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PRIMARY 6 · PRELIMINARY PRACTICE

## PSLE English · Practice Paper 2 · Gold 2

### Booklet A

**25 MARKS**

**TOTAL TIME FOR BOOKLETS A & B:** 1 hour 50 minutes

#### CANDIDATE PARTICULARS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Register No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Do not turn over this page until you are told to do so.
2. Follow all instructions carefully.
3. Answer all questions.
4. Use a 2B pencil to shade your answers on the Optical Answer Sheet (OAS).

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## PAPER 2 · BOOKLET A · 25 MARKS

**Multiple-choice questions**

Section	Marks
Section 1 · Grammar (Questions 1–10)	10
Section 2 · Vocabulary (Questions 11–15)	5
Section 3 · Vocabulary Cloze (Questions 16–20)	5
Section 4 · Visual Text Comprehension (Questions 21–25)	5
TOTAL	25

**Section 1 · Grammar**

For each question from 1 to 10, choose the answer that best fits the sentence(s). Shade your answer (1, 2, 3 or 4) on the Optical Answer Sheet. (10 marks)

- Not until Mei Lin had read the third paragraph aloud \_\_\_\_\_ her grandmother begin to weep quietly into the embroidered handkerchief in her lap.
  - did
  - had
  - would
  - was
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ah Ma not received the letter from Penang that afternoon, Mei Lin would never have learned that her grandmother had a younger sister at all.
  - If
  - Should
  - Had
  - Were
- Mei Lin's mother wished, more than once, that her own mother \_\_\_\_\_ taught to read in the village school before the war broke out.
  - was
  - were
  - had been
  - has been
- By the time Mei Lin finishes secondary school next year, Ah Ma \_\_\_\_\_ in the same Toa Payoh flat for nearly four decades.
  - lives
  - has lived
  - will live
  - will have lived

5. If the postman had not knocked twice on the door that afternoon, Ah Ma \_\_\_\_\_ the envelope at all.
- (1) would not notice
  - (2) would not have noticed
  - (3) had not noticed
  - (4) will not notice
6. Ah Ma kept a small tin box on top of the wardrobe, the contents \_\_\_\_\_ she had never shown to anyone in the family before that day.
- (1) of whom
  - (2) of which
  - (3) of that
  - (4) of whose
7. So carefully \_\_\_\_\_ Mei Lin form each Chinese character that her grandmother's reply took almost two hours to finish.
- (1) did
  - (2) had
  - (3) was
  - (4) would
8. The letter from Penang, \_\_\_\_\_ had been posted three weeks earlier, had been forwarded twice before reaching the flat in Toa Payoh.
- (1) that
  - (2) what
  - (3) which
  - (4) whom
9. Ah Ma seldom spoke of her childhood in the village before the Japanese soldiers came, \_\_\_\_\_?
- (1) did she
  - (2) didn't she
  - (3) would she
  - (4) wouldn't she
10. It was the first letter she \_\_\_\_\_ in seventy years from anyone who still remembered her by her childhood name.
- (1) receives
  - (2) had received
  - (3) has received
  - (4) was receiving

## Section 2 - Vocabulary

For each question from 11 to 15, choose the answer that best fits the sentence(s). Shade your answer (1, 2, 3 or 4) on the Optical Answer Sheet. (5 marks)

11. Ah Ma traced the unfamiliar handwriting with a \_\_\_\_\_ finger, as though afraid the words might lift off the paper and drift away.

- (1) clumsy
- (2) tentative
- (3) decisive
- (4) weary

12. The old envelope had been \_\_\_\_\_ preserved between the pages of a Cantonese hymnal for almost seven decades, its corners scarcely yellowed.

- (1) roughly
- (2) occasionally
- (3) immaculately
- (4) reluctantly

13. There was a \_\_\_\_\_ silence in the kitchen after Ah Ma finished dictating the last sentence, as though even the kettle had stopped to listen.

- (1) bewildered
- (2) festive
- (3) reverent
- (4) trivial

14. The dialect words Mei Lin had grown up hearing at the wet market had \_\_\_\_\_ to a handful by the time she reached secondary school.

