

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/12

Essay

Key messages

- Essays should be written in formal English.
- Use clear, specific vocabulary rather than abstract and overly complex words and phrases.
- Do not use abbreviations such as 'don't', 'it's'.
- Proofread answers afterwards and correct errors.
- Writing a plan before the essay often results in clearer, well-structured arguments.
- Do not spend too long writing an introduction.
- Use paragraphs to construct a coherent argument.
- Successful conclusions are those which step back and form an independent judgement on the issues discussed.
- Focus carefully on the specific wording of the question.
- Give appropriate examples to support ideas and opinions.
- Avoid listing, describing or having too many examples.
- Do not use headings or titles which are different from the question – these often distract from the question and argument.
- Evaluation (the ability to step back and offer an independent judgement on the issues discussed) should be included as part of the argument.
- Use legible handwriting.

General comments

The questions engaged the vast majority of candidates and many wrote detailed and well-structured arguments. It is important for candidates to try to structure and develop a coherent argument rather than write as much as possible. These essays were often repetitive, descriptive and often moved away from the focus of the question.

Candidates made good use of the time available with the majority choosing to construct their essay within a previously determined plan or template. This ensured that the question was explored, with some attempt at a definition of terms, followed by a debate within the main body, and concluding with what, in many cases, was a summary of previously cited points. It is this final section that differentiated between the good and very good responses. Rather than a summary, a wider viewpoint is better, along with a projection of where the case may develop in the future, or what hurdles need to be crossed before more progress is made. Overall, essays of the highest quality were those that considered several perspectives and did not base their argument on one viewpoint. Some essays showed too much evidence of unhelpful formulaic structuring which included a heading that was only loosely based on the question and a series of general subheadings. This did not help the argument remain focused on the question.

The vast majority of candidates wrote sufficiently clearly to be easily understood and there were some good examples of a range of vocabulary and appropriate lexis. Vocabulary was a strength in many responses, including words like 'detrimental', 'deforestation', 'exacerbated', 'exploited' and phrases such as 'existential threat' and 'compounded this challenge'. There was also good use of technical language. Grammar was a significant weakness for many candidates. Verb and tense agreement and issues with articles were the most common error seen and on **Question 9** it was unfortunate how many learners wrote 'The news are...'. 'Since past ten years' was also another common error. Other frequently seen issues were run on sentences and sentences starting with 'which' as well as a common inability to use 'and' before the last item in a list. Spelling was generally a strength but it was noted that many spelt more complex words such as 'exponential' correctly but there were common misspellings in the same essay such as 'definitaly' and 'convinient'. Homophones were a problem and confusion between 'its' and 'it's' were frequent. Register was often appropriate as most learners had a clear understanding of what constitutes formal language. However, there

were still plenty of issues with learners using contractions and non-academic constructions such as 'on the flip side' or 'To start off..'. Some of the weaker responses had a lack of appropriate punctuation, sentence control and paragraphing, making their arguments hard to follow.

Most candidates understood the questions though there were occasions where the command words of the question were misinterpreted. This resulted in a one-sided, unbalanced argument that did not unlock the potential of the question and give space for a wider range of related arguments. There was evidence of candidates introducing material in their analysis that was linked to the theme but not necessarily clearly focused on the topic. For example, there were many long explanations of online news and newspapers in **Question 9** but without necessarily relating these to the wording of the question. Many points raised lacked support. Many candidates explored the ideal situation or personal view without examining the opposite view to produce a more balanced and fair assessment of a case. Conclusions were mostly logical when they emerged, but these were often just summaries of previously introduced material.

Many candidates selected appropriate information to support their case. Examples were generally 'applied' and used 'to support the main ideas and opinions.' However, there was a tendency to treat these as an 'add on' rather than using them as an integral means to develop the argument. Some candidates listed examples without attaching them, to an argument which focused on the question. The strategic employment of examples and information is key to the scoring marks in the higher levels and when this was achieved the essay gained strength and stature. Some responses, however, were very general with no examples at all which meant that the argument lacked conviction.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

For many people, the past is more appealing than the present or the future. Discuss.

This question proved to be challenging for many that chose it. It requires some quite sophisticated reasoning by considering three time zones: past, present and future, which was difficult for many candidates. Learners who chose it found it difficult to find concrete examples to support their points and their responses then became vague and unclear. Successful arguments included clear examples and dealt with these in detail, e.g., an injured or retired sportsperson looking back wistfully to when they were at their prime or someone whose life had gone wrong looking back to a happier childhood. The less successful responses were often descriptive, such as about the candidate's schooldays, with the fact that these were happy. The argument was more effectively approached by referring to historical events and, for many, the simple life of the past which was seen as uncomplicated and lacking the many diverse, worrying issues facing people today. Many references to the future were negative and almost apocalyptic as the present world is rife with serious and unsurmountable problems. Essays were improved by using examples and scenarios, as well as referring to family history.

Question 2

Evaluate the view that it is justifiable to use animals in scientific research.

Most learners examined both sides of the argument, citing arguments about animals being less important than people and the impossibility of human testing as well as the cruel ways animals are treated and the lack of a right to play God. Looking at both sides gave candidates the opportunity to form an evaluative conclusion, with learners often saying that they agreed with animal testing for medical conditions as long as the appropriate safeguards were in place. Exemplification, mainly focused on the experiments conducted by psychologists, included the 'monkey toy', 'parrot learning' and 'elephant training' experiments. Candidates named cosmetic brands that had conducted tests on animals in the past but, due to pressure, had changed to a more ethical approach. Candidates explained the role of research for medical reasons, with only a few giving examples where this had been successful. Some candidates suggested that vaccines and other new drugs should be tested on criminals and that this would act as a suitable deterrent. As has been seen in previous sessions, the command word 'evaluate' is not properly understood by many candidates. The notion of presenting a balanced and fair assessment of several perspectives of the issues surrounding research using animals eluded many candidates with the resulting essays tending to emphasise the plight of defenceless animals and perceiving humans as cruel aggressors as opposed to giving equal consideration to the need for testing to save human lives. Less successful arguments drifted into a description of the ill-treatment of species in a broader sense rather than focusing on the matter of scientific research.

