

## Malay A Literature

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 18	19 - 33	34 - 46	47 - 59	60 - 72	73 - 84	85 - 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 17	18 - 31	32 - 45	46 - 58	59 - 70	71 - 82	83 - 100

### Higher level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

All schools need to ensure that their higher level candidates' commentaries are a literary analysis of a poem (or extract from a poem), not a mixture of poetry and prose. However, the passages given to candidates were almost of equal length and challenge.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

For most candidates, the use of language was generally clear and coherent but for a few it is still somewhat wanting for candidates at the higher level. Generally, the candidates' performance was satisfactory.

For knowledge and understanding of the extracts, the achievement level was between 3 and 4 marks. For appreciation of the writer's choice more candidates achieved at the 5 mark level. And for language usage, candidates scored between 3 and 4 marks. Most candidates were

fairly fluent in their presentation. Some candidates seemed to have only surface understanding of the passages. Commentaries were superficial and not perceptive. Overall, the standards presented did not reflect achievements at the upper levels.

It was also observed that it is still common practice for some candidates to start their commentaries by giving an introduction about the writer of the passage concerned. There were distinct similarities in terms of format and contents for each writer introduced. It is again emphasized here that such practice is largely irrelevant and a waste of time. The brief bio-data of the writer(s) were too general and did not link the writers' background or experience to his/her thematic treatments or writing styles especially of the passage at hand.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

For some, more exercise in speaking is needed. Candidates also need deeper understanding of works. Better proficiency in the language would help. Some exposure and further readings about the cultural settings related to the work studied would help a lot. Candidates should also be encouraged to do some research on one or more works of the writers used for internal assessment. Or, at least read some form of critiques of the writers' works. This will provide more ideas on the writers' struggles, opinions, attitudes and writing styles, which in turn help in further understanding and appreciation of the writer's choices in his/her works.

## Standard level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

All works submitted were appropriate within the PAL (prescribed list of authors) and schools' free choice. Passages given to candidates were almost of equal challenge be it prose or poetry. It was observed that the majority of candidates presented satisfactory responses in their commentaries on prose and poems. Most candidates successfully situated the extracts within the body of works to which they belonged and presented sound knowledge of the major and significant themes.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

Most candidates were fluent and articulate in their presentation. Teachers had posed effective questions in probing the candidates' knowledge and understanding. The majority of candidates performed very well in all criteria. The difference in achievement levels between candidates was small.

It was also observed that the practice for almost all candidates to start their commentaries by introducing the writer of the passage has improved. Some schools have done away with it and went straight to the commentary.

Criterion A: Most candidates had shown very good knowledge and understanding of the extract. However, generally candidates who were given prose extracts did a better job than those given poetry.

Criterion B: Most candidates articulated more on the literary features rather than the appreciation of writer's choice. This may be the result of a transition period, whereby schools had been used to the previous syllabus. But that is acceptable because in pointing out the literary features, candidates did relate that to the writer's style.

Criterion C: Did not pose much of a problem for the candidates. Most candidates delivered structured and well organized commentaries.

Criterion D: Saw an overall high achievement. Most candidates had a good command of the language showing clear, accurate and often time varied usage.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to do further studies of one or more works of the writers used for internal assessment. Candidates should also read some form of critiques of the writers' works. This will provide more ideas on the writers' struggles, opinions, attitudes and writing styles, which in turn help in further understanding and appreciation of the writer's choices in his/her works.

## Higher level and standard level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, the range of work submitted was suitable in producing individual well informed essays. The selection of topics and treatment of themes were satisfactory and acceptable. There were some similarities in chosen aspects and also the same method of treatment. This may be due to almost similar works studied at different schools. Dominant ideas were well discussed with a generally effective formal structure. However, some candidates still lacked the appreciation of relevant cultural settings in their assignments. Quite a number of candidates showed a somewhat surface level understanding. However, there is a marked decrease in the tendency to impose personal opinions based on one's values compared to the previous years in the essays for world literature (previous course).

## Candidate performance against each criterion

The major strength shown by candidates was in the criterion: knowledge and understanding (of works). Candidates were well prepared and have proven through their presentations their careful reading of the selected works, as well as sound comprehension of the significant themes. It was further boosted by their mastery of language (criterion E). This helped the better candidates to present good or strong arguments.

The main weakness was in presenting the reflective statement. For quite a number of candidates the appreciation of the writer's choices was an area of weakness. In some cases, the topic or essay title chosen were still not well defined resulting in candidates not being able to articulate effectively.

Since this is the first time the component is offered, there seemed to be difficulty with and some inconsistencies in terms of the reflective statement. Quite a number of statements presented did not answer very clearly the key question: 'how their understanding of cultural and contextual elements was developed through the interactive oral?' Most reflective statements were merely minutes of their discussions among peers without any conclusive statement showing understanding or criticism related to their topics or essays.

