

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11

Reading

Key messages

- Candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a diverse range of sources such as advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.
- Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic elements and features of texts such as parts of speech/word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph and text-level structure, formality/informality of register, pragmatics.
- Candidates should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.
- For **Question 1(a)**, the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their directed response. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.
- For **Question 1(b)**, candidates need to ensure they compare the form, structure and language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting elements from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.
- For **Question 2** candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of a text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, organise information in their answers, and write using clear and appropriate language.
- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

Candidates accessed and, to differing degrees, engaged with both texts well. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. There were some brief responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words. While there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, this is an aspect of the response's relevance to purpose. Candidates should remember that their work is marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, though, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. Only a few responses showed a lack of the language skills necessary for text analysis. This session, only a few candidates seemed to struggle to manage their time appropriately; such candidates consequently tended not to complete their last response.

Specific language features were generally well understood, but candidates must ensure that the features they identify are actually present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Not all candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage.

Question 1(a) is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session, the original text was taken from an information leaflet about beekeeping. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was the text for a speech opening to be given to a local school community (150–200 words) about keeping bees. Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates

are expected to write clearly, accurately, with relevant content, and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the text produced for **1(a)** with the given text analysing form, structure and language. Here, candidates are assessed for their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of texts, with clear reference to characteristic features and comparative analysis of form, structure and language and how a writer's stylistic choices relate to audience to shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach in their response to **Question 1(b)**. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a conclusion can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts. Those who adopted a topical approach tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic analysis. This series, only a few candidates compared the given text for **Question 1** with that given for **Question 2**, generally writing their comparative commentary after writing their directed response. These candidates did not respond appropriately to the **Question 1(b)** text analysis task.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of a text in terms of meaning, context and audience with reference to characteristic features, and their ability to analyse form, structure and language.

Quite a few candidates did not show understanding of the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the given text.

Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise use of language to link evidence with explanatory comments; phrases such as 'allows the reader to think' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Candidates were asked to read the text taken from an information leaflet about beekeeping. They were then required to write the opening text of a speech about keeping bees to be given to a local school community as if they were a beekeeper.

The characteristic features and conventions of a speech opening were adopted, and most responses showed clear understanding of the text. Most candidates acknowledged the directions of the rubric in part and were prompted by the contents of the text, addressing their speeches to a school community of students and/or parents and/or teachers.

Detailed responses showed close attention paid to the directive *Write the opening...*, and were structured accordingly with an effective opening (usually expressing gratitude in present tense) and an effective closure which provided a springboard for the rest of the speech, often in the subjunctive mood. Clear and effective responses paid attention to the point of view (a beekeeper), and this was evident in their introductions: 'my name is... and I have been a beekeeper for (xx) years'. Such responses also showed attention paid to the implicitly personal nature of the speech and its implicit purpose – to inform – although many responses simply emulated the persuasive style of the information leaflet.

Stronger responses generally addressed the audience respectfully, acknowledging both students and adults. They clearly identified the speaker's profession as a beekeeper and often included a brief explanation of the role. Many responses effectively engaged the audience early on by posing a question such as 'Who likes honey?' or by seemingly prompting a show of hands with queries like 'Does anybody here know what a hive is?'

The main body of the speech openings in these responses typically focused on explaining what beekeepers do in their important mission to keep bees safe and healthy. Some responses referred to swarming as a key opportunity for beekeepers to collect bees and transport them to a safe location. Occasionally, candidates mentioned the beekeeper wearing protective clothing, reinforcing the message that it is safe to handle bees with the right precautions.

Lists were often shortened to suit the spoken form, with candidates usually naming just two types of flowers, most often sunflower and one other less common variety, which helped maintain clarity for both speaker and audience. Bee-related puns were used sparingly; when included, they were generally effective, for example, 'bee-kind to our planet', which appropriately emphasised the insect's ecological value.

The second half of many speeches shifted focus to actions students could take to help save bees. Common examples included promoting initiatives like 'Adopt a Beehive' or suggesting that families offer spare outdoor space for siting a hive. Candidates often referred to the first line in the final paragraph – *Honey bees have been on Earth for some 30 million years, but it is only in the last 5000 years* – of the source material to include fun facts, enhancing the appeal of the speech.

Most candidates avoided discussing the risk of bee stings, likely recognising that this might discourage younger students. The opening sections of the speech usually concluded effectively, either with an invitation for the audience to ask questions or a clear signpost of what was to come, for instance, 'Let me now tell you more about the ways you can help in our cause.'

Most candidates paid careful attention to the audience and the context of the piece, adopting an appropriate, modified formal register and a respectful tone whilst employing first, second and third person at various points throughout. Most candidates adapted material from the source text, including the factual details (though not in the same way as mentioned above) *pollinating one third, 30 million years and last 5000 years*, and the many references to plants. Candidates engaged their audiences by employing second person and rhetorical questions, e.g. 'so how can you help in saving honey bees?' and triadic structure, 'flowers, vegetables and trees'. The voice, passion, empathy and agenda of a beekeeper in ensuring the survival of honey bees was captured by one candidate in the sentence, 'Honey bees might be small but, together, they carry one of the world's most important tasks on their backs.'

Many weaker responses offered a summary of the extract, drifted from the focus of the question and original text or quoted large amounts from the original text, which was rarely justified. They often simply listed pieces of information presented in the article without much attempt to shape it to the requirements of the task, especially regarding form, purpose and register. Many candidates failed to copy words accurately that were actually provided in the text, such as *pollination* and *environment*. Weaker responses often employed possession in common plural nouns. This was typically the case with bees ('bee's'), the spelling of which was, again, provided in the text. There were also many instances of unnecessary commas before most coordinating conjunctions. Expressions that did not flow easily included 'Bees grow more plants' and 'Bees are used to make honey'.

Specifically, these responses often began with casual salutations and frequently included multiple bee-related puns; for example, 'bee-utiful flowers' was especially common. They tended to list all the flowers and 'flowering herbs' mentioned in the source text, as well as all the suggested actions the community could take to help save bees. These lists were typically presented without explanation or justification, offering no indication of the relative importance of each action. As a result, activities such as reporting a swarm were presented as equally significant as more impactful efforts like improving communal spaces through the planting of wildflowers.

Striking the balance between showing understanding of the text and crafting an effective response is the key to this question and the tendency was perhaps to be a little too safe. It is important for candidates to be aware that understanding is not necessarily demonstrated by rearranging sections of the given text. The most effective writing often emerged towards the end of responses, once candidates freed themselves from the constraints of systematically addressing the text.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150–200 words). Several candidates wrote considerably shorter pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

(b) Candidates were asked to compare their speech opening with the text from the information leaflet, analysing form, structure and language.

To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse form, structure and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, i.e. the text given and the one that they have just created. An integrated approach is more effective for this type of

comparative task than dealing with each text separately. Where textual evidence is selected, candidates should remember to offer clear analysis of how the writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

Most candidates adopted the framework of the rubric in their responses, comparing and commenting on each aspect in turn. Many responses lacked supporting evidence in their comparisons. It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to give a more robust response in terms of their analysis.

Generally, stronger responses included appropriate and accurate critical terminology to link evidence with explanatory comments on the effects created by the writers of the original passage and directed response. These stronger responses showed a clear distinction between a speech opening and its conventions and the conventions of an information leaflet; these responses regarded the given text and the candidate's own speech opening as of equal status and commented on both extensively. Such responses also offered a considerable amount of detail to illustrate points, showing a strong grasp of each feature and detail selected, and how each related to audience and shaped meaning. Furthermore, they noted that the primary purpose of the leaflet was both to inform and to persuade the audience to become involved. They also noted that the leaflet targets a significantly larger audience than other formats and is primarily intended for adults, as indicated by references to fundraising and the donation of outdoor space. Beekeeping is promoted as a profession, and it is possible that a young person might find the content intriguing enough to consider it as a potential career. The text is structured into smaller paragraphs with clear headings, helping readers to navigate to the sections most relevant to their interests and circumstances. The language used is relatively straightforward and accessible to most adults. Candidates commented that any technical terms, such as *swarming* or *pollination*, are made understandable by the context in which they appear. Finally, these responses considered that the leaflet makes a strong appeal to the public's ecological concerns, not only by emphasising the importance of saving bees, but also by promoting broader environmental restoration efforts, such as the replanting of wildflower meadows. The best noted that *Invite a beekeeper to visit...*, the final sub-heading, effectively contextualised the directed response task.

Comparative points in limited responses were often straightforward with little attempt to provide evidence from each text or to analyse the features identified. These responses were often brief, focused more – occasionally entirely – on the extract than on the directed response, did not compare 'like with like' and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, showing little awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of writing associated with the genres without reference to the texts; and merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. Many weaker responses took a reflective commentary approach – a requirement of Paper 2 – when analysing their own writing, often referring to what they could 'done better' which is not a requirement of the task. Weaker responses showed lack of precision with use of linguistic terminology; frequently, for example, reference was made to high or low register (rather than formal, informal or modified formal) and high, middle or low lexis (rather than high frequency or low frequency lexis).

Specifically, in respect of **form**, many responses offered basic comments: 'one is an information leaflet, and the other is a speech' was usual. Clear and effective responses addressed some of the conventions of each text, linking such conventions to purpose, audience and language. Thus, the conventional use of a boldfaced title, italicised subheading, boldfaced subheadings and 'call to action', from the point of view of the advocate(s) of the 'Adopt a Beehive' scheme in the information leaflet informed, persuaded and/or advised a 'UK based' and/or 'broad, adult audience' because of its implied reference to home ownership – *if you have the space...* – and its directive to *encourage your own local authority*.... Responses often began with a conventional personal introduction and/or a call to action, written from the point of view of a beekeeper. This approach was used to inform, persuade, or advise a mainly young audience of students, although parents and teachers were often included as well. The effectiveness of this approach lay in several features: the initial address named the school community directly; credibility was established by referring to the beekeeper's years of practical experience; the topic was clearly introduced at the outset; some responses included a preview of the main points; and the language throughout was friendly and engaging. Candidates considered the register of each text, with the most effective responses comparing the modified formal and/or informal features of each. It was clear in effective responses

that attention had been paid to the rubric in that there was recognition that the task involved writing the text for the opening of a speech. Such responses generally closed with an adverbial phrase, e.g. 'here's a list of ways you can help', and/or the hortatory subjunctive to indicate this: 'now, let's look at this in more detail...'.

In respect of **structure**, many responses this series were limited in that they simply itemised the paragraphs in each piece and discussed their lengths – often, at length. Such responses also discussed long and short sentences in a limited manner. However, clear and effective responses compared the ways in which the setting out of 'problem and solution' in an abbreviated 10-point list, in the leaflet, and the use of hypophora, in their own texts, governed the structure of each piece. Attention was paid to the closing sections of the leaflet (with its succession of rhetorical questions from *Why not give them a call...* to *Why not invite...*) and to the intriguing closure and effective springboard in their own texts.

For comments on **language**, comparisons were often formulaic. It was usual for candidates to respond in terms of logos, ethos and pathos. That said, candidates noted the use of factual and numerical detail in the leaflet (*pollinating one third, 30 million years and last 5000 years*) and the inclusion of such details in their own texts 'to endorse credibility' and to outline 'the legitimacy' of the task of beekeeping and the 'serious' or 'urgent' tone of the project involved: 'to save honey bees from extinction' because they are 'diminishing at an alarming rate', despite the fact that 'they are vital to all food production'. With this in mind, several candidates commented on the secondary purpose of the information leaflet, noting the 'soft sell' tactic with its inclusion of a hyperlink and details about how 'adoption money' would be spent (one candidate noted the 'hybrid' nature of this text). In addition to register, candidates compared the uses of direct address, with effective responses commenting on the various ways in which number and person were employed (first, second and third) and how each of these were linked to purpose and content. Several candidates compared the mood(s) employed in each text, commenting on the use of declaratives within the body of the text and imperatives and conditionals in the subheadings, in the leaflet, and their own use of declaratives ('to provide information') and interrogatives ('to engage' and/or to provide structure). Several rhetorical features were compared: the tri-colons of the leaflet (*a park, a roundabout or a hanging basket and local group, schools and clubs*); the listing of *asters, and sunflowers, hollyhocks...* (usually, identified as asyndetic listing); the metaphor in *bee-magnets* and punning in *abuzz* was compared to their own usage of such features and linked to the friendly tone of each piece. Finally, the use of present tense in each text was compared because it provided 'a sense of immediacy'.

Candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of reading and especially analysis, analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally but also how specific effects are created that relate to audience and shaping of meaning. Furthermore, responses would benefit from clear references to the relevant text; this is particularly important when following a topical approach.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an extract from a non-fiction book about snow. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

Most of the responses began with an overview of the purpose and audience and commented on the descriptive and reflective nature of the excerpt.

Candidates appeared to really enjoy this text and there were many detailed and clear responses about the conventions of the **form**. Most candidates were able to comment on some of the conventional features of this extract from a non-fiction book. They commented on the bolded title and the word itself as an instance of Icelandic language. The 'unfamiliarity' of the noun was clarified by the italicised subheading, which provided a translation in the form of a simile. It was noted that the title of the extract appears later in the text as the title of a song by the band Sigor Rós; as such, this was identified as an instance of cataphoric referencing. Clear and effective responses identified the purpose and topic: to inform and entertain a broad audience about snow; the 'topic of snow was linked', in the text, 'to Icelandic culture': to song and language. Candidates identified quotations and factual details (such as references to singer/band names and dates) together with the reference to a meteorologist, Trausti Jónsson. These were seen as indicative of the non-fiction form in establishing credibility. Further, the writer's use of third person assisted in establishing an objective voice in the text.

In terms of **structural** features, responses frequently displayed confusion about the organisation of the text, and a number of personal opinions were introduced inappropriately. Responses generally commented on the way in which the writer initially 'sets the scene' by a quotation from an early traveller, PC Headley, and some reference was made to the 'dreamy atmosphere' with its focus on 'silence'; the latter, in detailed/effective responses, providing a circular structure since the text ends on the noun *silence*. There were also comments on the abrupt transition from past to present tense and the changing 'atmosphere' of Iceland, encapsulated by the short sentence *Yet the glaciers are vanishing* and the transition in the various metaphors employed, from *barely perceptible crackle of frost* and *howling to the throbbing bass* and *elfin [...] vocals*. Other features of structure included the reference back to the title in the third paragraph with *Hundslappadrifa*'s cultural resonance as a unique entity of snow: its size (*as big as dog's paws*), its texture and comfort (*soft* and *blankets*) and its ability to bring joy implied through, *Children are glad....*

In respect of **language**, and in addition to the above, reference was made to 'personification' in *tongues of ice*, but comments were often in need of development; furthermore, personification was not clearly understood. Comments on language features were generally not developed. Reference was made to the form, structure and language of music, but little was made of the impact of auditory imagery, apart from *Björk exploded*, suggesting her 'immediate impact' on the music scene. Responses commented on the writer's use of indigenous language to establish credibility. Several candidates commented on the beauty of the language of the final paragraph with its encapsulation of *musical notes*, *flakes falling* and technology and the way in which they recede to *silence*.

In summary, stronger responses demonstrated a clear engagement with the structure of the text, particularly in relation to the opening paragraph. Candidates recognised that this section plays a crucial role in introducing the main idea, as meaning is constructed through the reader's interpretation of the contrast between the initial silence described by Headley and the subsequent rise in tourism. This tourism, prompted by a desire to escape the modern world, is later ironically mirrored by the sounds of Icelandic indie bands and singers, sounds that attempt to replicate the now-absent *crackle of frost* as the glaciers melt. Some of these stronger responses also showed an appreciation of the cyclical structure of the extract, identifying how the concluding paragraph returns to the theme of silence. The image of the snow ceasing to fall allows the microphone to capture only *silence* once again, creating a thoughtful and effective structural echo.

In addition, stronger responses paid close attention to the language of the opening paragraph, noting the evocative use of words such as *exhilaration* and the idiomatic expression *drinking in the sunlight*. These descriptions of the natural world were often linked to later metaphoric representations, such as *musical notes and flakes falling* (as above) and the Icelandic words for different kinds of snow (e.g. *bright*, *calm*), which were understood as suggesting a direct connection between snowfall and the creation of music. This idea was also recognised in the metaphor of the *otherworldly orchestra [that] fades to a soft and dusty patter*. They also noted the contrast between the lyrical, descriptive passages and the stark simplicity of a sentence like *Yet the glaciers are vanishing*. This contrast was seen to create emotional impact and shift the tone.

Some responses reflected on the role of music in the extract, suggesting that lyrics do not need to be fully understood, or even carry clear meaning, to be appreciated. Others concluded that the writer's main message is environmental: highlighting the impact of climate change as the driving force behind the melting glaciers.

Weaker responses usually struggled to make more than a few disparate observations about textual features with correct use of terminology, identification of an apt example and some effort to describe (if not explain) a direct effect created. Weaker responses tended to take a more literal and surface-level approach to the text. These responses often proposed that the intended audience was primarily people considering a holiday to Iceland or fans of indie music, without exploring deeper or more nuanced interpretations. Such responses typically focused on extracting factual details to support the idea that the writer's main purpose was to inform, often pointing to the use of third-person pronouns and the inclusion of proper nouns, especially the names of bands and singers. While many noted the use of the verb *exploded* to describe Björk's rise to fame, and generally understood that this suggested a sudden and impactful emergence, they tended to stop at this observation rather than considering how the language contributed to the wider themes or tone of the piece.

Furthermore, such weaker responses often described style, mood and vocabulary as having 'positive connotations' or 'negative connotations', with little further elaboration or definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'creating an interesting image' or 'to paint a picture'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology. These weaker responses listed techniques with no reference or example given or explanation.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered minimal analysis. Such responses tended to summarise the contents of the text, generally at great length.

Selection of evidence by way of quotation was not always expertly used in these responses, with some candidates quoting at far too great a length or merely referring to a range of lines.

Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments. Candidates should be advised to: use quotations, evidence and evaluation to produce precise, meaningful commentaries; use appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments; and integrate quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument.

It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' is a feature of the higher levels; a whole-text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. A line by-line approach can lead to repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point cannot be rewarded twice.

Candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to the analysis of Reading texts. The categorisation of elements of a text as representative of 'ethos' or 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, needs to be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language. Candidates should also be advised that a glossary is not part of a given text but provided by Cambridge to provide definitions for words or phrases that may be unfamiliar, or that have specialised or technical meaning within the context of the document, and that consequently they have no need to comment on it.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12

Reading

Key messages

- Candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a diverse range of sources such as advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.
- Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic elements and features of texts such as parts of speech/word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph and text-level structure, formality/informality of register, pragmatics.
- Candidates should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.
- For **Question 1(a)**, the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their directed response. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.
- For **Question 1(b)**, candidates need to ensure they compare the form, structure and language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting elements from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.
- For **Question 2** candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of a text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, organise information in their answers, and write using clear and appropriate language.
- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

Candidates accessed and, to differing degrees, engaged with both texts well. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. There were some brief responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words. While there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, this is an aspect of the response's relevance to purpose. Candidates should remember that their work is marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, though, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. Only a few responses showed a lack of the language skills necessary for text analysis. This session, only a few candidates seemed to struggle to manage their time appropriately; such candidates consequently tended not to complete their last response.

Specific language features were generally well understood, but candidates must ensure that the features they identify are actually present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Not all candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage.

Question 1(a) is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session, the original text was an extract from a book by an explorer and adventurer. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was the text for a section of a leaflet (150–200 words) advising travellers of the landscapes that they will encounter in Suriname. Careful consideration of the target audience is required.

Candidates are expected to write clearly, accurately, with relevant content, and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the text produced for **1(a)** with the given text analysing form, structure and language. Here, candidates are assessed for their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of texts, with clear reference to characteristic features and comparative analysis of form, structure and language and how a writer's stylistic choices relate to audience to shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach in their response to **Question 1(b)**. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a conclusion can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts. Those who adopted a topical approach tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic analysis. This series, only a few candidates compared the given text for **Question 1** with that given for **Question 2**, generally writing their comparative commentary after writing their directed response. These candidates did not respond appropriately to the **Question 1(b)** text analysis task.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of a text in terms of meaning, context and audience with reference to characteristic features, and their ability to analyse form, structure and language.

Quite a few candidates did not show understanding of the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the given text.

Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise use of language to link evidence with explanatory comments; phrases such as 'allows the reader to think' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Candidates were asked to read an extract from a book by an explorer and adventurer. They were advised that they worked for a travel agency that organises expeditions to remote locations for young adults and then required to write the text for a section of a leaflet advising travellers of the landscapes that they will encounter in Suriname.

