report format is sought and the maximum word count is 200 words. The report has to be concise, yet compact and accurate. An overall trend or overview should be conveyed, followed by key features in support of the overall trend. Logical connection of data and use of appropriate linkers is expected. Apt vocabulary to highlight the changing pattern of grocery shopping is a requirement. The expected voice is one of clarity, commitment 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 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 chart and table. Similarly, in cases where there was no link to information found in the table, it is taken to mean 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/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 really good ones in order to convince the reader. Candidates need to be clear on the requirement of the task. In considering one's career choice as being guided by one's interest, candidates may reason out *sustaining a lifelong career, as motivation, as personal development, self satisfaction, overcoming challenges*, among others, as factors.

In considering one's career choice as being determined by other factors, candidates may reason out *parental expectations, friends' influence, qualifications, responding to market demands, experience, talent, responsibility, dictates of nation, monetary gains*, among others, as factors. The justification made will have to be supported by strong evidence, and 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

Most candidates wrote beyond the specified 200-word limit, with the effect of the analysis and synthesis of required information, contained in the table, missed being taken into account. Answers were only a partial fulfillment of the task. Many fulfilled the requirement of an objective tone in reporting, with a slight percentage keeping to a persuasive/argumentative tone. A poor percentage of candidates conveyed the required overview, which is the point of reference for the analysis and synthesis of the required information. Of these, only a negligible percentage was able to provide the overall trend and the connection between the two non-linear texts.

A small number of candidates were able to analyse and present the changing pattern in grocery shopping in 1985 and 2010, some using apt vocabulary of change and the degree of change, such as *a significant increase, a slight increase, remained stable, more, lesser, higher, lower percentage*, etc., while some others failed to use appropriate vocabulary, using general words such as *going up, going down*. Some gave vague descriptions such as, *wet markets are famous in 1985*; much worse, others did not furnish data in their analysis. Wrong choice of vocabulary was also a problem, such as *same amount*. Another is inaccuracy of information, such as, *the 24-hour stores are still less consumers by 5 percent*. Another is the missing year that distorts the meaning of the report, for example, *supermarkets provide a big discount and comfortable place to consumer...*

Poor reports showed weak expressions, weak vocabulary, inability to analyse, synthesise and highlight key features in the chart, failure to convey an overview and inaccuracies in data or missing data.

Question 2

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/competent answers discussed 3 points with illustrations of the importance/non-importance of being guided by interest in making a career choice. Frequently cited reasons were *as personal advancement, leading to self satisfaction, commitment, motivation, meeting parental expectations, monetary returns, challenge, security, experience, talent*.

Some candidates put forward ideas which were often simplistic generalisations. Many ideas were vaguely expressed, invariably due to poor command of vocabulary and structures. In the poor answers, there was poor understanding of the notion *interest* and the task. 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, wrong spelling, etc., are predominant. Overall, what is lacking in the essays are maturity of ideas and adequate control of the language for clear expression of ideas.