Question 3

Water is becoming a major reason for conflict between nations. Discuss.

Candidates sometimes misunderstood the question and discussed the importance of water in terms of creating dams and the detrimental environmental impact humanity has caused to water bodies. However, there was some discussion about how dams are used to supply energy in China and North Africa and how this resulted in bloodshed. They also described how polluting a water body shared by different countries, such as the Bellandur River, has created conflict. Dependency on water trade routes and the need to share resources, such as the Brahmaputra River between India and Pakistan and the Suez Canal, were also discussed. Also mentioned was that ownership of water bodies creates power, and this, in turn, causes conflict. Mention was also made of the Houthis attacking vessels carrying cargo. Less successful candidates tended to list conflicts and say if they were related to water or not. Consideration of the historical tensions surrounding water as well as the shortages that have occurred through the process of global warming, droughts, and other regional issues added breadth and interest to some enlightened viewpoints. It was welcoming to see candidates giving some consideration to other parts of the world and their challenges. It was also interesting to see mention of water being used as a currency by some nations.

Question 4

To what extent are workers' rights respected in your country?

It was commendable to see most essays focused on one specific country to satisfy the 'your country' rubric. Furthermore, there was evidence of impressive knowledge of the country's legislation concerning the protection of workers from a wide range of perspectives. Voices of concern were raised in most essays and the use of pertinent contemporary examples further emphasised that this was a real concern in India. Candidates were aware of the injustice faced by workers, most notably in the service and agricultural sectors. It became clear that many workers in manufacturing goods were still poorly paid and their rights not protected. There was good appreciation of the vastness of the country and how difficult it is to enforce laws or for perpetrators of dangerous practices to be stopped. Notably, many candidates recognised that conditions were improving compared to those endured by their parents and grandparents. Less convincing responses were descriptive and did not always keep the wording of the question in focus.

Question 5

All countries are now better prepared to prevent the spread of disease. Evaluate this statement.

Many responses used the Covid-19 outbreak as their main example throughout. Some candidates lapsed into describing the issues with the pandemic and lockdown rather than explaining if countries were now better prepared. Candidates that used the Covid-19 outbreak to demonstrate what the world had now learned, generally answered the question more clearly. Some candidates discussed other historical diseases and why these spread so readily, such as the plague, HIV and Ebola. Vaccines and immunisations were linked with diseases that have been nearly eradicated, such as polio and measles. The sharing of vaccines by richer countries was seen as key to helping the whole world prepare for further pandemics. Candidates cited that India had created their own vaccine for Covid 19 and readily shared it with other nations. Some candidates suggested education was the key to surviving another pandemic, with the simple message of handwashing and keeping apart.

Question 6

Tourism always has a damaging effect on the environment. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Successful arguments offered many examples of important historical and cultural sites that tourists visit which have been damaged, defaced or littered. Issues such as the pollution of water bodies with rubbish; the destruction of corals by snorkelling and water sports; the trampling of flora and fauna; deforestation for tourist infrastructure such as for roads and hotels and, finally, the use of damaging transport creating air pollution. There were a range of examples from many countries, including India, Dubai, Nepal and the Maldives. The answers to some essays seemed to imply that the reading of the question stopped after the word 'effect.' Many responses saw candidates exploring economic and human issues rather than considering the effect on the environment. The challenge sets out the notion of tourism 'always has a damaging effect' but many essays did not use this as a trigger for the exploration of the fact that tourism can have a positive effect on the environment by supporting conservation, development and the maintaining of natural surroundings

through the income generated by tourism. Most candidates approached their response by considering pollution (noise, air, water, land) and the expansion of existing communities by building modern facilities (hotels, restaurants, expanding airports, road systems). It was common to see candidates not expressing the extent to which they agreed with the question by only stating one side of the argument.

Question 7

To what extent do you agree that reading is the best way to acquire knowledge?

Many read the question as being an internet versus books debate. Some candidates did not consider the fact that it was necessary to read the information on the internet before any learning could take place and therefore the skills of reading had to be acquired before doing this. Answers revealed the common belief that books are outdated, and that learning can only be effectively achieved by using a computer. Whilst it was fair to consider that online learning involved resources that could be electronically updated with some frequency, it was refreshing to discover that many candidates recognised how sites such as Wikipedia could lead to the acquiring of suspect and unreliable knowledge. Other issues such as the availability of the necessary hardware and software in schools and homes were welcome inclusions in the most balanced responses to the question. The fact that books are still regarded highly despite their edition was encouraging. Many candidates struggled to exemplify their responses to this question and often, when examples were included, they were descriptive. Candidates compared the online presence of YouTube videos, bloggers, films, podcasts and other visual or verbal means of learning with the reading a text. The virtues and delights of reading for understanding, developing language skills and reading for pleasure were investigated. Some texts were upheld as important to read as they taught life lessons; for example, the Bhagwot Geeta – bible of knowledge and the history of partition.

Question 8

Using statistical data is crucial when making decisions. Discuss.

Candidates largely understood the question and used a considerable amount of technical terminology in their responses. Qualitative and quantitative data were compared, as were risk taking and calculated risk taking. Examples were mainly data driven which often led to candidates illustrating unusual points, such as: '63% of people in India would try out a toilet before they bought one'. Other examples were more helpful in relation to buying products, calculating losses in business and sales projection. Personal preference and bias were also mentioned as difficulties precluding the making of accurate decisions. By using contemporary issues and personal experiences candidates were mostly able to unravel the complexities of statistical data and examine the extent to which today's population rely on its accuracy and reliability. That created a dilemma as statistics are representative of a sample of data rather than empirical, definitive information. Most essays concluded that one cannot survive without the support of statistical data. However, the few candidates who also considered the idea that there is still room for impulsive choices and selections were able to fulfil the requirements of the question by refuting the idea that statistical data is crucial when making decisions.

