

GCSE

Biblical Hebrew

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J196**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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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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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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A201/01 Language

General Comments:

In order to do well, candidates should be encouraged to translate into flowing, 'sensible' English. Many candidates translate word for word, or half phrases, without considering the overall flow of the text. This results in sentences that are disjointed, and often unintelligible.

Examiners would like to warn against the use of archaic English in translation. Candidates should be encouraged to translate into the English language with which they are familiar. This would certainly aid their comprehension of the material. Words such as 'smote', 'dwell', 'sojourn' amongst others are not used in modern day speech. It is clear from the manner in which some candidates use these words that they do not fully comprehend the meaning of these words.

Comments on Individual Questions:

The following were some of the more common errors. Teachers are advised that focus on these points during teaching will help raise achievement in the examination.

Question 1

(a)

בָּה: In some contexts this may be translated as 'in her'. In this context, the correct translation is 'in it'. Candidates should be encouraged to refer to the context to achieve accurate translation.

(b) (i), (ii) and (iii)

וַיִּפְקֹד was taken by a number of candidates to mean 'he remembered them'. Although this verb can have that meaning, reference to numbers in the context should guide candidates to understand that 'counting' is the correct action. Again, reference to context will have helped candidates translate accurately.

מֶלֶךְ לְמַלְכָה / וְאַמְלִיךְ עַלֵּיכֶם מֶלֶךְ: It is important to highlight the hif'il meaning of the verb **מֶלֶךְ**, i.e. to 'crown a king'. Many candidates incorrectly wrote 'anoint a king'. In addition, candidates would benefit from being taught the differences between a kingdom and a kingship, **מֶלֶכְתָה** being the latter.

יָמַת: Many candidates were not able to differentiate between the various conjugations of this verb. **יָמַת** 'he will be put to death', was frequently translated as 'he will die'. This verb root is fairly common throughout Scripture, and so candidates would benefit from being taught to understand the effect the conjugation has on the meaning.

זָקַנְתִּי וְשָׁבָתִי: This was generally incorrectly translated either as 'I have become old and satisfied', or as 'I have become old and returned'.

Question 2

General comment

The examiners were pleased to note that the grammar questions through this paper were, overall, very well answered. The ability to recognise and appreciate grammatical features is an essential element of this subject.

Notes on specific parts of this question

- (g) In order to answer this question successfully, candidates needed to know that **פָּרִים** are bulls, not cows and to understand that **צֵדִים** in this context refers to 'wood', and not to 'trees'.
- (j) This question required the candidates to appreciate the use of imperatives, and how this affects the tone of the conversation. This question was well answered.
- (o) In this passage the following verbs were frequently not recognised: **מָאֹסֶל**, **וַיִּמְרָא**, and **מָאֹסֶל**.

A202/01 Literature

Question 1

- (a) This was generally well answered.
- (b) There were few problems with this question although some translated ‘from the east’ as opposed to ‘from the south’.
- (c) (i) (ii) and (iii) were all ably answered.
- (d) In a number of scripts, candidates went into lengthy explanations about Lot’s claim to the current ownership of the land but could only be awarded two out of four marks; the question clearly stated ‘give any two reasons’.
- (e) This was generally well answered. Some translated בַּאכְה צָעַר as ‘in Acha Zoar’ which is, of course, incorrect.
- (f) This was generally very well answered. Many responses had more than enough information.
- (g) Most answered this well.
- (h) Many candidates wrote ‘command and past’. Essentially this was a grammatical question and the answer was ‘imperative / command and infinitive construct’. Credit was given for correct translation provided there was some recognition of the Niphal, either as passive or reflexive.
- (i) This was generally well answered.
- (j) This was also generally well answered.
- (k) Most candidates responded well although the question did not ask for translated quotes from the text e.g. Lot saw the Jordan Plain, but for information one can deduce from the passage about Lot e.g. he was happy to settle in a wicked city.

Question 2

- (a) (i) and (ii) were ably answered.
- (b) (i) Most candidates' responses were very good. Some common mistakes occurred with 'אישה' 'a wife' and 'her husband', 'אישה חמת' translated as 'my anger' (חמת) and the Piel verb 'ותענה' as 'she answered her' (as in the Kal). was occasionally mistranslated as 'to live with Abram' rather than 'of Abram's living'.
(ii) A small number of candidates scored a mark on this question, which required an answer of for his benefit / as a wife only.
- (c) This was very well answered.
- (d) Again, this was very well answered.
- (e) (i) and (ii) A number of scripts gave the answer 'how can one call to a well' or 'the Lamed of לברך is superfluous'. These were marked as incorrect since there are many references in Tanach to people giving names to places and ... ויקרא ל... is the standard phraseology.

Some pointed out correctly that the well (ברך) was earlier referred to as עין (spring). This was given credit too.