The characteristic features and conventions of a leaflet section were adopted, and most responses showed clear understanding of the text. Most responses showed close attention to the rubric, recognising the point of view, as directed, in addition to some conventional features of the form and the advisory nature of the task. Most employed a title that embodied both a sense of place and of exoticism in the landscapes (for example 'Lustrous Landscapes of Suriname', 'Suriname's Forests: A Hidden Gem', 'The Last Refuge of Nature' and 'Surreal Suriname'). Responses were conventionally structured, employing subheadings and/or bullet point lists to advise young adults about features of the landscapes to be encountered. In clear and effective responses, such features included adaptations of the *calamitous cliffs*, the *ancient rocks*, the *gorge* with a waterfall, the *impenetrable forest*, the *tropical rainforest*, the *riverside camps*, the *gold mine* and the *mountainous [...] peaks*.

Effective responses adapted elements of the original text to provide cautionary interjections about the dangers of the landscapes that might prove 'challenging for young adults': 'Travellers be warned, this expedition is not for the faint-hearted'. Reference was made to appropriate footwear ('wear sturdy shoes') and to 'protective clothing' (wear 'proper equipment and gear') and to insect repellents ('don't forget your bug spray'). These responses tended to use sub-headings to provide coherence (for example 'Wonderful Waterfalls'). In these stronger responses, there was precise selection of adjectives to describe aspects of the landscape ('verdant foliage', 'vertiginous slopes', 'precariously steep', 'sky-scraping trees'); visual ('a perfect sight to behold') and auditory imagery ('a sonic boom jolting your chest') was employed; furthermore, there was a focus on adventurous activities suitable to aspects of the landscape ('sketchy death-defying situation'); some referenced gold mines in a vein of eco-tourism ('despicable activities that defile the forest').

Candidates generally employed direct address, an 'upbeat' tone and present tense to engage and to provide a sense of immediacy: 'Are you tired of always visiting...'. Most candidates recognised

the secondary purpose of the text, employing persuasive tactics such as hyperbole ('you will gain the skills of a real explorer'), tricolon ('majestic landscapes, mountainous walks and exposed rock cliffs') and hypophora ('tired of the same, boring, over-hyped expedition locations?') Most candidates employed first-person plural in recognition of the point of view whilst appealing to the perceived, adventurous nature of young adults, searching for a unique experience: 'our team awaits your arrival' if you 'want to have the thrill of a lifetime'. A sense of excitement and adventure was embodied from the outset in one response by the employment of an imperative: 'Pack your bags!' Most of the leaflet sections closed with a call to action ('Join us now') or with the travel agency's contact details.

Many weaker responses offered a summary of the extract, drifted from the focus of the question (for example did not address *landscapes*) and original text or quoted large amounts from the original text in their directed response, which was rarely justified. They often simply listed pieces of information presented in the article without much attempt to shape it to the requirements of the task, especially regarding form, purpose and register.

In weaker responses, titles often prioritised the travel agency itself ('Eternal Expeditions'); bucket-list-like potential achievements were included ('Conquer the Devil's Egg', 'Mine for gold in Wild West territory'); remoteness was over-emphasised ('lose contact with the rest of the world') at the expense of vivid descriptions of natural features (ancient rock, biggest waterfall, shallow green swamps situated above sea level). Some of these weaker responses did not focus on the *landscapes* as directed in the question. Many weaker responses presented *slumbering dragons* in a literal rather than figurative sense; there were lapses in maintaining a travel agency's perspective, usually found in the leaflet's conclusion ('I do hope you guys have an unforgettable trip!').

Striking the balance between showing understanding of the text and crafting an effective response is the key to this question and the tendency was perhaps to be a little too safe. It is important for candidates to be aware that understanding is not necessarily demonstrated by rearranging sections of the given text. The most effective writing often emerged towards the end of responses, once candidates freed themselves from the constraints of systematically addressing the text.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150–200 words). Several candidates wrote considerably shorter pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

(b) Candidates were asked to compare the text of their leaflet section with the extract, analysing form, structure and language.

To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse form, structure and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, i.e. the text given and the one that they have just created. An integrated approach is more effective for this type of comparative task than dealing with each text separately. Where textual evidence is selected, candidates should remember to offer clear analysis of how the writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

Most candidates adopted the framework of the rubric in their responses, comparing and commenting on each aspect in turn. Many responses lacked supporting evidence in their comparisons. It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to give a more robust response in terms of analysis.

Generally, stronger responses included appropriate and accurate critical terminology to link evidence and explanatory comments on the effects created by the writers of the original passage and directed response. These stronger responses showed a clear distinction between a section of a leaflet and its conventions and the conventions of an extract from a book; these responses regarded the given text and the candidate's own speech opening as of equal status and commented on both extensively. Such responses also offered a considerable amount of detail to illustrate points, showing a strong grasp of each feature and detail selected, and how each related to audience and shaped meaning. In respect of the extract, stronger responses noted the expository writing to vividly describe exploration of a not well-known remote location with the purpose of engaging in extreme physical activities; the audience usually being young adventure travellers who themselves enjoy hazardous activities (climbing and abseiling); use of first person

pronouns to vividly capture the author's direct experiences (*We hold our breath*); 'semi-formal' register mainly owing to the author's more personal and introspective comments (*speak to Helen, chapter of my baby's childhood*); appeal to the senses (*murky orange*); short sentences to create tension; the perspective that the author was not sufficiently physically and mentally prepared for his ordeal (*most remote and impenetrable forest, I was dying to get to something approaching civilization, a bleak start to the next few weeks in the interior, missing home desperately*).

Furthermore, stronger responses demonstrated a thoughtful comparison between the given extract and the directed response, as relevant, particularly in relation to purpose and audience engagement. They recognised the need to enthrall the audience and pique their interest in a country they may not even know about or have previously considered travelling to. To support this aim, key pieces of advice were often presented in bullet points 'so they stand out' or 'cannot be missed', showing an awareness of how layout can aid communication. Some also argued that graphology can be employed to appeal to a younger audience, citing the use of bold and underlined text, or even 'a different font for title and sub-headings'. There was purposeful use of second-person pronouns, with one candidate commenting that this helped 'close the gap between experienced adventure traveller and aspirational young audience'. They commented that rhetorical questions were used effectively to entice the audience, such as 'Do you dare to venture forth into the remote interior of Suriname?' These were often followed by a clear call to action in the final sentence, including phrases like 'We strongly urge...', which gave the piece a confident and persuasive conclusion.

Comparative points in limited responses were often straightforward, with little attempt to provide evidence from each text or to analyse the features identified. In respect of the extract, weaker responses generally noticed the alliterative title *Forgotten Forest*; they argued that first-person pronouns place an emphasis on the 'narrator' and 'his own story and experiences'; they labelled much of the writing as 'descriptive' with little attempt to show how various effects were created, and attempted to characterise the content ('very beautiful and dangerous terrain'). Furthermore, they found the author's intention to be persuasive (neglecting the many indicators that he was regretful of his decision to go into the *Forgotten Forest*). These weaker responses often saw the intended audience of the extract as being 'young travellers'. In comparison with the directed responses, where relevant, candidates commented on the 'fast pace' of leaflets created via short sentences and paragraphs to 'energise' the reader (and 'mimic the author'); there was a high incidence of 'you' considered to appeal to and influence the decision-making of impressionable potential customers; such responses saw the use of the semantic field of enjoyment ('joy', 'elated' and 'fun') as 'the primary aim of young travellers'.

Weaker responses were often brief, focused more – occasionally entirely – on the extract than on the directed response, did not compare 'like with like' and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, showing little awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of writing associated with the genres without reference to the texts, and merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. Many weaker responses took a reflective commentary approach, a requirement of Paper 2, when analysing their own writing, often referring to what they could 'done better' which is not a requirement of the task. Weaker responses showed lack of precision with use of linguistic terminology, chronology was not always clearly understood and types of verb received little attention (present continuous, dynamic and stative).

Specifically, in respect of **form**, clear and effective responses addressed some of the conventions of each text, linking such conventions to purpose, audience and language. Thus, the conventional use of a boldfaced title and short subtitle together with the autobiographical nature of the extract, combination of first and third person, factual detail and explorer's point of view served to inform and entertain a broad, adult audience interested in exploration and adventure. In the leaflet text, the conventional use of a title, subheadings, lists, call to action and contact details together with the employment of first and second person and travel agency point of view served to inform, advise and entertain an audience of young people searching for a unique and adventurous 'get-away', or 'adventurers and thrill-seekers', as one candidate put it. Candidates compared the modified formal/semi-formal register of the texts and the ways in which these appealed to their respective audiences.

In respect of **structure**, In addition to comments on form, and in clear and effective responses, candidates commented on the ways in which the extract evoked 'curiosity': beginning with the title

Forgotten Forest and continuing through various shifts in focus and tone from the ‘abrupt’, ‘dramatic’ and italicised, opening paragraph with its focus on the ‘dangerous’ or ‘precarious’ surroundings (implied by the noun *Rock!* and a *boulder swoops*) to ‘calmer’ but, often, ‘gloomier’ sections when the writer is recounting his frustrations – *the internet connection [...] was poor / would have taken weeks of jungle hacking* –, his ‘despondency’ and ‘regrets’ (*missing home desperately, an unrepeatable chapter of my baby’s childhood was slipping away*) and his environmental concerns (*energy companies prowl offshore, coveting...*). Candidates compared how they had created curiosity in their titles and how their focus and tone were dictated by the form and purpose of their pieces and, as such, although they included shifts in focus from informative to advisory, they were far more ‘upbeat’ in their ‘soft sell’ tactics. The paragraph sequencing of the extract with its ‘temporal references’ and ‘time shifts’, such as *After three weeks and our journey began* (though, often, referred to as chronological order), and its various shifts in tense from present to past, was compared to their own sequencing of information and advice (generally their use of subheadings and bullet points) and changes in tense. One candidate indicated that they had ‘focused on sights rather than the perilous process of getting to those sights’. Some reference was made to the variety of sentence structures, in each, with the short sentences of the extract which, in some instances, added to the ‘intensity’ of the unfolding drama (taken from *We hold our breath*) being compared to short imperative and/or exclamatory sentences in their leaflet: ‘Book now!’

For **language**, candidates commented on the vivid, sensory imagery of the extract, both visual and auditory. For some candidates, the writer created ‘wondrous detail’ a ‘fantastical mood’ in the metaphor *slumbering dragons*. For one candidate, the onomatopoeic *boom* evoked a ‘death defying tone’. Candidates commented on the writer’s use of alliteration and sibilance (*calamitous cliffs and sandy slop*) and how these, in addition to hyperbolic similes, such as *like a fly caught in a storm-blown web*, contributed to the ‘entertainment’ value and ‘drama’ of the extract. Candidates compared these rhetorical features to the ways in which they had employed visual imagery and hyperbole to suggest the variety of landscapes to be encountered in Suriname. For one candidate, the lush landscape of Suriname was a ‘hidden gem’. For another, the ‘fairy tale’ landscape of Suriname was ‘like heaven on earth’. For yet another, who had noted the writer’s concern with both the flora and fauna of the region, the landscape came with ‘bat sized mosquitoes’ – the latter being employed to contrast the negative tones of the extract, with the positive ones of the leaflet. Finally, candidates commented on the variety of moods in the extract with attention being drawn to the interweaving of factual/numerical declaratives (*13 billion barrels of oil and with \$10000 apiece*) to establish the writer’s credibility. The moods of the extract were compared to their own (as above), with credibility established by reference to the travel agency’s credentials (we provide ‘professional tour guides’) and contact details: ‘Contact us at SurinameTravellersAgency@gmail.com.’

Candidates would be well advised to note that ‘comparative’ is the most discriminating skill in terms of reading and especially analysis, analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally but also how specific effects are created that relate to audience and shaping of meaning.

Furthermore, candidates’ responses would benefit from clear references to the relevant text; this is particularly important when following a topical approach.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read the text from an article about how scientists plan to build biocomputers to emulate the human brain.

They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

Most of the responses began with an overview of the purpose and audience and commented on the descriptive and reflective nature of the excerpt.

Most candidates had a clear understanding of some of the conventional features of the article’s **form**. Clear responses commented on the bolded and ‘telegraphic’ title as being ‘straightforward’ or ‘matter-of-fact’. Effective responses identified the ‘shocking’ or ‘sensational’ nuances of making *computers out of brain* and that this provided the initial ‘hook’, arousing the curiosity of a broad audience interested in the ‘latest technological developments’. Such responses then commented on how the nuances of the title were clarified in the italicised subheading by explaining that *scientists borrow the performance of the brain for computing* but that a positive outcome for such a ‘pioneering project’ was not certain, as indicated by the stative verb in *they hope*. For most candidates, the writer’s use of formal register conveyed in the use of third person, quotations from reputable/expert sources, data, and jargon was indicative of an objective article, the purpose

of which was to educate, to inform and even to persuade. For a few candidates, subliminal 'bias' could be detected in the positive tone throughout and the inclusion of quotations from Thomas Hartung, whose aim was to brook 'any opposition' to OI by emphasising the *ethical and socially responsible* vision of the project.

In terms of **structural** features, most candidates commented on the short paragraph structure of the extract, including the one-sentence paragraph in which Hartung is quoted. The latter served 'to emphasise' the storage capacity of the human brain (2500 terabytes) and the 'scale' of the OI project in scientists' attempts to emulate such storage capacity in new computers. Effective responses focused on the ways in which paragraphs were sequenced in present tense, opening, topically, with the aspirations of scientists, then shifting to some contextualisation, then to 'technical aspects', then to 'potential benefits to the world' and closing on a reputable source to endorse the credibility of both the project and the article. For some, structural cohesion was considered to have been achieved, in the article, through the writer's employment of repetition at the beginning of paragraphs and throughout the text. They noted that 'scientists and researchers are mentioned' frequently.

In respect of **language**, and in addition to numerical data (linked to science and computing), several candidates commented on the jargon of the article, with one candidate identifying the telescoping of the noun *biocomputers*, and the verb *biocomputing* to provide an effective 'shorthand' for science/computer 'geeks'. The coinage of *organoid intelligence* and its abbreviation 'OI' served to embody the 'exciting' new development in the world of computing. Most candidates identified Hartung's use of tricolon in *fast, powerful, and efficient* which served to emphasise his aspirations for new computers. They also commented on Hartung's use of tricolon in *scientists, ethicists, and the public* which served to endorse his emphasis of *partnership*.

In addition, stronger responses commented on the impressionistic title, especially the phrase *make computers out of brain*; they noticed an optimistic tone (as above) expressed through *they hope* in both lines 3 and 24 (especially as a 'standalone' in the former instance); they also commented on the use of factual content that does not always 'overwhelm the reader', such as *1015 connection points* and *50,000 cells* in respect of the *brain organoids* because 'readers appreciate the human brain consists of many billions of cells'. Such stronger responses commented on instances of tech-related lexis (*silicon, transistors*), though the article's relatively little scientific jargon was considered to be a virtue as it might otherwise alienate general readership. They saw the use of third person helped cast scientists as 'higher level entities' who did 'mind-bogglingly innovative work'; these valued the comparison of the human brain's superior capacity (*wired completely differently*) to a *tiny chip* as illustrative of the complexity of the work being undertaken. There was consideration of the metaphor *a host of work* as understatement of what has yet to be accomplished and evaluation of the alliterative, plosive *building biocomputers* as a useful means to encapsulate the article's topic ('a pithy takeaway concept'). The effect of triadic structure *fast, powerful and efficient* was considered to succinctly characterise bio-computing; the rule of three *learn, remember – and perhaps even understand* was seen to serve as an effective segue into the final section of article, i.e. the ethical dimension of the issue.

Weaker responses usually struggled to make more than a few disparate observations about textual features with correct use of terminology, identification of an apt example and some effort to describe (if not explain) a direct effect created. These responses tended to take a more literal and surface-level approach to the text. They found the subject would 'fascinate' a general reader on basis that the audience is familiar with computers and 'we all' have a brain. These weaker responses noted that the sub-heading creates both 'certainty and uncertainty' that could 'confuse many readers'. Statistical information was considered as 'gives readers a solid base to research further the topic' and the article's 'high lexis appeals to intellectual people'. Some candidates questioned the veracity of the Hartang quotation *A community of top scientists has gathered to develop this technology . . . efficient biocomputing* and labelled it 'science fiction'. Often the single-sentence paragraph was 'designed to help the reader remember it'.

Furthermore, such weaker responses often described aspects of the text as having 'positive connotations' or 'negative connotations', with little further elaboration or definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'creating an interesting image' or 'to paint a picture'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology. These weaker responses listed techniques with no reference or example given or explanation.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered minimal analysis. Such responses tended to summarise the contents of the text, and they generally did this at great length.

Selection of evidence by way of quotation was not always expertly used in weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at far too great a length or merely referring to a range of lines.

Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments. Candidates should be advised to use quotations, evidence and evaluation, to produce precise, meaningful commentaries; use appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments and integrate quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument.

It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' and similar descriptors, are a feature of the higher levels; a whole text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of taking a line by-line approach can lead to repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point is not be rewarded twice.

Candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to the analysis of Reading texts. The categorisation of elements of a text as representative of 'ethos' or 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, needs to be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language. Candidates should also be advised that a glossary is not part of a given text but provided by Cambridge to provide definitions for words or phrases that may be unfamiliar, or that have specialised or technical meaning within the context of the document, consequently, they have no need to comment on it.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/13

Reading

Key messages

- Candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a diverse range of sources such as advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.
- Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic elements and features of texts such as parts of speech/word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph and text-level structure, formality/informality of register, pragmatics.
- Candidates should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.
- For **Question 1(a)**, the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their directed response. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.
- For **Question 1(b)**, candidates need to ensure they compare the form, structure and language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting elements from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.
- For **Question 2** candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of a text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, organise information in their answers, and write using clear and appropriate language.
- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

Candidates accessed and, to differing degrees, engaged with both texts well. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. There were some brief responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words. While there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, this is an aspect of the response's relevance to purpose. Candidates should remember that their work is marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, though, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. Only a few responses showed a lack of the language skills necessary for text analysis. This session, only a few candidates seemed to struggle to manage their time appropriately; such candidates consequently tended not to complete their last response.

Specific language features were generally well understood, but candidates must ensure that the features they identify are actually present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Not all candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage.

Question 1(a) is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session, the original text was an article about making journeys on sleeper trains. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was the opening text for a brochure (150–200 words) advertising the launch of a company's new sleeper train journey. Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates

are expected to write clearly, accurately, with relevant content, and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the text produced for **1(a)** with the given text analysing form, structure and language. Here, candidates are assessed for their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of texts, with clear reference to characteristic features and comparative analysis of form, structure and language and how a writer's stylistic choices relate to audience to shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach in their response to **Question 1(b)**. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a conclusion can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts. Those who adopted a topical approach tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic analysis. This series, only a few candidates compared the given text for **Question 1** with that given for **Question 2**, generally writing their comparative commentary after writing their directed response. These candidates did not respond appropriately to the **Question 1(b)** text analysis task.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of a text in terms of meaning, context and audience with reference to characteristic features, and their ability to analyse form, structure and language.

Quite a few candidates did not show understanding of the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the given text.

Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise use of language to link evidence with explanatory comments; phrases such as 'allows the reader to think' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Candidates were asked to read an article about making journeys on sleeper trains. They were advised that they worked for a railway company and required to write the opening text for a brochure advertising the launch of the company's new sleeper train journeys.

The characteristic features and conventions of a producing persuasive and promotional brochure openings which focused on the launch of advertising the company's new sleeper train journeys were generally understood. Most candidates employed language typical of marketing material, using emotive vocabulary, rhetorical questions and positive adjectives to highlight the benefits of sleeper train travel. Phrases such as 'wake up in a new city', 'escape the hassle of flying' or 'travel greener, sleep deeper' were common, achieving the desired tone and register. Most responses were conventionally structured, employing subheadings and/or bullet point lists to advise young adults about features of the landscapes to be encountered.

There was a general consistency in register, with many candidates adopting a modified formal tone that reflected a serious business promoting its service to a target audience of experienced or regular travellers, particularly business clients, though some responses also referenced leisure travel and special excursions. Openings were often enthusiastic and eye-catching, with candidates supplying short, relevant titles such as 'Dream Destinations' (a pun on sleeper coaches), and subheadings like 'Book the train ride of a lifetime', which captured attention and set the tone for the rest of the piece.

Effective responses usually addressed the reader as early as possible, often simply through the use of the second person pronoun 'you'. They clearly identified and highlighted the most attractive features of sleeper trains. For example, many noted the promise of a comfortable night's sleep in beds, 'equivalent to those found in 5-star hotels'. The smooth, electric-powered nature of the trains was also referenced, presumably based on the assumption implied by the phrase *renewable energy*. Candidates described either the sleek, modern styling of the trains or their nostalgic appeal, reminiscent of the golden age of rail travel, such as the Orient Express-style 'red velvet seats lined with gold trim that elegantly invite you to take your seat'.

