

Korean B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 15	16 - 32	33 - 48	49 - 61	62 - 74	75 - 87	88 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 15	16 - 31	32 - 47	48 - 60	61 - 74	75 - 87	88 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The IA of Korean B (HL) showed a good range in terms of the topics presented and the candidates' level, and most of them were suitable for the given requirements. Also, most of the teachers were supportive during the discussions and their questions for deeper level discussions were generally very good. However, some schools did not exactly follow the formal requirements, especially regarding the time allotments for Part 1 and Part 2. Also, a couple of schools seemed to allow the candidates to read prepared speeches aloud for the oral performances. It would be desirable for all the teachers to make sure that they have read, understood and followed the IB requirements for the task.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive Skills. Most of the work effectively showed a range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Expressions and grammar in sentence structures were mostly accurate and complicated enough for higher level. Intonation of all the candidates was highly natural and the level of authenticity was high in almost every performance. Most candidates expressed complex ideas on the given topics. However, candidates from some schools obviously read aloud prepared speeches rather than talking naturally on the topics. This practice goes against the guidelines for the IA task and disadvantages candidates' performance.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills. In most of the works, conversation flew coherently and candidates expressed ideas very effectively. Teachers usually led the candidates to a discussion on the general topic with appropriate questions. Most candidates showed appropriate level of knowledge on the subject matter during the discussion.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Most of the schools followed the guidelines for the tasks appropriately, but some schools did not exactly follow the format of the task. Several schools did not respect the timing for Parts 1 and 2. Also, candidates from some schools obviously read aloud prepared speeches. According to IB's Examiner Instructions, the candidate is permitted only "15 minutes of preparation time" for brief working notes. "These notes should be used for reference only and must not be read aloud as a prepared speech." Teachers should make sure that they follow the requirements for the task and properly point candidates in the right direction.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The IA of Korean B (SL) showed a good range in terms of the topics presented and the candidates' level. Especially regarding the candidates' level, the range became wider than last year, since there were more candidates without prior knowledge or Korean heritage background this year. Most of the performances were suitable for the given requirements. However, as in HL, some schools did not exactly follow the guidelines regarding the timing for Parts 1 and 2.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive Skills. Most of the works showed an effective range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Expressions and grammar in sentence structures were generally accurate and complicated enough for standard level. In some cases, candidates tended to describe the photos in too much detail instead of discussing the topic as a reaction to the photo, which should be used as a stimulus.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills. In most cases, conversation flew coherently and candidates expressed ideas effectively. Teachers usually led candidates to a discussion on the general topic with appropriate questions.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should remember that candidates should express their ideas and arguments on the chosen topics in both, the individual performance and the interaction with the teacher. Teachers from a couple of schools asked surface-level questions rather than probing more deeply into the candidates' understanding of the culture reflected in the materials or leading to further understanding of the topics. Teachers should ensure that they respect the timing guidelines for each part of the task as well.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

HL WA of Korean B showed a good range in terms of the topics covered and text types, and most of them were suitable for the given requirements. A few schools, however, did not seem to completely understand the nature or the requirements of the WA. For example, some schools chose non-literary works as the original texts to study and some candidates did not meet the minimum length of the tasks.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

Almost all the works showed competent level of language use. That is, the choices of words and expressions were varied and the sentence structures were accurate and complicated

enough for higher level. In terms of the word count, candidates tended to write a lot more than the word limit. However, the current guideline (1 English word = 2.3 Korean characters or 1.3 Korean words) is not yet official, and thus no penalties were applied. Despite this, candidates whose work clearly did not meet the minimum length were disadvantaged as they were unable to fulfil the demands of the task. Schools should ensure that they follow the requirements for the WA and it is recommended that they take advantage of the feedback published in subject reports.

Criterion B: Content

The majority of candidates demonstrated their understanding and knowledge of the main characteristics of the original literature works through different types of creative writing. Candidates from schools that chose non-literary texts simply presented summaries of the original works and candidates whose tasks did not meet the minimum length could not sufficiently develop their thoughts about aspects of the original texts in their WA tasks.

Criterion C: Format

Most of the tasks utilized appropriate creative writing styles, but diaries and letters were the most popular choices among the candidates. Candidates seemed to find these text types easier to handle to express their thoughts and to establish links with the literary work.