- (1) expanded
- (2) doubled
- (3) dwindled
- (4) lingered

15. Her grandmother spoke of her younger sister with an almost \_\_\_\_\_ tenderness, as if the very name might shatter if pronounced too loudly.

- (1) reckless
- (2) boisterous
- (3) begrudging
- (4) reverential

## Section 3 - Vocabulary Cloze

For each question from 16 to 20, choose the word closest in meaning to the underlined word(s). Shade your answer (1, 2, 3 or 4) on the Optical Answer Sheet. (5 marks)

On the morning my mother first asked me to fill out her hospital admission forms, I understood, with a small, late shock, that she had been concealing<sup>(16)</sup> her difficulty with English from us for years. The forms had always been done by my father, and after he passed away, by my elder brother, and now by me. None of us had thought to ask why.

She watched me fill in her name and her IC number with a kind of composed<sup>(17)</sup> attentiveness, as if she were memorising the shape of each letter for later. When I asked her, gently, whether she would like me to teach her, she shook her head. 'Too late already,' she said.

I thought about how often, growing up, I had been impatient<sup>(18)</sup> with her — with her halting English at parent-teacher meetings, with the way she would whisper, in Hokkien, for me to translate. I had taken her literacy for granted in the way only a child of immigrants can.

That evening, I sat by her hospital bed and read her the discharge instructions<sup>(19)</sup> aloud. She listened with the same grave attention she had shown the forms, nodding now and then. When I had finished, she reached for my hand and held it for a long time without uttering<sup>(20)</sup> a single word.

16.

- (1) announcing
- (2) hiding
- (3) denying
- (4) exaggerating

17.

- (1) calm
- (2) anxious
- (3) distracted
- (4) amused

18.

- (1) proud
- (2) grateful
- (3) irritable
- (4) puzzled

19.

- (1) promises
- (2) directions
- (3) warnings
- (4) complaints

**20.**

- (1) whispering
- (2) writing
- (3) shouting
- (4) speaking

## Section 4 - Visual Text Comprehension

For each question from 21 to 25, choose the best answer based on the notice below. Shade your answer (1, 2, 3 or 4) on the Optical Answer Sheet. (5 marks)

Study the notice below carefully. Then answer questions 21 to 25.

### VOICES BEFORE THE WORD

Singapore's Unwritten Lives - an oral history project

*Some grandmothers spoke whole worlds they never wrote down.*

Date: Project runs through 2026  
Time: Registration deadline: 30 June 2026  
Venue: Peranakan Museum, in partnership with Oral History Centre, NLB

**OPEN TO**

- Any Singapore family with an elderly relative aged 75 and above.
- Priority given to families whose elderly relatives received fewer than four years of formal schooling.

**WHAT IS INVOLVED**

- A trained volunteer interviewer visits the family at home (or at the museum).
- One 90-minute recorded interview in any language or dialect the elder is comfortable speaking.
- The recording is transcribed and translated into English by the museum.
- A free bound copy of the transcript is given to the family.
- The recording joins the National Archives' permanent oral history collection.

**WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD PREPARE**

- A quiet room with minimal background noise.
- Old photographs, letters or objects the elder may wish to refer to.
- One family member (over 18) to sit in for the elder's comfort.

**REGISTRATION**

- Online at [peranakanmuseum.gov.sg/voices](http://peranakanmuseum.gov.sg/voices), OR
- By telephone on 6332 7591 (Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.).
- Limited to 80 families. Allocation is by date of registration.

**ENQUIRIES**  
Cost: Free. Contact: [voices@peranakanmuseum.gov.sg](mailto:voices@peranakanmuseum.gov.sg)

21. What is the main purpose of the notice?

- (1) To recruit elderly volunteers to teach dialect at the Peranakan Museum.
- (2) To invite families to take part in a project recording the stories of elderly relatives.
- (3) To advertise a new literacy class for Singaporeans aged seventy-five and above.
- (4) To announce the publication of a book about Singapore's unwritten history.