These responses often appealed effectively to customers' environmental concerns, particularly their desire to reduce their carbon footprint. This was reflected in persuasive lines such as 'travel with a clear conscience [...] only 20 kg of CO₂ released per journey'. Candidates also made a virtue of the panoramic experience offered by large windows, which allowed passengers to 'marvel at snowy peaks framed by a starry sky on a crisp Alpine night'.

Finally, stronger responses incorporated the sentiment of enjoyment expressed by Julia Senninger in the direct quotation *It's so much more fun*. This sense of pleasure was further supported by her reference to the opportunity to meet *new, interesting people*.

Many weaker responses offered a summary of the extract, drifted from the focus of the question (for example lacking focus on the *launch* of a new sleeper train) and original text, or quoted large amounts from the original text in their directed response, which was rarely justified. They often simply listed pieces of information presented in the article without much attempt to shape it to the requirements of the task, especially regarding form, purpose and register.

Weaker responses tended to focus heavily on listing destinations and types of travellers, often at the expense of developing a persuasive tone or promoting the specific benefits of sleeper train travel. Rather than highlighting the virtues of electric sleeper services, many took every opportunity to criticise air travel, frequently describing it as 'dirty', which sometimes resulted in an unbalanced or overly negative comparison.

Of these weaker responses, some candidates did not select an appropriate or persuasive name for the company they were representing. For example, 'Station Stripes' fails to clearly communicate the advantages or appeal of sleeper trains. Others produced advertising copy that lacked clarity or coherence, such as the line 'Listen to, NO! embrace the tranquillity', or the unfinished slogan 'Enjoy the miles and miles of open', which left the potential audience confused.

A few responses included content that was irrelevant to the task or lacked audience awareness. One candidate opened with an unnecessarily long historical overview of modes of transportation, while another described the target audience as 'the environmentally cautious', a phrase that unintentionally downplayed the urgency or conviction often associated with sustainable travel choices.

Striking the balance between showing understanding of the text and crafting an effective response is the key to this question and the tendency was perhaps to be a little too safe. It is important for candidates to be aware that understanding is not necessarily demonstrated by rearranging sections of the given text. The most effective writing often emerged towards the end of responses, once candidates freed themselves from the constraints of systematically addressing the text.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150–200 words). Several candidates wrote considerably shorter pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

(b) Candidates were asked to compare the text of their leaflet section with the extract, analysing form, structure and language.

To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse form, structure and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, i.e. the text given and the one that they have just created. An integrated approach is more effective for this type of comparative task than dealing with each text separately. Where textual evidence is selected, candidates should remember to offer clear analysis of how the writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

Most candidates adopted the framework of the rubric in their responses, comparing and commenting on each aspect in turn. Many responses lacked supporting evidence in their comparisons. It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to give a more robust response in terms of analysis.

Generally, stronger responses included appropriate and accurate critical terminology to link evidence and explanatory comments on the effects created by the writers of the original passage and directed response. Candidates recognised that the article employed a modified formal or mixed

register, alternating between first person (from the company's perspective), second person (addressing the reader), and third person (to describe features and provide commentary). These choices supported an informative yet engaging tone, underpinned by a number of credibility-building devices. They noted that, in the given text, quotations from real passengers, such as Julia Senninger, served as indirect endorsements, while statistics such as the comparison of 250kg of CO₂ for air travel vs 26kg for trains reinforced the environmental case. Some candidates also commented on stylistic features, such as the alliterative *coaches and capacity to carry*, the onomatopoeic *buzz* conveying anticipation, and the triadic structure *adventurous, romantic and efficient*, which encapsulates the ethos of sleeper travel in a positively connoted phrase.

The comments from above were compared, as relevant, to their own directed response, noting that their tone was more promotional and energetic, designed to excite and persuade a travel-curious or younger audience. They described their use of direct address ('You deserve to travel in style'), rhetorical questions ('Why waste time in airports when you could wake up in a new country?'), and imperatives typical of advertising language ('Book now!', 'Don't delay!'). Some included short quotations as testimonials, for example 'Competitive cost, environmentally friendly, a relaxing experience', mimicking the article's use of expert or user perspectives.

Many stronger responses also addressed **structure**. Candidates recognised that the article adopted a chronological structure, beginning with a recent example *Back in October* and expanding outward to broader European developments. This helped frame sleeper trains as both a personal and pan-European experience. By contrast, where relevant, directed responses typically featured a thematic structure, organised around key benefits such as comfort, sustainability, and convenience. These were often signposted with bold headings and subheadings, for example 'Why Choose Sleeper Travel?' or 'Your Journey Starts Here' and occasionally bullet points, used judiciously for emphasis. There was also recognition of the present tense to highlight the sleeper service's immediacy and the future tense to suggest aspirations or outcomes: 'Travel will never be the same again'.

In terms of **language**, and in addition to above, many candidates identified that the title of the article suggested a sense of something being revived or brought back to life, aligning with the theme of the resurgence of sleeper trains. They commented on the use of quotations from both rail company representatives and passengers, recognising these as strategies to add credibility and authenticity to the article's claims.

The environmental benefits of train travel were frequently mentioned, with most candidates noting how the article contrasted rail and air travel, typically to the detriment of the latter. The inclusion of facts and figures (such as CO₂ emissions as above) was widely understood as reinforcing the case for sleeper trains, though at times candidates focused too heavily on the air travel comparison, both in analysis and in their own directed response.

Some candidates recognised the use of tripartite structures, such as *adventurous, romantic and efficient*, though fewer explored the effect of listing European cities, which was less commonly analysed. There was also general awareness of the article's romanticised portrayal of train journeys, for instance, the idea that sleeping onboard saves the cost of a hotel and creates a more pleasurable, experience-rich journey.

However, relatively few candidates commented on the wider tone of rejuvenation or revival present in the article. This was perhaps because many were more focused on the competitive advantages of rail over air travel, a theme that also dominated much of the language in their own directed responses. As a result, there was sometimes limited attention to the article's broader emotional appeal, beyond its practical benefits.

Weaker responses were more likely to treat the article and directed response separately, offering descriptions rather than comparisons. Many simply listed features, for example 'the article used quotes' or 'my writing used adjectives', with little explanation of effect or audience engagement. Some overlooked the importance of form and structure, focusing only on surface-level content or language. Others misunderstood the article's purpose, interpreting it as an argument about sleep itself, or mischaracterising its tone as entirely promotional rather than informative.

Less successful commentary also included generalisations such as the article being 'unbiased' for acknowledging both air and rail travel benefits, or over-simplistic observations about third person vs second person use.

Such weaker responses often did not compare 'like with like' and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, showing little awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of writing associated with the genres without reference to the texts, and merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. Many weaker responses took a reflective commentary approach, a requirement of Paper 2, when analysing their own writing, often referring to what they could 'done better' which is not a requirement of the task. These responses showed lack of precision with use of linguistic terminology.

Candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of reading and especially analysis, analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally but also how specific effects are created that relate to audience and shaping of meaning.

Furthermore, candidates' responses would benefit from clear references to the relevant text; this is particularly important when following a topical approach.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an extract from a non-fiction book about mindfulness. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

Most of the responses began with an overview of the purpose and audience and commented on the descriptive and reflective nature of the excerpt. The most successful responses demonstrated not only a sound grasp of language, structure and form, but also an appreciation of the writer's purpose: to reflect, to connect, and ultimately to inspire empathy and action through shared humanity.

Stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the writer's purpose, recognising that *The Invisible Army* was structured not just to recount a personal experience, but to offer advice, inspiration, and a call to action. Many noted that the title itself intrigued the reader, suggesting something hidden yet powerful, with the identity of the 'army' gradually revealed through the narrative and reflections.

These responses often highlighted the opening anecdote, describing how it immediately engaged the reader and created a personal connection. Phrases such as *our home* implied a family unit, and the first-person narrative drew the reader into the experience. Some referred to the speaker as a 'protagonist' or 'narrator' who was 'average' or 'ordinary', which allowed readers to sympathise with their vulnerability.

There was a strong focus on tone and structure, with perceptive commentary on how the piece evolved from a personal account to a broader, more philosophical message. Candidates observed that the use of discourse markers and the shift to a numbered list in the second half served to ease the reader into sensitive reflections, creating an almost conversational guide. One stronger response commented on this as a move 'from emotional recount to philosophical guidance', noting how each point developed the themes of connection and compassion.

Many responses were sensitive to the impact of language choices, including emotive lexis such as *helplessness*, *hurt*, and *flooding our minds*, which conveyed the trauma of the break-in. The use of idiom, like *power of love* and *love in action*, was interpreted as conveying warmth and collective strength, while metaphorical imagery was often seen to reinforce abstract values through emotional resonance.

The imperative mood, used in lines such as *Pick up the phone to say hi...*, was successfully analysed as a gentle call to action, fostering a tone that was empowering rather than forceful. The use of tricolon and repetition, for instance *say hi and check in, be honest, share your troubles*, and the repeated use of *do not*, was seen to give rhythm and clarity to the message, as well as reinforce its key ideas.

Stylistic features such as polysyndeton, for example, *and police were called and reports filed*, were explored in stronger responses, for their role in conveying a stream-of-consciousness effect, reflecting the narrator's sense of disorientation or emotional overload. Alliteration, such as *family, friends and more and more messages*, was sometimes highlighted for the emphasis it gave to the communal aspects of the narrator's recovery.

The most successful commented on tonal shifts across the piece – from the fear and tension of the initial break-in to a final tone of hope, gratitude and reflection. Several recognised how contrast was used, for

example between digital communication and human connection, or self-sufficiency and accepting support to develop the message that genuine help is both powerful and needed.

In contrast, weaker responses tended to rely on narrative summary, retelling the events of the break-in and the community's response without analysing how the writer's stylistic choices shaped meaning. While many identified features such as the first-person voice or the emotive language, they often stopped short of exploring the effects of such devices in detail. For instance, some commented that 'this creates emotion' or 'this makes the reader want to read more' without elaborating on how or why.

Some of these weaker responses repeated similar ideas, focusing heavily on the sense of 'hopelessness' or 'community' without developing a nuanced comparison or analysis. Others misunderstood aspects of the text, for example interpreting *one autumn night* as establishing a dark, gothic atmosphere, or suggesting that the narrator's use of advice implied obligation (*must*), when the tone was in fact more invitational.

While many weaker candidates identified the personal tone, lists, and emotive vocabulary, they didn't often link these to the writer's broader purpose or intended audience. Some labelled the text as merely 'emotional' or referred vaguely to 'personal growth' without connecting these ideas to specific stylistic features. There was also a tendency to ignore form and structure, despite clear shifts in paragraphing and tone that reflected the writer's development from personal trauma to communal uplift.

Furthermore, many of these weaker responses neglected to discuss how structure supported meaning, for example, how the lengthier early paragraphs may have been intended to slow the pace and emphasise seriousness, or how the use of a numbered list helped organise advice clearly and accessibly. Likewise, while repetition and rhetorical questions were often mentioned, few candidates analysed their rhetorical or persuasive effect in detail.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered minimal analysis. Such responses tended to summarise the contents of the text, generally at great length.

Selection of evidence by way of quotation was not always expertly used in weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at far too great a length or merely referring to a range of lines.

Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments. Candidates should be advised to: use quotations, evidence and evaluation, to produce precise, meaningful commentaries; use appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments; and integrate quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument.

It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' is a feature of the higher levels; a whole-text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. A line by-line approach can lead to repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point cannot be rewarded twice.

Candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to the analysis of Reading texts. The categorisation of elements of a text as representative of 'ethos' or 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, needs to be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language. Candidates should also be advised that a glossary is not part of a given text but provided by Cambridge to provide definitions for words or phrases that may be unfamiliar, or that have specialised or technical meaning within the context of the document, and that consequently they have no need to comment on it.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Quite often, the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is a vital and essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates know and understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; another common error was writing in sentence fragments. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. They should focus on answering each aspect of the task, ensuring that all content is relevant. Writing should be purposeful, without rambling or unnecessary filler content.
- To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question which indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the tasks chosen. In order to achieve the task (one of the Level 3 criteria on the mark scheme) the instructions must be followed.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates need to ensure that they provide evidence from their text to support points made in the **Question 1(b)** commentary. It is helpful to candidates to use a clear structure for this question, such as a PEA structure (Point, Evidence, Analysis).
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types, to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

Many candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)** at all. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or full of errors, possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work.

Stronger responses to **Question 1(a)** focused clearly on the question, comprised effective emails written in an appropriately formal tone. These candidates gave a few clear reasons to support their opinion, often referring to quotations from the original imagined article. Weaker responses often lacked an appropriate tone and relied on anecdotal evidence.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** maintained a close focus on linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, and language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly, or entirely, on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task; (review, story or speech), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions, as well as relevant content. Weaker responses on **Section B** generally contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were simple recounts of the content of the TV series, with very little in the way of critique or personal opinion, some **Question 3** responses lacked any sense of drama or suspense, and some **Question 4** responses were not in an appropriate form for a speech.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You recently read a newspaper article which said that the world would be a better place without mobile phones. You decide to write an email to the editor, in response to this article, giving your opinion

(a) **Write the text for your email, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, give reasons to support your opinion.**

Most candidates structured their writing clearly in paragraphs and demonstrated good awareness of the conventions of an email, using an appropriate tone. However, some candidates failed to adopt a suitable register, becoming overly emotional and sometimes verbally attacking the editor. The majority of candidates objected to the proposition entirely; however, a few agreed with the editor. Many candidates referred to personal experiences and effectively used emotional appeal to support their arguments. Some candidates took a balanced approach before favouring the continued use of mobile phones. There was a tendency by some candidates to confuse social media and mobile phones; these candidates somewhat digressed by discussing how the world would be a better place without social media instead of without mobile phones.

Stronger responses consistently addressed the appropriate audience, often beginning with clear and relevant greetings such as, 'Dear Editor, I have to wholeheartedly disagree.' They included features of an argument consistently throughout, giving clear reasons why mobile phones can be useful. They explored each reason in depth and complex lexical choices helped create a tone of credibility, with phrases like 'substantial impact', 'limiting the opportunities of our future generation' and 'capitalism and consumerism' demonstrating sophistication in language use.

Stronger responses were written in a respectful and professional tone, citing appropriate examples that reinforced the main points. For instance, one candidate wrote, 'On the contrary, many individuals earn a living solely through mobile phones. Influencers earn money using platforms like Instagram, Tik Tok and You Tube.' These candidates made sure to address all aspects of the question, balancing their opinion with some less common lexis, as well as a variety of rhetorical devices. Some candidates made effective use of figurative language to strengthen a point, such as the analogies in this example: 'Phones are as dangerous as knives. Without any training, they can be used to harm people, including the wielder.'

In their development, stronger responses addressed multiple points and elaborated on these with appropriate examples and language techniques. These candidates commonly used rhetorical questions, repetition, pathos, and relevant jargon related to mobile phones. For example: 'Do not you find it beautiful how we can share our opinions from across states, countries, oceans? You must agree that phones have interconnected the world's vast cultures.' Paragraphs were structured with specific purposes in mind, and sentence structures were employed to emphasise key ideas. Many showed evidence of planning, which contributed to a coherent flow throughout the email. Most also wrote close to the 400-word limit, allowing sufficient space to fully develop their ideas and persuasively argue that mobile phones are not the root cause of societal issues. Additionally,

candidates generally adhered to the email format, including address terms, body paragraphs, salutations, and signatures. For example, a considered final line was: 'I hope you will consider my humble opinions.' This demonstrated awareness of socio-pragmatic factors such as tone, directness, and formality appropriate to the audience and task.

Weaker responses were characterised by a poor awareness of audience and a lack of structure, as well as quite limited development of ideas. This all restricted the candidate's ability to fully meet the requirements of the question. These candidates typically wrote lists of reasons without sufficient elaboration, such as: 'Phones make life easier because we can call more people.' Their tense agreement was often insecure and inconsistent. They showed very little acknowledgement of audience or purpose, with examples like, 'Hi, I think cellphones are good.' Their viewpoints were frequently unclear or contradictory, for instance: 'I think mobiles should not be banned but also for some people they should be banned.' Sentence structures often contained errors such as missing punctuation and run-on sentences, which, along with numerous spelling mistakes, severely hindered communication.

Weaker responses tended to be subjective or emotional and attacked the editor without raising convincing arguments that justified their position on the article. These responses were sometimes very short, often only one paragraph, briefly outlining different ideas such as safety, education, GPS and using the internet, without exploring the subtleties and nuances around each idea. Some responses lacked respect for the audience, expressing outrage and/or shock at the opinions shared by the author of the newspaper article; at times, these were either too aggressive in their approach and language or far too casual in their tone and vocabulary.

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.

Many responses lacked true analytical depth, with candidates frequently summarising or paraphrasing what they had written in **Question 1(a)** rather than analysing their choices. One approach that worked well for some candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Analysis format to analyse form, structure and language. They named, one by one, the techniques used, providing precise evidence and explaining the effect on the audience. However, many responses were limited in detail and did not provide evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

Stronger responses clearly identified techniques and elaborated on the purpose behind each one. These candidates quoted specific examples from their **Question 1(a)** writing and explained how the techniques helped achieve a particular effect. One illustrative example is: 'To appeal to my purpose of explaining my reasons for my opinions, I used rhetorical devices like rhetorical questions ("Were you aware that...") paired with statistics ("72 per cent") to back up my ideas and to put the editor in my shoes. This was also done through anecdotes like "just yesterday" to display a sense of knowledge. A friendly tone is also made through exclamatory sentences and parenthesis ("and this was during a coastal sunset too!") which adds a sense of humour and interest.' This example demonstrates how the candidate not only named the techniques but also explained their objectives, which aligns with the expectations for language analysis.

References to logos, ethos and pathos were also very popular. For example, in reference to the impact removing phones would have on small business, one candidate wrote: 'I utilized rhetorical language, specifically pathos, to appeal to emotion and further persuade the audience. In paragraph 7, I write, "What kind of cruel person would want to take that away?" which attempts to make the reader feel guilty by painting them as a villain for holding their opinion.'

Weaker responses tended not to demonstrate any analysis of language, form or style. Instead, candidates often merely stated words or sentences they used without discussing techniques. For example, one candidate wrote, 'I have used the word disagree to show that I disagree.' Similarly, some candidates tended to quote long chunks of their own writing, such as, 'I wrote that "I always make sure to get the weekly paper at the end of each week." This statement shows that I've read the weekly paper for a long period of time.' Although this shows some attempt to explain, it does not constitute analysis of language, form or structure.

Another common tendency was to simply list the techniques used, with statements like, 'I have used this simile' or 'This repetition has been used' followed by examples quoted from their work. These candidates did not explain the purpose or effect of these techniques. For instance stating that repetition has been used without commenting on what it achieves is insufficient to demonstrate true

analysis. As a result, such responses showed limited analysis. In weaker responses, points were often very vague, with no examples provided, for example: 'The devices I used to get my points across was similes and metaphors. I got my points across through a emotional perspective but also through a serious and intelligent way as well. Overall, I made myself direct with my opinions and even pulled out quoting from the article.' Other responses were extremely short, sometimes under 100 words, and in some cases the question was not attempted.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

You have been watching a new TV series about interior design. You decide to write a review of the series, which will be published in your school magazine. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates wrote positive reviews, offering opinions on format, presentation and some technical aspects of the series. Most chose to write in an informal register, suitable for a school magazine, and there was generally an awareness that this was a review and that there needed to be some balance expressed, along with a final verdict.

In stronger reviews, candidates engaged their audience from the outset, often making their opinion clear in the title. For example, one review opened with the arresting title, 'The House Healers UK – a bigger disaster than I thought possible.' This was followed by an opening sentence which immediately addressed the audience directly and engaged them: 'Art and design candidates, if you have not turned on BBC One at 5 pm on Thursdays recently, then I would STRONGLY advise you to keep on living in uninformed bliss.'

Stronger responses often included subheadings to focus clearly on areas for review. Some developed the imagined content in an interesting way, for example by including ideas like an 'AI generator' to produce a mock-up of what a room would look like. Additionally, some included a comments section, with associated email address, for readers to write into, thereby fulfilling form and stylistic aspects of real-world reviews of this type. Such candidates also used less common lexis appropriate to the semantic field of interior design, such as 'aesthetically' and 'complementary colour schemes'. Authenticity was created by creating a suitable title for the review, such as 'Dream Designers...Destiny's Designs: a show you must not miss!' There were examples of a convincing sense of reviewer voice which engaged the audience, such as in the following two examples: 'Interior Design for Dummies shows that moving out into your first home does not have to be tough – hence it's a five-star watch for me,' and 'Another aspect that deserves all the praise is the variety of homes that were decorated in the show. Inclusivity, in niche markets like interior design, is an aspect I love to see. The show's hosts Luka and Jackie offered expertise to a wide range of houses—from cramped one-bedroom houses to palatial state-of-the-art mansions.' Some candidates referred in detail to an imagined specific episode, enabling them to write in precise detail rather than in general terms

In weaker reviews, candidates often wrote lengthy narrative accounts of an episode from the series, without giving their evaluation and opinion of the show beyond the very basic, such as: 'The show is good and fun to watch.' Other weaker responses focused too heavily on technological elements at the expense of meaningful review about content, presentation and other relevant aspects of the series. Some candidates spent too long setting the scene, for example describing themselves as 'bored, on a rainy day, scrolling through Netflix for something to watch.' Whilst this could form part of a relevant introductory paragraph, this point was sometimes laboured and starting to stray into diary entry territory, forming too large a section of the task. Other weaker responses were overly negative, giving a low star rating without convincing reasons, while others were very short and in need of development. Many weaker responses also contained numerous grammatical and structural errors.

