ENGLISH LANGUAGE

> **Paper 9093/11**
> **Reading Paper 11**

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 tone, and 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

The rubric was generally followed, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, 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 they are being 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 did not demonstrate the necessary language skills for text analysis.

Question 1(a) is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the language, style and structure of a given text to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session the original text was a magazine article. 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 of a speech to their class. Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates are expected to write clearly and 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, comparative analysis of form, structure and language, and understanding of 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 elements.

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 analysis of form, structure and language.

Most responses demonstrated a clear 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; brief phrases such as 'the author is extremely descriptive' and 'uses a first point of view to give a deeper meaning' cannot be considered useful text analysis. Value judgements were also seen in relation to analysis, for example, 'the writer masterfully …' or 'the writer has done a good job'. These unspecific value judgements are not supportive of analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   Candidates were asked to read a magazine article about stargazing. They were then required to write the opening of a speech to their class about the benefits to well-being of appreciating the sky at night.

The characteristic features and conventions of a speech were clearly recognised by most candidates: they stated the topic of their speech, used direct address to the audience, attempted to make the content relatable, most wrote in a register appropriate to their class and content showed unity, coherence and adequate development. Weaker responses read more like a generic essay, with no real engagement with the audience (their peers). In terms of content, there was some misunderstanding of *captivated people for millennia* as references to the civilisations mentioned (Egyptians, Polynesians and Scandinavians) which were made in the present tense.

Most candidates had read the rubric carefully and understood the purpose of the speech opening: to explain the benefits to well-being of appreciating the sky at night. Some responses took the approach of persuading their audience to 'Give it a try.' In terms of form, there was generally a suitable salutation – e.g. 'Good morning to all gathered here', 'Everyone in this room', 'Hello candidates' – and good use of topic sentences to guide the listeners through the content of the opening of a speech. There was some effective use of repetition (including anaphora) and triadic constructions, such as, 'The sky at night serves as a source of entertainment, is the ultimate solution to problems and promotes relaxation' to succinctly present pertinent ideas about 'benefits to well-being'.

Stronger responses occasionally adopted the persona of an enthusiastic amateur astronomer; they made effective use of encouraging, motivational tones of voice – successfully identifying with their audience members; usually addressed sources of stress in candidates' lives (particularly assignments and exams, though some mentioned personal issues involving family and friends) to provide a context for the topic of well-being; a few times candidates suggested stargazing locales from, apparently, their own local knowledge and that of their audience, making good use of the approach offered by the penultimate paragraph. Furthermore, they explored the use of rhetorical devices and engaged the audience with rhetorical questions to create further engagement. They related the context effectively to the text, showing understanding of how the historical background of stars make an impact, using anecdotes to similarly inspire this 'Just as our ancestors used the stars ...'. Candidates who wrote more successful responses often used the full word guidance to develop their ideas and used sophisticated expression, which contributed towards the overall effect. The most successful recognised that they were required to write the text for the opening of a speech previewing the main points and started to rebut anticipated objections.

Weaker responses often offered a straightforward summary of the text, listing information presented in the article without much apparent attempt to shape it to the requirements of the task, especially regarding form and register. Many candidates focused extensively on the content of mankind's historical fascination with stars (*To the Polynesians […]. The Scandinavians […]*) and the *HOW TO STARGAZE* section, with little attention paid to task requirements of 'benefits to well-being'. These responses frequently concentrated on defining awe (*that jaw-dropping feeling*) rather than specifying related benefits for well-being (*more original examples in tests, showed greater interest in abstract paintings, and persisted longer on difficult puzzles [...] helps us to break out of habitual patterns of thinking about the world*); some drifted from the text and focused on other topics such as pollution.

Furthermore, these weaker responses often showed errors with use of grammar and incorrect tenses, frequently as a result of being over ambitious with language choices. Several of these weaker responses lifted words or phrases from the given text, such as *boosting creativity and lowering stress*, *well-being of our planet*, *awe-inspiring* and *curious and creative*, or they quoted large amounts from the given text in their directed response, which was rarely justified even where they prefaced quotations with 'I recently read an article on [...]'.

Getting 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 chunks of the text. Often, the most effective writing came at the end of responses when candidates freed themselves from checklisting 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 magazine article, 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 relate to audience and shape meaning. It is perfectly acceptable for candidates to consider each text in turn, however in order to achieve the comparative requirement of the question, there needs to be ongoing reference to both texts.

It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to create a more robust response in terms of their analysis. Candidates certainly appear to now appreciate that a topical approach best facilitates comparative analysis – topics were usually organised by the question's command words 'form, structure and language'. However, the topics were almost invariably considered in the order of the question command words with the consequence that 'language' was not particularly well addressed.

Candidates compared the ways in which the conventions of a speech and magazine article writing were adhered to in the texts. They compared the purpose of each text: to explain (or persuade about) the benefits and to inform. Candidates considered the opening of their own pieces, but were often unclear or unsure about what to say about the original extract, although some made reference to the title and subheading of the article. They compared how each audience was specified by the purpose of each piece: the speech being to their peers, the article having a much wider audience. They compared how each was written in first person, with some noting that each text provides some 'insight' into the writer's thoughts. They commented on the register of each piece and how the audience dictated the register employed. They commented on the ways that audience is addressed in second person to provide a 'personal' tone and the ways in which the tone of the article is 'more neutral' because it is detailed and its primary purpose informative.

Points about structure were limited, largely comprising basic comparisons of paragraph numbers and lengths with reference made to the conventions of opening and, where they had attempted a full speech, its closing and call to action. Some reference was made to long and short sentences.

Some candidates noted that their speech opening only contained information relevant to the task whilst the article contained more factual detail together with opinion.

Comparisons of language features were very limited. There was some comparison of imagery, although comments were quite vague. Positive and reassuring language was also covered in general terms. There was little mention of contrast between busy modern lifestyles and technology, such as *Busy lifestyles and urban lighting* contrasted with *turning our gaze upwards* and *the chaos of the day quietening* and *the wheeling night sky*, which suggests freedom.

Stronger responses showed a clear distinction between the conventions of a speech opening and of an article. These responses regarded the article and their speech text 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. These responses commented on the shift in terms of style from a narrative perspective in first person, understanding the engaging tone and the spark of curiosity from the *unexpected visitor*, and how the article moved from a storytelling perspective to becoming more informative, providing factual data and historical background – *To the Polynesians […]*. Most understood the need for this in terms of credibility.

Limited responses were often brief, focused mostly on the magazine article, 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 a speech or an article; some merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect.

These weaker responses focused on a comparison of content and neglected language analysis. However, clear reference was made to characteristic features by candidates who compared the register, tone and language features of each piece and how these had been utilised for each specific audience.

Many candidates who adopted a direct comparison approach often stated that a feature that was present in one text was absent in the other. It is advisable to comment only on the features that are present in a text. Furthermore, candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of

analysis – analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally, but also how specific effects are created.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an extract from the autobiography of a chef. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

The text was generally well understood and was answered with obvious engagement by most candidates. There was a wide range of responses, with a significant number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There were very few short answers.

Responses to form were generally limited. Candidates understood some of the conventions of an autobiography (although some referred to the extract as 'a flashback'): use of first person, stories from childhood, authenticity, and the focus on memorable drama, including observations, thoughts, feelings, observations and descriptive language. Most were able to comment on purpose: to entertain and inform. Responses mainly commented that the title was 'to tell the reader what it's about'; however, for one candidate, this was a reference to scrambled eggs resulting in scrambled lives and complex relationships.

In terms of structure, some responses commented on time-related discourse markers in the fifth paragraph, *As the weeks went by [...] By the fourth week [...] by the sixth, […]*', concluding that this made the passage chronological.

Some candidates commented on the intricacies of conflict, change in terms of relationships, and a feeling of almost abandonment as the father starts to live a new and different life. They generally noted that the diction used in relation to the narrator's view of the father was undesirable, almost as if the father was deceitful – *cunning*. The use of dialogue was noted in conjunction with *Just try it*, coupled with imagery – *every morsel* –

to create an entertaining and humorous piece, as the audience almost smiles at the childlike actions – *sniffed* – and the continuous battle between father and child – *No lettuce leaf or bridge roll was left unchecked*. They also cited *scrambled suppers [...] feeding it to the dog* in support. Most commented on the negative perspective of *golden slop; a clear moat of yellow fat* (stronger responses also noted the oxymoronic use).

Stronger responses were often characterised by greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language. These responses showed awareness of conventions of autobiographical writing as above, and also formative childhood experiences, the narrator's strong point of view and chronological and episodic structure (the text provides two major sets of experiences that appear to be sequential). These stronger responses noted *of a chef* in the question's first command sentence and so recognised how much of the content of the first two paragraphs is highly ironic given the narrator's adult profession. Stronger responses sharply focused analysis on lexis conveying appearance, smell and texture of the dishes made from eggs, which 'appeal to reader's senses'. Some showed awareness that the father's focus on the narrator was gradually diminished and that this was signalled by the later prevalence of 'grooming' imagery – *whirlwind of aftershave and freshly ironed shirt [...] His hair glistened with Brylcreem [...] and his face and neck scrubbed up pink* – prior to the introduction of Mrs Potter, reasoning that the writer employed foreshadowing here. The strongest responses made reference to the latter part of the passage, i.e. after the dinkus, and the progression to an altered relationship.

Conversely, 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 'stopping the reader from being bored'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology. These weaker responses often struggled to make more than a few disparate observations about textual features and they were generally unclear about nature of relationship between narrator as a child and the father. They did, however, identify similes in *like espresso coffee. Her mouth was as tight as a walnut*, though very few understood how this language shaped meaning and merely re-explained the phrase, e.g. 'her eyes were brown like coffee; her mouth was tight and small', without explanation of how the narrator is shaping the audience's response to Joan Potter's facial features. Some candidates used the footnotes as 'proof' that the passage was 'set in France in the 1960s'. These weaker responses showed difficulty in commenting on the father-child relationship, the level of deceit involved in the training to eat eggs, the crafted use of culinary jargon and humour, and the rather extraordinary effect Mrs Potter had on the father.

Lower and higher frequency lexis was often confused with higher and lower orders of lexis and occasionally even register, where specific words were categorised as formal and informal and often referred to as tone. The wider the critical vocabulary of the candidates (and the accuracy of use), the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

These weaker responses often adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the […] paragraph[/section]', or adopted an approach to analysis which ranged haphazardly across the text. It would be helpful for candidates to be aware of the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured'; a whole-text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of the line-by-line approach was the repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point can not be rewarded twice.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered limited analysis. These weaker responses tended to summarise the content 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.

Although not overly prevalent this series, candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to analysis. The categorisation of textual elements as representative of 'ethos', 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, should be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12
Reading Paper 12

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 tone, and 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

The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were some overlong 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 they are being 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 did not demonstrate the necessary language skills for text analysis.

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 of a given text to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session the original text was an extract from a book. 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 a letter to a local authority. Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates are expected to write clearly and 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, comparative analysis of form, structure and language, and understanding of 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 elements.

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 analysis of form, structure and language.

Most responses demonstrated a clear 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; brief phrases such as 'the author is extremely descriptive' and 'uses a first point of view to give a deeper meaning' cannot be considered useful text analysis. Value judgements were also seen in relation to analysis, for example, 'the writer masterfully …' or 'the writer has done a good job'. These unspecific value judgements are not supportive of analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   Candidates were asked to read an extract from a book titled *Paradise Gardens*. In response to the text, they were then required to write a letter to their local authority suggesting the benefits of creating of a public garden in their local area.

    The characteristic features and conventions of a letter were clearly recognised by most candidates: they gave a salutation – 'Dear Sir', 'To whom it may concern', 'To the council members', 'Dear authority', 'Dear mayor' – and they gave a valediction; although not strictly necessary, some included an address and there was also the use of a subheading that stated the purpose of the letter instead of a direct address to a person; many attempted to make the content relatable by contextualising to their local area; most wrote in a register appropriate to a local authority and content showed unity, coherence and adequate development. Weaker responses read more as a generic essay based on the information in the extract, with no real engagement with the audience (the local authority) or the benefits as required by the task.

    Most candidates had read the rubric carefully and understood the purpose of the letter: to suggest the benefits of creating a public garden.

    Candidates demonstrated that they had understood the extract and included the beneficial aspects of having a garden, often comparing this to modern day issues such as: smog/pollution, hot weather, concrete jungles/cites and living in poverty. Occasionally, candidates utilised the desert concept (as in the given extract) as their home and suggested a garden would be beneficial to have there. Some candidates used a named place, possibly their own area, and explained how a garden would benefit them. Other candidates zoomed in on the idea of being able to support the community with fresh fruit and vegetables and also selling them for profit. Another idea that often appeared was linked to the gardens becoming a tourist attraction. However, this seemed to defeat the concept of the gardens being a tranquil and meditative space. One candidate suggested that the oxygenating plants in the garden would be a relief for all concerned – 'a blessing for the community'. Candidates used the imagery of a garden being a paradise or oasis for the benefit of its users. Not all candidates suggested using water in their garden, which was rather strange as this is a strong concept presented in the extract. Many candidates cited the religious significance of gardens and their links to paradise and how establishing them on earth would bring us closer to God. Links were also made to creating stronger bonds within the community, including the elderly and young children.

    Stronger responses adopted a persuasive style, transposing key elements appropriately. Examples of more focused answers included some juxtaposition of the reasons why a public garden was needed: the stress of city-life, heat, pollution and the built-up environment. One stronger response

used the example of technology as an antagonist, then compared this with the desert in their response to **Question 1(b)**. This kind of approach allowed for clear comparison and juxtaposition of the desert/garden. Stronger responses tended to utilise topic sentences to signpost possible features of a desired public garden separately from the benefits accrued; respect for the addressee was maintained throughout the letter, for example reference to how successful leadership could be demonstrated by granting a public garden, consistent with concern for citizens. These more successful responses often used the full word guidance to develop their ideas and used sophisticated expression, which contributed towards the overall effect.

Weaker responses often offered a straightforward summary of the text, listing information presented in the book extract without much apparent attempt to shape it to the requirements of the task, especially regarding form and register. Some candidates overused persuasive devices, which created an aggressive tone. These weaker responses utilised too much of the extract's historical content, resulting in unnecessary reference in their letters to, especially: mention of gardens of paradise in the Qur'an; the Persian word *pairidaeza* (which could potentially have been utilised as a derivation-based 'fun fact' to pique interest, or to develop a point about the benefit of fruit trees); Cyrus the Great's garden at Pasargadae; and, the *four-part chahar bagh … the model for paradise gardens throughout the Islamic world*. Candidates should be mindful that it is necessary to identify content that best suits the purpose of the writing task, to carefully select throughout the extract (gardens with fresh water allows life and fruit/produce to grow; they represent beauty and peace; they can provide shade from heat) and also to focus on the most pertinent, final three paragraphs of the extract.

Some responses drifted from the extract and focused on other topics or argued for provision of playground equipment – a place where children could have their 'parties' – and explained possible fundraising initiatives; the space was seen as a place for 'entertainment' and 'live concerts'; there was occasional reference to upcoming local elections, which was used as a veiled threat that if the authorities did not grant permission for the development of a public garden, they might not secure votes.

Furthermore, these weaker responses often showed errors with use of grammar and tenses, frequently as a result of being over ambitious with language choices. Several of these weaker responses lifted words or phrases from the given text, such as *a little bit of heaven*, *water cools and dampens the air*, *perfect oasis*, *heaven on earth* and *contemplation and peace*. Some quoted large amounts of the given text in their directed response, which was rarely justified even where they might have prefaced quotations with 'I recently read a book on ...'.

