

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/11
Reading and Writing (Core)

Key messages

Generally there was a good understanding of the rubric for each exercise. Where marks were lost, it was often through careless reading of the question. Throughout the paper words are highlighted to help candidates and to allow them to focus closely on the texts. This is particularly the case in Exercises 1–5, where precise reading of each question is most important as a first step to providing a successful answer.

Centres are reminded that spelling and precise detail are essential requirements for Exercise 3, the form-filling exercise. Words which appear in the text are all too often misspelt when completing the form. In Exercise 3C, where two sentences are required, too few candidates scored full marks. These two sentences must both contain accurate information and be properly constructed. If the candidate writes three sentences, only the first two will be considered. Where only one sentence is offered, a maximum of half the marks can be awarded, even if all the correct information is there and correctly spelt and punctuated.

The text to Exercises 4 and 5 was usually well understood, although the rubric to the first half of Exercise 4 was sometimes misunderstood. The second half of the exercise was completed more successfully. In Exercise 5 the 70 word limit was well observed. Centres are asked to emphasise to candidates that this exercise requires a cohesive paragraph which extends and develops the notes from Exercise 4. Candidates who listed their notes without any attempt to link them in a coherent manner were prevented from achieving full marks in this exercise.

Both Exercises 6 and 7 were found to be accessible by nearly all the candidates. Exercise 6 was better attempted and there were some imaginative and entertaining reasons given for the day closure of the school. Many were able to express themselves in an appropriate register using suitable language and tone for a letter to a friend. Exercise 7 proved more challenging and many candidates relied heavily on the prompts offered on the question paper. It should be emphasised that higher marks are given to those who are able to use the stimuli offered and to develop them further by introducing some ideas of their own. Simply staying with the given prompts can only earn marks up to those in the middle band.

General comments

Once again the majority of candidates were correctly entered and well prepared for this level. They were able to respond confidently to many of the wide range of tasks set in this paper. There was just a small number who scored particularly highly and who could arguably have benefited from being able to demonstrate their ability at the extended tier.

The paper offered a range of tasks within each exercise, requiring the candidate to show a number of practical skills, from scanning to identify detail and to express this as a short answer or in note form, to the more complex demands of writing at greater length in a summary, a letter and a discursive article.

Most candidates were able to complete all questions in the allotted time. If any exercise was omitted, it was usually Exercise 3C, Exercise 5 or, if time had run out, Exercise 7. It was rare indeed that both Exercise 6 and Exercise 7 were left unanswered.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

This exercise provided a good start and many achieved full marks. It should be stressed here that the responses to the questions should be brief and that extensive lifting from the text should be avoided.

- (a) Incorrect answers usually gave the name of the capital city, 'Kuala Lumpur', and not the country, 'Malaysia', which was the required answer.
- (b) There were many correct answers. Incorrect answers were usually responses lifted from the sentence which followed in the text and described instead the consequences if the climber slipped.
- (c) Those who gave incorrect answers had matched the keyword in the question 'grip' with gripping window ledges. A more precise reading of the question was needed here. 'What?' and 'carry' were the important words in the question.
- (d) In this question the key words were 'when?' and 'start'. The sentence in the text with the correct response contained two time phrases, 'in darkness' and 'at dawn'. Thus 'start' was the key word for the response and if 'dawn' was offered in response, it had to be written as 'before dawn'.
- (e) Most candidates gave good answers, but some did not equate 'failed to climb' in the question with 'stopped by security guards halfway through the climb' in the text. In this case 'three times' was the answer given and it was incorrect.
- (f) A great majority of candidates were able to connect key question words with the items in the text. This was arguably the most straightforward question on the paper.

Exercise 2

With the exception of the last three questions, which separated the weaker from the stronger candidates, many found the exercise within their capability.

- (a) If the mark was lost, it was because the candidate had failed to answer both parts of the question – 'what?' and 'when?' As a response to the question 'when?', 'last September' was the detail required.
- (b) Again this question contained two elements, for both of which the numbers had to include the appropriate units, '0.8 metres' and '1.5 kilograms'.
- (c) Most candidates managed at least one of the two marks available for this question, though there was extensive lifting from the text.
- (d) The great majority of candidates were able to respond correctly to this question on the graph.
- (e) Once again there were very few wrong answers. There was good matching by candidates of 'popular with television viewers' in the question and 'attract big audiences to television programmes' in the text.
- (f) This proved to be a discriminating question. The most common mistake was to miss 'what first indicated' in the question, which required a response connected with time. The key phrase in the text was 'only 30 seconds after landing' and it was the 'different kind of frog' that was required for the mark.
- (g) A comparison was involved here and many found the wrong side of the comparison for their answer. A response concerning the volcano animals was sought, so candidates whose response centred on the lowland animals did not get the mark. It was a good discriminator because the text gave the detail conversely, 'unlike in the lowland forests...'
- (h) The question 'How do scientists name...' required a verb or a preposition in the response, for example, 'they refer to a characteristic of the creature' or 'after the place where it was found'.

Exercise 3

The form was generally completed well, showing a good understanding of the text. As is often the case, however, marks were lost through carelessness in transcription.

Section A

A common mistake was to add the name 'Peter Wheaton' to the name and address of the school. A mark was also lost if the candidate used the preposition 'in' before 'Balmoral Avenue' in the address of the school. The address should be written as it would appear at the heading of a letter or on the front of an envelope.

Section B

This section was better attempted by many candidates, although there is still some misapplication of the *circle*, *underline*, *delete* and *tick* instructions. It is a shame that marks are lost when clearly the candidate has the correct response but has used the wrong convention. Centres should focus on this in exam preparation.

Section C

Generally quite well done, showing better preparation from Centres. Spelling and grammar showed improved accuracy. Centres should emphasise to candidates that two full and complete sentences giving accurate details are required. While most candidates achieved half of the four marks available here, very few managed to write two full and accurate sentences to gain full marks.

Exercise 4

Some candidates had difficulties with this question. Many were able to give correct responses as to what could be seen at the museum in the second half of the question. In the first part, however, some candidates gave details of his career and work, rather than describing the room in which he worked.

Exercise 5

For the summary some candidates wrote biographically about the man and his work with little else. What was needed was a summary about the Ghibli Museum. Overall there was a good sense of the style of a summary and most managed to use 70 words or less. Many candidates used a number of lifts from the text, thereby scoring less than full marks without the use of their own words in the response.

Exercise 6

In general candidates seemed to enjoy writing this letter and most used the idea of the *unexpected* day off school in their response. Many imaginative reasons were given for the closure of the school, ranging from bombs and rats to burglars and teachers on strike. Some got the time frame wrong and invited their friend to stay *today*. What the candidates did on the day tended to be somewhat formulaic with many playing football and/or video games and going shopping, but this part was usually sufficiently well developed. Many did not develop the third bullet point well, merely stating that it was 'great' or 'boring', without the idea of comparing this day with a normal school day.

In this question candidates need to think carefully about the audience for the piece of writing, as this will dictate the tone and language to be used. There were many letters which managed to inform and communicate, but lacked the informality of a letter to a friend.

Exercise 7

This was also found to be a good topic by most candidates who generally seemed to have an opinion. The great majority of responses dwelt only on the given prompts as the basis for their answer, but there were some in which attempts were made to develop points of their own, such as there being no need to wear a uniform at home or to carry any books backwards and forwards everyday. Credit is given for such ideas. Some even showed independence of thought and came down on one side or the other, but these responses were in a minority. Most found it easier to write a balanced essay with pros and cons. In the more formal register required for the newspaper article, good use was generally made of connectives such as 'on the other hand', 'however', 'another point is' etc.

In these last two exercises there were many common errors of grammar and syntax. Key areas of concern are:

1. The need to be careful with negatives e.g. 'you don't lost time travelling to school...'
2. Care is needed with sentences containing complex verb structures e.g. 'we decided to went...'
3. Singular/plural agreement e.g. 'these idea is good...'
4. Confusion of 'choose' with 'choice' and 'lose' with 'loose' etc.
5. Difficulty with homophones e.g. 'they're', 'there' and 'their'.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/12
Reading and Writing (Core)

Key messages

In this session the management of time and finishing the paper was a key issue for candidates and a considerable number omitted one or more exercises, most frequently Section C of Exercise 3; Exercise 5, or one of the extended writing pieces, Exercise 6 or 7. Centres are reminded that Exercise 6 and Exercise 7 are high value exercises, and carry the most marks, so are asked to continue to provide timed practice of extended writing as part of examination preparation.

There was evidence that greater precision was needed by some candidates in their reading of the questions, notably in Exercise 1 and Exercise 2. Precise reading and identification of key question words is the first step in achieving successful answers. Writing overlong responses is also detrimental, as this can lead to the inclusion of superfluous and inaccurate information, which may deny the mark.

The completion of Exercise 3, *Sections A* and *B* showed some improvement, particularly in accuracy of spelling. Candidates should, nevertheless, be reminded that accurate application of the circle, delete and underline conventions are required in order to achieve high marks. *Section C* continued to be demanding for the majority of candidates, with only a small number correctly combining contextual detail with total accuracy of spelling and grammar in the two sentences. A high proportion of candidates omitted this section of the exercise.

Many candidates made a satisfactory attempt at Exercise 4, and offered brief, factual notes as answers, thereby gaining the marks. Candidates are reminded that by copying full sentences from the text the key detail is often lost and marks denied.

Exercise 5 continues to create challenges for many candidates. There was improvement in the length of the summary, with most candidates writing within the 70 word limit. The majority of candidates who offered an answer listed points verbatim from Exercise 4, rather than making an attempt at good summary style. High marks can be awarded if the response is written coherently with the use of linking devices to create a cohesive paragraph.

The two extended writing tasks were well attempted by many. The more able candidates made a creditable effort at the more informal task presented as a letter in Exercise 6 and were able to present and develop ideas in a more formal, discursive manner in Exercise 7. A key point arising from the assessment of Exercise 6 was the need for a consistent letter-writing register, with the candidate engaging with the reader informally throughout. Many responses started in the appropriate style but quickly developed into a narrative, thus losing the awareness of audience and the purpose of writing. Candidates who were able to introduce their own ideas in Exercise 7 found the full range of marks available to them, but this exercise presented challenges for some candidates who did not address the core issues in the question and offered responses peripheral to the central idea.

General comments

Overall the majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level and many showed a good response to the variety of different tasks included in the paper. Time management presented a problem for a number of candidates who were unable to complete all the exercises.

The paper offered a range of tasks within the seven exercises, requiring the candidate to demonstrate a variety of practical skills, from scanning to identify details to be expressed in note-form or as a short answer, to the more complex demands of writing at greater length, using different styles and for different purposes.

There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in individual questions and across the paper as a whole. There was little evidence of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the rubric for each exercise and the full range of marks was awarded.

Presentation of answers and handwriting were acceptable in the majority of cases and an increasing number of candidates used black ink. Centres are reminded that black is the preferred colour and are asked to encourage candidates to write clearly and within the marked space on each page. As a general rule, the amount of space and the number of lines designated for an answer should provide a guide as to the requirement for the length of response. In the case of a candidate needing to write at greater length or to rewrite an answer, the blank pages at the end of the booklet can be used and candidates are asked to indicate this to the Examiner on the answer page. Candidates should be discouraged from starting Exercises 6 and 7 just below the question, but should begin their response on the lined page.

Exercise 1

The key skill in this exercise is to locate precise information from a longer text. This information may be in the form of a single word or number, or a short phrase. As an introduction to the reading comprehension tasks, this exercise provided varying degrees of difficulty and was successfully completed by a good number of candidates.

- (a) This proved to be an easy start to the exercise and was accurately answered in most cases. Common inaccuracies included the paraphrase of the question, 'making friends can be quite complicated and confusing', but without the key idea of the time 'when'.
- (b) Most candidates understood the requirement for an adjective to describe personality and there were many correct responses. Occasionally, candidates misread the negative idea in the text, 'don't find it difficult', and responded incorrectly with the opposite answer, 'naturally outgoing'.
- (c) Some candidates prefaced their answer with 'think ahead and have a few ideas to talk about', without giving the precise detail required in the question 'what could you talk about?' This incomplete response could not be credited.
- (d) Many candidates correctly identified the section of the text and provided completely correct answers to the question. Occasionally the response 'as you get older' was offered which could not be credited without the key detail 'you don't share as many interests as you used to'. Similarly, 'you don't share things' was not sufficiently detailed for the mark.
- (e) This question proved to be very challenging for the majority of candidates and was an effective discriminator. The requirement was for two separate pieces of advice on keeping a friend for one mark. Many correctly found and transferred the sentence, 'try talking to your friend to show that friendship is still important', which although long, was accurate. The second point needed precision in detail for the mark. Many responses were over generalised, transferring the sentence, 'get together to enjoy them' and did not include the idea of 'activities'.
- (f) This was generally well answered, with candidates either offering the detail of the web address or the general response, 'from the school website'. Common errors occurred with the omission of 'school', 'from the website' being oversimplified; with the inaccurate spelling of the web address, or reference to the 'school counsellor'.

Exercise 2

A number of candidates showed good understanding of the text as a whole and were successful throughout.

There are still candidates who write too much and this can lead to irrelevant or inaccurate information being included and marks lost. Some answers in this exercise demonstrated that candidates lacked care and precision in their reading of a particular question or their locating of a particular detail and as a result the whole range of marks was awarded for this exercise.