Question 3 – Story

Write a story called *No Turning Back*, about a person who leaves home one morning and decides never to return. In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many stories centred around a teenager experiencing abuse, neglect, or emotional conflict, usually within a troubled home environment involving parents or stepparents. This theme was a common choice, and while it offered opportunities for drama, the treatment of it varied significantly in quality. Whilst many candidates created or attempted to create drama and suspense, some candidates struggled to write consistently in one tense, resulting in a more muddled narrative. Most stories reached a satisfactory ending, even if it was necessarily looking forward to the unresolved future.

Stronger stories were written with more control and development. These responses were focused on characterisation and setting to enhance their narratives and to build the appropriate atmosphere. For example, one such response described three key places the narrator cycled past on their way out of town, each providing a bit more exposition and context as to why they were leaving, rather than stating it explicitly in the beginning. These candidates demonstrated their ability to use imagery and linguistic techniques to achieve drama and suspense more effectively, such as in: 'My home grieved for me, even though I was not yet gone. Maybe it already knew I was a ghost.' Additionally, showing the character's feelings and reactions rather than merely stating them made for a more engaging response: 'I walked through the empty halls once more. My footsteps echoed through the house like the ghosts that haunted graveyards, an odd sort of hollow grief that trails behind the race of time.'

Stronger stories were successful in building drama and suspense through a carefully crafted structure. One candidate used a ticking alarm clock as a structural device: 'The slow ticking of the clock was her only company. It was consistent, reliable; it never hesitated.' As the girl tried to escape, the ticking of the clock intensified: 'She wished the clock would stop counting for a moment. Time was running out.' The reason for the protagonist wishing to escape an unpleasant home environment was gradually revealed at various points through the narrative, thus maintaining the reader's interest. Another strong response was written from the perspective of a refugee fleeing Lithuania for the USA in WW2, effectively describing small details such as suitcases on the boat and the 'luminous glow of skyscrapers' on arrival at New York: 'The low toned boat horn exclaimed that our journey was over; joy was tinged with sadness knowing we were never going back.'

Some candidates used a time lapse structure and this was sometimes very effective as they made it into a circular narrative, looking back from the perspective of an older person who had made a new life in different place. Occasionally humour was used to good effect, with candidates assuming a sarcastic or world-weary tone and maintaining it consistently throughout the piece. Other candidates utilised pathetic fallacy to set an ominous tone from the outset, for example: 'Dawn breaks over the peaks of snow-capped mountains and the clouds hang heavy and dense in the sky. Dark and black and viscous, they gather; static electricity crackles bright and tense within the cavernous confines of rain-burdened clouds.'

Weaker responses tended to be poorly planned with limited narrative characteristics and more of a focus on a series of events with little development, some not entirely connected to the opening prompt. Weaker responses sometimes used the 'it was an ordinary day' phrase within the first few lines, followed by a pedestrian listing of a morning routine in the first few lines as an attempt at exposition, rather than integrating the exposition into the action. Weaker responses often lacked originality or relied on clichés. These narratives typically included limited character development and predictable plotlines. They tended to lack descriptive detail and suspense-building techniques.

In these stories, candidates seemed unsure of how to develop their plots or build tension. Often, these responses consisted of just an opening or fragment rather than a full narrative. Grammatical weaknesses and poor sentence demarcation were common, especially in weaker scripts that combined multiple issues, including lack of cohesion, inaccurate punctuation, and inconsistent tenses. A typical example read: 'As Georgina is climbing out her window her hand slip from grasping her window from and cuts herself, she screamed. Her mother dashed through her bedroom door "What on earth are you doing Gina" her mum yells out. Georgina froze at the site of her mother and decided to climb back into her window.' These errors disrupted the reader's engagement and impeded meaning. Additionally, weaker responses frequently fell short of the required word count, resulting in limited character or plot development.

Verb tense control was a particular challenge, with many candidates shifting inconsistently between past and present. Examples such as 'she speak' or 'I was aware I am a guest' demonstrate a lack of mastery over basic grammatical structures. The recommendation for such candidates is to stick to a single, consistent verb tense (preferably past tense) to avoid confusion.

Question 4 – Speech

Your class has just had a discussion about the benefits of studying science subjects at school. Your teacher has asked you to give a speech to first-year candidates at your school, encouraging them to learn science subjects. Write the text for your speech, creating a sense of enthusiasm for science. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most responses focused quite well on the benefits of learning science subjects and frequently linked this to employment opportunities. A summary of the contents of the speech was usually provided in the conclusion, often with a call to action and a valediction to close. Some candidates demonstrated a solid understanding of

audience and purpose. Most used at least some features of speech, such as rhetorical questions, and maintained an appropriate tone and register, generally informal but not overly colloquial.

Stronger responses created a genuine connection with the reader, often by establishing a voice or persona. For instance, opening lines like, 'I remember when I was just starting here' and 'We are so lucky that we have the facilities that we do here' added warmth and relatability. These candidates used a range of persuasive techniques to engage their audience directly, for example: 'Even the greatest minds like Marie Curie and Einstein were once candidates just like you' and 'In Environmental Science you will learn how to make a real difference in this world rather than sitting by and ignoring the greater issues.' They also maintained a strong sense of voice, for example: 'Plus, who does not love messing around with chemicals like an evil scientist? Shh, do not tell the headmaster I said that!'

Better responses were imaginative and purposeful. They used extended metaphors and referenced global issues such as 'global conflict' and 'global warming', linking their ideas to wider societal contexts. They also demonstrated grammatical accuracy throughout, with correct spelling and punctuation. An example of a strong, structured greeting was: 'To our Head Teacher, and her Deputy, teachers and fellow students – good morning!' This set a respectful and formal tone suitable for the speech format. The purpose was also made clear early on, as shown by: 'I am speaking to you today about the importance of learning a variety of sciences for our development.'

These responses elaborated on various ideas, for example, how science helps us understand the world, how it can be enjoyable and surprising, and how it leads to diverse careers providing 'infinite paths to go down'. Candidates used effective transitions such as 'moreover', 'furthermore', 'additionally' and 'consequently' to provide flow between paragraphs and ideas. Such candidates enriched their arguments by quoting famous scientists and philosophers, adding credibility and depth to their responses. One candidate wrote: 'Famous philosophers such as Pythagoras and Socrates as well as geniuses like Da Vinci and Tesla [...] icons of human history have improved the overall life of humanity due to their inventions and reasoning.' This was often followed by rhetorical questions used purposefully, rather than as a standalone device, such as: 'Why can not you be the next one to influence humanity?' Many concluded their speeches effectively, providing closure and acknowledging the audience. One candidate wrote a personalised motto that left a memorable impression – 'If you want to, you can!' – paired with a simple thank you to the audience for their attention.

In weaker responses, candidates often listed different areas of science without development. Their understanding of science often came across as superficial or stretched. There were some pedestrian responses merely listing and explaining the different sciences, for example: 'Biology is the study of life we learn about the interesting things we may or may not know how we see a specific color, how the water cycle works, cells of organism similarity or differences.' Some weaker responses relied on a rather mundane understanding of studying science, such as in this limited understanding of the anatomy of plants: 'You will understand how they grow which will make your garden flourish even more, and in case you go on a family camping you'll be able to point out the different parts, and tell them which ones they can not eat.'

A significant number of responses contained insecure spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Many responses contained frequent errors of various kinds, for example: 'Our science instructares here make learning science corses easy and fun to understand, so that it is both engaging and comprehendible. You should always take advantage of new ofpertanities to learn what goes on in the earth, your body, in the wild, and so much more.' Such language issues hindered clarity and reduced the overall impact of the writing. Another recurring issue was repetition, often of the same points in different paragraphs with no added effect or purpose. These responses were also frequently under the required minimum word count.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Quite often, the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is a vital and essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates know and understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; another common error was writing in sentence fragments. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. They should focus on answering each aspect of the task, ensuring that all content is relevant. Writing should be purposeful, without rambling or unnecessary filler content.
- To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question which indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the tasks chosen. In order to achieve the task (one of the Level 3 criteria on the mark scheme) the instructions must be followed.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates need to ensure that they provide evidence from their text to support points made in the **Question 1(b)** commentary. It is helpful to candidates to use a clear structure for this question, such as a PEA structure (Point, Evidence, Analysis).
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types, to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

Many candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)** at all. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or full of errors, possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work.

Stronger responses to **Question 1(a)** focused clearly on the question by making the purpose of the speech clear from the outset and comprised effective speeches which engaged their peer group audience and introduced both sides of the debate. These candidates utilised a clear structure and format. Weaker responses were unclear in terms of the purpose of the speech or to whom it was addressed and they tended to focus on only one side of the debate. Ideas were disorganised and often lacked any paragraphing.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** maintained a close focus on linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, and language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly, or entirely, on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (story, essay or review), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions, as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** lacked any sense of drama or suspense, some responses to **Question 3** read more like magazine articles than essays, and some **Question 4** responses were simple recounts of the content of the photography course with very little in the way of critique or personal opinion.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You are going to take part in a debate at school about whether it is better to have one job for life, or to change careers one or more times. Your headteacher has asked you to open the debate by giving a short speech on the topic.

(a) **Write the text for your speech, using no more than 400 words. Introduce both points of view and create a sense of interest in the debate.**

Many candidates demonstrated an understanding of the required format, showing awareness of audience and tone. Most candidates were able to generate some relevant arguments in response to the task. Common points in favour of staying in one job included long-term security and pension benefits, the opportunity to build deep expertise, and a strong sense of workplace community. In contrast, arguments supporting career changes often focused on developing broader skills, achieving higher earning potential, and adapting to a rapidly changing job market. Many candidates acknowledged the merits of both sides before clearly stating their own position. This helped to build momentum for the debate and allowed room for potential rebuttal.

Stronger responses usually began with a direct address and attempted to engage their audience early on, for example: 'Today, we have an interesting topic that has been debated for centuries: Is it better to have one job for life, or to change careers one or more times? Think hard here! Explore one land and call it your home or discover numerous corners and choose the best.' This type of introduction captured the spirit of the debate and set a clear direction for the speech. Another approach that created impact with a punchy opening was: 'Survive or thrive? What is it that you intend to do over the course of your working life?'

In stronger responses, candidates consistently used a range of language to create a compelling voice, which gave their speeches a personal and persuasive tone. For example, one candidate wrote: 'Nothing compares to the adrenaline of securing your first job. I remember when...'. Such responses were well-balanced, presenting both the benefits and drawbacks of long-term careers over switching jobs. They moved beyond simplistic ideas like money, status or family expectations, instead exploring deeper motivations and societal factors. Stronger responses were characterised by the inclusion of a variety of rhetorical devices, anecdotes and use of statistics. Stronger responses had an engaging, lively opening address, presenting an interesting hook rather than just rephrasing the question, such as in this example: 'Your life is a story. One with multiple chapters and pages that signify milestones and achievements. You make the choices. You hold the pen.'

Better responses were marked by their clarity, accuracy, and control of grammar and structure. Paragraphing was clear, with transitional phrases such as 'First, let us consider ...' helping to guide listeners. Such candidates employed complex sentence structures effectively, as seen in this example: 'Or maybe they would not. Maybe, since they were a kid, they've dreamed of "making it

big" – discovering something groundbreaking, creating endlessly, or just becoming really important – and really rich – in their field. A zeal that tells them what they're destined for.' These candidates demonstrated a well-developed thesis, maintained a logical flow, and concluded with clarity.

Weaker responses showed some awareness of audience, usually with a greeting, but many closed inappropriately and often lacked a clear opinion or argument. These candidates jumped from one idea to the next without an organising structure or cohesive thesis. Many began with excessive detail, particularly personal anecdotes about childhood dreams or family pressures, then ran out of time or space to complete the task meaningfully. Content was often simplistic, sticking to repetitive points about earning money or stability, for example, without further development.

Weaker responses were composed very simply and lacked a sense of interest, for example: 'When it comes to sticking through one job; it is extremely understandable. Choosing one major career and holding on to it has a good direction.' Grammar and sentence demarcation were significant weaknesses in many lower-level scripts. For example, one candidate wrote: 'But be careful while choosing this critical and decisive decision, there are some crucial points you have to think about and take in consideration, one of them being financial stability, my advice is searching up the yearly salary a average person.' This sentence illustrates multiple issues, including run-ons, incorrect idioms, article misuse, and awkward phrasing.

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set by your headteacher.

Many responses lacked true analytical depth, with candidates frequently summarising or paraphrasing what they had written in **Question 1(a)**, rather than analysing their choices. One approach that worked well for some candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Analysis format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They named, one by one, the techniques used, giving precise evidence from their answer and explaining the effect on the audience. However, most responses were limited in detail and did not provide evidence from their **Question 1(a)** response.

Stronger responses displayed candidates' ability to refer to specific stylistic features and explore their impact on meaning. For instance, one candidate wrote: 'I deploy the simile "Like a heart monitor" to create visualization of the changing careers.' Another wrote: 'Additionally, the metaphor "it could cripple you" demonstrates the negatives of one job for life.' These examples reflect an effort to identify language techniques and explain how they shape tone or contribute to argument.

Stronger responses effectively identified and explained specific linguistic features. For example, some discussed the use of rhetorical questions such as 'Have you ever wondered...?' to involve the audience, or inclusive pronouns like 'we' and 'us' to create a sense of shared experience. These candidates also commented on their use of a formal register and persuasive vocabulary. For example: 'The words "crucial" and "significant" add authority and emphasis.' Where relevant, some responses insightfully explored figurative language, such as metaphors depicting career change as a 'journey' or 'path,' and explained how these enhanced engagement and clarity.

They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. In this example, the analysis is detailed and focused: 'The simile "as risky as poker" suggests that switching careers is like playing poker which is generally considered a risky game. This further develops into an extended metaphor by using the words "royal flush" to describe the potential rewards as a royal flush is the highest value set in the game of poker.'

Such candidates demonstrated their ability to reflect on purposes, academic context and audience and how these factors shape style, tone and approach. They wrote about the spoken mode, politeness, debate protocol and rhetorical features. They traced the lexical patterns relating to both sides of the debate, often characterised by themes of stasis and change: 'trudging every day to the same place of work', 'doing the same thing day in day out can get repetitive and boring. It does not challenge you anymore', 'burnout' versus 'the fickle process of changing jobs and making countless applications' and 'As humans it's in our nature to want to explore and try new things.'

Weaker responses often summarised the content of the debate or made vague comments without providing examples, as in this case: 'The speech offers a new perspective on work troubles, with it being straightforward and simple. There is an avid use of connectors. Vocabulary is also simple and to the point as well as the use of paragraphs that distinguish the tackling of a different subject.'

I used simple words to make the speech more digestible.' Some candidates used written mode features to describe spoken mode features, for example referring to question marks rather than questions: 'This question mark helps to keep readers engaged throughout the text.' Other weaker responses tended to list a few basic features, mentioning devices like 'repetition' or 'pronouns', but with little or no attempt to explain how these were used or what effect they had on the reader. Frequently, these candidates listed words they had used without referencing the technical term or discussing its purpose. Many analyses were very short and were therefore insufficiently developed to demonstrate a sound understanding of form, structure, or language.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Story

Write a story which begins with the following sentence: *As I walked past the painting of the man, I was sure that his eyes were following me.* In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

While some narratives demonstrated real creativity and linguistic flair, many fell short due to lack of planning, control and sustained development. More successful candidates tended to pick an appropriate location to fit with the prompt (museum, art gallery, mansion, antique shop) and then followed on their narrative from this point. A common technical fault was insecurity of tense throughout the piece: often, writing would move from the past to the present and back again frequently and in ways that did not suggest deliberate authorial intent.

In stronger responses, candidates demonstrated a clear ability to use language effectively to build atmosphere, tension, and imagery. They maintained focus on a single time frame, often a moment of confrontation with the painting, and shaped their narratives with intention and coherence. Tension was often created through sharp, controlled sentences such as, 'And there it was. I could never escape it.' These candidates made full use of descriptive and figurative language, bringing their stories to life through imagery like, 'Wave after wave of fear crashed throughout my body,' and 'the city retching heavily to rid itself of the panic we all felt.' Such vivid language added depth and mood. Stronger responses also displayed grammatical control, accuracy in spelling and punctuation, and a conscious use of structure to craft a complete and satisfying narrative. One strong example of descriptive control was: 'Deep in the school, past classrooms, lockers, and teacher's offices, lay a wide, open hall. Clumps of candidates hurried to grasp a glance, swarming the painting like bees swarming their hive.' Similarly, metaphors like 'my heart was an unruly drum' and expressions such as 'to soothe my beating heart' or 'I forced a staggering breath' reflected an elevated use of language to evoke emotion and develop tension.

Another way candidates successfully created tension was to establish a sense of ambiguity in the opening which stimulated reader engagement, for example: 'Though recently I did not know what to believe, who to trust. My life, once picture perfect, seemed to be spiralling out of control and all I could do was stand there and watch.' The use of anaphora was an effective device in this task, provided candidates were able to confidently master their tenses. Some candidates approached the task as the onlooker having some mental or psychological issue, creating a more intense sense of drama and suspense. This was then often revealed at the end. For example, 'There is no way a painting's eyes were following me. "Get it together", I mutter under my breath.'

One candidate wrote from the perspective of a security guard in an art gallery: 'From afar, there seemed nothing extraordinary about this man in a long brown trench coat, sneering at all the tourists that stood before him.' This candidate demonstrated a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures, along with strong control over narrative organisation. Techniques such as internal monologue and sensory description were used effectively to create a growing sense of unease: 'I could feel a chill running down my spine as those eyes seemed to read my deepest, darkest thoughts.'

Weaker responses tended to be poorly planned, with limited narrative characteristics and more of a focus on a dramatic series of events with little development, some not entirely connected to the opening prompt. Weaker responses sometimes used the 'let's rewind a little' phrase within the first few lines but never returned to the prompt sentence, making for a fragmented response.

In weaker responses, candidates often struggled to use the prompt meaningfully. The painting was often treated as a throwaway detail rather than a central narrative device, as seen in the line, 'And I saw a painting with the eyes that followed me before I went back home.' These stories tended to lack planning, with seeming uncertainty over how to develop a plot or build tension. Often, these responses consisted of just an opening or fragment rather than a full narrative. Grammatical weaknesses and poor sentence demarcation

were common, especially in scripts that combined multiple issues such as lack of cohesion, inaccurate punctuation and inconsistent tenses. A typical example read: 'I felt a shiver down my spine as a slowly turned around, I knew I wouldnt find anyone there... My hands wouldnt stop shak\$ng as I dailed the number.' These errors disrupted the reader's engagement and impeded meaning. Additionally, such candidates frequently failed to reach the required word count, resulting in limited character or plot development.

Verb tense control was a particular challenge, with many candidates shifting inconsistently between past and present. Examples such as 'she speak' or 'I was aware I am a guest' demonstrate a lack of mastery over basic grammatical structures. The recommendation for such candidates is to stick to a single, consistent verb tense (preferably past tense) to avoid confusion.

Question 3 – Essay

In class, you have been discussing whether it is better to spend your holidays in your home country, rather than travelling abroad. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay on the topic, giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates attempted to present both sides before offering an opinion. However, many responses lacked the formality required by the question and some were almost speech-like, including phrases like: 'Let's look at'. Other responses read more like magazine articles. Most candidates explored the topic to some degree but struggled to present a solid and well-reasoned opinion, as required by the task. In several cases, arguments presented were contradictory, which undermined the quality and coherence of the writing.

Stronger responses evidenced candidates' ability to present balanced arguments with clear examples, comparing cost, cultural experiences, and convenience. These responses used some cohesive devices and maintained a formal tone. For example: 'While holidays in your own country have their advantages like convenience and affordability, travelling abroad provides us with unique experiences that allow us to grow and connect with the wider world.' One environmentally conscious response evaluated the carbon emissions incurred in travel abroad, while another advocate of staying at home, keenly aware of diversity, suggested: 'Do not go to another gargantuan metropolis from whence you came, go to the interiors that may yet be untouched by rampant homogenous development.'

