

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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| <p>Paper 8021/11 Essay</p> |
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Key messages

- Take care to read the question and ensure you are answering the question after each paragraph.
- Plan what you are going to write before beginning the essay.
- Write in formal English and avoid using conversational register.
- Have a focused introduction.
- Use named, specific and relevant examples to support each point in the argument.
- Write between 600 and 700 words.
- Avoid using overly formulaic structural words at the beginning of each paragraph.
- Ensure there is an evaluative conclusion.
- Use clear legible handwriting.
- Take time at the end to check over what is written and correct any errors.

General comments

Many candidates wrote interesting and clear arguments which showed they had engaged with their chosen question. Arguments usually contained 3 or 4 main points which were usually illustrated with examples, both specific and general.

Candidates should be advised that they must only answer one question. A noticeable minority responded to several, or occasionally all of the questions. Understanding the key words in the question carefully before starting to write should help candidates to stay focused on the question.

Preparing candidates to write a standard introduction is only partially successful. A number of essays did this, using specific phrases, but became weaker as they progressed and candidates needed to adapt what they had written to the specifics of their argument answering the question.

Candidates should be encouraged to make a plan. Those who noted down plans tended to have answers that were more developed and organised.

Candidates should ensure their examples are plausible and convincing to be considered appropriate for AO1.

A strong conclusion can improve a candidate's argument so it is worth allocating time to at least summarise ideas succinctly and, if possible, evaluating their argument, perhaps weighing advantages against disadvantages, or adding a new perspective or consideration.

Candidates should use more formal discourse markers, such as '*Conversely*' or '*In contrast to...*', or more precise ways of expressing ideas such as '*The key argument in favour of...*' or '*Despite these concerns, many argue that...*'. This will support a higher-level mark for AO3. Some candidates continue used a limited number of appropriately formal linking devices. Overused or incorrectly used connectors included: *To commence, to start, to add, to wrap things up, To begin (with), To start off, To start you off, To continue, Continuing on, In continuation on..., To wrap it up....*

Using separate paragraphs for each new idea will make the response more coherent and support a higher level for AO3.

Whilst there were a large number of well-expressed essays which utilised appropriate grammar and register, many responses featured language unsuitable for a formal context. Examples included the use of

contractions such as the frequent use of *it's*, *don't*, *wouldn't*, *could've*, *what's*, and *they're* instead of *it is*, *do not*, *would not*, *could have*, *what is*, and *they are*. Other frequent errors included *alot* instead of *a lot*.

Colloquial vocabulary and phrases were evident in many essays e.g.: *kids* instead of *children*, *stuff*, *crazy*, *things*, *gonna*, *wanna*, *cool*, *fun* rather than more precise or formal alternatives. There was considerable overuse of vague nouns and adjectives, such as *thing*, *stuff*, *big*, *bad/good*. Also common was the use of low-register, subjective terms, e.g. *This is a very bad form of protest* instead of offering a more precise critique. There was also the use of very informal, conversational register such as: 'Pretty scary to think about, huh?'. This is inappropriate register for a formal academic essay and should be avoided. Some took questions that asked for 'your' view to mean that they could adopt a conversational tone, with direct rhetorical appeals to the reader that did not fit the conventions of an essay (e.g. 'What do you think?'). Some candidates personally advised the reader how they should proceed in a similar situation, if it were to occur to them which is inappropriate. Candidates should write in a formal academic tone, avoiding contractions and informal vocabulary.

English language ability was competent, with most candidates using everyday vocabulary and sufficiently clear expression. Some responses were adventurous or highly fluent, and very few were in the category where communication was frequently or consistently lost. Errors were usually due to misspelling or minor grammar slips and, while these could be frequent and noticeable, they rarely impacted communication to any great extent.

Punctuation was accurate and appropriate in many essays but was also missing or misused in many responses this year, making meaning unclear in places. There was sometimes a lack of full stops, or extended passages separated only by occasional commas in place of full stops or semi-colons. This led to extremely long sentences which were hard to follow. Spelling was often accurate and there was some evidence of ambitious vocabulary being used. However, there were some confusions with homophones: *your* and *you're*, *their* or *there* instead of *they're*, *who's* instead of *whose*.

Some essays had no evaluative material and were simple statements in agreement or disagreement with the question. Some candidates tended to evaluate one argument or just in the conclusion of their essay. Evaluating 'a range' of different arguments and integrating evaluation throughout is a better approach for achieving marks in the top two levels.

The majority of scripts demonstrated understanding of the question, although precise focus on the question terms, rather than broader topic areas, was not sustained in some essays. Many responses were more descriptive than argumentative, overall, while mid-range and better responses did not only present information, but they did so in a way that proved a point and answered the question.

Most candidates offered points and ideas, but a smaller number developed more than two or three, which made it harder to produce developed arguments. The 'topic sentence' of each paragraph was often not developed further. Less successful responses often included only very short paragraphs, making several points without any development. Some lower level arguments repeated the same point, in place of development, so that the same ideas were presented multiple times.

Some candidates gave no examples or information to support their points or made only the occasional reference to an example. While some credit can be given to 'generic examples' (riots, boycotts, looting and overturning cars, **Question 9**), discussion of well-chosen specific, named examples (the actions of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, Rosa Parks, Gandhi, #MeToo and Black Lives Matter activists) offers much better and more convincing support for the arguments presented. Some candidates used the same example in almost every paragraph which does not demonstrate a range. There were some obviously fabricated statistics or survey results and although these provided 'specific' examples, they often hindered the development of the argument. While less convincing essays tended merely to name or list examples, some candidates tried to develop these, although this most often took the form of narration or description. The more successful responses were able to offer more than one example to support each point discussing and evaluating the relative strengths of these examples in relation to the line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

To what extent does the government provide effective public services to the people of your country?

Stronger responses tended to compare urban and rural provision or to discuss issues such as accessibility and funding, particularly with regard to regional differences (federal versus state provision in the United States, the north-south divide in Italy, for instance). Some of the strongest answers evaluated how efficient the public services are, considering accessibility and price. Better essays considered effectiveness from a range of perspectives, such as the ability of the police to prevent crime or the effectiveness of education in providing a safe, stimulating environment for candidates to learn in. There were some interesting responses from a range of countries, displaying large differences in services provided around the world. The range of examples of public services tended to be limited to healthcare, education, public transport and welfare systems. Some candidates did not fully understand what the term 'public services' meant, and consequently conflated services provided by public authorities with those provided *for* the public, or indeed *used by* the public in any context, but run by private enterprises. Responses were sometimes generic and lacked analysis of the government's effectiveness in delivering such services. They tended to be descriptive of the service and what it did, stating its importance and possible shortcomings. Some candidates did not provide specific examples of what public services were.

Question 2

Discuss the view that the news media should never be censored in your country.

Some candidates focused on general ideas of freedom without fully engaging with the specific context of 'news media' regulation. Occasional responses drifted into discussion of the benefits, drawbacks and effects of media in general, including social media and AI-generated sources of information, rather than focusing on the specific wording of the question. Many responses described all the different forms of information that the news provides, such as information on the weather, travel or public emergencies, and explained why these are important for the public to be aware of, often making one such type of information the central core of a paragraph, which sometimes led to the same point being repeated, i.e. that people need access to information. Stronger responses considered a wider variety of arguments and perspectives, including the extent to which this form of censorship contravenes citizens' rights. Stronger responses considered the breadth of censorship possibilities and did not just treat censorship as the complete control of information by a state or government. The most sophisticated responses elucidated the differences between censorship and bias, using apt examples and highlighting that, whether censorship is imposed on news media or not, it does not necessarily eliminate biases which – it is presumed – is one of the core justifications for censorship in the first place. Some candidates reported on their experiences in countries where state censorship of the media is routine. Good responses recognised the importance of press freedom while also acknowledging situations in which limited censorship might be considered necessary, such as to prevent the spread of harmful misinformation or panic, or to protect national security, military or trade secrets, religious and cultural sensitivities, and minors. Less successful arguments often equated censorship solely with government oppression or the spread of 'fake news' on social media. A lack of specific examples occasionally weakened otherwise well-structured answers, while some responses showed a lack of understanding of what the term 'censorship' meant.

Question 3

To what extent are art galleries and museums still necessary?

Stronger responses were analytical and included references to local or international institutions, as well as a clear personal perspective. In general, examples of items on display seemed to be limited to the *Mona Lisa* and 'dinosaur bones'. Even when prominent works were named, few candidates commented on what was specifically valuable about these making the museum or gallery 'still necessary'. Very few named galleries and museums were included, although there were some interesting local examples. Responses often showed a good level of understanding of the role of art galleries and museums in preserving culture and history, educating people of all ages and interests, and preserving important or delicate items. There was often a clear appreciation of the appeal and continuing value of such institutions, despite the ready access to information and pictorial or interactive versions of the likely exhibits in an online environment. Candidates often referred to digital alternatives and modern technology as replacements which might increase access and knowledge, but many were able to provide balanced arguments for and against continued necessity of physical buildings as repositories of valuable collections. Some essays criticised the cost of keeping

museums and art galleries going, as well as the price of art – with some very bold, negative assertions about the nature of modern art and the supposed lack of any skill involved. Others recognised that galleries and museums could be a significant source of income. Less successful essays tended to describe what happens in art galleries and museums, or to assert various claims about art and/or history, without using that information to explain why these establishments are ‘necessary’.

Question 4

Marriage is no longer necessary in modern society. Evaluate this view.

It was common for candidates to describe the benefits and drawbacks of marriage. While helping most to show an understanding of the question, this approach did not always allow for the clear addressing of the key term ‘necessary’. Some weaker arguments tended to advise the reader about how they, personally, should approach marriage. In such cases, the candidates tended to extol the virtues of marriage and explain what happens in a marriage that justified their praise of it or, conversely, they decried marriage and could be prone to insensitively asserting that certain social groups behave in certain ways in marriage, meaning it should be avoided. Several responses focused on why people get married, what happens when marriage disintegrates and what material and psychological consequences ensue for the partners and any children they may have created, which does not directly focus on the wording of the question. Better essays considered marriage beyond its conventional interpretation of a legally-binding union and considered how its necessity is dependent on factors such as one’s social group or, indeed, the culture or religion that one belongs to, as well as how certain privileges that come with marriage can only be accessed as a result of engaging in a marital union. Stronger arguments also tended to offer a more balanced analysis, discussing issues such as women’s growing independence, shifting societal values, and the high cost of weddings.

Question 5

New medicines should always be fully tested before people use them. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Most candidates understood the importance of testing new medicines to avoid serious health risks, including allergic reactions, addiction and other longer-term side effects, including possible reaction with other medicines already prescribed to a patient. However, many focused only on this side of the argument and did not consider exceptions, such as urgent access during health emergencies and the use of animals for testing. Occasional responses were focused only on animal testing and its drawbacks. If there were other perspectives discussed, they tended to be that the producers of medicines were at risk of legal challenge or that the public, at large, would lose trust in medications and wider members of the health-related industry. Good arguments presented a balanced view, addressing both the need for thorough testing and the challenges involved, including cost, time, and ethical and legal responsibilities. Candidates sometimes usefully referred to specific medications, but also relied on descriptive anecdotal evidence about the experiences friends or family have had with medicines. Better arguments assessed the importance of fully testing medicines, particularly in light of recent global health events. Common examples included the COVID-19 vaccine rollouts and historical drug safety failures. Stronger responses included ethical and scientific considerations discussing the balance between speed and safety in drug approval processes.

Question 6

To what extent is your country adequately prepared for natural disasters?

Most answers to this question demonstrated some understanding of disaster management. Some responses were descriptive rather than analytical, although stronger arguments included case studies, government strategies, and discussed areas for improvement such as infrastructure, early-warning systems, and public awareness. The work of emergency responders was widely praised, whereas post-disaster relief was deemed to be more variable in quality and speed, and it was often here that stronger responses became more evaluative. More perceptive essays were able to discuss how different communities might fare better or worse than others. Common examples given were of Hurricane Katrina (and the overall poor response) as well as the recent Californian wildfires, to which candidates were more sympathetic and noted that there are some catastrophic events which it would be virtually impossible for the country to be prepared for. Some responses were limited when describing measures that were taken and what they entailed, without explicitly stating or analysing how those measures indicated a country was suitably prepared, or not. Those candidates with information about the scale of damage caused by natural disasters or the relative effectiveness of government responses in the aftermath of natural disasters were more able to develop their arguments. There were some weaker responses which incorrectly saw warfare or terrorism as natural

disasters. The strongest responses, though, indicated that governments in certain situations lack the ability to be able to prepare or respond to disasters owing to additional factors, such as people's reluctance to evacuate their homes, financial or technological constraints, and social or cultural reasons for being less prepared or informed than others.

Question 7

All new house-building projects should include some green spaces within their plans.

Evaluate this view.

