

# A-level Biblical Hebrew

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**Preparing to teach**

Commentary booklet

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# Paper 1 – Translation, comprehension and composition

Question	Student response	Commentary
02.1	<i>The matter came out from G-d. They were not able to speak to him bad or good.</i>	Although the Mark Scheme says, ‘accept literal translation’, candidates should learn to paraphrase Biblical Hebrew into conversational English, e.g. it has been decided by G-d.
02.2	<i>He bowed to the ground.</i>	There are two types of bowing: bowing the head and prostrating the whole body on the ground. Here the verb means the latter and therefore bowed is not adequate as it implies the former.
	<i>He gave presents to Rebecca</i>	This is not the <b>first</b> phrase in line 4.
02.4	<i>‘Send me to my master.’</i>	The Piel conjugation of שלח is translated: ‘send away’ or ‘let go’, not merely ‘send’. At A-level this would be less than satisfactory.
	<i>‘and he’ll go to him’</i>	The response is missing the jussive mood ‘let me go’ and is not deserving of credit.
02.6	<i>‘the man says, “He is my master” ‘</i>	This does not answer the question.
02.8 (a)	<i>‘we will ask her’</i>	A pronominal direct object suffix could be used after the word ‘to ask’ e.g. כי ישאלך בוך [Exodus 13:14] but in our case it would have a <i>mappiq</i> .
	<i>‘let us ask’</i>	At A-level candidates are supposed to know the names of the functions of prefixes and suffixes. However since the question asked for the function, not the <u>name</u> of the ה, the answer would be accepted.
02.8 (b)	<i>Instead of אשר ‘that’</i>	As above.
02.9 (b)	הכס / תכס	Wrong, non-recognition of apocopated suffix

Question	Student response	Commentary
	נכס	The candidate probably thought the <i>dagesh</i> in the כ was to compensate for a missing ג.
04.1	בהמצאו <i>In His being found</i>	Less than adequate translation – minor error
	כִּי יִרְבֶּה לְסַלּוֹחַ <i>For He is abundant to forgive</i>	Acceptable but rather clumsy. Candidates should be trained to use their common sense to invert words in a phrase to emerge with a colloquial translation, e.g. מיטיב לנגן 'who plays well' rather than 'does well to play' [1 Samuel 16:17].
	אם <i>'unless' 'except' 'rather'</i>	All acceptable. However <i>'because if'</i> is unsatisfactory.
06.1	After Judith had removed אחרי הסירה יהדית	Candidate should have used the infinitive construct after אחרי
	Omission of the direct object indicator את	Occasionally the word את is missing in phrases even before a definite direct object, however since in the vast majority of cases it is present, its exclusion here might be considered a minor mistake.
	ראש של הפרנס	של 'of' is a later Hebrew word and not Biblical. It must be avoided in these compositions at all costs.
	She gave it נתנה אתו	Vov conversive should have been used.
	ויתן (lit. and he gave )	Throughout this passage the feminine verbs must be used when appropriate.
	Who put it in a bag השמה אתו בשק	Use of the relative ה : a credit worthy alternative
	And came ובאות	Had the candidate written הלך ובוא or הולכות ובאות that might have been acceptable cf. 2 Samuel 15:30 although this is usually the <i>casus adverbialis</i> describing how the action was done.
	The sentries השומרים	A suitable alternative
	ות' אקר:	Acceptable as occasionally one finds וי' אקר on a pause e.g. Exodus 4:1, although not at the end of a verse.
יי הוא עמנו	Unnecessary but not incorrect addition of הוא.	

Question	Student response	Commentary
	כאשר שמעו	The infinitive construct is preferable and more stylish but כאשר שמעו is still valid.
	Look! הביטו זס ראו	Acceptable but הנה is better.

