

SPM ENGLISH - EXTRA EXERCISE (PAPER 1) – SET 2

Section A : Directed Writing

[35 marks]

[Time suggested: 45 minutes]

Write a letter to the Dear Rita column of a magazine asking for her advice.
Use the following points to write your letter.

- Facing SPM examination
- Family pressure
- Lack of time due to co-curricular activities
- Relationship problems with friends

When writing the letter, you should remember: to address your letter appropriately

- to use all the points given
- to insert other interesting points to use the correct format

Section B: Continuous Writing

[50 marks]

[Time suggested: One hour]

Write a composition of about 350 words on one of the following topics.

- 1 Describe your school sports day.
- 2 Women can be the breadwinner in a home. Discuss.
- 3 A bad day .
- 4 Road rage is becoming a serious problem. Discuss the causes and possible solutions for the problem
- 5 Entertainment

Section A

199, Jalan 18/44,
Taman Seri Serdang,
43300 Seri Kembangan,
Selangor Darul Ehsan,
16 May 2013

Dear Rita,

I am a 17-year-old girl who is going to sit for the SPM examination at the end of this year. I am the eldest of three children and my parents have very high expectations of me. My parents want me to be a good role model to my younger sister and brother. They get very angry when I don't get straight A's in my school examinations. They control who I meet and never allow me to socialize, expecting me to come back home immediately after school. I feel very sad and stressed. They do not allow me to go out and I never have the chance to go shopping with my friends, not even my best friend at all. If it's shopping, it's with them. I am not even allowed to go out with any of my friends whom they know. They said they love me too much. Even when I watch television, my mother keeps nagging me to study. I believe I need a break once in a while too.

Furthermore, I am unable to study due to the lack of time as I am very busy with co-curricular activities. I am the President of the English Language Society and the Treasurer of the Prefectorial Board. I have many things to do in each of these positions. I informed my mother that I would be retiring from these positions in a few months' time but she refuses to let up, like a dog with a bone.

Also, my friends are distancing themselves from me as I have been unable to spend as much time with them as before. They think that I am becoming proud and forgetting them as friends, but this is not true. I have tried explaining to them many times but they don't seem convinced. I really feel isolated as I have no friends to talk to now.

I really hope that you will be able to give me some sound advice as I really need help in these difficult times. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Depressed

Section B

1 Last Friday, our school was like a busy hive. There was a sense of purpose and determination on many students' faces. They were dressed to conquer and their faces were decked out in their respective sports house's colours. The students of last year's overall winners were seen pacing up and down the running tracks. Some • stood around in little huddles, probably discussing strategy. The rest were seen in lines while various groups were crowded around the stadium.

Colourful banners and bunting were seen fluttering in the breeze. The teachers looked very relaxed in their sports attire and even Mrs Loke, our principal, who usually looked very

classy in her two-piece suit, still managed to look very trendy in her large Paris Hilton sunglasses. Everyone looked ready. It was time for our annual school sports day to begin!

The day started with the march pass of the five sports houses. Mercury, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo and Saturn. They looked very smart and nice indeed. This was followed by the singing of the national anthem 'Negaraku' and the school song. Everyone sang with vigour and gusto. Then, the raising of the school flag and the sports day flag was carried out by the representatives of the Scouts and Girl Guides. Finally, Mrs Loke gave her speech and the students cheered. It was official, the school sports day had been officially launched and a great cheer went up from the school's crowd.

The first event for the day was the 400 m race. This was followed by various events like the long jump, the shot-putt and other races. By 10.00 a.m., most of the students had tired lines on their faces. The heat of the day was beginning to take its toll on some of the participants. The team of St John Ambulance and the Red Crescent members were kept busy running back and forth with injured participants and so forth.

Finally, the most anticipated time of the day arrived - the moment of announcing the winners. It was a tense moment as our guest of honour, Datuk Jonathan Yee, gave his speech and praised the students for their perseverance, positive attitude and sportsmanship. Some of the students just wanted him to get over with his speech so that the winner could be announced.

"The winner is... the house of Mars!" Mrs Loke's voice rung out loud and clear.-A burst of hoorays and cheers resounded through the blue camp. After four years of taking the second place, it was official, the sports house, Mars, had wrested the coveted champion's trophy from the other houses. It was certainly a day to remember. After all, I was the captain of the Mars sports house!

2 Men, we assume, feel compelled to bring in the main wage. It is what defines them as a hunter-gatherer; it has always been so. That is why when news reports emerged that men in Britain now earn less than their partners has come as something of a shock.