Getting 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 chunks of the text. Often, the most effective writing came at the end of responses when candidates freed themselves from checklisting 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 book 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 relate to audience and shape meaning. It is perfectly acceptable for candidates to consider each text in turn, however in order to achieve the comparative requirement of the question, there needs to be ongoing reference to both texts.

It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to create a more robust response in terms of their analysis. Candidates certainly appear to now appreciate that a topical approach best facilitates comparative analysis – topics were usually organised by the question's command words 'form, structure and

language'. However, the topics were almost invariably considered in the order of the question command words with the consequence that 'language' was not particularly well addressed.

Candidates compared the ways in which the conventions of a letter and book writing were adhered to in the texts. They compared the purpose of each text: to suggest (or persuade about) the benefits and to inform. Candidates considered the opening of their own pieces, but were often unclear or unsure about what to say about the opening of the original extract, although some made reference to the brevity of the extract's opening sentence, *The Arabian desert is remorseless*. They compared how each audience was specified by the purpose of each piece: the letter being to a local authority; the book extract having a much wider audience.

Candidates' comments were largely descriptive when comparing the contrasts outlined in both pieces. Firstly, the Arabian desert and its utter barrenness with beautiful oasis-like gardens in the extract. Secondly, concrete jungles stifled by a lack of greenery compared with public gardens. Some responses commented on the use of imagery, e.g. *barren vastness is daunting*, and the metaphors *a little bit of heaven* and *paradise*, having crafted their own piece to include similar features; however, only some offered developed comparative comments. They also commented on the use of historical, religious and mythical references, and the use of negative diction to formulate an opinion about the desert, or to highlight the conditions faced by indigenous people. Many incorporated these facts into their letters, which was mostly successful, although some of these points were in need of expansion.

Points about structure were limited, largely comprising basic comparisons of paragraph numbers and lengths with reference made to the conventions of opening and closing a letter. Some reference was made to long and short sentences. Some candidates noted that their letters only contained information relevant to the task whilst the extract contained more factual detail together with opinion.

Comparisons of language features were also very limited. There was some comparison of imagery (as above), although comments were quite vague. More developed responses analysed the use of persuasive devices, including: direct address, hyperbole, anaphora, rhetorical questions, repetition, emotive language and the use of facts and opinions.

Stronger responses showed a clear distinction between the conventions of a letter those of the book extract; these responses regarded the extract and their letter 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. Stronger responses often effectively commented on the use of punctuation, for example *peace and – momentarily at least – it is devoid of all care*, explaining the effects of pacing, tone, and mood; furthermore, where used in their own writing, some commented on the repetition of *water*, showing understanding of the symbolism behind it and its effects of *life* and how this juxtaposed with the beginning of the extract.

Limited responses were often brief, focused mostly on the book extract, 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 a letter or the book extract/informative passage; some merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect.

These weaker responses focused on a comparison of content and neglected language analysis. However, clear reference was made to characteristic features by candidates who compared the register, tone and language features of each piece and how these had been utilised for each specific audience.

Many candidates who adopted a direct comparison approach often stated that a feature that was present in one text was absent in the other. It is advisable to comment only on the features that are present in a text. Furthermore, candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of analysis – analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally, but also how specific effects are created.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an editorial piece from a lifestyle magazine. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

The text was generally well understood and was answered with obvious engagement by most candidates. There was wide range of responses with a significant number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There were very few short answers.

Responses to form were generally limited. Candidates understood some of the conventions of an editorial (and some the concept of a lifestyle magazine): editorials usually express opinions, standpoints and viewpoints; there was an introduction, body and conclusion; and there is a direct mode of address and attempt to establish rapport with the audience. Most were able to comment on purpose and how it would appeal to the target audience, who they deemed as middle aged, middle class, and specifically mothers.

The ambiguity of the title was often mentioned, with only a few candidates linking it to later in the passage and the writer's state of mind. There were, however, a number of inciteful comments which demonstrated a detailed and, at times, sophisticated understanding of the text. One candidate discussed the theme of motherhood in the extract and identified that *the mother of all clear-outs* was linked with her clearing out her daughter's belongings and moving on with her life – particularly as most of the loft was filled with her daughter's items or memorabilia. Another point made was that 'the roof is a physical manifestation of the writer's emotions' and as it needs replacing, so does the author's cluttered mind with clarity and freedom.

Candidates commented on the structure of the extract by suggesting that the paragraphs grow larger as the writer finds more and more items in the loft, suggesting the vast number of items being stored in there. Other structural points offered were that the text used a problem and solution structure, with the roof being the problem and the solution being to declutter the loft area. Another suggestion was that the text used a 'cycle of pain', whereby the writer was distressed by the disintegrating roof at the beginning but this developed into feelings of relief whilst the spring clean began. However, this is short lived as the writer is crushed by overwhelming feelings from the *'Sentimental stuff'* she has found in the loft.

There were many suggestions concerning the mythological simile, *Pandoras Box*. One of these was that, once the box was opened, it would lead to the writer having an emotional breakdown as the '*Sentimental stuff*' in the suitcase could be completely overwhelming once viewed. Another idea was that the '*Sentimental stuff*' was 'magical and transportive', rendering the writer 'powerless'. A few candidates suggested that the writer was a hoarder and that we, as the reader, should empathise and possibly feel pity for her.

Some responses commented on the use of humour in the text. These occasions related to the author's private thoughts (which were contained in brackets) and her choice of language such as the reference to the Christmas carol – *Christmas bits and baubles to deck a thousand halls* – and the china shop – *enough pieces of china to fill an entire emporium*. Stronger responses developed this further by, firstly, commenting on the change in tense from first to third person, secondly, the inclusive writing style in *we need new beginnings*, and, thirdly, the warm and encouraging tone.

Stronger responses were often characterised by greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language. These responses showed awareness of conventions of editorial writing as above. These often saw the whole piece as allegorical, expanding on this notion to comment on how readers might recognise the need for a *fresh start* in their own lives. They commented on alliterative techniques – *boxes and bags, cases and crates* – and plosives added to the rhythm almost mirroring the packing and unpacking. In terms of structure, they commented on how the paragraph length progressed, mirroring Suzy Smith's feelings of being overwhelmed and also revealing the number of items to sift through, representing both the physical but also the psychological impact. They noted the structural shift again with the shorter paragraphs at the end of the extract as a sense of something 'renewed', creating the finality that she needed with the decision to embark on a new journey and 'let go'.

Conversely, 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 'stopping the reader from being bored'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology. These weaker responses often struggled to make more than a few disparate observations about textual features.

Lower and higher frequency lexis was often confused with higher and lower orders of lexis and occasionally even register, where specific words were categorised as formal and informal and often referred to as tone.

The wider the critical vocabulary of the candidates (and the accuracy of use), the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

These weaker responses often adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the […] paragraph[/section]', or adopted an approach to analysis which ranged haphazardly across the text. It would be helpful for candidates to be aware of the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured'; a whole-text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of the line-by-line approach was the 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.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered limited analysis. These weaker responses tended to summarise the content 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.

Although not overly prevalent this series, candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to analysis. The categorisation of textual elements as representative of 'ethos', 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, should be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/13
Reading Paper 13

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 tone, and 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

The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were some overlong 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 they are being 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 did not demonstrate the necessary language skills for text analysis.

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. 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 a diary entry written as one of the characters in the extract. Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates are expected to write clearly and 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, comparative analysis of form, structure and language, and

understanding of 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 elements.

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 analysis of form, structure and language.

Most responses demonstrated a clear 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; brief phrases such as 'the author is extremely descriptive' and 'uses a first point of view to give a deeper meaning' cannot be considered useful text analysis. Value judgements were also seen in relation to analysis, for example, 'the writer masterfully …' or 'the writer has done a good job'. These unspecific value judgements are not supportive of analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   Candidates were asked to read an extract from a book about the first successful ascent of Mount Everest. They were then required to imagine that they were Tenzing and write a diary entry about the ascent to the summit.

The characteristic features and conventions of a diary entry were clearly recognised by most candidates: they used first person and the past tense, sharing observations, thoughts and feelings that they would not necessarily share with others, wrote in chronological order, with detailed description and at times used emotive language.

Most candidates understood the need to write from Tenzing's point of view and most began with a conventional salutation, 'Dear Diary', and dated their entries. They employed first and third person and, generally, employed past tense to record and document their journey. Candidates usually interpreted the task requirements as best facilitated by an entry written immediately following the events depicted in the extract; diary entries were usually composed in a tent high up the mountain or upon return to base camp later on; one offered an entry composed the night before the final ascent that anticipated the route, technical issues and aspects of summiting depicted in the extract quite successfully. Generally, candidates offered thoughtful and sometimes spirited diary entries of Tenzing's final ascent to the summit of Mount Everest. There were a few responses which focused on the climb right from the start and stopped at some point before reaching Mount Everest's summit. Hence, these responses lacked a sense of achievement and included only the difficulties, although sometimes creating a sense of anticipation and hope. Most incorporated technical information and showed awareness of the historical nature of the event.

Some responses created an engaging, chatty dialogue, allowing the reader an insight into the writer's emotions. The relationship between Hillary and Tenzing did not always reflect the hierarchy of the time, with some candidates using terminology like 'buddy'. However, most did understand the formality of the task and the achievement. There was limited reference to feelings, except the final point when Hillary and Tenzing hugged. The stronger responses discussed excitement and sentimentality, especially with Tenzing's daughter where responses focused intently on the significance to Tenzing of the *blue-and-red pencil given to him by his daughter Nima* that he included as his *offerings*.

More successful responses combined accurate, detailed information of aspects of the ascent (such as there being a number of false summits, with one candidate recognising that the *panorama of shots looking down* taken by Hilary could be used to verify that they had successfully summited) with a careful crafting of the two men's personalities. For example, Tenzing followed Hillary on the ascent and Hillary used great skill to enable both men to climb successfully in difficult conditions. These more successful entries included how the men responded to such an amazing feat, with Hillary being rather reserved and Tenzing almost the complete opposite. However, there was one

response where Hillary was successfully compared with a ballet dancer, whereby his footwork on the icy vertical rocks and careful stepping was extremely controlled.

Weaker responses focused overly on the detail of the climb, often lifting material, or they skipped over the ascent and focused on the relief of 'reaching the top of the world', with no reference to the struggle. These responses tended to confuse the detail of the climb, for example referring to *the Rongbuk Glacier, Changtse, the North Col* as waypoints on the final day of Hillary and Tenzing's climb to the summit of Everest whereas they were features *far below them*. Some of these weaker responses did not adhere to the purpose, for example stating that they would 'try again tomorrow' or that they would 'not give up'.

Weaker responses often offered a straightforward summary of the text, listing information presented in the extract without much apparent attempt to shape it to the requirements of the task, especially regarding form and register. Candidates should be mindful that it is necessary to identify content that best suits the purpose of the writing task and to carefully select throughout the extract. Some weaker responses drifted from the extract, offering a backstory or beginning the night before, which did not demonstrate understanding of the given text and did not enable effective development of relevant content.

Furthermore, weaker responses often showed errors with use of grammar and incorrect tenses, frequently as a result of being over ambitious with language choices. Several of these weaker responses lifted words or phrases from the given text, such as *defying gravity*, *narrow gap between rock and snow*, *final undulating ridge*, *thumping him on the back* and *crystalline silence*, or they quoted large amounts from the given text in their directed response which was rarely justified.

Getting 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 chunks of the text. Often, the most effective writing came at the end of responses when candidates freed themselves from checklisting the text.

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

(b)   Candidates were asked to compare their diary entry with the book 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 relate to audience and shape meaning. It is perfectly acceptable for candidates to consider each text in turn, however in order to achieve the comparative requirement of the question, there needs to be ongoing reference to both texts.

It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to create a more robust response in terms of their analysis. Candidates certainly appear to now appreciate that a topical approach best facilitates comparative analysis – topics were usually organised by the question's command words 'form, structure and language'. However, the topics were almost invariably considered in the order of the question command words with the consequence that 'language' was not particularly well addressed.

Candidates compared the ways in which the conventions of a diary entry and book writing were adhered to in the texts. They compared the purpose of each text: to create a personal record detailing events, containing thoughts and feelings, and to inform. Candidates considered the opening of their own pieces, but were often unclear or unsure about what to say about the opening of the original extract, although some made reference to the title and the extract's dramatic opening sentence, *Right on the crest itself, defying gravity, a great plaque of wind-packed snow is plastered vertically against the east face of the bedrock*. They compared how each audience was specified by the purpose of each piece: the diary entry primarily for private consumption; the book extract having a much wider audience. Where responses had developed Tenzing's character through the

diary form, candidates commented on the writer's use of repetition, emotive language, use of sematic fields and figurative language. They also commented on the personal tone of the diary and the more abstract, historical, formal tone of the extract.

Comments were largely descriptive when comparing the ascent outlined in both pieces. Some responses commented on the use of imagery (similes, metaphors, personification, pathetic fallacy) to enhance the description and, consequently, their achievement, e.g. *the crystalline silence of this wonderful moment*, *a great plaque of wind-packed snow*, *Everest's summit is a giant snow cornice*, and *curl back on itself in a great wave,* having crafted their own piece to include similar features. However, only some offered developed comparative comments. They also commented on the use of use of a lexical field related to mountaineering e.g. *modern front-pointing crampon points*, *two or three false summits*, *the West Ridge*, *the North Col*, *breathing oxygen at 3 litres a minute*. Many had incorporated these facts into their diary entries with some success, although some referenced needed to expand on these.

Points about structure were limited, largely comprising basic comparisons of paragraph numbers and lengths with reference made to the conventions of opening and closing a diary entry. Some reference was made to long and short sentences. Some candidates noted that their diary entries contained information only relevant to the task whilst the book extract contained more factual detail.

Comparisons of language features were also very limited. There was some comparison of imagery as above and, for example, how the writer of the original passage used visual imagery *giant snow cornice* to describe Everest's summit and dynamic verbs *wedging*, *pushing*, *plodded* with the relaxed and emotive nature of the diary entry, although most comments were quite vague.

Stronger responses showed a clear distinction between the conventions of a diary entry and those of a book extract; these responses regarded the extract and their diary entry 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.

These more developed responses analysed the use of figurative devices, including: hyperbole, anaphora, rhetorical questions, repetition, emotive language. They also commented on how word classes had contributed to the emotive element of utter exhaustion – *the exhausted*, *shuffling plod of climbers* – and how sensory details and imagery clearly portrayed the sense of danger, creating suspense and anticipation – *fervent prayer that the cornice would remain attached to the rock* – giving a much more immersive experience. This worked well where they had used figurative language and given word classes in their own writing also creating an element of danger and the need of *prayer* to overcome the great Mount Everest. *Prayer* was often coupled with metaphors and similes of royalty, such as 'the king' or other religious connotations communicating the gravity of the situation and how death was a great possibility, not only allowing for fear and emotions to be communicated, but also allowing the audience to see the progression in terms of emotions as they 'conquered the giant'.

Limited responses were often brief, focused mostly on the book extract, and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, needing to show more awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of a diary entry or the book extract/informative passage; some merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect.

These weaker responses focused on a comparison of content and neglected language analysis. However, clear reference was made to characteristic features by candidates who compared the register, tone and language features of each piece and how these had been utilised for each specific audience.