Another area of difficulty was in the appreciation of the writer's choices. In a way, this is somewhat similar yet different to appreciation of literary convention. Appreciation of writer's choices should be more focussed on the writer's style and technique rather than just an open discussion about the presence of certain techniques in the texts/works. Candidates should also articulate the reasons or rationale, and to what effect, the writer's choice of certain types of characters, certain background or setting and so on has had.

As mentioned last year, school concentration on certain works and specific genres is still resulting in similarity and repetition of comments and treatments. Although generally the majority of assignments presented were of good quality, there appeared to be some difficulty in the effective development of ideas.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is recommended that schools give more attention to candidates' understanding of the cultural and contextual elements found in the works studied. The candidates' discussions and subsequent reflective statement should be related and focused on the eventual essay. It would be helpful if candidates are made aware of the writers' background too. Understanding the writers' perspectives will help in appreciation of the writer's choices. Again, teachers should please advise candidates against ambitious, verbose and 'bombastic' topics that they are not really sure of. Candidates should try to remain simple, precise and concise in choice of topics. Also, candidates need to refrain from writing in the manner of creative work rather than an academic exercise.

## Higher level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Question number 2, the poem, caused candidates more difficulty than the prose. It is possible that most candidates were not interested in writing a commentary on the poem because there were several difficult words to understand. This difficulty meant that candidates were unable to understand the message of the poet and this in turn meant that the candidates could not elaborate on the poem correctly.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

In contrast, most candidates were interested in answering question number 1, the passage from a short story. It was easier to understand this passage compared with the poem. Because it was easier to understand, most candidates preferred to write a literary commentary on this passage rather than on the poem.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The strengths of the candidates on both questions are writing the synopsis of the prose passage and investigating the meaning of the poem. Most candidates were able to show good understanding of the passage. However with regard to the weaknesses, there were two major aspects. Firstly, most of the candidates were unable to demonstrate persuasive interpretation supported by effective reference to the passage. Secondly, most candidates were unable to give good analysis and appreciation of the ways in which language, structure, technique and style shape meaning.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

1. To demonstrate persuasive interpretation supported by effective references from the passage.
2. To write excellent analysis and appreciation of the ways in which language, structure, technique and style shape meaning.

3. To write the ideas of the writers persuasively, organized with excellent structure, coherence and development.
4. To write with the language clearly, effectively, carefully chosen and precise with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Question number 2, which was on the poem, gave the candidates most difficulty. There were several words which are difficult to understand. Furthermore, both questions on part (a) and part (b) were quite challenging.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Question number 1, which is passage from a short story, was a more popular choice for the guided literary analysis. Furthermore, the passage was a very interesting one in that it concerns a human dilemma.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

For question number 1, most candidates are unable to differentiate between the main conflict and the conflicts. Most candidates do not mention which one is the main conflict. For question number 2, most candidates were unable to discuss how the structure of the poem strengthens the meaning of the poem.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

1. To demonstrate a sustained and convincing interpretation that is supported by well-chosen references to the passage.
2. To write very good analysis and appreciation of the ways in which language, structure, technique and style shape meaning.
3. To present the idea effectively organized and with good coherence.

4. To write with language that is very clear, effectively, carefully chosen and precise, and with a high degree of accuracy.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

### General comments

All the candidates chose the same question from the genre section, the novel, for their responses. The standard of performance varied between candidates. Overall the performance level was more than satisfactory.

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

For almost all candidates it appears that criterion B: response to the question, and criterion C: appreciation of the literary conventions of the genre proved to be difficult. Only a very small number of candidates showed good command of both criteria. In some ways the difficulty faced in meeting criterion B also affected the achievement level for criterion D: organization and development. Quite a number of candidates showed some difficulty in giving a good response to the main implications of the question. Although there are a few candidates who scored quite well overall, the achievement level on criterion C still needs to be improved. To some extent, the use of language by candidates is cause for some concern.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Overall, candidates were well prepared in terms of criterion A: knowledge and understanding of the works studied.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Of the 15 questions in the 5 sections offered, all candidates selected only the one question from the section on the novel. In responding to this question, candidates have used works of prescribed authors as their source of arguments. The chosen works were well suited to the specific demands of the question. Candidates used appropriate examples from the novels in putting forward their arguments especially in terms of techniques in characterizations and development of plot. However most candidates overlooked the literary techniques employed by the authors.

The major weakness was in the response to the question itself. More than half of the candidates were not aware of the main emphasis of the question. Although there was evidence of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the works studied, the responses were somewhat off-track from the main emphasis. That impacted on the quality of presentation and development of arguments.

