

TELT March 2019 Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

12 candidates sat for the TELT March 2019 examination session. 8 candidates were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a 66.7% pass rate which is slightly higher than the 64% pass rate of the candidates who sat the examination in November 2018, registering an increase of 2.7%.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

0 Distinction

3 Pass with merit

5 Pass

4 Narrow Fail

0 Fail

0 Unclassified

2. General Remarks

Overall, candidate performance in the March 2019 TELT session was very comparable to that in the previous session held in November 2018. Candidates performed well in Sections B and C in Part One and Sections B, D 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, and also in Part Two Section C. The Writing Section still poses a challenge for some candidates who struggled with the format conventions of the text type they selected (this was especially true for the Report question); weaknesses regarding lexis, collocation and structure were more noticeable in this section. A certain lack of punctuation and paragraphing were also evident. The presentation of some 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 adequate at just under 68%. This, however, indicates a 2% decrease when compared to the last examination session. Many candidates demonstrated just an adequate general knowledge of language terms and seem to have found a number of questions very challenging. Candidates who struggled in this area mostly did so with the grammatical items. It is advisable for all candidates to adequately prepare themselves for this exam section in terms of learning the grammar and related terminology – two areas that require focused study.

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 (76.3%) and very good in Section C (80%). When compared to those registered in the November 2018 session, these percentages indicate a significant increase for Section B (7%) and a slight 2.4% increase in Section C. Some marks were lost due to bad spelling, particularly of words like *'eliciting'* and *'methodology'*. The fact that candidates can generally recognise primary word stress and decipher words transcribed phonemically was, once again, counterbalanced by a rather 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 low average pass rate at 45.83%, with a significant 33% of the candidates being awarded 0 – 2 marks for this section. That being said, the pass rate this time round was significantly higher than the one registered in November 2018 (32.8%). This may mean a better preparation for this section and an increased awareness of the importance of Phonology for English language teachers.

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 with a view of reinforcing learner autonomy.

Part 1 Section E – Odd One Out

Overall, performance in this section was stronger than in the previous session with an average pass mark of 67.22%, this being a very significant increase of almost 15% over the 52.5% registered in the last session. Candidates, however, continue to struggle with terminology and this renders this task quite challenging. The level of difficulty was spread across the task. As in previous exam sessions, 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. Some candidates presented only half the answer and/or were not explicit enough in their answer so that the examiner had to make an assumption. Candidates who could correctly identify the odd one out but came up with a plausible reason for another possible answer still gained marks. Candidates who did not follow the rubric and therefore did not cover the three points – identifying the odd one out, noting what they all have in common, and saying why the odd one out was different from the rest – lost marks.

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors

The average pass mark for this section was 64.58%, a massive (and surprising) 13% drop over the good 77.8 registered in November 2018. 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 a clear lack of familiarity with idiom and collocation. Candidates had most difficulty with the following: correct forms of words and punctuation. Students had some difficulty with spelling, in particular *'sociable'* and *'waterborne'*.

Examiners believe that examination preparation trainers would do well to remind candidates to follow the rubric: identify the error by underlining the target error and writing ONLY the corrected word(s).

Part 2 Section B – Word Formation

In this section, candidates averaged an excellent pass mark of 91.67%, almost a 12% increase over the previous session. However, even on this occasion, some valuable marks were lost due to poor spelling in a number of instances, in particular *'protective'* and *'reputable'*.

Part 2 Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion

The majority of candidates performed rather poorly in what is usually one of the most challenging sections in the exam with an average pass mark of 59.17%, a drop of 7 percentage points over that registered in the November 2018 session (66.8%). Candidates who came up with plausible lexical options gained marks. Candidates who read regularly and broaden their range of collocation and commonly used phrases would generally fare well in this section.

Part 2 Section D – Sentence Transformation

Candidates registered a good 79.17% average pass mark, which was much higher than the previous session which reached 71.6%. Marks were lost mostly due to awkward sentence construction, misspelt words, 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 satisfactory with a 77% pass mark, identical to the candidate performance in the past examination session. A number of essays were written exceptionally well. In some of the weaker essays, some of the candidates appeared to have less of a natural flair of expression with some awkward expression and errors with collocation.

Moreover, there were recurrent instances where marks were deducted for poor spelling, awkward sentence construction, a lack of idiomatic language and poor text cohesion.

Candidates are advised to revise their writing and make any necessary corrections before handing the paper in. Even though candidates are writing under examination conditions, they should still pay some attention to presentation of their work.

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, examiners feel, continues to arise from the fact that candidates fail to recognise its usefulness in and out of class for their learners. This remains an area that trainers should address more forcibly in future TELT Preparation courses. Moreover, 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. Correct punctuation and conventions for paragraphing should also be focused on. Lastly, candidates should be reminded of the importance of 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.