22. Which of the following is not stated in the notice?
- (1) The language in which the interview may be conducted.
  - (2) What the family is expected to prepare beforehand.
  - (3) The names of families who have already taken part.
  - (4) The deadline by which families must register.
23. Which family is most likely to be given priority for the project?
- (1) A family whose grandfather completed his secondary education in English in the 1960s.
  - (2) A family whose grandmother was kept out of school during the Occupation and never learned to read.
  - (3) A family whose grandmother already records weekly podcasts in Hokkien.
  - (4) A family with three elderly relatives, each above the age of seventy-five.
24. From the notice, what can we infer about the museum's attitude towards the elderly participants?
- (1) The museum considers the participants to be in need of formal English instruction.
  - (2) The museum is mainly interested in the participants for academic research purposes.
  - (3) The museum treats the participants' stories as valuable in themselves, regardless of language.
  - (4) The museum expects the participants to provide written records of their own lives.
25. Why might a family hesitate to register, despite the project being free of charge?
- (1) Because the recording will be made public against the family's wishes.
  - (2) Because places are limited and offered on a first-come-first-served basis.
  - (3) Because the project requires the elder to learn to read before the interview.
  - (4) Because the museum charges families for the bound transcript at the end.

Please note that the passage for Comprehension Questions 66 to 75 in Booklet B is printed below and on the following page. Read it carefully. You may now go on to Booklet B.

## Comprehension passage for Booklet B (Questions 66 to 75)

Read this passage carefully. The questions in Booklet B (Section 9, Questions 66 to 75) refer to it.

### The Letter Writer

- 1 The envelope was thin, blue, and crossed with the faint, looping creases of a letter that had travelled a long way to reach Block 86. The postman handed it to Mei Lin at the lift lobby, already turning away before she had finished signing. She climbed the stairs with the envelope held out from her body, the way one carries a candle in a draught, in case it should suddenly become important. 5
- 2 Ah Ma was at the kitchen table, shelling beansprouts into a chipped enamel basin. The afternoon sun came through the kitchen window in long, careful bars and lay across the linoleum like the rungs of a ladder that led nowhere. “Letter, Ah Ma,” said Mei Lin, placing the envelope beside her grandmother’s elbow. Ah Ma did not look up at once. She finished the handful of beansprouts in her lap with the slow patience of someone who had learned, long ago, that one finished what one had started before attending to anything else. 10
- 3 When she did look up, her hands stopped. The blue of the envelope seemed to startle her, like a kingfisher seen unexpectedly in a drain. She picked it up by one corner and turned it over, peering at the unfamiliar handwriting as if at a language she ought to recognise but could not. “Mei Lin,” she said at last, in a voice gentler than her usual one, “you read for Ah Ma, can?” 15
- 4 It was at that moment — and Mei Lin would remember it, afterwards, with a small, late shock — that she understood, fully and for the first time, that her grandmother could not read. Not just English, which Mei Lin had always known about, but Chinese as well. The understanding settled in her chest in the way an old, half-felt suspicion settles when it is finally given a name. She had been ten years in Ah Ma’s kitchen. She had been wiped clean, after meals, by hands that had never traced a single character on a page. 20  
25
- 5 She sat down opposite her grandmother and slit the envelope along its edge with the bone-handled letter opener Ah Ma kept by the rice tin. Inside was a single sheet of pale-blue airmail paper, folded into thirds. The handwriting was unfamiliar but unhurried, the strokes of an older generation. The signature at the bottom said, in Chinese characters as well as in romanised letters, ‘Your sister, Ah Hwa, who has waited a long time.’ 30
- 6 Mei Lin read the letter aloud. She read it slowly, the way the school chaplain read the prayer at morning assembly, giving each phrase its full weight. Ah Hwa wrote that she was living in Penang now, in a house above a kopitiam owned by her son-in-law. She wrote that she had spent forty years trying to find Ah 35

