

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11
Passages

Key Messages

Successful answers show evidence of wide reading—a range of material from a range of diverse sources - such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspaper articles, blogs, advertisements and advertorials.

Good answers move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as conventions used, formats, genres, personification, alliteration and punctuation to consider the effects of such features in relation to their context and the extract as a whole.

Learners who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone, are those who tend to achieve the best results.

A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spellings, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General Comments

The passages selected for this series offered a wide range of styles, settings and linguistic features to examine, together with opportunities for imaginative responses to the passages. Weaker answers often do less well because they answer an imagined question rather than paying careful attention to the precise terms of the real question. This approach can lead to commentaries with a great deal of redundant and irrelevant material. Successful commentaries explain the key characteristics of a text and demonstrate how technique supports them, rather than simply identifying language and style features without further development.

Answers that did less well sometimes neglected to write about the complete text, in some cases saying nothing at all about the last paragraph.

The commentary sections of the papers produced some very pleasing and perceptive work but there were also a significant number of responses which did not make sufficient relevant points. To prevent this, candidates are advised not to spend overlong in explaining language features. Candidates do not need to explain what alliteration or hyperbole are, but rather, why they are being used in the precise context and what effect this has. The best commentaries make precise points as economically as possible and then move on to the next consideration.

Good answers kept any introductory remarks very brief, and engaged with the key characteristics of the passage as soon as possible.

All parts of the paper saw some engaged and entertaining directed writing. There were some impassioned and fluent additions to the addresses in **Question 1**, in which style and tone were convincingly reproduced. There is still some reluctance among candidates to take full advantage of the imaginative possibilities of the directed writing task, this can result in some very colourless responses, too heavily reliant on the events of the original.

Some less successful answers were marked by inaccuracy of expression in the directed writing exercise. The best directed writing responses combine imaginative writing with a good level of accuracy.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1A

This passage produced a great deal of very engaged and sometimes passionate writing, in some cases the wish to identify with the speaker's sentiments got in the way of clear consideration of language features. The

majority of learners had some understanding of the techniques employed in the speech and most of them recognised the more obvious oratorical elements. Almost all understood the use of repetition and the contrasting nature of “I refuse to accept” and “I believe”. The use of the inclusive pronouns was universally recognised and intelligently commented upon. Stronger answers understood the implications of powerlessness in the expression “flotsam and jetsam” but very few picked up the significance of the words “audacious” and “audacity” in creating the sense of boldness which characterises the speech. The metaphor of “wounded justice” was well understood and intelligently commented upon as was the imagery of the “starless midnight of racism”. Most answers gave consideration to the metaphor of the “known pilots and the unknown ground crew” demonstrating that the whole passage was being considered rather than simply the opening paragraph. There was a general understanding of the implications of the lion lying down with the lamb but the sense of security offered by “none shall be afraid” was virtually ignored.

A significant number of answers employed overlong quotations from the passage, way beyond what was needed to substantiate the points being made; quotation is most effective when it is concisely used. There was a tendency to simply repeat the circumstances of the speech as an opening paragraph. This is clearly a waste of time and the best answers engaged with the language techniques of a passage from the very outset of the response. Candidates should also beware of simple transcription errors: there were a fair number of “Noble Prizes”.

Question 1B

There was a generally very competent and often purposeful response to this exercise. The rhetorical devices, particularly the use of repetition were well used and the serious and lofty tone of the original was generally sustained and in some cases almost matched. Metaphor was employed and was sometimes strikingly successful. Strong engagement with the exercise sometimes led to a complete absence of punctuation; technical accuracy suffered at times as the candidates strived for rhetorical effects. Weaker answers tended to repeat the phraseology of the original but this exercise was successfully tackled by most.

Question 2A

This was the less popular of the two optional passages, yet it offered a wide range of language features and effects which might have been commented upon. The passage was essentially an exercise in the creation of mood, highly lyrical in places and allowing learners a potentially wide range of features for comment.

Competent answers understood the nostalgic tone of the writing and some picked up on the innate melancholy and sense of loss which develops as the passage progresses. The sense of the writer’s closeness to the natural world was largely confined to an understanding of the personification of the trees as companions of her world, possessing individual characteristics and sound signatures. There was also general comment on the prevalence of references to sound within the passage and how the author’s creation of atmosphere relies heavily on what she heard in her childhood rather than what she saw. Some good answers commented that the accumulation of sound detail creates a sense of the loneliness and detachment of her life. There was a strong sense of contrasts in the passage: the desert and the city silence and sound, but this was not always reflected in the answers. Successful answers not only identified language features but considered why they were being used and what overall effect the writer was trying to achieve.

Almost all answers recognised the onomatopoeic creation of the street sounds; only the best developed the point significantly: recognition of a language feature is not in itself enough, for high reward they need to explain its effects within the writing. The latter part of the passage was largely neglected. This meant that only a few devoted sufficient attention to the figure of the reed piper and the significance of his music.

Question 2B

The exercise produced some very fluent and competent responses, which in some cases made a very effective attempt to capture the lyrical quality of the original. Many chose to transpose to an urban setting and rely on the contrast between the delicate sounds of the original and the abrasive quality of city life: New York was a popular choice, car horns and screeching tyres popular inclusions. Comparatively few made any real attempt to recreate the pervading sadness and nostalgia of the original but there were many successful creations of soundscapes which demonstrated a good understanding of the original.

Question 3A

This was the more popular of the two optional passages and was generally well understood. There was good appreciation of the contrasting presentation of the skills of the instructor and the embarrassing clumsiness of

the writer. Most candidates readily picked out the “drunken seal” diving of the author in opposition to Robert’s “grace of a swan”. The awkwardness of the situation and the writer’s eagerness to please were generally commented on; better answers picked up on the elements of sarcasm and irony. The chatty and confiding style of the article was also recognised, though that was often described as being “informal”, which is too loose a term to be given significant credit. Many answers referred to the internal debate and dialogue which is a recurring feature of the passage but it was rarely fully explored. The injunction to “play it cool” was often commented upon but not often fully developed. The best answers commented upon the use of the present tense to create the immediacy of events and the effects of the choice of tense is an area to which learners might give more consideration. There was an understanding of the hyperbolic writing but only the best responses picked up on the references to romantic screen conventions in “I might die”, “technically I have to marry him”. There was little comment upon the structure of the writing but very good answers discussed how the terse paragraphing and short sentences are used to convey the fast and continually changing circumstances of the adventure

Question 3B

This exercise allowed learners to write in the character of the much admired Robert and to continue and develop the self-deprecating humour of the original. Most answers developed Robert as a relatively sympathetic character, characteristically as a very laid-back young man mystified by the behaviour of his candidate. The stronger responses found, not only a convincing voice for the character but also a convincingly different version of the events of the passage. Far less effective were the responses which simply reversed the original and added no altered view of events from Robert. Competent responses picked up the use of short sentences to quicken the pace of events. The exercise gave the opportunity to candidates to give a comic view of events and this was not as eagerly seized upon as it might have been.

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All parts of the paper saw some engaged and entertaining directed writing. There were some impassioned and fluent additions to the addresses in **Question 1**, in which style and tone were convincingly reproduced. There is still some reluctance among candidates to take full advantage of the imaginative possibilities of the directed writing task, this can result in some very colourless responses, too heavily reliant on the events of the original.

Some less successful answers were marked by inaccuracy of expression in the directed writing exercise. The best directed writing responses combine imaginative writing with a good level of accuracy.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1A

There was a generally sound response to this passage and the broad intention of the speech was well understood.

Most answers recognised the compelling impact of the opening paragraph. Good answers commented on the structure of the passage: its allocation of a separate problem and solution to each paragraph, its division into three terse and authoritative sentences. There was a very good general understanding of the recurring theme of the need for unity among the African nations; good answers supported this point clearly from the text. Some less successful answers used very extended quotations from the text, especially the paragraph listing the extent of African resources.

The best answers made use of the many adjectives which might accurately be applied to the tone of the passage, such as determined, authoritative and sometimes, clearly angry. However, most answers did less well, simply describing it as being “formal”, which was a much less precise definition. Many answers gave attention to the idioms of the “milch cow” and tackling “the bull by the horns” and some understood the contrasting qualities that they implied. There was also good understanding of the vocabulary of illness and health which the speech employs, the use of words such as “symptoms” and “chronic” were regularly noted. There was also recognition of the inspirational tone of the final paragraph with its promise of a transformation of the continent.

Weaker responses paraphrased elements of the passage or simply offered an exercise in comprehension.