Stronger work was structured logically through the use of discourse markers such as 'On the other hand', 'furthermore' and 'it is not always as simple as that' to clearly link and contrast points. These candidates also used a range of language to craft a persuasive and reflective tone, with well-developed ideas that went beyond surface-level reasoning. One wrote: 'I could take out the latest holiday brochure and spend all of my allowance, or we could look closer to home and experience our own culture.' Such candidates also used this task to showcase their descriptive ability combined with the warmth of personal voice, for example: 'Best of all, travelling takes you to the most exquisite palate of incredibly sumptuous foods from all cultures – what one would not do for just one soft, fruity scoop of Italian gelato?'

Weaker responses often displayed misunderstanding of the task. These candidates sometimes launched straight into the task with a minimum of planning. For instance, one candidate began by writing: 'Holidays are favourite time for students and teachers. Since they are quite short, most of the people prefer to spend them abroad to make holidays unforgettable and probably one of the most engaging. Also it's too inconvenience.' Many produced narrative-style accounts instead of argumentative essays, for example: 'The day had come. I was finally boarding the plane.' Others simply listed reasons to go on holiday, without providing commentary or forming a viewpoint. Their pieces lacked development, with limited or no attempt to weigh perspectives or express a clear opinion. Instead, they relied on vague or repetitive points such as staying at home being cheaper. One response read: 'The question has too many answers but at different individuals with different thinking of life. If there are friends we can enjoy movie nights or pot locks, despite its of no use.' Such errors in sentence construction, grammar, and spelling were frequent, often impeding meaning. These responses showed little awareness of structure or form, and the writing lacked the clarity and cohesion necessary for higher-level achievement.

Question 4 – Review

Last weekend, you did a one-day photography course for beginners. You decide to write a review of this course, which will be published on a photography website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

The review form was generally understood by most candidates, with most using evaluative lexis to some extent. The large majority were positive reviews of the photography course and there were some overly

negative reviews, which sometimes became rather monotonous. Balanced arguments were raised – on what went well during the course and what did not go well – with a few providing suggestions for improvement.

Stronger reviews were balanced and had an element of credibility. There was some use of specialist language and field-specific lexis such as ‘lighting/camera angle/shot’ that would be appropriate for the review. Their use of headings, summaries, and final ratings strengthened the clarity and readability of their reviews. They also used conventions of the genre such as informal but informative language, subheadings, personal anecdotes, and ratings. For example, some candidates established their motivation for doing the course: ‘As an avid traveller, I am always looking to capture beautiful moments in nature, but I fail to.’ They evaluated aspects like tuition quality, value for money, and the expertise of instructors. For example, some described ‘various cameras,’ or mentioned ‘the newly released 660 Canon’ and provided insight into how such equipment enhanced the learning experience. The use of headings was a feature of stronger work, helping to organise content into sections while signposting focus areas for the reader.

Stronger responses tended to have an engaging and consistent voice throughout, the writers not only providing details of the course, but also their feelings and reactions too. They kept form in mind throughout, using evaluative language and providing recommendations: ‘Overall, this course was one of the best I have experienced in recent years, and I urge you to take it too. You’ll end the day with a dozen beautiful pictures, a smile on your face, and a sense of pride knowing that you created your own art.’ They effectively developed a relationship with the reader and structured the review to focus on several key aspects of the experience, such as the venue, teaching quality, course content, and outcomes. For example, one candidate remarked, ‘The organisation of the course was a real surprise,’ effectively embedding a personal opinion. Others took a creative approach to tone and introduction, for example: ‘Welcome back to the blog, clickers! That’s what I call photographers who click at everything. You are in for a ride, for today I am going to talk about “SNAP ON THE MAP!” a photography course hosted by Tomorrow’s Photos for beginners.’ These openings established a clear voice while immediately situating the reader in a review format.

Weaker responses often showed misunderstanding or only partially addressed the requirements of the review genre. Some responses read more like descriptive accounts of the day or course without offering critical opinion or evaluation. First impressions of the organisers were overly long. There were several straightforward recounts with little evaluation of the course, even at the close. Such responses therefore lacked key features of a review, including little or no direct address to the audience. The ‘beginners’ aspect of the question did not feature much in weaker responses. Others presented the review as an afterthought – for instance, ‘I give this 5/5’ – and did not build meaningful commentary around their experiences. Some candidates spent long paragraphs listing what they knew about photography or different cameras, often unrelated to the course itself. Grammar, punctuation and spelling errors were frequent, as in: ‘As soon as I entered the workers there welcomed me with choclates which were amazing and hot Arabic coffee.’ Sentence boundaries were often unclear and verb tense usage was inconsistent. Some candidates switched between past and present without purpose, making the structure difficult to follow.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23

Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Quite often, the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is a vital and essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates know and understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; another common error was writing in sentence fragments. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. They should focus on answering each aspect of the task, ensuring that all content is relevant. Writing should be purposeful, without rambling or unnecessary filler content.
- To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question which indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the tasks chosen. In order to achieve the task (one of the Level 3 criteria on the mark scheme) the instructions must be followed.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates need to ensure that they provide evidence from their text to support points made in the **Question 1(b)** commentary. It is helpful to candidates to use a clear structure for this question, such as a PEA structure (Point, Evidence, Analysis).
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types, to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

Many candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)** at all. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or full of errors, possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work.

Stronger responses to **Question 1(a)** focused clearly on the question and made for effective blog entries which engaged the peer group audience. They created a sense of enthusiasm for learning and encouraged the audience to learn a new skill. Weaker responses were unclear in terms of the purpose of the blog. These candidates often gave an account of how they learned a new skill without there being any sense of it being their first blog entry. Their ideas were disorganised and sometimes lacked any paragraphing.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** maintained a close focus on linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, and language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly, or entirely, on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (review, descriptive piece or speech), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions, as well as relevant content. Weaker responses on **Section B** generally contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were simple recounts of the walking tour, with very little in the way of critique or personal opinion, some responses to **Question 3** were more narrative than descriptive, and some **Question 4** responses lacked any sense of being in an appropriate form for a speech.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

You have just started learning a new skill. You have always wanted to learn this skill, but you never thought you would be able to. You decide to write a blog about your experience.

(a) **Write the text for your first blog entry, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, create a sense of enthusiasm for learning new skills.**

Most candidates demonstrated a good awareness of blog conventions, especially the use of a conversational, light-hearted tone, and they approached this question enthusiastically. Subjects ranged from various sports, such as running, basketball, tennis and golf, to hobbies such as massage, origami, playing the guitar, crocheting and cooking. There was typically a strong emphasis on the difficulty of learning a new skill but also a recognition that the process of learning was extremely satisfying. Approaches varied, with some candidates opting for an anecdotal style, citing a long-lost yearning to play the piano, for example. This required 'dusting off my grandma's piano' which briefly evoked memories from childhood, wishing to honour their grandma's memory. Referencing members of a family as 'coaches' in acquiring a new skill was quite a common approach taken, and it came across to the reader as genuine and touching.

Stronger blogs included a range of conventions to organise the text, including catchy titles and sub-headings. These candidates grasped the purpose of the task and clearly outlined the fact that they had *just begun* to learn a new skill, rather than recounting full mastery of it. Such candidates understood the conventions of a blog and used them effectively to build a rapport with the reader. Some responses did include informal lexis, such as, 'So there you go guys, there's my story of how I learned a new skill', which was, in many cases, appropriate, due to the genre. When used judiciously, this informal tone helped establish a conversational and authentic voice.

Many strong responses began with engaging openings that sparked reader interest, such as: 'I've always had a fascination with novel party tricks like juggling or pen spinning.' This kind of introduction set the tone and provided a natural lead-in to the main narrative. Stronger entries often addressed the reader directly, employing questions or reflections, for example: 'Trust me, a little bit of something new can work wonders for your general happiness,' and 'For anyone who has tried something and failed, I encourage you to push through.'

Some responses deployed subject-specific lexis effectively to show a sense of growing mastery of the skill, while not forgetting the need to explain some of this lexis to the more general readership. In this response, the candidate wrote about learning to cook: 'I've always been bad at anything related to the culinary arts, from gingerbread cookies that wail in agony to soup that looks like something out of the Wastelands. I've never been a Picasso or Van Gogh of cooking'.

More successful candidates demonstrated their ability to describe the difficulty of learning the new skill whilst also conveying a sense of enthusiasm. Many encouraged the reader to give it a go by using an encouraging tone and suggesting common barriers to learning the specific skill. One notable blog, in which the writer described himself as 'feeling like Sisyphus struggling to push back against the endless waterfall of years' was written about a course in coding. Another drew this conclusion: 'Every time I fail, it is just more progress to break the barrier and learn and grow.'

Many weaker entries simply described an activity, without reference to the process of learning the skill. These candidates often adopted a more generalised approach by saying the skill was beneficial without giving any specific examples. Other weaker responses were very short, sometimes of under 150 words, or focussed too heavily on the backstory of why the writer wanted to learn the skill, rather than the process of starting to learn it, hence demonstrating misinterpretation of the prompt. Some responses described an extended journey of practice and eventual mastery, thereby drifting away from the actual requirements of the task. This often resulted in a loss of focus and underdevelopment of key ideas.

In terms of structure, weaker responses were sometimes unfocused or lacked cohesion, with tangential details that distracted from the core narrative. Additionally, many of these responses revealed a struggle to convey a consistent or appropriate tone for a blog. One of the most significant weaknesses was a lack of control over verb tenses. As this task required clear shifts between past and present tenses, for example recounting a past experience while reflecting on it in the present, candidates who did not demonstrate tense accuracy were hindered in both clarity and style. Weaker responses were often brief, lacking in details as to the importance of learning something new. Sentences were undeveloped, as in 'I learned so much' but never saying what or how. Other weaker responses contained frequent errors of all kinds, as in this example: 'Im not tall enough and I do not know how to walk properly. Maybe I did not born to be a model. My body was my insecure and my dream was to big for me.'

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.

One approach that worked well for many candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Analysis format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They named, one by one, the techniques used, giving precise evidence from their blog entries and explaining the effect on the audience. However, some responses were limited in detail and did not provide any evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

Stronger responses displayed candidates' ability to identify key elements of blog writing and demonstrated thoughtful reflection on their language and stylistic choices. For example, some noted their use of the first-person perspective to convey personal experience and their deliberate shift to second person to 'address the audience and create a sense of relatability and intimacy'. This demonstrated clear awareness of both audience and form. A few candidates also acknowledged the typical demographic of a blog audience, often younger readers, and used this to justify their use of colloquial language. Terms like 'so there you go guys' or signoffs like 'Peace out' were explained as part of establishing a more informal register, suitable for the genre and audience. One candidate commented on the importance of their final sentence, 'Why have you not tried something new dear friends?' The analysis was clear: 'This not only appeals to typical features of a blog, by engaging with the reader in a casual manner, but it makes the reader ponder on their own unfulfilled passions as well.'

In addition, stronger responses engaged with lexical choices, noting the use of positive diction such as 'victorious' and 'confident' to foster a sense of empowerment and encouragement. These candidates understood the role of tone in achieving purpose, and linked language choices directly to audience impact. Other candidates gave some precise analysis, such as in this example: 'In addition the author utilizes hypophora within the reflection. They write "Was I afraid of falling? Not really. Was I afraid of proving my parents right? Maybe a little bit. Was I afraid of failing? Probably." The use of hypophora brings a sense of the author's train of thoughts as if going down a list of the author's fears. It brings focus to the fears the author experienced in a concise fashion.'

In many weaker responses, candidates focused almost exclusively on the content of their responses, providing no analysis of their linguistic choices. Weaker responses were lacking terms of construction of the **Question 1(a)** response using specific linguistic techniques, stylistic choices, or an awareness of form. As a result, they were left with very little material to analyse in **Question 1(b)**. Instead of identifying and evaluating specific choices, many summarised the content of their blog or made vague statements about tone or style without supporting examples. They often concentrated on describing structure and format with generalised comments such as, 'I use typical aspects seen in a blog such as paragraph format and a title.'

In weaker responses, while candidates attempted to explain that their writing was intended to be 'encouraging' or 'relatable', they rarely unpacked *how* these effects were achieved. A common weakness was commenting only on the number of paragraphs or sentence types used – for example, 'I used five paragraphs' or 'I used simple and compound sentences' – without explaining the purpose or effect of these structural decisions. This lack of detail or connection of techniques to intended effects significantly limited the effectiveness of the analysis.

Many weaker responses were also short, included no examples, contained frequent errors or were inappropriate in tone. One typical response included the following vague paragraph: 'The structure of my blog was very organise. It had short or long paragraphs. For languages in my blog, I had imperative verbs throughout my writing to show what tense this writing was on. I included some past tense to my blog. There was some simile sentence in my blog.' Other responses were extremely short, sometimes under 100 words, and in some cases the question was not attempted.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

You recently saw an advertisement for a two-hour city walking tour called *Hidden Secrets*. You went on the tour last weekend. Write a review of this tour, which will be published on a travel website. Write between 600 and 900 words

Many candidates relied heavily on an anecdotal style, with lengthy preambles covering details regarding gatherings in the reception areas of hotels, with commentary on the appearance of the tour guide and other members of the tour. The 'hidden secrets' aspect of the tour was overlooked by some candidates, though it was integrated well by others who followed a clear review form, with some evaluative lexis being included.

In stronger responses, candidates employed a paragraphed, chronological structure – often with the use of headings and sub-headings – to describe the tour, and provided clear recommendations. They used an engaging, informative tone to both describe the walking tour and to address the extent to which it exposed the 'hidden secrets' of the area. They often provided a brief backstory but then focused on reviewing key elements of the tour such as the tour guide, the sights seen, the organisation, and the experience itself.

An effective strategy was to begin with an engaging introduction that captured attention and clearly stated the review's purpose. For example, a candidate wrote: 'One would think that the "secrets" of the beautiful city of Paris would have all been uncovered long ago, but the walking tour my wife and I recently took part in blew that theory out of the water.'

Such candidates established a clear personal voice, for example: 'Initially I was worried that my kids would not enjoy the tour, but they loved it!' They also addressed their audience directly, using phrases like, 'Happy travels everyone!' and employed description to good effect, as in this example: 'There lay cherry blossom trees encapsulating the beautiful architecture.' One candidate, reviewing Panoma Beach, used language to illustrate the beauty of the sea – 'a pool of glistening sea foam' – together with a stop on the tour to marvel at the hidden secrets of 'shells like pearls'

Other candidates employed a humorous or faintly ironic tone with some success, as in this example: 'While I do not doubt that Washington has many hidden secrets, they will remain hidden for eternity if this tour company continues in business. The biggest "hidden secret" on this tour was the "voluntary" added gratuity they charged us at the end of the tour. Secret indeed...'.

Weaker responses were often purely anecdotal with narrative descriptions of the tour, which relied on a chronological approach and offered little in the way of personal feedback or evaluation of whether one should do the tour or not. The review portion was sometimes tacked on at the end in a rather ad hoc fashion that fell short of meeting the task's purpose thoroughly. Some candidates did not name the location, or they made a name up, or place names were vague with no reference or attempt to explore 'hidden secrets.'

Such candidates tended to write a very personal account of a tour, not always of a city, without really addressing the prompt. The purpose and audience were often unclear and structure was weak, leading to disorganised, rambling responses: 'When we finally arrived at the meeting point there were loads of people waiting around and we had to just hope we were in the right group. They were handing out water bottles but we were at the back so we did not get any, and it was a hot day too so we really could have used some water to stop us getting dehydrated.'

Weaker responses tended to be overly critical without suggesting what would make the tour better, and many were short, sometimes of well under 400 words. Some candidates started with fairly clear introductions that attempted to grab the attention of the reader and mainly stated the review's purpose. However, their language was overly simplistic and failed to address the specifics of the tour, resulting in a monotonous tone that failed to engage the reader.

Question 3 – Descriptive piece

Write a descriptive piece called *The Valley*. In your writing, focus on sound, colour and movement to help your reader imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Some candidates used a narrative frame, which was sometimes successful but occasionally replaced more relevant, descriptive content. A range of interpretations was seen; as well as natural settings of woods and rivers, some interpreted a more urban landscape. Better responses were often linked by the passing of time such as a twenty-four-hour period or the passing of the seasons.

In stronger pieces, the writer maintained focus on the present rather than trying to explain how they had got to the valley. Use of advanced vocabulary and phrasing kept the focus on the sounds, colours and movements in the valley's surroundings, for example: 'A small stone path snaked through the valley like a winding river of rock darting in between the patches of bright flowers.'

Such candidates often made use of sensory language, particularly sound and imagery. One effective example described 'the excited hum of conversation among the bumblebees', which introduced a subtle sense of life and movement to the setting. Another used visual imagery to evoke scale and permanence: 'With the entire valley nestled between them, they stood like stony guards, moving for no one and standing mighty and proud.' The best responses demonstrated rich vocabulary and figurative language throughout, with vivid imagery and striking similes. For instance, one candidate wrote, 'An astonishing sight, a rich kaleidoscope of vibrant blooms sprouting from the lush expanse of grass,' which was both precise and evocative. Another offered an original and humorous sensory comparison: 'Those flowers smell like your dead grandmother's perfume; feminine yet forceful.'

Such moments elevated the work by offering the reader both imaginative flair and concrete detail, hallmarks of higher-level descriptive writing. Candidates who succeeded in this task usually demonstrated stronger technical control, particularly with grammar, spelling and sentence variety, and were more disciplined in maintaining focus on setting rather than drifting into narrative. Another candidate wrote: 'The valley was teeming with life. Millions of years of sharp rain and howling winds had created a deep gash within the crust of the earth. The afternoon sun loomed above the valley as the foliage and animals bathed in the sunlight.'

Weaker responses lacked cohesion, drifted into narrative, or relied too heavily on generic description. Even where some descriptive language was attempted, it was often vague or overused – for example, references to 'birds chirping', 'the sun shining' and 'a peaceful valley' appeared repeatedly without variation or deeper effect. These candidates also tended to rely on basic vocabulary and struggled with sentence control, leading to repetitive phrasing and grammatical inconsistency.

Frequently in very weak responses, candidates misinterpreted the task, shifting into full-blown narrative mode with minimal, or superficial, descriptive content. These responses focused on plot-driven action rather than atmosphere or setting, resulting in a loss of focus on the descriptive requirements of the task. The setting was mentioned briefly or in passing, with little development of sensory experience or concrete detail. Some candidates used the title to write a story about a place called 'The Valley' without creating effective description or focus on sensory imagery. They also changed tenses frequently and were imprecise in their direction and sense of writing style. They described how they had travelled to the valley and often peopled their description with characters who had lengthy backstories. These characters often engaged in conversations, which meant several lines of poorly punctuated speech with no focus on description.

Question 4 – Speech

You are going to take part in a debate at school about whether children should be allowed to use social media before the age of 16. Your headteacher has asked you to open the debate by giving a speech on the topic. Write the text for your speech, discussing both points of view and creating a sense of interest in the debate. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Candidates generally adopted a clear structure, discussing the advantages of allowing 16-year-olds to access social media. Most responses had an opening address and a suitable closing line. However, not all

candidates included direct address to the audience, making the text more of a discursive essay than a speech. Introductory paragraphs were common, giving some context with regards to the place of social media today. Most arguments were credible, including the need to understand what is happening in the world since newspapers do not attract the average 16-year-old. The importance of maintaining contact with their peers was a common argument. Candidates referenced the pandemic and social isolation as a further strong argument.

Stronger responses showed understanding of the need to present a balanced discussion, addressing both the benefits and drawbacks of social media use among young people. These responses were often structured using effective discourse markers such as 'however', 'in contrast', or 'moreover' to transition between contrasting viewpoints. They also demonstrated an awareness of their audience by using a respectful tone and controlled rhetorical techniques.

More successful candidates often employed logos, pathos, or ethos to establish credibility and connect with their listeners. For example, one candidate cited a relevant statistic: 'A study shows that teens with social media learn 30 per cent more about political and economic issues than teens without social media.' Another appealed to unity and broader social values: 'At the end of the day, social media is a tool that brings people together, not rips them apart.' Such candidates sometimes indicated their personal stance subtly, while still remaining open to other ideas. They were careful not to alienate any portion of their audience and demonstrated maturity in tone, thought, and structure. Their use of evidence, examples, and rhetorical strategies helped to deliver a reasoned and persuasive argument.

Stronger responses reflected in depth on the dangers of social media for young people and many commented on the effect of social media on mental health. A range of rhetorical techniques was employed, which served to pique interest in the audience, as in this example: 'While doomscrolling, social media consumers mindlessly consume more and more vacuous content. Have you ever felt like hours of your life have gone by in an instant while on social media?' Stronger responses provided a concluding paragraph, offering the writer's own point of view or summarising the main points: 'No matter how beneficial social media can be, it is the actual detriments that must, at the end of the day, be taken account of.'

