

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Biblical Hebrew (J196)

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A201/01 Language

Question 1 (a):

This question is designed to test candidates' ability to translate with accuracy all the various components of individual words. This question was well answered by most candidates. Here are the most common errors:

וַיָּשָׁב: sometimes confused with **וַיָּשָׁב**. As these two verb roots are so common and very similar, pupils should spend time learning to differentiate between them.

וַיָּנוּסוּ: often translated as 'they travelled'; possibly confused with **וַיִּסְעוּ**. This was not accepted.

וַיָּגֵלוּ: This verb root is not all that common, but it is on the recommended list.

וַהֲוֹצִיאֵנוּ: Many candidates recognised the verb, but did not appreciate the imperative form.

Question 1 (b):

For this translation question, teachers are reminded that they should train their pupils to translate the passages to make sense in English. An example was

וַיַּעַל בְּרֵאשִׁיטָה יוֹאָב בֶּן צְרוּיָה which some translated as 'He went up first, Yoav son of Zeruyah', rather than 'Yoav son of Zeruya went up first'. This is a relatively straightforward sentence structure, and yet many candidates made this error.

Examiners were impressed that most candidates understood the use of the phrase

וְעַצְמֵךְ וּבִשְׂרָרְךָ אֲנַחְנוּ – commonly translated as 'we are your flesh and blood'.

Many candidates very correctly understood that **לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת דָּוִד** means 'to harm David'.

Rarely translated correctly was **וַיִּפְשְׁטוּ** – 'they spread out'.

Question 2:

(b) **וְלָמָּה מְצָאָתָנוּ כָּל זֹאת** was frequently understood to mean – 'why have we found all this?', rather than 'why has all this found / happened to us?'

(d) i – ii: Examiners are pleased to note that most candidates understood what was required in this question, and were able to justify their opinions by providing proof from the text.

(e) **וְהִכִּיתָ אֶת מִדְיָן כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד**: Some understood this to mean: 'We will fight Midian together / as one'. Accurate referencing of verbs is important, **וְהִכִּיתָ** is singular: 'you will strike'.

(f) i: **אַל נָא תִּמּוּשׁ מִזֶּה** was frequently translated as: 'don't move from this until I return...'. This phrase does not make sense. Candidates should be taught to make sense in English of what they are writing, not just to translate words, i.e. do not move from this [place] = do not move from here.

(g) The verb roots **יָשָׁב** and **שָׁוַב** were often confused – 'I will return until you return'.

(h) There were many ways to earn four marks in this question, and most candidates will have achieved 3 or 4 of the available marks. Nevertheless, there were some common errors worthy of note:

ויעש גדי עזים was mostly translated as 'he made a goat'. This response did not earn a mark. Candidates at GCSE level should understand that in this context the verb means 'he prepared'.

ואיפת קמה was often translated as 'he baked flour', with only a minority of candidates noting 'an ephah / measure of flour'.

מצות must be translated as 'unleavened bread / crackers/ flat bread', not simply transliterated as 'matzos'.

שם: Very surprisingly, many candidates mistook **שם** for **שם** – 'the meat there in the basket'. This is quite a basic error at GCSE level, and candidates should be taught to take as much time as necessary to read each word carefully; the examination is timed to allow for this.

(j) ii: **ואישלח את** was almost always translated as 'he sent...' This did not receive a mark. Candidates were expected to recognise the use of this phrase to mean 'he stretched out his hand'. Training candidates to recognise idiomatic use of the language is important.

(l) and (m): These grammar questions were really well answered overall.

(q) i: The Hif'il form eluded many candidates, with a number mistaking the root **יסף** for **אסף**.

(q) ii: Whilst most candidates correctly noted the root **עלה**, the irregular *Kal* form was frequently taken to be *Hif'il*.

A202/01 Literature

As a general comment for answering questions and for future reference, candidates are reminded that answers must be written in English except for individual Hebrew letters or a verbal root used in responses to grammar questions, e.g. ה interrogative, root – עלה. Transliterations of Hebrew names and places are as acceptable as their Anglicized equivalents, e.g. Yehoshua.