- (f) (i) (ii) and (iii) were asking for a literary appreciation of the phrases so credit was given for literal and a more detailed explanation of the phrase. Several candidates explained in (i) that the angel was trying to engage Hagar in conversation, but this was not what the question required.
- (g) (i) and (ii) were well answered but in (iii) a large number of scripts just had 'infinitive construct'. This was an incomplete answer as this נ is almost specifically a feature of the Pé-Yud (I - Yud) verb.
- (h) Similarly those who just wrote 'Niphal' gained no mark. There also had to be mention of either 'missing נ' or 'future'.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates correctly answered ‘Palti’. Some wrote ‘David’, ‘Avner’ and even ‘Boaz’.
- (b) This was well answered. Some candidates said incorrectly that Avner made a feast for David.
- (c) Although many candidates said that the current king Ishboshet was from Benjamin, not all of them mentioned that it therefore required a greater effort to persuade the tribe of Benjamin to support David.
- (d) On the whole this was well answered. Some translated לפתח (‘to open you up’) as ‘to open you up’ and many slipped up with ושבו אליו and wrote ‘and he returned’ which was considered a minor mistake.
- (e) Very few candidates actually wrote the verbal root שלח and only gained one mark for ‘casually’, ‘quietly’ etc. It seemed that they did not understand ‘to justify’. ‘Peacefully’ was accepted.
- (f) This was well answered.
- (g) Some wrote וישלח without vowels or line reference and could not be rewarded as the word וישלח in the Kal also appeared in the passage. Some were fooled by the *dagesh* in the middle root letter. (This is due to the בגד כפת rule – not because it is Piel.)
- (h) (i) and (ii) were generally answered well.
- (i) There were many good responses here.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates had no idea where the land of the Plishtim was.
- (b) This was answered well by most candidates. There were a variety of points to draw upon.
- (c) This was generally well answered.
- (d) (i) On the whole, this was well answered. Some did not know the meaning of לְעֹזָר and wrote 'to Azor'.
(ii) Candidates who wrote 'there is a נ prefix' in this part only scored one mark. This is not an explanation why the word is feminine but merely a gender indicator.
- (e) This was very ably answered; one had to write at the very least 'a G-dly kindness'.
- (f) This was well answered by most. Some wrote 'David's servant' which is wrong.
- (g) This was generally well answered.
- (h) Many candidates did not seem to understand that this was a question on grammar asking for a question indicator e.g. אִיָּה or a grammatical particle such as the Hé interrogative. Credit was awarded for 'rhetorical and non-rhetorical questions'.
- (i) This was answered well by most candidates.

Question 5

- (a) This background question was answered correctly by many candidates. Others seemed to misread the question and wrote the name of a country such as 'Canaan' or 'Moab'.
- (b) (i) Some wrote 'Avimelech' which is wrong; others wrote 'Alimelech', which was accepted.
(ii) Incorrect answers to this question included 'Chilyon'; 'Machlon and Chilyon'; 'Boaz'!
- (c) Most offered a good translation of the passage. Some translated נערותי as 'lads' not 'girls'.
- (d) An excellent range of answers was given to this question.
- (e) This question was answered well too.
- (f) Some were very vague in their responses writing 'to redeem land' or 'to marry the woman' without mentioning widowhood or land sold due to poverty. Such answers could not be rewarded.
- (g) (i) This was generally well answered
(ii) A large number of candidates thought the Yud was the first person suffix 'me', which was not correct.
- (h) (i) was known by almost all of the candidature.
(ii) proved a little more difficult. The examiners did not accept שות as the root is most definitely שית. Others concocted other roots such as 'isha', 'isht' and even 'shb'.
- (i) Some candidates seemed unsure of what a metaphor was. Others offered worthy responses but these were out of lines 8-14 and could not be credited.

Question 6

- (a) Most sketch maps and answers were good.
- (b) Most candidates scored one mark for mentioning that Ammon wanted their land back from Israel but failed to obtain the second mark for giving a historical explanation such as Sichon, the Emorite taking it first before Israel captured it from them.
- (c) Some struggled to translate ויכנע correctly but if the translation flowed this was only considered a minor mistake.
- (d) (i) This was very well answered by many candidates.
(ii) Some wrote ‘because she was an only daughter’, which could not be rewarded.
- (e) A few candidates translated מימים ימימה as ‘from day to day’, which does not make sense in the context. Candidates are advised to be careful that their answers make sense within the context of the given passage.
- (f) (i) A variety of good answers was given for this question.
(ii) There had to be mention of **both** ‘riding’ **and** ‘colts / horses / donkeys’. Some wrote ‘in cities’ for ערים which is a mistranslation.
- (g) (i) This was very well answered by most candidates.
(ii) This was answered equally well.
- (h) The examiners were looking for the gender of the numbers and if they were absolute or construct. Many candidates wrote ‘cardinal’ and this was given credit.
- (i) Many answered this correctly. Responses of בגד כפת ‘at the beginning of a syllable’ could not be rewarded as it is not a full answer; it had to be ‘after a closed syllable / silent sheva’.
- (j) Here some candidates referred to points from Question 5. These could not be given credit. It has never been the practice to ask on the given passages and expect answers from a different question.

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