Question 9

To what extent does online news remove the need for printed newspapers?

The vast majority of candidates understood the question and discussed the relevance, easy access and scope of online news, compared with a plethora of issues relating to traditional newspapers. The validity and authenticity of printed papers, compared with the possibility of fake news, was also a major point exemplified by a variety of examples. The lack of access for poorer countries, due to no internet connections or devices to access it, was commented on. One candidate suggested that being able to access the internet in India demonstrated how wealthy you were. Candidates pointed out the tactile sensation of touching paper and how the smell and feeling of actually reading a 'real' text released dopamine in the brain. Others mentioned nostalgic feelings from childhood, such as watching their fathers reading the paper at breakfast, with a cup of coffee. The addition of videos, clips and audio extracts in online news was highlighted as a positive aid to understanding key concepts. Most candidates commented on the significant time lapse with printed news, compared to the up-to-date news feed on online news. Many responses were informed and clear but tended to be descriptive rather than offering a balanced debate. Assumptions and assertions were commonly cited: newspapers are for the elderly who like to sit on their terrace and read the news with a cup of tea; the younger generation are more active and mobile and need their news on the go; newspapers involve a subscription whereas online news is free, indicating how often young people think internet access is a free service because they do not pay the bill.

Question 10

Participation in drama or other performing arts brings only benefits to young people. Discuss.

Many candidates examined the virtues of drama with some reference to other performing arts such as musical performance and dance. Better responses revealed the tensions within families when a young person had talent and wanted to pursue drama or music and were prevented or discouraged by parents whose view was that this would lead to an uncertain future. The reaction of many candidates was to explain and celebrate the potential for improving life skills such as maintaining relationships with others, communication skills as well as handling stress and difficult situations through examining these in a dramatic context. In addition, the physical experience of dramatic performance and the playing of a musical instrument, including singing, was also explored in the better essays. The broadness of this question seemed to cause some candidates difficulty, whereby they gave vague and descriptive responses with limited exemplification. Some included other forms of art such as painting and drawing, which was not relevant to the question. A number of candidates found the second half of the question relating to 'young people' difficult to respond to and answers mostly stated that older people would struggle to cope with the physicality of performing arts. Some candidates misunderstood the question and discussed the validity of attending performing art clubs after school. Some candidates felt that drama was not viable as a career for young people but was only suitable as a recreational activity.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/22 Comprehension

Key messages

Thorough reading of the material in the insert, and of all the questions, is essential prior to attempting to compose any written responses. Given the differing demands of the question types set, across the logical reasoning (**Section A**) and reading comprehension (**Section B**), it is especially important for candidates to establish *exactly* what each question or sub-question is asking them to do, and how much information they need to offer in response to each sub-question. Candidates should aim to identify whether each question:

- states specifically in the question stem how many ideas they should provide (e.g., **1(b)(i)** and **1(b)(ii)** [two disadvantages explained, for four marks, in each] and **1(c)** [one piece of the Additional Information]) or implies this by the number of marks available (**1(d)(i)**, **1(d)(ii)** and **1(d)(iii)**, and much of **Section B**)
- is testing only the location and identification of the relevant ideas (much of **Section B**), or whether explanation and development of the chosen points is required (e.g., **1(a)**, **1(b)(i)** and **1(b)(ii)**)
- demands own knowledge, interpretation or wider thought, i.e., the answer does not (directly) appear in the material (**2(i)** and, to an extent, **2(g)**).
- assists with location of the correct responses in the material by the line numbers given, if any, or other clues present in the question wording (much of **Section B**)
- any word limit is imposed, necessitating a concise summary which, nevertheless, conveys the essential points with a degree of precision (**2(e)**, **2(f)** and **2(h)**)
- ideas need to be communicated principally in candidates' own words (**2(d)** only).

General comments

In both **Sections A** and **B**, the vast majority of candidates demonstrated high levels of understanding of the material, and a good degree of engagement with the questions set. There were very few infringements of the rubric, with blank response areas rare and hardly any candidates, for example, offering more than one piece of information in **Question 1(c)**. Few scripts scored very low total marks.

The vast majority of candidates communicated their ideas clearly in written English, also organising their answers in the appropriate response areas. Errors of grammar, spelling and expression rarely rendered responses unintelligible, though these did occasionally result in lapses of clarity and precision. Most candidates were able to offer the appropriate number of points relative to the available marks for each question, and seemed prepared for the range of question styles put before them. Inevitably, perhaps, some candidates found it more challenging to select the essential relevant points from the material, and to offer sufficient detail and precision, in questions with specific constraints. This was especially true of those questions in which a word limit was imposed (**2(e)**, **2(f)** and **2(h)** this session) or which required ideas to be presented mainly in candidates' own words (**2(d)**); please see more detailed comments below regarding these questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The scenario presented for **Section A**, relating to a forthcoming family celebration of a golden wedding anniversary, was clearly well understood by the vast majority of candidates in the cohort. Very few responses at all demonstrated significant misunderstandings of the material. Indeed, most candidates had plenty to

offer, especially in the extended responses required in Questions 1(a) and, to a lesser extent, 1(b)(i) and 1(b)(ii).

This session's logical reasoning exercise asked for consideration of three options; a surprise party, a day at the zoo, and a luxury hotel weekend. While all three clearly presented distinctive features, in such cases, there may be instances when two – or even all three – possibilities are (un)suitable, when matched against the requirements of the people involved. Credit can only be gained, in the extended questions requiring candidates to link ideas found in different parts of the material (1(a), 1(b)(i) and 1(b)(ii) this time), for those features which form the clearest advantage or disadvantage, depending on the focus of the question. For example, some candidates identified that Antony and Maria Ackwood, though in their 70s, are in good health and enjoy a good level of physical fitness, and offered this as an advantage for walking around the zoo, in terms of the proposition posing no physical challenge to them. However, this was also true of the party and the hotel weekend, so could not be credited. For the hotel, however, there was specific reference to 'woodland trails', among other leisure facilities, in the brief descriptors of each location/event, therefore distinct from the health and fitness information, which was found in the Background. The Ackwoods' enjoyment of walking, therefore, was a much more obvious advantage in **Question 1(b)(i)**, when paired with the presence of these trails.