Question 1B

Competent responses successfully adopted the first person plural and used this to create a tone of some urgency and authority. Almost all of the responses took up the theme of unity and the strongest answers found some imaginative development of the original. Weaker answers tended to paraphrase the original material, sometimes with minor alterations, but without giving any sense of progression or purpose. The tone and style of the original were often quite effectively realised and the sense of indignation concerning the past and determination to improve the future were well conveyed. There was also a general adoption of the structure of the original passage with its punchy paragraphing.

Question 2A

Some answers interpreted this passage as a promotion of Tahiti as a tourist destination whereas it is a very reflective and in places, quite dark assessment of a very specific time and place.

The most successful responses understood the balance of moods within the passage and accurately charted the progression of the passage from apparent paradise to something very flawed. These responses also picked up the foreshadowing effect of the French nuclear tests in the opening paragraph and the mention of looting in the Tahitian capital. The use of sensory reference was commented on, in particular the multi-coloured sunset and the smell of orange blossoms. Stronger answers noted the writer’s gradual intimations of disillusion in the “sobering jolt” and the night “slowly blowing out the scene” but almost all understood the change initiated by the arrival of “And night”.

Good answers gave the latter part of the passage full attention. Some noted the significance of the group’s departure from the hotel but the writer’s identification with the Tahitian ghost people was rarely commented upon. There was a great deal to comment on in the final paragraphs but many answers seemed to stop when the island began to seem less paradisaical. Very few answers gave any consideration to the reference to “Fletcher Christian’s mutineers”, yet the passage clearly suggests that the group and the author are in some ways mutineers against the tyranny of modern life.

There was little discussion or examination of the final paragraph, but the best answers recognised that here the author makes a very ambivalent summing up of her experience.

Question 2B

Competent responses produced some effective portraits of location and good responses created a sense of emotional response to the setting. Some learners opted for another tropical island setting and these responses often offered only a slightly altered version of the glorious sunsets and turquoise seas. More adventurous responses were often located in city settings and some of these used urban detail in a very effective and unexpected manner. Extreme weather locations were another popular choice and these often presented some very effective descriptions of the landscape and conditions. Several features of the passage were redeployed in many answers. One of these was the author’s use of “And night” which reappeared as several different times of the day and was often used to initiate a change of direction and tone in the passage. Another feature which was generally used was the author’s concluding sentence “I called it hope”. This was used with varying effectiveness as a conclusion - the repetition of language features in exactly the

same places as the original will often not be nearly as effective as in the original. Weaker answers stayed very closely with the main circumstances of the original: in some cases the writer was accompanied by the same group of backpackers. The better answers followed the rubric in basing their answers on “the style and features of the original”, but went beyond mere copying of the circumstances and characters of the passage.

Question 3A

This was a popular choice and was generally well understood. Weaker responses tended to rely on the narrative elements and there was a tendency to paraphrase sections of the text rather than examine the language and style. Stronger answers gave attention to the setting, characterisation and the increasingly strange progression of events in the passage.

Good answers recognised the speed with which the author establishes the setting, the character of Yumiko and the major events of the passage, all in the opening sentence. There was also some understanding of the economical use of dialogue and the way in which it established the character of both the author and Yumiko. In less successful answers there was a tendency to focus on the contrasting characters of the author and Yumiko and not give enough attention to the developing chaos in the restaurant. There was also relatively little attention given to the pattern of the passage, with crisp dialogue fragments interspersed by explanatory narrative charting the growing mayhem of the restaurant. There was lot of feature spotting which examined small areas of the writing at length but without throwing any real light on the general effect of the passage. An example of unhelpful feature spotting was the frequent comment on the alliteration effect of a “thick slab of salmon”, which was probably accidental and certainly added nothing of importance to the passage.

In most cases, candidates recognised the key element of the passage, which is the transformation of Yumiko’s attitude towards her boyfriend and by the author’s implication, life itself. This was understood with varying degrees of sophistication but the best answers charted her “liberation” from Satisho and conformity and even suggested the smug and self-congratulatory tone of the author.

Question 3B

This was generally competently answered question which brought forth evident enjoyment of the passage. The style and pattern of the original, not always noted in the commentaries, was generally reproduced in the writing exercise. Stronger answers took the character of Yumiko and gave it a little more complexity and a slightly stronger view of events and of her teacher than are suggested in the passage. Less confident responses simply took the events of the passage and retold them, without much alteration or suggestion of character viewpoint. This approach really proves nothing more than simple comprehension of the passage. Good answers demonstrated an awareness of the particular qualities of the writing and ideally, some imaginative development of the character and situation.

Generally, however, the responses to the exercise were able to make some identification with the character of Yumiko and to suggest her direction after the events of the passage.

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Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1A

The general progression of this passage, moving from the complexities of the past to present celebration and future responsibilities, was well understood and commented upon. There was also a general understanding that this speech was to some extent a “pep talk” to the nation with recurring reminders of the responsibilities

that were incumbent on the newly born nation. Some of the more subtle elements of the text were missed and weaker responses were based mainly on narrative comments or paraphrase.

Only the best answers picked up on the theme of destiny and of a nation's fate being fulfilled, which is present from the very opening. Some responses recognised the sense of this being a momentous occasion, which is established in the opening paragraph, but this was not widely acknowledged. Far better understood was Nehru's choice of vocabulary to make the speech as inclusive as possible. The use of the personal pronouns was a common observation, though again, this was not strongly supported by use of the text.

Many candidates recognised and discussed the imagery of labour pains and the birth of a "new star" and made some perceptive comments on their effects. The trope of the mother country was also well understood and commented on, though almost always as an example of personification. The best answers remarked upon the sense of a nation awakening that is clearly created in the words "after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free..."

Question 1B

Competent answers echoed the didactic, school-masterly tone of the original and made use of the "we" and "our" address in speaking to the nation. Good answers made confident use of imagery, particularly celestial, with stars being repeated with the addition of comets and blazing suns. Most answers took their cue from the words: "That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving..." and the tone of exhortation and even of rebuke was commonly used. Weaker responses simply reworked elements of the original and there was some undisguised use of the original material. That said, this was a largely competent and intelligently handled response.

Question 2A

There were some perceptive and sympathetic responses to the question but weaker answers were based on the wrong assumption that this was an extract from a travel brochure and was advertising the attractions of the Wli Waterfall: this completely missed the point. Very good answers made sympathetic identification with the writer's near mystical experience of the location and picked up on the fact that the waterfall "connects with the soul". Some of the references to religion and rituals were picked up, the priest dispensing holy water for example, but the sense of encountering a profoundly mystical place was only developed in the very best responses.

Weaker answers earmarked specific language features and described them, often at wasteful length, without fully suggesting their effects within the passage. An example of this was the recognition of recurring use of alliterative phrases such as: "I watched and I watched", the water kept "falling and falling". The alliteration was noted but the hypnotic and incantatory quality was not always commented on. Recognising the existence of language features is only the first step of a basic response-for higher reward, the necessary second step is to demonstrate their effects within the passage,

Stronger answers also mentioned the therapeutic qualities of the waterfall and the contrast with the "polluted air", "plastic waste" and "hustling human parasites" of the city, but this was missed by many.

Question 2B

In the many good answers, learners seized upon the clear direction they had been given and took the opportunity of pouring cold water on the enthusiasm of the author.

Prosper was often very strongly and convincingly conveyed and ranged from being bored with the waterfall to loathing it with fierce intensity. Almost all the responses were to some extent hostile to the tone of the original and there were effectively scathing accounts of the pretentiousness of journalists. There were also some interesting varieties of tone in Prosper's attitude to his daughter, some of these managed to create an approach that was both credible and tender.

Question 3A

Stronger responses recognised and tried to explain the sardonic quality of the tone but weaker answers missed the irony entirely.

Good answers commented on the 'snapshot' style of writing, describing how the use of the present tense and the terse sentencing create a dry and journalistic quality. There was some misunderstanding of the

presentation of Pascal, with less successful answers taking the author at face value and regarding him as a figure of menace, rather than as being slightly ridiculous. Stronger answers recognised the gradual relaxation of the writer's straight face towards the end of the passage.

The latter part of the passage offers a wide selection of the author's sardonic observation of the couple and especially Samantha; this was often ignored.

Question 3B

Good responses understood the ironic distance of the original and utilised it well, creating both credible characters and structures. They made good use of the passage's clipped sentences, to echo the style of the original. In weaker answers there were some very improbable scenarios and couples.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21

Writing

Key Messages

- imaginative responses need to be planned and structured more effectively with greater narrative / descriptive control;
- argumentative / discursive writing needed to be shaped more effectively and developed in terms of detail and depth.

General Comments

Some of the responses to **Section B** were very short; these were self-penalising: short work is often under-developed and lacking in convincing details. Candidates who wrote a brief plan often wrote more structured responses. The use of a short plan to clarify ideas before writing definitely helps the thinking process. It is important to read the ‘small print’ to each question carefully, to avoid writing inappropriately. Quite well written responses sometimes scored less highly because of lack of focus. This planning stage is crucial, but quite often neglected.