Many candidates who adopted a direct comparison approach often stated that a feature that was present in one text was absent in the other. It is advisable to comment only on the features that are present in a text. Furthermore, candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of analysis – analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally, but also how specific effects are created.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an extract from the introduction to a cookery book. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

The text was generally well understood and was answered with obvious engagement, usually exhibited with the factual aspects of the extract alongside the nature of the writer's many observations about Indian cuisine and its centrality to family life. There was a wide range of responses, with a significant number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There were very few short answers.

Responses mostly began with the overview of the purpose and audience, and commented on the autobiographical nature of the extract. They identified the first-person narrative voice throughout the extract by the use of first-person pronouns.

Responses to form were generally limited. Candidates understood some of the conventions of an introduction to a cookery book: the extract being an introduction and recipes expected to be followed, hence giving an introduction to a concept; the purpose being to engage and tantalise the audience, sell the main theme, offer personal touches (cooking being a personal and intimate experience), potentially giving an overview of recipes and offer encouragement to the audience about their ability to eventually follow the recipes. Most commented on the purpose and how it would appeal to the apparent target audience who they deemed as those interested in developing their culinary skills.

Responses generally adopted an approach of commenting on the development in each paragraph whilst explaining the meaning of a particular word or phrase. Although there were frequent misunderstandings about the writer's background, status, religion and having *tiffin* with children from other communities, the concept of *unity* was understood by most, in addition to how food played such a pivotal role in the sense of community and unison: *my friends and I would assemble under a shady neem tree*.

Chronology was often misidentified, with many candidates unable to recognise flashbacks or narrative shifts, even when clearly prompted, for example by, *One of my fondest memories*. However, many responses showed an understanding of the thematic links presented. Most commented on the anecdotal nature of the piece *grandmother wrote* coupled with flashbacks *Starting from that time*, the use of humour as in *An SOS to my mother*, showing the writer's own vulnerabilities through the use of questioning, *Use of the kitchen was all very well, but exactly **how** was I going to use it?* which created a certain sense of relatability and in turn inspiration, showing the writer's journey with food and that they too needed help. They also discussed how this would give hope to the reader. The translation from the Indian *Kheema matar* to the English *Minced meat with peas* was noted, but not always the intended humour or the irony that the exotic meal is simply minced meat and peas. However, responses generally did acknowledge that the translation dispelled the mystique of Eastern food.

Some responses focused on the evocative descriptions and the sensory language produced, for example, *titillate our palates* coupled with the hyperbole *wholesome food and endless flavours and dishes*, to create the uplifting experience and adventure that food had provided for the writer and so many *friends*. Listing was identified, which was noted went hand in hand with the use of hyperbolic statements to reiterate the complexities and excess and how Indian cookery offers so much, enhancing the theme presented that food is of *adventure and discovery* and open to all. Some stronger responses commented on how the use of parentheses containing the English definitions created a welcoming effect for a much broader audience. These also mentioned contrast between *Delhi* and *London* adding to the writer's journey as well as between childhood and adulthood; they noted how the love of food remained – *I have always loved to eat well*.

Stronger responses were often characterised by the greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language. These responses showed awareness of the conventions of an introduction to a cookery book as above. They were also proficient in delineating the structure of the extract, noting the narrative frame established by opening and concluding paragraphs focused on two important encounters with food in the narrator's infancy and childhood. In addition, they inferred that the writer is likely a chef or restaurateur as the extract is taken 'from the introduction to a cookery book', thus aiding their comprehension of the purpose of the extract to explain the narrator's formative experience of Indian food. Language was usually analysed quite extensively in these responses. In addition to comments on the positive description of food, they noted the use of subtle persuasive tone to persuade readers to buy the book and try out the recipes. These confident responses also suggested that the writer was trying to target a young audience, especially students who leave home for university, by the use of slang words *digs* and *cocky*. These responses commented on the use of adverbs and adverbial phrases. For example, how food came *miraculously* creating a sense of magic and enticing the readers into the writer's Indian culinary

experience. There were perceptive responses with interesting comments on the writer's humour, reminiscing about childhood moments from *smacking my lips rather loudly* to *my ribboned pigtails fluttering behind me*.

Conversely, 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 'stopping the reader from being bored'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology. These weaker responses often struggled to make more than a few disparate observations about textual features. Such responses were mainly confined to how the writer describes different dishes and indicated some sense of the narrator undergoing personal development through the food they encountered at different early stages of their life.

Lower and higher frequency lexis was often confused with higher and lower orders of lexis and occasionally even register, where specific words were categorised as formal and informal and often referred to as tone. The wider the critical vocabulary of the candidates (and the accuracy of use), the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

These weaker responses often adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the […] paragraph[/section]', or adopted an approach to analysis which ranged haphazardly across the text. It would be helpful for candidates to be aware of the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured'; a whole-text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of the line-by-line approach was the 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.

There were few basic responses which offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered limited analysis. These weaker responses tended to summarise the content 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.

Although not overly prevalent this series, candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to analysis. The categorisation of textual elements as representative of 'ethos', 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, should be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/21
Writing Paper 21
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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 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. To ensure that candidates 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. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions are to write the text for your **speech,** to introduce **both points of view** and create a **sense of interest** in the debate.

* Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is an essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.

* Clear expression in simple and compound sentences with less variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Responses are often weaker where candidates have lost control of grammar in attempting to write in long, complex sentences. One error that 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. One error which occurred with some regularity was a lack of capital letters for proper nouns and to start sentences.

* Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one 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 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 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

A number of 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 attempt **Question 1(b)**. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or less linguistically accurate, possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger responses focused clearly on the question, consisted of text for effective speeches, and successfully created a sense of interest in time travel. Weaker responses described one or two scenarios from the past or the future, and did not address their audience or make it clear that this was the opening speech for a debate. Candidates should avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the

task; the guidance of *no more than 400 words* means candidates are being guided to provide a purposeful, succinct response.

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, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly or entirely on content and therefore provided minimal analysis by indirectly outlining the structure of the **1(a)** response.

Stronger responses on *Section B* generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (magazine article, review or description), 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 quite repetitive and lacked variety and balance, some responses to **Question 3** were simple recounts of the content of the course, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion, and some **Question 4** responses were mainly narrative rather than descriptive.

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 would be more interesting to be able to travel back to the past, or forward to the future. 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. In your writing, introduce both points of view and create a sense of interest in the debate.**

The exact wording of the question, asking candidates to *open the debate*, signified that some form of opening address was needed. While most candidates wrote an introduction which included a greeting to their audience of peers and a brief outline of the purpose of their speech, others did not acknowledge the audience. Stronger responses demonstrated a clear opening, establishing the purpose of the debate. Levels of formality varied, with most opting for the more informal 'Hello' and 'Welcome everyone,' thereby addressing the audience, while some candidates incorporated some use of less formal language such as 'y'all'

Most candidates were able to offer ideas about why one should travel forward or back in time, and some chose to conclude by supporting one side of the argument. Reasons to visit the past were varied, perhaps reflecting some of the candidates' interests, and included: witnessing historic events such as WWII, the Great Depression, and the Boston Tea Party; watching record breaking sporting events; discovering more about dinosaurs, such as whether they had feathers. Many suggested seeing old friends or relatives who had died, while others mentioned how you could now 'ace' your assignments. A few candidates mentioned stopping tragedies occurring, such as 9/11. Reasons to travel to the future were not quite so diverse, but included: to see if the world does still exist or whether humanity has been taken over by AI/robots/aliens; to meet their future self to see if they were successful; to marvel at new technology (such as 'the iPhone 150').

Stronger responses recognised both the physical and moral implications of changing the past or knowing the future, and many included mentions of the 'butterfly effect.' They provided further context for the debate before moving onto some of the arguments and reasons for travelling back to the past or forward to the future. Stronger responses provided some specific examples to engage the audience; if travelling to the past, these included being able to see the Beatles live in concert, or to witness the 'election of Lincoln' and the 'glory of the Roman Empire', while examples for travelling to the future included seeing 'improvements in health care' and the impact of AI intelligence/technological advancements, including 'flying cars.' Concluding comments were apparent on stronger responses, with closing sentences such as 'Sit tight and listen,' and 'Quite a hard choice, is not it?'

Weaker responses were often limited in scope and repetitive. Many weaker speeches were short, often under 200 words, and therefore lacked in development of ideas. Some said what the debate motion was, introduced the speakers from the two sides and then wrote no more, without creating a sense of interest. Some did not address their role in starting a debate, launching straight into their own thoughts on the topic, while others spent a lot of time introducing the debate, describing the school and welcoming the audience rather than engaging with the topic. Many weaker responses would have been improved with greater attention to structure, often having been written without any paragraph breaks.

Weaker responses were also often hampered by grammatical errors, for example in sentence construction, missing words and spelling, as in this example: 'Another side of the argument is why should we travel back to the past if we allready what happen in it why should you keep on fustating your self with the past, if we can travel foward and see the bright future, which is a bright as the sun.'

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

Fror most candidates, performance on this question was generally the weakest for the paper. One approach that worked well for some candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation 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 and explaining the effect on the audience. However, most responses were limited in detail and did not provide evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

Most candidates who produced stronger responses approached this question in one of two ways, each of which proved to be successful: addressing form and structure, going through the content of the speech and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. Stronger responses included a range of features, such as anaphora and hypophora, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave precise examples and attempted to analyse how the writer's stylistic choices related to audience and shaped meaning, for example: 'I decided to personify the future in a simile. The future is like a caring mother that we can not delaying knowing, given the chance [(sic)]. This simile appeals to the ethos of my audience, who can relate with the image of a nurturing mother.'

Quite a lot of candidates demonstrated the ability to select particular words and phrases they had used and to begin some analysis of their choices, but few got beyond a limited level of analysis, sometimes including inaccurate terminology, as in this extract: 'The writer makes it clear that the speech is in first person point of view by using first person pronouns such as "us", "we", "our" and "you". The writer uses these words to make it clear that the person giving the speech is speaking to his audience. The reader is able to interpret from the writer the sense of inclusion letting the audience feel appreciated and united together.'

Weaker responses sometimes showed an ability to identify some basic language and structural features, but less so in terms of analysis. Some candidates attempted analysis but used general phrases such as, 'I used rhetorical questions to keep the audience engaged. They helped the readers think as they listened.' They often wrote very short or general answers without adequate analysis of effects. Incorrect terminology was also common. There were many examples of candidates paraphrasing the text of their speeches or focusing solely on structure, with little or nothing on language. Some candidates listed linguistic features without providing supporting evidence. Other responses were extremely short, sometimes under 100 words, and in some case the question was not attempted.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Magazine article

In class, you have been discussing whether all museums should be free. You have decided to write an article on the topic, which will be published in your school magazine. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many candidates presented a balanced argument on the advantages and disadvantages of charging a fee to enter museums. Some candidates seemed to have knowledge of the intricacies of running a museum and

used that to inform their writing. Many articles had a title and some included subheadings. Most candidates wrote in the form of an article, with some appreciation of the need for a formal or semi-formal register. Candidates explored a range of arguments on either side, some more successful than others, some with a deep sense of passion. Some candidates employed headings such as: 'Is History breaking the bank?'

In stronger responses, arguments were developed clearly, offering quite convincing reasons on both sides of the discussion. These candidates often structured their articles by providing the pros and cons before offering a clear point of view that effectively wrapped up their discussions. Many stronger responses included subheadings as a way of directing the reader's interest and included solutions which added depth, as opposed to a string of issues without resolution. Others provided clear, focused topic sentences for each paragraph. Interesting ideas included that as we pay for cinemas we should pay for museums, and that museums are educational and we claim education is for free. Some provided mature arguments as to the lack of feasibility of the impact of free entry on budgets; equally, some candidates argued ethically for the idea of free museums and how this would positively impact on educational experiences.

Weaker responses tended to be limited in scope or overly focused on one issue, such as one which spent too long discussing the cost of plumbing issues and the consequent need to increase ticket prices. Some candidates stated an opinion but limited their discussion to a few simple ideas, for example that, if museums were free, overcrowding would inevitably lead to damage and breakages of valuable artefacts. Frequent errors, poor organisation and weak expression impeded many responses.

Question 3 – Review

Last summer, you did a two-week course to learn a range of water sports. You decide to write a review of the course, which will be published on an activity holiday website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

The strongest responses to this question were those which combined descriptive elements and details with some evaluation of the facilities, staff and prices, as well as utilising the review form effectively. Some of these responses addressed the problem of having the advantage of top-quality facilities and instruction but also considered the high costs involved. Many weaker responses to this question were short, sometimes fewer than 400 words.

Stronger responses showed clear understanding of the features of a review, adopting a suitable, credible voice and register that facilitated some sophisticated expression and, sometimes, some humorous touches appropriate to an activity holiday website. They offered evaluative comments on the venue, the standard of accommodation, the course costs and administration, the instructors, the equipment and the food provided. They wrote clear reviews of the pros and cons of the course, highlighting what was offered and whether they were fit for purpose. Headings and subheadings were often used, providing a clear structure for the review. Paragraphing was clear, with each paragraph often beginning with a topic sentence to guide the reader through the review. For example, one candidate opened their second paragraph like this: 'Though I am oozing with positive things to say regarding this course, let me begin with the less exciting details.' Stronger reviews ended clearly with a summative paragraph and a clear conclusion, such as in this example: 'The staff, equipment, structure and overall quality of the course is well worth any amount of money, but it makes it that much better that this two-week immersive experience is only $250. Please sign up if you enjoy the water. I guarantee it will change your life for the better!'

Many weaker responses merely recounted the writer's experiences on the course, such as writing about the weather and the friends they made, and many wrote a concluding paragraph that did or did not recommend the course. Some weaker responses tended to list the activities rather than review them, for example: 'We could surfboard, wakeboard, swim, water polo, waterskiing – all these things were offered on the course.' Other weaker responses described rather than reviewed, for example: 'The waves were lapping at the boat and I felt the sun on my face', or digressed into irrelevant factors like personality clashes among those attending. Some weaker responses often fixated on some minor detail, such as the provision of snacks on the course, rather than concentrating on the substantial issues that a genuine review would want to cover for its readers, such as value for money, quality of customer service and availability of equipment. Many weaker responses lacked paragraphs and other organisational devices and had frequent errors of various kinds, including lack of control of sentence structure. For example, one candidate wrote, 'The first day it was a very welcoming day everyone got along well including the staff which you do not see very often. We got to know eachother first where we were from, how old we were, and what made us want to join. Also with a fun fact of us, of course, that can never miss out.'

Question 4 – Descriptive piece

Write a descriptive piece called *The Square*, about a town square at sunrise. In your writing, focus on colour, light and movement to help your reader imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many candidates used a narrative frame in their responses to this question. The wording of the question was quite specific with the focus being *a town square at sunrise*. Many candidates overlooked *sunrise*, and this oversight produced some less focused and engaging pieces of writing.

In stronger responses, candidates had taken a wide variety of approaches to the task. Examples included a character seated in the square at sunrise, noting gradual changes in light with an increase in sound and movement. This proved to be a successful approach, engaging the reader, allowing for detail, with conscious choices of vocabulary. Conscious crafting of language, utilising suitable and well-chosen lexis, was a strength in some good descriptions. One candidate described a fountain *'washing the night away in a wave of warmth and light.'* To capture movement, candidates included early morning shop keepers and market holders setting up their stalls for the day. Detailed descriptions were an element of the majority of stronger responses. For example, a simple but clearly imagined detail was described by one candidate: 'There were kids of all ages; their words filled the previously empty air, but still talking about nothing.' Other details, such as 'the dragon flies dart around the square, their wings rapidly fluttering with a sense of haste' demonstrated clear focus on the imagined scene. Sustaining the present tense successfully sometimes enabled higher-level attainment, for example: 'The sun stretches out rays that look like thin, long, luminous arms swaying around you. Since you're under the willow, its leaves encapsulate you. It feels private; the colours and light exist only for you.'