- (a) Most candidates made a good start to this exercise. Marks were lost for the response, 'when he was a boy', as the question required a response indicating duration of time, rather than specific time.

- (b) There were many correct responses to this question, showing that most candidates had understood the idea of 'evidence'. Marks were lost if the candidate offered 'solving abilities' without mention of 'problem'. Some candidates misinterpreted 'sharks do not want to attack humans' or 'no shark species eats humans' as a piece of evidence, and these answers could not be credited.
- (c) The majority of candidates showed understanding and were able to identify the section of the text where the answer could be found, but many incomplete answers denied the mark. Although candidates attempted to respond using brief answers, this frequently led to incomplete pieces of information being offered, such as 'the shark leaves after realising' or 'sharks don't eat humans'. Similarly, 'bitten a human and not its intended prey' does not provide a sufficient link to the key question words, 'by mistake'.
- (d) Many candidates responded with a full answer and gained the mark. Some answers did not include 'shark', merely writing 'they have time to grow again', which could not be credited. Other candidates included the idea that 'many will still be killed' or 'caught up in fishing nets', which, without 'fishing for other fish' did not relate to the question.
- (e) This question required candidates to identify the key question words, 'as a child' and select the appropriate detail 'When Andy was a boy' from the context. This was more discriminating as a question and the majority of answers did not include the required information. Many candidates wrote instead about the work and career of the shark expert as an adult, 'working with sharks in an aquarium' or 'involved with making programmes about sharks', rather than his childhood influences. Two details were required for two marks and more able candidates correctly selected information about his childhood and his father's work.
- (f) A number of responses to this question illustrated imprecise understanding of the text. There were many partial answers which included incomplete information, 'observe her behaviour' or 'teach her how to do things', which indicated that candidates had not understood that 'they know how to...' and 'by rewarding her' were integral parts of the answer and necessary for the mark.
- (g) The interpretation of the graphical material was well addressed, with many candidates selecting the correct numerical item, '700'. However, without the labelling descriptor 'thousands', the mark could not be awarded for an otherwise correct response. More careful reading of the graph would have enabled many candidates to achieve the mark for this answer.
- (h) This was generally well answered, with many candidates identifying two separate ideas and choosing 'persuade people personally' and 'his work through the media'. Others were less precise and supplied 'persuade people personally and the media'. Marks were lost through the inaccurate selection of 'keep spreading awareness', which related to his main objective, rather than his means of educating people.
- (i) The majority of candidates were successful in their answer and supplied the two required details, 'ecological balance' and 'control other species'. Some added the extra information that sharks are essential creatures in our oceans, but this did not detract from the central point. Marks were lost when candidates offered the detail that 'shark's fin soup is a favoured food'.

Exercise 3

Candidates continue to show the results of good classroom preparation. More candidates attempted this task and there was greater understanding of the specific demands of the exercise and the conventions of form-filling. Total accuracy in spelling is required for high marks to be awarded, and at times, careless transcription resulted in a lower mark for an otherwise correct answer.

Online Shopping Application Form and Customer Survey

In general, candidates were successful and scored well in *Sections A and B*.

Section A

Many candidates were successful with the name, age and contact details. Occasionally marks were lost through the misspelling 'Aysha' for 'Ayesha', and 'Ahmad' for 'Ahmed'. Candidates could not be credited if the address included a preposition, 'at 110 Privett Avenue...', and teachers are asked to remind candidates that prepositions 'in' or 'at' are not part of the convention of writing addresses and therefore cannot be given

credit. Further common errors in the address occurred in the misspelling, 'Private' for 'Privett', and 'Newton' for 'Newtown'. Candidates are again reminded of the need for total accuracy in spelling in this exercise in order to avoid unnecessary loss of marks.

Section B

Candidates were less confident in this section and errors were made through misapplying the convention of circling and underlining the options chosen. Most commonly in this session, candidates were confused about how to delete 'YES/NO' and often conveyed the opposite answer. Centres are advised to focus specifically on this aspect in order to avoid mistakes. Some good attempts were made in answer to the question, 'How many cars..?' the most frequent being 'no cars'. Marks were lost if candidates tried to write a longer answer, 'doesn't have a car' or 'they don't have a car'. More careful reading of the item regarding newspapers was required, with the key word 'daily' often being ignored and both newspapers being incorrectly offered in answer. Information for the last three questions in this section was often correctly selected, but marks lost through incorrect identification using circle or underline.

Section C

This section continues to present challenges to all but the best candidates and teachers are asked to provide as much practice as possible for this task. It is important that candidates clearly understand the rubric – two sentences are required, and candidates who offer more than this will only be given credit for the first two. Secondly, the sentences must be written from the point of view of Ayesha, so sentences written in the third person, 'she' or 'they' will receive no marks. In addition, it is important that candidates are aware of the need for full and complete sentence formation with total grammatical and spelling accuracy. Thus answers starting with 'because...' will receive no credit. The best responses selected the key points from the stimulus text and transferred them in a clearly defined and well-written sentence form, including an initial capital letter and a final full stop. A good answer for the first sentence was, 'I want to do my shopping online because it's easier.' Other correct responses included, 'I'm bored with the same meals so I want to shop online.' The second sentence required a reason why it would be easier, so a suitable response was, 'The shopping will be quickly delivered to my home.' Many candidates found difficulty in distinguishing the different requests of the two sentences and repeated the same information in both. Others tried to include all the information in one sentence, thereby limiting the marks available to half the possible total.

Exercise 4

This exercise proved to be demanding for a number of candidates and few were able to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the text to gain more than half the available marks. It was pleasing to see that many candidates recognised the bullet points at the start of each line and used these as a guide to supply brief note-form answers, although at times very short notes resulted in incomplete responses. Overall, candidates found it easier to locate and select items for the first heading of the exercise than for the second, and occasionally answers would have been credited if they had been placed under the relevant heading. In some cases, candidates copied sentences from the text containing both relevant and irrelevant material.

Technological clothes already produced

Key contextual points were identified by many candidates and all four possible content points were used, with 'jacket with built-in minidisc' and 'jacket with built-in fans' as the most popular. As the heading required 'clothes', answers which did not include 'jacket' or 'shoe' or 'jeans' could not be credited. Similarly, 'built-in' was a necessary key feature in response points 1 and 2. A number of candidates wrongly supplied 'perfectly fitted jeans' under the second heading, which did not earn the mark.

Technological clothes being worked on for the future

This section proved to be more of a challenge, and although few candidates achieved full marks, all five content points were used, which showed a degree of understanding of the relevant paragraphs in the text. Marks were lost through incomplete responses, 'clothing changes shape' or 'long-sleeved shirt becomes short-sleeved', which without the essential point, 'according to temperature', did not gain the mark. Other common errors included responses which did not address the technology, 'trousers keep their legs warm'. The inclusion of 'by heating coils' would have gained the mark. The misspelling of key items, 'seawater' for 'sweater' and 'air conditioner' for 'air conditioned' also contributed to candidates scoring lower marks.

Exercise 5

This exercise continues to present a challenge to all but the strongest candidates and unfortunately many omit it when under pressure of time. It was pleasing to note that more candidates who attempted this exercise wrote clearly and within the 70 word limit than in previous sessions.

In this session it was expected that candidates would write a paragraph using their notes about current technological fashion and possible future plans for technological clothes. Good summary style was needed, using candidates' own words where possible and with attempts to link ideas together using connecting devices, such as 'in addition', 'although', 'despite', 'also', 'because'. The full range of marks was awarded for this exercise, with the majority relying entirely on their notes and so achieving half of the marks available. Better answers fulfilled the task and supplied an ordered paragraph containing the relevant points of detail, with attempts at their own words. Candidates who merely listed the points from the previous exercise without any attempt at writing a connected paragraph were prevented from achieving high marks. Other less successful answers included copying sentences from the text without clear understanding, thus including information beyond the central focus of the task.

Exercise 6

General comments

In general, candidates who attempted this exercise wrote with some enthusiasm and imagination. The majority observed the word limit, although candidates whose work was short were prevented from gaining marks in the top band for content.

There are three written prompts for this exercise and candidates are expected to address each prompt to achieve a satisfactory mark for content. If candidates used these prompts as the basis for organising their letter into paragraphs, this would provide an overall structure to the response. More able candidates recognised this and used paragraphing well in conjunction with opening and closing sentences to form a successful letter. Less able candidates could not have access to the range of higher marks if only one paragraph was written. In addition to paragraphing, candidates are expected to adopt the appropriate style and register when writing to a friend. Providing awareness of and engagement with the reader throughout is an integral part of this type of informal letter writing and many candidates demonstrated this successfully.

The main area of concern was the lack of consistency of grammatical tense throughout the whole response. The letter required the use of past tense in narrating events which had already happened. A considerable number of candidates started well and accurately, but were unable to maintain this accuracy to the end, resulting in confusion for the reader. Centres are advised to focus on encouraging candidates to sustain an extended piece of writing in the correct tense. There was an improvement in punctuation in this session, with many candidates writing well-constructed sentences with appropriate use of capital letters and full stops.

The use of idiomatic expressions can be appropriate in an informal piece of writing and Examiners will always give credit for ambitious attempts in the right contexts. Candidates should be aware, however, that the use of abbreviated language such as is used in text messages, or the spoken colloquialisms 'wanna' or 'gonna' should not form part of an examination answer and their use will have a detrimental effect on the mark awarded for language.

Exercise 6

Changes affecting school life

In this exercise, in addition to the three bullet points, there is a picture guide which is provided for candidates who need help in selecting content for their letter. It should be stressed that the use of this guide is optional and should merely act as a stimulus for candidates to use their own imagination. Candidates are always free to use their own ideas and some candidates can produce work of greater originality and show more ambition in language when the visual guide is not followed.

In general, this task was well addressed. Many candidates made a satisfactory attempt to cover all three bullet points, and a number of candidates developed all the points at appropriate length. The first point required a description of the new headteacher and many supplied details of age, clothes, friendliness towards students and matters of discipline. Less successful candidates merely introduced the teacher by name, without further development, which prevented marks in the higher band being awarded. The second point required candidates to use their imagination to supply and develop details of the changes being made.

More able candidates incorporated the final bullet point into their writing at this stage and expressed feelings of pleasure or frustration about the new timetable hours, new buildings, improved facilities, cleaning classrooms or air conditioning. Some candidates developed the second point at length without the same depth of detail being provided for the other points, resulting in a somewhat unbalanced piece of writing. Similarly, high marks were not achievable for candidates whose response relied on simple statements about longer or shorter study hours without any resulting reaction to this change.

A number of candidates were less successful in this piece of writing than in previous sessions, due to the lack of interaction with the reader. A considerable number of letters started well but developed more as a piece of narrative writing, thus losing contact with the reader and losing credibility as a result. Centres are asked to remind candidates to continue to address the reader throughout the letter in order to sustain the appropriate register and have access to the marks in the higher band.

Further noticeable language errors included a lack of grammatical agreement in simple structures, 'he have changed the timetable', 'he don't get angry', and 'I was very busy and that's why I don't replied you'. In addition, errors were commonly found in more sophisticated attempts at language, 'the school hours have being change' and 'the hall is being repairing'.

Exercise 7

General comments

In this final writing exercise, candidates are asked to respond in a more formal register to a topic of general interest. Of the candidates who attempted this exercise, many were able satisfactorily to adopt the required discursive tone and register. Four written prompts were provided, two in favour and two against the topic in the question, to act as a guide to help some candidates with their selection of content material. As in Exercise 6, the more successful responses were characterised by the inclusion of candidates' own thoughts and opinions. More able candidates understood the prompts provided and used some of them to support and develop their own ideas effectively, thus achieving greater independence, away from the given information. The majority of candidates at this level, however, tended to rely closely on the given information and used it as the basis for a balanced argument piece of writing, considering both sides. Less successful candidates repeated the written prompts with little personal contribution and often without any attempt at paraphrasing. A number of candidates were unable to complete this exercise, due to lack of time.

Exercise 7

Television and newspapers spend too much time reporting on famous people

Some candidates responded well, understanding and engaging in a thoughtful manner with the topic. The most able took sides early on in their writing and developed and justified their opinions. Others provided a good balance of argument, believing that because our lives are so serious, we need to read about famous people, although we can never be sure of the truth of the reporting. Good use of paragraphs and connecting devices created an effective framework for their writing. The majority opinion was that the media should report more serious news and less gossip about famous people although a number of candidates believed that our lives could be made better by learning about and following the ways of celebrities.

There were some candidates who did not engage with the main focus of the topic and who wrote in a general way about celebrities and the advantages or disadvantages of living in the public eye. Similarly, some candidates did not understand the question and offered a piece of writing which discussed at length the role of television and newspapers today in reporting the news in general. These interpretations missed the real point of the argument and in order for candidates to achieve marks in the top band for content they needed to address the central point of the question.

It was pleasing to note that many candidates attempted to connect their ideas in a structured and logical manner, using linking devices such as, 'on the other hand', 'moreover', 'nevertheless', 'in conclusion'. At times these cohesive devices were misapplied, with 'on the other hand' used in support of a previous point, and 'moreover' to introduce a contrasting idea. Candidates are encouraged to continue to practise the use of these phrases in extended pieces of discursive writing in order to gain in confidence and accuracy.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/21

Reading and Writing (Extended)

Key messages

It is necessary that candidates read individual questions and instructions carefully to ensure that responses provide sufficient precision for a successful answer. Omitting important detail or including incorrect information can result in the loss of marks. This applied particularly in Exercises 1, 2, 3C and 4.