- Ma. She wrote that she had been five years old when the Japanese soldiers came to the village, and that she remembered, still, the colour of the headscarf Ah Ma had been wearing the day they were separated at the railway station. Mei Lin paused on the word 'headscarf' and looked up. Ah Ma was sitting very still, her two hands flat on the table, as if she were holding the table down so that it would not float away. 40
- 7 "Read more, child," said Ah Ma. So Mei Lin read on. She read about cousins Ah Ma had never met, about a husband long dead, about a small samsui-red shawl that Ah Hwa had kept in a tin box for seventy years on the chance that it might one day be returned to its first owner. When the letter ended, the kitchen was very quiet. The bars of sunlight had shifted across the linoleum; the ladder was leading somewhere different now. 45
- 8 "You write back for Ah Ma, can?" said her grandmother, after a long time. Mei Lin nodded. She fetched a fresh sheet of foolscap from her schoolbag and uncapped her good pen. Ah Ma began to dictate, in Hokkien, the way she dictated her wet-market list — slowly, with long pauses, except that these pauses were not the pauses of a forgetful mind. They were the pauses of a woman who had not, in her whole life, been allowed to put her own words on paper, and who was now deciding which of the many sentences inside her she would set down first. 50  
55
- 9 Mei Lin wrote carefully. She translated each phrase into the simplest English she could manage, then read it back in Hokkien to make sure she had it right. Ah Ma listened with her eyes half-closed. Once she shook her head and said, 'No, not like that. Say: I dreamed of you, but I was afraid the dream would stop if I spoke of it.' Mei Lin crossed out the line she had written and wrote the new one. She would remember, years later, the small, sharp pleasure of being trusted to find the right words. 60
- 10 When the letter was done, Ah Ma did not read it back. She could not. Instead, she placed her old, blotched hand over the page for a moment, as if to seal it with something more than ink. Then she folded the sheet into thirds, slid it into a fresh envelope, and asked Mei Lin to write the address in careful block letters. Before she sealed the flap, Ah Ma did something Mei Lin had never seen her do to any object before. She lifted the envelope to her lips and kissed it, very lightly, on the side where the address was written. 65
- 11 That night, lying in bed, Mei Lin thought about the long road from a village railway station to a kitchen table in Toa Payoh, about everything that had been carried across the years without ever being written down — names, songs, the colour of a headscarf, the precise shape of a sister's small hand. She had always thought of literacy as something she had been given at school, like a uniform or a name tag, and which everyone she knew had also been given. She was beginning to suspect, in the way a child first suspects something difficult, that what she could read and write had been bought, somewhere along 70  
75

the way, with the silence of women like her grandmother.

**END OF BOOKLET A**

## PSLE English · Practice Paper 2 · Gold 2

### Booklet B

**65 MARKS**

**TOTAL TIME FOR BOOKLETS A & B:** 1 hour 50 minutes

#### CANDIDATE PARTICULARS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Register No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Do not turn over this page until you are told to do so.
2. Follow all instructions carefully.
3. Answer all questions.
4. Use a dark blue or black ballpoint pen to write your answers in the spaces provided.
5. Do not use correction fluid, correction tape or highlighters.
6. Please do not write in the margin.

## PAPER 2 · BOOKLET B · 65 MARKS

## Written response

Section	Marks
Section 5 · Grammar Cloze (Questions 26–35)	10
Section 6 · Editing for Spelling and Grammar (Questions 36–45)	10
Section 7 · Comprehension Cloze (Questions 46–60)	15
Section 8 · Synthesis and Transformation (Questions 61–65)	10
Section 9 · Comprehension Open-Ended (Questions 66–75)	20
TOTAL	65

## Section 5 · Grammar Cloze

There are 10 blanks, numbered 26 to 35, in the passage below. From the list of words given, choose the most suitable word for each blank. Write its letter (A to Q) in the blank. Each word may be used once only. The letters I and O have been omitted to avoid confusion during marking. (10 marks)

<b>A</b> in	<b>F</b> of	<b>L</b> although
<b>B</b> to	<b>G</b> who	<b>M</b> with
<b>C</b> when	<b>H</b> that	<b>N</b> whose
<b>D</b> as	<b>J</b> but	<b>P</b> were
<b>E</b> on	<b>K</b> which	<b>Q</b> how

During the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, the lives of ordinary families were thrown \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(26)</sup> chaos. Many children \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(27)</sup> had been attending village schools were forced to abandon their studies, often before they had learned to read or write more than a handful \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(28)</sup> characters.