Some weaker responses demonstrated a struggle to organise the description and many candidates used minor or incomplete sentences. Quite a large number had trouble with verb tenses, often switching back and forth between present and past, while others wrote a narrative piece which contained a limited amount of description of colour, light and movement. Narration was common amongst weaker responses, with dialogue between shopkeepers and customers. In many such responses, descriptive content tended to be limited as narrative details dominated. Some weaker responses mechanically listed features of light, sound and movement rather than incorporating them into the piece of writing, such as in this example: 'The shops were bright and clourful [(sic)]. No noise or movement as they were closed'. Some wrote about the journey to the town square for much of their answer so that the directly relevant material only began late in the response. A large number focused mostly on colour, often of the sunrise, buildings or flowers. On occasion this was effective, but often resulted in lists of colours and tones that became rather stilted to read. Some weaker responses simply included lots of adjectives, such as 'the pale-skinned, handsome boy stood by tall, bushy, green trees.' Some responses were not restricted to the sunrise and described how the square changed throughout the day. Like the other *Section B* responses, many weaker responses lacked paragraphs and contained frequent errors of various kinds, including lack of control of sentence structure. For example, one candidate wrote, 'The people began to gather and see what a mess was left. Their assumptions becoming reality. The only color left was that in the sky. The most beautiful sunrise the town had ever seen.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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 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. 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. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions are to write the text for your *first blog entry*, to create a *sense of enthusiasm* and to *encourage others to take part*.

- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is an essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.

- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences with less variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Responses are often weaker where candidates have lost control of grammar in attempting to write in long, complex sentences. One error that 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. One error which occurred with some regularity was a lack of capital letters for proper nouns and to start sentences.

- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one 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 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 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

A number of 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 attempt **Question 1(b)**. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of *Section B*, which was either short or less linguistically accurate, possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger responses focused clearly on the question, consisting of blog entries which were both engaging and encouraging; they were clearly the first entry of the blog and enticed the reader to return to the blog for more details in later posts. Weaker responses addressed the issue but tended to describe the walks without creating enthusiasm or addressing their audience. Candidates should

avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the task; the guidance of *no more than 400 words* means candidates are being guided to provide a purposeful, succinct response.

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, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly or entirely on content and therefore provided minimal analysis by indirectly outlining the structure of the **1(a)** response.

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

Weaker responses on *Section B* generally lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some reviews in **Question 2** were simple accounts of the boat trip, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion. Some responses to **Question 3** lost focus on the formality required of the letter and became repetitive, with the same points made several times rather than offering a selection of relevant points, while some **Question 4** responses were mainly narrative rather than descriptive.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You are taking part in a fitness challenge which involves walking 10 000 steps every day. You have decided to write a blog about the 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 the challenge and encourage others to take part too.**

Most responses were written in an appropriate blog format, with a suitable tone and address to the audience. Some candidates chose to include blog conventions such as dates, links and hashtags. There was generally good awareness of typical features of a blog, although the informal style did prompt some overly informal use of language, with some incomplete sentences and a lack of accurate sentence demarcation. A great many candidates described both the physical and mental difficulties they experienced doing the challenge and they gave ideas about how they managed the challenge, such as breaking it up into short walks throughout the day, walking to places instead of driving, or starting with fewer steps and building up. Some described how they stayed motivated, such as walking to the coffee shop or walking with friends and then having brunch, or because they were in a competition for some prize money. In some instances, candidates exceeded the 400-word limit due to overlong introductions with an unnecessary amount of detail regarding the rules of the challenge. However, some well written responses were too brief, as positive advice and positive language were missing.

Stronger responses engaged the audience of the blog from the outset, for example: 'Hello everyone! I'm back and I'm feeling better than ever! It is currently the third day of my 10,000 steps challenge.' They sometimes took on a persona which gave them a different viewpoint on the subject, for example an adult or parent outlining ways in which extra paces might be incorporated into a busy working schedule. They used a degree of anecdotal material to reflect the blogger's commitment to the challenge and the degree of change in the level of fitness. This change was sometimes successfully reflected through a contrast in language. For example, one candidate wrote of the 'gruesome, exasperating' challenge which then became 'a breeze', a 'walk in the park' and a 'delight'. An enthusiastic tone to encourage others was evident in these more focused responses, such as in this concluding paragraph: 'So, what are you waiting for? I reckon all of you, my followers, are capable of beating this 60-day challenge. I'll be looking forward to seeing the metal that you're made of!' This enthusiasm was often seen in simple sentences such as 'You can do this!' and 'Join me, friends, for this gruelling challenge!' Field specific lexis related to sport trickled through the writing with references to 'playlists' 'step counters' and 'fit bits' along with puns and catchy phrases, for example, 'Glow and grow', and 'Fitness Frenzy' were used as headings. One candidate added a poetic touch with, 'nothing is more refreshing than a morning jog under the glistening morning sky before a day of revitalising exercise.'

Weaker responses often lacked paragraphs and other organisational devices. Some tended to lack focus on the part of the rubric which asked candidates to encourage others to take part in the challenge, giving too much attention to relaying the woes of the challenge and body image. Some blogs lacked enthusiasm for the challenge and did not encourage others to take part, with only a token, 'I do highly encourage people to try it' appearing in many responses. Content was sometimes unconvincing or undeveloped, with some unrealistic claims about the type of athleticism required to walk 10,000 steps, and the number of miles or kilometres the distance covered. Many weaker responses took too long to get to the focus of the question, the challenge itself, creating lengthy expositions leading up to their decision; this resulted in a lack of concision and focus. Weaker responses were also often hampered by grammatical errors, for example in punctuation, sentence construction and spelling, as in this example: 'At first It seemed unrealistic to me like "how can one walk 10000 steps a day"? Ubelievable! but belief me I choose to take up the challenge, I went and bought the most comfortable shoes and clothes for walking.'

(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 some candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation 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 entry and explaining the effect on the audience. However, most responses were limited in detail and did not provide evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

Most candidates who produced stronger responses approached this question in one of two ways, each of which proved to be successful: addressing form and structure by going through the blog's content and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. Stronger responses included a range of features in their responses, such as anaphora and hypophora, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave precise examples and analysed how the writer's stylistic choices related to audience and shaped meaning, using terminology to enhance their analysis, for example: 'Moreover, my blog also utilises a metalinguistic approach with words such as "bingeable" and "funk", as a form of sociolect that is likely to appeal to a younger, fitter audience. This is often accompanied by different lexical fields to create tonal shifts. For example, at the start of the entry, a negative lexical field of struggle and pain is evident, with words such as "cramps", "ache", "crushed" and the adverb "begrudgingly".' Other stronger responses considered linguistic choice, purpose and audience in an integrated way. For example, one candidate wrote: 'My blog begins by addressing the audience as "fitness fanatics" and "couch potatoes" – contrasting metaphors which immediately grab the attention of the reader. The phrase "buckle up comrades" creates excitement because usually people are told to buckle their belts before doing something fun, such as riding a rollercoaster. The noun "comrades" connotes an inclusive unity.'

Weaker responses sometimes demonstrated an ability to identify some basic language and structural features but showed more difficulty with analysis. Frequently, candidates included more obvious points, such as, 'I wrote in paragraphs: to break up the text, so the reader knew to expect a new topic.' Some candidates listed linguistic features without providing supporting evidence: 'I used hyperboles, metaphors and verbs', 'I used yours faithfully at the end of the email', 'I did a good job', 'I didnt [(sic)] write too much as the reader would get bored'. Often, there was little attempt to explain how a technique's use furthered the writer's purpose, other than making vague assertions about keeping the reader interested or to connect with the reader. Such candidates often wrote very short answers or very general answers, listing lots of features but without adequate analysis of their effects. Incorrect terminology was also common. There were also many examples of candidates paraphrasing their speeches or focusing solely on structure with little or nothing on language. Other responses were extremely short, sometimes under 100 words, and in some case the question was not attempted.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

Last weekend, you went on a boat trip in your local area, which was organised by a new tourism company. You decide to write a review of the trip, which will be published on a travel website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

The review form was generally understood and evaluative lexis used to an extent by most candidates. The strongest responses to this question were those which combined descriptive elements and details with some evaluation of the facilities, staff and prices, as well as utilising the review form effectively. Some of these responses addressed the problem of having the advantage of top-quality facilities and knowledgeable tour guides while also having the high costs involved.

Stronger responses established form, subject and purpose from the outset. For example, one candidate engaged the audience in the opening paragraph through imagery and word play: 'Delta Tours' boat trips are exactly what you would expect from a scruffy, tropical seaport: old, rusty nautical gear, stolen signposts and dilapidated wooden decking underfoot. When my tour advisor suggested we try out a new tourism company advertising, "the gnarliest boat tours on the Atlantic," I should have expected something fishy. But no amount of briefing could have prepared me for this floating fiasco.'

Stronger responses showed clear understanding of the features of a review, adopting a suitable, credible voice and register for a travel website. They offered evaluative comments on the venue, the standard of the boat, the costs, the guides, the scenery and the food provided. They wrote clear reviews of the pros and cons of the boat trip, highlighting what was offered and whether they were fit for purpose. Headings and subheadings were often used, sometimes starting with a heading incorporating the name of the company, for example, 'Eyes of wonder' and 'Wet and wild!' Many reviews felt authentic and sounded genuinely enthusiastic, such as in this example: 'I did not want this marvellous river trip to end. The flamboyant fish, towering trees and massive mountains framing the scenic view provided a five-star experience.' Paragraphing in stronger responses was clear, with each paragraph often beginning with a topic sentence to guide the reader through the review. For example, one candidate opened their fourth paragraph like this: 'Although the staff were exceptional, the snacks provided were of a mediocre standard.' Such stronger responses ended clearly with a summative paragraph and a clear conclusion, such as in this example: 'I would never recommend this tour to anyone. I experienced nothing but disappointment, mismanagement and incompetence all round. Mauritian madness indeed!'

Many weaker responses recounted the details of the boat trip in detail but included few elements of a review. Some weaker responses read like a straight narrative account of the trip, rather than a review of an experience. Weaker responses sometimes provided details of the journey to the harbour, being greeted by the captain on arrival and the accommodation and food provided, but needed more focus on the boat trip itself. Other candidates merely described their experiences on the boat trip, such as writing about the weather and the friends they made, and wrote a brief concluding paragraph that did or did not recommend the trip. Some weaker responses fixated on some very minor detail, such as the provision of snacks on the trip, rather than concentrating on the substantial issues that a genuine review would want to cover for its readers, such as value for money, quality of customer service and the places visited. Many weaker responses lacked paragraphs and other organisational devices, and contained frequent errors of various kinds, including lack of control of sentence structure. For example, one candidate wrote, 'Last weekend I decided to go on a boat trip in the local area which oraganised by a new tourism company and I have decided to write a review about this trip to show the pros and cons of this trip but this would be based on my experience but it may also be different to yours.'

Question 3 – Letter

You recently read a newspaper article which said that young people should get jobs after leaving school, rather than go to university. You decide to write a letter to the editor, in response to this article, giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Successful letters were well organised, got straight to the point and used discourse markers effectively. A large majority of responses were appropriately formal and were generally in agreement with the newspaper article. Many candidates chose to include fictitious statistics or quotes from experts to prove their points; generally these were quite sensible and believable.

Most stronger responses acknowledged the article in their opening address and many candidates created quotations from the imagined article in order to develop their opinions, for example: 'Your article insists that getting a temporary job before going to university increases the chances of getting a permanent job after graduation. However, research has shown that in fact the opposite is true.' Those who referenced the article in detail gave various reasons for agreeing with the statement in the prompt, while other candidates justified the contrasting viewpoint, some using sophisticated expression, as demonstrated in this extract, achieved using carefully chosen discourse markers, sentence structure, punctuation, lexis, register and tone: 'Although I agree that perhaps not everyone should attend university, it is simply not beneficial to encourage the entire generation to simply skip the process. Additionally, I believe that this message instils into the youth a false narrative that university is useless or that all career paths are available without it, which is not the case.'

Stronger responses demonstrated an ability to produce reasonable, balanced arguments on the issues raised in the article. In addition, rather than making bold assertions, some candidates presented their ideas effectively using moderators such as 'many', 'may' 'could'. For example, one candidate wrote: 'Moreover, young people could have the freedom to experiment with different careers without having to commit to one field. Many universities do not give young people the opportunity to discover their real passions. Getting a job may enable a young person to learn more about that field and if it is as good fit for them.'

Weaker responses often demonstrated a minimal attempt at text organisation, with inaccurate sentence demarcation errors further affecting coherence. Such candidates seemed to struggle with conveying many relevant ideas and some seemed to go off track very easily, resulting in a rant to the editor, often in an inappropriate tone and register for an amateur writer addressing a professional insider. Several writers seemed to break out of their role with unexpected bluntness, such as in these two examples: 'I hope you consider this information as well as receive it well' and, 'I hope you have a great day further and I hope hear back from you [(sic)]. Kind regards.' Many responses contained frequent errors of various kinds, including lack of control of sentence structure. For example, one candidate wrote, 'Many people wish for these jobs, its evident when they say, "i want to be a doctor" or "i want to be an engineer" these careers and many others reqire higher education for many years.'

Question 4 – Descriptive piece

Write a descriptive piece about a factory in the middle of a working day. In your writing, focus on the sound, light and movement in the factory to help your reader imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many candidates used a narrative frame in their responses to this question. The wording of the question was quite specific, with the focus being the 'middle of the working day', which was overlooked by some candidates who described a full working day shift, or early morning in a silent factory. These descriptions did contain relevant content but lacked precision and depth of detail. Specificity helped engage the audience in a number of responses, where candidates identified a particular type of factory and production, for example a shoe factory, a chocolate factory or a car factory.

Stronger responses took a wide variety of approaches to the task. Examples included taking a factory tour and a speaker's first day working at the factory, so the shock of the new was very much determining their perspective. Such specific approaches gave those answers an integrity and cohesion that some of the others lacked. Some of the most successful used an extended metaphor, such as a symphony or a beehive, to develop their response. This sometimes proved to be a successful approach, engaging the reader and allowing for detail, with conscious choices of vocabulary. Conscious crafting of language, utilising suitable and well-chosen lexis was a strength in many good descriptions. One candidate described the workers thus: 'Like bees in a hive, they buzz from table to table and machine to machine. Loud snippets of conversation fill the factory, before they scatter to their original positions to resume their intensive labour.'

Detailed descriptions were an element of the majority of stronger responses. For example, one candidate described the factory workers: 'The workers, pale and lifeless, begin their robotic movements as the machines sputter and whirr. Everything except for the items on the conveyors is filthy. The machines grind and gnash their gears, locking up due to a buildup of oil, dust and metal fragments.' Other details, such as the concentration of workers in a car factory, were equally effective: 'Their orange rectangular toolboxes and tools are littered everywhere around them. Some of the workers are bent over an open hood, their faces contorted in contemplation over where the next piece to their mechanical puzzle will go. The more artistic mechanics sport masks and aprons with paint spray guns in hand, moving steadily and smoothly.'

