

Classics : Language Aptitude Test

Specimen : An informal guide to the answers

Section A

1. If a noun in the singular ends in the sounds [s], [z] or [ʃ] (the first sound in *ship*), then the plural marker will have the form [ɪz] : further examples could include *gases, prices, hoses, blazes, dashes, wishes*, etc.

Note that it is necessary to think in terms of sounds rather than spellings. Candidates are not expected to be familiar with phonetic symbols (!), and any clear formulation, e.g. 'a *sh*-sound', would be acceptable. The rule given above will account for the examples in the list provided; the full rule for English would have to be extended to cover forms like *matches, judges*, etc. but mention of these is not required by the question asked here.

2. **atlar, geceler, okullar, arkadaşlar, filler**

The choice between **-ler** and **-lar** is determined by the vowel of the preceding syllable : after **-e-** or **-i-** the form is **-ler**, after **-a-** or **-u-** the form is **-lar**. The full rule would take account of all the other vowels found in Turkish, but this partial statement accounts for the examples given here.

3. **saroy, hnoy, hmoy, hroy, orboy, ergoy, ceroy, groy**

The vowels **-u-** and **-i-** are lost when a further syllable is added.

Section B

4 (a) 'the servant hates the child'
'the children like the kings'
batas mug molonti

4 (b) 'the dog did not chase the elephant'
'the kings did not praise the servants'
mugas tot nenikonto

4 (c) 'the cat and the dog were sleeping in the field'
'the children are not riding on the elephants'
mugs parkte negortsto

4 (d) 'wasn't the elephant in the palace?'
'where is the prince working?'
mipos gavas woikte sonto?

English translations without 'the', or using 'a(n)', would be equally acceptable, e.g. in 4 (a) 'children like kings', or in 4 (c) 'a cat and a dog ...', and so forth. In the sentences in Babel, different word order would be acceptable.

Section C

5. When a question like ‘*Does he like it?*’ is put into the past, only the auxiliary verb *do* is given a past tense form, i.e. *did*, so ‘*Did he like it?*’

There is no single right answer to this question, and candidates are not expected to be familiar with the notion of an auxiliary verb; any explanation to the effect that in these questions it is only the forms of *do* that indicate tense would be acceptable.

6. ‘*You have presumably not heard the latest score.*’
‘*Luckily I had some spare cash hidden in my shoe.*’
‘*England predictably failed to get a single goal.*’

One test for this might be that it is possible to reword these sentences as follows: ‘*I presume that you have not heard the latest score,*’ etc.; but it is not possible to have ‘*It was dejected that Sarah re-read Jack’s letter,*’ etc.

7. One further possibility would be ‘the action of cooking apples’, for which parallels might be things like ‘*eating people* (is wrong)’ or ‘*compiling tests* (can be a thankless task)’.

A third possibility would be ‘apples suitable for cooking’ (as opposed to *eating apples*), and parallels can be found in expressions like *racing bike*, *knitting needles*, etc.

There is no single right answer to this question. Any reasonably clear formulation of the differences would be acceptable, and any suitable examples.

8. ‘*Susan said that she was sorry to be late, but that she had been waiting hours for a bus, and she was afraid that the same thing might happen tomorrow unless they finished the roadworks; if things hadn’t improved, she would just have to come on foot.*’