Similarly, there may well be a 'middle option' of three, in terms of suitability. An example here would be Francesca's workload in preparing food. In **Question 1(a)**, for instance, a number of candidates concluded that preparing a picnic was not too much effort for Francesca, especially as she works in events and catering. However, such a response does not take into account that, if her parents were to go to the luxury hotel for the weekend, Francesca would have no food preparation to manage at all. Conversely, the work involved in the picnic for the zoo trip is not a convincing disadvantage either, since the surprise party Francesca would cater, for 120 guests, would involve significantly more stress, time and organisation, even if she had help from James and/or her own catering company. As such, this was a point which, while it was clearly *true* of the zoo trip, was neither a clear advantage nor an obvious disadvantage, when contextualised within the logic of the scenario as a whole.

- (a) The 10-mark extended question, **Question 1(a)**, asked for balance but with the thrust of the argument being in favour of one particular option; the zoo trip. Candidates were, therefore, required to develop or explain (link across the material) three advantages and one disadvantage. Occasional responses conveyed the same number of advantages and disadvantages (equal balance) or, more rarely, included more valid disadvantages than advantages, an outcome which does not align with the logic of the question and so will be limited in terms of the overall mark achievable. More often, however, full marks were not obtained because too few of the points selected were sufficiently developed. Many responses also included irrelevant material and/or features which could be true of more than one of the propositions, as explained above.

It is valid for candidates to use the context provided to explain the importance of a point they have included. Some thoughtful examples formulated an advantage from the shy grandson with the hearing impairment (Additional Information point 11), such as *James's six-year-old would be able to enjoy this trip more, despite having a hearing impairment and being shy, as there is a small crowd of people who he is familiar with and because the zoo is primarily a visual experience* [a very well-developed point]. There was occasional misunderstanding here, however, with some candidates citing *James* as the one with a hearing impairment, rather than his son. As ever, while inaccurate observations cannot gain credit, a valid following or connecting point may do so, on the principle of 'no further penalty'. In relation to explanation from context, there does need to be supporting evidence in the material for the viewpoint, as opposed to reliance on speculation. Examples include how quiet or busy the zoo might be on the day of the possible visit. (In **Question 1(b)(i)**, similarly, some candidates assumed the Ackwoods would enjoy watching the celebrities present at the luxury hotel; a deduction for which the material provided absolutely no evidence.)

There was frequently far too much made, in **Question 1(a)**, of the minibus ride around the animal enclosure, with a number of candidates suggesting Antony, as a former train driver, would enjoy *driving* the minibus himself. This was too unlikely a proposition to credit. Similarly, those candidates who considered that the minibus tour would benefit the elderly Ackwoods, in that *they will not get tired/will not have to walk too far*, had not clearly understood their level of physical fitness, as stated in the Background.

On the other hand, there was evidence of good logical thinking in the use of some parts of the material, such as the candidate who deduced, from Additional Information point 5: *Antony and Maria prefer spending time with their grandchildren. This will give them the opportunity to bond with*

their eldest granddaughter as they do not talk to her every day. This was in contrast to the more usual connection made here, including in this very well-developed response: *Due to the trip being only immediate family, Antony and Maria get to spend a lot of time with their grandchildren, which they prefer. As they talk to Katarina's youngest children most days, they can further strengthen their bond with them.*

Most candidates did correctly pick up on the information in the Background (which was, incidentally, often well used by candidates this session) regarding the Ackwoods' 'five grandchildren' being 'the most important part of their lives' and/or Additional Information point 1, stating that Antony and Maria prefer 'to treat their grandchildren whenever they can', rather than spending 'a lot of money on themselves'. It was necessary to recognise, if using these elements in the response, that the *most* time would be spent with the grandchildren at the zoo (the whole day, and with no other guests/only immediate family invited) and that, while almost certainly the cheapest of the three proposals, the zoo trip would probably present the most opportunities to treat the five children, with snack food, drinks, toys and souvenirs, for example. Indeed, the desire not to spend too much money on themselves was variously offered in all three extended questions, so in response to all three options. To gain credit, it needed to be clearly understood that the Ackwoods would not be paying for any of the three proposed celebrations, and linked to another relevant idea. (For example, in **1(b)(ii)**, some candidates deduced that a reason against the party might be the couple's preference for their three children – or, in reality, Francesca and James – not to incur excessive or extravagant expenditure on their behalf. On the other hand, in **Question 1(b)(i)**, the opportunity to experience a level of luxury, at the five-star hotel, to which they would not normally treat themselves, was a clear advantage of this proposition, but was rarely an angle picked up on by candidates.)

Some candidates chose information from the material which was the *least* obvious in terms of potential benefits, or disadvantages. The points of interest relating to the Ackwoods' food preferences, for example, offer useful illustration here. Additional Information point 13 states that the Ackwoods normally enjoy simple, home-cooked healthy meals but prefer 'more adventurous food when dining out'. A number of candidates made too much of this in **Question 1(a)**, especially. While it was possible to use the 'dining out' element here as a disadvantage ('balance'), in that the picnic proposed by Francesca *might be too simple*, those who tried to use the 'adventurous food' as an advantage did not clearly understand that both the surprise party and the luxury hotel weekend were likely – if not guaranteed – to provide more variety and quality of food to the guests. (Indeed, the reference to 'gourmet dining experiences' at the hotel was a far more obvious advantage for the five-star hotel weekend, in terms of their preferences when eating out, so could gain credit in **Question 1(b)(i)**.)