In weaker responses, candidates often struggled to maintain the appropriate register. Many slipped into overly informal language or relied heavily on colloquial expressions and flawed structures. In addition to register issues, weaker responses often focused on a single side of the argument, usually opposing the ban, and presented it vociferously, without acknowledging alternative perspectives. Some responses veered into general arguments about mobile phone use or communication, thereby missing the more specific requirement to address social media and its impact on young people. As a result, these responses tended to lack focus, development and structural coherence.

Other weaker responses lacked paragraphing and demonstrated a lack of technical accuracy, such as in this example: 'The world is to leanient with social media. Social media isnt safe for anyone. Its not the platform. Its the people. The people who let children on these platforms and the people who should have common knawlege for children.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31
Language Analysis

Key messages

In Paper 31, candidates are required to respond to two compulsory questions. The topic for **Question 1** in **Section A** is *Language change* and the topic for **Question 2** in **Section B** is *Child language acquisition*. Each of the two compulsory questions have 25 marks available, meaning that the question paper as a whole carries 50 marks.

The main requirement in both compulsory questions is for responses to present analytical findings drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas need to be evidenced throughout by data selected from the texts supplied. Furthermore, points raised are required to contain references to the relevant area of wider study of the topic.

General comments

In June 2025, several responses to both sections of the question paper were brief, meaning ideas were underdeveloped, and responses focussed mainly on presenting their understanding of linguistic concepts, models and approaches rather than selecting data from the stimulus material.

In **Question 1**, Assessment Objective 5 is weighted more heavily at 15 marks, therefore, there is an expectation of a more in-depth engagement with the given data. In **Question 2**, conceptual references need to be tied relevantly to selected data because of the weighting of Assessment Objective 4 (15 marks).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – Language change

This question requires candidates to read Texts A, B and C and analyse how the texts exemplify the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. Text A was extracted from the opening of *The Quality Papers*, a magazine of short stories, published in 1827. Text B was a word table illustrating the top five modifying adverbs found with *conceited* taken from the Early English Books Online Corpus (1470s – 1690s) and the English Web Corpus (2020). Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the words *shew* and *show* (1780 – 2000).

Writing

Analyses tended to be set into a clear and usually logical sequence of paragraphs. Candidates tended to organise their work according to a series of linguistic frameworks which included grammar, syntax, morphology, semantics or pragmatics. In limited responses, lexical or graphological frameworks were those most frequently used.

Some sophisticated analysis was seen where candidates had made use of technical terminology fluently and with ease although there were also some terminological inaccuracies, with a minority of candidates incorrectly identifying the modifying adverbs in Text B as adjectives, despite the question stem making this clear. This suggests that closer attention to word class and grammatical precision is required.

In June 2025, some responses included reference to irrelevant material such as accounts of historical periods including the Roman, Nordic or French invasions of Britain. These tended to be offered as an introduction to the main body of the analysis. Candidates could be reminded that analytical responses do not need lengthy introductions and could result in wasted examination time. The same can be said of conclusions which repeat material which has already been seen in the main body of the response.

Conceptualisation

Most responses commented on the process of standardisation, relating prescriptive grammar influences, such as those of Robert Lowth or other 18th-century grammarians to the discussion. Greater awareness of prescriptivist and descriptivist views, for example those of Honey, Crystal or Aitchison and their connection to punctuation norms or syntactical device would strengthen responses. There was appropriate reference to Johnson's Dictionary (1755) and the role of the printing technology in promoting linguistic consistency. These ideas were often well-integrated with some relevant sociological comment and demonstrated sound understanding of internal and external influences on language change.

More effective responses cited Romaine, Fairclough or Goodman in analyses of levels of formality and how informalisation maybe a driver for gradual change in the English language. Less convincing were arguments which sought to translate perceived archaic constructions into contemporary English to illustrate points regarding levels of formality without recourse to theoretical models or approaches.

Halliday was usually relevantly cited in terms of what was described by most candidates as 'functional theory' and also more clearly as the theory of lexical gaps. However, random fluctuation (Hockett) or cultural transmission (Bandura et al) were generally not attributed even though they were the approaches most often suggested to account for changes.

The concepts of pejoration, amelioration, narrowing and broadening were often applied to consideration of 'conceited' as seen in Text B although there was some inaccuracy seen in such labelling. Jespersen's notion of the Great Vowel Shift was frequently applied to account for the orthographical change in *shew* for *show* seen in Text C. 'Industrialisation' and even 'globalisation' were also offered as reasons for change seen in Text C, sometimes with limited arguments. More useful were references to Chen's S curve model which was easily identified in the *n*-gram graph or to Aitchison's PIDC model.

Data handling

In June 2025, there was a tendency for weaker responses to include fewer items for analysis from the stimulus which led to surface-level analysis. In basic responses only items from the notes at the foot of Text A drew commentary. There was also a tendency to label those items which might be outside a candidate's everyday lexicon as 'archaic' or 'obsolete' although such items may have been more accurately described as 'low frequency' which should have been expected from a prose text of 1827. Lexemes from Text A inaccurately labelled in this way included *quest*, *illuminated*, *ascertain*, *graced* and *paunch*.

Limited responses mainly focused on the punctuation in Text A, with attention to what was often described as 'unusual spacing' between *Ryde* and the question mark, and then *R/ISE* and *EARLY!* There was further similar discussion of the use of the '.', after *Dr. B*, the use of italics, capitalisation, the asterisks replacing the name in line 19, moving on to the use of semi colons, dashes, commas and the length of sentences. However, clearer responses progressed to lexical analysis which included *thither*, *beget*, *paunch*, or *lowermosts*. Nonetheless, a common error was noted where candidates had indicated that *beget* was from the French 'baguette'.

Although in contemporary English the inappropriateness of describing someone as *portliest* was frequently discussed, only effective or sophisticated responses extended commentary to make a deeper morphological analysis of the inflection –est even though there were a number of incidences of this seen in Text A.

In June 2025 analyses were more synthesised than those seen in previous examination sessions. For example, clear and more effective responses drew findings together from Texts A and Texts C in consideration of the lexeme *shew*. However, there was still the tendency to organise responses with analysis of Text A, moving to a separate analysis of Text B and then a further separate analysis of Text C. This approach usually led to brief descriptions of the data in Text C where time may have become an issue during the examination.

Section B

Question 2 – Child language acquisition

The stimulus material for **Question 2** comprised a transcription of a conversation between Izzy (age 3 years) and her mother who were at home, having breakfast. Candidates were required to analyse ways in which Izzy and her mother are using language in this conversation. In their responses, candidates were further required to refer to specific details from the transcription, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

Almost all responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of Conversation Analysis Transcription with only very few commenting that both the child and the mother were at fault in their lack of use of punctuation. The transcription provided many opportunities for comment on characteristic features, but basic or limited responses selected only those features which had been indicated in the transcription key.

Characteristic features which could have been identified for analysis in terms of how the mother was using language included her frequent separation of clause with pause and micropause, her questioning technique of using pitch variation in both closed and open questions, for example *are you going to eat yours* ↗ and *what do we need to do* ↗, her use of plural pronouns to indicate the close relationship between herself and Izzy and joint activity in *lets blow on it*, recasting of Izzy's emerging phonological competence rather than explicit correction, and maintenance of her level of politeness in controlling behaviour, for example *dont stand on that chair please*.

With regard to characteristic features illustrated in the child's utterances, opportunities for identification and analysis included Izzy's residual substitution of phoneme /r/ in /pɒwɪdʒ/↗ and /kæwɪ/ even though she appeared able to produce the consonant cluster in *wobbly*, reception and transmission of negation, competence in turn-taking with one minor lapse, initiation and fulfilment of adjacency pairs, omission of auxiliaries – occasionally coupled with emphasis as in *I NOT LIKE IT*, pitch variation in questioning and stressed syllable as in *coat*. Subject verb agreement appeared as a virtuous error at times as in *daddy like /pɒwɪdʒ/* although there was clear cognition in comparing states as in *too wobbly* and *too hot*.

Most responses demonstrated an understanding of a selection of the characteristic features shown above. More effective responses described features fully and labelled using technical terminology with consideration not only being to what the features were but also why they were being used.

Conceptualisation

Some responses used only the child's age to identify that Izzy had reached the telegraphic stage of language acquisition. However, more effective responses provided differential diagnoses using analysis of her utterances to illustrate that whereas at times her speech had telegraphic tendencies there was some clear evidence that she had progressed into the post-telegraphic stage.

This was similar to the way in which only the child's age was used to identify which of Piaget's stages of cognitive development Izzy had reached. Where it was stated that she remained in the sensorimotor stage, the argument became implausible as there was clear evidence (including her egotistical utterances) that the preoperational stage was more accurate.

Most candidates introduced Skinner's notion of behaviourism to an extent. There was clear evidence of positive and negative reinforcement in the mother's utterances, for example in *thats it* and *we're not going yet* respectively.

A number of Hallidayan functions of spoken language were evident in the transcription with clear responses correctly identifying the personal function in *I NOT LIKE IT*, the regulatory function in /kæwɪ/ me and the heuristic function in *we /gəʊɪn/ see papa tom* ↗. At times, there was mislabelling of these functions and at times they were described as 'stages' which led to an impression of limited understanding of Halliday's approach.

In effective responses, details according to Bellugi's Stage 3 of language acquisition were referenced as Izzy was seen to use a variety of pronouns, including person, subject, number and possession – further evidence that Izzy had progressed into the post-telegraphic stage.

As in previous examination sessions, Chomsky was frequently cited but comments were not always tied to identification of characteristic features from the transcription. This was similar to the way Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development was introduced. The Vygotskyan approach was often discussed but evidence from the text was not always supplied although the mother could be seen to scaffold the child into constructing a list, for example in lines 20 and 23.

Data handling

In June 2025, some responses were limited in their selection of data for analysis, relying more on identifying features for generalised discussion rather than demonstrating keen analytical skills.

Analysis should include exploration of how the grammatical structure of specific utterances supports the identified feature or by examining word choice and selection in relation to how it might function in a communicative role. For example, Izzy's repetition in *i like /pɒwɪdʒ/ (.) mummy like /pɒwɪdʒ/ (.) daddy like /pɒwɪdʒ/ (1) what bout nanny and papa tom↗/deɪ/ like /pɒwɪdʒ/↗* provides a clear example of how she seeks to build social connections. Here, the coordinated simple clauses and use of familiar nouns reflect her developmental stage, while the rising intonation suggests she is prompting a response — showing emerging pragmatic competence in her understanding of turn-taking.

Clear, effective or even insightful responses attempted phonological analysis although these varied in their accuracy and precision. Often, Izzy's substitution of the voiced plosive /d/ in place of the voiced fricative in /deɪ/ was inaccurately labelled as consonant cluster reduction. Similarly, the rhotic /r/ was described as a plosive phoneme at times. Her pronunciation of /su:z/ was also mislabelled with some limited descriptions stating that she was 'not able to pronounce the letter h'. Candidates are reminded of the difference between graphemes (used in written language) and phonemes (used in spoken language and as seen in Conversation Analysis transcription).

The child's pronunciation difficulties were frequently described as 'mistakes' whereas in there were many instances of emerging competencies, for example in *we /gəʊɪn/* where Izzy's deletion of the final /g/ may indicate imitation of the caregiver's more colloquial production of continuous present tense at other times – a possible further indication of how a young child might use language to establish her position in a close social setting.

Overall, although clear to effective analysis was seen at times in June 2025, Data handling was the least well addressed of the three assessment objectives. This was due mainly to fewer selections being made from the transcription and reliance on generalised descriptions of identified features.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32 Language Analysis

Key messages

Paper 32 presents stimulus material in **Section A – Language change**, and **Section B – Child language acquisition**. Candidates are required to provide two sustained and cohesive analytical responses by making a careful selection of data from each of the texts provided, and to support their analysis with relevant knowledge and understanding from their wider study of the two language topics.

Each section of the question paper carries 25 marks, giving 50 marks overall. Assessment Objectives 2, 4 and 5 are applied in Section A, and in Section B, Assessment Objectives 1, 4 and 5 are applied.

General comments

In June 2025, there were some brief responses particularly to **Section B** of the question paper which meant that there was a lack of development of ideas. In general, responses focused mainly on presenting linguistic concepts, models and approaches rather than selecting data from the stimulus material.

However, in **Question 1**, it is Assessment Objective 5 which is weighted more heavily at 15 marks therefore there is an expectation of a more in-depth engagement with the data. In **Question 2**, conceptual references were tied relevantly to selected data because of the weighting of Assessment Objective 4 (15 marks).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – Language change

The stimulus material for **Question 1** comprised three texts. Text A was the opening of an essay published in 1773 about the mineral water found naturally in the Liverpool area of England; Text B was a word table illustrating five of the top collocates for 'spa' from the Early English Books Online Corpus (1650s – 1780s) and the Cambridge International Corpus (1980s – 1993), and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the words 'acidulous' and 'acidic' (1760 – 1980).

Candidates were required to read Texts A, B and C and analyse how Text A exemplified the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. In their responses, they were further required to refer to specific details from Texts A, B and C, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of language change.

Writing

Although responses were brief at times, most analyses were set into a clear and usually logical sequence of paragraphs. Candidates had also tended to organise their work according to a series of linguistic frameworks. In limited responses, lexical or graphological frameworks were those most frequently used whereas clear or effective responses presented analysis led by commentary on grammar, syntax, morphology, semantics or pragmatics.

Some sophisticated analysis was seen in responses that used technical terminology fluently and with ease although there were also some terminological inaccuracies, with a minority of candidates incorrectly identifying the collocates in Text B as 'replacement words', despite the question stem making this clear. For examples, some basic responses claimed that the words *treatment* and *waters* had changed their meanings

to become *pamper* and *whirlpool* respectively. This suggests that closer attention to word class and grammatical precision is required.

In June 2025, some lengthy introductions were seen which contained information that was not relevant to the stimulus material. These usually included accounts of historical periods which had gone before any of the publication dates of the texts provided and were therefore not plausibly discussed. Candidates could be reminded that analytical responses do not need lengthy introductions and can result in wasted examination time. A more productive approach would be to begin immediately by setting Text A on a timeline, which in this case would have been just inside the upper date limit of Early Modern English.

Conceptualisation

The most frequently cited reference to Text A was that to Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, usually weakly described as 'Halliday's functional theory'. Halliday was generally referenced in terms of the ideational metafunction where the passive voice was noted to structure information to emphasise processes and outcomes rather than agents. A small number of responses referred to the Latinate structures in the text, but did not always successfully connect this to Latin's enduring influence on scientific discourse — a point well-articulated in the work of theorists such as David Crystal.

Levels of formality were frequently discussed, though not always in terms of the scientific register presented in Text A, nor was the concept of scientific advancement as a driver for language change. However, the concept of prescriptivism was referenced by most candidates as was the opposite concept, descriptivism, though seldom attributed as a specific theorist's approach. More effective responses cited Romaine, Fairclough or Goodman in analyses of how informalisation may be responsible for gradual change in the English language. Less convincing were arguments which sought to translate perceived archaic constructions into contemporary English to illustrate points regarding levels of formality without recourse to theoretical concepts or approaches.

A number of responses referred to random fluctuation theory although not all attributed it to Hockett, leaving the reference incomplete. There was generally, however, a clear identification of how seemingly minor and 'random' variations which may have begun in error in language use can, over time, lead to one form becoming dominant. While this occasionally lacked depth, it nonetheless demonstrated a willingness to engage analytically with the data provided, particularly in Text B.

A smaller number of responses accurately applied Chen's S-curve model to findings from Text C, though even fewer analysed the change through its three key stages: innovation, acceleration and stabilisation. Those who did were able to offer more nuanced, theory-driven commentary. A greater number of effective responses referenced Aitchison's three stages of language change — slow emergence, rapid growth, and final stabilisation — and applied these or their understanding of Aitchison's PIDC model to their findings from Text C.

The concepts of pejoration, amelioration, narrowing and broadening were often applied to consideration of 'spa' as seen in Text B although there was some inaccuracy seen in such labelling — where broadening would have been the most precise. There was also evidence of speculative etymological analysis of the lemma which led to ideas on the concept of borrowing. French was usually seen as the loaning superstrate (spa derives from the Belgian town of Spa but it was not expected that this should be known).

Data handling

In June 2025, there was a tendency in limited responses to label those items which might be outside a candidate's everyday lexicon as 'archaic' or 'obsolete' although such items may have been more accurately described as 'low frequency' which should have been expected from a prose text of 1773. Lexemes from Text A inaccurately labelled in this way included *inattention*, *impregnated* and *pungent*.

There were some thoughtful comments on the graphological features. Some responses noted its distinctive graphological conventions, such as the prominent use of section headings *PREFACE* and *§ i. Of Mineral Waters* in general, recognising these as precursors to the structured formats seen in later academic and scientific writing.

Others discussed orthographic features, including the use of the long s (ſ) in words such as *discovered*, *uled*, and *polleſ'd*. These were mainly accurately identified as typographical conventions typical of 18th-century printing, which gradually disappeared by the early 19th century. There were also references to elided spellings (for example in *promis'd*, *fix'd* and *polleſ'd*), with a number of responses linking these to older

stylistic conventions and poetic influence. However, some limited responses made links to Shakespeare, which tended to be implausible.

Most responses made successful observations about capitalisation, identifying how both concrete nouns (*Spring, Stone Quarry, Spa Water*) and abstract concepts (*Virtues, Humanity, Society*) were capitalised. This was correctly linked to the lack of standardisation in 18th-century English, as well as to typographic conventions that assigned emphasis or social status through visual prominence.

In analysis of Text C, more effective responses tracked how *acidic* initially gained recognition within scientific circles (innovation), subsequently increased in popularity as it aligned with broader trends in scientific discourse (acceleration), and ultimately became embedded in usage, superseding the more archaic *acidulous* (stabilisation). An in-depth morphological analysis of these two lexemes was seen only in insightful analyses, however.

In general, there was still the tendency seen in previous examination sessions to organise responses with separate analyses of Text A, Text B and Text C. This approach usually led to brief descriptions of the data in Text C where time may have become an issue during the examination. More effective and fuller responses applied analytical skills to all three texts in **Section A** of the question paper.

Section B

Question 2 – Child language acquisition

The stimulus material for **Question 2** comprised a transcription of a conversation between Faizal (age 2 years) and his mother which had taken place at home. Candidates were required to analyse ways in which Faizal and his mother were using language in this conversation. In their response, candidates were further required to refer to specific details from the transcription, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

All responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of Conversation Analysis Transcription. The transcription provided many opportunities for comment on characteristic features but basic or limited responses selected only those features which had been indicated in the transcription key.

Characteristic features which could have been identified for analysis in terms of how the mother was using language included her extended responses to Faizal's interrogatives as seen in *a snowman is where we roll lots of snow into a big big ball and make it look like a man*, her questioning technique which provided a variety of closed, open and tag questions as in *you like your red hat (.) yes ↗ and what else would we need to make it look like a man ↗*, her use of inclusive plural pronouns, for example, *shall we go and find our warm clothes*, and her choice to recast rather than explicitly correct Faizal's pronunciation difficulties.

In terms of how the child was using language, characteristic features which were present for identification included substitution of phoneme /r/ in /wed/ and consonant cluster reduction in /fifi/ /bvl/, deletion of final phoneme and plural in /pebu:/, omission of the copula verb and indefinite article in *what snowman ↗*, fulfilment of adjacency pairs, clear understanding of turn-taking with minimal interruption, intonation technique including pitch variation, stressed syllable and volume increase (for example in *go now (.) we go NOW mummy*, repetition, mirroring of the mother's syntactical patterns, ability to express preferences, the emergence of negation and understanding of temperature, as seen in *i cold mummy and warm clothes*.

Most responses demonstrated an understanding of some of the characteristic features shown above. Responses became more effective when features were described fully and labelled using technical terminology with consideration not only being to what the features were but also why they were being used.

Conceptualisation

Limited to clear responses had used only the child's age to identify that Faizal had reached the holophrastic or telegraphic stages of language acquisition. More effective responses provided evidence from the range of characteristic features listed above to consolidate their differential diagnosis. Some basic responses interpreted Faizal's utterances set into phonemic representation as an indication that he remained in the babbling stage which was incorrect.

There was frequent clear citation of major theorists, for example Skinner, Vygotsky and Bruner with reasonable explanations for their inclusion being provided. More effective responses progressed beyond Skinner's operant conditioning by integrating Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, illustrating how Faizal's mother was scaffolding his language acquisition, *for example by explaining a snowman is where we roll lots of snow into a big big ball*. Most responses also applied Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) with varying degrees of clarity, highlighting the mother's use of questions, prompts, and shared routines as in *shall we go and find our warm clothes now then?*

Effective responses incorporated Nelson's criticism of Motherese, arguing that Faizal's own language use and interaction with his environment might be more crucial to his development than the specific style of maternal speech. The Fis Phenomenon was also introduced to demonstrate the extent of which Faizal's level of understanding outweighed his level of production, as seen in *i like /fʌfɪ/ /bɒl/ it tickle*.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development was generally well applied, with appropriate references to the transcript in terms of his acquisition of object permanence and examples of egocentrism indicating the preoperational stage. Nevertheless, some candidates incorrectly placed Faizal in the sensorimotor stage without taking account of characteristic features which illustrated that he had progressed beyond that. These could have included him knowing that he should *not eat /pebʊ:/* which was a demonstration of him not only remembering that she should not eat pebbles but also that he is able to articulate that memory.