One would think that these men would feel emasculated but this is a false assumption that they are quite happy to let their spouse? Take up the financial reins and they take on a more relaxed pace of life.

What of the women? Women can be happy with the new situation as they may enjoy being in the financial hot seat because it gave them more say on how the money was spent. They begin to have more autonomy which they hadn't in the past. It can be quite common enough to see women earn more than their partners. And it's getting more common as time goes on.

The skills that women bring into the workforce are more appreciated than they once were. There is much more value put on the ability to juggle many balls, the ability to establish rapport and build up relationships as so many jobs these days are dependent on that and women have the edge in that regard. Of course, they may pose a threat to their male bosses and they face greater pressure to perform within the corporate arena. However, companies are looking solely at the return on their investment and they are getting a better

return from women than they are from men. The skills and the talents that are needed to succeed, are more and more the ones that women possess.

How would men take this shift in power? Some men are probably fine with this; others not as they were raised to believe that they were the hunter-provider. Even today in kids literature, the princess is always waiting for a prince to rescue her; there is never talk of her being the managing director of marketing. It's tough for these men to realise that, for whatever reason, they can't provide right now and it affects their confidence as they may feel inadequate somehow.

Logically, if a woman in the home brings in more money, shouldn't the men stay at home and care for the children and the home and many men do well in fact. It cannot be denied that not every man is made to stay at home. It would depend on the person's personality as well. When all is said and done, the option for women to be the breadwinner and men to stay at home should be looked at from a positive viewpoint. If the two parties can come to an agreement, then there is no bone of contention about women being the breadwinners of the home.

3 I had woke up late again and the only phrase that kept going on and on in my mind was "My boss is going to kill me! My boss is going to kill me!" I managed to catch the bus, even though it was packed like sardines. Of all days, the bus literally crawled along the highway. I think my granddaddy would have hobbled along faster than the bus.

The chatter of the passengers in the bus made me grind my teeth in further impatience. I quickly got off the bus at my stop and tore my way through the morning rush of pedestrians at Kylin Square and barely made it to clock in on time. My boss gave me a stare as I barged in the shop and that was not a good sign indeed.

Mandy quickly filled me in on that a group of Korean tourists was about to arrive in an hour's time. I quickly got my dessert station ready for the expected influx of patrons. Right on the dot of 10, the Koreans entered. I greeted all of them warmly as they ignored me and headed for the barbecue station. I groaned. Just then, a young girl of about 10 approached me and asked for a bowl of our famous Cendol Heaven. I got out a bowl and started my preparation. The bowl slipped out of my hand and crashed to the floor and shattered into pieces. Time froze except for my rapid-beating heart as I scanned the shop. Sure enough, my boss's belligerent face stared across the room at me. I quickly cleared up the mess and got the cendol prepared for the girl. That careless mistake would cost a cut from my salary. Oh dear!

After that, it was non-stop action at the dessert station as more and more people finished their main course. I felt giddy as the impatient Koreans jabbered at me in Korean. When I finally finished work at eight, I was more than ready to hit the sack. Unfortunately, Lady Luck was not on my side. I had to wait a whole hour to get a bus home and when I arrived, a note from my family welcomed me, "Have gone to your grandma's house. Prepare your own dinner. Love, Mum". Famished as I was, I slapped some peanut butter on a few pieces of bread and headed for the living room to eat and relax. I switched on the television but a blank screen greeted me. Just great, the television had decided to abandon me too. It

was certainly a bad enough day for me. I climbed the stairs, plopped myself on my bed and went out like a light! I really hope a day like this would never cross my path ever again.

4. Road rage is becoming a serious problem indeed in the streets and roads of Malaysia today. It is a specific type of aggression in which the road bully has a wilful and conscious desire to hurt the driver of another car in response to certain factors. Road rage encompasses physical aggression, verbal threats and so forth. There have been many quarters discussing this problem right from the cabinet meetings in parliament to the coffee shop aficionados. I have my opinion on the causes of road rage too and some of the alternative solutions to address this problem.

Firstly, I believe that road rage stems from the attitude of the drivers themselves. They probably had negative role models to model in their growing years as they sat in the car of a relative or friend. Cursing and swearing at the other drivers on the road was the norm to them. They were told that breaking traffic rules was common and a much needed practice if they wanted to get ahead in life. After all, these role models of theirs had never been caught by the law and even if they did, the fines were negligible and not worth worrying about. Swerving in and out of traffic to simply get ahead by one car was a skill to be learnt. Besides, showing the middle finger to an offender or a driver was nothing surprising. It was all part of driving on our roads.