In the completion of the form in Exercise 3, candidates should abide by the conventions and tick, circle, underline or delete as directed. This was not always the case. Candidates also need to be aware of the correct address format. Handwriting is particularly important in this exercise due to the importance of correct spelling and the accurate use of capital letters. On occasion, handwriting was not sufficiently clear. In Section C, the word limit must be adhered to and the requirements of sentence construction fulfilled in order for the candidate to gain available marks. The sentence must also be relevant. Some candidates did not provide suitable responses in terms of length, grammar and relevance.

In Exercise 4 most answers were sufficiently brief. A number of candidates did not connect the headings accurately to the text and misunderstood what was required. It is important that candidates give time to ensuring that answers offered correspond to the headings of each section. In addition, although this is a note-taking exercise, all key detail must be included. The notes that the candidates give need to convey different points, and the points must be clear and make sense in relation to the heading.

In the summary for Exercise 5, successful candidates attempt to use their own words and connect the points in summary-style writing, adhering to the salient ideas in the original text and keeping within the word limit. Care should be taken not to provide or lift irrelevant information or to repeat points. There were some candidates who were able to complete the summary well.

The extended writing tasks of Exercises 6 and 7 were well attempted and developed to an appropriate length. Candidates seemed interested by the topics and responded well. In these exercises, good organisation with clear paragraphs, demonstrating cohesion and coherence is important if a candidate is to obtain marks in the higher bands. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure there is subject/verb agreement with appropriate and accurate use of grammar and vocabulary. There were some candidates who had attempted to learn idiomatic language which was not quite accurate or was used inappropriately in the context of their writing. Candidates should be encouraged not to overuse such language.

General comments

Most candidates were correctly entered at the Extended tier. Only a small number of candidates found it too challenging. The Core tier paper might have been more appropriate to their linguistic ability.

The paper offered a range of tasks within the seven exercises, requiring the candidates to use different practical skills. There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in individual questions and across the paper as a whole.

There were a few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric on certain questions. Handwriting and presentation were mostly acceptable. Candidates should be encouraged to use black ink as this is the preferred colour. Candidates should avoid writing in the *For Examiner's Use* column to the right of each answer page. Generally they should be advised that the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required. It is permissible for them to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in Exercises 6 and 7, but it is important that they indicate clearly to the Examiner where extra work has been completed. Candidates should not use the

space on the question pages for Exercises 6 and 7. Time management did not appear to be a problem and very few candidates were unable to complete all the exercises in the paper.

Exercise 1

In this kind of exercise, candidates need to answer precisely, and, after locating the relevant section of text, should read enough to ensure they have found the full, correct answer. Exercise 1 was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates, providing an appropriate introduction to the reading comprehension tasks.

- (a) This was quite well answered. A number of candidates did not read the question carefully enough and lifted incorrectly, giving 'in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia'.
- (b) Many candidates generally gave appropriate answers. Some candidates did not locate the relevant part of the text and gave, 'gripping window ledges and placing fingers in cracks'. Some misspelt 'ropes', writing 'robes'. This word exists and because it has a very different meaning, could not be credited.
- (c) This was well answered by most candidates.
- (d) This was generally well answered. Some candidates omitted the essential idea of Robert *rarely* being given permission.
- (e) A number of candidates responded correctly. The response given by some, 'in darkness at dawn', was not acceptable, since Robert would appear some way up a building by dawn.
- (f) This was well answered by most candidates. A few thought that as this was the third attempt the correct response should be 'three'.
- (g) This was generally well answered except by a few candidates who substituted 'arrested' for 'stopped'. He was arrested only on completing this attempt but had been stopped on previous climbs.

Exercise 2

Some questions in this exercise proved challenging for candidates. Answers given were suitably brief and the chart was accurately read. The full range of marks available was awarded on the exercise and differentiation was achieved. As in Exercise 1, candidates need to be precise in their answers and to ensure that responses follow on from the question. When the relevant section of the text has been located, it is important that candidates read enough to satisfy themselves that they have found the correct answer and that they understand reference words, such as pronouns, correctly. This was generally the case, with a few exceptions.

- (a) This question was generally well answered. A few candidates omitted some key words, giving only 'rat' or 'September' instead of '*giant rat*' and '*last September*'. Candidates should always include these important ideas which provide essential detail or change the meaning of a response. Occasionally, 'extraordinary creature' was given and this was not an acceptable synonym for 'giant rat'.
- (b) Most candidates provided both details correctly. Occasionally 'metres' and/or 'kilos' were omitted, which meant the response could not be credited.
- (c) Most candidates obtained at least one of the two available marks. The second detail was sometimes a repetition of the first. Occasionally 'forest' was omitted, so the mark could not be awarded.
- (d) Nearly all candidates read the chart accurately. Very few wrote '30%', the percentage of species outside the rainforests.

- (e) This question was well answered. Very occasionally the important adjectives *wild* or *big* describing the type of cats was not given.
- (f) This question proved challenging as a number of candidates did not include the idea of 'thirty seconds after landing'. This was a vital part of the correct answer as it was an immediate indication to scientists that they would find new species.
- (g) This was well attempted by most candidates. The question required candidates to refer to the behaviour of volcano animals compared to that of lowland animals. In this kind of comparison question, it is vital that the response follows on from the question, so here information only referring to lowland animals makes the answer incorrect. Candidates giving a response such as 'they are shy' were not awarded the mark.
- (h) This question was quite well answered. There were some candidates who did not provide the essential preposition or verb linking the question to the answer. The answer 'characteristic of species' is insufficient as the meaning is unclear and links such as 'by' or 'refer to' are necessary to make the answer meaningful.
- (i) Most candidates obtained two or more of the available four marks. A few candidates gave 'animals are afraid of humans' when '*mammals* are afraid of humans' was required. For the point 'spend long hours waiting', the waiting idea was essential and this was not always included.

It may be helpful for Centres to be aware that this final question in Exercise 2 is global and is designed to differentiate. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because the answers may appear at any point in the text.

Exercise 3

Candidates had been generally well prepared for the particular demands of this exercise, which requires the application of the conventions of form-filling and total accuracy in spelling, the use of capital letters and punctuation, where appropriate. *Sections A* and *B* of the application form are designed to be completed with brief answers, and there are instructions to underline, circle or delete as necessary. Candidates generally covered these sections well. A few candidates did not follow the instructions and underlined, deleted or circled inappropriately. Nearly all candidates completed the form as Anton Marica.

Holiday Course Application Form

Section A

Most candidates successfully provided the details required. Typical errors in the address were the omission of 'Apartment' and misspelling of 'Victoriei' and 'Bucharest'. It is important that candidates check their spellings against those in the text to avoid losing marks in this way. A number of candidates gave the address details in the incorrect order. It is encouraging to note that there was little use of prepositions such as 'at' and 'in', which are inappropriate and cannot be credited. Capital letters as in the stimulus text are required and a few candidates did not use these. Occasionally candidates gave the doctor's email address as the contact detail instead of that of the family.

Candidates need to be aware that clear handwriting is especially important in this exercise. Therefore capital letters should be easy to distinguish as should individual letters. For example there were occasions when the letter 'a' was formed in the same way as 'e'.

Section B

This section was generally quite well answered. Occasionally candidates wrote 'water-based activities' or just 'diving' for the preferred choice of activity when the correct response was 'scuba diving'. A few candidates gave the choice of country in the wrong order and misspelt the countries as 'Thialand', 'Malvides' or 'Australia'. Overall, many candidates underlined, deleted and circled as specified. There were a few candidates who did not follow the instructions correctly and it is vital in this exercise that they should do so. If one answer has been deleted, it is not necessary to circle the alternative. The doctor's name was sometimes given as 'Lonoscu' and her phone number provided as a contact detail. If this was included, no mark could be awarded.

Section C

In this section, for maximum marks, candidates are required to be within the prescribed word limit, to use proper sentence construction with no errors of punctuation, grammar or spelling and to give relevant details according to information in the stimulus text. Candidates lost marks if these conventions were not adhered to. A few candidates answered with two sentences and in this case no marks could be awarded. Occasionally, the pronoun 'he' instead of 'I' was used. This made the answer incorrect. Some candidates misunderstood the requirements of the section and gave reasons such as 'loving the sea' and 'wanting to be in a warm country' for their choice of activity. Inappropriate information from the text was selected as candidates were expected to explain why they had chosen scuba diving, not why they had chosen a water-based activity.

Exercise 4

This exercise proved challenging to some candidates and good for differentiation. Responses tended to be of appropriate length. Although brief notes are required, it is important that essential details such as verbs or adjectives that add to or clarify meaning are included, and that points are completed. Occasionally candidates gave repeat points, which could not be credited

Details of Miyazaki's study

This section was quite well answered. There were a few candidates who gave details of Miyazaki's work and the things he had done, such as 'directed nine feature films'. These details did not correspond to the heading and were not appropriate even as areas that Miyazaki might have studied since they were his productions. Sometimes candidates provided incomplete details; for example, 'overflowing with models and books' supplied the necessary detail whereas 'models and books' alone did not express the important idea of quantity.

Details of Miyazaki's character

This section was quite well attempted. A few candidates repeated one of the points, giving both 'private' and 'rarely gives interviews', which express the same idea. They also gave details of Miyazaki's physical appearance. Occasionally candidates misunderstood the rubric and did not realise the difference between 'character' and 'characters', so they wrote details such as 'huge, furry, black-whiskered'.

What you can see or visit outside

Most candidates scored well in this section. There were six possible details for candidates to choose from and most candidates supplied two correct points. A few candidates gave 'cafe' or 'garden', omitting the important detail 'rooftop', or 'Ghibli', which was the name of the museum.

Exercise 5

Many candidates performed well on this exercise. They were generally well prepared in the required summary skills, and read the rubric and the requirements of the exercise carefully. Candidates were asked to write a summary of the possible benefits of swimming in ice-cold water. There were eight possible content points. There were some candidates who lost marks because their summary exceeded the word limit significantly. They tended to focus on the effects of the ice bath and/or general information about swimming in icy water, including irrelevant details. Sometimes a point could not be credited if it was imprecise or too vague. For example, candidates needed to state that *job* worries could be forgotten, not just worries. A few candidates misunderstood part of the text and wrote that cold water is used to treat people with heart disease. Many candidates were able to identify at least four key content points and some candidates were able to gain full marks for the content aspect of the exercise.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range. A number of candidates lifted the key ideas from the text and attempted to link these with conjunctions rather than using their own words to express salient points. For a higher language mark candidates should attempt to give the key points in their own words, whilst ensuring the point is still clearly communicated. Higher marks of three and four for language are available for those candidates who make an attempt to use their own words, so practice with verb, noun and adjective synonyms is recommended.

Exercises 6 and 7

General comments

In general, many candidates produced letters and articles which were satisfactory or better in terms of both language and content in Exercises 6 and 7. Length was generally within the specified word limits and was rarely short of the minimum requirements. Candidates are not penalised for exceeding the recommended word length but short answers are unlikely to be awarded a satisfactory mark for content, and the language mark may also be affected since the range of language will be limited. In terms of organisation, many candidates had a reasonable understanding of how to structure and organise their work. Paragraphing, together with an appropriate introduction and ending were generally in evidence. Good organisation is crucial to the quality of what is produced. The degree of cohesion and coherence affects the extent to which ideas are well-developed and the reader's interest is engaged.

There were candidates who overused idiomatic language, sometimes inappropriately, in an attempt to demonstrate what they had learnt. This does not help to gain marks in the higher bands as what is produced is less effective and not sufficiently precise. Some candidates demonstrated good control of language, showing variety of structure and length, which meant that their mark for language was in the higher bands. Basic punctuation was generally sound, although sometimes commas were substituted for full stops, which was confusing for the reader. Candidates obtaining marks in the higher bands for content developed their ideas effectively with writing that was relevant to the context.

Exercise 6

In this exercise, candidates must address and develop the bullet point prompts and the extent to which this is done will determine which band is achieved in the criteria for content. For a mark in a higher band, candidates should convey a good sense of purpose and engage the reader's interest. Examiners are looking to reward those candidates who can demonstrate a more vital style and provide some innovative detail.

Unexpected day's holiday from school

This subject seemed to appeal to candidates in that it was something to which they could easily relate. Many candidates responded using a satisfactory or effective register and tone. Most candidates addressed all three bullet points, focusing particularly on what they did during the day. Most were extremely pleased that school was closed for the day but there were some who were sorry that they had a day off, which in some cases limited what they had to say if the day had been uneventful. There were often many quite imaginative reasons for the school being closed, such as fires, infestations, elections, staff deaths and strikes. Sometimes whether the day had been better or worse than a day at school was only implied, and occasionally this point was not addressed. It is important that candidates clearly cover the bullet points as this will affect the content mark. In terms of language, many candidates did their best to display their repertoire of language, using a range of connectives and idiomatic words and phrases. Sometimes these were misused or inappropriate.

Exercise 7

In this exercise candidates discuss a topic for a specific target audience. It is essential that candidates read the rubric carefully and then refer to the prompts, which are there to provide a stimulus for the candidates' thoughts on the subject. The argument should make reference to the situation, assisted by the prompts. To obtain a mark in one of the higher bands, candidates should expand the ideas in the prompts and express these in their own words, including other perspectives on the topic. There needs to be evidence that candidates can develop arguments and persuade the reader of their convictions. They should also use an appropriate tone and register which will stimulate the reader's interest in the topic.

