

Examiners' Report

Summer 2013

PLSC English (LEH01/01)
Year 9 Achievement Test

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General Comments

Overall the exam was accessible and successful. Centres will need to teach students how to respond successfully to some of these tasks but there was some evidence of student engagement.

Better students were able to engage fully with both texts and respond appropriately. In their writing they produced lively responses which were well controlled and accurate. Weaker students sometimes struggled to understand the passages. Their writing lacked coherence and the use of idiomatic English.

There were some questions left unanswered. Sometimes this was the later ones suggesting students had run out of time. This limited students' overall achievement.

Section A (Q1-31) Reading

Q1-Q15 were fairly straightforward questions testing the students' ability to read and retrieve relevant information from the texts.

The majority of the students were able to identify the correct response to Qs 1-3 although some found Q4 more challenging.

Some students used the whole sentence in response to Q2 instead of a short phrase which was allowed this time but centres should teach students how to select a short phrase.

Some students lost the mark for Q5 because they omitted any sense of 'danger'.

Very few students were able to answer Q6 successfully and many did not attempt it.

Many students did not successfully answer Q7: most said it was a conclusion.

Q8 was generally correctly answered and so was Q9. Where students did not achieve on Q9, it was because they had not read the instructions correctly.

Q10 and Q11 were challenging for a lot of students. Responses to Q10 showed that many students had difficulty linking the ideas of 'soldier' and attack, relying more on how there were a lot of them that marched together. Quite a lot of students were able to identify one reason in response to Q11 (usually to emphasise the noise) but most failed to make another point.

Very few students were able to correctly identify the writer's feeling for Q12, the majority identifying 'irritation'.

Q13, Q14 and Q15 were generally answered correctly.

Q16: There were a reasonable number of students who developed a comparison of both texts across the whole answer. Many responses had too much focus on summarising the texts. A few did just identify features without any comparison at all. Weaker students saw the texts as being very similar and were unable to understand the purpose of text B. Some saw text B as primarily advising the reader on how to protect themselves from insects. It was pleasing to see in more successful responses the evidence that students had been taught how to respond to this type of question.

Q17 – Q21 were generally answered correctly but some did not give sufficient information for Q18 and just said 'Raghu'. For Q21 most scored 1 mark but did not find a second point – identifying either the first or third bullet points but not both.

Q22 was mostly answered correctly although, again, some students used a whole sentence instead of a phrase.

Some students correctly answered Q23 but there were some students who simply said 'to show he is asking questions' or focused on how the questions affect the reader.

In response to Q24 many students underlined far too much and were not rewarded – the question clearly asked for a phrase.

Q25 produced some correct responses but there were a number of students who struggled to respond successfully.

Q26 and Q27 were mostly answered correctly.

Many students struggled to respond appropriately to Q28 simply using quotations from the text without explanation rather than focusing on the requirements of the question. Some students did manage to make the point about Ravi feeling forgotten or less important than the others.

Most students responded successfully to Q29 and Q30. A surprising number correctly identified the word 'insignificance'.

Q31 produced a range of responses with some students simply providing quotations from the text with no other explanation. Better students were able to identify the changing feelings and how the writer's language shows this. However the comments on the writer's use of language were often not very developed.

Section B (Q32 – Q35) Grammar and Punctuation.

Q32 was often answered correctly. Those who did not do so commonly used too many commas or did not know what a colon was.

Q33 had a good number of correct responses. Common errors were to confuse apostrophes with inverted commas or to use apostrophes on too many words, especially those ending in 's'.

Generally students were able to use suitable prepositions in response to Q34(b) and Q34(c) but many struggled to find the correct answer to Q34(a).

Q35 proved challenging for some students. It was clear that some students did not understand the term 'embedded phrase' and where they understood the instruction in Q35(b) they often struggled to use appropriate punctuation or had problems with grammar. Very few students correctly identified the three errors in Q35(c) and the majority only correctly identified 'were'. Hardly any students identified 'fewer'. Some students seemed to interpret the task as being 're-write the sentences'.

Section C (Q36) Writing

This question is a writing task and students are assessed on their skills in writing appropriately and accurately in a range of forms and with an awareness of audience and purpose.

It was rare to see evidence of students planning their response to this question.

Form, Communication and Purpose

Very few students achieved higher than level 5. Better answers used sentence structures for effect, such as engaging opening sentences, a mix of complex and simple sentences and a range of punctuation such as exclamation marks for effect. Weaker responses were often similar to the third text in content and written with weak language controls. Vocabulary was generally sound. Paragraphs were normally correct although some students did not use them.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Many students demonstrated accuracy across their chosen range of spelling and punctuation however in some responses the range of sentence structures was not varied sufficiently. Spelling was fairly accurate, although common errors included 'i before e' rule words, 'necessary' and common homophones. 'I' was not always capitalised and some missed commas round clauses and in lists. Language controls were not always secure and some students had problems with grammar, sentence structure and idiomatic English.

Summary

Most successful students:

- read the texts with engagement
- selected relevant points in response to the reading questions
- used their own words in response to questions that required them
- engaged the reader with creative writing that was well structured and developed
- used ambitious vocabulary
- wrote with accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Least successful students:

- did not engage fully with the texts
- did not find enough relevant points in response to the reading questions
- did not attempt to use their own words in response to questions that required them
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas in their creative writing
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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