Where Imaginative Writing is concerned, candidates were not always clear about how to structure the opening of a story or novel, or how to write in a way to engage the reader. More often than not, paragraph structure was neglected. Candidates need to ensure that they address inconsistent tenses. They should also pay closer attention to the different types of sentence, in order to write with more variety.

Where Writing for an Audience is concerned, candidates need to think carefully about “for whom” and “from whom” so that they engage more in the idea of voice, thinking more carefully about forms of address for their audience and the use of vocabulary.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

Regeneration

There were some lively and original interpretations. Successful answers showed focus on setting and mood and ended with a cliff hanger. They displayed a balanced narrative between the run-down aspects of the neglected neighbourhood preceding the actions of the developers. The best answers used character’s memories to remember their old home/town before it was regenerated; and many good answers used actual places, which made the composition more convincing. Often a first - person narrative was employed, of someone who has risen from poverty to change their own environment, though the ‘outsider’ element sometimes provided more suspense and contrasting moods. Many of the successful answers used vivid imagery to depict the setting, scene, and mood.

Less successful responses tended to be swept away by plot and to overlook these key words. They often drifted from the idea of regeneration to a complaint about the neglect. Sometimes there was very little about anyone “developing” the area. A lot of weaker responses were not openings, or part of a story, or even very narrative-based; there were quite a few discursive essays. Less successful answers struggled with the concept of change.

Question 2

A Change in the Weather

This was generally handled in an appropriate way. Successful answers showed use of evocative description capturing particular places at a moment of weather change. There were some metaphorical interpretations, which only worked well where candidates had included detailed description. Stronger answers showed the effects of the weather on the people and/or animals that had to change their plans in accordance with the change. There were some very good responses on a 'climate change' level, though it was then harder to describe a particular "scene". Some answers explored the emotional landscape of relationships and integrated nature as a character, keeping the descriptive element as a core focus.

Less successful answers relied sometimes on highly artificial prose and this led to the misuse of certain words in an effort to be original. Many used endless lists of what a storm can do in a given place, starting with the clichéd "baby-blue" sky, followed by a sudden and terrifying hurricane. Many less successful answers slipped into a solely narrative mode, disregarding the essential 'descriptive' element of the task.

Question 3

Ambition

This brought forth a variety of effective answers. "To succeed at any cost" was an interesting aspect of the question: many candidates chose psychopathic or otherwise criminally minded individuals, living on the edge. Stronger answers were very driven personality narratives in many cases, often dealing with a criminal sub-text, gangster power and so forth; quite a few really excellent answers described a character's rise to power from the 'ghetto' type environment.

Less successful answers demonstrated a general tendency to be too ambitious with timescale, which often led to the narration of a whole story, not just the opening. Plot then took over and the candidates sometimes lost sight of the central focus of the exercise until the last few lines. In numerous scripts, the sense of an appropriate form was lacking. Less successful were often the family conflict stories, where (typically) the father figure expects too much of the son. This was acceptable enough, but a lot of the less effective answers dwelt too long on this aspect of motivation and forgot to delineate much character. As usual, there were many 'motiveless crime' stories, which, by definition of course, do not highlight motivation.

Question 4

Corruption

The idea of public corruption was treated too generally in many weaker answers. The opportunity to use contrasting voices was not always well exploited. Less successful answers did sometimes achieve contrasting viewpoints but had little specific content - they generalised about corruption, or railed against the writers of the article without introducing specific criticisms based on what would have been close readings. Less successful answers used a personal tone, or inappropriate overly-emotive language. Many candidates seemed to find the question too abstract and found it difficult to provide a convincing context.

Better answers provided key examples of local government corruption and addressed these issues differently in each letter. Strong answers mentioned specific types or cases of corruption. One or two Snowden-associated pieces were effective.

Question 5

Fan magazine

Candidates generally wrote well from their own knowledge of a specific celebrity personality. Some really effective responses highlighted the star's personality through interview format and subtly got them to admit to their 'good works'. Other treatments included profiles with a surprised narrator wondering what all the fuss was about, when the star went AWOL, took drugs publicly or offended their fan-base inappropriately.

Less successful answers tended to use a fairly crude format for the essay without a properly controlled paragraph structure. There were a lot of formulaic answers which listed either the star's entertainment highlights, or their unacknowledged (thus far) helping out in African villages, or both. Some candidates

simply did not mention the 'bad bits'! The answers where the stars themselves wrote their justifications were understandably trickier to accomplish.

Question 6

Gap Year

The best answers showed some knowledge of travel and notions of different foreign places. Strong answers mentioned specific locations to highlight the difference between problems/benefits. Some good answers used anecdotes sparingly within the overall structure of the pros and cons. Many were realistic speeches where the audience were put at ease at the beginning and reminded of the opportunities in a summary.

Less successful answers were written very generally and without a focus on the terms of the questions, which require them to specify "their experience" and call for a sense of "problems and benefits". Some candidates did less well because they forgot the form and wrote an article, not a speech. Some were side-tracked in terms of task and tone: being snide to the candidate-audience (or more often staff) about how they themselves had hated School and could not get away quickly enough (these were plastered over occasionally by irony though it still did not work); recounting long and rambling 'stories' of incidents on their travels; stereotyping poorer cultures in the world as helpless, or certainly in need of *their* help; moralising in a generalised way about what they had learned, and by implication, what the poor candidates in front of them should learn; and finally, not speaking about a gap year at all, but listing what had happened at the School.

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Paper 9093/22

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Where Writing for an Audience is concerned, candidates need to think carefully about "for whom" and "from whom" so that they engage more in the idea of voice, thinking more carefully about forms of address for their audience and the use of vocabulary.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

The Settlers

There were some lively and original interpretations. Stronger answers showed focus on setting and motivation and ended with a cliff hanger, whilst weaker ones tended to be swept away by plot, and overlooked the key words of the title, which led to some inappropriate handling of the question. Stronger answers included a number of effective responses about colonisation (often from the 'native's' point of view). Some good answers showed improvement in the situation, though most opted for a negative, land-wasting angle.

Less successful answers reflected a stereotypical point of view in a simple narrative, in which the older men were manly and the women foraged for berries and did the washing; with unrealistic ideas about a communities being built in a couple of days. Quite a lot of responses missed the "rural" element. This question seemed to prompt more complete stories, rather than openings. Time passing, as the transformation takes place, was seldom tackled effectively.

Question 2

Laughter and Tears

This question provoked some rather sentimental, sometimes mawkish responses. Less successful answers tended to be quite plot-driven and to lose sight of the key prompt ('write a descriptive piece') for the answer. Many less effective answers tended to be repetitive, using the terms of the question throughout without really creating a sense of happiness or sadness. There were also quite a few narrations and even discursive essays on why we laugh or cry. These were sometimes successful when the candidate managed to embed description through giving examples of particular events where we might laugh or cry.

Stronger answers were subtle in their approach. Some strong answers had original ideas, such as a circus setting or a funeral. The pieces that worked best tended to stick to one setting and examine laughter and tears within this one setting. A common theme was marriage, and there was a clear sense of cultural context at play, with a number of candidates describing a girl leaving her parents and joining her husband and his family to begin a new life. The sense of contrasting emotions was often conveyed effectively as a result, but the focus was on narration which resulted in a lack of descriptive language features in many responses.

Question 3

Suspicion

This produced a variety of effective answers. The task of writing an "ending of a novel" needed to be kept in focus, and few candidates managed to successfully deal with the 'backstory' elements succinctly. The best answers showed a focus on the notion of suspicion from the first sentence. There were many good answers with climactic endings or denouements showing the reasons why protagonists did not trust each other beforehand. The use of first person narrative generally led to the best work here. Some well-crafted responses involved murder / gangster plots, which had developed, engaging novel endings with credible characters and situations.

Less successful answers were heavily plot-driven and tended to lose touch with the central theme early on. There were many dialogue-heavy accusation pieces where the characters simply blamed everyone (mostly fathers) for betrayals from the past. A small number of candidates went for a failed romantic relationship/ marriage and these responses tended to be significantly weaker than the ones in the gangster/ murder genre.

Question 4

Two Politicians

Apart from a few exceptionally able attempts at this question, it was not treated well by candidates. First the format of a leaflet was rarely used - very few candidates wrote realistic "leaflet" type texts, which should be punchy and attractive to the reader. Instead a common treatment was to offer two contrasting speeches. Quite a few were couched in the format of a letter, which was unhelpful. Less successful answers showed haziness about the political process and about the issues in focus. Many were content to merely flatter their readers and promise everything to them. Some candidates wrote all about why the old or the young were important, but did not really include any policies. Quite a few candidates interpreted 'older voters' as OAPs and promising more care homes / hospitals / instructions for technology etc., unwittingly insulting their audience.