Students learn online at home

Candidates were expected to write an article for their school magazine discussing their views on schools being replaced by online learning in the future. There was a selection of four guiding prompts, two for and two against the topic under discussion. Some candidates attempted this well, expanding their ideas with supporting evidence for their views, which suggested some independence of thought. Many candidates considered both sides of the question, expressing a strong preference for keeping schools. There were some candidates who relied heavily on the wording in the prompts, often with minimal development. A few candidates misunderstood the issue and wrote about home-schooling without any reference to online

education, occasionally with no mention of schools. In such cases, the content or language mark was affected. There were examples of rhetorical questions, emphasis and other devices to achieve a more precise and engaging style. Paragraphing and linking words were often used appropriately. The quality of some candidates' work may have been affected by time constraints at this stage of the paper, but in most cases this did not appear to be a problem for candidates.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/22

Reading and Writing (Extended)

Key messages

There were very few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric for each exercise, although there was evidence that some candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of individual questions, particularly in Exercises 1, 2, and 5. As with previous sessions, it should be emphasised to candidates that precise reading of the wording of each question and the instructions to each exercise are vital as the first requirements to a successful answer.

In Exercise 3, there was improvement in the completion of *Sections A to C* in the talent show application form. In *Section D*, the sentence writing task, it must be emphasised that the information for writing the sentence will always be found in the stimulus text. Candidates cannot be credited if they supply their own personal details or create fictitious answers. This section is not intended to be a creative writing task.

Exercise 4 was generally successful and answers were largely in note form, although there were still a significant number of candidates who wrote full sentences and exceeded the space provided for the answer. Teachers should continue to use the brevity of the mark scheme as a guide to what would constitute minimal but successful answers in this exercise.

In Exercise 5, the summary writing task, word lengths were generally well observed. Less able candidates wrote in excess of 120 words, often as a result of careless reading of the rubric. They concentrated initially on general statements about travel companies and mass tourism, and hardly addressed the key details about responsible travel before the 120 word limit. Candidates are advised to read carefully the wording of the question and to concentrate solely on those areas of the text that are relevant to the task.

The extended writing tasks of Exercises 6 and 7 were satisfactorily attempted and the topics seemed to have appealed to this group of candidates.

General comments

Overall, the vast majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level, but a number obtained scores equivalent to E grade and below. These candidates could arguably have benefited from being entered at Core tier, where the tasks would have been more suited to their linguistic ability.

The paper offered a range of tasks within the seven exercises, requiring the candidates to demonstrate a variety of practical skills. There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in individual questions and across the paper as a whole.

Handwriting was acceptable in the majority of cases and an increasing number of candidates used black ink. This is the preferred colour and teachers should encourage all candidates to use this in future sessions. Overall, general presentation was not as precise as in previous sessions, with answers appearing in unexpected spaces. Candidates should be discouraged from writing in other areas, especially on pages 12 and 14, which contain the rubric and the prompts for Exercises 6 and 7.

It is, however, permissible for candidates to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in Exercises 6 and 7, but they need to indicate clearly to the Examiners where extra work has been added. Generally candidates should be advised that throughout the paper the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required and they should not consistently exceed this. In addition, candidates should not make pencil notes in the answer space and then

write over these in ink. This often makes the script difficult to read. All necessary notes should be made at the side of the answer spaces and should be deleted.

Time management did not appear to be a problem this session and there were very few candidates who failed to complete all the exercises in the paper, although some responses in Exercise 7 were brief and consisted of copying the prompts in the question.

Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well attempted by candidates and provided a suitable introduction to the reading comprehension tasks.

- (a) This was generally well answered with the single word 'teenager'.
- (b) This was very well attempted; almost all candidates were credited for the single word 'shy'.
- (c) This was well answered. The most popular correct option was 'ask about school'. Occasionally candidates misspelt 'compliment' as 'complement' and could not be credited.
- (d) This was well attempted, although some candidates were careless with the reading of the question and answered 'as you get older', which explained *when* but not *why* friends grow apart.
- (e) This was more challenging and required careful reading of the text to ensure that the correct wording was provided in the answer. There were many candidates who were successful in conveying the idea that friendship is important. However, many answers did not include the essential second detail of 'activities'.
- (f) This was well answered and most candidates lifted 'a friend may be a bad influence on you' directly from the text.
- (g) This was well answered and both options were selected. Occasional careless wording implied that it was the friend who was being reassured rather than the parents.
- (h) This proved to be more challenging than anticipated because candidates were not careful enough with their reading of the question, in particular the phrase 'general guidance'. As a result, many wrote about the 'school counsellor', which was factually incorrect. On occasion, candidates were careless in transcribing the website details.

Exercise 2

More able candidates provided brief answers here and were able to select key detail from the text and transcribe it with precision. There are still candidates who write too much and teachers should encourage more brevity. The answers in the mark scheme provide a good guide to the length of answer required. The interpretation of the graphical material in question (g) was not as good as in previous sessions. A range of marks was achieved on the exercise as a whole.

- (a) This was well answered overall, although 'since he can remember' was too imprecise and could not be credited.
- (b) This was very well answered, with both details included in brief answers.
- (c) Some candidates omitted important details which rendered the answers incomplete. For example, 'the shark leaves after realising' with no reference to biting a human. All three options were chosen, but candidates could not be credited on occasion for careless spelling, such as 'beaten' for 'bitten' and 'pray' for 'prey'.
- (d) There was a good response here generally, although there was occasional confusion between this and the previous question, with the answer to (c) appearing in this space.
- (e) This question required two details with a mark for each correct answer. Many candidates found this question challenging. They were careless with the reading of the question and often overlooked the introductory, 'As a child...' As a result, many wrote about Andy's adult achievements and his current job making television programmes about sharks.

- (f) This question also proved to be challenging. Candidates needed to be very precise with their reading of the text. Many omitted the key word 'know' from the first option which rendered the answer incomplete. Similarly, the expression 'by rewarding her' was essential for the second possible answer.
- (g) Candidates needed to refer to the graphical element and this question proved to be very discriminating. A large number of candidates missed the fact that the figures on the vertical axis needed to be expressed in thousands. Many offered '700' and could not be credited.
- (h) This was well attempted and most candidates conveyed the options 'personally' and 'persuade people'. On occasion, some candidates were only able to convey one detail with the answer 'Through the media to respect sharks, the critical role they play in our environment'.
- (i) This was very well attempted with both details included in brief answers.
- (j) This question proved to be a very good discriminator. Most candidates were awarded at least two marks overall. Candidates selected all the options in equal measure. There was some repetition of point number 4, where candidates offered 'fished for fins' and 'great demand for shark's fin soup' as separate details and could only be credited once. Many answered incorrectly with '90% of hammerhead sharks have disappeared' and others omitted key detail such as 'a day' in the first point.

Centres are reminded that this final question in Exercise 2 is more challenging and is designed to differentiate between the most able candidates. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because key information may appear at any point in the text.

Exercise 3

Candidates continue to be better prepared for the specific demands of this exercise which requires application of the conventions of form-filling and total accuracy in spelling. *Sections A, B and C* of the talent show application form were designed to be completed with brief details. Candidates answered these sections well.

As a general comment, candidates need to be reminded of the importance of good, clear handwriting throughout the paper. This is especially so in this exercise where correct spelling is crucial and where capital letters need to be clearly formed when introducing proper nouns in names and addresses.

Talent Show Application Form

Generally, candidates were precise in the first three sections of this task and scored well.

Section A

Almost all candidates were successful with the full name and telephone number as well as the underlining and circling tasks. Deletion continues to be the form-filling convention which is most problematic for candidates. There were some candidates who completed the address in the wrong order but most errors were made with the age of Sarah Harman. '16-year-old' was lifted from the text but is not an acceptable way of conveying age on a form. More able candidates re-worded the detail as '16' or '16 years'.

Section B

The majority of candidates were successful with the name and length of the performance as well as the technical equipment required. A common error was to include the answer 'Shout Aloud', which was the name of the show rather than the performance item.

Section C

There continues to be uncertainty about how to delete 'YES/NO' and some candidates often conveyed the opposite answer concerning the parent's permission. Centres are advised to concentrate on practising this particular aspect with their candidates. The circling task was well attempted.

Section D

An encouraging number of candidates composed a sentence which was well punctuated, with a clear full-stop at the end, and accurately spelt. This task remains very challenging for all candidates because of the grammatical precision required. Firstly, it must be stressed that if candidates are outside the prescribed word limits for the sentence then they automatically score zero, as per the mark scheme. In this session, this requirement was much better observed than in the past, but there were still some candidates who wrote in excess of 20 words. The majority of candidates scored either 0 or 1 mark overall for this task. There were different errors which meant that full credit could not be given. The most common mistakes were in the incorrect use of capital letters, sometimes inappropriately used upper case, and sometimes all lower case as in 'canada'. The most common error, however, was where candidates ignored the specific content of the text and wrote a sentence about different holiday destinations all over the world. Candidates are reminded that the correct answer will always be found in the text and fictional detail will not be credited.

Exercise 4

Many candidates were able to show enough understanding of the text and extract the relevant information to score creditably here. Overall, the exercise produced good differentiation, with maximum marks being obtained by only a few of the more able candidates. There were fewer candidates this session who wrote full sentences, and most answers were brief and in note form. At the same time, the notes should not be so short that key words are omitted. The bullet points and the length of line should be a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers here. If candidates' answers extend beyond the space provided then they have arguably written too much.

Technological clothes already produced

Key points were well recognised. All of the four possible content details were used, with the first two points being the most popular. Less able candidates had difficulty in separating the same content point. For example, candidates often included 'jacket with built-in mini-disc' and 'jacket with built-in remote control' as different ideas on different lines. The text was clear that these two points were the same idea and so only one detail could be credited. Other answers could not be credited because essential detail was not supplied. For example, some candidates did not include the key word 'built-in'. A few candidates were careless with their spelling, and 'microship' and 'jacks' could not be credited.

Technological clothes being worked on for the future

This task was more challenging and less successfully attempted than the first section. Candidates were required to be more precise with their reading and transcription to ensure that key detail was not omitted. Points 8 and 9 were the most successfully identified. In point 5, many offered 'blue jeans' instead of 'trousers', which was factually inaccurate. Similarly, answers such as 'a temporary dress' in point 7 was too vague and made no reference to the use of chemicals. Any answer which omitted 'shape' or 'heat/temperature' in point 6 could also not be credited.

Exercise 5

The summary proved to be a good discriminating exercise and there was a range of marks awarded. Candidates needed to write a summary about what responsible travellers do when on holiday. The majority of candidates completed the summary within the prescribed word limit. More able candidates selected precise detail and wrote with a good sense of order, selecting carefully and sequentially from the text. Content points 3, 9 and 10 were less frequently recognised, but an encouraging number of candidates were able to identify at least 5 content details successfully.

Less able candidates started copying from the first paragraph of the text without sufficient care as to the rubric requirements. As a result, there were needlessly detailed descriptions of holidays and travel companies in general and little about responsible travel in particular.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range. It was pleasing to note that a good number of candidates attempted to use their own words and expressions. Centres are reminded that higher marks of 3 and 4 for language are available for those candidates who make an attempt to paraphrase with the use of noun and adjective synonyms. It must be emphasised that candidates need to exercise care when using their own words to ensure that the sense and meaning of the content is not altered. There was an encouraging attempt by many candidates to use appropriate linking words and phrases.

Exercise 6

General comments

In general, this exercise was successfully attempted. The rubric was well understood, the word limit was well observed and there was little evidence of short work.

There are three prompts in Exercise 6 and arguably each one deserves a paragraph to give the whole piece appropriate balance. More able candidates used paragraphs to good purpose and they provided an effective division between the different ideas that the candidates needed to address. There was often a good attempt to supply a suitable introduction and brief concluding statement, in an informal register. Overall there was a good sense of form and shape to these letters. Less able candidates wrote one continuous paragraph, with little attempt to supply detail about the new headteacher or how they felt about the changes in their school. Most candidates concentrated on providing information about the changes themselves, which was the requirement of the second bullet point.

In Exercise 6, in addition to the bullet prompts, there is a visual guide to help candidates when selecting content for their writing. It must be emphasised that candidates are always free to choose their own material and those that do often produce pieces which have greater originality and ambition. Candidates must, of course, address and develop the three bullet prompts to achieve the higher bands on the grade criteria for content. In addition, candidates should convey a good sense of purpose and engage the reader's interest. Examiners are looking to reward those candidates who can demonstrate a more vital style and provide some innovative detail.

Examiners welcome the use of more ambitious and unusual language, but candidates need to be aware that pre-learnt phrases and expressions do not always work in certain contexts. Some candidates fill their writing with a wide array of inappropriate and poorly chosen idioms. Stock phrases and proverbs should not be included for their own sake. Colloquialisms need to fit the situation and should be chosen with care and not used excessively. In an attempt to use extravagant language, meaning is sometimes obscured.

Exercise 6

Changes affecting school life

It was somewhat disappointing to see that many candidates did not take the opportunity to include more engaging and original detail in their responses, bearing in mind that the task was asking them to address a topic with which many of them would have been familiar. It was interesting to note that most of the responses either praised the new headteacher for providing candidates with more free time or complained about a reduction in free time.