Therefore, the road bullies of today do realize that what they do is wrong but they are not bothered in the least. After all, their excuse is that the stress of work. To a certain extent that is true. Thus, having poor role models and the stressed drivers are experiencing in life, are situations which are ripe for a total blowout when certain conditions are met such as the sudden breaking of the car ahead or the overtaking of a car from a side road or even a near miss of sliding pass and knocking one's side mirror. Anger boils over, temper rises and finally, incidents of road rage occur. In the heat of the moment, drivers start off with harsh words which eventually escalate into physical blows.

Drivers who are prone to road rage should remember that not everyone is intentionally out there to instigate and cause them to be angry. They are drivers on the road too. Certain strategies such as planning one's route to avoid unnecessary traffic jams and avoiding bad road condition can make all the difference. Furthermore, a soothing or favourite radio station can calm frazzled nerves. Going for yoga classes or meditation classes too, can help a hot-tempered driver to learn how to control his or her emotions. Finally, think about the effects of road rage. Being an aggressive driver, it doesn't do anyone any good. Their children then only repeat their actions and become equally aggressive and un-conscientious drivers. As the saying goes 'Like father, like son.'

Road rage is a social menace and it is usually more prevalent among male drivers than female drivers. Therefore, a prevention programme is needed to instil positive behaviour in the drivers.

5 Have you watched the latest movie? How was it? Any good? Boring? What about the computer game you're currently so engrossed in? Have you beaten the computer's highest score? That magazine looks good. Is that a photo of Brad Pitt's and Angelina Jolie's latest baby? How about a session of karaoke at the centre just down the road? Not into that? Why don't you try a game of Twisters? That should be fun. Where am I leading to? Entertainment of course!

It goes without saying that people have to perform some kinds of work or another to earn their salaries. Students have to study or they would fail their exams and fail to find the appropriate work of their choice. Housewives even have to keep law and order in the house or chaos would rule. As everyone puts their respective minds to doing some tasks or another, another part of their brains constantly awaits the time when work is no longer the focus and relaxation and entertainment conies into play.

Entertainment is a great form of relaxation. There are many ways in which one can be entertained. Movies, video games, board games, songs, music, printed materials, artwork, the list is endless. Entertainment provides our minds with creative juices. This helps us balance our lives. With balance, there is a higher sense of achievement and satisfaction in life. It is able to help people to de-stress themselves, thereby lessening various health-related problems. In a way, entertainment is good for our health but remember, something is only good if we don't go overboard.

Besides, entertainment allows us to establish new friendships, strengthen old ties and simply become an outlet for people to share ideas, opinions and thought on a subject or area of common interest. There is a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood in sharing the same likes or dislikes. Watching a movie would not be much fun without a group of close friends and popcorn. Playing a video game wouldn't be much if one always competed against the computer and what's, the point of a board game where you're the sole player? Therefore, in the process of being entertained, there is a greater work going on as the wheels of friendship keep turning and turning.

As mentioned before, entertainment is able to generate our creativity and even spur us to create and do other things. A good movie on pirates may encourage us to have a costume party or have a treasure hunt for children. A computer used for games may be used to create a similar game but for a different group of people. There is no saying where creativity will take you. Not only you will be entertained by the interesting looks of a celebrity in a magazine but you may even hone your sewing skills to sort out with an equally exciting dress for your sister's wedding.

Therefore, do not simply look at entertainment in the negative aspect where all vice originates from, instead let entertainment take you on a journey of discovery and growth. Entertainment is fun and enjoyable and when done with the right people and at the right times, it can be beneficial too.

EXTRA ESSAYS

Time

Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with RM86 400. It carries over no balance from day to day, allow you to keep no cash balance; and every evening, cancels whatever part of the amount you have failed to use during the day.

What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course! Well, everyone has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86 400 seconds. Every night, it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.

It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There are among those who believe in the popular saying as "Time is Gold" and of the three types of input that every activity needs - material goods, skills and time — time is the most important. It is definitely like a commodity ("Time is money"). We need time. We need time to work, to eat, to sleep and to accomplish all the daily chores of living. We also need time to know and understand our spouses, our children and our friends. Most of our relationships, in fact, require more time than we have; and it is difficult to avoid the feeling that we could never have enough. Nor is our list of demands on our time complete.

Technology also uses more of our time as we try to work harder to obtain more technology and to maintain things and possessions. All these things - the inevitable trappings of affluence, make more demands on our ever-diminishing store of time. They are responsible for many of the sour notes sounded as affluence becomes more general and more disappointing.

