

TELT March 2018 Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

15 candidates sat for the TELT March 2018 examination session. 8 candidates were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a 53.3% pass mark compared to the 90% pass mark of the candidates who sat the examination in November 2017, registering a sharp drop of 36.7%.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

0 Distinction

2 Pass with merit

6 Pass

4 Narrow Fail

2 Fail

1 Unclassified

2. General Remarks

The March 2018 TELT session has seen a rather sharp and unexpected drop in candidate performance, especially when compared to the previous sessions held in 2017. Candidates only performed adequately in Section A in Part One and Section D in Part Two, while they seem to have struggled with most other sections. The Writing Section still poses a challenge for many candidates who struggled with the format conventions of the text they selected; weaknesses when it comes to 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 71%, indicating a slight drop of 2% from the last examination session. Many candidates demonstrated an adequate general knowledge of language terms. Students who struggled in this area mostly did so with the lexical items. One candidate performed below par. 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 (68%), registering a dip of 3% from the last session. Candidates performed adequately in Section C (67%), indicating that candidates can

generally recognise and decipher words transcribed phonemically. As in most of the previous examination sessions, there were isolated instances of candidates misspelling words for which they lost marks. Section D remains the most challenging examination task for TELT candidates. Candidate performance registered a very low pass mark at 20%, with 80% 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 again weaker than in previous sessions this year with an average pass mark of 54%, a drop of 7% from the last session. Most candidates continue to struggle with terminology. Candidates often identified the odd sentence, but they were unable to give the reason why it is different from the other three sentences. Five candidates performed much below par. The range of challenge was spread across the task.

Candidates who partly responded to the questions had a chance to gain marks if their parts were correct. A number of candidates did not volunteer any answers in some instances. Candidates who did not select the correct odd one out but delivered a justifiable description of what they identified as being in common and odd had a chance to gain marks.

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors

The average pass mark for this section is a low 46%, which is again a sharp drop of 24% from the previous session. Candidates who did well relatively well, followed the rubric and wrote down only the correct word, phrase or punctuation in the space provided. Most errors had to do with not identifying misspelt words, wrong formation of words, and wrong choice of words.

Part 2 Section B – Word Formation

In this section, candidates averaged a pass mark of 65%, which again fell short of the previous session by 11%. On this occasion, apart from some words which were not reformulated correctly, valuable marks were lost due to poor spelling in isolated 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%, which fell slightly short of the previous 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 65% average pass mark, which was much lower than the previous session which reached 87%. Marks were lost mostly due to awkward sentence construction and inexistent collocations.

Part 2 Section E – Writing Section

Overall, performance in this section was adequate with a 69% pass mark, identical to 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 it was clear that candidates were not familiar either with the required layout of the task they selected or with idiomatic language.

Marks for candidates who struggled in this area were brought down by poor spelling, awkward sentence construction, a lack of ‘natural’ language, poor cohesion, and samples of wrong collocation. 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. 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. There were some instances of the content being below the expected level in terms of range of lexis and maturity. 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 would also serve to help students develop their creativity and come up with ideas for their writing. Examiners encourage trainers to provide candidates with opportunities to read and develop their writing using a variety of texts.

4. Recommendations

As with previous reports, more focus and attention to phonology, in particular the phonemic script, is encouraged. The necessity to spell correctly needs to be impressed upon candidates as well as use correct combinations of collocation. 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 may serve as a valuable model for their own writing.