In this exercise, Examiners were looking to credit candidates who initially described the new headteacher in some detail. There was not much originality but some candidates made the piece more lively and enjoyable to read by introducing some humour into the description of the character. Stronger candidates responded to the rubric with more detail and expansion. Less able candidates did little more than use a single adjective with no further detail, 'We have a good new headteacher'. Overall, there was more detail provided about changes to the school than the description of the new headteacher. Many candidates wrote about the changes to the timetable and the conversion of the library into a new computer suite or similar re-building projects. In this respect, candidates closely followed the illustrations in the rubric. The third bullet point was covered briefly but, encouragingly, there was a range of emotions expressed, and many candidates wrote of their dissatisfaction at the new developments within the school.

The vast majority of candidates stayed on task and to the point. Most candidates remembered to write in paragraphs. Basic punctuation was generally sound, although there were candidates who substituted commas for full stops throughout the whole piece. There were some candidates who did not use capital letters, thus making one uninterrupted sentence on occasion. Overall the responses were generally safe and most candidates used a letter format with the correct salutation and appropriate conclusion.

Exercise 7

General comments

Most candidates were able to adopt a more formal tone and register for the final discursive exercise. There was a selection of four prompts - two for and two against the proposal in the title - to guide candidates. Less able candidates tended to stay very close to these cues, at worst copying them directly with little or no development or personal contribution. In similar fashion, some candidates often used the prompts as 'quotations' from 'other students'. For example, 'I asked people in my school and one student said, 'Life is serious enough, it is fun to read about...' etc.

More able candidates expanded on the prompts and showed some independence of thought. They also achieved some variety of style by, for example, the use of rhetorical questions. It is recommended that candidates are selective in their choice of prompts, perhaps one for and one against, and attempt to develop those in some depth rather than giving superficial coverage to all four. There needs to be evidence that candidates can develop arguments and persuade the reader of their convictions in order to gain access to the higher mark bands. Many candidates gave a balanced view and considered both sides of the argument with good use of paragraphs and linking words to support this. Word limits were well-observed and it appears as though time constraints at this stage of the paper were not a problem for the majority of candidates. There were some candidates who had obviously left themselves short of time and resorted to copying the prompts with little or no individual comment.

Exercise 7

Television and newspapers spend too much time reporting on famous people.

Many candidates did not appear to have particularly strong views on this issue and resorted to using the statements provided in the prompts on the examination paper. It was interesting to note that some candidates included politicians and political activists as celebrities. More mature candidates with a wider knowledge of world events were able to include examples of recent natural disasters and contrast the gravity of these with the gossip about the lives of certain celebrities.

By contrast, a number of candidates were careless in their reading of the rubric heading and produced pieces which named famous people in general terms, without reference to whether it is good or bad for the public to be subjected to so much coverage of their activities. This interpretation missed the real point of the argument and there was a sense that certain candidates had reproduced a previously written piece about celebrities in general. This approach should be avoided because such pieces are often of limited relevance and cannot be credited with higher marks for content.

More able candidates responded with a balanced argument, both for and against. They were able to expand widely on the subject prompts and produced pieces that were persuasive. There were many commendable attempts to intersperse the writing with rhetorical questions and to provide an introduction and concluding opinion. This gave a sense of cohesion to many of the pieces.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/31
Listening (Core)

Key messages

Teachers should continue to encourage candidates to keep their answers concise and relevant. Although the majority gave the brief responses required, there were still some who offered lengthy responses. This was sometimes counter-productive as they offered incorrect material first, or went on to negate their answer by offering contradictory material afterwards. In these instances the candidates lost the mark they might have gained by keeping strictly to the relevant detail. Even if the extra material was judged to be irrelevant (so that they still got credit for the answer) of course, the candidate had wasted precious listening time.

Teachers should also continue to encourage candidates to attempt answers where they are unsure. Candidates need to be made fully aware that an attempt at a phonetic spelling of the word – as long as it does not create another new word with a different meaning – can still gain credit, if it is considered a reasonable and clearly recognisable attempt. Another approach is to offer the answer in their own words, perhaps offering a synonym or paraphrase. Leaving blank spaces is unnecessary, as guesses can be correct.

A fair proportion of candidates made errors with the recognition of numbers in their responses to this paper. It is recommended that teachers should ensure candidates are familiar with basic numerals.

Finally, candidates should be warned against the use of correction fluid (forbidden in any CIE examination), or unclear crossings out, as these can leave the Examiner unsure of the intended answer. There were also occasions where letters had been formed unclearly, which led to Examiners not awarding the mark.

General comments

There was a wide distribution of marks, suggesting that the paper differentiated well between candidates. There were few omissions of questions, with even the less able candidate being able to access most of the questions. The evidence was that the majority of candidates knew what to expect in the examination and had been well prepared.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1 - 6

Candidates generally responded well to this section of the paper.

Question 1

This seemed a reasonably accessible opening question, with most being able to offer '5.45' correctly. It seemed that a few candidates would have benefited from practice with listening and writing numbers, as '5' appeared as '9' in quite a few responses.

Question 2

This seemed the most accessible question on the paper, with nearly all candidates recognising the word 'football'. 'Practice' was frequently wrongly spelt, but this did not stop candidates getting the mark.

Question 3

This question proved an effective discriminator. It demanded close listening, as many missed out on the mark by writing 'easy to buy' instead of 'easy to find'. Others could not be given credit because they had written 'easy to *fine*'. Candidates need to take care they do not create new words which clearly do not make sense in the context.

Question 4

Most candidates realised they needed to put more than one item in the answer, recognising the plural 'refreshments'. However, the question picked out those who did not listen really closely, since many candidates gave familiar pairings, e.g. 'cheese and biscuits', rather than the required 'juice and biscuits'. The spellings of both words caused difficulty, but the majority were able to have reasonable phonetic attempts and get the mark. Some candidates mistakenly offered the telephone number. Closer listening was needed in these cases.

Question 5

The word 'strap' caused most difficulty in this question, with many varied attempts, often creating new words which did not make sense in the context, e.g. 'stripe' and 'scrap'.

Question 6

Many candidates found this question challenging, and offered just one part of the answer. Those who did give the second part often neglected to be precise, so that they wrote 'the teacher wanted to mark it' but did not make it clear it would take place 'tonight' – an essential element of the answer. Although the language in this answer should have been familiar – 'email' and 'mark' – a surprising number of candidates found the words difficult to spell. 'Email' was often presented as 'emall' which did not get credit; 'going to mark it' often was written as 'gone to market'. Again, candidates need to be alert to the context and check their answer makes proper sense.

Question 7

This question overall discriminated very effectively and the less able candidates were still able to attempt it.

- (i) Although generally well answered, it was disappointing to see that so many candidates are not familiar with numbers in thousands. Common errors were the wrong number of zeros, and also writing the number correctly, followed by the word 'thousands', i.e. '34,000 thousand'. This is an area where specific teaching could benefit candidates.
- (ii) 'Adventure' caused some difficulty, although many reasonable phonetic attempts were credited.
- (iii) Although the language expected should have been familiar, the phrase '60 second video' caused problems for many candidates in Question 7. '67' was often offered for 'sixty second'. This item was the one most frequently omitted in the paper as a whole, again suggesting the need to practise recognising numerals.
- (iv) In this question, the word 'sail' caused most problems. It was frequently written as 'sale' and so could not be awarded the mark. 'Test' and 'tast' were often given for 'taste', neither of which could gain a mark, the former because it was a new word which did not quite work in the context, and the latter because it was not a reasonable phonetic attempt.
- (v) This question was generally well answered.

Question 8

Question 8 as a whole was more difficult for the candidates than Question 7.

- (i) This was the easiest item for candidates in this exercise. Most were familiar with the date and the conventions of writing a date.
- (ii) Quite a fair proportion of candidates did not get this mark because of poor or unclear handwriting. Some clearly wrote 'lost' instead of 'last'. Candidates need to be reminded that handwriting must be clear, especially in a question like this where the incorrect spelling created another word with a very different meaning.
- (iii) Many candidates, of all levels of ability, found this item very difficult. The answer required a sense of the live action at the track. A common error was to repeat the word 'TV'. Another was to give 'at the same time', thus not including the sense of live action as well as the TV and internet coverage. There were some good answers which offered alternatives to 'track' such as 'race' or 'grand prix'.
- (iv) This was another question requiring a large number as an answer. The same issues arose as in 7(i).
- (v) This question again proved challenging, with both elements – 'service' and 'refuelling' – requiring close listening.
- (vi) This item, along with the next, proved the most difficult part of the paper. The word 'harbour' appeared unfamiliar to many, with relatively few recognising the 'harb...' sound at the beginning of the word.
- (vii) Similarly, few candidates recognised the word 'floodlights' with many various attempts at the word being offered, often replacing the 'd' sound with 't' – 'flatlights' being a common response which received no credit. 'Flashlights' also appeared quite often – a word which candidates should have realised from the context could not be correct. In both (vi) and (vii), careful listening could have produced more accurate phonetic attempts. It is recommended that Centres encourage candidates to listen closely and attempt close phonetic representations of words they do not recognise. 'Fludlights', for example, scored a mark.

Question 9 and Question 10

These questions, as in previous sessions, required candidates to indicate whether a statement is 'True' or 'False' by ticking the appropriate box. The two questions had quite similar results, with candidates generally scoring reasonably well. They showed themselves to be well-practised at the format, with very few making the error of ticking more than one box, or of leaving a large number of blank boxes. There were again a few instances of candidates not making clear their corrections, perhaps leaving both boxes ticked or both crossed out. Candidate should be reminded of the need to make their answers absolutely clear for the Examiners.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/32
Listening (Core)

Key messages

Teachers should continue to encourage candidates to keep their answers concise and relevant. Although the majority gave the brief responses required, there were still some who offered lengthy responses. This was sometimes counter-productive as they offered incorrect material first, or went on to negate their answer by offering contradictory material afterwards. In these instances the candidates lost the mark they might have gained by keeping strictly to the relevant detail. Even if the extra material was judged to be irrelevant (so that they still got credit for the answer) of course, the candidate had wasted precious listening time.

Teachers should also continue to encourage candidates to attempt answers where they are unsure. Candidates need to be made fully aware that an attempt at a phonetic spelling of the word – as long as it does not create another new word with a different meaning – can still gain credit, if it is considered a reasonable and clearly recognisable attempt. Another approach is to offer the answer in their own words, perhaps offering a synonym or paraphrase. Leaving blank spaces is unnecessary, as guesses can be correct.

A fair proportion of candidates made errors with the recognition of numbers in their responses to this paper. It is recommended that teachers should ensure candidates are familiar with basic numerals.

Finally, candidates should be warned against the use of correction fluid (forbidden in any CIE examination), or unclear crossings out, as these can leave the Examiner unsure of the intended answer. There were also occasions where letters had been formed unclearly, which led to Examiners not awarding the mark.

General comments

There was a wide distribution of marks, suggesting that the paper differentiated well between candidates. There were few omissions of questions, with even the less able candidate being able to access most of the questions. The evidence was that the majority of candidates knew what to expect in the examination and had been well prepared.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1 - 6

Candidates generally responded well to this section of the paper.

Question 1

This seemed a reasonably accessible opening question, with most being able to offer '5.45' correctly. It seemed that a few candidates would have benefited from practice with listening and writing numbers, as '5' appeared as '9' in quite a few responses.

Question 2

This seemed the most accessible question on the paper, with nearly all candidates recognising the word 'football'. 'Practice' was frequently wrongly spelt, but this did not stop candidates getting the mark.

Question 3

This question proved an effective discriminator. It demanded close listening, as many missed out on the mark by writing 'easy to buy' instead of 'easy to find'. Others could not be given credit because they had written 'easy to *fine*'. Candidates need to take care they do not create new words which clearly do not make sense in the context.

Question 4

Most candidates realised they needed to put more than one item in the answer, recognising the plural 'refreshments'. However, the question picked out those who did not listen really closely, since many candidates gave familiar pairings, e.g. 'cheese and biscuits', rather than the required 'juice and biscuits'. The spellings of both words caused difficulty, but the majority were able to have reasonable phonetic attempts and get the mark. Some candidates mistakenly offered the telephone number. Closer listening was needed in these cases.

Question 5

The word 'strap' caused most difficulty in this question, with many varied attempts, often creating new words which did not make sense in the context, e.g. 'stripe' and 'scrap'.

Question 6

Many candidates found this question challenging, and offered just one part of the answer. Those who did give the second part often neglected to be precise, so that they wrote 'the teacher wanted to mark it' but did not make it clear it would take place 'tonight' – an essential element of the answer. Although the language in this answer should have been familiar – 'email' and 'mark' – a surprising number of candidates found the words difficult to spell. 'Email' was often presented as 'emall' which did not get credit; 'going to mark it' often was written as 'gone to market'. Again, candidates need to be alert to the context and check their answer makes proper sense.

Question 7

This question overall discriminated very effectively and the less able candidates were still able to attempt it.

- (i) Although generally well answered, it was disappointing to see that so many candidates are not familiar with numbers in thousands. Common errors were the wrong number of zeros, and also writing the number correctly, followed by the word 'thousands', i.e. '34,000 thousand'. This is an area where specific teaching could benefit candidates.
- (ii) 'Adventure' caused some difficulty, although many reasonable phonetic attempts were credited.
- (iii) Although the language expected should have been familiar, the phrase '60 second video' caused problems for many candidates in Question 7. '67' was often offered for 'sixty second'. This item was the one most frequently omitted in the paper as a whole, again suggesting the need to practise recognising numerals.
- (iv) In this question, the word 'sail' caused most problems. It was frequently written as 'sale' and so could not be awarded the mark. 'Test' and 'tast' were often given for 'taste', neither of which could gain a mark, the former because it was a new word which did not quite work in the context, and the latter because it was not a reasonable phonetic attempt.
- (v) This question was generally well answered.