Candidates who approached the question from multiple angles tended to write more effective arguments. Responses asserting that a small lawn or a tree in front of each new dwelling will solve the pressing issues of climate change and/or deforestation over-stated the benefits. Broad interpretation included the benefits of parks and communal spaces within larger urban areas, as well as new housing developments alone. More successful arguments referred to specific advantages such as better air quality, pleasing aesthetics, support for the environment, promotion of biodiversity, and even social interaction via gardening clubs. There was consideration of the disadvantages such as the overuse of pesticides and fertilisers, the attraction of unwanted pests, and the lack of available cost-effective space in inner cities. This sometimes led to more evaluative commentary, when candidates noted that, in cities and other places where residents are potentially most in need of more green space, the cost implications of devoting space to such features, with already high house prices and demand, were likely to preclude any such possibility. Many answers were descriptive rather than analytical, and generalised, even assertive, rather than referring to specifics. However, there were some thoughtful evaluations on the impact of green areas on mental health, as a space in which communities can gather and mingle and children can play, environmental sustainability, and urban design.

Question 8

Advertising has become an unwelcome feature of our lives. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

The majority seemed to think that advertising is too intrusive and should be curbed in certain settings, such as distracting billboards at the roadside, as well as the constant interruptions to entertainment, such as in television services or on music-streaming platforms supported by advertising. Other candidates discussed concern about political advertising, as well as children and teenagers being shown unsuitable content in advertisements, especially online. Candidates commonly referred to personal experience of their annoyance when advertisements interrupt YouTube videos, along with some games being virtually unplayable on various hardware due to the increasing prevalence of required advertisements. Candidates frequently expressed annoyance at having to pay a premium to go 'ad free'. Less successful candidates struggled to name specific types of advertisements or products that are particularly forced onto consumers. Better arguments came from candidates who were able to see that the word 'unwelcome' is relative and depending on the context or situation in which the advertisements are being seen or consumed, and to consider the views of a range of stakeholders. The adverts running during the Super Bowl interval were mentioned frequently as a highly anticipated source of entertainment in themselves, as well as being expensive but highly lucrative to advertisers. Many candidates explored the role of social media in advertising, where 'influencers' are paid to promote a certain brand and make a living from it, so that one could never really know whether the recommendations in this case are genuine.

Question 9

People should be allowed to protest in any way they choose. Evaluate this statement.

Many candidates were clearly engaged with the topic and had strong personal opinions. Popular examples, both modern and historical, referenced Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, the Capitol Hill riot and the Black Lives Matter protests of 2021. A significant number of candidates referred to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution when discussing the right to protest and freedom of expression, often using it to frame their arguments about the importance of protecting civil liberties. Candidates discussed various forms of protest, ranging from peaceful marches to more disruptive actions, often reflecting on the effectiveness and consequences of different protest methods. Stronger responses made distinctions between legal rights and moral arguments, and considered the role of law enforcement, public safety, and the importance of free expression in a democratic society. Evaluation was sometimes sophisticated and showed a high level of critical thinking. Comparisons were made with countries such as Russia, North Korea, and China where

protest policies are clearly different. Stronger responses provided a balanced analysis, weighing the right to protest against the need for public order and respect for alternative views. Many argued that peaceful protests are acceptable whereas violent protests are not. Some candidates highlighted that, sometimes, protests can descend into violence – and then lose any public support – because of the behaviour of law-enforcement officers or counter-protest groups seeking to use violent means to bring the events to an end and, potentially, to demean the well-meaning intent of the original protest. Some candidates looked at acts of protest that smaller groups might take, such as those in a workplace protesting against their employer through various forms of industrial action. Less successful arguments had few or no supporting examples and were very generalised.

Question 10

International aid benefits the people providing the aid more than the people receiving it. Discuss.

Many responses asserted that donor countries benefit politically or economically from giving aid, with little explanation or evidence. A few stronger arguments examined case studies or international relations in depth and considered both the strategic and humanitarian dimensions of aid. Most responses seen tended to view aid, in terms of finance and warfare-based weaponry and artillery, through the lens of the support rendered to others in situations of armed conflict. Few responses seen considered other forms of aid such as multi-lateral aid, short-term emergency aid, long-term aid, debt abolition or non-governmental aid. Some criticised the aggressive exploitative foreign policy that the United States has exhibited throughout its history or, in contrast, bemoaned the amount of money and resources dedicated to help other countries, when so many at home might be in dire need too. Many candidates struggled to find balance as it was more obvious to note the benefits of aid to its recipients. However, some better responses did recognise how aid enables the donating country to create alliances and offers the leverage of 'soft power'. US aid given to Israel and Ukraine featured strongly in these responses, but there were occasional historical references too. The practical effects of aid and the 'moral obligation' of richer countries to help where they can were also sometimes discussed.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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| <p>Paper 8021/12 Essay</p> |
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Key messages

- Choose a question carefully, based on sufficient knowledge to develop robust arguments.
- Ensure that the essay clearly focuses on the question by highlighting key words and maintaining a consistent focus throughout.
- Plan, edit and proofread for errors, to ensure clarity and coherence in the response.
- Write between 600 and 700 words.
- Keep the introduction concise and focused. Avoid lengthy descriptions, definitions and explanations.
- Begin with a clear point and then provide specific examples to support it.
- Ground ideas with specific, real-world examples rather than generalised or vague ones.
- Ensure that examples and information are applied to the argument.
- Improve cohesiveness using appropriate to link ideas smoothly.
- Analyse and evaluate instead of just describing and explaining.
- Maintain appropriate formal vocabulary and tone, avoiding colloquial expressions and conversational tone.
- Maintain clear, legible handwriting with proper spacing between words and letters properly formed.

By noting these key messages, learners can improve their performance in the English General Paper by ensuring clarity, coherence, and evaluative use of evidence.

General comments

Many candidates demonstrated sophistication and ambition in their writing, though when trying to use more complex vocabulary, candidates should be mindful that they use it in the appropriate context and with accurate meaning. A significant number of Level 5 responses showcased complete control over language use and effective vocabulary application to formulate arguments. Most essays that achieved Level 3 for communication used everyday vocabulary and usually achieved clarity despite some noticeable errors.

Overall, the level of register and accuracy was sustained by the majority of candidates. However, it was fairly common to see occasional lapses into inappropriate register, such as the use of contractions (don't, gonna, we're) and informal vocabulary/tone (kids, you guys, stuff).

A number of candidates gave their responses a heading and sub-headings. However, structuring their responses in this manner sometimes gave the effect of fragmented text and did not bring any particular benefits over those candidates who wrote in continuous prose. Some candidates needed to construct arguments more effectively, often preferring to outline situations that may not always align closely with the chosen question. Additionally, some used a mini-conclusion format where key ideas are repeated at the end of paragraphs, which sometimes appeared repetitive. Topic sentences and logical connectors were essential for establishing clear stages and structure within an argument.

Learners should be encouraged to find personal, local, national, or international examples which could diversify their responses. This approach might increase the sense of candidates' personal engagement, making answers less similar and standard.

Candidates who performed well chose questions that allowed for detailed knowledge or an evaluative approach specific to them. This enabled responses to be fully developed. All questions offered opportunities for analysis and evaluation, but many responses tended to focus primarily on citation and explanation without further exploration, resulting in essays that remained at the level of description and explanation.

The strongest responses engaged well with broad-ranging challenging issues, presenting a range of reasoned arguments and consistently analysing and evaluating. The best responses demonstrated sophisticated paragraphing, use of discourse markers, and accurate communication. Less successful responses tended to repeat ideas, misunderstand key vocabulary, struggle with cohesion, or offer insufficient evidence. Encouraging a deeper exploration and analysis of topics, along with refining structure and controlled communication, will enhance overall performance.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was the second most popular question choice. Many candidates focused on life in rural areas rather than discussing government approaches to the distribution of funding of urban/rural areas. They wrote in detail about the difficulties faced by those in rural areas but did not always link this back in an evaluative way to problems or unequal treatment of city populations.

Many candidates wrote well about their own country, and gave detailed specific examples rather than making assertions. Most answers mentioned that rural areas had fewer and less well-equipped hospitals and schools, poorly maintained roads, and inefficient transportation systems compared to urban areas. This was attributed to the larger population in cities and limited government funding to cover all regions.

The main weakness of responses was assertion and generalisations about city life and rural life. Some candidates attempted simplistic definitions of rural versus city life. Many candidates confined themselves to writing about the needs of rural dwellers, such as poor health facilities, inadequate education facilities, and limited job opportunities. A frequent claim was that rural poverty leads to crime, and eliminating it would reduce this issue.

Stronger responses achieved a balance between urban and rural issues, recognising that cities generate tax revenues but balancing this with what the countryside contributes in terms of food production, leisure, and tourism. Some candidates specified areas in Nepal, Pakistan, and India and suggested various solutions rather than simply listing points without development. A few candidates commented that farmers in other countries such as the UK and USA receive better subsidies compared to their own country's agricultural sector.

Overall, many candidates focused on the rural side of the question, producing unbalanced responses. The strongest responses presented arguments for both sides of the issue, understood government approaches to funding and made judgments about the needs which should be prioritised

Question 2

Some candidates demonstrated a misunderstanding of what 'traditional arts and crafts' are. They often wrote extensively about architecture, festivals, dialects, food, music and dancing with varying degrees of relevance to traditional arts and crafts.

Many candidates often mentioned famous and beautiful temples but did not always examine exactly how these structures help to understand the country's history. Some responses concluded each description of an example with a short statement about historical value. This resulted in vague responses that did not fully address the historical context required.

Better responses often focused on tapestries and paintings depicting past rulers and mythology, and extended this to handicrafts and pottery. Many candidates discussed the need to educate people in order to preserve traditions that they believed were in danger of being lost by the present generation. Candidates also mentioned traditional skills passed through generations, the use of local resources, souvenir culture, and changing perceptions of heritage. High-performing essays used national or regional examples and linked past traditions to how these influence current cultural and national identity.

The majority understood that the question required a strong focus on their country though there were a few who discussed famous international landmarks and artworks or covered a broad range of topics related to history. Strong responses questioned the capacity for handicrafts and pieces of art to accurately or reliably convey a country's history as the purpose of such objects is often aesthetic or functional. These candidates wrote about traditional arts and crafts being produced as a means of livelihood or self-expression rather than as intentional means to preserve history.

Question 3

This popular question elicited a rich mix of responses from both sides; weaker essays attempted to be overly positive or negative and stronger responses adopted more subtle perspectives. Many acknowledged the dual role of social media as both divisive and unifying. Most candidates referenced other factors such as race, class, gender, politics, religion, and nationality as potential sources of division.

Many candidates wrote a good response to this question. They used specific examples throughout their responses while also analysing and debating the broader implications of division and unity. This allowed for a nuanced evaluation of the question and precise, convincing answers supported by a wide range of evidence.

The United Nations' post-World War II efforts to maintain peace were often highlighted by some candidates, while others pointed out local initiatives or global movements were breaking down barriers. Candidates also addressed issues in their local communities and referenced specific on-going armed conflicts, religious extremism and trade wars around the world.

Weaknesses in lower band responses often involved generalisation and lack of concrete evidence. Many candidates relied on vague references to technology and countries not helping each other. Some wrote only about the impact of social media.

Some candidates concluded that the world is more divided now than in previous times, while others felt that post-World War II, much progress has been made with global peace, diplomacy, increased gender and social equality. Many heartfelt and interesting responses were seen with some effectively arguing that division has always been a part of the world but division does not necessarily mean there is no unity in such places and circumstances.

Question 4

While acknowledging that prisoners should be in prison if they had committed a crime, many candidates pointed out that often crimes were committed by desperate people, that many prisoners were poorly educated if not illiterate and often inhumanely treated in prison and poorly prepared for release.

There was good understanding of the purposes of prisons, that is, deterring and keeping criminals off the streets, rehabilitating prisoners, and preventing recidivism. Humane treatments were applauded, like education in prison and therapies of different kinds. Some answers referred to enlightened prison systems where prisoners are treated with dignity and recidivism rates are lower than in many countries.

Responses did not always achieve a balance between prison as punishment and a place of rehabilitation. Stronger answers saw the practical problem of effective rehabilitation and the issues present by wider society towards former criminals. Some responses did not always link their arguments back to the key issue of keeping societies safe and stronger responses argued that prisoners themselves are still members of society who deserve to be safe too, especially in relation to unfair exploitation that inmates can receive from guards and fellow prisoners.

Weaker candidates who chose this question responded with lengthy definitions of crimes and 'examples' of how criminals should be treated. They often strayed into recounting actual crimes, becoming emotive and forgetting the focus of the question.

Question 5

This was the most popular question chosen by almost half of the candidates. Overall, the question was answered well. However, there were very few responses which successfully evaluated whether online learning is the future of education as the vast majority were focused more on describing all the advantages and disadvantages of online and traditional learning.