Some families were separated, sometimes for decades. Brothers and sisters were sent to live with distant relatives, \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(29)</sup> a precaution against further raids. In the years \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(30)</sup> the bombs had fallen across Singapore, telegrams and handwritten letters became the only way \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(31)</sup> the scattered families could find each other again. The letters were often delivered \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(32)</sup> bicycle, sometimes weeks after they had been written.

It was not unusual for a letter to take many months to arrive, especially \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(33)</sup> the addressee had moved across several towns. The senders were sometimes literate; the receivers, \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(34)</sup> not. In Singapore's older neighbourhoods, professional letter writers \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(35)</sup> set up their stools beneath the five-foot-ways read out, for a small fee, the letters that grandmothers could not read for themselves.

## Section 6 - Editing for Spelling and Grammar

Each of the underlined words in the passage below contains either a **spelling** error or a **grammatical** error. There are 5 spelling errors and 5 grammatical errors in total. Write the correct word in the box beside its question number. (10 marks)

My grandmother grew up in a small village in southern China and came to

Singapore as a young bride in 1948. She had only recieved<sup>(36)</sup>

36

two years of formal schooling. Throughout my childhood, she manage<sup>(37)</sup>

37

the household entirely from memory: the prices at the wet market, the bus

routes to her sister's flat, the dosage instrucshuns<sup>(38)</sup>

38

on her medication. Nothing was ever written down. It was my mother, that<sup>(39)</sup> had attended an English-medium school in the 1960s, who read her

39

every letter and form. When my mother passed away last year, my grandmother's

world becomed<sup>(40)</sup> very small. Although<sup>(41)</sup> the rest of us

40

tried to help, the loss of her daily reader was a kind of second bereavment<sup>(42)</sup>. She would sit by the window for hours, the morning

42

noozpaper<sup>(43)</sup> open on her lap, looking at the photographs but unable

43

to read a single headline. We learned, slow<sup>(44)</sup>

44

by slow, to take turns. We read aloud to her every evening, the way she

had once read the world aloud to us - in a diferent<sup>(45)</sup> tongue altogether.

45

## Section 7 - Comprehension Cloze

Read the passage below carefully. Fill in each numbered blank with a suitable word. Use only ONE word per blank. (15 marks)

Language is one of the strangest inheritances a person can receive. It is given to us in infancy, long before we are old enough \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(46)</sup> understand what we are being given. By the time we begin to use it \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(47)</sup> our own purposes, it has already shaped the way we think.

It is easy to forget, in a country as multilingual as Singapore, that not every generation has had equal access \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(48)</sup> the written word. Many of our grandparents were taken out \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(49)</sup> school after only a few years, or never sent to school at all. They grew up rich in spoken language but were never given the small, ordinary power of being able to read a letter for \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(50)</sup>.

What does it mean, to live a life \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(51)</sup> the written word? It means, perhaps, that one's memory has to work harder. Stories are kept by being told, and told again, \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(52)</sup> the listener has learned them by heart.

It also means that certain forms of dignity are placed permanently out of reach. A woman who cannot read her own letters must always ask \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(53)</sup> someone to read them for her. A man who cannot fill in his own forms \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(54)</sup> always be a small distance away from the workings of his own affairs. The loss is not loud, but it is \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(55)</sup>. It accumulates over a lifetime.

Younger Singaporeans, who have been given English and Chinese at school as a matter of course, do not always \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(56)</sup> this inheritance. We assume that what we have, our grandparents \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(57)</sup> had also. We forget that the literacy we are so casual \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(58)</sup> was, for the women in our family who came before us, the difference between being heard and being heard only through someone else's voice.

Perhaps the best thing we can do, for the grandparents still with us, is to listen well — to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(59)</sup> down the stories they tell us, in our own hand, in their words. To do for them what they could not do for themselves: to leave something on the page that will outlast the \_\_\_\_\_<sup>(60)</sup>.