Some weaker responses showed a struggle with text organisation and many candidates used minor or incomplete sentences. Quite a large number had trouble with verb tenses, often switching back and forth

between present and past, while others wrote a narrative piece which contained a limited amount of description of sound, light and movement. Narration was common in weaker responses, with some including a lot of dialogue between factory workers; in such responses, descriptive content tended to be limited as narrative details dominated. Some candidates mechanically listed features of sound, light and movement rather than incorporate them into the piece of writing, such as in this example: 'The benches were grey and boring. It was noisy and people were moving everywhere.'

Some candidates who produced weaker responses wrote about the journey to the factory for much of their answer, so that the directly relevant material only began later in the response. A large number focused mostly on colour, often of the workers or of the products being made in the factory. On occasion this was effective, but often resulted in lists of colours and tones that became rather stilted to read. Some weaker responses simply added lots of adjectives, such as 'the old, pale, tired man worked at a grey, dull, crowded bench'. Some responses were not restricted to the middle of the working day but described how the factory changed throughout the day. As in the other *Section B* responses, many weaker responses lacked paragraphs and contained frequent errors of various kinds, including spelling and lack of control of sentence structure. For example, one candidate wrote: 'Staring out into the overveiw of the factory; The enless sea of machinary and workers. Everything becomes clear and in perspective. We are all the same working for someone else weather you are working for a boss or you are the boss we all slowly kill ouselfs to survive.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23
Writing Paper 23

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 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. 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. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions are to write the text for your **email to the editor**, giving **reasons to support your opinion.**

- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is an essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.

- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences with less variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Responses are often weaker where candidates have lost control of grammar in attempting to write in long, complex sentences. One error that 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. One error which occurred with some regularity was a lack of capital letters for proper nouns and to start sentences.

- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one 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 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 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

A number of 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 attempt **Question 1(b)**. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or less linguistically accurate, possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger responses focused clearly on the question, writing engaging emails, stating clear opinions on the given topic. Weaker responses did not adhere to appropriate form and did not refer to the newspaper article. Candidates should avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the task; the guidance of *no more than 400 words* means candidates are being guided to provide a purposeful, succinct response.

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, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly or entirely on content and therefore provided minimal analysis by indirectly outlining the structure of the **1(a)** response.

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

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some reviews in **Question 2** were simple descriptions of the website's contents, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion, some responses to **Question 3** did not create a sense of drama or suspense, and some **Question 4** responses lost focus on the formality required of the essay and became repetitive, with the same points made several times rather than offering a selection of relevant points.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

You recently read a newspaper article which said that people spend far too much time and money shopping these days. You decide to write an email to the editor, in response to this article, giving your opinion.

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

Successful emails were well organised, got straight to the point and used discourse markers effectively. A large majority of responses were appropriately formal and were generally in agreement with the newspaper article. Many candidates chose to include fictitious statistics or quotes from experts to prove their points; generally these were quite sensible and credible.

Stronger responses engaged the audience through a range of effectively illustrated arguments in support of a particular view on shopping. Some of the issues raised included e-shopping/e-commerce, the role of Influencers and celebrity endorsement, social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram, and the pervasiveness of 'shopping culture', capitalism and consumerism. Candidates sometimes took on a persona which gave them a different viewpoint on the subject, for example a parent defending three teenage offspring or a low wage worker. Most stronger responses acknowledged the article in the opening address and many candidates created quotations from the imagined article in order to develop their opinions, for example: 'Your article stated, "Young people shop like moths to a flame." I disagree strongly and current research backs me up.' Those who referenced the imagined article in detail gave various reasons for their opinions, mostly agreeing with the statement in the prompt, such as in this candidate's thoughtful consideration of the impact of clothes shopping on a global scale: 'So how does the world maintain this global demand for clothing? Fast fashion. Companies like "Shein" completely take advantage of workers in other countries that have weaker laws to protect citizens and create sweatshops to produce masses of horrible quality items and clothing, while paying workers merely cents per garment. This results in huge profits for CEOs while workers suffer and consumers continue to purchase items to blend in with the latest trend.'

Weaker responses listed what had been stated in the article and tended to be brief. For example, one candidate highlighted that 'the total time spent shopping in a year was a good thing to write'. Another wrote a very limited response, stating several simple points such as, 'I do not think spending time and money on shopping are bad, instead I think it's really good and enjoying.' Weaker responses often demonstrated a minimal attempt at text organisation, with no paragraphing and inaccurate sentence demarcation further affecting coherence. Such candidates seemed to struggle with conveying many relevant ideas and some went off track very easily, resulting in a rant to the editor, often in an inappropriate tone and register for an amateur writer addressing a professional insider. Many weaker responses contained frequent errors of various kinds, including lack of control of sentence structure; for example, one candidate wrote: 'I could say

that most people shopping are just for themselves. No matters it's to upgrade ourselves, or just like the moment of spending money, it's all acceptable.'

(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, Explanation 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 email and explaining the effect on the audience. However, some responses were limited in detail and failed to provide evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

Most candidates who produced stronger responses approached this question in one of two ways, each of which proved to be successful: addressing form and structure by going through the email's content and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. Stronger responses included a range of features, such as anaphora and hypophora, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave precise examples and analysed how the writer's stylistic choices related to audience and shaped meaning, using terminology to enhance the analysis, for example: 'Low frequency lexis is used in conjunction with the formal register to solidify the formality of the piece and come across as well informed and educated. Words like "valiant", "alienate", "blunder", "intrinsic" and "inclusivity" are examples of this.' Other stronger responses considered linguistic choice, purpose and audience in an integrated way. For example, one candidate wrote: 'Throughout the email, the writer establishes an extended metaphor for capitalism comparing it to an insect. The writer uses vocabulary such as "blood sucking mosquito". The writer also uses vocabulary such as "greedy", "weird", "leeches", "chains" to create a semantic field of oppression surrounding the concept of capitalism to show how it is influencing consumers' mental health and wasting valuable time and money.'

Weaker responses sometimes demonstrated an ability to identify some basic language and structural features, but showed more difficulty with analysis. Frequently, candidates included more obvious points, such as: 'I wrote in paragraphs: to break up the text, so the reader knew to expect a new topic.' Some candidates merely listed linguistic features without supporting evidence: 'I used many similes, adjectives and verbs', 'I used yours faithfully at the end of the email', 'I used a lot of first person of speech because it is an opinion'. Often, there was little attempt to explain how a technique's use furthered the writer's purpose, other than making vague assertions about keeping the reader interested or to connect with the reader. Such candidates often wrote very short answers or very general answers, listing lots of features but without adequate analysis of their effects. Incorrect terminology was also common. There were also many examples of candidates paraphrasing their speeches or focusing solely on structure with little or nothing on language. Other responses were extremely short, sometimes under 100 words, and in some case the question was not attempted.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

A news website aimed at teenagers has recently been set up, and you have been looking at it. You decide to write a review of the news website, which you will post on your blog. Write between 600 and 900 words.

A good level of imagination was used to respond to this question. The review form was understood and sustained evaluation, with appropriate lexis, was produced by most candidates. Most responses were clear and effective, with the best responses showing very effective use of a wide range of technical language. The strongest responses to this question were those which combined descriptive elements and details, demonstrating clear understanding of how news should be presented to a target audience of teenagers.

Stronger responses established form, subject and purpose from the outset. These responses showed clear understanding of the features of a review, adopting a suitable, credible voice and demonstrated a very strong sense of audience and skilful use of the blog form to write a review of a news website. Several candidates structured the blog entry using very effective subheadings. For example, one candidate used sub-headings which included 'Accessibility and Navigation' and 'Appearance and Appeal for Teenagers'. The candidate began the latter paragraph effectively: 'The website, I have to admit was a bit much. While it was sleek and the content itself was perfect, the colours were far too bright. Come on. Neon pink and yellow? This is not

2001.' Such stronger responses were well structured with an appropriate degree of informality for a blog. New websites were given titles such as 'Teen Talk Today', 'Got news.com', and 'News for YOUth'. The casual style, frequent use of personal and second-person pronouns, which were typically evident in stronger responses, made for quite credible responses.

Paragraphing in stronger responses was clear, with each paragraph often beginning with a topic sentence to guide the reader through the review. For example, one candidate opened two of their paragraphs with these topic sentences: 'I found the content itself to be rather frivolous and trivial' and, 'Putting aside my gripes with content, I have to admit that this site is very well designed.' Such stronger responses ended clearly with a summative paragraph and a clear conclusion, such as in this example: 'I believe this site works well for entertainment, but is probably not the best and most constructive place to spend your energy. One thing I can say for sure is you do not want to be getting your politics from there!'

Many weaker responses focused almost entirely on design aspects of the website. A few candidates misread the question and reviewed a 'new' website aimed at teenagers, with no focus on 'news'. Other weaker responses recounted the details of the contents of different sections of the website, usually in some detail, but included few elements of a review, while some were organised into several brief sections with only simplistic review comments. Some weaker responses lacked paragraphs and other organisational devices and had frequent errors of various kinds, including spelling and punctuation. For example, one candidate wrote, 'Overall the webize is quite blance and structured, I would ask for a search system personally but consider its in starting stage, it's far from bad.'

Question 3 – Story

Write a story called *Fake* about a person who is not who they claim to be. In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

There were some highly creative responses and impressive structuring and use of complementary narrative devices. Creating a convincing character was often key to a story's success, particularly if a narrative viewpoint was then adopted. For example, there were stories of a deposed emperor who then posed as a merchant before being found out and executed, and of a person being replaced by their reflection, which began intriguingly: 'One day my reflection climbed out of my bathroom mirror.' Some candidates chose unusual and engaging settings for their narratives, along with more unusual cases of fake identity. One was set in a prison camp and one in an Antarctic science lab, where scientists were researching strange geothermal happenings. There were some unexpected endings to entertain the reader and some narratives reminiscent of the Alfred Hitchcock genre of horror films. The short story form was not always strictly adhered to, with some candidates opting for cliff hanger endings. However, there were quite a lot of stories which seemed to suggest a belief that the darker the story is, the better it is. There were several twisted stories with soulless fake characters who killed and maimed many victims.

Stronger responses often engaged the reader from the first sentences, as seen in these two openings: 'The room is dark, only a small part of the mirror lit by the tiny candle place beside it. Day 568 without a home, without a true identity, without a true name'; 'I worked the usual 9 to 5. Big Office. Downtown, Cubicle and all. Everything was great in the city. That is, until he arrived.' More engaging and successful responses focused on feelings of confusion and in some cases panic as the narrator tried to make sense of the person who was not who he claimed to be, as in this response where the narrator found himself alone in the classroom with a mysterious student: 'As he locked eyes with me, I found I was unable to move. I sat there for what felt like hours, the world narrowing to only him and the thumping of my heart.' Strong responses tended to spend time establishing setting and character. Setting was often ominous and dark; more effective responses achieved this through imagery, such as, 'The door made a horrible death wheeze as it creaked open.' Additionally, showing the character's feelings and reactions, such as in 'A familiar stab shoots through my stomach as I feel my hands get clammy', rather than merely stating them is what separated the stronger responses from the rest.

Some of the weakest responses had plots which were too complex and hard to follow. Other responses lacked coherence and structure when trying to achieve the necessary withholding of information needed to create suspense. Other stories were very simple cases of mistaken identity which did not achieve a sense of drama or suspense. In addition, some weaker responses failed to use paragraphs as tools to effectively create the required atmosphere of drama and suspense. Some weaker responses were incomplete, lacking a convincing ending; some responses followed tropes such as waking up from a dream. Errors which hampered the effectiveness of many responses tended to be centred in grammatical frameworks, with a significant number of candidates making tense and sentence demarcation errors throughout their responses. Another common error was the sudden switching of narrative voice without intention; this frequently took the

form of a third-person to first-person switch as the candidate became more involved in their story. Punctuation of direct speech was also often weak.

Question 4 – Essay

Your class has just had a debate on whether health or happiness is more important in life. Your teacher has now asked you to write an essay on the topic. Write between 600 and 900 words.

The majority of candidates who answered this question discussed the issue in a balanced way, offering arguments to support each side of the debate. Most candidates were confident with the discursive essay form, paragraphed their essays clearly and used a formal or semi-formal register.

Stronger essays were clearly planned and written with logically arranged paragraphs and discourse markers. The question prompted some interesting discussion points which were successfully conveyed by some candidates who argued that health and happiness are 'intertwined'. Stronger responses clearly stated a viewpoint in the opening, and then proceeded to develop this point. Such essays had a clear and focused introduction with an established point of view, for example: 'Both health and happiness are related.' One candidate simply argued that 'Keeping healthy makes you happy – keeping a smile makes you healthier.' Such effective openings with clear statements lead to discussions of ways to stay healthy which in turn brings happiness, or as one candidate preferred to call it, 'a state of gradual contentment which arises more as you get older'. Stronger responses argued that happiness is a 'state of being' and often 'momentary'.

Weaker responses tended to reveal a struggle to write 600 words of relevant content. Some essays contained too many statistics, with detailed and convoluted definitions, and others were purely based on autobiographical material about personal struggles for happiness. Some candidates who produced weaker responses had attempted to cover too much ground, separating physical health from mental health and happiness from unhappiness, with numerous examples given in each case. The result was confusion and contradiction. Other weaker responses were not composed in the correct form and the essay nature of the task was substituted for something more resembling an article, with a headline and subheadings. The occasional less confident candidate lost the thread of argument and counterargument to contradict themselves until a final conclusion suddenly emerged in the last paragraph. Responses with no evidence of a plan tended to be weaker.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

| Paper 9093/31 |
| Language Analysis |

Key messages

In Paper 3, the main requirement in both of the compulsory questions is for responses to contain analytical findings drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas should be evidenced throughout by data selected from the texts supplied. Furthermore, points raised should contain references to the relevant area of wider study of the topic.

General comments

Responses tended to be briefer than in previous sessions, meaning that ideas often remained undeveloped. At times, irrelevant material was presented; candidates should be aware that focus on the question should be the backbone of the analysis.

Clearer or more effective responses were sustained and provided, at times, insightful references to a wide variety of theories and theorists. Control and clarity of expression was generally clear to effective, with some sophisticated use of technical terminology.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *Language change*

The question required candidates to refer to Texts A, B and C in their analysis of how the texts exemplified the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. Text A was an extract taken from a description of a hospital for disabled and retired soldiers, published in 1695; Text B was a word table containing collocates for 'kettle' and 'pot' from the British National Corpus (1980s–1993), and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the items *boiled*, *boyled* and *boyl'd* (1650–1700).

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Writing

Most responses were appropriately paragraphed into a logical sequence of ideas. An appropriate register was usually maintained, although there were some lapses into colloquialism at times. The main problem seen in basic or limited responses was that there were insufficient ideas presented, leaving the work undeveloped.

More thorough analysis was seen where responses moved through a series of linguistic frameworks, such as graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, syntax, pragmatics, etymology, semantics or morphology. It is not a requirement to refer to all of these frameworks, but those responses which used some of them as an organisational tool retained a linguistic, analytical stance which was not seen in more generalised work. Technical terminology was used with ease and accuracy in effective or sophisticated responses, whilst those described as basic or limited used only general descriptors to label data selected from the text.

Conceptualisation

Most responses opened effectively by succinctly setting Text A on a timeline of historical influences. Weaker responses occasionally provided irrelevant material by describing the change over time in the English language from the Roman invasion of Britain to contemporary technological influence such as the invention of the internet.