A number of Hallidayan functions of spoken language were evident in the transcription with clear responses correctly identifying the personal function in *i like /spaɪz/*, the regulatory function in *we go NOW mummy* and the heuristic function in *what snowman?*. At times, there were inaccuracies in the labelling of these functions and at times they were described as 'stages' which led to an impression of limited understanding of Halliday's approach.

As in previous examination sessions, Chomsky was frequently cited but comments were not always tied to identification of characteristic features from the transcription. Further weak or incomplete references were made to some referred to Genie and the critical period with some citation of Lenneberg.

Data handling

In June 2025, some responses were limited in their selection of data for analysis, relying more on identifying features for generalised discussion rather than demonstrating keen analytical skills. This led to an imbalance noted between Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding and Assessment Objective 5 – Data Handling. Some responses which demonstrated at least a clear if not detailed understanding of the transcription provided little or no data selection, which was problematic given the task's focus. Close, consistent engagement with the transcript is crucial to an effective response.

Candidates are further reminded that analysis should include exploration of how the grammatical structure of specific utterances supports an identified feature or by examining lexical choice in relation to how it might function in a communicative role.

Clear, effective or even insightful responses attempted phonological analysis although these varied in their accuracy and precision. Often, Faizal's substitution of the voiced plosive /d/ in place of the voiced fricative in /deɪ/ was inaccurately labelled as deletion. Similarly, the rhotic /r/ was described as a plosive phoneme at times. However, more precise labelling was seen in analysis of *i like /spefə/ (2) and i like /spaɪz/* with deletion of liquid /l/ in /spefə/ and assimilation of initial syllable together with consonant cluster reduction in /spaɪz/.

In limited analyses, the child's pronunciation difficulties were frequently described as 'mistakes' whereas there were many instances of emerging phonological competencies, thus a deficit approach had been taken. Responses could instead have explored Faizal's mirroring of the mother's lexical choices and syntactic pattern, including tag question seen in *you got /wed/ hat? (.) yes?* a possible further indication of how a young child might use language to establish his position in a close social setting.

Overall, although effective analysis was seen at times in June 2025, Data handling was the least well addressed of the three assessment objectives. This was due mainly to fewer selections being made from the transcription and reliance on generalised descriptions of identified features.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33 Language Analysis

Key messages

In Paper 31, candidates are required to respond to two compulsory questions. The topic for **Question 1** in **Section A** is *Language change* and the topic for **Question 2** in **Section B** is *Child language acquisition*. Each of the two compulsory questions have 25 marks available, meaning that the question paper as a whole carries 50 marks.

The main requirement in both compulsory questions is for responses to present analytical findings drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas need to be evidenced throughout by data selected from the texts supplied. Furthermore, points raised are required to contain references to the relevant area of wider study of the topic.

General comments

In June 2025, there were some brief responses to both sections of the question paper which led to undeveloped ideas. In general, it seemed that candidates had not fully observed the weighting of the assessment objectives which is different in the two sections. Even in some clear responses to **Question 1**, they seemed to include as much evidence of wider study as possible, rather than to provide an in-depth analysis of the language data. Conversely, some clear responses to **Question 2** touched lightly and quickly on linguistic models and approaches yet offered full explanations of minor characteristic features which had been spotted in the transcription. Candidates could be reminded of the assessment objective weightings to address this issue.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – Language change

The stimulus material for **Question 1** comprised three texts: Text A was an article about cooking, published on the Good Housekeeping website in 2023; Text B was a word table illustrating five of the top collocates for 'epic' taken from the Early English Books Online Corpus (1470s – 1690s) and from a corpus of online English (2020 – 2022), and Text C was *n*-gram graph for 'microwave oven' and 'air fryer' (1950 – 2019).

Candidates were required to read Texts A, B and C and analyse how Text A exemplified the various ways in which the English language has changed over time, by referring to specific details from Texts A, B and C, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of language change.

Writing

Overall, analyses tended to be set into a clear and usually logical sequence of paragraphs. Candidates had also tended to organise their work according to a series of linguistic frameworks. In limited responses, lexical or graphological frameworks were those most frequently used whereas clear or effective responses presented analysis led by commentary on grammar, syntax, morphology, semantics or pragmatics.

Some sophisticated analysis was seen where candidates had made use of technical terminology fluently and with ease although there were also some terminological inaccuracies, with a minority of candidates demonstrating misunderstanding of the concept of collocation as shown in Text B. This suggests that closer attention to word class and grammatical precision is required.

In June 2025, although clarity and control of expression was generally clear, some material was presented which was not made relevant to the task. This tended to be offered as an introduction to the main body of the analysis. Candidates are reminded that analytical responses do not need lengthy introductions and can result in wasted examination time. The same can be said of conclusions which merely repeat material which has already been seen in the main body of the response.

Conceptualisation

Most responses commented on the processes of standardisation and informalisation, relating descriptive grammar influences on linguistic creativity, such as the invention and widespread use of the internet and social media, to language change as seen in Text A. Crystal was briefly cited in limited responses although more effective responses referenced Romaine, Fairclough or Goodman in analyses of levels of formality and how informalisation maybe a driver for gradual change in the English language. Fairclough was also cited in terms of synthetic personalisation as seen in the direct address to the audience in Text A, for example with the rhetorical *Curious about exactly what an air fryer is?*

Halliday was usually relevantly cited in terms of what was described by most candidates as 'functional theory' and also more clearly as the theory of lexical gaps. Random fluctuation (Hockett) or cultural transmission (Bandura et al) were generally not attributed even though they were concepts frequently suggested to account for changes. Some responses selected from the range of hyphenated examples such as *all-purpose*, *cult-status* and *perfectly-seared* to illustrate random fluctuation in the development of compounding over time.

The concepts of pejoration, amelioration, narrowing and broadening were often applied to consideration of 'epic' as seen in Text B although opinions varied on which of these four concepts could be most accurate label. Jespersen's notion of the Great Vowel Shift was frequently introduced as evidence of wider study of the language topic, as was Johnson's dictionary of 1755, Caxton's printing press of 1476 and the influence of Shakespeare, although these references were not made entirely relevant to the stimulus material. Industrialisation and even globalisation were also offered as reasons for change seen in Text A and these were much more plausibly introduced. Additionally, references to Chen's S curve model or to Aitchison's PIDC model were useful in exploration of Text C.

Data handling

Text A offered many opportunities for language analysis. Most candidates engaged with the playful nature of lexical and grammatical items presented by the text originator. Those which drew the most frequent attention included the clipping in *mozz* and diminutive in *veggies* and the rhythmic or humorous qualities offered by examples of alliteration such as *crispy, crunchy and craveable*.

Although Text A contained many incidences of stylistic features of contemporary popular journalism, for example the use of conjunctions *And* and *But* to begin sentences, incomplete constructions as in *So. Much.* and the inclusion of hyperlinks, there were examples of lexical items from classical Greek and Roman literature which provided contrast in line 7 with *ode* and *epic* used to construct hyperbole. These items enabled synthesis of commentary using Texts A and B.

Text B was generally interpreted well although some basic responses demonstrated misunderstanding of the nature of collocates, stating that the word table illustrated changes in meaning of the items so that 'majesty now means fantasy and tragedy now means failure' which is incorrect.

Only very few responses undertook morphological analysis of the items in Text C where the peak shown for *microwave oven* in 1990 could indicate wider reception and public interest in scientific or technological advancement in the late 20th century as well as the development of compounding. The sharp incline after 2015 of *air fryer* could provide further evidence of informalisation in a move away from the scientific register of *microwave*, and the widespread unquestioning acceptance of nonsensical nature of the name of the appliance as it is not possible to fry air.

In June 2025 analyses were more synthesised than those seen in previous examination sessions. In general, there was still the tendency seen in previous examination sessions to organise responses with separate analyses of Text A, Text B and Text C. This approach usually led to brief descriptions of the data in Text C where time may have become an issue during the examination. More effective and fuller responses apply analytical skills to all three texts in **Section A** of the question paper.

Section B

Question 2 – Child language acquisition

The stimulus material for **Question 2** comprised a transcription of a conversation between Otto (age 5 years), Felix (age 8 years) and their mother. The interlocutors were at home, playing a board game.

Candidates were required to analyse ways in which Otto, Felix and their mother were using language in the conversation. In their responses, candidates were further required to refer to specific details from the transcription, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

All responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of Conversation Analysis Transcription. However, although the transcription provided many opportunities for comment on characteristic features, basic or limited responses selected only those features seen in the text which had been indicated in the transcription key.

Characteristic features which could have been identified for analysis in terms of how the mother was using language included the way in which she had adopted the role of mediator by using language to address behaviour and to progress the activity, her choice not to correct or recast any deviation from standard grammar or pronunciation which may be perceived as different from the usual methods of child directed speech (for example in *it doesn't matter how he says it* *felix* (2) *we all know what he means*), her use of timed pause and micropause to assist the children's understanding, and her use of simple polite yet direct forms in mainly declarative structures such as *felix you need to be more kind to your brother please*.

With regard to characteristic features illustrated in the children's utterances, opportunities for identification and analysis included fulfilment of adjacency pairs with some interruption to the turn-taking, ease with negation and contraction as in *no i did not*, Otto's residual virtuous errors in construction, for example, *i can not do it cos hes putting me off to think*, use of the diminutive *mummy* from Otto and the contrasting clipped *mum* from Felix, prosody including raised and decreased volume, pitch variation for closed and open questions, repetition and use of emphatic stress, for example in *fell* over not *fall* over.

Most responses demonstrated an understanding of a selection of the characteristic features shown above. However, responses became more effective when features were described fully and labelled using technical terminology with consideration not only being to what the features were but also why they were being used.

Conceptualisation

Limited or clear responses had used only the children's ages to identify that Otto had reached the post-telegraphic stage of language acquisition and that Felix is continuing his language development beyond the initial stages.

Evidence from the transcription was selected in most responses to indicate that Otto may still remain in the preoperational stage according to Piaget; given the age of Felix it was generally stated that he should have reached the concrete operational stage. Clear or effective responses used evidence to substantiate claims including that of understanding of cause and effect and inductive reasoning in Felix's utterance: *and you should know that from school*.

A number of Halliday's functions of spoken language were evident and most responses described the way in which Felix used the regulatory function in *say it properly* as well as the representational function in *he sounds like a baby*. On the other hand, Otto's utterances were seen to demonstrate the personal function, for example in *my knees hurt* and the mother's language being used in an interactional way, as in her *lets get on with the game*. Some insightful responses had selected and differentiated these functions to illustrate how each of the interlocutors had used language to establish their individual roles in the conversation.

Most responses described the way in which the mother was using scaffolding to encourage Otto. Some attributed this to Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System rather briefly although more effective responses referenced the mother as Vygotsky's More Knowledgeable Other, somewhat accurately stating that her approach using initiation, response and feedback was designed to bring Otto into a zone of proximal development. Evidence for this was provided in *so ive shaken a three and a five* (2) *how many does that make* ↴ and the following utterance: *nearly right otto* (1) *we need a bigger number than seven*.

Although Chomsky and the Language Acquisition Device, as in previous years, was introduced but generally not thoroughly explained, effective responses demonstrated understanding of the notion of Universal Grammar by including Otto's natural use of the English morphological rule for numbers in *eleventy twelve*.

Data handling

In June 2025, some responses were limited in their selection of data for analysis, relying more on identifying features for generalised discussion rather than demonstrating keen analytical skills.

Limited responses tended to describe items presented as phonetic representation as 'mistakes', taking a deficit approach rather than attempting to provide evidence of progression through cognitive development and phonological competence which is almost complete apart from Otto's rhotic phoneme substitution in /wɪpʌnd/.

There was some clear analysis of grammatical forms, however, using the same item, /wɪpʌnd/, to discuss overgeneralisation of past tense, and reduplication of comparative *be more kinder* in which Otto has ignored his mother's modelling of the correct form. Tense was also considered in Felix's utterance *i havent complained did i mum ↗* in a somewhat generalised manner although this selection is an example of how children at eight, and who are in the continuing development stage of acquisition, may have residual grammatical or syntactical difficulties in extended spontaneous constructions.

Overall, although clear to effective analysis was seen at times in June 2025, Data handling was the least well addressed of the three assessment objectives. This was due mainly to fewer selections being made from the transcription and reliance on generalised descriptions of identified features.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41
Language Topics

Key messages

The overall title for 9093 Paper 41 is *Language topics*. The question paper is set into two sections, each containing one compulsory question. Each question carries 25 marks, with 50 marks being available for the question paper as a whole. For each question, there is a specific question frame, pertinent to the stimulus material and appropriately relevant to a particular aspect of the language topic.

The topics considered in Paper 41 are *English in the world* provided in the question paper in **Section A**, as **Question 1**, and *Language and the self*, positioned as **Question 2** in **Section B**. Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) apply to both questions.

General comments

The main requirement in Paper 41 is for candidates to provide sustained, discursive essays in response to the focus of the question. As in previous examination sessions, at times there was evidence that analysis of the stimulus material had been undertaken, with responses containing commentary on the text originator's use of language. This was seen more in responses to **Question 2** rather than in those to **Question 1**. Such analysis is not required in Paper 41 and any response comprising such material ran the risk of becoming irrelevant.

In June 2025, despite the engaging nature of the stimulus material, some responses were rather brief, particularly in **Section B**, meaning that ideas remained undeveloped. Moreover, particularly in responses to **Question 1**, there was a good deal of evidence of candidates wanting to present the entirety of their understanding of the broader language topic instead of selecting what they considered to be the most important points raised in the text. This led to loss of focus and a lack of development of any main, relevant points.

Nonetheless, some clear to effective work was seen at times, mainly in **Section A**. Such responses retained focus on the ideas presented in the stimulus material and the specific frame of the question. More effective essays provided relevant support drawn from wider study of the language topics and demonstrated clarity and control of expression throughout.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – English in the world

The stimulus material for **Question 1** was a series of extracts from the Indian online newspaper The Print, titled *Dear Indians, MTI (Mother Tongue Influence) stigma is just language apartheid. Make English another bhasha*, which was published in 2021.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the influences on the *use and status of English in an international context*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding (10 marks)

The stimulus material presented a number of points which candidates could select for discussion, including a definition of the linguistic concept described in the text as *mother tongue influence* which is the way international learners of English were taught by teachers who spoke in a regional rather than British or American accent. Further elements for discussion included the overwhelming view of the text originator that Indian learners should *embrace MTI* even though some aspirational Indians are trying desperately to forget their mother tongue and the reasons why Indian speakers of English should be concerned if their accent betrayed their mother tongue if, as the text originator stated, there should be a complete acceptance that the English language has multiple registers, dialects and accents, even in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Most candidates selected at least some of these points although in a large number of limited responses some misunderstanding was demonstrated in discussion of the text originator's view that mother tongue influence should be seen as *normal, natural and healthy*; even some clearer responses had stated that it was the British received pronunciation which the author viewed as *natural* and therefore it was not surprising that mother tongue influence could lead to *cultural inferiority and self-hatred*. Candidates are reminded that close reading of the stimulus material is necessary to gain as much insight into the ideas presented as possible.

As in previous examination sessions, basic or limited responses referred to the stimulus material only minimally, choosing instead to present knowledge and understanding of their wider study of English in the world. Candidates are reminded that even where this knowledge and understanding of the language topic is demonstrated as extensive, focus on the stimulus material should underpin the question frame – in this case the *use and status of English in an international context* and not the other way round.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing (5 marks)

On the whole, those responses which were sustained were clearly organised into a logical sequence of paragraphs. This controlled approach demonstrated commendable writing skills including clear to effective introductions which provided a succinct precis of the text and gave a brief overview of the points which were to follow. On the other hand, limited introductions provided either a history of the emergence of the English language into its current form, or an extended overview of the language topic. Candidates are reminded that Assessment Objective 2 does not only cover aspects of writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammar: relevance of content and development of ideas are also assessed by applying that AO.

The most cohesive and coherent discussions followed a strong standpoint supported by a logical progression of ideas, well-integrated theoretical citation, and purposeful reference to the text. In contrast, weaker responses often meandered, lacking a stated line of argument or lapsing into general commentary.

Tone and register were generally maintained; clear discourse markers were usually seen to develop ideas or to introduce new points. Some loss of control was evident in responses which were overly long, indicating a move away from the original direction in the writing: extending a response into a continuation booklet does not necessarily mean that the essay has remained focused and relevant. On the contrary, it is more likely that the writing is not succinct, that the essay may have become repetitious or that some of the material presented is not relevant.

Assessment Object 4 – Conceptualisation (10 marks)

In June 2025, a wide range of linguistic issues, concepts, models and approaches were referenced, usually relevantly and accurately.

Kachru's model of concentric circles was the most frequently-cited theory and understandably so, as it offers a clear, accessible, and relevant framework in relation to the specific points raised in the stimulus material and the question frame. However, there were some recurring errors in its application. Limited responses tended to describe Kachru's model in simplistic terms, often misidentifying India's position as originally posited, or failing to accurately articulate its norm-developing role.

Clear to effective responses used Kachru's framework as a springboard to explore deeper postcolonial themes such as linguistic imperialism, language death – including progression to extinction according to UNESCO – and the dynamics of language revitalisation as seen, for example, in Wales or New Zealand. These more effective responses demonstrated a deeper grasp of linguistic theory and often integrated examples drawn from broader academic contexts.

Encouragingly, effective and, at times, sophisticated responses developed discussion by referencing more contemporary theorists. Macaulay's notion of English as a colonial tool was seldom cited, while more developed responses incorporated the work of McArthur and Phillipson. These responses not only explored English as a global lingua franca but also engaged with its benefits and drawbacks, particularly in relation to cultural homogenisation and linguistic hybridity. Examples provided included Chinglish, Konglish and Japlish.

Some effective responses drew on Platt, Weber and Ho's work on World Englishes and discussed the concept of hybridisation in detail. Jennifer Jenkins was cited with some confidence, and several candidates used her work on English as a lingua franca to argue for a more inclusive and pluralistic understanding of global English, often contrasting this with older deficit models.

Section B

Question 2 – Language and the self

The stimulus material presented in **Question 2** was taken from a podcast called *Ideas*, broadcast by the Canadian broadcaster CBC Radio in 2021, titled *The ongoing search for the perfect climate change metaphor*.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can *shape and reflect the ways people think*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding (10 marks)

Most responses selected at least some of the specific points raised in the stimulus material, including explanations of how the use of metaphors in material concerning climate change could be more meaningful than providing factual information because data may not always be understood or their use may lead to what is described as the *information deficit model*. The view that *Metaphors are central to how we talk and think about a lot of aspects of our world* was widely discussed, as was the feeling that it was crucial to select *the right metaphor to get people motivated*.

Limited responses relied on the examples of metaphors provided – *heat-trapping blanket*, *house on fire*, and *melting ice cream cone* to demonstrate a generalised understanding of the stimulus material. However, clear to effective responses discussed in detail the dangers of *relying on war metaphors* as some people's interpretations may assign glory, bravery and success to war instead of the intended interpretation of collective continuous striving with no end point to allay climate change.

Clear responses responded thoughtfully to Professor Kai Chan's contribution in which he proposed the metaphor of love as an alternative to fear- or crisis-based metaphors like war, although only insightful responses offered counterarguments to Chan's suggestion.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing (5 marks)

In June 2025, many brief responses were seen in **Section B**, possibly indicating that time management during the examination had been a problem. Candidates are reminded to ensure that their response time should be used equally between **Section A** and **Section B** in order to maximise the potential to gain marks.

As in previous examination sessions, some responses were limited by the inclusion of literary analysis of the stimulus material instead of linguistic discussion of the specific ideas which it presented. At times, responses offered analysis of the text originator's tone, use of imagery and narrative point of view and did not engage with ideas underpinning the question frame. Often these responses were overly long and lacking in precision and relevance.

However, those responses which were appropriately and relevantly sustained were generally crafted into a clear organisational structure with ideas flowing through a logical sequence of paragraphs. Introductions were generally succinct giving a clear overview of ideas which were to be discussed or a short precis of the stimulus material. However, conclusions tended only to repeat points already stated rather than end by reaffirming a strong linguistic point of view.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation (10 marks)

It was evident that while some candidates had surface knowledge of linguistic determinism or relativity, many lacked a clear understanding of these concepts. The result was superficial commentary, often unmoored from the actual text. References to Sapir and Whorf were sometimes made, but tended to rely on examples such as the Hopi tribe which did not meaningfully enhance the argument. Furthermore, most responses did not distinguish between the strong and weak hypotheses, which were critical to assessing how the text relates to linguistic relativity.