The advantages of online learning included accessibility, breadth of material available, customised learning, a range of teachers, instant answers to questions and help from AI assistants. Many cited the low cost or free access to learning websites but neglected to consider the high cost of technological devices and internet access. Candidates usually made nominal links between the perceived benefits of online learning and the question of its status in the future.

Similarly, the disadvantages of online learning were described in detail, such as social isolation, procrastination and distractions, the lack of teachers to guide and discipline, a lack of equipment and infrastructure for rural areas, cheating and health issues.

Weaker responses described only experiences during the pandemic and sometimes did not acknowledge that teachers had been using online teaching methods in traditional classrooms before and after the lockdowns. Conclusions in weaker essays tended to be brief or summaries of the pros and cons. Candidates either fully agreed, disagreed or were ambivalent in their conclusions.

Strong responses compared traditional and online learning from the perspectives of learners, educators, educational institutions and governments. Some interpreted learning more broadly than simply students being educated at school and discussed different skills and types of learning that can be acquired online. Better responses suggested how learning environments in the future might be created through the fusion of online learning and traditional methods.

Question 6

Many candidates showed a very good knowledge of this topic. However, there were also exaggerated and false claims made; learners should be cautious about the information they have read and select to use in their responses. Many responses provided ample evidence regarding how people's lives have been transformed by genetic engineering.

Candidates were familiar with CRISPR, and factual details about its processes were often included though not all were accurate. Common examples of benefits included the prevention of inherited diseases such as sickle cell anaemia and cystic fibrosis were frequently mentioned. The genetic engineering of crops and farm animals was also detailed extensively, with golden rice being a notable example.

The issue of 'designer babies' emerged as a frequent topic though many candidates assumed this was already a common use of gene editing for wealthy parents to select desirable physical traits for their offspring. Some candidates stated that genetic engineering had become cheap and accessible, while others thought the opposite. Stronger responses used topic-specific vocabulary, often referencing examples of the methodology and techniques used which supported their ideas. Strong responses discussed ethical issues while balancing them with good reasons why genetic engineering is crucial for farming and medicine. These responses were often detailed and exploratory and balanced scientific detail with clear evaluation, providing well-rounded answers. Most candidates who tackled this question also had a strong command of language.

Question 7

This was a popular question. Candidates demonstrated awareness of the global shortage of clean water caused by factors like climate change, drought, and pollution. They detailed how unclean water affects human health and mentioned common sources of contamination from farms, industrial waste, and inefficient providers. Many candidates discussed methods to improve water safety, including maintaining reservoirs and rivers, avoiding pollution, addressing urban sewage infrastructure issues, and utilising modern technology such as desalination plants.

Weaker responses often described how and why humans and animals need water for health and survival. They concentrated on the importance of clean water for survival and its role in various aspects such as drinking, washing, and food preparation. Weaker responses often described hypothetical scenarios rather than addressing the core question directly.

Better responses focused on national conflicts over limited resources like border disputes or internal strife due to competing interests between industry and agriculture for clean water. Candidates generally demonstrated good knowledge of the effects of lack of clean water worldwide though it was rare to see candidates stating that humans are not equally threatened by a lack of access to clean water, suggesting that global risks cannot be generalised without considering individual circumstances.

Overall, candidates demonstrated varying levels of understanding and depth in their answers. Stronger candidates clearly articulated why clean water is essential and evaluate its importance not just for individuals but for communities, economies and countries.

Question 8

This was a reasonably popular question. The responses were generally well-argued, showcasing a wide variety of fiction from both modern and classical sources. Candidates engaged with novels, stories, film, and television shows, demonstrating their broad understanding of different fictional genres.

All responses offered something different views, with well-referenced examples addressing how fiction reflects and informs real-life situations. References were made to classical literature, Shakespeare, Austen, and modern authors from diverse genres such as social realism, science fiction, dystopian narratives, and fantasy.

However, weaker responses did not analyse whether fiction is related to everyday reality or serves merely as escapism. The main issue was in their narrow use of examples, such as Disney or superhero films or generic examples to support their argument. Some essays were 'binary' in nature with candidates arguing for one side and then abruptly flipping to the other.

Some stronger candidates argued the use of non-fiction texts in reflecting everyday life more accurately than fictional works. This approach provided insights into how authors across various genres draw on personal experiences and humanity generally to create narratives. A few candidates successfully considered how the 'realities' of everyday life vary based on individual experiences when engaging with fictional works, highlighting that what might seem unrelated to some readers could be relevant to others.

Overall, these responses demonstrated a broad understanding of fiction and its relationship to reality, with several very strong responses.

Question 9

High-scoring responses effectively addressed the impossibility of containing the spread of information on the internet, highlighting how global popularity of social media has led to varying approaches in censorship debates.

Candidates demonstrated their knowledge through well-chosen evidence and thorough exploration of the implications. Candidates discussed methods like VPNs and the dark web evading censorship, emphasising its counterproductive nature by arousing curiosity when topics are being concealed. Additionally, they pointed out how governments withhold sensitive information for security reasons.

Typically, weaker answers simply stated that media censorship is aimed at protecting children from unsuitable language or content. Many weaker answers focused solely on age restrictions as a form of censorship without delving into political reasons or discussing why certain forms of censorship might be ineffective. For instance, candidates could identify minors falsifying their ages to access content but did not consider whether these restrictions were truly effective in preventing inappropriate material from reaching children. Some candidates limited their discussion of 'media' to social media and did not include broadcast and print media.

Some responses lacked depth when addressing the reasons for censorship. Better answers provided historical and current examples of political motivations behind censorship, in both democratic and authoritarian societies. These examples illustrated how censorship serves to control a population's views. Media corporations were also mentioned as controllers of information rather than censors, with examples of corporations that have political agendas.

Overall, informed responses acknowledged that while various authorities attempt censorship, it is only partially successful in today's digital landscape. Many candidates demonstrated a nuanced understanding of how different forms of censorship operate and their limitations.

Question 10

This was the least popular question. The question required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of wealth inequality and evaluate the possibility of achieving it through proposed solutions. Many candidates did not appreciate that equality of wealth means an equitable distribution of wealth amongst the citizens of a country. Instead, many believed that equality of wealth meant equality of opportunity to be able to earn more money.

Most concentrated on what assistance was needed to enable the poor to compete with the wealthy. The importance of education as an escape route from poverty was emphasised by many candidates. Stronger answers stated that quality of education varied depending on where one lived within the country, with subsequent effects on employment opportunities. Corrupt governments were identified as a significant reason for lack of equality, with leading figures manipulating systems. Regressive taxation was proposed as a solution, but it faced issues such as corruption, nepotism, and the narrow elite's grip on society. Most candidates remembered the 'own country' focus of the question, grounding their responses in specific examples.

Strong responses successfully identified the means by which wealth inequality could be addressed, such as through progressive taxation, social safety nets, increased social mobility and strengthening labour laws and the extent to which the implementation of these had or could be applied within their country. Some demonstrated excellent background knowledge in economics, resulting in detailed and exploratory essays.

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| <p>Paper 8021/13 Essay</p> |
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Key messages

- Answers require attention to how the question is phrased and its key words.
- Where reference to your country is required by the question, the country or region should be the focus.
- Introductory paragraphs should indicate as briefly as possible the intended shape of the essay.
- Concluding paragraphs should also be brief, not a repetition of the points already made.
- Responses should be between 600 – 700 words in length.
- An academic rather than an informal, conversational style is expected.
- Essays require paragraphs that show the development of a debate or argument.
- Examples must support and illustrate points and ideas.
- Appropriate knowledge of the chosen topic is essential.
- Questions are designed to encourage analysis and evaluation not description.

General comments

Several learners were well prepared for the examination although there were a few brief responses and a few that attempted more than one question. A limited consideration of a topic will receive a mark in the lower bands.

Many of the responses were detailed and thoughtful and learners usually chose questions on topics they were familiar with. Sweeping statements or assertions were rarely encountered. **Questions 4 and 5** were popular but in both cases, responses were thoughtful, sensitive, and balanced. Different points of view on prisons and protest were encountered but answers usually revealed an understanding of different approaches to these topics.

There were occasional examples of candidates using a question to write more generally about a topic rather than addressing the specific terms of the question. Some responses to **Questions 8 and 10** were written with regards to animal rights and climate change respectively. The way we use animals to provide for our dietary needs is relevant but to allow animal rights to become the focus of an answer was a limiting factor. In the same way allowing a response to **Question 10** on electric vehicles to become almost exclusively about global warming was a misjudgement. Careful identification of what a question is asking keeps responses fully relevant.

Encouraging learners to notice how accomplished writers and journalists link paragraphs would benefit them greatly. Words and phrases such as, *firstly, secondly, to introduce, for starters, to add on, to end it off, my next point* can reduce an essay's impact. Paragraphs should be fluently linked and a way of doing this is to repeat a word, short phrase, or idea towards the end of the preceding paragraph in the opening sentence of the next paragraph.

Conversational idiom was rare, but some responses directly addressed the reader with phrases such as; *do not you think, would you like it if, surely you agree that*. Second person address is rarely appropriate.

Many candidates demonstrated sophisticated and apt vocabulary. Many candidates successfully chose when to apply subject specific terminology; *conscientious objector (Question 1), special and challenging needs (Question 2), genre (Question 3), recidivism (Question 4), denial of individual rights (Question 5), cultural uniformity (Question 6), marginalised communities (Question 7), the dangerous allure of fast food (Question 8), encapsulating a character's essence (Question 9), prohibitive cost (Question 10)*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Everyone must help their country in times of war. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

There were several responses that demonstrated a sensitive awareness of different approaches to this question. Patriotic duty where wars are clearly in a just cause was mentioned but the individual's right to disagree with a country's war aims or involvement in a war was also recognised. Ways of positive involvement other than military also featured. A key word in this question is 'everyone' and candidates who recognised this usually produced thoughtful answers that included references to gender, age, physical health, and belief systems. One candidate wrote that 'pacifists can volunteer to help the injured' and those on the front line'. Examples were given in support of these remarks from previous conflicts and most of the learners recognised that 'helping' does not necessarily mean 'fighting'. There were specific references to the contributions of non-combatants, particularly of women in World War 2. Nurses, doctors, and ambulance drivers were often given as examples and in the words of one candidate 'they have shown selfless dedication to others no matter where they were working or for whom'. Thoughtful responses considered whether one still has a moral duty to help a country if there was disagreement with their actions. There were solid arguments about people unable to help for psychological reasons or because of physical incapacities.

Persuasive answers adopted a balanced approach by considering both individual rights and national priorities in times of war.

Question 2

To what extent should towns be designed to support people's needs?

Most of the responses focused on 'needs' only with some attention being paid to design. Environmental concerns such as the need for recreational spaces within a town were expressed by a few. Candidates successfully identified needs while acknowledging the cost implications of addressing these needs. Many argued that towns need shelters for the homeless, ease of access in shopping areas for people suffering from a variety of impairments and an efficient public transport system. The mental and physical health of town dwellers was a concern of many and in this context one candidate argued that 'community centres should be constructed that can promote bonding for a variety of age groups'. As well as concern for the elderly and retired, candidates stressed the importance of providing for the young with one candidate writing that skateparks and basketball courts should be features of every town.

There was some recognition of the difficulties of imposing town design changes on existing infrastructure and some discussion about many people flocking to a desirable town leading to overcrowding, which would in turn render it less desirable. That view was countered by those who argued that attractive towns draw visitors, create jobs, and boost the local economy.

Many of the answers had relevance even if architectural design and its many possibilities were rarely mentioned.

Question 3

Non-fiction books will never be as popular as fiction books. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

There were several interesting answers to this question and several successful responses argued that there was no competition between the two genres. The temptation to argue that fiction is alive and entertaining while non-fiction is dull and boring was given into by a few but most of the candidates avoided that narrow view. Several examples of interesting fiction were offered and the general point that reading fosters creativity was often made. The range of information available through non-fiction, including autobiography and biography, was appreciated. Anne Frank's diary was often cited as a historical document and a reminder to people that history should not be allowed to repeat itself.

The counter argument was the 'escape from reality' afforded by fiction. Many described how they had been influenced by Harry Potter when younger and how fiction in general, be it sci-fi, adventure or romance, allowed for relaxation and the forgetting of troubles. Responses with an evaluative edge observed that fiction, for example George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' and Steinbeck's 'The Grapes of Wrath', enhance our understanding of the real world. The cultural impact of 'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee and 'Fahrenheit 451' by Ray Bradbury was communicated in the words of one candidate as being 'a strong warning about the consequences of racial prejudice, totalitarianism and censorship'. Other learners made the point that psychology and biology textbooks provide invaluable explanations of human behaviour that are 'immortalised' in some works of fiction.

A few candidates did not understand the terminology in the question and did not distinguish between fiction and non-fiction.

Question 4

Evaluate the view that the aim of prison should be to improve people rather than punish them.