Question 8

Question 8 as a whole was more difficult for the candidates than Question 7.

- (i) This was the easiest item for candidates in this exercise. Most were familiar with the date and the conventions of writing a date.
- (ii) Quite a fair proportion of candidates did not get this mark because of poor or unclear handwriting. Some clearly wrote 'lost' instead of 'last'. Candidates need to be reminded that handwriting must be clear, especially in a question like this where the incorrect spelling created another word with a very different meaning.
- (iii) Many candidates, of all levels of ability, found this item very difficult. The answer required a sense of the live action at the track. A common error was to repeat the word 'TV'. Another was to give 'at the same time', thus not including the sense of live action as well as the TV and internet coverage. There were some good answers which offered alternatives to 'track' such as 'race' or 'grand prix'.
- (iv) This was another question requiring a large number as an answer. The same issues arose as in 7(i).
- (v) This question again proved challenging, with both elements – 'service' and 'refuelling' – requiring close listening.
- (vi) This item, along with the next, proved the most difficult part of the paper. The word 'harbour' appeared unfamiliar to many, with relatively few recognising the 'harb...' sound at the beginning of the word.
- (vii) Similarly, few candidates recognised the word 'floodlights' with many various attempts at the word being offered, often replacing the 'd' sound with 't' – 'flatlights' being a common response which received no credit. 'Flashlights' also appeared quite often – a word which candidates should have realised from the context could not be correct. In both (vi) and (vii), careful listening could have produced more accurate phonetic attempts. It is recommended that Centres encourage candidates to listen closely and attempt close phonetic representations of words they do not recognise. 'Fludlights', for example, scored a mark.

Question 9 and Question 10

These questions, as in previous sessions, required candidates to indicate whether a statement is 'True' or 'False' by ticking the appropriate box. The two questions had quite similar results, with candidates generally scoring reasonably well. They showed themselves to be well-practised at the format, with very few making the error of ticking more than one box, or of leaving a large number of blank boxes. There were again a few instances of candidates not making clear their corrections, perhaps leaving both boxes ticked or both crossed out. Candidate should be reminded of the need to make their answers absolutely clear for the Examiners.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/41
Listening (Extended)

Key messages

- Centres are strongly encouraged to advise candidates to provide clear and legible responses. Examiners need to see the formation of individual letters and where handwriting is untidy this can be extremely difficult. It is not in a candidate's interest to provide responses which are difficult to read.
- Examiners reported an increased number of gaps left this session. It is always worthwhile making attempts, even if candidates lack confidence in spelling.
- In responses where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised not to list more than one response. This follows for two items i.e. two responses only.
- In longer responses, candidates should be careful to convey their ideas clearly. The use of own words is encouraged, but candidates should try to make sure that the response offered makes sense as a whole, and in context.
- Pencil should not be used to provide initial or 'draft' responses; it is better to use a pen from the outset and simply cross out responses which need to be altered.
- Candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for by highlighting the question words (e.g. 'how', 'why', 'when', etc.) and/or the key words in the question. Establishing what the question requires gives a strong indication of the type of answer that is likely to be successful. Examiners recommend more work in the classroom on developing pre-listening skills, particularly in predicting content.
- More work on homophones is encouraged. Examiners are often restricted in awarding marks because the word offered, a homophone, forms another word in regular usage e.g. 'by' for 'buy', and 'sale' for 'sail'. This brings meaning into doubt.

General comments

Examiners are keen to allow benefit of doubt to candidates, particularly in cases where understanding appears to have been conveyed, but with errors in spelling, grammar or structures.

Successful responses to short-answer questions were those which provided the detail required succinctly, and chose to do this by using note-form responses. Some candidates wrote too much and in doing so made it difficult for Examiners to ascertain the answer being suggested. Where several responses were offered, Examiners marked the first acceptable response. Providing a list of potential responses is not to be encouraged.

The most successful answers which required longer responses were those where the response had clear meaning as a phrase. Some candidates should re-read their longer responses to ensure clarity and that the idea is being conveyed as succinctly as possible. Examiners are not able to reward responses which do not make sense.

As regards spelling, phonetic attempts are always considered, and, in many cases, lead to marks being awarded. Where candidates offered an alternative spelling comprising the correct number of syllables and accurate vowel and consonant sounds, it was more likely that credit could be given. Some candidates could practice phonetic attempts by focusing on the number of syllables required and by re-creating the sounds of the key letters.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1 to 6 were based on six separate brief conversations or short announcements.

Question 1

This was generally answered well. Candidates mostly responded with 'juice' and 'biscuits', though 'chips' and 'biscuits' was seen, along with 'cheese' and 'biscuits'. There were many acceptable phonetic attempts at both 'juice' and 'biscuits'. 'Cookies' was allowed as a synonym for 'biscuits'.

Question 2

Some candidates were unfamiliar with the word 'strap'. Phonetic attempts that were not allowed included 'scrap', 'scrab', and 'strip'. Some candidates offered 'blonde with a black strap'.

Question 3

Question 3 required two ideas; 'by email' and 'to be able to mark it tonight'. Candidates did very well on this question, with a high degree of success. As long as the main idea of needing to mark the essay later that day or at night was present, the answer was allowed. Attempts that could not be credited included 'email because she left it at home' and 'teacher needs to market it'.

Question 4

This question often saw candidates provide all three responses on the mark scheme. This is fine, but there is always the danger of the unnecessary third response being incorrect and negating the mark. Responses not accepted included 'keep the phone off', 'where something bright', and 'do something bright'.

Question 5

This posed difficulty for many candidates who could not express the idea of a '10% reduction' clearly and fully enough. Examples of unclear meaning included '10% of the sales price', 'voucher of 10%', and 'an extra 10%'. Where numerical accuracy is required, candidates need to think of how to state the answer accurately and succinctly.

Question 6

Question 6 required full understanding of both elements (for one mark each). Candidates performed better on the first part, with many recognising the 'buy one, get one free' idea. 'Buy one free, get one free' was seen and was not allowed because of the confused meaning. On the whole, it was the second part that lacked detail in many responses e.g. 'because of his dad's birthday' or 'she was saving something special for her dad'. The key idea of saving money for a birthday had to be present. 'Setting up for dad's birthday' was seen on a number of occasions, and was not accepted.

Question 7 was based on an interview with an island caretaker.

Item 1 was answered extremely well. Very rarely, '3,400' was seen. Some candidates preferred to write the answer in words, which is fine, but then caused concern in the spelling of 'thousands'.

Item 2 was also answered very well. There were some variants of 'adventure' that could not be accepted such as 'inventure' and 'venture'.

Item 3 proved to be quite challenging to many. The application process required a '60 second video', and Examiners required this to be expressed with precision. The expression sometimes varied, and '60 s video', for example, was allowed. Candidates falling short offered 'submit a video', 'a 67 second video' and '60 minute video'. Phonetic attempts at 'video' were usually allowed, as were synonyms, e.g. '60 second film', '60 second clip'.

Item 4 proved to be very challenging with few accurate responses. Typically, '50' was given instead of the required '16'. Where '16' was stated, it was sometimes followed by 'sent' or 'shortlisted'.

Item 5 required two activities to be conveyed: 'sailing' and 'tasting'. Many candidates heard these words but some wrote 'sale' for the former and this could not be accepted as it creates another word. 'Selling' was sometimes seen, which of course is a very different idea. 'Testing' was also seen for the second element and was not allowed for the same reason. However, there were more correct responses than incorrect ones.

Item 6 saw a good degree of success with many candidates recording 'land' and 'water' in accordance with the expected responses in the mark scheme. Examiners were flexible with alternatives to both elements e.g. 'islands', 'on land', 'the sea'. An occasional incorrect response was 'promoting and blogs'.

Item 7 was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Incorrect responses usually offered verbs for the first element which were not synonymous with 'write'. For the second element, 'prevent' was sometimes seen instead of 'present'.

On the whole, Question 7 was found to be accessible to the majority of candidates and was generally answered well.

Question 8 was based on an interview about a grand prix car race.

Item 1 required the date when the first race was staged at the new venue. Candidates recorded a high rate of success in answering this question. Incorrect responses usually omitted either the year or the date in the month.

Item 2 saw a number of candidates write 'lost' for 'last'. The idea of a 'lost race' is quite different from the 'last race' and could not be credited. Otherwise, responses were generally as expected.

Item 3 sought to secure the idea that the race could be viewed at the track itself i.e. in the stadium, but also via the internet. Candidates appeared to find it difficult to provide both elements with accuracy. Some responses lacked clarity e.g. at the 'same time' was often seen. Others wrote 'millions and millions' in the first gap, and some candidates gave 'truck' for 'track'.

Item 4 was well answered with many candidates providing the required capacity of '50,000'. A few candidates gave '5,000' or '15,000'. Where 'capacity' was not known candidates tended to provide 'seats' or 'people' only.

Item 5 saw a large number of variations of 're-fuelled'. The main idea, of the cars needing to stop and have more fuel put into them was what Examiners were looking for, and in cases where incorrect spelling demonstrated this, the mark was allowed. Where a different idea was introduced, such as 're-filled' or 're-fulled', the mark was not allowed. Candidates were more familiar with 'serviced'.

Item 6 required candidates to state either 'journalists' or 'reporters'. This item was generally answered well, although there was a wide range of spelling attempts at 'journalists'. Where attempts included an additional syllable, e.g. 'generalists', the mark was not awarded.

Item 7 presented a challenge for many candidates. Relatively few appeared to be familiar with the word 'harbour'. Examiners required the 'harb' sound to be present in acceptable phonetic attempts.

Item 8 was answered very well, with the majority of candidates familiar with 'business' and 'school'. Where 'centre' was offered for 'school', this was allowed as synonymous.

Item 9 saw the greatest number of unsuccessful attempts in this exercise. 'Floodlights' was not known by some candidates, and resulted in lots of phonetic attempts, many of which could not be accepted.

On the whole, Question 8 was found to be straightforward and many candidates scored high marks in this section. The majority of candidates appeared to have found the content accessible.

Question 9 was based on an interview about the search for water on the moon.

9(a) required candidates to convey two ideas to gain the mark. Many candidates were able to recognise that the moon was regarded to be 'without water' or 'dry'. The evidence to contradict this, however, was often poorly conveyed. Examiners needed to be sure that candidates had understood the idea that ingredients that make water had been found, so there *might* be water present. Candidates who simply said that water had been found or that the moon was saturated with water had therefore misunderstood. In the final two questions on the paper Examiners are expecting higher level listening ability to be demonstrated, including inferential skill.

9(b) required that candidates understood the use of the word 'function' in the question. Responses were either given as expected in the mark scheme, e.g. 'making maps of the moon', or were completely wrong. Examples of the latter included: 'to find water', 'two from the space agency and one from India', and 'to take photos of the moon'. Some candidates misheard 'maps' and wrote 'naps'; this was not allowed as 'naps of the moon' is not logical.

9(c) emphasised 'recent' and this was the pointer for candidates to locate 'hydrogen' as the discovery. Candidates not picking up on 'recent' went further back and offered more general responses, e.g. 'detected water on the moon'. There were variants of 'hydrogen' and these were generally accepted, unless the spelling indicated that the word itself was not known. For the second element, 'south pole' was required and the only synonymous response accepted was 'south polar'. This question was reasonably well answered.

9(d) asked how the discovery of potential water supplies might help humankind, and the answer is that there will be no need to carry water to the moon as it will already have supplies. Candidates who offered the idea that humans on Earth would be able to use water from the moon were introducing a new idea not present in the interview and could therefore not receive credit. However, where candidates offered additional material, e.g. 'satellites/astronauts/lunar communities will have access to water', Examiners were flexible, unless the additional material led to confused responses. The question was not generally well answered, largely because many candidates stated that the moon's water could be used on Earth.

9(e) posed difficulty to some candidates. A sound understanding of the use of 'experiment' was necessary if responses were to be logical and clear. The experiment sought to send a probe into a crater to see if water was present. There were various attempts at wording this and successful ones included: 'probe crashing of crater', 'crash the crater expecting water', 'open crater to see if water there', and 'crush probe into crater'. Unsuccessful attempts included: 'crush the crater', 'crash the moon', and 'take the crater from the moon to check for water'. Overall, this was the least successfully answered item in Question 9.

Although Question 9 was challenging, less able candidates were able to make attempts at responses, with some success. Stronger candidates were able to score well.

Question 10 was based on a talk about a car that can travel underwater.

10(a) was very straightforward in that candidates needed to recognise that James Bond was the inspiration for the invention. This item was very well answered and Examiners were flexible with spellings of 'James Bond'.

10(b) also required a brief and straightforward response, '30 years' or '3 decades'. Some candidates wrote '30 years ago' and this of course is inaccurate. Unfortunately, where the spelling of 'decades' was given as 'decays', this could not be allowed. However, almost all other phonetic attempts were allowed.

10(c) tested candidates' understanding of what slows down underwater vehicles, the answer being 'their (heavy) weight'. This was generally well answered but some candidates offered 'they are heavy to submerge'. This introduced a different idea and was therefore not credited.