Criterion D: Rationale

This was the most challenging part for all candidates. Some candidates did not state the goals of the tasks or did not provide a justification for the text types chosen in the rationale.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is important for teachers and candidates to clearly know the goals of and the instructions for the WA task.

Firstly, they should make sure that they understand how to choose literary texts for study.

Secondly, candidates should state the aims clearly as well as the text types used for the tasks, and include, in the rationale, a justification for the text type chosen.

They should ensure that they meet the minimum word limit and sufficiently develop their thoughts.

It would be helpful if candidates learnt how to write a variety of text types. Many candidates seemed to strategically choose a diary or letter as the text type, but, depending on the task, these text types are not always helpful to develop the candidates' critical thinking ability through the WA.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of the works submitted for SL WA was wide in terms of the topics and the candidates' level. The majority of the texts selected for the candidates to work on were more difficult than the texts for SL paper 1, but the candidates did not seem to have problem in understanding the selected texts for WA. Most of the works submitted were suitable for the given requirements.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

Most of the works showed at least acceptable level of language use. That is, the choices of words and expressions were varied and the sentence structures were complicated enough for standard level.

Criterion B: Content

Many of the candidates demonstrated the ability to understand and respond to the written texts chosen for the tasks. However, there were many other candidates who did not understand the nature of the WA. These candidates simply summarized three source texts in their tasks. This consequently led to the lack of development of their own arguments. Some candidates, who provided their own arguments, did not organize them very clearly. Another important issue was that some candidates did not cite the source texts properly.

Criterion C: Format

Many of the tasks utilized appropriate text types. Many other tasks did not exactly specify, in the rationale, the particular text types that they selected for the tasks.

Criterion D: Rationale

This was the most challenging part for all candidates, as pointed out earlier in the HL section. There were many candidates who did not clearly state the aims of their work in the rationale. Some candidates did not even specify the text type they decided to use for the tasks.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The comments on the candidate performance against each criterion above have clear implications for the teaching of future candidates. Future candidates will benefit the most if they receive clear instructions on what the goal of the WA task is and how they should present their aims and text types of the tasks in the rationale.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 26	27 - 33	34 - 40	41 - 46	47 - 53	54 - 60

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The areas of the programme that appeared difficult for many candidates were how to find the main message in different paragraphs and understanding the language used in the literary text. Another aspect that seemed difficult for some candidates was dealing with questions which involved subtleties of language usage or subtle implications.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The majority of HL candidates seemed to be well prepared to answer most of the various types of exam questions from identifying specific content items or identifying true statements to understanding the overall meaning and vocabulary within context.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

For HL candidates, teachers should provide sufficient practice on how to understand written texts more thoroughly and deeply, to try and promote their interpretive and analytical skills so that candidates can figure out the main messages of different paragraphs, supporting details for those main messages, cohesive devices among sentences or among paragraphs, etc. This type of instruction will also be useful to help candidates understand literary texts.

Furthermore, it is necessary that future candidates refine their knowledge on the subtleties of specific language usage, for example, mastering the knowledge on grammatical categories of words, subtle differences of similar words, idiomatic expressions, and so on.

General comments

The results for HL paper 1 in Korean B showed a wider range in terms of candidates' level than last year's exam. It seemed that some candidates participated in the HL Korean B programme with significantly less prior knowledge of Korean than last year. This observation is similar to the more diverse backgrounds of candidates found at SL. Despite this observation, many candidates were still heritage speakers of Korean who had been exposed to the target language for a very long time, and this enabled the majority of HL candidates to deal with a variety of question types based on their understanding of the purposes of the written texts and the questions in paper one.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 33	34 - 39	40 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The area that appeared difficult for most candidates was the understanding of vocabulary, specific words or phrases. Many candidates showed a weakness in identifying the meaning of new vocabulary although the context for these words and phrases were provided.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Many candidates seemed to be well prepared to identify references to key phrases or structures when these phrases were relevant to important and practical information they could find in the texts.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Like for HL candidates, it is recommended that candidates receive instruction on how to refine their knowledge on the subtleties of specific language usage, for example, mastering the knowledge on the grammatical categories of words, subtle differences of similar words, idiomatic expressions, and so on. This will improve their performance when dealing with vocabulary items in future exams. Instead of rote memorization, learning new words and expressions in context will be helpful.