This was a very popular topic and the general view was that the the prison sentence is the punishment but thereafter what happens during a prisoner's time in prison should be constructive. Very few argued for a strict and punitive prison system. Several learners referred to prison initiatives in other countries such as conjugal visits, skills' training, anger management courses and drug and alcohol rehabilitation schemes. Education from the most elementary to the higher levels should be made available, many argued. There were some personal stories about family members who had been incarcerated. Where personal experience supports and does not dominate, responses can be enriched by anecdote.

There were many thoughtful responses to this question. Knowledge of contrasting prison systems, for example Scandinavian prisons, made for a rich argument. Corruption and violence in prisons were often referred to and those that did often successfully linked the failure of prisons to wider problems in their society. Candidates, although arguing for a humane approach, often added that the threat of prison must have a deterrent effect, otherwise they might be seen as 'hotels'.

Another popular idea was the provision of more sports' activities to work off aggression as this would improve mood within prisons. A few suggested that art, music, drama, and creative writing classes should be made available to allow individuals to express themselves more effectively. The profit motive, that is bound to be a consideration for those who run private prisons, was identified as possibly limiting worthwhile activities on the grounds of cost.

Question 5

The rights of people to protest on the streets should always be protected. Examine this statement.

This was a very popular question and nearly all the learners addressed the question's key phrase 'on the streets.' It was recognised that most protests are peaceful but some turn violent either intentionally or because the protestors are provoked by the authorities and the authorities themselves engage in violent suppression. One candidate wrote that successful revolutions were rarely accomplished without violence.

Many responses offered examples encompassing many issues; women's rights, civil rights of various kinds, anti-war movements, environmental protests, and workers' rights. Several learners emphasised the significant effects of protests that start at a grass roots' level. A few essays contrasted Martin Luther King's

approach to protest with the more militant Malcolm X. The general view was that while freedom of speech should be protected, once this spiralled into violence, nobody is above the law and any illegal acts should be punished appropriately.

Historical protests were also included such as the Boston Tea Party. Among the different types of protest, sit-ins, strikes, and boycotts featured. A few candidates held firmly to the view that any protest which inconveniences others would be detrimental to the cause but most of the essays were balanced in their approach.

Question 6

To what extent has globalisation improved people's lives in your country?

This was not a popular question. Where learners were able to define 'globalisation', offering examples, their responses were usually very creditable. A few essays wrote about the negative impact of trade on their local cultures. The benefits of globalisation included; the development of new markets, employment created by multi-national companies, the sharing of medical advances and the opportunities to purchase foreign goods, particularly vehicles. Several candidates mentioned the positive and negative effects of tourism. Many candidates believed tariffs would diminish globalisation, consumer choice and prosperity. There were no dissenting essays on this topic although there are arguments in favour of the imposition of tariffs.

Question 7

Government investment is essential for local community arts to survive. Discuss.

There were a few knowledgeable responses to this question. Learners demonstrated knowledge of their local communities and successfully assessed the contribution and potential of the arts within those communities. A few candidates offered the vibrancy of small local communities in cities such as New Orleans and New York where different national groups add diversity across the artistic spectrum for example.

The preservation of local historical data and artifacts was seen as vital for community cohesion and memory. Opportunities for involvement in the arts and various crafts were seen as important for all but particularly for those from low-income families who, if deprived of local encouragement would have to abandon their artistic dreams.

The key word 'arts' was missed by a few who focused on government investment in general. The majority of candidates acknowledged that the arts is a wide term encompassing theatre, dance, film, sculpture, pottery, and ceramics. The consensus was that arts allow people a welcome distraction from colourless world and should be encouraged.

Question 8

To what extent does a plant-based diet ensure a healthy lifestyle?

This was a relatively popular question. The examples tended to focus on nutritional value and not moral decision. Many supported a plant-based diet to lose weight. A few wrote about the dietary rules of certain religions and the dangers presented by processed foods.

Again, the key words and phrases were important; 'plant-based diet' and 'healthy lifestyle'. A few candidates concentrated on what makes for a healthy lifestyle without properly considering the other key phrase.

Several candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of nutritional requirements of the human body in discussing whether plants could provide a sufficiently diverse range of nutrients. Many concluded that a plant-based diet may not be suitable for different societal groups, including athletes and people with various medical conditions. Candidates demonstrated understanding of the benefits and deficiencies of vegan-type diets and nearly everyone felt that meat was essential for omnivorous human beings.

Learners warned against a high intake of fats and sugars and some celebrated the fact that those on a plant-based diet will be immune to the 'allure' of fast food. A few essays considered the versatility of plants and vegetables in cuisine citing Asian cookery as an example. Others argued that plant-based diets would encourage people to grow some of their own food thereby improving their mental health because as one essay put it: 'plants help with neuroplasticity which also helps with a healthy mind and life.' Others pointed

out that although iron is found in meats, it is also found in spinach and kale. Most candidates recognised that we need to eat food 'that has a complete protein profile' to avoid conditions such as obesity.

Question 9

Actors playing leading roles in movies are too often chosen for their physical appearance. Discuss.

This question was generally answered well. A core argument found in most of the essays was that choosing to cast a role based on physical attractiveness can limit the potential of a film if 'actors with a versatile range of depth and depth of emotion were overlooked because they did not fit the desired physical description.' This comment in a candidate's essay represents many responses that argued that talent is more important than appearance. Apart from observations such as these, it was pointed out that re-makes can risk absurdity if they ignore the appearance of actors in the original versions. This can reduce the pleasure that nostalgia offers. Movies that celebrate either characters from the past or from different cultures, it was felt, need to choose actors that can convincingly represent the roles they are playing. An actor that plays the part of a living legend such as Bob Dylan played by Timothy Chalamet in 'The Complete Unknown' needs to be as authentic as he was in that film. A few candidates made a specific and persuasive reference to that movie. Candidates appreciated that box office appeal matters.

Question 10

To what extent is the introduction of electric vehicles a positive development?

This question was generally answered well by candidates. Overall, these vehicles were seen in a positive light although a few candidates questioned the environmental morality of the mining of rare metals for batteries. Electric vehicles are to be welcomed, some learners argued, because they reduce harmful emissions and cut down on noise pollution. It was argued by a few that the repair costs for electric vehicles are not as heavy as those for conventionally fuelled vehicles but others took the opposite view. A few candidates pointed out that the eco-friendly image of the electric vehicle is not only tarnished by lithium use in batteries but by the electricity used to charge these vehicles, often produced by burning coal. A few argued that there are other means of powering vehicles, such as hydrogen, and suggested, evaluatively, that political reasons are holding back such development.

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| <p>Paper 8021/21 Comprehension</p> |
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Key messages

Before beginning to write a response to any question in either **Section A** (logical reasoning) or **Section B** (reading comprehension), candidates are strongly advised to read thoroughly the material provided in the insert for that section, and all the related questions. They should then be well placed to understand exactly what is expected for each of the question types set, and where they should be looking for the information appropriate to each question. It is good examination practice to ascertain from the outset:

- Where in the material to find the relevant information, particularly if specifically directed, e.g. in **Section A**, to focus only on the descriptions of the two attractions and the Additional Information (**Questions 1(b)(i)** and **1(b)(ii)**). In **Section B**, candidates are generally directed to the appropriate section of the material by means of line references (in 'word count' and 'own words' questions) and/or with key words from the material appearing in question stems.
- How much information is required in response to each sub-question, considering the number of marks available (e.g. all the one-mark questions in **Section A**, which require a single piece of information), whether development of ideas is expected (e.g. **Questions 1(a)** and **1(i)**, requiring one and two explained reasons respectively; **1(g)** asking candidates to 'explain', and **1(h)**, the extended response question), and any instructions regarding the number of reasons or ideas to provide (e.g. **Questions 2(c)** and **2(e)**).
- The rubrics specific to certain styles of question, such as 'using your own words as far as possible' (**Question 2(g)**), or to summarise part of the material within a specified number of words (**Question 2(c)**).
- When use of continuous prose (full sentences) is essential for full credit (**Questions 1(h)** and **2(c)**).
- Which questions, if any, demand candidates to apply their own knowledge, interpretation or wider thinking, i.e. the answer does not appear in the material (**Question 1(a)** explanations).

General comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated at least some overall understanding of the material in both **Sections A** and **B**, and there was a good degree of engagement with the topics and with the questions set. Very few direct rubric infringements were observed, although some candidates did not follow the guidance provided by the line references given in **Section B** and offered erroneous material from elsewhere in the text. Some candidates wrote relatively minimal answers to the 8-mark question (**Question 1(h)**) whereas a more extended response was required for higher marks.

Candidates generally communicated their ideas successfully and clearly in written English, and most organised their writing in the appropriate response areas. Some answers did lack full clarity and precision, or were ambiguous in their possible interpretations, sometimes impacting the marks awarded. Presentation was sometimes problematic in the weakest scripts, making it difficult to assess the accuracy and precision of the points attempted.

Some candidates found it more challenging to select the essential relevant points from the material, and to offer sufficient detail and precision in their responses, in those questions with more specific rubric demands. This was particularly true of those questions which imposed a word limit (**Question 2(c)**) or which required ideas to be conveyed mainly in candidates' own words (**Question 2(g)**). Some candidates appeared to find the two styles of vocabulary question (**Questions 2(b)(i) – 2(b)(iv)** and **2(i)(i) – 2(i)(iv)**) challenging. Please see detailed comments below regarding the conventions and requirements of all these questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The principle in **Section A** is that of 'logical reasoning', which requires candidates to demonstrate understanding of the overall context and situation when making their selections of relevant material and, when asked to do so, to develop or explain. The May/June 2025 **Section A** material related to selecting a place of interest to review as a result of winning a travel writing competition for a newspaper in the fictional nation of Neeniot. Candidates seemed to engage well with the premise involved and generally showed understanding of the most important considerations and stakeholders. Some lapses of focus and logic were evident, however, as well as occasional factual inaccuracies.

Questions 1(h) and 1(i) both required candidates to 'develop' points for full credit. In this context, development of ideas means explaining the importance or relevance of the material selected, in respect of the proposal under consideration, or the ability to make connections between pieces of information found in different parts of the material. Candidates should keep the sense of the material in mind, as well as the general principle that the points made must be the 'logical choice', i.e. specific to the proposal central to the question and not true of both options, or more generally. Arguing by means of features of the alternative proposal, in **Questions 1(h) and 1(i)**, is specifically forbidden in the rubric, although comparatives are permitted, for example the inference from the relative travel costs that *Sottix Marina is closer to her home in Chyme City*. Cost issues, for instance, were frequently cited in response to both extended questions, but were not, in fact, a logical benefit of either. Once accommodation and travel costs were considered, both options would exceed the competition winner's budget, assuming Jorjina took someone with her in line with the competition rules, and would therefore need the second traveller to contribute to costs. As such, these and similar considerations, such as her status as an unemployed person, were not logical advantages (or, indeed, disadvantages) of either attraction, and so were not valid for credit.

- (a) Some candidates seemed to miss the focus of this opening question, referring instead to the consequences of the realisation that Anakii Old Town 'could not continue to be the capital city', citing the creation of the new capital of Neeniot, Chyme City. There was sometimes implicit reference to the actual reasons for this decision, when candidates referred to this new city being *in the centre of Neeniot*, but this alone could not gain credit. The correct features – Anakii Old Town's location 'on a small mountain plateau' and 'in the far north of the country' – were sometimes (both) identified, but one or other needed to be explained in order to gain the second mark. There was also evidence of some imprecision, for example by stating that the town itself was small, or omitting the crucial term 'plateau'. Successful explanations relating to the former feature included the difficulties of expansion in such a location, as well as potential access issues, including for the delivery of food items or construction materials. Responses aiming to explain why being 'in the far north' might have proved problematic focused on the isolation and lack of accessibility from other areas of the country, in particular from the far south, and the difficulties of communication by a national government to all reaches of the country. Successful developed points included the following examples: *Anakii Old Town is on a small mountain plateau (1) so it was difficult to house a growing population (1)*, and *Anakii Old Town was in the far north (1) and this would have made it hard to govern the distant southern areas of the country (1)*.

Some responses demonstrated a lack of understanding regarding the timing of the capital city's move, confusing its previous 700-year history with its demotion some 300 years ago. Some anachronistic suggestions included reference to the city's being *only accessible by airplane*. Other incorrect responses seemed to imply that the consequences of Anakii Old Town's reduced status and importance – being described as 'a perfect time capsule' and attractive to tourists – were also reasons why the capital city was moved elsewhere. Other erroneous responses related to the costs of travel, not recognising that this was both irrelevant and too specific to the characters concerned here, rather than a generalisable problem.