Each of us has only 24 hours a day and no one else can live our lives for us. This obvious yet profound fact means that time is potentially major limiting factor in our personal life. The clock is running. Make the most of today.

Describe the scene in your classroom when the teacher was away.

As soon as Miss Lee walked out of the classroom, there was but a brief second of calm, like being in the eye of the storm and then chaos broke out. Lisa shrieked as Hassan pulled her pigtailed for the thirtieth time. She whirled around and punched him playfully on his stomach. The actor that he was, he doubled up in slow motion, Matrix-style and collapsed on the floor before bursting into laughter.

Simultaneously, at the back of the classroom, Julie and her gang were caught up in a huddle, busily digesting the latest information about the trainee teacher, Mr Samuel Kam, who was both charming and young. "Well... if you compare him to some of the dinosaurs in this school, I think the red tie he wore last week made him look cuter," Rusnah volunteered. "Yes, but did you see the way he effortlessly helped our principal, Puan Latifah, with those heavy boxes?" Jean offered. Their chatter complemented the rowdy and boisterous shuffling of Ah Pong and Samad who were attempting to mimic Michael Jackson's famous moonwalk.

Poor Shafiq, he was trying so hard to control the class. The two prefects, Marie and Piak Har, were doing their best to help him. However, for those who were familiar with 5G, teachers didn't refer to us as the 'Holy Terrors' for nothing. "Keep quiet!" Marie shouted at the top of her voice. There was a brief silence but soon, the casual whispers rose in a crescendo and turned into a medium hum before hitting an all-time loudness. She shook her head in exasperation.

A paper plane flew past me and landed on Christina's table. "Hey! Will you cut that out? I'm trying to finish up with this graph before Mr Lam's period. You know how fussy he is about homework!" she piped. "Ah, just copy Lydia's work. She's finished all her homework!" someone shouted. Valusamy and Zahan were drumming a really catchy beat on the wooden tables of our classroom. Soon, Colin and Zuraidah were rapping to the beat. If it wasn't for the "school" atmosphere hanging over our heads, we might have impressed a recording producer or two. "Shhh, Miss Lee is coming back!" a warning call rang out.

We rushed back to our seats, picked up strewn papers, threw away paper planes and settled down with books. Reference books popped open and pens were heard scratching away on the paper we diligently bowed our heads to the work she had set for us. When she entered, it was a picture of tranquillity and diligence.

Describe a friend of yours who has been an encouragement to you.

Matthew is my best friend, even at present. We met at the age of five, across our home's garden fence and have been best friends ever since. He has been a great encouragement to me in many ways.

He is a hard-working individual who believes that hard work always pays off, it is just a matter of time. In school, he was diligent in his studies and even when he did not always excel in his schoolwork, he never let up in keeping up with his studies. He took his homework and assignments seriously and had never procrastinated in his work. He is really a well-organized individual as he always allocates time for play and study accordingly because he strongly believes that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". With all these qualities he possessed, he had inspired me to acquire these traits as well.

We both played in the school hockey team and here too, he had his little ways and gestures of keeping me encouraged. At times, when I missed a goal or two, he was always ready with an understanding smile or a gentle tap on my shoulder to remind me that all is not lost.

I remember the time when his father lost his job due to an accident. He did not give up nor feel helpless, but instead, he was always upbeat and hopeful for the future. He even took on a few part-time jobs to help make ends meet. I remember being so impressed by his sense of responsibility and duty. Later, when my mother passed away, he continued to show his support and encouraged me to do well in my studies to make my mother proud of me.

In university, we had to go separate ways as we were interested in different courses, but we were coincidentally in the same university. We did not meet each other much though as university life was not as free as we thought it would be. Even so, whenever we met, we would make good use of it by exchanging our stories and experiences.

Later, we had to go out into the world, facing the hardships our parents had to go through but he was still there encouraging me to move forward in life. I remember he once quoted that the only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life is often merely the will to try it and the faith to believe that it is possible. Today, I am a very successful accountant and Matthew continues to be a source of encouragement to me and even to my two sons.

Describe a proud moment in your life.

As I stepped out onto the field with a football tucked under my arm, the glare of the stadium blinded me for a few moments. I looked around me and saw thousands of students cheering me. Imagine that? After surmounting heavy odds, the team and I had arrived on this day for the National Football Competition Finals where 64 teams from all over the country had fought hard to reach this stage. SMK Dato' Lokman now faced us, SMK Haji Ukmar. The winning team would get to compete in the international championships held in England.