Stronger responses were specific with policies and they used political rhetoric. The most successful candidates managed to create contrasting voices directed at the very different audiences suggested by the question. Successful responses had candidates demonstrating an ability to use rhetorical devices for effect.

Question 5

Sportsperson's Injury

This was generally handled in an appropriate way. Strong answers showed an excellent grasp of a sporting career. Effective answers tended to use the interview format, with an anchor-person to lead the (sometimes over-modest) sportsperson through their achievements. Both interviews and 'live broadcasts' were used, incorporating all aspects of the question and including detail about the career of the sportsperson. Very few of the answers considered the press conference, which is the most common form in which these announcements are usually made.

Less successful candidates had trouble with the format of the "broadcast script". Their answers showed a lack of clarity about the sport in question or how a career in sport develops. Many were justifications of the sportsperson's achievements; complaining about their injury and hoping they *would not* be retiring; or a dull listing of their life story, elaborating at great length how they were inspired to get into the sport in the first place. Less successful answers allowed the interviewer to hold the floor more than the 'sportsperson' or were non-specific about the sport / ignored the retirement and the injury.

Question 6

The New Socialisers

This title led to some excellent answers from the candidates' own experience. This type of writing often showed a greater level of articulacy and a greater tone of authority. Stronger responses focused on the parents' generation as a contrast (rather than the candidates' earlier memories of their own generation). Successful compositions were well structured by different aspects of socialising, often by witty headings. The more successful candidates typically included anecdotes and provided balanced discussion of social media versus more traditional socialising, or argued convincingly that the new way was just as valid as the old.

Sometimes in less successful answers there was an imbalance in the treatment of one generation or the other. Some wrote the same answer about the wonder of social media which was a question in the previous exam series. A lot of the less effective responses were unstructured, with many using the 'scattergun' approach of writing down all they knew about how people like them socialised, with scandalised parents in attendance. There seemed to be many short answers as well, for this question. Less successful answers repeated the same point several times (e.g. social media bad, face-to-face meetings good). Another approach was to examine the manner in which the young and old talk to each other, rather than the mediums through which they socialise. These responses were not without merit, but tended to be more limited in scope.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23

Writing

Key Messages

- imaginative responses need to be planned and structured more effectively with greater narrative / descriptive control;
- argumentative / discursive writing needed to be shaped more effectively and developed in terms of detail and depth.

General Comments

Some of the responses to **Section B** were very short; these were self-penalising: short work is often under-developed and lacking in convincing details. Candidates who wrote a brief plan often wrote more structured responses. The use of a short plan to clarify ideas before writing definitely helps the thinking process. It is important to read the ‘small print’ to each question carefully, to avoid writing inappropriately. Quite well written responses sometimes scored less highly because of lack of focus. This planning stage is crucial, but quite often neglected.

Where Imaginative Writing is concerned, candidates were not always clear about how to structure the opening of a story or novel, or how to write in a way to engage the reader. More often than not, paragraph structure was neglected. Candidates need to ensure that they address inconsistent tenses. They should also pay closer attention to the different types of sentence, in order to write with more variety.

Where Writing for an Audience is concerned, candidates need to think carefully about “for whom” and “from whom” so that they engage more in the idea of voice, thinking more carefully about forms of address for their audience and the use of vocabulary.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

The Old Town

Strong responses were seen where candidates gave interesting, thoughtful responses, with setting and mood clearly addressed. An effective way of addressing the terms of the question, ‘a historic part of a modern environment’ was when the narrator moved through the modern bits of a city to chance upon its older parts.

Less successful responses talked about the “old town” as a separate entity and not part of a bigger environment. This was a common error - to address a ‘historic part...(which) remains unchanged’ but not in setting of a ‘modern environment’. Less effective answers also lacked narrative structure and features; or addressed ‘setting’ in the rubric well but were lacking in ‘mood’; or were not an opening to a story. There were some attempts to write a complete ‘short story’ – which then became plot driven responses, lacking in both mood and setting. Less successful answers repeatedly stated that ‘nothing had changed’ in the ‘old town’.

Question 2

Winter Turns to Spring

Generally, candidates were comfortable with the idea of a descriptive piece and they wrote reasonably well on this clear and contrasting theme. There were often some quite interesting metaphorical answers. Successful answers explored the emotional climate of relationships and integrated nature as a character, keeping the descriptive element as a core focus. This question brought out some poetic responses.

Less successful responses tended towards narrative form and lacked descriptive contrast. Some listed features or wrote what people do in winter or spring, rather than describing the seasons. Also, there was some confusion about spring - a few candidates misunderstanding and describing summer.

Question 3

Confrontation

In general, this was the most popular question, bringing forth a variety of effective answers. Successful responses managed to effectively convey a sense of character and motivation. Stronger answers wrote with a sense of realism and credible beliefs. There was a clear focus on a character being confronted/ challenged in some way, and there were some interesting ideas around the notion of confrontation.

Some candidates seemed to struggle with adapting their writing to suit the form of this task, and tended to write a whole story rather than a novel opening. Often, 'beliefs' was understood to be religious beliefs. Less successful answers were about a fight or argument, ignoring the idea of beliefs being challenged.

Question 4

World Fitness for All

This was handled rather well. Stronger answers were specific and realistic about grievances. They mentioned specific weaknesses of the firm and expressed truly "justified disappointment". Some excellent answers to this combined outrage with substantial grievance. This question provoked a real variety of content that read like lived experience. There was some good use of sarcasm.

Less successful answers took the approach of objecting to the slogan itself - e.g. that it is unrealistic for 'all' people to be fit because some are ill, in hospital or struggling with obesity. There is a point here, but answers like this had limited scope. There were some candidates who were a little over-passionate and blunt about their hatred of the health Centre, thus achieving the effect of humour - or of a rant, rather than justified disappointment.

Question 5

Wealth Creators

There were a few outstanding responses, which acknowledged the concerns about favourable treatment and then went on to create a sophisticated counter-argument by listing all the benefits of businesses and generating wealth.

Question 6

Getting Around for Less

Stronger responses focused on budgeting within one country, which is what the key words in the question actually are. The strongest answers were those that had a close focus on the question – the problems and benefits of travelling on a budget. The more successful candidates, as with other questions, provided specifics and included examples and tips.

Some candidates overlooked the terms of the question and simply focused on describing their own travels. Whilst offering some interesting descriptive writing, the sense of purpose/ audience/ task was therefore lacking in these responses. A small number of responses revealed a misunderstanding of the question with candidates writing a persuasive text, advertising a travel company or website, instead of an article about travelling on a restricted budget. Less successful candidates were not specific about their country or focused only on one aspect of money saving for budget travellers.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31
Text Analysis

Key Messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different language use and styles.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provides the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis and register to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own reworking, with an emphasis on selecting suitable aspects of language from both texts to examine in an analytical manner the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, link these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General Comments

Some candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. The carefully structured nature of most of their responses suggest that they used the fifteen minutes reading time purposefully to begin to formulate their responses to the three texts presented to them (one in **Question 1**, two in **Question 2**) by identifying distinctive linguistic features that informed detailed plans found in their answer booklets. However most candidates attempted little planning work or did not create plans at all. A sizeable proportion of the responses to **1 (b)** and **2** appear to have been primarily based on candidates "gleaning hints" from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than analysing the texts themselves in any purposeful way. A mere reiteration of the content of passages also produces a very limited response. It is good to note that very few candidates now resort to simply quoting large tracts of the relevant text(s), linked together with short passages of superficial commentary.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response *informed by* the style and language of the accompanying text, in this Session either a transcription of a TV or a radio broadcast on an aspect of sport. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this Session these were a blog entry and a comment on an online comments blog. Careful consideration of the target audience (in both cases a general one which is more specifically defined by the contexts revealed by the transcriptions) and the requirement to clearly convey a personal perspective or opinion is required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120-150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is invaluable in responding to **Question 1 (b)** where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the blog entry or comment produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the respective transcription. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register (varying levels of formality), format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference any evaluation of speakers' or writers' opinions. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in

the transcriptions and comparing the effects they produced with those in the candidate's own reworking was a key discriminator in the best informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is also required as candidates are assessed for: comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and, an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential differences between the Texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that more candidates are now adopting a topical approach - these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated more comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

The majority of candidates still evaluate each Text in turn. In order to ensure comparisons are eventually made under this second approach, aspects of the first Text analysed on its own terms must be later selected and evaluated alongside those of the second Text as it is analysed on its own merits in the second part of the response. It should be recognised that the second approach thus leads to a degree of duplication of effort and candidates must work carefully to guard against rushed and superficial comparative analysis and conclusions that can be too pithy and do not offer any further insight.