10(d) was found to be challenging by some. The expected response of 'two motors' was seen in less than half of the responses. Incorrect responses regularly included: 'three motors', or 'it is heavy'. Candidates who preferred to state that 'the engine is watertight' or that it was 'resistant to water pressure' tended to do well.

10(e) asked how passengers breathe underwater and more than half of the candidates correctly identified that an 'air tank' or 'compressed air' was used. Examiners allowed 'a tank like divers use' and this was seen. 'Comprest air' was seen regularly and this was allowed as a strong phonetic attempt.

10(f) generally provided the expected response of the doors possibly getting stuck (in the closed version of the car). Responses which could not be given credit included: 'so the doors won't get stuck', 'because it is heavy', 'for safety reasons' (which is in the question), and 'in case of emergency' (which is insufficient detail). There were many successful attempts using own words here, mostly in expressing the 'easier to get out in an emergency' idea, and it was good to see candidates processing the main idea and conveying logical responses.

On the whole, Question 10 worked very well and was shown to be accessible to candidates. There were very few situations where Examiners felt that candidates had not grasped the gist of the interview, or had struggled with the content and vocabulary.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/42
Listening (Extended)

Key messages

- Centres are strongly encouraged to advise candidates to provide clear and legible responses. Examiners need to see the formation of individual letters and where handwriting is untidy this can be extremely difficult. It is not in a candidate's interest to provide responses which are difficult to read.
- Examiners reported an increased number of gaps left this session. It is always worthwhile making attempts, even if candidates lack confidence in spelling.
- In responses where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised not to list more than one response. This follows for two items i.e. two responses only.
- In longer responses, candidates should be careful to convey their ideas clearly. The use of own words is encouraged, but candidates should try to make sure that the response offered makes sense as a whole, and in context.
- Pencil should not be used to provide initial or 'draft' responses; it is better to use a pen from the outset and simply cross out responses which need to be altered.
- Candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for by highlighting the question words (e.g. 'how', 'why', 'when', etc.) and/or the key words in the question. Establishing what the question requires gives a strong indication of the type of answer that is likely to be successful. Examiners recommend more work in the classroom on developing pre-listening skills, particularly in predicting content.
- More work on homophones is encouraged. Examiners are often restricted in awarding marks because the word offered, a homophone, forms another word in regular usage e.g. 'by' for 'buy', and 'sale' for 'sail'. This brings meaning into doubt.

General comments

Examiners are keen to allow benefit of doubt to candidates, particularly in cases where understanding appears to have been conveyed, but with errors in spelling, grammar or structures.

Successful responses to short-answer questions were those which provided the detail required succinctly, and chose to do this by using note-form responses. Some candidates wrote too much and in doing so made it difficult for Examiners to ascertain the answer being suggested. Where several responses were offered, Examiners marked the first acceptable response. Providing a list of potential responses is not to be encouraged.

The most successful answers which required longer responses were those where the response had clear meaning as a phrase. Some candidates should re-read their longer responses to ensure clarity and that the idea is being conveyed as succinctly as possible. Examiners are not able to reward responses which do not make sense.

As regards spelling, phonetic attempts are always considered, and, in many cases, lead to marks being awarded. Where candidates offered an alternative spelling comprising the correct number of syllables and accurate vowel and consonant sounds, it was more likely that credit could be given. Some candidates could practice phonetic attempts by focusing on the number of syllables required and by re-creating the sounds of the key letters.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1 to 6 were based on six separate brief conversations or short announcements.

Question 1

This was generally answered well. Candidates mostly responded with 'juice' and 'biscuits', though 'chips' and 'biscuits' was seen, along with 'cheese' and 'biscuits'. There were many acceptable phonetic attempts at both 'juice' and 'biscuits'. 'Cookies' was allowed as a synonym for 'biscuits'.

Question 2

Some candidates were unfamiliar with the word 'strap'. Phonetic attempts that were not allowed included 'scrap', 'scrab', and 'strip'. Some candidates offered 'blonde with a black strap'.

Question 3

Question 3 required two ideas; 'by email' and 'to be able to mark it tonight'. Candidates did very well on this question, with a high degree of success. As long as the main idea of needing to mark the essay later that day or at night was present, the answer was allowed. Attempts that could not be credited included 'email because she left it at home' and 'teacher needs to market it'.

Question 4

This question often saw candidates provide all three responses on the mark scheme. This is fine, but there is always the danger of the unnecessary third response being incorrect and negating the mark. Responses not accepted included 'keep the phone off', 'where something bright', and 'do something bright'.

Question 5

This posed difficulty for many candidates who could not express the idea of a '10% reduction' clearly and fully enough. Examples of unclear meaning included '10% of the sales price', 'voucher of 10%', and 'an extra 10%'. Where numerical accuracy is required, candidates need to think of how to state the answer accurately and succinctly.

Question 6

Question 6 required full understanding of both elements (for one mark each). Candidates performed better on the first part, with many recognising the 'buy one, get one free' idea. 'Buy one free, get one free' was seen and was not allowed because of the confused meaning. On the whole, it was the second part that lacked detail in many responses e.g. 'because of his dad's birthday' or 'she was saving something special for her dad'. The key idea of saving money for a birthday had to be present. 'Setting up for dad's birthday' was seen on a number of occasions, and was not accepted.

Question 7 was based on an interview with an island caretaker.

Item 1 was answered extremely well. Very rarely, '3,400' was seen. Some candidates preferred to write the answer in words, which is fine, but then caused concern in the spelling of 'thousands'.

Item 2 was also answered very well. There were some variants of 'adventure' that could not be accepted such as 'inventure' and 'venture'.

Item 3 proved to be quite challenging to many. The application process required a '60 second video', and Examiners required this to be expressed with precision. The expression sometimes varied, and '60 s video', for example, was allowed. Candidates falling short offered 'submit a video', 'a 67 second video' and '60 minute video'. Phonetic attempts at 'video' were usually allowed, as were synonyms, e.g. '60 second film', '60 second clip'.

Item 4 proved to be very challenging with few accurate responses. Typically, '50' was given instead of the required '16'. Where '16' was stated, it was sometimes followed by 'sent' or 'shortlisted'.

Item 5 required two activities to be conveyed: 'sailing' and 'tasting'. Many candidates heard these words but some wrote 'sale' for the former and this could not be accepted as it creates another word. 'Selling' was sometimes seen, which of course is a very different idea. 'Testing' was also seen for the second element and was not allowed for the same reason. However, there were more correct responses than incorrect ones.

Item 6 saw a good degree of success with many candidates recording 'land' and 'water' in accordance with the expected responses in the mark scheme. Examiners were flexible with alternatives to both elements e.g. 'islands', 'on land', 'the sea'. An occasional incorrect response was 'promoting and blogs'.

Item 7 was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Incorrect responses usually offered verbs for the first element which were not synonymous with 'write'. For the second element, 'prevent' was sometimes seen instead of 'present'.

On the whole, Question 7 was found to be accessible to the majority of candidates and was generally answered well.

Question 8 was based on an interview about a grand prix car race.

Item 1 required the date when the first race was staged at the new venue. Candidates recorded a high rate of success in answering this question. Incorrect responses usually omitted either the year or the date in the month.

Item 2 saw a number of candidates write 'lost' for 'last'. The idea of a 'lost race' is quite different from the 'last race' and could not be credited. Otherwise, responses were generally as expected.

Item 3 sought to secure the idea that the race could be viewed at the track itself i.e. in the stadium, but also via the internet. Candidates appeared to find it difficult to provide both elements with accuracy. Some responses lacked clarity e.g. at the 'same time' was often seen. Others wrote 'millions and millions' in the first gap, and some candidates gave 'truck' for 'track'.

Item 4 was well answered with many candidates providing the required capacity of '50,000'. A few candidates gave '5,000' or '15,000'. Where 'capacity' was not known candidates tended to provide 'seats' or 'people' only.

Item 5 saw a large number of variations of 're-fuelled'. The main idea, of the cars needing to stop and have more fuel put into them was what Examiners were looking for, and in cases where incorrect spelling demonstrated this, the mark was allowed. Where a different idea was introduced, such as 're-filled' or 're-fulled', the mark was not allowed. Candidates were more familiar with 'serviced'.

Item 6 required candidates to state either 'journalists' or 'reporters'. This item was generally answered well, although there was a wide range of spelling attempts at 'journalists'. Where attempts included an additional syllable, e.g. 'generalists', the mark was not awarded.

Item 7 presented a challenge for many candidates. Relatively few appeared to be familiar with the word 'harbour'. Examiners required the 'harb' sound to be present in acceptable phonetic attempts.

Item 8 was answered very well, with the majority of candidates familiar with 'business' and 'school'. Where 'centre' was offered for 'school', this was allowed as synonymous.

Item 9 saw the greatest number of unsuccessful attempts in this exercise. 'Floodlights' was not known by some candidates, and resulted in lots of phonetic attempts, many of which could not be accepted.

On the whole, Question 8 was found to be straightforward and many candidates scored high marks in this section. The majority of candidates appeared to have found the content accessible.

Question 9 was based on an interview about the search for water on the moon.

9(a) required candidates to convey two ideas to gain the mark. Many candidates were able to recognise that the moon was regarded to be 'without water' or 'dry'. The evidence to contradict this, however, was often poorly conveyed. Examiners needed to be sure that candidates had understood the idea that ingredients that make water had been found, so there *might* be water present. Candidates who simply said that water had been found or that the moon was saturated with water had therefore misunderstood. In the final two questions on the paper Examiners are expecting higher level listening ability to be demonstrated, including inferential skill.

9(b) required that candidates understood the use of the word 'function' in the question. Responses were either given as expected in the mark scheme, e.g. 'making maps of the moon', or were completely wrong. Examples of the latter included: 'to find water', 'two from the space agency and one from India', and 'to take photos of the moon'. Some candidates misheard 'maps' and wrote 'naps'; this was not allowed as 'naps of the moon' is not logical.

9(c) emphasised 'recent' and this was the pointer for candidates to locate 'hydrogen' as the discovery. Candidates not picking up on 'recent' went further back and offered more general responses, e.g. 'detected water on the moon'. There were variants of 'hydrogen' and these were generally accepted, unless the spelling indicated that the word itself was not known. For the second element, 'south pole' was required and the only synonymous response accepted was 'south polar'. This question was reasonably well answered.

9(d) asked how the discovery of potential water supplies might help humankind, and the answer is that there will be no need to carry water to the moon as it will already have supplies. Candidates who offered the idea that humans on Earth would be able to use water from the moon were introducing a new idea not present in the interview and could therefore not receive credit. However, where candidates offered additional material, e.g. 'satellites/astronauts/lunar communities will have access to water', Examiners were flexible, unless the additional material led to confused responses. The question was not generally well answered, largely because many candidates stated that the moon's water could be used on Earth.

9(e) posed difficulty to some candidates. A sound understanding of the use of 'experiment' was necessary if responses were to be logical and clear. The experiment sought to send a probe into a crater to see if water was present. There were various attempts at wording this and successful ones included: 'probe crashing of crater', 'crash the crater expecting water', 'open crater to see if water there', and 'crush probe into crater'. Unsuccessful attempts included: 'crush the crater', 'crash the moon', and 'take the crater from the moon to check for water'. Overall, this was the least successfully answered item in Question 9.

Although Question 9 was challenging, less able candidates were able to make attempts at responses, with some success. Stronger candidates were able to score well.

Question 10 was based on a talk about a car that can travel underwater.

10(a) was very straightforward in that candidates needed to recognise that James Bond was the inspiration for the invention. This item was very well answered and Examiners were flexible with spellings of 'James Bond'.

10(b) also required a brief and straightforward response, '30 years' or '3 decades'. Some candidates wrote '30 years ago' and this of course is inaccurate. Unfortunately, where the spelling of 'decades' was given as 'decays', this could not be allowed. However, almost all other phonetic attempts were allowed.

10(c) tested candidates' understanding of what slows down underwater vehicles, the answer being 'their (heavy) weight'. This was generally well answered but some candidates offered 'they are heavy to submerge'. This introduced a different idea and was therefore not credited.

10(d) was found to be challenging by some. The expected response of 'two motors' was seen in less than half of the responses. Incorrect responses regularly included: 'three motors', or 'it is heavy'. Candidates who preferred to state that 'the engine is watertight' or that it was 'resistant to water pressure' tended to do well.

10(e) asked how passengers breathe underwater and more than half of the candidates correctly identified that an 'air tank' or 'compressed air' was used. Examiners allowed 'a tank like divers use' and this was seen. 'Comprest air' was seen regularly and this was allowed as a strong phonetic attempt.

10(f) generally provided the expected response of the doors possibly getting stuck (in the closed version of the car). Responses which could not be given credit included: 'so the doors won't get stuck', 'because it is heavy', 'for safety reasons' (which is in the question), and 'in case of emergency' (which is insufficient detail). There were many successful attempts using own words here, mostly in expressing the 'easier to get out in an emergency' idea, and it was good to see candidates processing the main idea and conveying logical responses.