# Paper 2 – Prose literature

Question	Commentary	
01.1	<p>In addition to the mark scheme, candidates may mention:</p> <p>Use of והיא as opposed to ותהי shows continuous action.</p> <p>אמתך (or עבדך for males) is the usual respectful, submissive way of saying 'I' or 'me' when talking to G-d or a king.</p> <p>Repeated pausal forms of אַמְתְּךָ (although the pausal is usually on an <i>ethnachta</i> or <i>sof-pasuk</i>) to create more individual phrases.</p>	
Question	Student response	Commentary
01.5	<p><b>Before</b> Samuel knew G-d and <b>before</b> G-d's word <b>will</b> be revealed to him. G-d continued to call Samuel on for <u>a</u> third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, "Behold here I am because you called to me," and Eli understood that <b>it was</b> G-d calling the lad.</p>	<p>טרם means 'no yet' as opposed בטרם which means 'before' - major</p> <p>יגלה Although the verb is in the future tense, in context it is translated in the past (perfect).</p> <p>בְּשִׁלִישֵׁת literally means 'on <i>the</i> third [time]' but in context 'a third time' is perfectly acceptable.</p> <p>The word היה 'it was' is not in the text but again, in context, the translation is most suitable.</p>
2.1	<p>He uses a typical prophetic expression, "So says G-d ... "</p> <p>Use of the word Israel but in two different contexts: In the phrase 'G-d of Israel', Israel here refers to the entire Israelite nation whereas in the phrase, 'I have anointed you over my people, over Israel', Israel refers to the Kingdom of Israel i.e. the ten tribes as opposed to the Kingdom of Judah.</p> <p>He makes a dramatic exit at the conclusion of the speech - 'He opened the door and fled.'</p>	<p>A credit worthy answer.</p> <p>A clever point but not really dramatic and therefore does not really answer the question.</p> <p>Although this is not dramatic speech but a 'dramatic exit', it does lend a theatrical conclusion to an already vivid picture of what is going to take place to the house of Ahab</p>

# Paper 3 – Poetry

Question	Student response	Commentary
01.2 (a)	<i>'groups'</i>	Obviously the candidate has tried to avoid the literal translation but the problem mentioned in the Mark Scheme still applies. 'Groups' implies collective units in contrast to 'types' which refers to individual entities.
01.2 (b)	<i>'family' does not make sense in context'</i>	Part of the answer in the MS is given and this would deserve a mark since an attempt was made in 1.2 (i).
01.3	<i>'He worshipped idols'</i>	A suitable answer.
01.4	<i>'In many ways the root הלך follows the pattern of a Pé-Yud verb which takes a tzere vowel in the imperfect.'</i>	Correct and definitely worth a mark.
01.6	<p>Use of perfect tense throughout the passage.</p> <p>עָצְמוּ לִי אֶלְמוֹנוֹתַי מִחוּל יָמַי <i>Its widows were stronger to me from the sand of the seas.</i></p> <p>הַפְלֵתִי I fell</p>	<p>This would reduce the overall mark by one as the candidate has not recognised that the passage foretells a future event using the prophetic past. Some translations use the present tense and this would be accepted.</p> <p>Use of 'its' which is literal is fine because the possessive pronoun of 'people' can be 'its' as well as 'theirs'.</p> <p>In context (a prophecy of doom) עָצְמוּ cannot be translated as 'stronger' since this would give a positive meaning and hence incorrect.</p> <p>However the candidate failed to recognise the n of comparison. This is considered a minor mistake.</p> <p>Hiphil not recognised: a minor error</p>



Question	Student response	Commentary
01.7	<p><i>'Israel has always been warned to distance themselves from the idolatrous practices of the nations and yet has stooped to a lower level than they.'</i></p> <p>Synonyms for 'path' דרך שבילים נתיבה implying whichever way they went they sinned.</p>	<p>Similar to the first point in the MS and worth credit.</p> <p>A suitable answer.</p>
02.1	<p><i>השערה is a feminine singular verb referring to 'fire' or is a general verb meaning 'it is stormy'. Daat Mikra says it can also refer to וסביביו although the noun is masculine singular.</i></p>	<p>Credit should be given for an explanation from a reputable source.</p>
02.4	<p><i>'chiastic: "a free-will offering, let me sacrifice to You; I will thank Your Name O L-rd for it is good" [where the main clauses occupy the end of the first part of the verse and the beginning of the second part of the verse</i></p> <p><i>non-chiastic: 'with Your Name save me; with Your might, avenge me ' [where the first parts of each phrase are parallel and similarly the second parts; noun-verb, noun-verb.]</i></p>	<p>The question asks for examples not <b>types</b> of parallelism but since examples were given the appropriate marks can be awarded for these examples.</p>

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## Notes



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