- (b)(i) In both two-mark parts of **Question 1(b)**, it was necessary for candidates to identify an 'exaggerated claim' relating to the two attractions and then select evidence from the Additional Information to justify why each claim was exaggerated. From the material they selected, it seemed that most candidates understood what was meant by the term 'exaggerated'. Mayor Eva Voun's exaggerated claim was prefaced in the material with 'I can guarantee', prompting candidates to select correctly that 'no visitor will ever get bored (while staying in Anakii Old Town)'. Less precision was evident when candidates paraphrased with *no-one/nobody/people*, only gaining

credit when the phrase also contained some sense of visiting or staying there. Similarly, the information refuting the claim, that ‘Some online reviews... recommend staying only a couple of days at most, (as they felt that you could easily see everything of real interest in that time)’ (Additional Information point 16) needed some precision. For example, some candidates overstated the point by writing *many reviews*, *most previous visitors*... or even *all the reviews said*..., or conversely understated it with *one review advised*... Unless directed to summarise or to use ‘own words’ in response to questions, as in some parts of **Section B**, candidates are best advised to copy the relevant material they have selected, in order to avoid losing the precision and full detail of the original. Paraphrased answers may gain credit but are not required.

Even when the correct claims were identified, not all candidates conveyed the justification in sufficient detail for credit. For the second mark, some candidates did not use the Additional Information to justify their choice of ‘exaggerated claim’ and gave their own reasoning instead, for example, *It is impossible to know that everyone will not get bored; Not all tourists are interested in historical attractions and Two palaces, a museum and an art gallery might not be interesting to everyone*. Candidates are also well advised to select both elements of the question together. One common incorrect response included *breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains at every turn*. However, there was nothing in the Additional Information to refute this ‘exaggerated claim’, so candidates had to use their own ideas to explain that this was not a term intended to be literal. This was not, therefore, a valid approach. Similar comments apply to those who offered *a perfect time capsule* as the exaggerated claim.

- (ii) Fewer candidates successfully selected the correct ‘exaggerated claim’ here than in **Question 1(b)(i)**, with a number of responses merely repeating some of the features of the resort, taking issue with the purported ‘Olympic-sized swimming pool’, the number of berths in the marina, or the luxurious nature and design of the resort. When Ivo Grix’s ‘exaggerated claim’ was correctly identified, candidates sometimes omitted key details, most often ‘I have a proven track record...’ or ‘building’. When citing the justification from the Additional Information (point 20), some responses confused the two elements, i.e. ‘closed down his previous construction company’ and ‘leaving behind a half-finished building’. Once again, copying the selected Additional Information in full was the better option here, as it ensured the necessary detail and precision were included. Incomplete or incorrect renderings included *Ivo Grix left/abandoned his previous company* (which might imply it was still open) and mentioning only that *he left an incomplete building/closed his last site mid-project/abandoned a previous building, leaving it unfinished*, i.e. did not mention the closed-down construction company. The opening of the current company, ‘Grix Property Development, the following day’ was sometimes included but not required for credit. Occasional explanations focused on this element, suggesting that such a short time frame was surely overstating the matter.

While both elements of the question were independent, so a mark could be gained for the correct justification even if the claim was inaccurate, imprecise or incomplete, an occasional incorrect response presented the justification as if it were the claim made. This could not be credited. As in **Question 1(b)(i)**, some candidates offered their own explanations, not from the Additional Information, such as *People have a different idea of what a luxury resort/holiday would include and Not everyone likes aquatic activities as their dream holiday*. It was slightly more common in this question than the previous one to omit the justification entirely. There were also some misunderstandings, including suggestions that the *Sottix Marina buildings are not finished*.

- (c) Many candidates correctly identified Additional Information point 11 as the crucial information in response to this question. Either part was acceptable for credit but, as with all one-mark questions, only the first response could be considered. Where candidates cited the complete statement but had omitted detail in the first part (*He’s a yachtsman* (no ‘experienced’) or *keen sailor* (not a synonym for ‘experienced’)), the second part (‘keen to review Sottix Marina himself’) was considered, as the whole response was a single idea. Once again, paraphrasing tended to be less successful than quoting the relevant information, as candidates who merely implied that *Linus Frijmann would like to go/explore there, has already reviewed the resort or wants to visit Sottix Marina because he likes sailing/could go sailing on the Southern Neeniot Sea* did not capture the idea that he wanted to be the one to review the place instead of Jorjina, which is really what answered the question.
- (d) This question was not well answered by most candidates. A number of candidates merely restated the question, that potential reviews might not meet the newspaper’s standards. Others gave self-evident responses, suggesting that *It’s their money being spent, Linus can say what he likes as he’s in charge, Jorjina is not a professional reviewer/journalist so might not do a good job, The*

competition rules say she must obtain approval from Linus first or *That's what it says in the competition rules*. Some candidates successfully located the relevant information from the Background section of the material, which was that the *Neeniot Echo* is 'a prestigious national Sunday newspaper'. Either 'prestigious newspaper' or 'national newspaper' could gain credit. Once again, paraphrasing rather than copying rarely assisted candidates. While *respected* could be accepted in place of 'prestigious', other attempted synonyms were unsuccessful, such as *popular* or *well-liked*.

- (e) (i) Both parts of **Question 1(e)** relied upon the concept of 'conflict(s) of interest', a term which was glossed for candidates' benefit within the material and defined therein as 'personal connection(s) that could compromise his/her judgement, decisions or actions'. As such, it was clear that responses required identification of evidence of potential compromise relating to Serge and Amalie respectively. It was insufficient merely to state that *Serge is Jorjina's brother*, that *he pays her rent*, *has been promoted* or that *he had entered her article in the competition in the first place*. Candidates tended to be rather indiscriminate in the provision of information about Serge. Possibly because it came first among the four points in which his name appeared in the Additional Information, or because it contained the word 'fascinated', which suggested a link to 'interests' in a different sense of the word, the most common incorrect answer was that *Serge is interested in Neeniot's history and culture, (choosing to study both at university)*. A similarly unfocused example was: *Serge is fascinated by the history of Neeniot, which compromises his judgement since he likes it more*. Across both **Questions 1(e)(i)** and **1(e)(ii)**, there were suggestions that Jorjina would want to undertake one type of activity, whereas Serge (or Amalie) might prefer something else; in this case, Serge's interest in history being compared with Jorjina's more activity-led outdoor hobbies. An incorrect response therefore included: *Serge would want to look at the museums but Jorjina would rather climb a mountain*. The correct answer, that 'Serge is a good friend of Mayor Eva Voun's son' (Additional Information point 9) was sometimes inaccurately rendered, suggesting his friendship was *with the mayor* (or, occasionally, *the major*) or even that *he is the mayor's son*.
- (ii) Some of the comments relating to **Question 1(e)(i)** above are also relevant here, with some candidates stating only that Jorjina and Amalie are friends, or choosing to align Amalie's more conservative approach to spending money with Jorjina's financial struggles. Other responses referred to their *shared passion for scuba diving*. When the correct information was selected, that *Amalie had previously worked for Grix Property Development (during her holidays/while studying)* (Additional Information point 14), there were some inaccuracies, with candidates suggesting *she works for Ivo Grix* (wrong tense) or further speculating that *she used to work at Sottix Marina* (not the same as working for the company that built it) *so will know her way around/might not want to contribute to Jorjina's review/will get fired if the review is bad/will be biased in favour* (or occasionally *against*) *the resort*.
- (f) Responses to questions in **Section A** always need to be specific to the option under consideration, in this case Sottix Marina. *Jorjina received Linus Frijmann's email on Monday 2 October* was true of both destinations, leaving her exactly the same amount of time between notification and submission. What was relevant to Sottix Marina alone was its 'opening date for guests' being 'Friday 17 November' (Additional Information point 18). With a one-week stay there, this left only a further week for the writing of the review, in time for final submission by Friday 1 December. Some candidates included the information about the resort being open from that time to include 'the lucrative festive season in December'. This could be overlooked in conjunction with its opening date but when responses focused on Jorjina missing out on these festivities for her review, that was deemed to be incorrect focus regarding the submission date referenced in the question stem. It was acceptable to refer more generally to the limited writing time available and to calculate the limited amount of time Jorjina would have in which to produce her review, though there were varying levels of success with the arithmetic in such cases. Some responses referred to the consequences of not meeting the deadline, i.e. *Her review will not be able to be published in January's Travel Supplement*. This is the wrong focus for the question, with such a reading requiring a candidate to insert 'not' before 'delivering' and would be true of both resorts.
- (g) Of the two marks available, candidates more frequently gained one for referring to Jorjina's status as being *currently unemployed, struggling to find a job or having struggled to find a job since graduation* (Additional Information point 2). Questions with the rubric instruction 'explain' require a link or explanation to be offered for a second mark. In this case, relatively few candidates picked up on the point that, among the competition rules, it was stated that 'At the discretion of Linus Frijmann, the prize-winner's name might be added to the list of interviewees for the newly created post of Trainee Travel Correspondent.' Less precise renderings of this concept were acceptable, if

there was any sense that Linus himself was in a position to offer her a job, an interview, put her name on the list of interviewees, work for the newspaper or similar, thereby answering the question of 'why it could be important' to impress him specifically. Vaguer answers which did not gain credit included: *Jorjina might get a job in a related field/Her review being published would gain her fame/contacts in the industry*. Entirely incorrect responses included those which referred to Serge paying her rent and the benefits to her circumstances of gaining employment in general, Linus' interest in yachting, the potential for Jorjina to get a job at Sottiex Marina, or to features of the two resorts.

- (h) In this extended writing question, with its levels-based marking, candidates were required to offer and develop three points to obtain the maximum eight marks. Relatively few responses were placed in the lowest level or low in Level 2; these marks represented brief or undeveloped responses. Most candidates were able to offer at least one or two reasons why Jorjina might be more likely to choose to review Sottiex Marina. A few candidates ignored the rubric instruction 'Apart from impressing Linus Frijmann' and made reference to possible career-based benefits, observations which were more appropriate to **Question 1(g)**.

Top Level 4 responses required three points to be identified and developed. However, it was possible to gain all the available marks with very good development or explanation of two of the three, by making more than one connection across the material. This was most often achieved by linking Jorjina's (and Amalie's) 'passion for scuba diving' (Additional Information point 8) to one or more of the various water-related leisure activities mentioned in the description of the attraction, and also to the availability of tuition 'at all levels of ability, in a wide range of water sports', outlined in Additional Information point 5. A particularly good example, combining these features logically to form a very well-developed point, includes: *Jorjina, along with her best friend, has a passion for scuba diving and the artificial beaches and coral reefs will provide for that passion. (enough for a developed point by this stage) Jorjina can also sign up for individual water sport activities – even if she is alone – allowing her to experience all activities.* (further development, linking to another part of the insert and thoughtfully addressing the issue of whether or not someone would accompany Jorjina, without getting side-tracked by irrelevant cost considerations)

Most candidates successfully developed at least one of the points they had chosen, if sometimes only doing so minimally. Many responses included two ideas connected with other information from the material. Such an approach meant that many candidates reached Level 3. Responses remaining in Level 3 usually either included one or more 'minimal' developments and/or featured some losses of focus, or lapses of clarity and precision. Answers evidenced by only one development being offered, even though two, three or more valid individual ideas had been presented, did not exceed Level 2, since the key skill of analysis was not sufficiently demonstrated to gain higher marks. Responses which achieved Level 1 were characterised by the selection of just a couple of relevant points, by one isolated and minimally developed point, or by severe weaknesses of expression and clarity.

Weaker responses tended to rely somewhat on description or narration of what might have been relevant points, had they been given more context. There was indiscriminate 'lifting' from the description of Sottiex Marina, sometimes going little beyond mere copying of that description. While such a response may – inadvertently or otherwise – have included a number of potentially relevant points, there was little or no reference to why these would appeal to Jorjina specifically. The ability to connect the facilities and features to Jorjina's interests and motivations is the essential skill being tested and credited in these extended questions. As such, responses were usually limited to Level 1 when they copied or abbreviated general holiday features which might have appealed to anyone, such as *a range of facilities and activities*, 'swimming pool', 'beach' or 'luxury'. Some responses successfully linked Jorjina's current unemployed status and financial struggles with her likely appreciation of Sottiex Marina's luxurious offerings: *Jorjina might appreciate the luxuries at Sottiex Marina because she is unemployed and likely cannot afford vacations. The opportunity to treat herself to a holiday in a brand new five-star resort like this one is not to be missed.*

Weaker responses tended to offer irrelevant material relating to Amalie or to make too much of the cost of transportation being cheaper, when the accommodation costs – and, therefore, the total cost – were higher than for a trip to Anakii Old Town, so this was not a logical choice. It was possible to gain some credit for inferring that the lower cost of travel meant that the destination was the closer of the two, however. It was also possible to make a connection between this feature and Jorjina's interest in the environment (Additional Information point 19). In both **Questions 1(h)** and **1(i)**, candidates often made too much of the relatively strong financial positions of Amalie and

Serge respectively in attempting to explain how the over-budget total costs could be mitigated by Jorjina's 'plus one'. This did not represent a logical choice for either option, since the prize money was exceeded by the total cost for two travellers in both scenarios. Despite the clear rubric instruction not to refer to 'impressing Linus', a number of candidates did focus on Jorjina's potential reviewing of Sottix Marina being likely to *catch his attention, as he is an experienced yachtsman*.