Few rubric infringements were noted – most instances involved candidates producing responses to **1 (a) and (b)** only. It was apparent that some candidates devoted too much time and effort in composing their Directed Writing pieces for **1 (a)** and then produced brief responses to **1 (b)** and **2**. Centres and candidates need to appreciate that **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **1 (b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) The pieces of directed writing candidates produced featured generally solid engagement with the form and style of an online blog, providing suitably reworked references to the original material – a transcription of a conversation forming part of a CNN television broadcast on the morning of the 2003 New York City marathon - through suitable reflections on “citizen athlete” Sam Austin’s training regime and his participation in his first full marathon. All but a handful of candidates grasped the central premise that they were adopting Sam’s persona based on the details about him they gleaned from the transcription of the conversation and that he was writing for an audience, that he was not writing a private diary entry for his eyes only. Many candidates addressed Sam’s followers directly although most appeared to conceive of a more general audience (whose members plausibly only first read the blog due to the publicity Sam received courtesy of the TV broadcast). Entries were usually dated and some candidates included an entry number (mindful the blog would have been kept for eight weeks already). Salutations were usually of an informal nature, as was much of the ensuing content, that suited the blog’s context and Sam’s purposes in writing it. Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120-150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces. The majority of candidates definitively concluded their entries, usually by signing off as Sam, rather than leaving them open-ended in accordance with the instruction to ‘write the opening’ of ‘the last of (Sam’s) entries’. Most of the candidates following closely the direction to write an opening of the entry usually briefly revealed Sam’s race result, reflected retrospectively on his training regime and its effectiveness and responded to some of the comments made by the commentators before preparing to transition to details about the race itself (beginning with his delayed start) through the use of an ellipsis. A significant number of candidates erroneously produced blog entries that predated the marathon rather than being situated ‘on the night after running the marathon’.

Reworking of the transcription primarily centred on expressing Sam’s perspective of running the marathon and his attitude towards the commentators’ sceptical comments about his chances of finishing at all. Attention to details contained in the transcription is important in both regards. As it was entirely within the candidate’s gift to decide what sort of result Sam achieved, it was entirely appropriate to learn that he may have not finished the marathon, that he finished and (to usually

quote the transcription verbatim) 'beat oprah winfreys time'. It was far less plausible that he might set a time considerably 'under four hours' let alone set one usually only achieved by elite marathoners yet a significant number of candidates recorded Sam's time as being in the two-three hour range that does not take close account of his meagre eight week preparation time. Most candidates at least briefly reworked the ideas concerning training to run a marathon presented in the transcription, sometimes adding their own on such matters as diet and footwear. Sam's emotions ran from elation (and sometimes rampant triumphalism and even anger if it was judged he had been mocked by the commentators) to resignation (his training had been inadequate), self-recrimination (he should have heeded advice to train for far longer) and heightened self-awareness (he will run the marathon again next year having prepared properly). More astute candidates ensured Sam thanked his blog's followers for their support and offered his encouragement for them to set their own goals and persevere until they were achieved (whether he was successful himself or not).

Strong responses included purposeful, focused and concise re-working of a range of detail drawn from the transcription in a consistent blog style that took account of its wider audience in some manner, usually by employing an encouraging tone and sometimes engaging in a slightly self-deprecating form of humour. Weaker responses lacked fluency and accuracy and featured very little or insecure re-working of the transcription's content. There was usually little audience awareness exhibited as well as an uneven sense of purpose that occasionally featured emotional ranting against the commentators.

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the transcription of the TV programme conversation and the blog entry produced by each candidate in response to 1 (a). Few candidates simply paraphrased the contents of the transcription and the blog entry. There was a number of instances of candidates failing to recognise the nature of the transcription with little evidence of understanding the methodology required to analyse it. The purpose and hence the conventions of a transcription consisting of utterances with regular pauses and turn-taking between speakers were not appreciated by these candidates. Many candidates thus attempted to compare the punctuation and grammar of the their blog entry to the transcription, often at considerable length but little analytical effect. Simply using the comparative words 'written' and 'spoken' in the opening sentence of their responses ought to have ensured these candidates were immediately on the correct analytical track. Overall it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription of spontaneous speech.

A considerable number of candidates did not adopt an integrated approach to their answer and sought to deal with each text separately. Whilst it is possible to compare in this way it is usually easier and far more efficient and fluent if an integrated approach is used. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate or better knowledge and understanding of the conventions of television coverage of a live event and the purposes of both informing and entertaining an audience primarily consisting of the adult general public. These candidates clearly appreciated that the participants in the conversation were experts, one an experienced TV presenter (Carol Costello) and the other an athletics club director (Julia Emmons) offering her knowledge and experience of marathon running training regimes.

The most common difficulty many candidates seemed to experience was in interpreting the tone of the conversation between Costello and Emmons. It was often interpreted in too starkly negative terms - sarcastic, mocking, insulting (or 'belittling') – owing to indiscriminate focus on a few instances of the speakers' use of raised volume when directly referring to Sam Austin ('CITIZEN ATHLETE' and 'QUITE MISERABLE') and the paralinguistic feature of laughter. This appears to have led a significant number of candidates to compose a blog entry by Sam that was chiefly an aggrieved and angry riposte that led to their commentaries focusing on that limited aspect of comparison. Stronger candidates were more able to see that the dialogue was not meant, at least, to be as mocking as it might appear to other candidates, and were more likely to interpret the exchange as incorporating this humorous approach in order to keep viewers engaged.

The majority of candidates satisfactorily attempted to accurately reference and evaluate at least some of the following aspects of the transcription: the conversation features highly co-operative speakers whose utterances generally correspond to adjacency pairings with occasional

collaborative overlaps entirely consistent with a polite spontaneous conversation; the conversation was efficiently managed by the lead speaker Costello who used her prompts to exercise a high degree of accommodation (and active encouragement) of Emmons who responded in extended utterances to provide the necessary facts and expert opinion; and the speaker with least broadcast experience, Emmons, amplifies her comments in an unstructured way typical of spontaneous speech with the use of non-fluency features such as back-tracking, repetition and re-formulating – ‘well (.) thats how you start (.) and i would actually (.) actually (1) if if i was the citizen athlete (.) who hasnt started yet (.) i would take a full year’ – and also uses her own past experience of marathon running as a discourse marker: ‘i ran the marathon in washington dc’. Most candidates appeared to appreciate that the participants have no need to use each other’s names, as the conversation’s context is a fairly relaxed Sunday morning TV programme and there are currently no other participants and the viewing audience can see as well as hear all of the exchanges.

In more substantive commentaries candidates usually made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. Their commentaries clearly exhibited an ability to select and analyse specific textual detail in both the original text and the directed writing. In the case of the transcription this might entail focusing on the repeated use superlatives, especially by Julia Emmons (‘its WONDERFUL’ ... ‘it’s a wonderful thing’) and amelioration (‘bless his heart’) and the irreverent and humorous colloquial term used at the end of the transcript to refer to the marathoners generally – ‘your fellow suckers’. Many noted the ‘OH’ in l. 1 as being used similarly as the ‘oh’ in l. 29, where Costello is making a voiced pause to be precise in announcing the time in both cases. One candidate felt this might be her own idiosyncratic way of pausing to make people pay attention to one of her more prosaic professional tasks as a TV presenter. Another candidate used Sam’s persona in his blog entry to state that Emmons has a vested interest, as director of an athletics club, in advising people to train long and hard for a marathon rather than ‘doing it themselves’ in only eight weeks as Sam had done. Better responses also exhibited an awareness of the ways in which the on-line written format of their blog might contain features typical of spoken language.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by speakers in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in their blog entry in a comparative fashion. By so doing such responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis of 50:50 or 60:40 on the transcription and blog entry.