## Section 8 - Synthesis and Transformation

For each question from 61 to 65, rewrite the given sentence(s) using the word(s) provided. Your answer must be in **one sentence**. The meaning of your sentence must be the same as the meaning of the given sentence(s). Each question carries 2 marks. (10 marks)

61. Mei Lin had hardly finished reading the letter aloud when her grandmother began to cry into the embroidered handkerchief. [2]

*No sooner* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

62. Ah Ma had never been taught to read English. She had never been taught to read Chinese either. [2]

*Neither English* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

63. Ah Ma kissed the envelope because she could not sign her own name at the bottom of the letter. [2]

*It was because* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

64. Ah Hwa was the younger sister. Ah Ma had been separated from her at a village railway station seventy years before. [2]

*Ah Hwa, from whom* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

65. "I will write to my sister again next month," Ah Ma promised Mei Lin that evening. [2]

*Ah Ma promised* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

## Section 9 - Comprehension Open-Ended

Read the passage 'The Letter Writer' in Booklet A. Answer the questions below in the spaces provided. Marks for each question are shown in brackets. (20 marks)

66. From paragraph 1, pick out a six-word phrase that suggests Mei Lin treated the envelope as if it might be valuable or fragile. [1]

.....

.....

67. In paragraph 2, the writer describes the sunlight as lying across the linoleum "like the rungs of a ladder that led nowhere". What does this image suggest about Ah Ma's life in the flat before the letter arrived? [2]

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68. In paragraph 3, the writer compares the blue envelope to "a kingfisher seen unexpectedly in a drain". Explain what the writer is suggesting about Ah Ma's reaction. [1]

.....

.....

.....

69. Look at the table below. Write down the word or phrase from the passage that each underlined word refers to. [3]

Underlined word	What it refers to
the word "it" in "she would remember <u>it</u> , afterwards, with a small, late shock" (paragraph 4)	(a) _____
the word "something" in "as if to seal it with <u>something</u> more than ink" (paragraph 10)	(b) _____
the phrase "what she could read and write" in the last paragraph	(c) _____

70. Re-read paragraph 4. Explain in your own words two things Mei Lin came to understand at that moment. [2]

.....

.....

.....

.....

71. From paragraph 6, pick out one word that suggests Ah Ma's stillness was caused by deep emotion rather than by physical tiredness. [1]

.....

.....

72. Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false. Give a reason for each answer using information from the passage.

- (a) Mei Lin had always known that her grandmother could not read Chinese.
- (b) Ah Ma's pauses while dictating the reply were caused by a failing memory.
- (c) Ah Hwa had given up searching for Ah Ma long before the letter was written. [3]

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73. Look at the table below. For each of the two moments, describe Ah Ma's behaviour and explain what it reveals about her feelings. [2]

Moment	Ah Ma's behaviour and what it reveals
Just before Ah Ma asked Mei Lin to read the letter (paragraph 2)	(a) _____
Just before Ah Ma sealed the envelope (paragraph 10)	(b) _____

74. Which TWO of the following statements about Mei Lin are best supported by the passage? Put a tick (✓) in the box beside your TWO answers. (DO NOT TICK MORE THAN TWO BOXES.) [2]

- She had always been her grandmother's regular letter writer.
- She came to understand that her own literacy had a hidden cost in her family's history.
- She felt impatient with her grandmother's slow dictation in the kitchen.
- She took quiet pride in being trusted to find the right words for her grandmother.
- She believed that her grandmother had been deliberately hiding the letter from the family.

75. At the end of the passage, the writer says that Mei Lin's literacy had been “bought, somewhere along the way, with the silence of women like her grandmother.” In your own words, explain what Mei Lin was beginning to understand about her own education. [3]

.....

.....

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.....

.....

**END OF BOOKLET B · END OF PAPER**

## ANSWER KEY

## LearnUp PSLE English Practice Paper 2 — Gold 2

Sample answers and marking notes. For open-ended questions, accept any answer that is clearly supported by the passage and expressed correctly.