In addition to the scuba diving and water sports connections mentioned above, the most common developed points to gain credit were those which linked Jorjina's decision to become a vegetarian three years ago (Additional Information point 10) with the information from the Sottix Marina website relating to one of its three restaurants having an entirely plant-based menu, and her new interest in environmental concerns (Additional Information point 19) with the aquarium's 'pioneering conservation work with dolphins'. Two well-explained examples include: *The aquarium at Sottix Marina is also working for the conservation of dolphins and Jorjina is interested in environmental issues so she will find plenty to reflect on here and may want to highlight and give special coverage to the conservation efforts. As an individual with an interest in environmental issues, the dolphin conservation efforts at the on-site aquarium give her an outlet to investigate the impact humans are having on endangered species*. There was some originality of thought evident from those candidates who linked the 'artificial coral reef' to those considerations, as this was seen by the more perceptive as being likely to preserve any real ones. References to the 'artificial beach' were generally less convincing in this regard, however, since such constructions tend to necessitate environmental damage. A number of candidates successfully identified the relevance of Additional Information point 15 but often rendered the information with insufficient precision, since omitting 'in Neeniot' suggested that Jorjina may have travelled to other countries further south. To be convincing, it was essential to clarify that she wanted to 'rectify (her) lack of knowledge' of the southern parts of Neeniot and, to develop the point, link this idea with Sottix Marina's location on and 'access to the Southern Neeniot Sea', from the resort description.

Examples of minimal development included linking Jorjina's (and Amalie's) shared passion for scuba diving with the availability of *water-related activities at Sottix Marina*, rather than specifying one or more of the several available. Responses such as *Jorjina is a vegetarian and they have a plant-based menu* offer minimal development – though still a clear connection across the material – in contrast with the fuller and accurate *Jorjina has been a proud and committed vegetarian for the last three years, so the fact that one of Sottix Marina's three restaurants boasts entirely meat-free offerings will suit her perfectly*. Stronger responses, worthy of additional credit for development, went on to say: *This will resolve any potential anxiety Jorjina might have about maintaining her dietary restrictions while she is away*. This is an example of thoughtful and perceptive additional explanation of the context.

A response which developed four points convincingly – more than the three required for eight marks – and with no loss of focus included: *Jorjina has a passion for scuba diving. Sottix Marina's wide range of water activities and sports would give her the change to participate in activities she loves*. (developed point) *Jorjina is a vegetarian, but she would not have to worry about meals at Sottix Marina. One of their three restaurants' menus is entirely plant-based*. (developed point) *Chyme City is the farthest south Jorjina has been in Neeniot. Going to Sottix Marina would satisfy her desire to learn about South Neeniot, and it would give her access to the Southern Neeniot Sea*. (developed point) *Sottix Marina has an aquarium that is working to conserve dolphins. This aligns with Jorjina's personal environmental concerns, habits and preferences*. (developed point)

- (i) To gain the four available marks, candidates were required to offer two developed advantages for Jorjina of choosing to review Anakii Old Town. As in **Question 1(h)**, successful answers were able to identify features specific to visiting and reviewing Anakii Old Town, and then explain the significance of the selected points, or make connections between related pieces of information found in different parts of the material. However, some candidates did not include the right focus here, particularly when looking for anything beyond the most popular correct developed point, which connected Anakii's 'mountain trails and climbing routes' with Jorjina's previous experience of climbing being limited to 'a climbing wall at her local sports centre' and her never having 'had the opportunity to climb a real mountain' (Additional Information point 4). Any connection between her past experience or desire to climb a real mountain and the presence of mountains in Anakii sufficed for credit. However, responses featuring only Anakii's mountain views did not have quite the right focus for credit, especially when attempting to link this angle, or that of the traditional and unchanged architecture, with Jorjina's interest in the environment.

As explained in **Question 1(h)**, cost issues were a popular but erroneous choice. A number of candidates also referred to the historical and cultural places of interest but there was no evidence in the material to suggest that these would appeal to Jorjina. What was relevant in regard to these two ideas was the fact that Serge does have such interests. This could be developed by suggesting why Jorjina might choose to take him with her, as a thank you either for paying her rent (Additional Information point 6) or for entering her article in the competition in the first place (Background). These examples were successful: *Since her brother has been paying her rent, Jorjina might want to treat him (1) by asking him to come with her to Anakii, especially as Serge, Jorjina's brother, is fascinated by Neeniot's history and culture (1).* *Since her brother is the reason she won the prize, she might feel she owes it to him (1) to share the prize and allow him to indulge his interest in the history and culture of Neeniot (1).* These connections were made relatively rarely, however. When Serge was mentioned, it was often because of his personal connections or his knowledge, with candidates asserting that these could help Jorjina access more areas, obtain special offers or write a better review. There was also misunderstanding evident among the large number of candidates who used Additional Information point 15 to propose that a trip to Anakii Old Town would extend her knowledge of Neeniot. That information referred to the southern part, while the description of Anakii Old Town stated clearly that the former capital is located in 'the far north of the country' (see **Question 1(a)**). Similarly, some candidates attempted to reverse the timing issue relating to Sottix Marina more relevant to **Question 1(f)**, i.e. *she can go there immediately*, or to render the information relevant to **Question 1(b)(i)** positive, by stating that *she only needs a couple of days there*. Both ideas were 'developed' along the lines of *Jorjina can complete the review quickly/she can finish her review in plenty of time for the due submission date*. These were not acceptable approaches.

Section B

Question 2

Candidates generally engaged well with the material in **Section B**, on the subject of the Sierra Madre rainforest in the Philippines. Occasional misunderstandings of the details were evident in some candidate responses, in particular confusing the role and activities of Francisco and Marc. Others did not refer to the correct parts of the material. As always in **Section B**, differentiation was evident in how successfully candidates located the correct material in response to the questions set, and then how precisely they communicated those ideas. The additional rubric requirements of **Questions 2(c)** (word limit/summary) and **2(g)** (own words) posed additional challenges to some candidates, as did the two styles of vocabulary-based questions to be found in **Questions 2(b)(i) – (b)(iv)** and **2(i)(i) – (i)(iv)**. Please see below for further details.

- (a) The majority of candidates correctly identified the correct information, that 'the memory that drives Francisco Elle deep into the dense rainforests day after day' is 'the faces of children he could not save'. Some responses lacked full detail here, however, for example by omitting reference to 'faces' or by replacing 'could not' with *did not*, which loses the original meaning.
- (b)(i) **Question 2(b)** comprised four sub-questions testing candidates' ability to locate, in the material, an appropriate synonym for a given word or phrase. The underlying principle in this style of vocabulary question is that the sentence can be read with either version of the selected word or phrase in place and should still make sense, both grammatically and semantically. Precision is vital, especially in not providing any more words than necessary. Most candidates gave a single-word answer or the appropriate short phrase. There were, nonetheless, a number of entirely incorrect answers which did not include the term sought from the material or which selected something from outside the given line references. A small number of candidates attempted to give their own definitions or synonyms, more in the style of **Question 2(ii) – (i)(iv)**.

In response to **Question 2(b)(i)** particularly, many of the candidates who had grasped the sense of the prompt omitted the preposition 'in' from the correct response ('barrel in'), leaving only *barrel*, which is neither grammatically nor semantically synonymous with 'move in at speed'. Other incorrect responses included *stretching* or *stretching for more than 500 km from north to south*, and *typhoons*. It was not uncommon to provide the whole clause (*strong typhoons*) *which barrel in from the Pacific Ocean*. Unless the exact phrase sought is identified within a longer section, by means of underlining, or using inverted commas, capital letters or brackets, then such an approach lacks the precision required and cannot gain credit.

- (ii) Of the four sub-questions in **Question 2(b)**, this was the most commonly correct, with a good majority of candidates correctly identifying **(a) middleman** as the term matching 'a person arranging business deals between other people'. A common distractor seemed to be *orders*.
 - (iii) Although there were some responses not credited because they included the run-on *mud* after the correct response (*claggy*), most candidates again found the right answer here. Possibly thinking of the noun 'sticks' instead of the adjective 'sticky', the noun *saplings* was not an uncommon incorrect response. Another distractor was *sure-footed*.
 - (iv) Of the four sub-questions here, this was the most often correct. An occasional wrong response was seen, usually because too many words were included: *The volunteers continue to plant, unfazed*. An incorrect adjective sometimes cited was *frank*.
- (c) Candidates need to be precise about the material they select and how they convey it in questions testing summary skills by means of an imposed word limit; 'in about 30 words' in this case. Relatively few responses exceeded the word limit. There was some evidence in a number of responses 'wasting words' which cannot gain credit, by opening with a lengthy introduction or repetition of the question stem. Answers need to be written in full sentences for this question to gain all available marks.

Most candidates gained at least one of the available marks, and a good number offered two creditworthy points. Of the five possible points, the three most frequently credited were that Francisco *has to duck under a thick ceiling of leaves, exposed tree roots can trip people* and the *faint trail*. Occasional responses also included that it was *difficult to follow him* but most of those attempting the final point, that *clouds roll down the hillside, covering branches with rain*, omitted one or more key details or, more usually, ran out of words before the point was successfully concluded. Of the creditworthy points attempted, it was not uncommon to miss important details such as 'exposed' (tree roots) or to offer inaccurate renderings, such as *thick leaves, piles of leaves* or *to walk through* (rather than 'under') *thick ceilings of leaves*.

A common distractor was the idea too specific to Francisco, relating to *his glasses slipping down his nose*. Some candidates did not use the line references guiding them to the correct part of the material and chose instead some of the challenging features from lines 44 to 47. An example concisely communicating three valid points within just 23 words was: *He has to dip under thick ceilings of leaves (1), avoiding tripping over exposed tree roots (1), and the trail he follows is very faint (1)*.

- (d) Most candidates correctly identified what was meant by 'nature's revenge' in the material but did not always convey the information with full precision or clarity. References to a *landslide* alone were insufficient for credit, as this term did not convey the full horror of what Francisco had experienced. It was necessary to mention also the number of human fatalities, being 'More than 1000 people'. Some candidates offered *killing 1000 people, thousands of people were killed* and *around 1000 people died*, none of which was accurate, while *killed many people* and *several people died* were clearly too vague. Merely mentioning that these individuals *were washed away in a landslide* also lacked precision.
- (e) While the vast majority of candidates correctly identified the relevant sections of the material (lines 20 to 23) to include in their answers, the level of precision with which points were conveyed was the key differentiating factor here in determining how many of the three available marks could be awarded. For example, it was necessary to include the term 'original' in the idea that '90 per cent of the original rainforest is now gone' and 'illegal' before 'logging'. A number of candidates copied the single phrase 'illegal logging, mining and quarrying' for all three marks, often separated across the three sections of the response area, whereas copying a list will almost always be worth a single mark only. Once again in responses to this question, unnecessary paraphrasing where the rubric did not demand the use of own words or the ability to summarise sometimes meant candidates lost the precision of the original. There were also omissions of detail in these two attempts, the most frequent being 'vast' and 'heavy', as well as some confusion across the two, such as linking the tree roots with absorption, or by implying in the phrasing that the tree roots were at fault; *there are no stable tree roots, poor tree root stability, the tree roots are experiencing reduced stability* or *fail to stabilise the ground*. Candidates often repeated the question stem ('landslides and flash floods are becoming more common') in each attempt, sometimes confusing this with the final creditworthy point, related to storms. Successful attempts recognised *the rising frequency and severity of storms*

but some candidates omitted one of 'frequency' or 'severity', or did not make it clear that these 'increase'.

- (f) Many candidates successfully identified Marc's justification of his illegal logging activities from line 24, that 'God gave all this to us so we can use it'. Some responses then either made no further attempts or simply copied what followed in the material, relating to his chainsaw and bamboo huts, which did not answer the question. The remaining relevant points came a little further on, in lines 34 to 37, although there was also a potential alternative idea in lines 30 to 31, relating to the money that could be earned from 'a big order'. Among these later points, it was essential to be precise, particularly in regard to the concept of logging representing the 'only' source of income or livelihood for Marc and/or the poorest Filipinos. Candidates stating that it was *a way of making a living, one of the few ways he can earn money, how he supports his family, how Filipinos make a living* and similar lacked that emphasis. Responses citing how this activity is *not a choice* or *not something he wants to do* were generally successful, while those referring to farming sometimes lost the sense of 'We can only get our money for basic necessities from farming our land.' The term '(basic) necessities' was sometimes also confused with the 'only source of income' point, which was itself sometimes repeated within responses.