On the whole, Question 10 worked very well and was shown to be accessible to candidates. There were very few situations where Examiners felt that candidates had not grasped the gist of the interview, or had struggled with the content and vocabulary.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/05
Oral Communication

Key messages

- Please read and become familiar with the *Teacher's/Examiner's Notes* booklet. This contains detailed guidance on how to conduct the tests, assess candidates' performance, and prepare the samples to be returned to CIE. Far fewer transgressions would occur if this booklet was read in full beforehand, and referred to during the examination process.
- Conduct Part A at the beginning of the test so that candidates know the format of the whole test and are aware that Part B is not assessed.
- If the warm-up phase does not indicate an appropriate topic for a particular candidate, please avoid selecting a topic which is clearly unsuitable. There are still instances where a candidate answers in the negative when an area of possible interest is mentioned, and the Examiner nonetheless proceeds with a card on that topic area, or an area closely linked with it.
- Begin Part D by utilising the first two prompts on the topic card rather than your own opening questions. This ensures that the flow of conversation remains focused and that candidates begin in a confident manner.
- Ensure that a focused discussion develops in Part D by utilising the last three prompts to explore the depth of the topic so that candidates can illustrate their higher level speaking skills. Examiners are required to use all five prompts.
- Remain within the allowed timings: 2–3 minutes for Part B and 6–9 minutes for Part D. Tests which are too short or too long are likely to be counter-productive.
- Please do not allow candidates to deliver speeches or monologues. Speeches do not enable candidates to engage in a genuine and spontaneous discussion. In such cases, it is unlikely that a mark above the Band 4 level for the *Development & Fluency* criterion would be acceptable because little or no conversation has taken place.
- Examiners need to be sure that the appropriate objectives have been met in the *Development & Fluency* criterion before issuing 9 or 10 marks. The candidate needs to demonstrate the ability to contribute at length to the discussion, to respond successfully to changes of direction brought about by the Examiner, and to sustain a focused discussion.
- Please note that if a Centre chooses to divide its entry across the two syllabuses; that is, enter some candidates for syllabus 0510/05 (oral endorsement) and other candidates for syllabus 0511/05 (count-in oral) in the same examination session, a full sample and the accompanying paperwork is required by CIE for each component entry.

General comments

Moderators reported that more Examiners are recognising that the five prompts on the topic cards need to be used, and that they should be used in sequence, to help promote developing discussions.

More centres are now submitting samples on Compact Disc which is how CIE prefers to receive the recordings for this component. It is strongly recommended that Centres use digital equipment to generate audio files which can then be transferred to a CD. Please use recognised audio file formats that can be played on common computer software (e.g. mp3, wav, wma). There is no need to use the blue cassette inserts to record the candidates in the sample; a list of candidates and their numbers on the CD cover is fine. It is also better if the individual tracks on the CD are re-named to those of the candidates themselves (instead of 'track 1', 'track 2', etc.). If at all possible, please do not use analogue recording and audiocassettes.

Please note that Moderators utilised the 'CW Amend' form on more occasions this session to correct the occasional inaccurate marking at some Centres. The CW Amend is used for re-assessment of individual candidates and not for correcting trends of lenient or severe marking.

Moderators would like to remind Centres to carry out thorough clerical checks to ensure that the mark sheets provided are accurate and consistent with each other. The marks on the Summary Form should be identical to those presented to CIE. It is also recommended that the addition of the criterion marks be checked; errors in addition are sometimes found during the moderation process.

Please ensure that the Summary Forms are included in the package. This is the most important document for the external Moderator because it records the criteria marks as well as the total mark for the candidate. The Examiner who conducts the tests is responsible for completing the Summary Form and he/she should sign and date it. The form also records the oral test card given to each candidate and, in effect, it is the working record of the examining undertaken.

Part A – Brief explanation of the test format

Moderators note that some Examiners still prefer to conduct this part of the test as a reminder at the Part C stage. There are still some Centres at which no explanation of the test format is given before Part D begins. Centres are reminded therefore that Examiners should explain briefly what is going to happen in the course of the test just after the candidate has taken his/her seat and been introduced. It is better for both the candidate and the Examiner if Part A is conducted at the beginning so that the candidate is immediately aware that Part B, the warm-up, is not assessed.

Part B – The warm-up

The warm-up should be used to try to select an appropriate oral test card. Examiners should not miss an opportunity to present a suitable topic for discussion, particularly when a candidate has expressed an interest in an area for which one of the cards would generate a productive conversation.

Please therefore aim to draw out candidates' hobbies and interests and avoid talking about school matters or anything which might make candidates uneasy e.g. nervousness, or other examinations being taken, or anything which is unhelpful in informing Part D. There are Centres at which the warm-up focuses too much on school life. Moderators also noticed that some Centres are incorporating informal discussion of the topics themselves into the warm-ups. Neither of these approaches is acceptable.

A sensible approach is to stay within the 2–3 minutes allowed and to gain an early idea of a candidate's interests. Please also use the warm-up to relax the candidate, to get to know a little about him or her, and to prepare the candidate for Part D and for formal assessment.

Part C – Selecting the topic, handing out the card, and allowing preparation time

Please note that the Examiner chooses the oral test card. Under no circumstances should a choice be offered to the candidate.

The selection of oral test cards should not be random or prepared beforehand; it is not fair to candidates to choose cards in this manner. Topics should be selected to try to match each candidate's interests and ability and Moderators are listening to see how, and how well, this is being done by Examiners.

Part D – The Conversation

The best discussions are relaxed and allow a natural conversation to flow, with skilful Examiners picking up on points made by candidates and returning to the oral test card at appropriate times to ensure focus. Examiners should certainly work through the five bullet point prompts in the given order but should remember to extend the discussions beyond the prompts to ensure a full and rounded discussion (of between 6 and 9 minutes) takes place.

Examiners are reminded that development of the conversation is an integral part of the assessment. What is expected is that Examiners will help guide candidates through the levels of the discussion. The prompts on the oral test cards increase in sophistication and move from the personal through the general, to the more abstract and challenging; thereby allowing stronger candidates to illustrate higher level speaking skills. Less able candidates are not always expected to engage fully or successfully with prompts 4 and 5, and Examiners will need to simplify the ideas in these prompts to accommodate and support these candidates.

Moderators noted that when the first two prompts on the topic card are utilised from the outset, the discussions tend to be successful, with the candidates growing in confidence.

Examiners are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that candidates do not offer speeches or monologues. In such cases, the Examiner should intervene quickly and begin a conversation.

Comments on specific questions

A Working life

This was a popular topic. Most candidates were able to talk about a preferred career, and many of the choices involved professions already linked to their own families. The second prompt was well covered and most agreed that school provided a variety of skills for later life. Discussion of the third prompt involved more use of the imagination. The fourth prompt was challenging but provided a variety of responses and certainly proved to be a very good discriminator. The fifth prompt was also well attempted. Examiners generally used the final two more challenging prompts for all ability levels, and this is encouraging.

B Your local community

This was also a popular topic. The first two prompts were well answered. Most candidates were positive about the friendliness and helpfulness of their local community and wished to see improvements to its infrastructure. The third prompt was sometimes a ceiling for the weaker candidates, and produced a re-run of the ideas already expressed. The fourth prompt was challenging and some Examiners steered clear of the final prompt. Examiners are reminded that for less able candidates paraphrasing should be attempted so that the main idea embodied in a prompt is made accessible.

C Reliance on technology

There was a good deal of time spent on the first prompt with many candidates describing their various electronic gadgets in some detail. Examiners sometimes got caught up in this and allowed this part of the conversation to go on for too long, leaving less time for the more challenging elements which were often bundled together. The third prompt made candidates think hard. The fourth prompt was well attempted and many candidates agreed with the suggestion and drew on experiences based on their own families and friends. The final prompt was clearly discriminating. Overall, this was an accessible topic which many candidates were able to discuss, presenting interesting ideas throughout.

D Journalism

Many candidates gave full and interesting accounts of their own journalistic experiences, mostly connected to tasks undertaken as part of school-based projects. A surprising number of candidates declined the offer of a career in journalism. The second prompt revealed that some candidates lack awareness of global issues, remaining securely in the local context. The best discussions were formed around the third prompt which produced stimulating responses from candidates with personal experience of journalistic reporting of political events. For the fourth prompt, the strongest responses were able to grasp the concept of bias in news reporting. There was relatively little discussion around the final prompt, perhaps because candidates are so familiar with '24 hour news' coverage.

E Healthy living for children

This was a popular topic which had lots of relevance to many candidates. The opening prompt often resulted in a detailed personal discussion and was therefore well covered. The second prompt tended to repeat ideas already raised, and was probably a natural follow on from the first. The third prompt was well attempted with a wide range of reasons given, including poverty, poor health care provision and lack of education. The fourth prompt raised the bar somewhat, and stronger candidates emphasised the crucial role of international organisations as well as what individual governments should do. Many candidates adopted a similar stance generated by the third prompt and simply rejected the suggestion in the final prompt. Overall, this was a topic which gave candidates of all ability levels a chance to demonstrate their conversational skill.

F Creativity

Many candidates considered themselves to be creative and an encouraging number explained their involvement in various artistic activities. The second prompt usually involved a local artist rather than an international figure, although there were examples from the immediate family also. The third prompt was well attempted and there was a good range of responses with some very mature ideas about the composition and style of the proposed arts school. There was a good deal of disagreement with the suggestion in the fourth prompt which therefore proved a good stimulus for discussion. Many candidates took the view that advanced technology is driving the creative movement and that a fusion of both ideas is the way forward. The final prompt proved accessible to most and provoked discussion around the idea of being born with talent. Views generally seemed to hold that creativity could indeed be taught but that the raw talent needed to be there initially.

G Cultural differences

Many Examiners clearly felt that this topic was well within the experience of international candidates and it was generally well attempted. Contributions in response to the opening prompt were sometimes over-long, however, with examples of all three elements covered unnecessarily. Some Examiners could have intervened earlier here to move the discussion forward. Many candidates drew a comparison with a school friend of theirs from a different culture for the second prompt, comparing life in the school environment to life at home. The third prompt brought forth many good ideas with universal agreement that cross-cultural exchanges are a positive development. The last two prompts proved to be generally accessible but with a rejection of the central and core idea proposed in the fourth prompt. Concrete ideas were rare for the final prompt but candidates generally agreed with the suggestion.

H Violence in society

The opening prompt stretched some candidates who had no first-hand experience of what constitutes violent behaviour. Many therefore relied on the global idea of conflict. The second prompt tended to produce responses along the lines of 'talk to the two parties'. The third prompt led to more interesting responses and seemed more within the experience of candidates, providing many with the opportunity to quote the latest video games as examples of violence. Some Examiners allowed candidates too much time on this segment, however. The last two prompts were often covered together as two sides of the same coin. Most candidates agreed with the sentiment in the fourth prompt and were hesitant over the word 'never' in the fifth prompt.

I International sport

This topic was very accessible to candidates. The opening prompt often involved football and this was the signal for a comfortable introduction, but one which needed the Examiner to control and move on from. There were some surprisingly unadventurous responses to the second and third prompts. Stronger candidates stressed the importance to the countries themselves of success in sport, showing understanding that it was not just the sport itself that was the issue. The idea proposed in the fourth prompt was often rejected and candidates emphasised the income generated by large international tournaments. Some candidates commented on the recent economic success of the Olympics and the football World Cup. The final prompt brought mixed reactions and proved to be a good discriminator. Overall, the card was accessible to a wide range of candidates but did not always produce the depth of discussion which was possible.

J Shopping habits

Some Examiners needed to be firmer with candidates talking in response to the opening prompt, because of the tendency to provide too much detail which occasionally became mundane. The second prompt needed some explanation at times before candidates were able to grasp the concept of the social element. There was general agreement with the third prompt and stronger candidates touched upon the inequality of the idea presented. The fourth prompt proved challenging and although most agreed with the suggestion, there was some insecurity about the difference between producers and retailers. The final prompt was interpreted in an interesting variety of ways. Some simply saw a great opportunity to walk into shops and pick up items for nothing, while others saw the social implications of supplying basic essentials, such as energy, water and even fuel, as free items, especially for the needy. On the whole, this topic was well handled in the early stages but not always explored with sufficient challenge or depth in the later stages.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0511/06

Oral Communication (Coursework)

Key messages

- Centres are reminded of the ethos of coursework, which is to provide the candidates with a broad range of activities and a variety of ways for their second language speaking skills to be demonstrated, and assessed. Evidence of this should be presented on the Individual Candidate Record Cards, which should contain full descriptions of the activities and tasks undertaken.
- If a teacher is not completely confident, however, in designing and implementing three different and productive activities comprising relevant tasks then it is advisable to opt for Component 05, the Oral Test.
- It is important for IGCSE English as a Second Language that the coursework activities are designed to accommodate and illustrate second language English competence. Please remember that the assessment criteria test language skills and not presentational or performance skill.

General comments

A Moderator is seeking to fulfil two main duties when listening to a Centre's coursework: initially to confirm the Centre's interpretation and application of the assessment criteria, but also to confirm that a variety of appropriate tasks and activities has been completed.

For the moderation process to be completed efficiently, Centres need submit only a recording of candidates engaged in a discussion or a conversation. This might be with a Teacher/Examiner or it might be with another candidate.

CIE encourages sample work to be sent in using CDs, and it is preferable for all of the candidate recordings in the sample to be collated onto a single CD. The use of modern, digital recording equipment is strongly recommended.

Comments on specific tasks

This session saw a good range of coursework activities in those Centres where Teachers recognised that coursework should form an integral part of the learners' weekly activities. Productive coursework included candidates making individual presentations, working with a partner and then also taking part in group discussions. A balance of role playing and authentic material was present in stronger work, and it was good to see literature included in some activities.