As one of the products of Malaysia's tribal community, I was here to tell the country that I was more than able to carry my weight and had the mettle to achieve my dreams and ambitions. My tribal community had been extremely supportive of my efforts and they were definitely standing behind me, cheering me on as my team members and I played our hearts out in the next 90 minutes.

I came from a poverty-stricken family and my father always reminded me to take the issue of education seriously as it was the only way to break out from the vicious cycle of poverty. He reminded me that education would help me get a slice of mainstream life. Nurtured in a residential school from the age of seven, I was now prepared to announce my arrival. England beckoned, so did recognition and fame.

As the underdogs this time, the crowds cheered us on as we tied at the 82nd minute. With only 8 minutes to go and I knew that we had to be more aggressive with our game. I could see at a glance what my team members were thinking. This was the make or break moment. This moment was a moment of not simply participating for the sake of sportsmanship but this moment required us to win and we did! It was such an amazing moment to be the one to kick in the ball into the goalpost as the roar of the crowd drowned out the screams of exhilaration from my teammates as they all fell on me, hugging me and shaking me.

This proud moment of standing at the podium to receive the championship shield will never be forgotten. I looked around the stadium and I could see the beams of happiness radiating from the stands and realized, England, here we come!

My most important lesson

When I turned 47, I received a letter saying that my father was degenerating in his Alzheimer's disease. I was half a world away and my siblings wanted me to return before it was too late and he didn't recognize me any more.

Immediately, I thought of how inconvenient it was for me to quit my job and I would never find another position that paid me so well. However, I did quit my job. Work would have to wait saving money would have to wait. After all, it's family that's most important. Friends come and go, lovers come and go. Wives leave husbands, husbands leave wives. We make money, we lose money. We find a job, we lose a job. When we cut through all the clutter that in our lives, family is all we have left. This haven in a heartless world, this bridge over troubled water; whatever metaphor we choose to use, family is all we really have. Everything else is - well. just everything else.

Moreover, I recently came to a very painful realization as I continue to think about my father's illness and my upcoming trip home that I had not been a very good son nor brother. While working in Istanbul for the last 4 years, I shamefully admit that I have not called my parents often enough; not emailed my father and sisters often enough; and I certainly have not told each of them that I love them dearly enough. There is no excuse for that. More often than not whenever I call my father, he doesn't know who I am any more. Sometimes he hangs up on me, saying that I have the wrong number. Since my sisters told me about my father's worsening condition, I've been calling him every week. It has been nice talking to all of them.

I am grateful for this second chance, a chance to make amends. As I prepare to go home, as I prepare to see my family for the first time in four years, I will do something I have never done before. I will apologize to my parents for not being the son I could have been. I will apologize to my sisters for not being the brother I could have been.

Now as my father lays in his nursing home bed, his mind numbed by drugs too numerous to count. I will take his hand in mine and beg his forgiveness for not calling often enough. Then I will promise to be a better son and brother. I will be grateful for the loving and caring family that I have. I will become the son and brother the world expects of me. I will honour my mother and my father. That is my most important lesson.

Write a story ending with: "Crystal finally realized the importance of friendship and how it had saved her life."

Joanne and Crystal were the best of friends since a very young age. As little girls, they used to go to school together, play together and sometimes even stay at each other's places. They were next-door neighbours and thus their parents were also friends. They both finished school and went to the same college. Everyone knew they were the best of friends. There was nothing that was hidden between them and both knew each other inside out.

However, Joanne found Crystal acting very strangely one day. Crystal would remain withdrawn, sleep too much and turn violent if provoked. At first Joanne thought it was just her studies getting on to her. But with time, Crystal became even more moody and frustrated. Finally, Joanne couldn't take it any longer and confronted her with the problems. Crystal denied that anything was wrong with her, but Joanne knew deep down that there was more to the situation and the guy she was with had definitely something to do with what Crystal was going through. To her horror, much later she found out that the guy Crystal was seeing was taking drugs and Crystal was doing the same thing too.

Joanne thought of a way to help her. Joanne contacted the college counsellor who was a psychologist and told her the problem. She knew Crystal would probably never forgive her and she might lose her friendship with Crystal forever. When Crystal found out, she felt betrayed and was extremely angry at Joanne. She cutting off all ties with her but in time and with the help of the counsellor and her family, she realised that she was only hurting herself.

In a letter to her, Joanne reminded her of her dreams of becoming a successful professional, inspired her to set an example for others and reminded of what her parents would feel if they found out she had killed herself in an overdose. Crystal came to know that Joanne had never actually betrayed their friendship as she had never left her side and always stood by her. Crystal finally realized the importance of friendship and how it had saved her life.