

LOTE: Khmer GA 2: Oral examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall performance of students was very good. Many seemed relaxed, and only a few were really nervous. Some students' successful strategies when interacting with assessors included:

- using body language
- asking for clarification
- explaining ideas
- maintaining eye contact
- taking turns to speak
- developing arguments
- making comments and voicing opinions
- using gap-fillers appropriately.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Part 1 – General conversation

Conversations were of a good to very good standard. The range of responses included clarification, correction, confirmation, and expansion of information. Students responded with short answers as well as elaborating on information, using language appropriate for particular responses.

Part 2 – Report and discussion

Students prepared themselves with appropriate and interesting topics. Students who were confident about the subject of the report were able to present ideas and arguments very well. However, some reports on the Khmer traditions should have contained ideas and opinions. The purpose of the task was to present a report topic and express ideas about it during the discussion. Some reports were more like folktales (i.e. the report told a tale but did not reach a conclusion for the task). Such reports did not present discussion or opinion. In most cases, the language used for the reports was appropriate and relevant to the topic. Many students did not have first-hand experience of the cultural event used as the subject for their report.

Some successful topics for the reports were:

- asylum seekers
- food and health
- non-compulsory sport curriculum
- deforestation
- effect of cigarette smoking.

Situational role-play

Most students chose situation two for the task. Although there were some students who did not appear to be fully prepared, most students interacted well and presented well-developed arguments. Generally, students performed well in the task.

All parts of the task

It is necessary for students to be familiar with Khmer words for terms they use everyday in English such as telephone, TV and subjects at school. Accuracy in the meaning of words must be stressed.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Conversation, report and discussion

The written examination consists of three separate papers. Student responses are assessed against a number of criteria, which are stated on the back cover of each examination booklet. It is most important that teachers discuss these criteria with students and explain what they mean.

Most students performed well and were able to convey information confidently and effectively. A variety of interesting topics were chosen, and students prepared themselves well. Most students were able to discuss their ideas clearly, used a broad range of vocabulary and scored well against the criterion of 'cultural appropriateness'.

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

Part A – Tasks on the two spoken passages

Most students scored well in this part of the examination, and their listening skills were of a high standard.

Part B – Task drawing on both passages

In general students performed satisfactorily in this task. Responses showed an understanding of the topic and students generally selected appropriate information. Most students handled the requirements of the discourse form satisfactorily, although a few students had difficulties with the concept of an article for a travel magazine. A small number of students included information that was not in the passages. Some had difficulties with spelling certain words. Most students demonstrated effective skills in organising and sequencing information. However, some students had difficulty putting the information into their own words.

Weaknesses in the areas of punctuation and sentence structure were common. Some sentences were too long, while others were too short.

Paper 2

Part A – Writing in Khmer

There were several outstanding responses. Weaknesses were generally related to spelling and sentence structure, punctuation, and sequencing of ideas. Some students wrote sentences that were lengthy and vague. Students are reminded that they must respond to the topic chosen and the most successful write well-structured responses with clear and logical conclusions.

Part B – Reorganising written information

Most students managed the requirements of the discourse form well, although some responses were too long, but there were some responses of a very high standard. A number of students had difficulty selecting and then using relevant information and some copied sentences straight from the texts instead of demonstrating a degree of independence from the original wording. A few problems were experienced with spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

A number of responses were outstanding, with the most successful addressing the whole question, avoiding generalisations, and supporting all statements with examples from the texts studied. They drew conclusions about the themes of the works that were directly relevant to the question.

Some students did not make adequate reference to texts studied. Responses must be based on works studied, and references to the works must be used to support all statements and conclusions. Students are expected to demonstrate 'understanding and appreciation of the works' in their responses, as well as 'depth of treatment'. The content of their responses must be 'relevant to the demands of the task'. That is, all aspects of the question must be answered. Some students just retold a part of the story without drawing any conclusions or making any links between the works they had studied and the question they were responding to. Others retold the stories and gave personal opinions on the question, without linking the two. Students are reminded that they must provide evidence of preparation and research by showing how the theme that the question relates to is illustrated in the resources studied.

Many students still have difficulties writing in the style of the discourse form required as some responses lacked an introduction or a conclusion. The most successful responses demonstrated a very high level of understanding and appreciation of the works studied, and they drew all key statements together in a clear, coherent conclusion.

Not all students demonstrated a satisfactory level of English writing skills. There were many difficulties with both structure and expression, with limited use of paragraphs and punctuation. However, most students used a satisfactory to wide range of vocabulary and listed resources referred to in the 'resources used' box.