



Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In Biblical Hebrew (1BH0)  
Paper 02

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This was the second year of examining the new Biblical Hebrew specification, and the first year of examination of a new set of Set Texts. This report will attempt to give specific feedback and guidance related to candidates' performance on this year's paper. For general information about the new specification, centres and candidates are directed to the Specification itself and to last year's Examiner's Report.

**Q01 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A1, 1 mark)**

A surprising number of candidates struggled with this simple comprehension question; many candidates were confused by the words 'בְּנֵי קָדָם' in the verse and thought that the answer was 'east'.

**Q02 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A1, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q03 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A1, 2 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q04 (AO2 Grammar, Passage A1, 2 marks)** Generally well answered, although a surprising number of candidates thought that the root for 4(a) was הִכָּה rather than נָכָה. Additionally, centres should be aware that, as detailed in the Specification, Hebrew must be written using the 'block' system. Answers written in Hebrew script were not credited.

**Q05 (AO3, 4 marks)** This was generally well answered with most candidates getting 2 or 3 marks. Candidates were awarded a mark for giving a translation and then another mark for any root or explanation thereof.

**Q06 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A2, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q07 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A2, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q08 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A2, 2 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q09 (AO2 Grammar, Passage A2, 2 marks)**

A surprising number of candidates did not appear to know what an infinitive construct is, some listed nouns in the construct form. A large number of candidates also erroneously listed 'לְבַלְתִּי' as an infinitive construct.

**Q10 (AO3, Passage A2, 4 marks)**

This challenging question required candidates to explain a complex metaphorical phrase and attracted a range of responses. As mentioned in the question, marks were not awarded for translation. (The command word 'Examine' as well as the question's position at the end of a section makes this clear). Many candidates were aware that Gideon was favourably comparing the Ephraimites to his own family and were awarded two marks. In order to get the full 4 marks, candidates needed to give more detailed explanation e.g. of עוֹלֵלוֹת as the lone grapes after a harvest, or a general linguistic comment about the phrase e.g. noting that the phrase was a rhetorical question. Full details are available in the Mark Scheme.

**Q11 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A3, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q12 (AO2 Comprehension, Passage A3, 2 marks)**

Generally well answered, although some candidates lost marks for writing 'killed all his brothers' without specifying how many. As the number (70) was in the line referred to in the question, responses without that number were not given credit as per the Mark Scheme.

**Q13 (A02 Grammar, Passage A3, 2 marks)**

A surprising number of candidates thought that נִיַּל was in the Nifal conjugation.

**Q14 (A03, Passage A3, 3 marks)**

This question attracted a range of responses. It should be noted that no mark was awarded for 'he killed his brothers'. This is because the question asked how Abimelech got his support. Killing people was not how he got support but how he got rid of opposition therefore no mark was awarded.

**Q15 (A03, Passage A3, 2 marks)**

Most candidates wrote that Abimelech killed his brothers in order to rule alone and were awarded one mark. The second mark required some more background explanation e.g. that the brothers originally wanted to rule together and Abimelech disagreed with this, or Abimelech's jealousy/inferiority due to his being the son of a concubine.

**Q16 (A02 Translation, Passage A4, 5 marks)**

This translation question attracted a range of responses, as expected. It is worth noting that many candidates got the tense wrong in the first sentence, translating as a past rather than a future, which was counted as a major error.

**Q17 (A03, Extended Response, Passage A5, 9 marks)**

Predictably, this 9 mark essay question attracted a range of responses. As has been mentioned previously, in order to meet the top band (7, 8 or 9 marks) candidates must show 4 examples of linguistic technique which focus on both bullet points in the question. These should be explained in terms of their effect on the reader. Candidates are not required to quote from the text, but if they do, then quotes need to be translated or credit will not be given.

Candidates who merely paraphrased the text were awarded a maximum of 3 marks.

Centres are referred to the Examiner's Report from 2022 which gives greater general information about how this question (and its parallel, question 36) is marked.

Regarding this specific question, a surprising number of candidates assumed incorrectly that נִישְׁבְּרוּ is a Piel intensive form (which it is not).

Additionally, there were candidates who linked the Shofar blasts to those at Mount Sinai. As this was a linguistic question, this was irrelevant and given no credit.

**Q18 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B1, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q19 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B1, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q20 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B1, 2 marks)**

Generally well answered, although some candidates did mention things that Shimi had done that were not in the text. These responses were not given credit, as the 'State' command word, the line references and the question's position within the section identified this as a comprehension question.

There were also many candidates who wrote that 'Shimi pressured David not to kill him'. As this is not in the lines referred to in the text (the text says that 'I (David) swore to him..') it was not given credit.

