

TELT May 2018 Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

41 candidates sat for the TELT May 2018 examination session. 26 candidates were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a 63.4% pass rate compared to the 53.3% pass rate of the candidates who sat the examination in March 2018, registering an increase of 10%.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

0 Distinction
7 Pass with merit
19 Pass
10 Narrow Fail
5 Fail
0 Unclassified

2. General Remarks

The May 2018 TELT session has registered a welcome improvement in candidate performance, when compared to the previous session held in 2018. Candidates performed well in Section A in Part One and Sections B and E in Part Two. Performance was adequate to good in other sections, while, as usual, candidates seem to have struggled with Part One Section D. The Writing Section still poses a challenge for some candidates who struggled with the format conventions of the text type they selected; weaknesses regarding lexis, collocation and structure were more noticeable in this section. The presentation of many essays, moreover, left much to be desired.

3. Section Analysis

Part 1 Language Description, Sensitivity and Awareness

Part 1 Section A – Language Terminology

In Section A Part 1, the average pass mark was quite high for this section registering 77%, indicating a 6% increase when compared to the last examination session. Many candidates demonstrated an adequate general knowledge of language terms. Candidates who struggled in this area mostly did so with the lexical items. It is advisable for all candidates to adequately prepare themselves for the exam in terms of learning the grammar and terminology. Candidates who did well were likely to have been well prepared in terms of grammar and lexis.

Part 1 Section B – Primary Stress Identification

Part 1 Section C – Transcription of Phonemic Script into Normal Spelling

Part 1 Section D – Transcription into Phonemic Script

Candidate performance was quite good in Section B and Section C (both a 68%), indicating almost identical percentages to those registered in the March 2018 session. The fact that candidates can generally recognise primary word stress and decipher words transcribed phonemically was, once

again, counterbalanced by a very poor performance in Section D. As in most of the previous examination sessions, Section D clearly remains the most challenging examination task for TELT candidates. Candidate performance registered a very low average pass rate at 27%, with almost 60% of the candidates being awarded 0 – 2 marks for this section.

Once again, the examiners would like to impress upon centres and trainers preparing candidates for this exam the importance of teaching pronunciation and using the phonemic script as a teaching aid in the classroom, especially to reinforce learner autonomy.

Part 1 Section E – Odd One Out

Overall, performance in this section was slightly better than in the previous session with an average pass mark of 58%, this being 4% over the last session. Most candidates continue to struggle with terminology. Candidates found this task to be quite challenging as the average mark was 17 on 30. The level of difficulty was spread across the task. In some cases, it seemed that candidates were not prepared for the task. Some candidates did not attempt some answers;; others gained some marks for at least selecting the sentence they thought was the odd one out. There were candidates who correctly selected the odd one out, said why it was the odd one out compared to the remaining sentences, but left out what they all had in common. Candidates who do not follow the rubric and cover the three points: identifying the odd one out, noting what they all have in common, and saying why the odd one out is different from the rest - lost marks. Some candidates did not correctly identify the odd one out but still gained marks for coming up with a plausible reason for another possible answer.

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors

The average pass mark for this section was 63%, a noticeable improvement over the very low 46%, from the previous session. Most errors had to do with failing to identify misspelt words, wrong formation of words, and wrong choice of words. Moreover, errors and corrections candidates made seemed to indicate weakness of idiom and collocation. On the other hand, awareness of correct usage of tense and punctuation was on the stronger side.

Part 2 Section B – Word Formation

In this section, candidates averaged a pass mark of 75%, a 10% increase over the previous session. On this occasion, apart from some words which were not reformulated correctly, valuable marks were lost due to poor spelling in a number of instances.

Part 2 Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion

The majority of candidates performed adequately well in this section with an average pass mark of 65%; this is identical to that registered in the March 2018 session. Candidates who read regularly and broaden their range of collocation and commonly used phrases would fare well in this section.

Part 2 Section D – Sentence Transformation

Candidates registered a low 58% average pass mark, which was much lower than the previous session which reached 69%. Marks were lost mostly due to awkward sentence construction, non-existent collocations and a certain unease with the Use of English sentence transformation task.

Part 2 Section E – Writing Section

Overall, performance in this section was adequate with a 73% pass mark, a 4% increase over the pass mark in the past examination session. Essays that were coherent, demonstrated a good control of language and appropriate use of cohesive devices were rewarded with high marks. Task completion in the form of answering what was specifically requested of them in the rubric was generally good.

In the weaker essays, there were recurrent instances where marks were deducted for poor spelling, awkward sentence construction, a lack of idiomatic language, poor cohesion, and frequent occurrences of wrong collocation. There were some instances of the content being below the expected level in terms of range of lexis and maturity. There were also isolated instances of writing that which were out of point, where the candidate misinterpreted the selected question.

Candidates are advised to revise their writing and make any necessary corrections before handing the paper in. The examiners remarked on the shoddiness in the presentation of the two written tasks rendering some essays almost illegible. Even though candidates are writing under examination conditions, they should still pay some attention to presentation of their work. A small number disregarded the rubric in that they far exceeded the word count.

4. Recommendations

As with previous reports, more focus and attention to phonology, in particular the phonemic script, is encouraged. The lack of familiarity with the phonemic script is a matter of concern and may arise from the fact that candidates fail to recognise its usefulness in class. This may be an area trainers could address in future TELT Preparation courses. The necessity to spell correctly and the use of correct combinations of collocation, needs to be impressed upon candidates. Trainers are encouraged to provide candidates with opportunities to improve their writing skills in the various text types and their respective writing conventions. Lastly, candidates should be encouraged to dedicate time for regular reading practice as this will increase their exposure to modern English and serve as a valuable model for their own writing.

In preparation of the writing section of the exam, examiners suggest that candidates dedicate more time to quality reading, with reading being a model for writing as well as a means by which candidates broaden their range of lexis and structures. Reading a variety of texts would also serve to help students develop their creativity.