## Booklet A - MCQ answers (Q1–Q25)

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
(1)	(3)	(3)	(4)	(2)
Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
(2)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(2)
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(4)
Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
(2)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(4)
Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25
(2)	(3)	(2)	(3)	(2)

## Section 5 - Grammar Cloze (Q26–Q35)

Q26	(A) in	Q31	(K) which
Q27	(G) who	Q32	(B) to
Q28	(F) of	Q33	(C) when
Q29	(D) as	Q34	(J) but
Q30	(H) that	Q35	(E) on

## Section 6 - Editing for Spelling and Grammar (Q36–Q45)

Q36	recieved → received	(spelling)	Q41	Although → Though	(grammar)
Q37	manage → managed	(grammar)	Q42	bereavment → bereavement	(spelling)
Q38	instrucshuns → instructions	(spelling)	Q43	noozpaper → newspaper	(spelling)
Q39	that → who	(grammar)	Q44	slow → slowly	(grammar)
Q40	becomed → became	(grammar)	Q45	diferent → different	(spelling)

## Section 7 - Comprehension Cloze (Q46–Q60)

<b>Q46</b>	to	<b>Q51</b>	without	<b>Q56</b>	notice
<b>Q47</b>	for	<b>Q52</b>	until	<b>Q57</b>	have
<b>Q48</b>	to	<b>Q53</b>	for	<b>Q58</b>	about
<b>Q49</b>	of	<b>Q54</b>	will	<b>Q59</b>	write
<b>Q50</b>	themselves	<b>Q55</b>	constant	<b>Q60</b>	voice

### Section 8 - Synthesis & Transformation (Q61–Q65) — sample answers

**Q61.** No sooner had Mei Lin finished reading the letter aloud than her grandmother began to cry into the embroidered handkerchief.

**Q62.** Neither English nor Chinese had Ah Ma ever been taught to read.

**Q63.** It was because she could not sign her own name at the bottom of the letter that Ah Ma kissed the envelope.

**Q64.** Ah Hwa, from whom Ah Ma had been separated at a village railway station seventy years before, was the younger sister.

**Q65.** Ah Ma promised Mei Lin that evening that she would write to her sister again the following month.

### Section 9 - Comprehension Open-Ended (Q66–Q75) — model answers

**Q66.** [1]

“the way one carries a candle” (accept also “held out from her body”).

**Q67.** [2]

The image suggests that Ah Ma's days were quiet, repetitive and without forward movement — a ladder normally leads upward, but here it leads nowhere, implying that her routine offered structure without progress.

**Q68.** [1]

The writer is suggesting that the envelope is something bright, beautiful and out of place in Ah Ma's ordinary kitchen — its sudden appearance is startling.

**Q69.** [3]

(a) The moment of understanding that her grandmother could not read at all. (b) Ah Ma's feeling for her long-lost sister — the love, longing or blessing that Ah Ma wished to imprint on the page beyond the written words. (c) Mei Lin's own literacy — her ability in English and Chinese to read and write, which she had been given freely at school.

**Q70.** [2]

First, she realised that her grandmother could not read at all — not only in English but in Chinese as well. Second, she realised that this had been the case throughout her own childhood, and that the household's silence on the matter had hidden it from her.

**Q71.** [1]

“flat” (her two hands were ‘flat on the table, as if she were holding the table down so that it would not float away’). Accept also ‘still’ or ‘holding’.

**Q72.** [3]

(a) False - paragraph 4 says Mei Lin understood for the first time that her grandmother could not read; she had known only about English, 'not Chinese as well'. (b) False - paragraph 8 says the pauses 'were not the pauses of a forgetful mind'; they were the pauses of a woman deciding which sentences to set down first. (c) False - Ah Hwa's letter says she had spent forty years trying to find Ah Ma.

**Q73. [2]**

(a) She finished shelling the beansprouts in her lap before attending to the letter. This reveals a lifelong habit of self-discipline and perhaps a moment of bracing herself, refusing to be hurried by something that frightens her. (b) She lifted the envelope to her lips and kissed it. This reveals tenderness, longing and a kind of farewell — she is sending something of herself that the written words alone cannot carry.

**Q74. [2]**

Correct: (2) and (4).

**Q75. [3]**

Mei Lin was beginning to understand that her own ability to read and write — which she had received freely at school — had not been freely available to the generation of women before her. Their lack of access to schooling, especially during the war, was part of what had made her own education possible: their unwritten lives had, in some sense, paid for hers. She was realising that literacy is not simply a personal achievement but an inheritance carried down generations at the cost of others' silence.

**End of answer key.** Find more free LearnUp resources at [brainbuzz.sg](https://brainbuzz.sg).