Weakness in the formal use of language was still evident in a few candidates' answers. A few others, who seem to have a good command of language, had compromised their quality by being verbose to the extent of being ambiguous in their answers.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

For this examination session it is commendable that most candidates showed in-depth knowledge and understanding of works studied. However, a number of candidates were either not careful in reading the question or were not aware of the specific demands of the question. Some candidates wasted time and energy on arguments that were totally irrelevant to the question. This has had a negative impact on the response to criterion B. Teachers are encouraged to remind candidates to read and reread the question to identify the specific demands.

For example, as in the case of question 8, which asked about 'how noble intention(s) by one character can have negative impact(s) on another character', the response can be very simple and straightforward. Character A wanted to do this (noble) deed, but character C suffered, how and why. A number of candidates responded by saying character A did something noble but in the end character A suffered. That shows that the candidate did not pay attention to the specific demands of the question.

Apart from that, candidates should be trained to highlight the literary styles and techniques used by the authors. Candidates should be able to identify the techniques used and the effect of the techniques in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the works. It is a matter of noticing "what the author did" and "how does that affect the plot or the reader?"

Candidates should also be reminded at all times that writing the answer for paper 2 is actually about writing an academic essay. The language should be precise and simple. There is no need to embellish with idioms and figurative speech to the extent of making the argument confusing and 'blurry'. Please, teach candidates to write straight to the point.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25



## General comments

All the candidates chose the genre, the novel, for their essays. One particular question stands out as the most popular choice. The standard of performance varied between candidates. Overall the performance level was more than satisfactory.

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

For almost all candidates it appears that criterion B: response to the question, and criterion C: appreciation of the literary conventions of the genre proved to be difficult. Only a very small number of candidates showed good command of both criteria. In some ways the difficulty faced in meeting criterion B also affected the achievement level for criterion D: organization and development. Quite a number of candidates showed some difficulty in giving a good response to the main implications of the question. Although there are a few candidates who scored quite well overall, the achievement level on criterion C still needs to be improved. To some extent, the use of language by candidates is cause for some concern.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Overall, candidates were well prepared in terms of criterion A: knowledge and understanding of the works studied. Most candidates scored quite well on criterion E: language.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Of the 15 questions in the 5 sections offered, all candidates selected only the questions from the section on the novel. Question 8 became the most popular question, answered by more than half of the candidates. In responding to the questions, candidates used works by prescribed authors as their source of arguments. Candidates tried to use examples from the novels in putting forward their arguments especially in terms of techniques in characterizations and development of plot. However quite a number of candidates overlooked the literary techniques employed by the authors.

The major weakness was in the response to the questions chosen. More than half of the candidates were not aware of the main emphasis of the questions. Those choosing question 7 or question 9, showed lack of understanding in terms of the specific demands of the question. The examples taken from the works were mostly irrelevant to the questions. Although there was evidence of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the works studied, the responses were somewhat off-track from the main emphasis. This impacted on the quality of presentation and development of arguments.

Weakness in the formal use of language was still evident in a few candidates' answers. Quite a number too, who seem to have a good command of language had compromised their quality by being verbose, 'playing' with words to the extent of being unclear in their answers.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

For this examination session it is commendable that most candidates showed in-depth knowledge and understanding of works studied. However, a number of candidates were either not careful in reading the question or were not aware of the specific demands of the question. Some candidates wasted time and energy on arguments that were totally irrelevant to the question. This has had a negative impact on the response to criterion B. Teachers are encouraged to remind candidates to read and reread the question to identify the specific demands.

For example, as in the case of question 8, which asked about ‘how noble intention(s) by one character can have negative impact(s) on another character’, the response can be very simple and straightforward. Character A wanted to do this (noble) deed, but character C suffered, how and why. A number of candidates responded by saying character A did something noble but in the end character A suffered. That shows that the candidate did not pay attention to the specific demands of the question.

Question 9, asked for something very specific – the treatment or inclusion of historical event(s) or figures in the works. Most candidates could not give a good response just because the works they had studied did not contain those elements. Yet, they twist and turn trying to conjure some kind of answer. It was a waste of effort and opportunity.

Question 7 presented the same scenario because candidates who chose to answer the question studied works that did not offer them enough material to argue on the different kinds of plot development.

Apart from that, candidates should be trained to highlight the literary styles and techniques used by the authors. Candidates should be able to identify the techniques used and the effect of the technique in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the works. It is a matter of noticing “what the author did” and “how does that affect the plot or the reader?”

Candidates should also be reminded at all times that writing the answer for paper 2 is actually about writing an academic essay. The language should be precise and simple. There is no need to embellish with idioms and figurative speech to the extent of making the argument confusing and ‘blurry’. Please, teach candidates to write straight to the point.