Effective responses showed a grasp of the weak hypothesis, linking it thoughtfully to the extract's discussion of the *information deficit model*. These responses argued that the shift from factual communication to metaphorical language reflects an understanding that people's perception of climate change is mediated by language – a key tenet of linguistic relativity. Some effective responses also applied a determinist viewpoint, arguing that the very need for metaphor suggests a deterministic assumption: namely, that if climate change is not framed in specific, emotionally resonant ways, people will struggle to conceptualise it or take action. This showed some sophisticated thinking, especially where responses evaluated how metaphors do more than communicate – they structure thought and behaviour.

Effective responses engaged confidently and accurately with George Lakoff's theory of conceptual metaphor. These responses demonstrated an assured understanding that metaphors are not merely decorative, but fundamental to thought, and that abstract concepts are understood through familiar, embodied experiences (for example *blanket*, *house on fire*, and *war*). Sophisticated discussion explicitly found echoes of Lakoff in Stephen Flusberg's idea: *Metaphors are, to use a metaphor, baked into language*.

The concept of love as proposed by Chan was often linked to Universalism, which led to discussions of how universal cognitive and emotional frameworks (sometimes citing Pinker but with little development) enable such metaphors to transcend language-specific differences. Clear responses drew attention to Chan's rhetorical question: *Everybody knows what that word means, right?* interpreting this as a tacit appeal to universal understanding, reinforcing the idea that the metaphor of love works precisely because it draws on a shared human emotional capacity, supporting a universalist position.

Some discussion of genderlect theories was provided in limited responses which stated that metaphors of war would be more meaningful to a male audience and metaphors of love could be more meaningful to a female audience. Even where Robin Lakoff, Cameron and Tannen were cited in some irrelevant detail, such wide-reaching generalisations were not plausible.

There were also many citations of the four maxims of conversation according to Grice. In most cases these references were implausible and usually not tied relevantly to specific points from the stimulus material or to the question frame.

In some very long responses, presentation of conceptualisation dominated the response throughout. Rather than carefully selecting and applying the most appropriate theoretical examples to points being made, at times there were successions of paragraphs which only discussed various linguistic models or approaches, making no mention of how or why they supported ideas from the text. Candidates are reminded that in Paper 41, focus on the stimulus material, the question frame and reference to conceptualisation should remain intertwined throughout a sustained but firmly-directed response in order to maximise marks being awarded.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42
Language Topics

Key messages

The overall title for 9093 Paper 42 is *Language topics*. The question paper is set into two sections, each containing one compulsory question. Each question carries 25 marks, with 50 marks being available for the question paper as a whole. For each question, there is a specific question frame, pertinent to the stimulus material and appropriately relevant to a particular aspect of the language topic.

The topics considered in Paper 42 are *English in the world* provided in the question paper in **Section A**, as Question 1, and *Language and the self*, positioned as Question 2 in **Section B**. Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) apply to both questions.

General comments

The main requirement in Paper 42 is for candidates to provide sustained, discursive essays in response to the focus of the questions. As in previous examination sessions, at times there was evidence that analysis of the stimulus material had been undertaken, with responses containing commentary on the text originator's use of language. This was seen more in responses to **Question 2** rather than in those to **Question 1**. Such analysis is not required in Paper 42 and any response comprising such material ran the risk of becoming irrelevant.

In June 2025, despite the engaging nature of the stimulus material, some responses were rather brief, particularly in **Section B**, meaning that ideas remained undeveloped. Moreover, particularly in responses to **Question 1**, there was a good deal of evidence of candidates wanting to present the entirety of their understanding of the broader language topic instead of selecting what they considered to be the most important points raised in the text. This led to loss of focus and a lack of development of any main, relevant points.

Nonetheless, some clear to effective work was seen at times, mainly in **Section A**. Such responses retained focus on the ideas presented in the stimulus material and the specific frame of the question. More effective essays provided relevant support drawn from wider study of the language topics and demonstrated clarity and control of expression throughout.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – English in the world

The stimulus material for Question 1 was taken from an article published in the British newspaper The Guardian in 2022 titled *English is picking up brilliant new words from around the world – and that's a gift*.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to *the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding (10 marks)

The stimulus material presented a number of points which candidates could select for discussion. These included whether English could be viewed as a global language with examples of its predominance around the world, given that the text provided information that there are *1.75 billion global speakers*. Discussion was often developed with ideas of *ownership* of English and the extent to which it had become *shared* across the world.

Such ideas led naturally into explorations of English *in all its diversity* which had evolved due to borrowing, or indeed the *important reframing* of terminology from *loanwords* to *gifts* as defined by the text originator. Clear to effective responses brought forward arguments for, and relevant counterarguments to, the point that lexical gifts might be enriching English as it becomes more widely shared in response to the text's position that *Speakers of world varieties of English are remaking its vocabulary to better express their identities, cultures and everyday realities*.

Limited responses tended to focus solely on the examples of English borrowing from other languages for *lack of a direct English equivalent* provided in the stimulus material including the Portuguese *saudade*, the Dutch *gezellig* and *nomakanjani* from isiZulu. Clearer or more effective responses explored the text originator's notion that borrowing had been, and remains, part of the natural evolution of all living languages.

As in previous examination sessions, basic or limited responses referred to the stimulus material only minimally, choosing instead to present knowledge and understanding of their wider study of English in the world. Candidates are reminded that even where this knowledge and understanding of the language topic is demonstrated as extensive, focus on the stimulus material should underpin the question frame – in this case *the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world* – and not the other way round.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing (5 marks)

On the whole, those responses which were sustained were clearly organised into a logical sequence of paragraphs. This controlled approach demonstrated commendable writing skills including clear to effective introductions which provided a succinct precis of the text and gave a brief overview of the points which were to follow. On the other hand, limited introductions provided either a history of the emergence of the English language into its current form, or an extended overview of the language topic. Candidates are reminded that Assessment Objective 2 does not only cover aspects of writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammar: relevance of content and development of ideas are also assessed by applying that AO.

The most cohesive and coherent discussions followed a strong standpoint supported by a logical progression of ideas, well-integrated theoretical citation, and purposeful reference to the text. In contrast, weaker responses often meandered, lacking a stated line of argument or lapsing into general commentary.

Tone and register were generally maintained; clear discourse markers were usually seen to develop ideas or to introduce new points. Some loss of control was evident in responses which were overly long, indicating a move away from the original direction in the writing: extending a response into a continuation booklet does not necessarily mean that the essay has remained focused and relevant. On the contrary, it is more likely that the writing is not succinct, that the essay may have become repetitious or that some of the material presented is not relevant.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation (10 marks)

In June 2025, a wide range of linguistic issues, concepts, models and approaches were referenced, usually relevantly and accurately, although somewhat briefly. Taking the fundamental standpoint from the stimulus material, the issue of colonial influence and concepts of linguistic borrowing, cultural homogenisation and linguistic hybridisation were frequently seen. English as a killer language and cultural imperialism were also frequently referenced, although not always attributed to Pakir and Phillipson respectively.

Basic or limited responses introduced the standpoints of descriptivism and prescriptivism in relation to the stimulus material, although these introductions did not go beyond generalised description. This was similar to the frequent but often inaccurate inclusion of quotes from Crystal which were not tied to any specific points.

Understandably, Kachru's model of concentric circles was generally cited, even in basic responses, and it offered a clear, accessible and relevant framework in relation to some specific points raised in the stimulus material and the question frame. Effective responses used Kachru's Three Circles Model not just descriptively but as a springboard to interrogate issues such as borrowing, nativisation, and anxieties over

linguistic purity. From here, responses often branched into discussion of more contemporary or less well-known theories, including Tom McArthur's model of World English, Macaulay's notion of English as a colonial tool and Jennifer Jenkins' work on English as a lingua franca.

Some insightful discussion was seen in responses which explored the complex sociolinguistic outcomes of the global spread of English including code-mixing and the pathway to language death according to UNESCO. Effective responses analysed the phenomenon of hybrid languages such as Singlish to discuss the socio-political tensions between local identity and perceived linguistic legitimacy. A small number of responses incorporated relevant personal experiences from their own bilingual education or observations of English use in multicultural contexts, to add authenticity and insight to their argument.

Section B

Question 2 – Language and the self

The stimulus material presented in **Question 2** was taken from an article on the BBC website, published in 2021 titled *Africa's lost languages: How English can fuel an identity crisis*.

Candidates were required to discuss what they considered to be the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can *shape and reflect personal and social identity*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding (10 marks)

The stimulus material offered viewpoints gained from two lived experiences: the first, from Khahliso, offered insight from a regional language speaker who was bullied for her lack of proficiency in English; the second was from Amaka who described her identity crisis which had resulted, conversely, from her not knowing Igbo and who had taken steps to learn her native language as an older student. Basic or limited responses used the above examples to paraphrase the presented narratives without exploring the wider linguistic consequences of the details provided.

However, clear responses selected at least some of the specific points raised in the stimulus material, including how language can be used to discriminate, and therefore in regions around the world, English *can open and close doors*. These differentiated views were developed by the text originator with the notion that *Language gives you a sense of community*, although most responses provided more engagement using the idea that, in the past, children have been *forced to speak English*.

In terms of the language topic, *Language and the self*, clear or effective responses explored ways in which a speaker's *diction* can engender discrimination or how learning languages other than one's mother tongue can allow one to see *the world in a different light*.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing (5 marks)

In June 2025, many brief responses were seen in Section B, possibly indicating that time management during the examination had been a problem. Candidates are reminded to ensure that their response time should be used equally between Sections A and Sections B in order to maximise the potential to gain marks.

Although a number of responses to **Question 2** were brief, there were also responses which were overly long and lacking in precision and relevance.

However, those responses which were appropriately and relevantly sustained were generally crafted into a clear organisational structure with ideas flowing through a logical sequence of paragraphs. Introductions were generally succinct giving a clear overview of ideas which were to be discussed or a short precis of the stimulus material. However, conclusions tended only to repeat points already stated rather than end by reaffirming a strong linguistic point of view.

Overall, tone and register were appropriately maintained and discourse markers allowed a degree of fluency through clear to effective responses. There was a tendency, however, to use rhetorical questions in the main body of some discussions, possibly in an attempt to provide journalistic flair. This approach to crafting academic writing is not advised because if there are questions to be posed, then they should be answered by the candidate.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation (10 marks)

In those responses which were sustained, a wide range of mostly relevant conceptual references was seen. These included those to Michael Pearce's work on language and social groups, as well as examples of accent studies such as those conducted by Gary Ives.

As expected, there were many citations of landmark sociolinguistic theories such as Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory, Labov's overt and covert prestige, Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory and Milroy and Milroy's social network theory. Effective responses referred to Fishman's theory of language and ethnicity as well as Butler's performativity in relation to the construction of social identity. There was also some insightful reference to Gumperz as a critical source on code switching, presenting it as a strategy for navigating the social and linguistic expectations of the various social groups to which an individual belonged.

Support for arguments with real-world illustrations such as the overt prestige associated with Received Pronunciation in the UK and the covert prestige enjoyed by African American Vernacular English in the US was plausible where it was relevantly tied to specific points made in the stimulus material. However, less plausible was reference to theories pertaining to English and its impact on the world as these would have been better placed in a response to Question 1. Conceptualisation which was misplaced included reference to Kachru's concentric circles model or concepts such as Phillipson's linguistic imperialism and Pakir's English as a killer language which refer to the pre-eminence of English and the resultant language death.

There were also many citations of the four maxims of conversation according to Grice. In most cases these references were implausible and usually not tied relevantly to specific points from the stimulus material or to the question frame. This was similar to inclusions of Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and Tannen's genderlect which were not made relevant to the discussion.

In some very long responses, presentation of conceptualisation dominated the response throughout. Rather than carefully selecting and applying the most appropriate theoretical examples to points being made, at times there were successions of paragraphs which only discussed various linguistic models or approaches, making no mention of how or why they supported ideas from the text. Candidates are reminded that in Paper 42, focus on the stimulus material, the question frame and reference to conceptualisation should remain intertwined throughout a sustained but firmly-directed response in order to maximise marks being awarded.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43
Language Topics

Key messages

The overall title for 9093 Paper 43 is Language topics. Thus, the question paper is set into two sections, each containing one compulsory question. Each question carries 25 marks, with 50 marks being available for the question paper as a whole. For each question, there is a specific question frame, pertinent to the stimulus material and appropriately relevant to a particular aspect of the language topic.

The topics considered in Paper 43 are *English in the world* provided in the question paper in **Section A**, as Question 1, and *Language and the self*, positioned as **Question 2** in **Section B**. Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) apply to both questions.

General comments

The main requirement in Paper 43 is for candidates to provide sustained, discursive essays in response to the focus of the question. As in previous examination sessions, at times there was evidence that analysis of the stimulus material had been undertaken, with responses containing commentary on the text originator's use of language. This was seen more in responses to **Question 2** rather than in those to **Question 1**. Such analysis is not required in Paper 43 and any response comprising such material ran the risk of becoming irrelevant.

In June 2025, despite the engaging nature of the stimulus material, some responses were rather brief, particularly in **Section B**, meaning that ideas remained undeveloped. Moreover, particularly in responses to **Question 1**, there was a good deal of evidence of candidates wanting to present the entirety of their understanding of the broader language topic instead of selecting what they considered to be the most important points raised in the text. This led to loss of focus and a lack of development of any main, relevant points.

Nonetheless, some clear to effective work was seen at times, mainly in **Section A**. Such responses retained focus on the ideas presented in the stimulus material and the specific frame of the question. More effective essays provided relevant support drawn from wider study and demonstrated clarity and control of expression throughout.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – English in the world

The stimulus material for **Question 1** was an extract from an article published on a business website in 2021 titled *Is English taking over the world? Or is the world taking over English?*

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to *the changing use of English in the world*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding (10 marks)

The stimulus material presented a number of points which candidates could select for discussion. These included consideration of the potential of any impact experienced in the text originator's notion that English is becoming the language of international trade, the linguistic concept of borrowing including any *random collection of origins*, the reasons for transmission and absorption of loanwords into the English language including any colonial legacy, the author's conceptualisation of what they describe as *tentpole words*, changing international perceptions of the *coolness factor* of English, the concept of code switching and whether it may be deemed necessary for reasons of *pragmatism, efficiency and pronunciation*.

Most responses provided a selection of at least some of these points with a tendency to focus more on the well-known concept of borrowing rather than exploring the idea of tentpole words being used in a variety of regions *because they describe a thing that was not there before*. Only very few responses explored the questions posed by the text originator in the title of the text, *Is English taking over the world? Or is the world taking over English?*

Effective responses demonstrated a deeper reading of the stimulus material, discussing the validity of the text originator's final point that there may be instances when English, as used by some multilingual speakers, can sound *pretentious and inauthentic*.

Basic or limited responses referred to the texts only minimally, choosing instead to present knowledge and understanding of their wider study of English in the world or an historical account of the development of the English language over time. Candidates are reminded that even where this knowledge and understanding of the language topic is demonstrated as extensive, focus on the stimulus material should underpin the question frame – in this case *the changing use of English in the world* – and not the other way round.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing (5 marks)

On the whole, responses were clearly organised into a logical sequence of paragraphs. This controlled approach demonstrated commendable writing skills including provision of clear to effective introductions which provided a succinct precis of the text and gave a brief overview of the points which were to follow.

On the other hand, limited introductions provided either a history of the emergence of the English language into its current form, or an extended overview of the topic, *English in the world*. Candidates are reminded that Assessment Objective 2 does not only cover aspects of writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammar: relevance of content and development of ideas are also assessed by applying that AO.

Tone and register were generally maintained; clear discourse markers were usually seen to develop ideas or to introduce new points. Some loss of control was evident in responses which were overly long, indicating a move away from the original direction in the writing: extending a response into a continuation booklet does not necessarily mean that the essay has remained focused and relevant. On the contrary, it is more likely that the writing is not succinct, that the essay may have become repetitious or that some of the material presented is not relevant.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation (10 marks)

A wide range of linguistic issues, methods, concepts and approaches were referenced in response to **Question 1**, most of which were accurately cited although not all were attributed to their originator.

The most frequent citation used was of Kachru's Circles of English model with a generally accurate account of how Kachru had differentiated use of English in the inner, outer or expanding circles. Using the text originator's reference to Hindi, Japanese, German or Korean speakers, most responses referencing Kachru made accurate placements of these speakers' home nations according to the original model. Effective responses sought to discuss whether Kachru's differentiation may have changed and become outdated, in consideration of any changing use of English internationally.

Crystal and Diamond were also frequently referenced, although not always accurately, and with little relevance to the discussion in hand. At times, conceptualisation was generalised, especially in terms of English as a 'killer language', language death, and influences of colonialism. Some citations were somewhat out of place and would have been better positioned in a response to **Question 2** of Paper 43. These included references to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory and Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes.

Clear or effective conceptual references included detailed accounts of Schneider's dynamic model, McCrum's default position, Widdowson's spread and distribution, Modiano's circles and the channels described by Galloway and Rose and how these approaches might reflect the ways in which the use of English is changing. The most effective, or even insightful, responses took care to reference only those theoretical examples with direct relevance to the point being made rather than present a succession of names of theorists whose work was either outside the scope of the stimulus material or was only minimally appropriate to the discussion.

Section B

Question 2 – Language and the self

The stimulus material presented in **Question 2** was an extract from an article in the American magazine *The Atlantic*, published in 2021 and titled *Why We Speak More Weirdly at Home*.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can *shape and reflect social identity*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding (10 marks)

The main thrust of the article was delivered in its subtitle: *When people share a space, their collective experience can sprout its own vocabulary, known as a familect*, thus a number of opportunities for discussion on the concept of language used within familial relationships was offered.

Specific points raised by the text originator included the ways in which, and reasons for, development of a *secret* language or, as described a *private lexicon*, how and why the *shared experience* of being part of a family unit can affect language and its users, the value of being able to extend one's familect to others resulting in the effect of *welcoming outsiders into one's clan*, the personal and social values of being able to express *our nonpublic selves in all their weird glory*, and how and why a sense of community might be developed in using a familect or other private language.

Most candidates engaged with the purposes of forming at least a private, if not secret, language and drew upon examples from their personal experience to enhance their response and demonstrate their understanding of the concept of familect.

Clear to effective responses explored how relationship dynamics, described in the article in terms of Mignon Fogarty's podcast might be enhanced and form a strong social identity for the family unit internally and possibly also externally. Limited responses, on the other hand, tended to take a narrative approach in recasting the humorous experience of Alex Roberts where *half a hog* had come to mean a small unit of measurement of liquid instead of making an in-depth exploration of Cynthia Gordon's final comment: *moment by moment, in everyday language use, we create our families*.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing (5 marks)

Writing skills generally demonstrated structural control in that most responses were crafted into a logical sequence of paragraphs, headed by appropriate discourse markers. Some effective introductions provided a succinct overview of the main points which would be presented in the body of the essay. Limited introductions tended to define the difference between idiolect and sociolect without reference to the stimulus material, even though the familect concept was clearly a specific aspect of sociolect. Most discussions concluded with a generalised repetition of points already stated instead of reaffirming a strong linguistic point of view.

Tone and register were generally maintained throughout and content of responses was mostly relevant even in brief responses. This gave the impression that completing a sustained discursive response equal to that provided to **Question 1** had not been possible due to time constraints. Candidates are reminded to plan their examination time carefully, including giving themselves enough time for deep reading of the stimulus material.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation (10 marks)

Using knowledge and understanding gained from the June 2024 stimulus material for **Question 2** for Paper 43, responses plotted the concept of familect plausibly against examples of cryptolect, including that developed in prisons, Polari and Cockney Rhyming Slang. These two concepts sat well together as support for evidence selected from the stimulus material.

The setting of the family unit gave a natural opening for reference to the strong ties defined in Milroy's Social Network theory, the notion of In-groups according to Tajfel, and Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory. Effective responses were developed by introducing how language can be used to exclude as well as to include. These discussions cited Kramarae's Muted Groups or Eckert's Jocks and Burnouts to support points made in terms of how private sociolects may be perceived as secret and exclusionary to anyone outside the established social group.

At times, however, there was loss of focus on the question frame which asked specifically for discussion of *social identity*. In such cases, responses began to present irrelevant citations which were more suited to explorations of language and thought, with references being made to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Universalism, Innatism and Language of Thought. Candidates are reminded of the importance of maintaining focus on the question frame and the stimulus material and not to add in the names of theories and theorists just because they are known. Relevant conceptualisation should be tightly knitted into a response which is sustained and firmly directed in order to maximise its potential for marks being awarded.