Question 1

- (a) – (b) These were well answered by most candidates.
- (c) Many candidates scored at least three marks. Some confused ביני ובינך with 'my son and your sons'.
- (d) About half of the candidate body received two marks; however many confused the monument (מצבה) with the pile of stones (גל) and entered into long-winded irrelevant answers.
- (e) Well answered.
- (f) About a third of candidates did not realise Laban was the grandson of Nahor. Although there were other correct answers such as 'brother-in-law', '(Isaac)'s uncle', no credit was given as this is not their closest relationship.
- (g) Many candidates concentrated on the word אלהי ; this was not part of the question. No credit was given for 'the father of Nachor and Abraham'.
- (h) Most answers were correct; some wrote reflexive or passive but these were not correct in this instance. In addition, many candidates did not understand that the question required them to justify the use of the *binyan*, rather than prove from the pointing what *binyan* was used. Candidates should be trained to recognise this question style and answer appropriately.
- (i) (i) Almost everyone gained a mark for this question.
- (i) (ii) Many candidates wrote 'Piel middle root letter'. If this were the case the vowel before would be a short one not a *sheva*. Some candidates also wrote 'weak at the beginning of a syllable' – this is not correct as the rule only applies when the preceding syllable is closed. Others just wrote *begad kefat*, which is an incomplete response.
- (j) Almost all scored well on this question.
- (k) (i) Most scored two marks but many translated 'the angels of G-d met him' as 'he met the angels of G-d'. This was considered a minor mistake. Others failed to realise that ראו means 'he saw them'.
- (k) (ii) Most answers were correct: either dual form or pausal form. Those who wrote 'plural' saying that the minimum plural is 'two' did not get the mark as they failed to recognise the dual plural form.
- (l) The examiners were looking for two points of contrast of Laban's behaviour before and during this encounter with Jacob. Some candidates just wrote a few points about Laban's previous or current behaviour, which could gain a maximum of only two marks.

Question 2

- (a) (i) This was answered correctly by practically all candidates. However some did not read the question carefully enough and only wrote one half of the answer.
- (a) (ii) Most answers were correct. Some mistakenly said אלה referred to Jacob's family.
- (b) (i) Candidates handled this passage well. The vast majority of mistakes involved the phrases אוֹלֵי יִשָּׂא פְּנֵי , where the literal translation did not make sense, and וְתֵעָבֵר הַמִּנְחָה , which some translated as 'and you passed the present'.
- (b) (ii) Most scored zero for this question.
- (c) Most scored well on this question. However many candidates did not understand that they were being asked to justify the translation of the root rather than the given words. Candidates who explained the structure of the given words were awarded only one mark.
- (d) (i) and (ii) were answered very well by virtually the entire candidature.
- (d) (iii) Some answers were vague with regard to the exact part of the body ('thigh', 'sinew' etc.) and some replies were so descriptive of the current Jewish practice regarding the porging process that they forgot to add that the prohibition remains to this day.
- (e) (i) and (ii) were answered very well by virtually the entire candidature.
- (f) At least a third of candidates wrongly thought וּשְׂאֵלָךְ was *Piel*.
- (g) Most answered this correctly. 'Additional nun' was accepted.
- (h) At least one mark was gained by virtually the entire candidature.
- (i) Most scored the maximum on this question. Candidates should be advised for the future that they should take their answers from the given passage unless the question specifies that they may refer to elsewhere in the set text.

Question 3

- (a) (i) Almost all answers were correct.
- (a) (ii) Most gave the correct answer; some put Ai, which is wrong.
- (b) Well answered by almost all candidates.
- (c) Some very good free-flowing translations were offered, although some translated תִּאֲסַפּוּ as a passive verb: 'shall be gathered'.
- (d) Well answered by virtually all candidates.
- (e) (i) Some were confused about who were risking their lives for whom.
- (e) (ii) About half the scripts failed to mention 'fortification wall' or 'thick wall', which was the purpose of the question. It was not enough to write 'her house was in the wall' as that was obvious from the verse.
- (e) (iii) Some thought this phrase meant that the spies would not be responsible for any of Rahab's family who ventured out of the house. This was not the correct answer, as this was the subject of the start of the verse. What was required was the corollary, i.e. 'we will be responsible for anyone who stays indoors that is harmed'.
- (f) (i) Most recognised the root and conjugation.
- (f) (ii) About half thought נִמְגוּ was *Kal* of נִמַּג.
- (g) About two thirds of candidates gave a correct answer. The examiners accepted the *Hatam Sofer's* answer that two of the dots from ךְּ were needed for the extra *Yud* added to Joshua's name causing the word ךָּ to be written with a *hiriq*.