Overall, responses made reference to plausible examples of linguistic models and approaches. These included advancements in printing technology since Caxton, Jesperson's notion of the Great Vowel Shift, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Lexical Gap models, Bandura et al's Cultural Transmission and Hockett's Random Fluctuation. These models and approaches were seemingly well-known and at times were applied thoroughly.

Chen's S-Curve model, Crystal's Tide and Aitchison's Crumbling Castle metaphors were applied to an extent, although often these were merely mentioned in passing to support commentary on Text C. Therefore, references remained incomplete or insubstantial, as were those to the concepts of prescriptivism and descriptivism.

Lesser used but still plausible scholarship included John Hart's Capitalisation of Nouns and the pathway to standardisation. The concepts of narrowing, broadening, amelioration and pejoration caused confusion at times and these labels were often misapplied in basic or limited responses.

Data handling

There were attempts to cite the terms used in Texts B and C as they appeared in Text A. Many responses also made comment on the time period of Text A by comparing it to the periods included in Texts B and C. This approach was effective in more confident work as the analyses became cohesive.

Conversely, basic or limited responses tended to analyse the three texts separately and in their order of appearance in the question paper. Where this approach was seen, it was usually Text C which drew very little commentary, although most responses did attempt some analysis of all three texts as required.

Limited responses attempted to translate lexical items and phrases into contemporary English. Although such an approach demonstrated understanding of the data to an extent, it did not provide depth to the analysis. However, many responses plausibly noted that the contemporary lexeme 'perk' derives from Text A's *perquisite* and linking this to the tendency to abbreviate and informalise over time, according to Goodman.

Text A's presentation of the medial S and capitalisation of nouns drew much commentary, as might have been expected as there were so many examples to be cited. Basic or limited responses described both of these features as 'random', which was incorrect. A further common error was to consider that each of the lexemes provided in the glossary at the base of Text A are 'no longer in use', as was frequently stated. Candidates should be aware that often, definitions are provided to assist understanding of low frequency items and it is incorrect to assume that all have become obsolete.

Clear responses were sustained by consideration of Text A's presentation of time, for example in *Ten a Clock*, semantic shift in *garniſh,* and vowel epenthesis in *soupe.* At times, there was also clear, effective or even sophisticated syntactical analysis of phrases such as *it is ordered* ... or pragmatic shift in levels of formality as in as *they reckon it; but here it is otherwiſe*.

Question 2 – Child language acquisition

The question required candidates to analyse three short transcriptions, referring to specific details. Extracts 1 and 2 were transcriptions of conversations between Dylan and Isaac (both age 5 years), who were playing with their friend Jayden at school. Extract 3 was a transcription of a conversation between Isaac and his headteacher. Candidates needed to support their analyses with examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

Understanding

Overall, there was clear understanding of the interactive nature of each brief conversation. Candidates who produced basic or limited responses spotted features, most of which related to items in the transcription key. Although feature-spotting can be credited to an extent, candidates should be aware that responses should demonstrate understanding of how and why features are used by the interlocutors according to age, stages of acquisition or levels of caretaking responsibility – the latter illustrated in November 2023 by the role of the headteacher.

Some basic responses attempted a chronological paraphrase of the stimulus material rather than selecting any characteristic features. In some basic responses, confusion was seen where there had been an expectation for the interlocutors to 'use better punctuation', with comments indicating that the child interlocutors were 'behind' in their language acquisition because there was no punctuation used. Candidates should prepare for Question 2 by gaining knowledge and understanding of the conventions of Conversation Analysis.

Clearer or more effective responses analysed competence in turn-taking, fulfilled adjacency pairs, conditional clause (for example in *if you dont let me play rough games then i will never EVER invite you to my party again*), levels of politeness, and a wide range of prosodic features including rising and falling intonation, raised and lowered volume, and emphasis to signify their feelings.

Conceptualisation

In November 2023, only a limited range of theoretical models and approaches was used to support ideas. Often, these were only mentioned briefly and in some basic or limited responses they were not applied to the analysis.

Most candidates identified the child interlocutors as being in the post-telegraphic stage of acquisition, although there was some confusion in basic or limited responses which indicated that the boys remained in the telegraphic stage.

Most frequently seen were references to one or more of Halliday's seven functions. Candidates should be aware that these are functions of language and not stages of acquisition, although generally the representational function, as in *im freezing cold*, the regulatory function as in *you just stay here,* and the personal function as in *i WANT to* were correctly identified and labelled.

Skinner, Bruner and Chomsky were usually cited relevantly, although in basic or limited responses there was some confusion as to the relevant stage of the child interlocutors according to Piaget. Clearer or more effective work demonstrated evidence of deep reading into the transcriptions in order to analyse whether the boys might remain in Piaget's preoperational stage or whether they might be emerging into his concrete operational stage. Evidence selected for such approaches included *one day could you choose me.*
It was felt at times that more thorough referencing to a wider range of theoretical models and approaches could have made responses more effective, perhaps including study of Bellugi, Aitchison or Dore. However, there was some clear reference to how the headteacher assumed the role of Vygotsky's More Knowledgeable Other.

Data handling

The headteacher's child-directed speech was apparent in her questioning, use of pause and monosyllabic lexis, all of which drew some clear commentary. Responses also usually detailed the ways in which she used positive reinforcement as part of Skinner's notion of operant conditioning.

In consideration of the child interlocutors' utterances, basic or limited responses tended to describe 'grammar mistakes' rather than virtuous errors and frequently used Isaac's *how i been good* or his *i be kind to everyone* to take a deficit approach when analysing his use of tenses, even though he uses present continuous in *im freezing* and also incorporates a contraction in that utterance.

Most responses attempted analysis of *will you please make ourselves a deal* indicating that Isaac's use of *ourselves* was a grammatical error. However, effective responses made further analysis of this phrase to identify his grasp of modality, politeness, the future aspect and phonological competence in the difficult /lvz/ consonant cluster. A similar deficit approach was taken in consideration of Dylan's *please can you play fighting* ↘*,* where a perceived grammatical error was identified though not fully explained in basic or limited responses.

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Overall, responses could have been improved by a greater selection of data for analysis and by deeper reading of the transcriptions. Instead of describing what the child interlocutors had not yet achieved in the acquisition of language, it could have been more fruitful to organise the response into a framework of competencies, such as use of conditionals, contraction, negation, prosody, interrogation and command, for example.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/32
Language Analysis

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Key messages

In Paper 3, the main requirement in both of the compulsory questions is for responses to contain analytical findings drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas should be evidenced throughout by data selected from the texts supplied. Furthermore, points raised should contain references to the relevant area of wider study of the topic.

General comments

In general, responses were sustained, meaning that levels of development were clear overall. At times, however, irrelevant material was presented; candidates should be aware that focus on the question should be the backbone of the analysis.

At times, there was insightful references to a wide variety of theories and theorists. Control and clarity of expression was generally clear to effective, with some sophisticated use of technical terminology.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *Language change*

The question required candidates to refer to Texts A, B and C in their analysis of how these texts exemplified the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. Text A comprised extracts from *The History of Mansfield,* written by a journalist and historian called William Harrod, published in 1801. Text B was a word table of the top ten collocates for 'furnishing' from the Early English Books Corpus (1470s–1690s) and the British National Corpus (1980s–1993), and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for *excepting*, *except for* and *with the exception of* (1780–2000). Candidates were further required to support their analysis with ideas and examples from their wider study of language change*.*

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Writing

Most responses were appropriately paragraphed into a logical sequence of ideas. An appropriate register was usually maintained, although there were some lapses into colloquialism at times. Discourse markers were used appropriately except where 'Although' tended to be used in place of 'However', giving rise to dysfluency.

Overall, thorough analysis was seen where responses moved through a series of linguistic frameworks, such as graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, syntax, pragmatics, etymology, semantics or morphology. It is not a requirement to refer to all of these frameworks, but those responses which used some of them as an organisational tool retained a linguistic, analytical stance which was not seen in more generalised work. Those analyses which were organised according to this approach usually worked through graphology and lexis with some exploration of grammar in *is situate*. Effective or insightful responses made a more thorough inspection of levels or formality and syntactical structures in phrases such as *had the curiosity to taste thereof and pronounce it to be ...*.

Technical terminology was used with ease and accuracy in effective or sophisticated responses, whilst responses found to be basic or limited included only general descriptors to label data selected from the text.

Conceptualisation

Most responses opened effectively by succinctly setting Text A on a timeline of historical influences deemed to have caused change. However, basic or limited responses occasionally provided irrelevant material by describing the change over time in the English language from the Roman invasion of Britain to contemporary technological influence such as the invention of the internet. Such accounts were generally included as one or even more introductory paragraphs and had clearly eaten into much of the examination time. Fewer examples of this type of approach were seen in November 2023 than in previous sessions, however, and there were also fewer repetitious conclusions.

Overall, responses made reference to plausible examples of linguistic models and approaches. These included advancements in printing technology since Caxton, Jesperson's notion of the Great Vowel Shift, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Lexical Gap models, Bandura et al's Cultural Transmission and Hockett's Random Fluctuation. These models and approaches were seemingly well-known and at times were applied thoroughly.

Chen's S-Curve model, Crystal's Tide and Aitchison's Crumbling Castle metaphors were applied to an extent, although often these were merely mentioned in passing to support commentary on Text C. Therefore, references remained incomplete or insubstantial, as were those to the concepts of prescriptivism and descriptivism.

The contact to standardisation continuum appeared well known, although some responses needed to focus more clearly on the later pathway to standardisation, given the date of publication of Text. A. The concepts of narrowing, broadening, amelioration and pejoration caused confusion at times and these labels were often misapplied in basic or limited responses.

Data handling

There were attempts to cite the terms used in Texts B and C as they appeared in Text A. Many responses also made comment on the time period of Text A by comparing it to the periods included in Texts B and C. This approach was effective in more confident work as the analyses became cohesive.

Conversely, basic or limited responses tended to analyse the three texts separately and in the order of their appearance in the question paper. Where this approach was seen, it was usually Text C which drew very little commentary, although most responses did attempt analysis of all three texts as required. Moreover, basic or limited responses tended to generalise descriptions of the grammatical items in Text C. Furthermore, misreading was sometimes demonstrated in basic responses where consideration of 'accepting' was discussed in place of *excepting*.

Limited responses attempted to translate lexical items and phrases into contemporary English. Although such an approach demonstrated understanding of the data to an extent, it did not provide depth to the analysis. However, candidates engaged well with Text B, with many correctly identifying the narrowing of the lexical item *furnishing*. Surprisingly, not many identified the collocation with *ships* or *fleet*, which could have drawn historical or sociological commentary. There were some interesting discussions on Text A's short versions of *tho'* and *altho'*, where responses mirrored this with the same shortened use of the lexemes due to contemporary technological influences. More effective responses supported these claims with reference to Goodman's notion of Informalisation.

Compounding was frequently seen in Text A and some thorough accounts of that process were provided, with *Moot-Hall* and *Leeming-Lane* often used as examples.

A common error was to consider that each of the lexemes provided in the glossary at the base of Text A are 'no longer in use', as was frequently stated. Candidates should be aware that often, definitions are provided to assist understanding of low frequency items and it is incorrect to assume that all have become obsolete. Lexemes from Text A which were incorrectly identified as obsolete were *fretting, tepid, saline* and *limpid*.

Question 2 – Child language acquisition

The question required candidates to analyse a transcription of a conversation between Tyree (age 4 years) and his mother. They were further required to refer to specific details from the transcription, and to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

Understanding

Overall, there was clear understanding of the interactive nature the conversation. Candidates who produced basic or limited responses spotted features, most of which related to items in the transcription key. Although feature-spotting can be credited to an extent, candidates should be aware that responses should demonstrate understanding of how and why features are used by the interlocutors according to age, stages of acquisition or levels of caretaking responsibility – the latter illustrated in November 2023 by the role of the mother.

Most responses analysed at least some of the following characteristic features in the Tyree's utterances: competence in turn-taking, fulfilled adjacency pairs, use of the singular first-person pronoun *me* in the object position combined with *i* in the subject position, second person object pronouns, negation, prosodic features including rising and falling intonation, raised and lowered volume and emphasis, and/or conditionals.

Conceptualisation

In November 2023, a smaller range of theoretical models and approaches was used to support ideas than had been seen in previous sessions. At times, these were only mentioned briefly and in some basic or limited responses they were not applied to the analysis.

Most candidate's identified Tyree as having arrived at the post-telegraphic stage of acquisition, although there was some deliberation as to whether he remained in the telegraphic stage given the brevity of some of his utterances. The real key to accurate positioning of Tyree into a stage of acquisition lay in his final utterance: *you give me a high five and i'll tell you*, where his competencies included complexity of clauses joined by conjunction, imperative, contraction and ability to use language in play or to tease – none of which would appear in the telegraphic stage.

A number of Hallidayan functions were identified in analyses of Tyree's utterances, which included the representational function in *i just heard a noise*, his regulatory *be quiet*, the personal function in *i like daddy* and the imaginative function in <u>*be a tractor*</u>.

Tyree's age was usually used to identify which of Piaget's cognitive development stages he had reached although there was some confusion in basic or limited responses over which stage was most appropriate, even though his egocentric utterance *mummy you ask me a question* pointed to the preoperational stage.

Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device was frequently referenced, although not always thoroughly, with Tyree's omission of certain grammatical items, for example in *tractor dont have work*. Basic or limited responses merely described such instances as 'mistakes', whereas clearer work demonstrated understanding of the concept of virtuous error.

The mother's use of child-directed speech was discussed by most candidates in terms of her scaffolding according to Bruner and Vygotsky. Her attempts to bring Tyree into a Zone of Proximal Development as described by Vygotsky, notably in *you want to drive a tractor or you want to be a tractor* ↘ were considered in some responses, but commentary became unfocused in attempts to draw conclusions on this aspect of Vygotsky's Constructivist theory. The mother's recasts, for example in *you like to play cars*, were attributed to Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System and further to Skinner's notion of operant conditioning as part of his Behaviourism.

Data handling

Overall, responses could have been improved by a greater selection of data for analysis and by deeper reading of the transcription. In November 2023, there was greater reliance on describing theoretical models and approaches than there was on analysis of the transcription. To an extent, such an approach was plausible as most of the marks for Question 2 are awarded through AO4. However, candidates should bear

in mind that identification of characteristic features must be evidenced by selections from the transcription, and that citations of theoretical models and approaches are to be used as support for ideas – not the other way round.

At times, a deficit approach was presented. Instead of describing what the child interlocutor had not yet achieved in his acquisition of language, it could have been more fruitful to organise responses into a framework of competencies, such as use of conditionals, contraction, negation, prosody, interrogation and command, for example.

Nonetheless, Tyree's phonological competence drew some detailed analysis in effective or even sophisticated responses. Mainly, however, it was said that he was making 'mistakes' or that his vocal folds were not yet sufficiently developed to achieve full utterances. Nonetheless, Tyree's */dʒɪmnæstəs/* was scrutinised by some in terms of voiced fricative, consonant cluster, substitution or deletion in a sophisticated manner at times. Further phonological analysis of /tweɪn/ revealed substitution of the rhotic phoneme, with some accurate labelling.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

> **Paper 9093/33**
> **Language Analysis**

Key messages

In Paper 3, the main requirement in both of the compulsory questions is for responses to contain analytical findings drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas should be evidenced throughout by data selected from the texts supplied. Furthermore, points raised should contain references to the relevant area of wider study of the topic.

General comments

Responses tended to be briefer than in previous sessions, meaning that ideas often remained undeveloped. At times, irrelevant material was presented; candidates should be aware that focus on the question should be the backbone of the analysis.