Question 2

As was the case for **1 (b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B’s language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques their authors employed and awareness of the effects created. Instead candidates often simply paraphrased some information contained in the Texts in turn and offered a brief summary of their contents, usually demonstrating a surer grasp of the meanings produced by Text B (perhaps as the candidates were better accommodated by lexis targeting young adult readers – ‘You’ve moved out of home, you’re living at uni, you’re free!’ is Text B’s first sentence). Some candidates concentrated on punctuation, paragraph length and producing lists of the linguistic devices they could identify without the support of concise quotation and precise comments that would facilitate the communication of a more thorough appreciation of the effects of the writing. Some ability to recognise the use of form and language to instruct readers in each Text, but in isolation from each other, was usually demonstrated: Text A’s list of ‘Ingredients’ and numbered, step-by-step ‘Method’ with imperatives and precise cooking terminology to assist the reader in preparing one dish – ‘1. Put the white wine vinegar and shallots into a saucepan and slowly reduce to a syrup’ – as opposed to Text B’s simple structure utilising sub-headings (‘At the shops...’) to signpost sections of general advice often rendered as syndetic listing: ‘Stock up on staples! Soup, pasta, rice, meat and fish, meal bases and sauces’. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Candidates producing comparative and hence more substantive responses readily understood the difference in purpose and audience between the Texts: introducing, contextualising and providing the recipe for a Welsh fish dish for mature adults who are also experienced and confident cooks in Text A as opposed to general advice about shopping for staple food products (without a specific recipe, however simple) for a global audience of university students living away from home in Text B. Many also endeavoured to ascertain the context of Text A by noting how it implicitly celebrates Welsh cuisine and the quality of indigenous main

ingredients used in the recipe ('fresh line-caught bass' sourced from Welsh coastal waters and 'laverbread (that) grows on the rocks and beaches of the Gower coast... sold in markets and fishmongers' in south Wales ... as famous as our lamb') and so has a fixed cultural and geographic context. The primary focus on one recipe representative of Welsh cuisine ('...it is a light dish and speaks volumes about Welsh food') offered by its award-winning Welsh chef suggests a discernible secondary purpose of advertising his current restaurant and hotel to a well-heeled clientele.

Candidates also demonstrated a more informed understanding of the effects of the Texts' linguistic techniques and semantic fields when a comparative approach was utilised. Most candidates could at least generally remark how Text A carries a personalised, sophisticated tone whilst Text B's is friendlier and far more pragmatic. Candidates often noted how Text A is immediately more linguistically complex as it has an alliterative headline ('Rare Recipe from Bryan Webb, Tyddyn Llan') followed by an introductory paragraph in the third person to present the chef, his credentials and his approach to cooking through positive evaluative lexis, including superlative adjectives - 'His cooking is all about subtle flavours and an uncompromising attitude to sourcing the finest, freshest ingredients'. Text B's relative simplicity is initially apparent through its two headings, the second barely amplifying the first - 'Quick and Cheap Cooking Tips for Students / Some advice for students about shopping and cooking on a budget' - before constructing the reader as a university student through direct address ('You've moved out of home...') and an imagined scenario - 'Naturally, you're excited about being able to buy and cook the food you want instead of living by mum's pantry rules' - reinforced by an ensuing 'typical' imagined internal monologue: "I know I need food. I know what I like to eat...". Candidates proceeded to contrast the richness of the descriptive language in A to the simpler, more functional vocabulary in B and to continually connect both to their respective purposes and audiences (and, less frequently, their contexts). Some of the features selected for comparative analysis from Text A included: the consistent lexical emphasis on Wales and on Welsh food and culture and on the art of cooking; the variety of ways in which the sequence of culinary procedures is made clear in the 'Method' section, mostly through compound strings of imperatives, but also a few fronted subordinated clauses of time ('While the fish is cooking, in a large pan melt the extra butter ...'), and the simple 'fronted' imperatives ('Season the fish and coat lightly ... Place onto a hot griddle ... then place...') which provide clear instructions, often pre- and post-modified by embedded adverbials ('On a light heat slowly add the butter a little at a time ... In a separate saucepan add two tablespoons of laverbread ...'). From Text B candidates tended to focus on the following features: its primarily informal register characterised by colloquialisms ('Keep an eye out ...') although more astute candidates also noted an occasional heightened level of complexity and formality, too ('... satiate your hunger ...' is perhaps the starkest example); the frequent use of exclamative sentences to shift topics ('Don't be lazy!') and imperatives to issue instructions (a clear point of comparison with Text A); the piece's simple instructional structure, combining very basic information with advice, for example by offering an introductory opinion-as-fact declarative followed by a brief explanation ('Pasta and rice are great - you only need a tiny amount for each meal, and they don't go off'); and the reference to students' habitual use of the Internet to find solutions to problems, 'Google is your friend' (occasionally found to be an instance of unintended irony as the reader is already using the Internet to access the Text).

In future perhaps candidates could refrain from using their conclusions to simply reiterate points made previously in their responses. There is no need for repetition and it would be more effective and efficient to emphasise the Texts' more important similarities and differences in an evaluative manner instead.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32
Text Analysis

Key Messages

For **Question 1 Part (a)** good answers make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis and register to suit the task set.

For **Question 1 Part (b)** good answers select suitable aspects of language from both texts to examine in an analytical manner the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** good answers identify specific features of each text's language and style, and link these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General Comments

Some candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. The carefully structured nature of most of their responses suggest that they used the fifteen minutes reading time purposefully to begin to formulate their responses to the three texts presented to them (one in **Question 1**, two in **Question 2**) by identifying distinctive linguistic features that informed detailed plans found in their answer booklets. However most candidates attempted little planning work or did not create plans at all. Some weaker responses to **1 (b)** and **2** appear to have been primarily based on candidates "gleaning hints" from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than analysing the texts themselves in any purposeful way. The weakest answers just repeated the content of passages.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Good answers followed the instructions carefully to produce a written response *informed by* the style and language of the accompanying text, in this Session either a transcription of a TV or a radio broadcast on an aspect of sport. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text incorporated recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this Session these were a blog entry and a comment on an online comments blog. Successful essays featured careful consideration of the target audience (in both cases a general one which is more specifically defined by the contexts revealed by the transcriptions) and the ability to clearly convey a personal perspective or opinion.

In responding to **Question 1 (b)** where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the blog entry or comment produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the respective transcription, the best work showed ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register (varying levels of formality), format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference any evaluation of speakers' or writers' opinions. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the transcriptions and comparing the effects they produced with those in the candidate's own reworking was a key discriminator in the best informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, competent answers showed a sound knowledge of linguistics in giving a comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and, an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential differences between the Texts and the relative strengths of each.

The majority of candidates evaluated each Text in turn. In order to ensure comparisons are eventually made under this approach, aspects of the first Text analysed on its own terms must be later selected and evaluated alongside those of the second Text in the second part of the response. Some candidates did less well when they neglected to go back and compare the second text to the first.

Few rubric infringements were noted – most instances involved candidates producing responses to **1 (a) and (b)** only. It was apparent that some candidates devoted too much time and effort in composing their Directed Writing pieces for **1 (a)** and then produced brief responses to **1 (b)** and **2**. **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **1 (b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

(a) The pieces of directed writing candidates produced featured generally solid engagement with the form and style of an online blog comment, providing suitably reworked references to the original material with suitable opinions expressed concerning the sports lecturer Paul Dimeo's radio speech about the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport. The majority of candidates addressed Dimeo directly, although a few recognised that the radio station hosts the blog site and addressed its management directly (usually when either strongly congratulating or criticising the radio station for taking the decision to broadcast Dimeo's comments). A formal salutation was usually employed, although less formal forms of address – often directly addressing other postees ('Hey man!') – were employed and equally indicated engagement with the task's context. Most candidates formally signed off their comment. Some candidates identified themselves only through the inclusion of a personal email address and the timing of their posts in clear attempts to indicate their understanding of some of the conventions of the indicated online medium of communication. Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120-150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that lost a focus on the requirement to "write a comment" (rather than an essay).

The content of Dimeo's speech had the effect of polarising opinion. A majority of candidates, usually casting themselves as sports fans, athletes or concerned parents, took issue with Dimeo's views on ethical (using performance enhancing drugs is cheating) or moral (high profile individuals ought to be positive role models to children) grounds although a sizeable minority either assented to his views and his status as an 'authority' on the subject or simply praised him for his courage in expressing 'an inconvenient truth' as one candidate succinctly put it. A few candidates chiefly took issue with Dimeo's appropriation of Umberto Eco's philosophical thoughts about the role of sport in society. Most of the candidates' reworking of the speech's content stemmed from Dimeo's references to sport as a business ('the multi million pound industry'), his citing of high-profile sportspersons who had been caught using performance enhancing drugs (the cyclist Lance Armstrong was nominated by some candidates as a more notable recent example) and instances when a positive test can be plausibly challenged (usually expressing sympathy for Callum Priestly's situation). Some candidates were convinced Dimeo had cast aspersions against the spirit of the Olympic Games, was either too sympathetic or naïve when he suggested exposure of drug-taking made 'sports stars seem like human beings (.) tragically flawed' and took issue with his insensitivity in characterising the doping: anti-doping dynamic as 'a war' when there are so many terrible conflicts currently taking place.