Another general principle applicable to extended questions, such as **Question 1(a)**, relates to the crediting of pieces of information found together in the material. Additional Information point 8 contained two ideas which were potential advantages for the zoo trip, specifically the zoo's 'international awards' for 'high standards of animal welfare' and its well-known 'tigers and snow leopards'. The relevance and importance of these features of the zoo could clearly be explained with reference to Antony's liking for 'big cats' (from Additional Information point 3) – also occasionally and successfully linked to the prospect of viewing roaming lions, on the minibus tour of the enclosure – and Katarina's eldest daughter's keen interest in 'animal rights' (from Additional Information point 12), potentially forming two developed points. An example of the latter point being developed included: *The zoo has also won international awards for its captive breeding programmes and high standards of animal welfare. Katrina's eldest daughter would be pleased to know this as an animal rights activist and be excited to see these standards implemented first-hand.* If the whole of Additional Information point 8 is quoted together, however, it counts as a single relevant point, though both valid links/explanations, if present, can also be credited. For full credit, the two limbs of Additional Information point 8 needed to be offered separately, each in connection with the appropriate accompanying points, since these could be found elsewhere in the material, and this is the essential skill tested here.

The presence of a 16-year-old 'animal rights activist' was also sometimes successfully presented as a disadvantage, in so far as *she might object on principle to the idea of viewing animals kept in cages*, or even that *she might start a protest or argue with the zoo staff*. Since Additional Information point 12 could logically be argued either way, its mere inclusion in a response was insufficient for credit, unless clearly stating it as an advantage or disadvantage. Other valid disadvantages, satisfying the question rubric's requirement to provide and explain a point of balance, included: The potential misbehaviour of Katarina's children (please also see paragraph

below); the exclusion of close childhood friends Jerzy and Susana (though this was a more obvious advantage for **Question 1(b)(i)**, hence credit for the exact same points could not be awarded twice, on the principle of 'reversal', or repetition), which *might offend them or disappoint the Ackwood couple*; concerns along the lines of the zoo *not seeming a very special place for an occasion like a golden wedding anniversary and the focus will be on the grandchildren rather than Antony & Maria themselves*, as well as the fact that *neither James nor Katarina is specifically in favour of the zoo trip, so might not be very enthusiastic about it*. (This point was occasionally, and usually more effectively, argued positively, as a way for Francesca not to appear to be 'taking sides' against either of her siblings, who had each expressed a clear preference for one of the other two options, and whose relationship seems somewhat distant, even antagonistic.)

To gain full marks in questions with this format, it is essential that candidates develop the balance (disadvantage) negatively, rather than offering mitigation. An example would be that Francesca tends to find Katarina's three children 'very loud and poorly behaved' (Additional Information point 2); clearly a valid disadvantage of the zoo day. However, some candidates went on to say that this would not be a problem (mitigation), because Antony and Maria love their grandchildren, or are very close to the youngest two, talking with them 'almost daily' (Additional Information point 5), so they might not mind this. A better development, for full credit, was to explain that *Francesca would have to spend the entire day in their company, including in the enclosed space of a minibus to tour the animal enclosure, or to say that the children might disturb the animals, or cause embarrassment to the family if they misbehaved in such a public place*.

- (b) (i)** The most popular and well-developed responses, which correctly made links between pieces of information found in different places in the material, included the luxury hotel's heated pool being likely to appeal to Maria, with her love for swimming but not in cold water (hotel details linked with Additional Information point 7), and the opportunity for both Antony and Maria to enjoy the 'gourmet dining experience', given that they prefer 'more adventurous food when dining out' (hotel details linked with Additional Information point 13). The 'woodland trails', also mentioned in the outline hotel details in the material, were also frequently and successfully connected with the information about their walking (and, at a push, cycling), found in the Background.

A further example of a thoughtful point, making good use of the material, suggested: *As Antony and Maria do not spend a lot of money on themselves, spending two nights at a luxurious hotel which celebrities attend, all paid for by their children, might be the perfect way to celebrate such a monumental milestone.* [2 marks; linking Additional Information point 1 with elements of both the Background and the hotel weekend's outline details].

Despite the information in the Background regarding the couple's grandchildren being 'the most important part of their lives', it was acceptable to include, as an advantage, the (surprise) presence of their sole set of close childhood friends, Jerzy and Susana, with whom the Ackwoods have holidayed, at the Saturday night dinner at the hotel. Recognising that this event offers the best *opportunity to spend quality time with them*, candidates here made a clear and logical connection between Additional Information points 4 and 14. However, in order to distinguish this point from the possible creditworthy disadvantage of the exclusion of Jerzy and Susana from the zoo trip, some level of detail regarding the dinner (as opposed to a more general invitation) and why these people are important to Antony and Maria, was necessary for full credit, with two marks being available for each of two developed points.

- (ii)** Most candidates were able to offer a developed point connecting the Ackwoods' preference for quiet evenings and minimal social life (Additional Information point 4) with the relatively large intended number of potential guests at the surprise party ('around 120'). Some perceptive responses also noted that the invitees included 'extended family' and 'neighbours', i.e., a significant number of people that Antony and Maria probably only know slightly. Given their preference for spending time with the five grandchildren, and their sole set of close friends Jerzy and Susana, this was also correctly viewed as a disadvantage. Some candidates offered additional explanation of the problem here, suggesting that Antony and Maria *might find it socially awkward or feel uncomfortable to be the centre of attention* in such a setting. A very well-developed response included: *The couple does not have a very active social life and may have lost touch with a lot of the 120 guests invited to the party. This makes it quite uncomfortable for them to engage in conversation and may lead to awkwardness.* It was too speculative to rely on the idea of *loud or noisy*, however, given the inclusion of 'a classical pianist' as a form of entertainment for the guests.

Some candidates correctly identified the distasteful potential for a recurrence of arguments between Antony's cousins, given the scene at a dinner last year, alluded to in James's email to Francesca. This was good reading of the material, given the similarity of the two settings, and a number of responses made reference to how inappropriate this behaviour would be on such an important and public occasion, or that it would be rude to exclude them from the event, picking up on the reference to 'extended family' in the material. However, there was evidence of occasional misunderstanding – or perhaps just incorrect reporting – of the material in some answers, where it was stated that the previous year's quarrels had been *between Antony and his cousins*. In such instances, while that point is clearly incorrect, a valid following explanation could be credited with a mark, on the principle of 'no further penalty'.