Clearer or more effective responses were sustained and provided, at times, insightful references to a wide variety of theories and theorists. Control and clarity of expression was generally clear to effective, with some sophisticated use of technical terminology.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *Language change*

The question required candidates to refer to Texts A, B and C in their analysis of how the texts exemplified the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. Text A was an extract taken from a description of a hospital for disabled and retired soldiers, published in 1695; Text B was a word table containing collocates for 'kettle' and 'pot' from the British National Corpus (1980s–1993), and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the items *boiled*, *boyled* and *boyl'd* (1650–1700).

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Writing

Most responses were appropriately paragraphed into a logical sequence of ideas. An appropriate register was usually maintained, although there were some lapses into colloquialism at times. The main problem seen in basic or limited responses was that there were insufficient ideas presented, leaving the work undeveloped.

More thorough analysis was seen where responses moved through a series of linguistic frameworks, such as graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, syntax, pragmatics, etymology, semantics or morphology. It is not a requirement to refer to all of these frameworks, but those responses which used some of them as an organisational tool retained a linguistic, analytical stance which was not seen in more generalised work. Technical terminology was used with ease and accuracy in effective or sophisticated responses, whilst those described as basic or limited used only general descriptors to label data selected from the text.

Conceptualisation

Most responses opened effectively by succinctly setting Text A on a timeline of historical influences. Weaker responses occasionally provided irrelevant material by describing the change over time in the English language from the Roman invasion of Britain to contemporary technological influence such as the invention of the internet.

Overall, responses made reference to plausible examples of linguistic models and approaches. These included advancements in printing technology since Caxton, Jesperson's notion of the Great Vowel Shift, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Lexical Gap models, Bandura et al's Cultural Transmission and Hockett's Random Fluctuation. These models and approaches were seemingly well-known and at times were applied thoroughly.

Chen's S-Curve model, Crystal's Tide and Aitchison's Crumbling Castle metaphors were applied to an extent, although often these were merely mentioned in passing to support commentary on Text C. Therefore, references remained incomplete or insubstantial, as were those to the concepts of prescriptivism and descriptivism.

Lesser used but still plausible scholarship included John Hart's Capitalisation of Nouns and the pathway to standardisation. The concepts of narrowing, broadening, amelioration and pejoration caused confusion at times and these labels were often misapplied in basic or limited responses.

Data handling

There were attempts to cite the terms used in Texts B and C as they appeared in Text A. Many responses also made comment on the time period of Text A by comparing it to the periods included in Texts B and C. This approach was effective in more confident work as the analyses became cohesive.

Conversely, basic or limited responses tended to analyse the three texts separately and in their order of appearance in the question paper. Where this approach was seen, it was usually Text C which drew very little commentary, although most responses did attempt some analysis of all three texts as required.

Limited responses attempted to translate lexical items and phrases into contemporary English. Although such an approach demonstrated understanding of the data to an extent, it did not provide depth to the analysis. However, many responses plausibly noted that the contemporary lexeme 'perk' derives from Text A's *perquisite* and linking this to the tendency to abbreviate and informalise over time, according to Goodman.

Text A's presentation of the medial S and capitalisation of nouns drew much commentary, as might have been expected as there were so many examples to be cited. Basic or limited responses described both of these features as 'random', which was incorrect. A further common error was to consider that each of the lexemes provided in the glossary at the base of Text A are 'no longer in use', as was frequently stated. Candidates should be aware that often, definitions are provided to assist understanding of low frequency items and it is incorrect to assume that all have become obsolete.

Clear responses were sustained by consideration of Text A's presentation of time, for example in *Ten a Clock*, semantic shift in *garniſh,* and vowel epenthesis in *soupe.* At times, there was also clear, effective or even sophisticated syntactical analysis of phrases such as *it is ordered* ... or pragmatic shift in levels of formality as in as *they reckon it; but here it is otherwiſe*.

Question 2 – Child language acquisition

The question required candidates to analyse three short transcriptions, referring to specific details. Extracts 1 and 2 were transcriptions of conversations between Dylan and Isaac (both age 5 years), who were playing with their friend Jayden at school. Extract 3 was a transcription of a conversation between Isaac and his headteacher. Candidates needed to support their analyses with examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

Understanding

Overall, there was clear understanding of the interactive nature of each brief conversation. Candidates who produced basic or limited responses spotted features, most of which related to items in the transcription key. Although feature-spotting can be credited to an extent, candidates should be aware that responses should demonstrate understanding of how and why features are used by the interlocutors according to age, stages of acquisition or levels of caretaking responsibility – the latter illustrated in November 2023 by the role of the headteacher.

Some basic responses attempted a chronological paraphrase of the stimulus material rather than selecting any characteristic features. In some basic responses, confusion was seen where there had been an expectation for the interlocutors to 'use better punctuation', with comments indicating that the child interlocutors were 'behind' in their language acquisition because there was no punctuation used. Candidates should prepare for Question 2 by gaining knowledge and understanding of the conventions of Conversation Analysis.

Clearer or more effective responses analysed competence in turn-taking, fulfilled adjacency pairs, conditional clause (for example in *if you dont let me play rough games then i will never EVER invite you to my party again*), levels of politeness, and a wide range of prosodic features including rising and falling intonation, raised and lowered volume, and emphasis to signify their feelings.

Conceptualisation

In November 2023, only a limited range of theoretical models and approaches was used to support ideas. Often, these were only mentioned briefly and in some basic or limited responses they were not applied to the analysis.

Most candidates identified the child interlocutors as being in the post-telegraphic stage of acquisition, although there was some confusion in basic or limited responses which indicated that the boys remained in the telegraphic stage.

Most frequently seen were references to one or more of Halliday's seven functions. Candidates should be aware that these are functions of language and not stages of acquisition, although generally the representational function, as in *im freezing cold*, the regulatory function as in *you just stay here,* and the personal function as in *i WANT to* were correctly identified and labelled.

Skinner, Bruner and Chomsky were usually cited relevantly, although in basic or limited responses there was some confusion as to the relevant stage of the child interlocutors according to Piaget. Clearer or more effective work demonstrated evidence of deep reading into the transcriptions in order to analyse whether the boys might remain in Piaget's preoperational stage or whether they might be emerging into his concrete operational stage. Evidence selected for such approaches included *one day could you choose me.*
It was felt at times that more thorough referencing to a wider range of theoretical models and approaches could have made responses more effective, perhaps including study of Bellugi, Aitchison or Dore. However, there was some clear reference to how the headteacher assumed the role of Vygotsky's More Knowledgeable Other.

Data handling

The headteacher's child-directed speech was apparent in her questioning, use of pause and monosyllabic lexis, all of which drew some clear commentary. Responses also usually detailed the ways in which she used positive reinforcement as part of Skinner's notion of operant conditioning.

In consideration of the child interlocutors' utterances, basic or limited responses tended to describe 'grammar mistakes' rather than virtuous errors and frequently used Isaac's *how i been good* or his *i be kind to everyone* to take a deficit approach when analysing his use of tenses, even though he uses present continuous in *im freezing* and also incorporates a contraction in that utterance.

Most responses attempted analysis of *will you please make ourselves a deal* indicating that Isaac's use of *ourselves* was a grammatical error. However, effective responses made further analysis of this phrase to identify his grasp of modality, politeness, the future aspect and phonological competence in the difficult /lvz/ consonant cluster. A similar deficit approach was taken in consideration of Dylan's *please can you play fighting* ↘, where a perceived grammatical error was identified though not fully explained in basic or limited responses.

Overall, responses could have been improved by a greater selection of data for analysis and by deeper reading of the transcriptions. Instead of describing what the child interlocutors had not yet achieved in the acquisition of language, it could have been more fruitful to organise the response into a framework of competencies, such as use of conditionals, contraction, negation, prosody, interrogation and command, for example.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Key messages

The question paper in November 2023 presented candidates with engaging texts which comprised the stimulus material for two compulsory questions. The topic for **Question 1** in **Section A** was *English in the world* and the topic for **Question 2** in **Section B** was *Language and the self*. Each of the two compulsory questions had 25 marks available, meaning that the question paper as a whole carried 50 marks.

Dictionaries were not permitted to be used during the examination, which had a duration of two hours and 15 minutes.

In Paper 41, the main requirement in both compulsory questions was for responses to discuss specific points drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas needed to be evidenced throughout by selecting material from the texts supplied. A further requirement was that points raised should contain references to knowledge and understanding of linguistic issues, models and approaches gained from candidates' wider study of the topic focus.

General comments

In general, responses were sustained meaning that levels of development were clear or effective overall. There was some sophisticated work, however, some irrelevant material was presented in basic or limited responses. Candidates should be aware that focus on the question should be central to any discussion.

At times, insightful references to a wide variety of theories and theorists were seen. Control and clarity of expression was generally clear to effective with some sophisticated use of technical terminology.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *English in the world*

Candidates were required to read the text *Introducing Bermudian English* which was an extract from a blog published on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) website in 2021 and then discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised by the text, with a particular focus on the changing use of English in the world. Candidates 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 Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) were applied.

Understanding

Overall, there was a clear understanding of the stimulus material when candidates presented their ideas on a number of points raised. These included discussion of the writer's opinion that the addition of Bermudian words into the dictionary is *a landmark moment for the OED* and whether Bermudian people could also consider it as a landmark for themselves and their country, the diversity of sources from which Bermudian words derive, how new *Englishes* may retain *many unique features*, any potential linguistic outcome for a nation which might be *geographically remote,* and how the Bermudian dialect is *in a category of its own.*

Basic or limited responses used only a minimum of the points above and did not demonstrate a full exploration of ideas. However, those responses seen as clear, effective or even sophisticated provided a sustained discursive essay including full commentary on the writer's arguments which, at times, were developed by thoughtful counterarguments.

Writing

In general, responses were organised into a logical sequence of ideas. Basic or limited responses were brief with lack of development or included ideas which were not directly related to the specific focus of the question which was the *changing use of English in the world.* Development in clear, effective or even sophisticated responses was achieved through creative thought on this specific focus and through succinctly providing examples of how the English language had changed over time and perhaps how it would continue to change in the future.

Control and clarity of expression was clear or effective overall. In some basic or limited responses there was a slip into colloquialism, whereas clear or effective responses maintained an appropriate register throughout. Discourse markers signalling development, or a new idea, were clear, however misuse of 'Although,' at the head of a new paragraph led to some dysfluency at times.

Effective or sophisticated responses demonstrated an ease in accurate use of technical terminology, indicating that the candidate had retained a linguistic focus throughout.

Conceptualisation

The stimulus material itself contained ideas which, on deep reading, could have provided candidates with opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and understanding gained from wider study of the language topic. In basic responses, these opportunities were not taken up. In limited responses, the concepts of borrowing (exemplified in the stimulus material by *chopse*) and the classification of *World Englishes* were discussed with some development concerning hybridisation, popular examples provided being Hinglish or Singlish. There was also discussion in basic or limited responses on colonisation although, at times, reference to historical influences overshadowed exploration of other points from the stimulus material which could have enabled a wider range of linguistic issues, models or approaches to be introduced. Appropriately succinct work on colonisation was also seen, however, supported relevantly by reference to Phillipson's notion of Imperialism.

Clear or effective responses also considered how or why some people may be *World English enthusiasts*, as described by the writer, and introduced Graddol, Crystal, McArthur's Wheel and Kachru's Circles of English. Sophisticated responses extended discussion by explaining thoughts on how Kachru's model may now be superseded by the growth of international trade, media and education in the contemporary world, and why that of McArthur might now be a more appropriate source for citation.

The concept of koineization presented difficulties in some basic or limited responses where a common misinterpretation of the stimulus material understood *koine* to be the name of the language widely spoken in Bermuda. Those responses which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of this concept, however, also introduced Kerswill, illustrating the pathway from contact to koine to support ideas.

Question 2

Candidates were required to read the text presented which was an article from *inews*, a British news website which had been published in 2021, and then discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. Candidates 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 Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) were applied.

Understanding

The stimulus material, titled *Why I'm no longer changing my Indian phrases around my white friends,* presented a number of specific points, each of which provided candidates with a springboard for discussion. These included how, in the past, the author *changed the way I'd speak around my friends* and her reasons for doing so which included how she felt *embarrassed* and *didn't want to be judged*.

Further opportunities for discussion included the author's feelings of *guilt* which had come from her own *conscious decision,* the reasons for these feelings which forced her to make changes to her speech patterns and the methods she had used to overcome this, which included making *an active effort to use Indian phrases around my white friends.*

Basic or limited responses tended to explore those points which were made by the author towards the beginning of the text provided, whereas clear, effective or even insightful responses were developed by careful consideration of the author's advice that language is a *part of us* and how and why we *need to normalise the use of phrases that come from our backgrounds.*

Writing

Most responses used an appropriate register although there were some lapses into colloquialism in basic or limited responses. It was clear in most responses that the stimulus material had been found to be engaging; indeed, there were some impassioned ideas, at times, which included occasionally relevant examples from personal experience.

There was evidence that the specific focus of the question, *ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity,* had not been observed, despite the author issuing advice on the need to *be proud of our identities, not hide away from being ourselves*. This led to the presentation of some material which was not fully relevant to the required discussion.

Some basic or limited responses merely paraphrased the stimulus material instead of making a careful selection from the ideas in the text. This approach did not demonstrate any real understanding of the text. Other limited responses tended to rely on overly long quotes taken from the text. On first sight, the impression was that such responses were reasonably lengthy. In these instances, whilst the quotes were long, the ideas were brief. Candidates should be aware that evidence from the text should be carefully selected and, to save examination time, it is acceptable to use line numbers or ellipses within quotes if the selected quote is too long to copy out.

Conceptualisation

In the stimulus material, the author had described a situation where changing her idiolect *between my community and white friends was becoming unmanageable* which provided candidates with the opportunity to discuss the generally well-known concept of code-switching.

Conceptual references to models and approaches concerning language and thought (Sapir-Whorf or Boas-Jakobson) or language of thought (Fodor) were not always made relevant to the focus of personal and social identity. More appropriate were the citations of Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory which were frequently seen in clear or effective responses. Also frequently seen were references to Grice, although these were not always fruitful.

There were some effective explorations of how Tajfel and Turner's in-group and out-group concepts regarding establishment of group identity were appropriate to the author's views, coupled with reference to less well-known theorists such as Edward Thorndike and his views on operant conditioning. Insightful responses considered performativity, citing Judith Butler or Erving Goffmann, and how this is reflected in the behaviour of the writer of the text.

There were also attempts to include the ideas of Sperber and Wilson or Milroy and Milroy's Social Network, although links were not always made between the theories and the ideas presented in the stimulus material.

Overall, a wide range of models and approaches were introduced to support ideas. These were not always thoroughly discussed, nor were they always full or accurate. Candidates should take care to read the question thoroughly before attempting a brief writing plan to ensure that any linguistic theories referenced are fully relevant to the topic focus.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42
Language Topics

Key messages

The question paper in November 2023 presented candidates with engaging texts which comprised the stimulus material for two compulsory questions. The topic for **Question 1** in **Section A** was *English in the world* and the topic for **Question 2** in **Section B** was *Language and the self*. Each of the two compulsory questions had 25 marks available, meaning that the question paper as a whole carried 50 marks.

Dictionaries were not permitted to be used during the examination, which had a duration of two hours and 15 minutes.

In Paper 42, the main requirement in both compulsory questions was for responses to discuss specific points drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas needed to be evidenced throughout by selecting material from the texts supplied. A further requirement was that points raised should contain references to knowledge and understanding of linguistic issues, models and approaches gained from candidates' wider study of the topic focus.