Strong responses included purposeful, focused and concise re-working of some aspects of the speech, with their arguments – either for or against Dimeo's position - being well marshalled in a consistently formal, usually respectful tone. Such candidates usually included a range of strategies to express their viewpoint – facts, opinions, and references to the words of other experts - and persuasive devices such as rhetorical questions, tricolon, connotations and hyperbole. Weaker responses lacked fluency and accuracy and featured very little or insecure re-working of the speech's content and usually did not attempt to posit a considered opinion of their own in some way distinguishable from Dimeo's. These weaker responses exhibited little audience awareness, as well as an uneven sense of purpose and, occasionally, emotional ranting against Dimeo's position.

(b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the transcription of Paul Dimeo's speech broadcast on radio and the blog comment produced by each candidate in response to **1 (a)**. Very weak answers simply paraphrased the contents of the

transcription and the blog comment. Weak answers failed to recognise the nature of the transcription and showed little evidence of understanding the methodology required to analyse it. The purpose and hence the conventions of a transcription consisting of sustained utterances by one speaker with regular pauses and stressed syllables were not appreciated by these candidates. Some of these answers attempted to compare the punctuation and grammar of their blog comment to the transcription, often at considerable length but little analytical effect. Simply using the comparative words 'written' and 'spoken' in the opening sentence of their responses ought to have ensured these candidates were immediately on the correct analytical track.

A considerable number of candidates did not adopt an integrated approach to their answer and sought to deal with each text separately. Whilst it is possible to compare in this way it is usually easier and far more efficient and fluent if an integrated approach is used. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually produced thin and undeveloped responses.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate or better knowledge and understanding of the conventions of making a speech with purposes of both informing and educating an audience primarily consisting of the adult general public. These candidates clearly appreciated that Paul Dimeo is an authority in his field (as a sports lecturer) who is accustomed to addressing an audience that might chiefly consist of knowledgeable sports fans if not other professionals in related fields (such as sports medicine and human physiology).

The most common difficulty many candidates seemed to experience, besides appreciating Dimeo's position on the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport (see 1a), was analysing a transcription that is a pro-planned, uninterrupted monologue delivered by an educated, experienced public speaker. Many candidates struggled to appreciate how Dimeo uses pauses to separate elements of the dense packages of information he imparts - with longer ones deployed to introduce new aspects of the speech's content (the two second pause in l. 4 before introducing the ideas of Umberto Eco is a particularly clear example) – as well as pausing for dramatic effect to allow the listeners to digest what has just been uttered (e.g. 'he was given a two year ban and not allowed to protest his innocence (1)'). Good answers appreciated that he also tends to stress parts of the words he speaks that convey crucial elements of his argument (e.g. 'so we can say that anti-doping has become a moral and a policing and a controlling force') and involve abstract ideas (e.g. 'the purity of sport', 'without doping as its nemesis'). Successful answers appreciated that the speech was delivered in ways to help ensure listeners remained engaged with intellectually demanding and somewhat controversial ideas, in addition to understanding that Dimeo speaks fluently and thus there are few non-fluency features (an instance of hesitation perhaps occurring when he says 'and only a small number relatively (.) will be there to see it in real life' and somewhat awkward repetition present in 'then discussing the discussion (1) and drugs certainly enhance the discussion').

In more substantive commentaries candidates usually made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. Their commentaries clearly exhibited an ability to select and analyse specific textual detail in both the original text and the directed writing. In the case of the transcription this might entail focusing on the speaker's use of field specific lexis concerning various sports (cycling, baseball, Australian rules football and athletics), performance enhancing drugs (doping, epo, clenbuterol, substance) and publicity (media organisations, biographies, autobiographies, colourful life and tragic demise, international limelight). As few candidates' comments demonstrated concerted efforts to emulate Dimeo's use of low-frequency lexis (enhance, 'tragically flawed', disillusioned, nemesis, parameters, fascination) it was sensible to emphasise that deliberating employing a mid- or high frequency lexis in their comment to appeal directly to other listeners (also non-specialists) reading comments on the radio station's blog was an effective strategy. Some candidates noted that Dimeo repeatedly refers collectively to the implied audience using the first person plural ('we can say', 'we can also say') thus suggesting that they should agree with his stance; he also appears to position himself alongside his listeners with his admission 'id never heard of Scottish cyclist david millar'. Similar approaches were effectively adopted in some candidates' comments to unite other listeners against Dimeo's position and examined to good effect in their commentaries.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by Dimeo in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in their blog entry in a comparative fashion. By so doing such

responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis of 50:50 or 60:40 on the transcription and blog entry.

Question 2

As was the case for 1 (b), candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques their authors employed and awareness of the effects created. These answers often simply paraphrased some information contained in the Texts in turn and offered a brief summary of their contents, usually demonstrating a surer grasp of the meanings produced by Text A. Some candidates concentrated on punctuation, paragraph length and producing lists of the linguistic devices they could identify - without the support of concise quotation and precise comments that would have facilitated the communication of a more thorough appreciation of the effects of the writing. There was a marked emphasis on Text A in the candidates' responses, likely facilitated by its portrayal in a dramatic narrative style of Streep as an heroic figure who early in her acting career assumed the part played by the ill female lead of a university drama School production even though she was not the understudy and, as suggested by the vivid images of her as cheerleader and prom queen, was prior to that a young woman who represented the epitome of American high School success. Text B was accessible and most candidates appreciated it is a review of a performance of the ballet *Cinderella* (although some candidates insisted it was a review of a film with the same title) and that the reviewer praises it despite finding it to be 'sublime ridiculousness' (as it is identified in the Text's headline). Some ability to recognise the use of form and language to inform and entertain readers in each Text, but in isolation from each other, was usually demonstrated: Text A's overall structure - which starts in 1975, then summarises Streep's success, recalls her origins, and then focuses on the recollections of a classmate - and its use of direct speech and reported speech to provide details about the subject's biographical background and professional achievements; and, Text B's consistent use of the present tense, as is conventional in a review, its abundance of adjectives (usually employed to praise but not always recognised as doing so) and more complex sentence structures than those found in Text A. A significant number of candidates erroneously found that Text B's reviewer expresses complete dislike for the production and exclusively employed a mocking tone. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Candidates producing comparative and hence more substantive responses readily understood the difference in purpose and audience between the Texts, finding Text B to have a potentially larger general audience (the review was published in a national newspaper) than Text A (an article in the 'Life Stories' section of a monthly magazine for women) but one refined by a purpose that would appeal only to a subsection of that readership and further reduced by plausibly assumed aspects of its context: the review of a ballet performance would appear in an 'inside' section of the newspaper where articles concerning the performing arts are usually printed (and perhaps within a supplement) and its specialised lexis - 'tutu', 'pas de chat' 'pas de deux', 'allegro' - caters for a select, educated readership with prior knowledge of ballet and movement on stage.

Candidates who used a comparative approach demonstrated a more informed understanding of the effects of the Texts' linguistic techniques and semantic fields. Most remarked how Text A carries a friendlier tone whilst adjudging Text B's to be somewhat aloof. Candidates often noted how Text A contains many references to a popular culture lexis derived from the theatre and film industries that presumes some knowledge on the part of its readers ('director', 'chorus line', 'understudy', 'opened on Broadway', 'Oscar nominations') and uses alliteration to draw attention to the significance of its subject's accomplishments ('rave reviews', 'Streep's star power') and pre-modification to suggest the ease in which she achieved them ('just 25', 'only an afternoon's rehearsal', 'quite simply the greatest actress of all time'). More astute candidates also commented on the dramatic effects created by the use in the opening paragraph of the present tense and adverbial fronting ('It's February 1975...') and hyperbolic language to further describe the situation (the production is 'thrown into chaos' because the lead actress is 'struck down with flu') to help the reader comprehend the circumstances of a formative moment in Streep's career. They also tended to appreciate and closely evaluate how the quotations provided by Susan Castrilli (a high School friend of Streep's who is 'speaking exclusively to *Marie Claire*' and whose contribution makes up approximately half of Text A) establish that the subject possessed extra-ordinary gifts from an early stage ("She had a very strong presence.... Just walking sown the hallways, she sort of glowed She was tall, beautiful, elegant and smart, and also pretty confident - a quality lacking in most teenage girls...") who is nevertheless presented as humble ("...she was very down to earth..."). The range of apt examples drawn from Text B was a little more constrained although stronger responses usually incorporated consideration of some of the reviewer's positive language used to assess the principal performers ('Eastoe is delicate and striking as Cinderella...', 'Jackson's prince is suitably charming') as well as some of the supporting ones ('Laura Tong is a scene-

stealing standout...'; 'Juliet Burnett similarly brings great joy to her performance as the "skinny" stepsister...') with clusters of idioms ('her verve and heart makes her shine', 'winning the hearts', 'a magical transition') serving to reinforce the praising tone permeating Text B. A few candidates noted 'that gleefully maniacal' suggests an opposition of happiness and madness which in this context indirectly praises one actress' versatility in her role (as the evil stepmother) and how the production's direction by Alexei Ratmansky was successful because it eminently suited the subject matter (as implied by 'imbues this ballet with a delightful lightheartedness', 'his direction is ebullient, with a grand sense of humour...') with one candidate rationalising nothing more nor different should be expected because, as the reviewer notes in the concluding sentence, '...the central conceit of *Cinderella* – that the prince can only recognise the woman he fell in love with by her shoe size – is slightly ridiculous to begin with...'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33
Text Analysis

Key Messages

For **Question 1 Part (a)** good answers make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis and register to suit the task set.