- (h) Most candidates scored at least two marks but in many cases candidates merely wrote the flip-side of the previous answer, e.g. 'the spies assure Rahab they will save her family'; 'Rahab is assured by the spies her family will be saved'. This was only worth one mark.

Question 4

- (a) Candidates had to mention 'Jericho' to receive the second mark.
- (b) Well answered.
- (c) There were many good translations. The word תיגע was not always interpreted correctly.
- (d) (i) and (ii) Most responded well to this question.
- (e) Well answered. Students are advised to use line references.
- (f) (i) and (ii) and (g) were well answered by most candidates.
- (h) Some had innovative answers and were awarded marks accordingly. Others had no idea what an idiom was. Answers written in Hebrew alone were awarded no credit – the question paper clearly states that answers should be written in English.
- (i) Most scripts had two or three correct answers. However many candidates merely provided three three-letter roots and were not given credit. צוית' was marked right; it is, after all, a verb with I as its middle root letter.
- (j) Well answered.

Question 5

- (a) Almost all answered this correctly.
- (b) (i) Most answered well but some candidates translated בבית דוד as 'in the house of David' as opposed to 'against ...'.
- (b) (ii) Only about one third got this right. No credit was given for translating the phrase, as the question clearly states 'explain'.
- (c) (i) Almost all responses were correct.
- (d) Surprisingly, about only half of the candidates answered this correctly. Some thought Bethel was in Judah; others thought it was in the far north of Israel. Some did not read the question carefully and wrote that Bethel was in the Northern Kingdom – this was stated in the question.
- (e) Many scripts contained three correct answers. Very few mentioned the use of the prophetic present and others just churned out the points of the prophecy (for which they gained only one mark)
- (f) Well answered.
- (g) Well answered.
- (h) (i) On the whole, most translations were good. Some wrote 'called' for ונקרע.
- (h) (ii) A substantial number of candidates wrote 'kal'.
- (i) Well answered.
- (j) The correct answer was 'it can be either masculine or feminine'. Those who replied 'is usually feminine but here is masculine' only received one mark. Some had no idea what gender meant.

- (k)** Most candidates failed to realise that this was a general question discussing the relationship between kings and prophets, not an invitation to rewrite the story of the Man of G-d and Jeroboam as given in the passage. Therefore many responses were awarded only one mark.

Question 6

- (a)** Most candidates correctly answered 'Aviyah, son of Jeroboam'. Some wrote 'Man of G-d' or 'Jeroboam'; both answers are wrong.
- (b) (i)** A large number of answers underscored on one or more of the following: the first few verbs were translated in the past, ונתש and וזרם were not correctly interpreted, and failure to realise that the phrase ונתן את ישראל is elliptical.
- (b) (ii)** Most scripts including at least one of the answers in the Mark Scheme; some wrote the Jordan or even the Nile.
- (c) (i) and (ii)** The vast majority gained both marks; however, for **(ii)**, quite a few candidates wrote '41', which was Rehoboam's age, not the length of his reign.
- (d)** Well answered.
- (e)** Well answered.
- (f)** About 50% of candidates received both marks for this question.
- (g) (i) and (ii)** Very few knew the root גגן yet still recognised the Preformative *Mem*. Many candidates were not aware that, when asked for a derivation, they needed to give a root – centres should train their students to recognise key words and answer accordingly.
- (h)** Most candidates recognised the *vav* as a conjunctive, not conversive.
- (i)** Well answered.
- (j)** There was a healthy variety of acceptable responses to this question.

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