The presence of extended family members was also successfully – if only occasionally – linked to the forthcoming 'big wedding only three weeks after' the anniversary (Additional Information point 10). It was sensible to deduce that many of the same people would be invited to both events, including the entire immediate family. This could well mean that the surprise party might be less special – even boring – as a result. Some responses proposed that a number of invitees might decide not to turn up, given that the big wedding is already arranged. Some candidates, however, made erroneous statements about costs in regard to two large events, given the Ackwoods 'are quite well off' (Additional Information point 1).

Where reference was made to the hosting costs, it is likely that the surprise party would indeed transpire to be the most expensive event of the three, and some candidates were able to use the description to outline why this might be so (hiring the 'classical pianist' and 'a professional photographer', for example, as well as catering for around 120 people). However, for full credit here, it was essential to recognise that the Ackwoods senior would not be paying for anything. The correct focus, seen in a small number of responses, was that they might feel uncomfortable to see their children paying for such an extravagant event, given that they do not ordinarily spend much on themselves/prefer to treat their grandchildren (Additional Information point 1). Similar comments apply to Francesca's workload. Since the focus of the question was on her parents' choice, creditworthy responses needed to refer to their concerns. A very good example included: *Hosting 120 people at Francesca's house might be very chaotic for her. Organising the entertainment and coordinating the invites might be too taxing and Antony and Maria would prefer Francesca spending time with them rather than running around.*

The inclusion of the family/grandchildren, and of close friends Jerzy and Susana, are both examples of 'middle option' for the surprise party. While these important people in the Ackwoods' lives would be invited, their presence would be diluted among the many other guests, so was sometimes viewed as less than ideal. However, the zoo trip excludes Jerzy and Susana entirely, while the same is true of the hotel weekend and the grandchildren, so their 'dilution' at the surprise party could not be credited as a clear disadvantage here. Occasional thoughtful responses recognised Antony and Maria's likely concern for the hearing-impaired grandson at such a busy event, however, including with the background music.

- (c) Most candidates correctly identified that Additional Information point 6, relating to Antony and Maria's former employment, was the least relevant consideration when deciding on how best to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. Common distractors included points 5 (if a clear potential threat to the secrecy of the party, and Jerzy and Susana's invitation to dinner at the hotel), 10 (though the forthcoming family wedding was clearly very similar to the proposed party, hence an obvious disadvantage creditworthy in **Question 1(b)(ii)**) and 11 (even though the shy child with a hearing impairment was thoughtfully used in a number of responses relating to the minimal interactions required, and those only with immediate family, in **Question 1(a)**, and the more intimidating crowded party environment in **Question 1(b)(ii)**). An occasional incorrect response selected material from outside the Additional Information altogether.
- (d) (i) Questions such as these three sub-questions **(1d)**, which ask candidates to show some understanding of the character and motivations of one or more of the individuals involved in the Section A scenario, often elicit good responses from candidates. This session's versions were no exception, although it was necessary to read and understand the precise focus of each sub-question before selecting the 'evidence' required. Some candidates provided answers to Questions 1dii or 1diii in response to **Question 1(d)(i)**, for example. It was also not entirely uncommon for candidates to misunderstand the instruction given to James, via Francesca, and for candidates to think that it was *James's wedding flowers* which were under investigation. This suggestion was both inaccurate and illogical, so could not gain credit, even if expressed clearly as an example of

an instruction given in Katarina's email. Occasional responses relied solely on James's email, rather than seeking corroborating evidence in Katarina's, as the question stem clearly directed.

It is also worth noting that marks can be awarded merely for identifying (i.e., quoting) relevant 'evidence' from the material, but if two relevant ideas are found in consecutive sentences in the material, it will be necessary to add some commentary or a new element, in order to show full understanding and thus gain both available marks. For example, in this first sub-question, merely stating what Katarina says about the cake, floral decorations and type of flowers would gain a single mark. For the second, candidates needed to make clear that this is evidence of Katarina's liking 'to tell other people what to do', by including one or more terms such as *instructs, orders, demands, uses a bossy tone*, or similar. Simple repetition of 'tells people' (from the question stem) similarly could not be credited by way of explanation. Another way to embellish the second point (about James) was to take the cue from the material ('I'd have no idea') and state that *Katarina indirectly commands James find out about their parents' wedding flowers [1 mark], rather than finding out for herself/making any effort herself to contact Antony and Maria and ask them.* [examples for a second mark]

- (ii) Simply quoting Katarina's statement in her email response to Francesca about her 'decorating work' on the house was not, on its own, an acceptable answer here. Without context, this is not necessarily evidence that Katarina 'is not telling the truth when saying she cannot contribute financially'. Only an occasional candidate noted that the work on her house did not appear to be urgent in nature ('decorating', rather than repairs), so could have been planned not to coincide with an important anniversary, which would have been known about well in advance. These were valid points. To gain credit otherwise from the 'decorating work'/'limited funds' idea, there needed to be a contrast with her *claiming* that this work was taking up all her funds, while simultaneously being excited to dress the children in 'smart clothes', and to have 'an excuse' for a new hairdo, as well as 'new dress, new shoes'. Some candidates went on to say that these things would be expensive, and/or that Katarina seems only too *happy to spend money on herself*, and her children, as opposed to contributing to the celebration costs, or expressing a preference for a cheaper event. Any of these were creditworthy, showing logical understanding of the situation presented. An occasional response cited the flight home from a conference abroad as an expense proving Katarina could afford to contribute to costs. However, this was both a creditworthy answer to Question 1diii and lacked logic here, since it is a work trip, therefore essential, and it is unlikely Katarina would be paying. However, those who used her attendance at a conference abroad to suggest that Katarina probably *has a well-paid job, and so should be able to afford to contribute her share of expenses*, could gain credit. This again showed thoughtful consideration of the material and application of the ideas in a logical manner.
- (iii) Most candidates gained one of the available two marks here, with the observation that Katarina states that she will 'be flying home from a conference abroad that Friday evening'. The follow-on from the material, 'so can't help with the organisation' had been used to form the question stem, so was not a valid explanation. Occasional responses demonstrated some confusion over whether she would still be abroad, or at the conference, or suggested that she would only reach home on the evening of the party, rather than the day before, to help with last-minute organisation. Although the party day was not specified in the material, it was assumed to be on the Saturday. It was not logical to propose that it was to be held on the Friday evening, when Katarina was only just due to be landing, yet also clearly planned the time to have a hair appointment, and dress up, prior to attending the event.