General comments

In general, responses were sustained meaning that levels of development were clear or effective overall. There was some sophisticated work, however, some irrelevant material was presented in basic or limited responses. Candidates should be aware that focus on the question should be central to any discussion.

At times, insightful references to a wide variety of theories and theorists were seen. Control and clarity of expression was generally clear to effective with some sophisticated use of technical terminology.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *English in the world*

Candidates were required to read the text *Introducing Bermudian English* which was an extract from a blog published on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) website in 2021 and then discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised by the text, with a particular focus on the changing use of English in the world. Candidates 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 Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) were applied.

Understanding

Overall, there was a clear understanding of the stimulus material when candidates presented their ideas on a number of points raised. These included discussion of the writer's opinion that the addition of Bermudian words into the dictionary is *a landmark moment for the OED* and whether Bermudian people could also consider it as a landmark for themselves and their country, the diversity of sources from which Bermudian words derive, how new *Englishes* may retain *many unique features*, any potential linguistic outcome for a nation which might be *geographically remote,* and how the Bermudian dialect is *in a category of its own.*

Basic or limited responses used only a minimum of the points above and did not demonstrate a full exploration of ideas. However, those responses seen as clear, effective or even sophisticated provided a sustained discursive essay including full commentary on the writer's arguments which, at times, were developed by thoughtful counterarguments.

Writing

In general, responses were organised into a logical sequence of ideas. Basic or limited responses were brief with lack of development or included ideas which were not directly related to the specific focus of the question which was the *changing use of English in the world.* Development in clear, effective or even sophisticated responses was achieved through creative thought on this specific focus and through succinctly providing examples of how the English language had changed over time and perhaps how it would continue to change in the future.

Control and clarity of expression was clear or effective overall. In some basic or limited responses there was a slip into colloquialism, whereas clear or effective responses maintained an appropriate register throughout. Discourse markers signalling development, or a new idea, were clear, however misuse of 'Although,' at the head of a new paragraph led to some dysfluency at times.

Effective or sophisticated responses demonstrated an ease in accurate use of technical terminology, indicating that the candidate had retained a linguistic focus throughout.

Conceptualisation

The stimulus material itself contained ideas which, on deep reading, could have provided candidates with opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and understanding gained from wider study of the language topic. In basic responses, these opportunities were not taken up. In limited responses, the concepts of borrowing (exemplified in the stimulus material by *chopse*) and the classification of *World Englishes* were discussed with some development concerning hybridisation, popular examples provided being Hinglish or Singlish. There was also discussion in basic or limited responses on colonisation although, at times, reference to historical influences overshadowed exploration of other points from the stimulus material which could have enabled a wider range of linguistic issues, models or approaches to be introduced. Appropriately succinct work on colonisation was also seen, however, supported relevantly by reference to Phillipson's notion of Imperialism.

Clear or effective responses also considered how or why some people may be *World English enthusiasts*, as described by the writer, and introduced Graddol, Crystal, McArthur's Wheel and Kachru's Circles of English. Sophisticated responses extended discussion by explaining thoughts on how Kachru's model may now be superseded by the growth of international trade, media and education in the contemporary world, and why that of McArthur might now be a more appropriate source for citation.

The concept of koineization presented difficulties in some basic or limited responses where a common misinterpretation of the stimulus material understood *koine* to be the name of the language widely spoken in Bermuda. Those responses which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of this concept, however, also introduced Kerswill, illustrating the pathway from contact to koine to support ideas.

Question 2

Candidates were required to read the text presented which was an article from *inews*, a British news website which had been published in 2021, and then discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. Candidates 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 Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) were applied.

Understanding

The stimulus material, titled *Why I'm no longer changing my Indian phrases around my white friends,* presented a number of specific points, each of which provided candidates with a springboard for discussion. These included how, in the past, the author *changed the way I'd speak around my friends* and her reasons for doing so which included how she felt *embarrassed* and *didn't want to be judged*.

Further opportunities for discussion included the author's feelings of *guilt* which had come from her own *conscious decision,* the reasons for these feelings which forced her to make changes to her speech patterns and the methods she had used to overcome this, which included making *an active effort to use Indian phrases around my white friends.*

Basic or limited responses tended to explore those points which were made by the author towards the beginning of the text provided, whereas clear, effective or even insightful responses were developed by careful consideration of the author's advice that language is a *part of us* and how and why we *need to normalise the use of phrases that come from our backgrounds.*

Writing

Most responses used an appropriate register although there were some lapses into colloquialism in basic or limited responses. It was clear in most responses that the stimulus material had been found to be engaging; indeed, there were some impassioned ideas, at times, which included occasionally relevant examples from personal experience.

There was evidence that the specific focus of the question, *ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity,* had not been observed, despite the author issuing advice on the need to *be proud of our identities, not hide away from being ourselves*. This led to the presentation of some material which was not fully relevant to the required discussion.

Some basic or limited responses merely paraphrased the stimulus material instead of making a careful selection from the ideas in the text. This approach did not demonstrate any real understanding of the text. Other limited responses tended to rely on overly long quotes taken from the text. On first sight, the impression was that such responses were reasonably lengthy. In these instances, whilst the quotes were long, the ideas were brief. Candidates should be aware that evidence from the text should be carefully selected and, to save examination time, it is acceptable to use line numbers or ellipses within quotes if the selected quote is too long to copy out.

Conceptualisation

In the stimulus material, the author had described a situation where changing her idiolect *between my community and white friends was becoming unmanageable* which provided candidates with the opportunity to discuss the generally well-known concept of code-switching.

Conceptual references to models and approaches concerning language and thought (Sapir-Whorf or Boas-Jakobson) or language of thought (Fodor) were not always made relevant to the focus of personal and social identity. More appropriate were the citations of Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory which were frequently seen in clear or effective responses. Also frequently seen were references to Grice, although these were not always fruitful.

There were some effective explorations of how Tajfel and Turner's in-group and out-group concepts regarding establishment of group identity were appropriate to the author's views, coupled with reference to less well-known theorists such as Edward Thorndike and his views on operant conditioning. Insightful responses considered performativity, citing Judith Butler or Erving Goffmann, and how this is reflected in the behaviour of the writer of the text.

There were also attempts to include the ideas of Sperber and Wilson or Milroy and Milroy's Social Network, although links were not always made between the theories and the ideas presented in the stimulus material.

Overall, a wide range of models and approaches were introduced to support ideas. These were not always thoroughly discussed, nor were they always full or accurate. Candidates should take care to read the question thoroughly before attempting a brief writing plan to ensure that any linguistic theories referenced are fully relevant to the topic focus.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/43
Language Topics

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Key messages

In November 2023, the question paper presented candidates with engaging texts which comprised the stimulus material for two compulsory questions. The topic for **Question 1** in **Section A** was *English in the world* and the topic for **Question 2** in **Section B** was *Language and the self*. Each of the two compulsory questions had 25 marks available, meaning that the question paper, as a whole, carried 50 marks.

Dictionaries were not permitted to be used during the examination, which had a duration of two hours and 15 minutes.

In some responses, there was evidence that attempts had been made to analyse the linguistic or literary features of the stimulus material. Candidates should note that this approach is not required in Paper 43 as the mark scheme cannot credit material which is not relevant. The requirement in Paper 43 is to produce discursive work which explores the ideas presented by the stimulus material and not the language it contains.

In Paper 43, the main requirement in both of the compulsory questions was for responses to discuss specific points drawn from the stimulus material. Ideas needed to be evidenced throughout by selecting material from the texts supplied. A further requirement was that points raised should contain references to knowledge and understanding of linguistic issues, models and approaches gained from candidates' wider study of the topic focus.

General comments

Overall, responses were thoughtfully sustained, meaning that levels of development were clear or effective. Some sophisticated work was seen at times, which drew together specific points raised in the stimulus material, creative thought from the candidate and full and accurate citation of relevant theoretical models and approaches. Occasionally, some irrelevant material was presented in basic or limited work. Candidates should be aware that focus on the question should always be central to any discussion.

At times, insightful references to less well-known theories and theorists were seen, indicating individual research into the topic. Control and clarity of expression was generally clear to effective with some sophisticated use of technical terminology.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1 – *English in the world*

Candidates were required to read the text, *When English is not your mother tongue*, which was an article from *Nature*, an online scientific journal, and then discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised relating to the present and future status of English in an international context. Candidates 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 Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) were applied.

Understanding

Overall, there was a clear understanding of the stimulus material demonstrated as candidates presented their ideas on a number of points raised. These points included the text's illustration of the dominance of the English language in science and how this dominance *streamline(s) the process of science, but it also creates extra barriers and the potential for conflict.* Responses outlined how and why *English speakers have become the gatekeepers of science* using the text's example of the Chinese language lacking *much of the vocabulary that's needed to describe physical science.*

Developed work included discussion of the perceived notion that a *lack of ability to speak clearly in English is often perceived as a lack of ability to think clearly about science* with the result that globally we might be *missing out on a lot of perspectives and a lot of good research* or we *could be losing some really smart minds.*

Further issues considered in the text included the necessity to embrace linguistic diversity, with the opposite notion that *having a single global language of science makes the whole endeavour more efficient* presenting candidates with the opportunity for counterargument.

Basic or limited responses used only a minimum of the points above and did not demonstrate a full exploration of ideas. However, those responses seen as clear, effective or even sophisticated provided a sustained discursive essay including full commentary on the writer's arguments which, at times, were developed by thoughtful consideration.

Writing

All but basic or limited responses were organised into a logical sequence of ideas. Basic or limited responses were brief, indicating lack of development, or included ideas which were not directly related to the specific focus of the question which was *the present and future status of English in an international context.* Development in clear, effective or even sophisticated responses was achieved through creative thought on this specific focus and by succinctly explaining how the English language is positioned in the contemporary world and whether, and if so how, that position was likely to shift.

Control and clarity of expression was clear to effective overall. In some basic or limited responses there was a slip into colloquialism, whereas clear or effective responses maintained an appropriate register throughout. Discourse markers signalling development, or a new idea, were clear. Misuse of 'Although,' at the head of a new paragraph led to some dysfluency at times. Effective or sophisticated responses demonstrated an ease in accurate use of technical terminology, indicating that the candidate had retained a linguistic focus throughout.

Conceptualisation

In November 2023, a very wide range of linguistic issues, models and approaches were cited in relation to ideas sourced from the stimulus material. Although basic or limited responses mentioned one or two theories or theorists, sometimes not fully accurately or relevantly, other clear or effective responses gave a full account of Scheider's Dynamic Model.

Knowledge and understanding of how technological advancement might assist scientists in whom English is not their first language was seen in most responses, taking the idea from the stimulus material that *native English speakers probably think that Google Translate can solve everything.* Responses which acknowledged that *the technology isn't there yet* went on to include ideas concerning artificial intelligence and the influence it may have on English used in scientific papers in the future. Moreover, some responses indicated that the lack of reliable translation software promoted linguistic imperialism which provided the opportunity to introduce Phillipson. Extended discussion on technologically influenced linguistic concepts also referenced Crystal, McCulloch, or Ostler on the implications of universal translation.

The concept of English as a lingua franca was also widely discussed with some insightful referencing to Phillipson's metaphorical models of the Young Cuckoo or Lingua Frankensteinia. Pakir and Graddol's Killer Language was also well-known but development on the concept of language death was not always fully developed.

Most responses demonstrated knowledge of Kachru's Circles of English. Clear or effective work took issue with the model, explaining how it now may be outdated and referred to McArthur's Wheel or the paradigm suggested by Galloway and Rose as being more relevant to the issues presented in the stimulus material.

Question 2 – *Language and the self*

Candidates were required to read the text *Updating our words can drop barriers, open us to new ideas,* which was an article from the Canadian newspaper, *The Province*, published in 2020. Candidates were further 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 how individuals think, and to refer to specific details as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 10 marks), 2 (Writing – 5 marks) and 4 (Conceptualisation – 10 marks) were applied.

Understanding

The stimulus material presented a number of specific points, each of which provided candidates with a springboard for discussion. These included the suggestion that Merriam-Webster's choice of 'they' as the word of the year *reflects growing social recognition of gender diversity* and the opposing view of *critics* who *called it a bid 'to control people's behaviour and speech'.*

Development was made in consideration of how and why *omitting and redefining words can be a tool of oppression to prevent critical thinking* together with ideas on ways in which *new ways of thinking about ourselves* may be achieved.

Discussion on the author's view that *updating our vocabulary also can free us to consider new ideas* was countered by examples of why *we should be wary of how we change language.* In clear to effective responses there was development seen in work which explored how and why *evolving our vocabulary also can tear down walls* by *making us aware of offensive words we take for granted*. This latter idea was not only supported by the obvious example of the change to the Canadian national anthem presented at the beginning of the stimulus material, but by other examples gained from some candidates' personal experience.

Writing

Most responses used an appropriate register with very few lapses in tone. It was clear that the stimulus material had been found to be engaging as most responses to **Question 2** were more sustained than those to **Question 1**. Discourse markers were generally used accurately to signal development or to introduce a new idea and essays were usually organised into a logical, fluent sequence.

However, there was evidence that the specific focus of the question, *the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think,* had not been observed. This led to some material being presented which was not fully relevant to the required discussion, particularly in relation to conceptual examples.

Some basic or limited responses merely paraphrased the stimulus material instead of making a careful selection from the ideas in the text. This approach did not demonstrate any real understanding of the text, however. Other limited responses tended to rely on overly long quotes taken from the text. On first sight, the impression was that such responses were reasonably lengthy. However, where the quotes were long, the ideas were brief. Candidates should be aware that evidence from the text should be carefully selected and, to save examination time, it is acceptable to use line numbers or ellipses within quotes if the selected quote is too long to copy out.

A linguistic standpoint was maintained in responses which demonstrated an accurate use of technical terminology, particularly when discussing the relative merits of the concept of epicene.

Conceptualisation

The stimulus material, in its consideration of how *human languages have constantly changed and evolved* provided the opportunity for discussion on how and why the *evolution of language is the evolution of humanity.* Where this opportunity was taken up - and in some cases where the statement: *there is no reason in the world not to change* was scrutinised - explanations of descriptivism and prescriptivism were offered. Although these concepts were relevant to the discussion, more accurate and complete referencing could have included the specific views of Crystal, Aitchison or Honey.

The author's views on language change led some candidates to provide irrelevant information on the evolution of the English language specifically rather than language influencing the growth of humanity. Such

irrelevant information included the influence of the Roman and Viking invasions of Britain, the pathway to standardisation and the industrial revolution. Deep reading of the text could have prevented any misconceptions of the author's intention.

Conceptual references to models and approaches concerning language and thought (Sapir-Whorf or Boas-Jakobson) or language of thought (Fodor) were directly relevant to the focus of the ways in which language influences the way people think. Also relevant and appropriate were citations of Kramarae's Muted Group theory which were frequently seen in clear or effective responses.

As the stimulus material had included ideas taken from Orwell's *1984*, many responses considered how, if not why, redefinition of works can lead to oppression. However, some insightful responses gave a sophisticated account of how cryptolect can provide its users with covert prestige or even – as with transition of Multicultural London English into Urban British English, for example – overt prestige.

The issue of political correctness was widely discussed, although references could have been made more complete by introducing Pinker's Euphemism Treadmill. In basic or limited responses there was recourse to genderlect theories from Lakoff, Tannen, Cameron or Jesperson, although links were not always made between the theories and the ideas presented in the stimulus material.