- (g) In this question candidates needed to respond in their 'own words as far as possible'. Technical terms, or words for which it is otherwise difficult to provide sensible synonyms, were permitted, such as 'tree(s)' or 'down', in this case. Different verb forms from those in the material were allowed (e.g. *chopped* or *chop*, from 'chopping'). However, replacing only singular forms of nouns with a plural, and vice versa, was not deemed to demonstrate sufficient independence from the material, e.g. *sin* (from 'sins'). Equally, the adjective *great* was not distinct enough from its superlative form 'greatest'.

Many candidates achieved at least one mark for this question. There was some evidence of misunderstanding of the verb 'regards', being taken to mean 'holds in high regard', alongside some exaggeration of Francisco's reverence for trees as *sacred, more important than humans* and similar. Despite the line references, some candidates referred to his past activities or how he now teaches children to plant trees. There were also misunderstandings of the sense, such as *only chopping one small piece is helping to save the forest*.

- (h) Some candidates missed the focus of this question. When responding to such questions, it is advisable for candidates to copy the information they have identified as relevant exactly as it appears in the insert, in order to convey the required precision. For example, it was necessary to identify the Philippines as 'one of the most dangerous places to be an environmental activist', rather than to describe it as (*very*) *dangerous*, to omit reference to the country, or to refer merely to *being an activist*. Candidates often did not convey the sense of confrontation with the loggers, with the colloquial term *calling out illegal loggers* not being synonymous with 'call out to someone to tell them to stop cutting trees'. Other renderings were too gentle, suggesting that Francisco merely *advises* or *encourages people to stop logging*. The point regarding his explaining often lacked the detail of the consequences, i.e. 'what will happen to all of us if they continue what they do'. Candidates who had attempted either of those points but without the full detail required for credit could sometimes gain a globally valid mark, if there was sufficient sense of confrontation with the loggers to show an overall understanding of the situation. Some answers included the more positive peaceful outcomes of these encounters with loggers, but these did not really demonstrate bravery, whereas more perceptive responses referred to the sometimes-violent outcomes of such confrontations, for example *loggers can become physically aggressive* or *these situations sometimes become violent*. The specific example of this concept, from the material, was sometimes mentioned but not always complete, with either the number of rangers ('two') omitted, or without either 'attacked' or 'wounded'.

- (i) (i) Each of the four sub-questions in **Question 2(i)** required candidates to provide their own synonym for a prompt word or phrase from the material.

Candidates seemed to find **Question 2(i)(i)** the most challenging of the four sub-questions and some either did not include the correct grammatical form (third person plural, any form of past tense) or the required negative sense. For instance, while *affected, impacted* and *had an impact on* work grammatically in the sentence, they lack the negative connotations of *caused damage, negatively affected/impacted, harmed*. In contrast, noun phrases such as *negative/unwanted consequences/repercussions/effects*, or infinitive constructions including *to have a bad effect*, had

a similar sense to the original but were not grammatically identical, so could not be substituted into the sentence.

- (ii) This sub-question was generally answered well. Almost all responses offered an infinitive verb form, so were grammatically correct. The inclusion of 'to' before the verb was optional. Common correct answers included *(to) go against, stand/fight/act/work/rebel against, resist, deliberately disregard*. Incorrect or imprecise alternative suggestions included: *avoid, decline, deny, contradict*.
- (iii) The majority of candidates demonstrated understanding of the sense of 'vows'. However, a number of responses did not use the same grammatical form (third person singular verb), so answers such as *to promise* or *promise* would not be valid substitutes in the original sentence. Candidates needed to look back at the material for the context. The most common correct answer offered was *promises* but there were also successful renderings of the prompt seen in *makes a promise/commitment, keeps his word, swears, commits, and pledges*.
- (iv) This sub-question was answered very well. Most candidates demonstrated understanding of the meaning and successfully provided a synonym with the same grammatical form, i.e. an infinitive verb. It was also possible to use the word 'sure' from the prompt ('to) ensure' in responses such as *(to) make sure* and *(to) assure*. Other popular answers included *guarantee, make certain, make 100 per cent certain, confirm, (double) check* and *verify*.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/22
Comprehension

Key messages

Candidates are advised to read all of the material from the Insert, and the questions, before they begin to write any of their answers in **Section A** and **Section B**. A thorough reading should ensure that candidates know exactly what is expected of them for each question considering the varying demands of the tasks set. In particular candidates should determine:

- From which part of the material to select information for their answers, especially when directed, and to focus on the Additional Information, the brochures and background material (**Section A**), or by means of the line references and/or key words in question stems (**Section B**).
- How much information should be offered in response to each sub-question considering the number of marks available, whether the development of ideas is important (extended response **Questions 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d**), and any instructions regarding the number of reasons or ideas to provide (**Questions 2a, 2e, 2f, 2g, 2h(i), 2h(ii)**).
- Any instructions such as 'using your own words as far as possible' (**Questions 2b(i), 2b(ii), 2b(iii), 2b(iv) and 2b(v)**), or to summarise within a specified number of words (**Questions 2c, 2d and 2(i)**).
- Where the application of knowledge, interpretation or wider thought is required and the answer does not appear in the material in the Insert (**Questions 1e and 1f**).

General comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated good understanding of the material in both **Sections A** and **B**. Candidates tended to perform better in response to questions in **Section A** than in **Section B**. In general candidates engaged well with the material and successfully presented their ideas with clarity in written English. Some candidates found it more challenging to select relevant points and offer sufficient detail in responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

In **Section A** the material related to three summer camp brochures being considered by a fictional family. There were occasional lapses of logic and misunderstanding evident in the selection of material for responses. Candidates are advised to read the question carefully, regarding which sections of the material to consider and the exact focus of the question set.

- (a) In this extended response question candidates showed good overall understanding of the advantages that made Camp Imagi a suitable choice for both Zandy and Julian, as evidenced in the Brochure and Additional Information. The skill assessed in this question was the ability to make connections across the different parts of the material and explain the relevance of the information selected, in the context of the question. For ten marks, it was necessary to develop four reasons why Tony and Paula Larson would be likely to choose Camp Imagi as the summer camp for Zandy and Julian. Most candidates offered at least two or three reasons. Some responses needed to include further development for their points made to achieve higher marks. Most responses used information from the brochure and related it specifically to Julian or Zandy. The quality of the development, the focus and overall understanding of the points are considered when selecting an appropriate mark.

The two most common developed points credited were: Firstly, Additional Information point 6 (Julian, who has performed in several school plays, is a talented actor and would like to pursue a career in acting) developed by the point that Camp Imagi offers drama as an activity and it might improve his skill by working with professionals; secondly, Additional Information point 9 (Zendy has been learning to play the guitar for eight years and she has started song writing, as she is thinking of studying music performance at university) developed by the camp also offers music rooms and recording studios which will help Zendy polish her skills. Less successful developments cited both of these Additional Information points and the camp had music or drama activities rather than detail specific advantages of how these activities could specifically benefit Zendy and Julian.

Additional Information point 20 relating to Julian's homesickness on a recent school trip was often successfully linked with information relating to the fact that Julian would be returning home each evening or linked with Additional Information point 7 detailing the daily opening times of Camp Imagi. In a similar way Additional Information point 10 was used as the weekday opening times of the camp would allow Julian to go cycling at the weekend with his friends.

Additional Information point 19 was also used effectively: Firstly, the guest instructor for photography has accepted a job to take pictures for a prestigious magazine which would show Tony and Paula that the instructors at the camp are reputed professionals which would favour them choosing the camp. Some misunderstanding or speculative comments were made about this point such as, Julian and Zendy having the opportunity to go to Kenya to take photographs.

Many candidates made use of Additional Information 1 citing that Zendy and Julian wish to attend the same camp with development relating to the way that their various interests could be met at Camp Imagi.

Some responses linked Additional Information points 2 and 5 to make a creditable valid developed point: Tony and Paula would most likely choose Camp Imagi because Julian had an accident when climbing a high cliff at the beach and had to be rescued. Tony and Paula might fear for Julian's safety after the incident and would prefer more safe activities like the artistic activities at Camp Imagi.

The most common misunderstanding concerned the distance of 50 km which some candidates did not manage to judge, pointing out that the camp was close enough and convenient enough for Paula and Tony to drop Julian and Zendy off while managing their own timetable.

- (b) Two developed points were required for full marks, using the information from the brochure on Camp Venchure and the Additional Information points 3, 13 and 15. Most candidates successfully to provide two developed responses explaining why Zendy might want to attend Camp Venchure.

The most popular developed points linked Additional Information point 3 regarding Zendy's proficiency as a paddler to the brochure information and the availability of Kayaking as a similar activity which Zendy might enjoy. Similarly, for Additional Information point 13 candidates successfully linked Zendy's sixteenth birthday present of a skydiving experience to one of the extreme activities on offer at the camp.

- (c) Three developed points were required for full marks, using the information from the brochure on Camp Anim8 and the Additional Information points. Candidates successfully used Additional Information point 5, Paula's concern about health and safety at summer camps and this was often linked successfully with the availability of the welfare team at Camp Anim8. *Camp Anim8 has a dedicated welfare team available 24 hours a day, and over all a good support system which would appease Paula's worries on the health and safety aspect of summer camps.* Other successful responses emphasised the longevity and reputation of the camp. *Camp Anim8 has been running for almost 50 years as one of the leading providers of international summer camps this might increase Paula's faith in the credibility of the camp and she might feel more comfortable in sending her children to an established institution.*

Candidates also used Additional Information point 11, the proximity of Camp Anim8 to the family home, with varying degrees of success. *Camp Anim8 is only 20 Km away from where they live so it is easier for Paula to get there if something goes wrong and there is an emergency.* Less successful responses linked the commute too closely to Paula's working hours and her ability to

drop off and collect Zandy and Julian from the camp. As the daily operating time of Camp Anim8 is not specified in the material this was not accepted as being creditable.

Camp Anim8 was the only camp with the flexibility of attending on a residential, or on a daily basis and candidates were able to make this point quite effectively. *This camp offers a choice where children can stay with host families or travel each day so Paula can work during the day without being concerned about collecting the children from camp on time.*

- (d) This question was generally answered well. Responses could gain full marks for this question for either one developed point, or two single points. Focus on the key aspect of the question 'international' was essential here. *Tony's children are already exposed to Spanish culture and enjoy the language so he might prefer his children to attend an international summer camp to expose his children to a wider range of nationalities, culture and languages, making his children multilingual and perceptive of the world around them.*
- (e) Most candidates successfully identified Additional Information point 12 as the least relevant point for Tony and Paula when choosing a summer camp for Julian and Zandy.
- (f) This question required candidates to apply their own knowledge to provide two different informal language features. There were many instances of candidates giving two examples of the same feature so could not be credited with full marks for this question. There were also instances of candidates providing a longer piece of text without identifying the example of colloquial language.

Section B

Question 2

In general candidates engaged well with the subject matter of the **Section B** material relating to the development of robotic worms. The questions in the reading comprehension that proved most challenging were questions requiring candidates to express relevant points mainly in their own words (**Questions 2b(i), 2b(ii), 2b(iii), 2b(iv) and 2b(v)**), or within a limited number of words (**Questions 2c, 2c and 2(i)**). For other questions that do not require candidates to use their own words candidates are best advised to write the exact points they have identified using the same terminology as in the original in an effort to maintain precision.

- (a) This was answered correctly by the majority of candidates.
- (b) This question on the paper required candidates to use their own words. The question was broken down into five phrases used in the material. Each answer was worth one mark. Candidates were permitted to respond with suitable synonyms, adjectives or verbs derived from nouns in the material, or with different verb forms.
- (b)(i) Excellent burrowers (line 3) The majority of candidates successfully provided alternative vocabulary choices.

Examples of Mark scheme points successfully conveyed in candidates' own words include: *great at digging themselves into the ground/skilled excavators/able to tunnel underground proficiently/talented diggers/expert tunneller/possessing a great talent and ability for digging through ground.*

- (ii) Spaces that might be difficult to access (lines 4 – 5)

Examples of Mark scheme points successfully conveyed in candidates' own words include: *places which could prove hard to reach/areas that are hard to enter/locations which are not typically accessible with ease/regions that are problematic to go to or explore.*

- (iii) Filled with gel (line 19)

Examples of Mark scheme points successfully conveyed include: *packed with a sticky, fluid substance/full of viscous fluid/completely loaded with liquid/brimming with lubricating fluid/full of or comprised of a jelly-like liquid, semi-solid substance/packed to the brim with thick viscous fluid*

- (iv) Though it's not as fast on a flat surface (lines 20 – 21) In general, this question was not answered well.