Relatively few candidates picked up Katarina's emphasis on 'busy, busy, busy' or that she had taken three weeks to respond to her sister's email, about an important family event, which would surely necessitate a quick response. Fewer still made any reference to Katarina's flattery of her sister's capabilities, or her mentioning of Francesca's contacts, both of which made it sound as though it would be very easy for Francesca to do all the work. Notable good examples of these more subtle points, however, included: *Moreover, she deflects it on to Francesca, 'You're just so brilliant at all that, clever big sister'* which suggests Katarina would not do work even if she was present [2 marks]/... *actively coaxing and flattering Francesca into doing the organising by herself/She's sweet talking Francesca into doing all the work/... tried buttering up her sister to do the work* [the latter three examples each being worth a single mark]

Section B

Question 2

Candidates generally seemed to engage very well with the subject matter of the **Section B** material, relating to an innovative arts programme in US prisons. As is usual in the reading comprehension section of the question paper, differentiation resulted chiefly from candidates' ability to convey the precise detail and nuance of the original in their responses. This was especially so when required to conform to particular rubric instructions, specifically in those questions requiring them to write mainly in their own words (**Question 2(d)**) or within a limited number of words (**Questions 2(e), 2(f) and 2(h)**). Unless so instructed, candidates are well advised to reproduce the points they have identified from the material as they appear therein. Unnecessary attempts to reword the ideas risk losing the precision – and, thus, the validity – of the points offered. Questions testing summary skills (word-limited) should be answered in continuous prose and candidates should resist the temptation to reproduce the question stem, or other introduction, at the start of these responses, since this 'wastes' available words but receives no credit.

- (a) The opening question in **Section B** was usually very well answered, with almost all candidates identifying the correct part of the material for their responses, guided by the wording of the question stem. However, as noted above, this was a very good example of where candidates made the question more difficult than it needed to be, in attempting to render the ideas in their own words, when this was not a requirement here. The important adjectives – 'harsh', 'dehumanising', 'hardened' and 'vicious' – were not easily replaced with close synonyms, so it was certainly preferable, in this instance, to identify and convey these concepts exactly as they were expressed in the material.
- (b) Most candidates gained the single available mark here, although some referred to the humanising of *prisons*, rather than 'prisoners'. Occasional responses did not find the correct focus, while others sometimes repeated 'them', so became unclear as to whether 'prisons', 'prisoners' or even 'art classes' were intended. It is also worth noting that, in single-mark questions, as here and in all three parts of **Question 2(c)** (please see below), only the first attempted response is considered.
- (c) (i) All three parts of **Question 2(c)** required candidates to identify vocabulary from the material, prompted by a synonym given in the question stem. Most answers to **2(c)(i)** were correct, with *demystify*. There were a number of distractors, however, not all of which were infinitive verbs, as the synonym given in the question stem directed. Nearly all responses were taken from the correct line numbers, in all three sub-questions of **2(c)**. Occasional candidates attempted their own definitions of the given terms, however, instead of looking in the material.
(ii) The second of the three vocabulary questions proved most accessible for candidates, with almost all correctly identifying *collaboration* as the synonym for the term 'partnership'. Most of the incorrect responses had selected *business partner* instead. Incompatible grammatical forms, such as *collaborative* (adjective), could not gain credit.
(iii) This proved to be the most challenging of the three sub-questions in **2(c)**. The question stem included the direction to select an 'exact word' (singular), so answers which prefaced the correct one (*mindfulness*) with the adjective *creative* could not be credited. It was perhaps unfortunate that the definition in the question stem included an adjective, as this would usually be a pattern to be repeated in the format of the response. However, there were other incorrect answers, including some which were not nouns, i.e., did not have the same grammatical form as the original, which is essential in responses to these questions.
- (d) **Question 2(d)**, worth five marks, was the only one this session which required candidates to answer using their own words. Candidates are permitted to repeat, in their responses, some specialist vocabulary with no obvious synonyms, such as 'prison(s)', '(the) art(s)' and 'therapy'. It is also permissible to respond with adjectives or verbs derived from nouns in the material, and similar, or with different verb forms, such as *expressing/express* (from 'expression'), *violence* ('violent' in the material) and *reaction* ('reacted'). Indeed, some successful renderings of 'sadness... anger... joy' adopted such an approach, along the lines of ...sad, angry and joyful. Better examples for this mark, using entirely new terms, were *sorrow, fury and happiness*, or *pain, rage or delight*. A term too commonly repeated from the material, sometimes several times within the same response, was 'emotion(s)', for which *feeling(s)* could quite easily have been substituted. Marks were most frequently gained for conveying the ideas of 'the arts are a way to channel'; 'and deal with emotion'; 'this is to give people one of the tools to go to instead of', and 'something that could turn violent'.