It is also necessary to teach them how to grasp important messages from different paragraphs and understand how those paragraphs are organized and connected to each other to develop a main point through the whole text. Thus, candidates should be able to enhance their comprehension ability to another level, starting from identifying key information to understanding the whole text more comprehensively, not just at surface level.

General comments

Most candidates, even those with a poorer performance, were able to show some understanding of the meaning and purpose of the written texts, at least to a certain degree, in their treatment of the questions that asked for key information from the texts. It seems that most of them were heritage speakers of Korean. On the other hand, when dealing with questions which asked about specific details that were not highly related to the key information of the texts, candidates made errors more frequently.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 35	36 - 40	41 - 45

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A

Criterion A: Language

Command of the language was good in most of the responses. Expressions and grammar in sentence structures were mostly accurate and complicated enough for higher level. However, the use of cohesive language devices to connect sentences and paragraphs could be improved.

Criterion B: Message

This category of assessment was weaker than the language skills in many candidates' work. Sometimes, ideas were not well developed, not appropriately supported or not coherently organized whereas language skills were strong in most of the candidates' work.

Criterion C: Format

The majority of responses used appropriate text types and used appropriate tone and register for the target audiences.

Section B

Criterion A: Language

Command of the language was generally good as seen in Section A. Regarding the text types, most of the candidates simply wrote their views in straightforward explanatory prose rather than selecting a particular type and explicitly indicating it. This was not penalized but it is an area for improvement that schools should work on.

Criterion B: Message

Many candidates showed weaker argument development than in Section A. The supports or justifications for the arguments were not always strong and responses were not well organized in many cases, either.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is recommended that teachers focus their instruction more on developing the candidates' critical thinking abilities so that they can develop logical and complex thoughts on certain issues as well as discussing possible consequences.

It is also necessary to train candidates on how to organize, support and justify their thoughts or arguments.

It is strongly recommended to teach concepts regarding the format and structure of different text types as this will also be helpful to improve candidates' performance.

General comments

Candidates showed a strong tendency to select familiar topics to their daily lives, namely thin body image (Q3, health) and positive use of smart phones (Q5, science and technology). More than half of the candidature chose these two topics and the rest of the candidates selected the other three topics. Their responses showed a good range in terms of quality and level. The text types were appropriately applied in the majority of cases, at least to some degree, and language skills were generally very good due to their heritage background. However, candidates' skills to organize their thoughts logically and support their arguments effectively were not as strong as their language skills. Repetitions of similar claims were frequently found in many responses.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Criterion A: Language

Most of the candidates demonstrated at least basic command of vocabulary and grammar. However, the grammatical conjugation for sentence endings was the area in which many candidates could improve. Spelling errors were more observable this year than last year. Some candidates made serious spelling errors although the levels of their vocabulary knowledge were quite high.

Criterion B: Message

As in HL paper 2, many candidates showed their weakness in their ability of developing arguments with details and organizing them in a clear and convincing way.

Criterion C: Format

The majority of the candidates used appropriate text types. However, many candidates who chose a diary entry format (Q1) did not use the proper format or writing style in Korean. Some candidates addressed the diary as "Dear Diary" as in English, but this is not the correct way to write a diary entry in Korean. Also, writing a diary entry in Korean requires a specific writing style called "plain style," but some candidates used an informal speech style, probably influenced by their use of English. For the other text types chosen, the particular 'tone' or 'feel' of each text type to the detailed level was not always achieved either. In some cases, detailed elements for a text type were not provided at an appropriate level.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates will benefit if they can refine their knowledge of vocabulary in terms of spelling and their grammatical knowledge regarding the construction of different sentence styles.

It is also recommended that students receive instruction on how to develop the main ideas, support them with details, and organize them in a clear and convincing way.

Candidates should also be taught about the complexity of Korean speech styles, so they can choose the most appropriate style for the particular text type of their task.

General comments

SL paper 2 showed a wider variety of levels of fluency and accuracy in the language than last year. However, candidates seemed to find more difficulties separating different paragraphs and inserting space between different words. Regarding the topic choice, cultural diversity (Q1) was chosen by most candidates, probably due to the journal entry format which they felt more comfortable with. Healthy eating habits (Q3) and reducing the time on the internet use (Q5) were also selected by many candidates. Customs and traditions (Q2) and leisure (Q4) were rarely chosen.