Examples of Mark scheme points successfully conveyed include: *even if its speed is slower on the plain terrain/despite not being quick on horizontal planes/may operate at lesser speeds on even and level ground*

- (v) It's able to move deeper (line 21)

Examples of Mark scheme points successfully conveyed include: *it possesses the capability to penetrate to greater depths/ability to locomote to a greater depth/it can go down a greater distance/It can travel longer distances downward*

- (c) This was the first question testing summary skills and required candidates to restrict their response to about 30 words. In all summary word counted questions candidates needed to write in full sentences. Candidates are advised not to repeat the question stem in their response as this has the potential to compromise the successful completion of valid points within the word count. A number of candidates exceeded the word count for this question. Most candidates achieved at least two of the three available marks within the word count.

A successful three-mark response was: *Robotic worms mimic earthworm setae that helps them to anchor, whilst also copying fluids in earthworm segments that helps them move, as well as capturing the earthworm's distinctive movement. (29 words)*

- (d) This question required candidates to restrict their response to about 20 words. Most candidates achieved at least one of the two available marks. Most candidates made the point that parts of the earthworm were able to extend in two directions. A successful two-mark response was: *Each segment is able to expand bilaterally, thus allowing it to create earthworm-type contraction and expansion waves. (17 words).*

- (e) Most candidates were successful in answering this question.

- (f) Many candidates achieved full marks for this question. Candidates needed to identify the difference in size between the earthworm and the bioinspired earthworm robots. Candidates could demonstrate this by giving the exact measurement in their response or by explaining that the robot was considerably larger. Responses that simply stated that robotic worms were larger were not specific enough.

The second difference related to the pumps and systems for movement that increased the bulk of the robotic earthworm. This second difference was less successfully identified by candidates as many did not specify the bulkier aspect in their response.

- (g) Most candidates answered this question well. Less successful responses chose the incorrect organisation DARPA.

- (h)(i) Some candidates did not address the focus of 'commercial clients' in the question stem. Candidates that successfully located the correct information needed to provide sufficient detail for three advantages of using GE robots. Candidates who identified the lower cost and less damage to the environment needed to reference a comparison to conventional drilling.

- (ii) This question was generally answered well. Less successful responses confused the amount of research that could be disclosed or the number of roboticists that do not wish to work on military applications.

- (i) This question required candidates to restrict their answer to about 20 words. Less successful responses did not explain that the robotic earthworm was successful because it was able to make use of a camera to find survivors. Candidates who achieved one mark explained that the robotic earthworm would not create further damage to the ground in their response.

- (j) (i) All three questions in 2(j) required candidates to identify vocabulary from the material prompted by a synonym given in the question stem. In such questions the appropriate word must be selected both for the similarity in meaning and the correct grammatical form. Care should also be taken to avoid extra material.

Of the three sub-questions, this first one was answered the best by the majority of candidates with 'potential' being a distractor.

- (ii) Some candidates incorrectly identified 'stealthy' as the answer to this question. It was generally answered well.
- (iii) This question was generally answered well.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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| <p>Paper 8021/23 Comprehension</p> |
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Key messages

Candidates are advised to thoroughly read the insert material before attempting the questions.

It is essential that candidates read the question carefully and note the specific instructions and guidance. For example, in 1(a)(ii), candidates were directed to Mrs K.

In questions where candidates are instructed to answer using their own words, it is highly recommended to avoid using the words in the original material. It is unlikely that the words from the original material will gain credit, however technical vocabulary is occasionally allowed.

In word count **Questions 2(g)(i) and (ii)**, candidates must note the word count and provide succinct responses. Candidates are advised to avoid an introduction or repeating the question in their answer. It is also recommended that candidates make full use of the word count in order to cover all of the necessary points.

If a question does not instruct candidates to write a response within a certain word limit or using their own words, it is highly recommended that the candidates copy the relevant text from the material. Some responses were not detailed enough to gain credit and the re-wording of the original material unnecessarily affected the precision of the responses.

General comments

The majority of candidates showed good understanding of the material in **Section A** and **B** and there was a good degree of engagement with the questions.

It is strongly advised that candidates focus on their use of language. Weaker responses were not clearly expressed or lacked the required detail.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The June 2025 **Section A** material was based on two foreign language trip options for ten candidates and two teachers from Muttumbox High School. Candidates were required to use the information provided, including reviews and conversations, to demonstrate understanding of the context and material.

- (a) In (i), candidates were asked to identify the two reasons why Jonah's language ability did not improve whilst in Sellacka. The focus of this question was on Jonah's language ability. Candidates gaining the highest credit located the relevant material and expressed their answer clearly. For example, 'Nobody spoke to him while in Sellacka. His host family only watched TV shows that he did not understand.'

Weaker responses were characterised by a lack of detail and misunderstandings. Some candidates noted that 'Sellacka is in the middle of nowhere' and 'Jonah's host family just watched TV' which does not relate to Jonah's language ability. Others cited 'Jonah felt ignored by his host

family' which lacks the required detail. Jonah's feelings or perceptions were not specific enough and were unable to gain credit.

In (ii), the question directed candidates to Mrs K and her review of the Bonngat Private Language School. Candidates were asked to identify the two different ways the Bonngat Private Language School promotes language learning. Here, the focus of the question was on language learning.

Candidates gaining the highest credit cited, 'The language school provided high-quality teaching. The language school organised a city tour where the knowledgeable guide taught the candidates very useful phrases.'

Responses which were unable to gain credit were characterised by a lack of detail. For example, 'There were high expectations.' 'There was a knowledgeable guide.' 'There was a city tour at the weekend.'

- (b) In this question, candidates were asked to explain three possible disadvantages for the candidates of Muttumbox High School if their teachers choose Bonngat Private Language School. Here, it was important to note the guidance within the question stem to not refer to cost or the Language Exchange Programme to Sellacka.

Candidates who scored highly linked ideas from different parts of the **Section A** material and made connections, whilst providing adequate detail. For example, 'The wheelchair-bound candidate will have difficulty navigating the packed streets and could fall behind, get lost or be further injured in the process.' 'The traditional dishes in Bonngat are mostly meat based which makes it difficult for vegetarian candidates to fully indulge themselves in the culture and experience.' 'Candidates may spend a lot of time doing homework, leaving them annoyed and without the time to join in with the others in the evenings.'

Some candidates provided vague or generalised responses which did not gain credit. Weaker responses were characterised by a lack of linked ideas and the repetition of the same disadvantages with slightly different wording.

- (c) In this levels-based question, candidates were asked to only consider the advantages and explain why the Language Exchange Programme to Sellacka would be the better option for Muttumbox High School. Candidates gaining the highest credit made connections and linked ideas across the **Section A** material, and developed four different points. The following examples of well-developed points were noted: 'At Sellacka, candidates will be granted a more hands-on experience with the culture and language by staying with a host family, which can more effectively immerse them into the language and promote their goal of cultural awareness. Additionally, the Sellacka Community School is famously recognised for their innovative ways of teaching – highlighting the school's capabilities to keep candidates engaged while enhancing their knowledge.' 'Sellacka is welcoming to visitors and loves the visiting teachers' presentations. This would help the candidates feel comfortable.' 'Sellacka is a rural village in Jummba. This means there would be fewer tourist distractions, allowing for a more immersive experience which would also help raise test scores.'

Weaker responses tended to cite fewer valid points and were characterised by a lack of linked ideas which were required to successfully develop a point. Candidates gaining some credit were able to note several valid points only. For example, 'Sellacka is closer to Muttumbox High School. They have won many awards for promoting the local traditions and it costs \$400.'

The weakest responses made vague statements without explanation and it was not always clear why it was an advantage. Examples include references to the school bus, transportation, the candidate using a wheelchair and statements such as 'it will be more fun'. One common misunderstanding was the amount of time required to get from Muttumbox High School to Sellacka, with a number of candidates stating the journey took four hours instead of five.

- (d) This question assessed candidates' ability to explain the meaning of 'I'm working flat out'. Candidates gaining credit noted that Mrs Yoder was working as hard as possible. Creditworthy responses included: 'she has been working non-stop,' 'she is working all the time', 'she is working as hard as she can' and 'she is working at maximum capacity.'

Uncreditworthy responses lacked the required detail and were too vague. Examples included: 'she's working hard' and 'she's working a lot.'

- (e) In this question, candidates were asked to explain why Mrs Yoder might be against a visit to Sellacka Community School. Candidates gaining the highest credit were able to state that Mrs Yoder would be tasked with preparing the presentation and successfully link it to her need for her needing a break from work as she is currently overworked and likely exhausted. The following response gained full credit: 'Mrs Yoder is becoming burnt-out, not having the energy to even see her family. On top of that, she's the one who would have to prepare and deliver the presentation at Sellacka.'
- (f) This question required candidates to explain why it is important to learn a foreign language. It was essential for candidates to note the guidance in the question to not repeat material from **Section A**. Creditworthy responses were precise and provided ample detail. For example, 'It can increase your chances of acquiring a good job in a foreign country and make you more useful and skilful to employers.' Other creditworthy responses included: 'so we understand how difficult it is for others to learn our language and we can gain more empathy and respect for those people', 'it allows for greater communication skills' and 'it can help to expand vocabulary.'

Uncreditworthy responses lacked precision and referred to the **Section A** material. A number of candidates discussed the importance of learning about other cultures. This could not gain credit as it was one of the main ideas in **Section A**.

Section B

Question 2

Candidates generally engaged well with the material based on immersive technology in Indian monuments.

- (a) Candidates gaining credit noted 'Smart Tourism' or 'smart technology'. 'Industry 4.0' or 'modern technologies' were also valid responses. Uncreditworthy responses were generally too vague, for example, 'technological advancements'.
- (b) In (i), candidates needed to note one of the following points: 'monuments are not interesting or relevant for the younger generation' or 'the monuments currently use static displays or graphic content.' Uncreditworthy responses lacked precision. For example, 'They do not offer the same things as digital heritage sites.'
- In (ii), creditworthy responses included references to digital heritage sites or technology which would enhance the experience. Alternatively, candidates could cite the need for visitors to be at the centre of the monument or for activities to revolve around the visitor. Some responses lacked the required precision, such as examples of technology, and were unable to gain credit.
- (c) In all three sub-questions, candidates gaining credit noted the wording of the question and cited the exact word in the material. Minor spelling errors were tolerated; however, candidates who noted several words were unable to gain credit.
- (d) This question required candidates to state three benefits of technology according to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Candidates gaining full credit correctly noted three of the four possible answers, providing the required level of detail. An example of such a response is, 'Technology adds experiential value to the heritage sites. It is used as a catalyst for inclusion in the development of the country. It makes a more interactive and impactful human experience.'

Weaker responses were characterised by a lack of precision. There were frequent misspellings of 'experiential' which made the word resemble 'experiment'. A change in meaning could not be credited. Furthermore, a number of candidates gave part of a correct answer but omitted necessary details. For example, 'Technology is engaging and impactful.' Such responses were uncreditworthy.

- (e) Candidates generally performed very well on this question and successfully noted the two correct points: 'to gain knowledge' and 'entertainment'.
- (f) In this question, candidates were instructed to answer using their own words as far as possible. In order to gain credit, candidates needed to provide synonyms for each of the five phrases so that

the meaning remained the same. All elements of the original phrase needed to be re-worded. Some very successful responses were noted.

In **(i)**, the following responses gained credit: 'an auditory guide in multiple languages', 'a built-in recording available in different languages to inform you about the site' and 'a guiding voiceover in a variety of languages.' In **(ii)**, creditworthy responses included: 'a floating insignia at the front desk', 'a floating symbol near the lobby' and 'a floating logo when you walk into the building.' In **(iii)**, the following responses gained credit: 'tourists are taken to the past', 'makes people experience things as if it was long ago' and 'they truly become immersed in the history.' Candidates seemed to find **(iv)** the most demanding out of the five sub-questions. The following successful responses were noted: 'awaken the phrases', 'gives life to the language' and 'reanimating the speech.' In **(v)**, creditworthy responses included: 'it grabs your attention', 'creating interest and involvement' and 'transform it into something appealing'.

Weaker responses were characterised by lifted material which was often uncreditworthy. Furthermore, if there were missing elements in the re-wording, the response was deemed too vague.

- (g)** In word-count questions, candidates are strongly advised to avoid repetition of the question and introductions to their response. It is also recommended that candidates make full use of the word count in order to cover all of the necessary points. Candidates gaining the most credit were able to clearly note three valid points in about 30 words in **(i)** and four valid points in about 40 words in **(ii)**. For example, in **(i)**, 'A dedicated website was made for people to upload pictures of themselves with India's National Flag to promote patriotism. This created abundant conversations about the flag and this campaign on social media.' In **(ii)**, the following response was noted: 'People can have pre- and post-visit stages. Multiple sites have demonstrations of what you will experience at time of booking. After the visit you can share clips of your experience or certificates of contributions and pledges. People can also experience the site through VR at home.'
- (h)** Here, candidates were required to state the exact meaning of 'disseminating' and 'emergence'. It is essential that candidates retain the same grammatical form. Candidates were more successful with **(i)** than **(ii)**, however a variety of correct responses were noted. 'Spreading' and 'introduction' were the most common correct responses.