Examples of mark-scheme points successfully conveyed in candidates' own words include: *a pathway for/a method of direction for* ('a way to channel'); *handle feelings/face their thoughts and feelings/tackle and fix emotional issues/process and cope with feelings* ('deal with emotion'); *numerous individuals finding themselves* ('a lot of people who end up'); *under horrendous circumstance /the hardened environments they currently reside in* ('in these difficult situations'); *simply responded impulsively/lashed out with an outburst of volatile behaviour* ('have just reacted'); *faced a lack of healthy emotional release/had no alternative for catharsis/had no other modes of venting to use* ('didn't have the outlets'); *every individual requires various sources of help* ('we all need multiple different types of outlets'); *including counselling or conversing with someone / therapy and interacting with others* ('from therapy to being able to talk to people'); *this provides an alternative solution to/offers new options for* ('this is to give people one of the tools to go to instead of'), and *acting in a manner harmful to themselves or others/causing physical harm* ('something that could turn violent'), the latter two sometimes successfully combined. An example is: *This provides other options for reaching out rather than becoming aggressive. /Arts prevent the restrained feelings from emerging otherwise, as destructive tendencies./It avoids relying on other, more dangerous coping mechanisms.* [2 marks each] Another successful conflation of two mark-scheme points was: *Everyone needs a variety of mediums [1 mark] from counsellors to someone who will listen to what they want to say [1 mark]*.

- (e) The first of three questions testing summary skills required candidates to restrict their responses to 'about 50 words'. A number of candidates included some, or even all, of the opening three sentences of the paragraph indicated by the line numbers in the question stem, which did not answer the question, and thereby 'wasted' a number of the available words. As a result, many responses exceeded 50 words by some margin. On the whole, candidates seemed to find this question challenging, not only due to the word limit imposed, but because the precision and meaning of some of the points was lost. For example, reference to the designers' *skills* was sometimes lacking in relation to the design duo's intentions for reform, while there was sometimes confusion as to whose skills, involvement and responsibility were intended in the material. The most common points gaining credit identified society's responsibility for making (and therefore towards) criminals, and the concept of locking people away and forgetting about them. Almost all responses to this question were written in continuous prose, however (please see comments about **Questions 2(f) and 2(h)** below).
- (f) This was the second question requiring candidates to summarise key ideas in a certain number of words, in this case about 30 words. Here and in **Question 2(h)**, some key points relating to this style of question are noteworthy. First of all, it is not in the spirit of such questions to write in incomplete sentences, and full marks cannot be gained by so doing. Secondly, candidates should not repeat the question stem, or include other unnecessary material, such as who Annie Buckley is, by way of introduction. Such an approach 'wastes words' and risks that creditworthy material will fall after the permitted word count. Most candidates were, nonetheless, able to access at least one of the three available marks here, most often by identifying the ideas of 'safe space' in which to 'relax'. It was common, however, to include all of lines 48–49 from the material, taking up a lot of words (up to 30) merely to convey these two simple but key concepts, for a single mark. Where a second mark or – more rarely – a third mark was awarded, this usually referred to the issue of *connection with students/teachers/in arts lessons/with artists*, and how this was either *meaningful* and/or an opportunity to interact with people prisoners might otherwise never have met. Some successful responses were able to contract these two ideas successfully, to convey both notions together in relatively few words, gaining two marks in the process. An example includes: *Prisoners establish meaningful connections with university students they would usually not meet* [only 12 words but 2 marks]. The notion of developing an identity around creative activities or studies was sometimes alluded to for a mark, whereas the point about the 'safe space' being assumed outside – but rarer and more valuable inside – prison was very rarely awarded at all.
- (g) The focus of this question was on altered perception, rather than identities and, in particular, in the eyes of the daughter of one inmate participant in the arts programme. Responses which were too general, either referring to prisoners more widely and/or to their changed identities, could not gain credit. It was essential to show understanding of the way the daughter's terms of reference (*now referring to her father as an artist [rather than a prisoner]*) and perception of her father's status had changed (*her prior shame/embarrassment compared with her newly attained pride when talking about him*). A good example, gaining both available marks here, although including all three valid mark-scheme points, was: *Whilst the daughter might once have hesitated to mention her father was a prisoner, she can now proudly say he is an artist*.

- (h) The third and final word-limited question required candidates to respond in about 20 words. Once again, repeating the whole question stem was unnecessary. *The organisers of the programme do not ask prisoners why they're there or what they've done because...* takes up 17 of the permitted 20 words, merely to repeat the question stem, and gains no credit. It was also quite common to start the response with 'Because...' and not form a complete sentence, which cannot therefore gain full credit (two marks). Most candidates successfully attempted to convey the concept of *changing identities*, while any second mark was usually awarded for prisoners *not being known for the worst thing(s) they've (ever) done*. Some precision (a superlative) was needed here, rather than the vaguer *their crimes, their past or what they've done*.
- (i) Candidates generally responded well to this more open question, which demanded some balance, in comparison with the largely positive thrust of the material's presentation of the effectiveness of art therapy for prisoners. Occasional responses were too negative and generalised about possible actions by the incarcerated (*they will attack each other with paint brushes or seek to take advantage of the people coming from outside and find a means of escape*). However, where nuanced, similar suggestions could gain credit. Examples include: *Some prisoners may have criminal connections and still be affiliated with gangs on the outside and wouldn't want it getting back to them they were doing something that wasn't seen as tough. /Some prisoners might feel judged for seeking art therapy as being soft or unmanly, this fuelling feelings of rage, violence, shame and insecurity, instead of coping*. There were also some thoughtful ideas relating to entrenched values and mindsets, the necessity of not appearing too soft or unmanly to one's fellow inmates, and a reluctance to change or accept outside help, as well as to longer-term social and psychological issues. Simpler but equally valid ideas included that some prisoners might simply not show any interest in, or aptitude for, the arts, perhaps preferring other pastimes, such as sport. The potential for competition and frustration, as well as for triggering, and the need for time and patience to develop skills, were also represented among responses to this question. Very few responses scored no marks here. Examples of good responses included: *Art therapy for prisoners may falter if it lacks individualised approaches tailored to participants' needs, or if there is an inadequate support infrastructure to facilitate meaningful expression and psychological growth [2 marks]; Not all times does art give peace and calmness. Sometimes art is formed by one's darker inner self. The therapy might have an adverse effect (reverse psychology) where the opposite happens instead of what was intended [2 marks], and It is not powerful or strong enough and cannot undo a lifetime of being raised in a certain way and having certain bad habits. It also doesn't change society as a whole and systemic issues still prevail. [2 marks]*