

TELT August 2020 Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

8 candidates sat for the TELT August 2020 examination session. 6 candidates were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a 75% pass rate.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

0 Distinction
3 Pass with merit
3 Pass
2 Narrow Fail
0 Fail
0 Unclassified

2. General Remarks

Candidate performance in the August 2020 TELT session was quite good all round except for the usual Part One Section D which again remains TELT exam candidates Achilles' heel. The Writing Section was very satisfactory in this examination session with an average mark of 78%. Many candidates demonstrated a good control of language and familiarity with idiomatic expressions and turn of phrase. In this section, a certain lack of punctuation and, especially, paragraphing were also evident, and this resulted in loss of marks. As noted in previous Examiners' Reports, the presentation of many essays, moreover, left much to be desired.

3. Section Analysis

Part 1 Language Description, Sensitivity and Awareness

Part 1 Section A – Language Terminology

Candidates fared very well in Section A Part 1 where the average pass mark was 85%. Many candidates were well prepared and demonstrated good general knowledge of grammar and language terms.

Part 1 Section B – Primary Stress Identification

Part 1 Section C – Transcription of Phonemic Script into Normal Spelling

Part 1 Section D – Transcription into Phonemic Script

Candidate performance ranged from very good in Section B with an average mark of 79%, to excellent in Section C, average mark of 88%. One or two candidates lost marks for spelling errors in Section C. The fact that candidates can generally recognise primary word stress and decipher words transcribed phonemically was, once again, counterbalanced by a poor performance in Section D with an average mark of 44%. Better preparation for and familiarisation with the IPA and transcription is required for this section. One candidate did not attempt Sections C and D.

Part 1 Section E – Odd One Out

Candidate performance in this section was just satisfactory at an average mark registering 68%. The examiners noticed that many of the candidates did not follow the rubric carefully and did not identify all the three distinct strands: identifying the odd one out; specifying what all the items in bold had in common; and why the odd one out was different to the others. Marks were therefore lost by those candidates who presented only part of the answer.

Two candidates showed a certain lack of preparation for this section by not even hazarding a guess where they were not sure of the answer.

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors

Part 2 Section A was the most challenging of the tasks. The average pass mark for this section was a low 61%. Most errors had to do with failing to identify and correct errors, with a lack of familiarity with certain verb patterns, and with collocation, word formation, and word choice. Many candidates wrongly identified errors in sentences where there were no errors.

Examiners encourage examination preparation trainers to remind candidates to closely follow the rubric in this section: identify the error by underlining the target error and writing ONLY the corrected word(s).

Part 2 Section B – Word Formation

In this section, candidates averaged a satisfactory average mark of 69%. Valuable marks were lost due to poor spelling in a number of instances and illogical word formation.

Part 2 Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion

Performance in this task was adequate with an average mark of 69%. Candidates who came up with plausible lexical options gained marks. Examiners believe that candidates who read regularly and broaden their range of collocation and commonly used phrases would generally stand a better chance of performing well in this section, which exam candidates often find challenging. Examiners encourage examination preparation trainers to emphasise the importance of this concept.

Part 2 Section D – Sentence Transformation

Candidates registered a very good 79% average pass mark. Marks were lost mostly due to errors in phrase construction, word order, collocation and misspelt words.

Part 2 Section E – Writing Section

Performance in this section was very good with an average pass mark of 78%. Many essays were exceptionally well-written; a few others clearly less so in terms of language range and control as well as presentation. Not all candidates produced responses with an acceptable format and register depending on the task type. There were some instances of weakness with and/or complete lack of paragraph structure. As usual, marks were deducted for poor spelling, awkward sentence construction, weak control of structure, and poor text cohesion.

Candidates are advised to plan what to write and revise their written text, making any necessary edits before handing the paper in. Even though candidates are writing under examination conditions, they should still pay some attention to presentation of their work.

4. Recommendations

As with previous reports, more focus and attention to phonology, in particular, the transcription of the phonemic script, is encouraged. The lack of familiarity with the phonemic script remains a matter of concern. Examiners feel that this continues to arise from the fact that candidates fail to recognise its usefulness in and out of class for their learners, especially with a view of reinforcing learner autonomy. This is an area that trainers should strive to address much more forcibly in future TELT Preparation courses.

Moreover, the necessity to avoid instances of incorrect spelling and the use of correct combinations of collocation, need to be impressed upon candidates.

Trainers are encouraged to provide candidates with opportunities to improve their writing skills in the various text types and their respective writing conventions. Correct punctuation and conventions for paragraphing, in particular, should also be explicitly focused on.

Lastly, candidates should be reminded of the importance of regular quality reading practice as this will increase their exposure to modern English and serve as a valuable model for their own writing as well as a means by which candidates broaden their range of lexis and structures, as well as their creativity.