**Q21 (A02 Grammar, Passage B1, 2 marks)**

A surprising number of candidates struggled with this question. Many candidates wrote the grammatical terms in Hebrew, which, as detailed in the Specification, were not awarded marks.

**Q22 (A03, Passage B1, 4 marks)**

This 4-mark question, requiring the explanation of a complex phrase, attracted a range of responses. Some candidates merely translated the phrase, which was not given credit. Many candidates cited the methods in which Joab killed Abner and Amasa, and linked them back to the phrase 'the sword was attached loosely to **his belt**' etc. There were some incorrect explanations e.g. 'the blood dripped on to Joab's shoes and belt' 'Joab bent down to tie his shoelaces (it was Abner when demonstrating to Joab)' etc.

Please see the Mark Scheme for greater detail into how marks were awarded for this question.

**Q23 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B2, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q24 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B2, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q26 (A02 Grammar, Passage B2, 2 marks)**

(a) Very few candidates knew the function of the ם in םלש, most assuming that it meant 'me'.

(b) Candidates needed to note that the word is Hifil. Answers like 'to replace the vav' or 'vav and yud are interchangeable' or 'it is an ayin-vav word' without reference to Hifil were not given credit.

**Q27 (A03, Passage B2, 2 marks)**

A surprising number of candidates did not know that this phrase is the introduction to an oath. Many candidates who did get that mark lost the second mark for just translating the phrase. For the second mark, candidates had to explain it in context i.e. that the one making the oath was saying that dire consequences would befall him if he did not keep his word.

**Q28 (A03, Passage B2 3 marks)**

Generally well answered.

**Q29 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B3, 1 mark)**

A surprising number of candidates did not know the location of Tyre. Centres/candidates are reminded that candidates are required to know the locations of places referred to in the Set Texts.

**Q30 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B3, 1 mark)** Generally well answered.

**Q31 (A02 Comprehension, Passage B3, 2 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q32 (A02 Grammar, Passage B2, 2 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q33 (A03, Passage B2, 2 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q34 (A03, Passage B2, 2 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q35 (A02 Translation, Passage A4, 5 marks)** Generally well answered.

**Q36 (A03, Extended Response, Passage A5, 9 marks)**

Points focusing on parts of the passage other than Solomon's prayer such as the opening, or G-D's words, were not given credit. Some students misunderstood the text e.g. stating that G-D had dealt with David 'with truth...' while it was actually David's following G-D.

### **Q37 Synoptic Assessment (AO2/AO3, Extended Response, 12 marks)**

Many candidates offered very simplistic analysis 'leaders had rebels' 'rebels were killed'. These responses were generally awarded marks in the top of the second band or the bottom of the third band depending on the content.

Many candidates mentioned episodes within the set texts that were not to do with rebellion but with general rulership e.g., Shlomo's alliance with Hiram, Shlomo's wisdom in dealing with the two women. Where these were clearly connected to the topic e.g., where the analysis focused on wisdom as preventative of rebellion marks were awarded.

There were some candidates who did not appear to know what was meant by rebellion, instead citing any examples of conflict, or of peace. Again, unless specifically linked to rebellion, these were not given credit.

A significant minority of candidates simply described instances of rebellion in the texts, without comparing, contrasting, or analysing them. These were awarded a maximum of 6 marks as 6 out of the 12 marks are given for analysis.

One feature of some otherwise excellent essays was the absence of contrast; candidates just offered comparisons and analysis. These typically scored at the top of the third band if other requirements were fulfilled. As mentioned last year, for essays to be considered for the top band, they must include at least 2 comparisons and 2 contrasts, and analysis.

It should also be noted that credit cannot be given for episodes outside of the Set Texts e.g., Absalom's rebellion.

### **Conclusion:**

- Comprehension questions were generally well answered.
- Grammar questions were not well answered.
- In both the Comprehension and Grammar questions, a significant minority of candidates lost marks because they had written proper nouns and grammatical terms in Hebrew. Centres and candidates should be reminded that Hebrew is only permitted to be used for individual letters and quotes when needed (and for the term בגדכפת) as detailed in the Specification. Hebrew must also be written using the 'block' system. Centres are referred to the Specification for further details.
- Translation questions were well answered.
- The short answer AO3 questions were generally answered well.
- Many candidates answered the AO3 Extended Response Questions (Q17 and Q36) by describing what was happening in the text. These questions require candidates to look primarily at the language; in order to be awarded high marks candidates need to be able to identify language techniques and describe their effect on the reader or on the characters within the text.
- The Synoptic Element (Q35) was fairly well answered; however, candidates should take care to provide analytical rather than moral conclusions and to limit their comparison and contrast to the subject given (in this case 'Honesty and Deception') and to examples within the Set Texts.