For **Question 1 Part (b)** good answers select suitable aspects of language from both texts to examine in an analytical manner the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** good answers identify specific features of each text's language and style, and link these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General Comments

Some candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. The carefully structured nature of most of their responses suggest that they used the fifteen minutes reading time purposefully to begin to formulate their responses to the three texts presented to them (one in **Question 1**, two in **Question 2**) by identifying distinctive linguistic features that informed detailed plans found in their answer booklets. However most candidates attempted little planning work or did not create plans at all. Some weaker responses to **1 (b)** and **2** appear to have been primarily based on candidates "gleaning hints" from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than analysing the texts themselves in any purposeful way. The weakest answers just repeated the content of passages.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Good answers followed the instructions carefully to produce a written response *informed by* the style and language of the accompanying text, in this Session either a transcription of a TV or a radio broadcast on an aspect of sport. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text incorporated recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this Session these were a blog entry and a comment on an online comments blog. Successful essays featured careful consideration of the target audience (in both cases a general one which is more specifically defined by the contexts revealed by the transcriptions) and the ability to clearly convey a personal perspective or opinion.

In responding to **Question 1 (b)** where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the blog entry or comment produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the respective transcription, the best work showed ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register (varying levels of formality), format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference any evaluation of speakers' or writers' opinions. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the transcriptions and comparing the effects they produced with those in the candidate's own reworking was a key discriminator in the best informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, competent answers showed a sound knowledge of linguistics in giving a comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and, an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential differences between the Texts and the relative strengths of each.

The majority of candidates evaluated each Text in turn. In order to ensure comparisons are eventually made under this approach, aspects of the first Text analysed on its own terms must be later selected and evaluated alongside those of the second Text in the second part of the response. Some candidates did less well when they neglected to go back and compare the second text to the first.

Few rubric infringements were noted – most instances involved candidates producing responses to **1 (a) and (b)** only. It was apparent that some candidates devoted too much time and effort in composing their Directed Writing pieces for **1 (a)** and then produced brief responses to **1 (b)** and **2**. **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **1 (b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on Specific Questions

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41
Language Topics

Key Messages

All three topics require candidates to be aware of relevant concepts and research in the specified fields.

Good answers featured thoughtful analysis of the passages.

A successful approach to this paper requires balance. Candidates who do well are those who combine detailed exploration of examples in the extracts provided with well-chosen instances from their own wider study.

General Comments

As Centres will be aware, candidates have to choose two questions from three on this paper. The pattern of question-choice suggested that many candidates were prepared for just two of the three Language Topics. This is of course a valid approach – there is no requirement to study and prepare all three Topics – although it means that candidates will in effect have no choice when they sit the examination. However, Centres might want to consider how study of one Language Topic can support understanding of another. For example, familiarity with the conventions of transcriptions of spoken language is essential for both *Spoken language and social groups* and *Language acquisition by children and teenagers*.

The best answers on all three Topics were those in which candidates managed to be flexible in responding to the material in the supporting passages. Answers which offered a quantity of prepared material on the Topic with little reference to the extract provided were unlikely to reach the higher Bands. Responses which were unbalanced in the opposite direction – those in which candidates responded to the passage but applied little of their own wider study – were similarly limited.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1: Spoken language and social groups

The transcript provided material for candidates to analyse a co-operative exchange, in this case involving a social group of three young women, one of whom is trying to make a decision about her future.

Better answers maintained a properly linguistic focus, exploring ways in which meaning was created by the dynamics of interaction, and appreciating that the brief topic shifts (*to having a baby and getting married*) were followed by a topic loop back to Eve's genuine concerns. Less successful answers tended to over-dramatise aspects of conversational exchange, trying to argue for instance that Denise's joking references to stereotypically 'female' concerns (*got to knit a jumper*) were instances of conflict.

Some candidates took a socio-linguistic approach, but placed too much emphasis on the sociology and not enough on the linguistics.

Question 2: English as a global language

There was some useful discussion of the provenance of the source material provided in the question. Candidates noted that the passage was '*from a web-site devoted to discussion of the scientific and historical study of human language*', and concluded (reasonably enough) that the views expressed could be taken fairly seriously as representing some of the range of attitudes to *English as a global language*. Where they

applied knowledge from their own wider study, informed by understanding of theorists, to produce a critique of the passage, they were likely to develop a relevant or even proficient (Band 2) answer.

Less successful answers tended simply to paraphrase or summarise the points in the passage. Since articles about *English as a global language* are so common, especially on the internet, learners should be encouraged to research and read a wide variety, and to consider how often arguments are rooted in assertion, presumption or prejudice rather than based on a sound linguistic foundation. Less good answers were too ready to accept some of the assertions made in this passage – for example, the claim that *some people who use English as their native language do not know how to spell difficult words, since they basically know English as a spoken language* – rather than to question them and subject the argument to a more critical analysis.

Question 3: Language acquisition by children and teenagers

Child Language Acquisition was the area in which knowledge of theories/theorists was strongest in this paper. There were some minor errors of spelling in the names (of Chomsky, Bruner and Piaget, for example) and many examples of one theorist being paired with the theory of another (associating Skinner, for example, rather than Vygotsky with the notion of the zone of proximal development). These were slips, however, rather than serious lapses of understanding, and it is more important to be able to identify and explore instances of repetition and positive reinforcement than merely to be able to use the words ‘operant conditioning’.

Good answers to this question showed an understanding that Mother was able to teach 20-month-old Claire about belonging/possession. More sharply linguistic answers were able to locate this in Mother’s reinforcement and repetition of personal pronouns: *will you please sit on your stool (.) youre in my way (.) please sit on your stool ... youre in my way (.) yes (.) put your foot on your own stool ... thats right (.) this is my stool and that belongs to you*. Similarly, well-informed answers were able to develop their analysis of Claire’s stage of Language Acquisition by explaining that the child left out ‘function’ words such as pronouns and auxiliary verbs in holophrastic or telegraphic utterances (*mommy help ... Claire help ... mommy sit CLAIRE stool*) but had learned to use intonation and emphatic stress to ask for and give information.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42
Language Topics

Key Messages

All three topics require candidates to be aware of relevant concepts and research in the specified fields.

Good answers featured thoughtful analysis of the passages.

A successful approach to this paper requires balance. Candidates who do well are those who combine detailed exploration of examples in the extracts provided with well-chosen instances from their own wider study.

General Comments

As Centres will be aware, candidates have to choose two questions from three on this paper. The pattern of question-choice suggested that many candidates were prepared for just two of the three Language Topics. This is of course a valid approach – there is no requirement to study and prepare all three Topics – although it means that candidates will in effect have no choice when they sit the examination. However, Centres might want to consider how study of one Language Topic can support understanding of another. For example, familiarity with the conventions of transcriptions of spoken language is essential for both *Spoken language and social groups* and *Language acquisition by children and teenagers*.

The best answers on all three Topics were those in which candidates managed to be flexible in responding to the material in the supporting passages. Answers which offered a quantity of prepared material on the Topic with little reference to the extract provided were unlikely to reach the higher Bands. Responses which were unbalanced in the opposite direction – those in which candidates responded to the passage but applied little of their own wider study – were similarly limited.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 – Spoken language and social groups

Candidates were invited to explore an interaction involving a group of three women in their twenties, one of whom was contemplating a career change.

More successful answers avoided making the assumption that interruptions/overlaps signal competitive speech, and appreciated that this was a largely co-operative exchange. The most astute readers realised that when Cerys says *no (.) you need to look into what youre (.) and research things* she is not disagreeing but reinforcing what has barely even been half-said in the fragmented utterances *different things ... too much choice*. Most candidates picked up Lucy's use of tag questions in lines 16 and 26 – *doesn't it ... don't you* – to invite agreement and speaker support. Some went on to argue that these were features typical of interactions involving women, citing Robin Lakoff, Deborah Tannen and Jennifer Coates.

Less successful answers tended to begin with assertions from gendered-language theory and then to look for evidence to support their claims. This is invariably an unsuccessful approach, and Centres are advised to encourage learners always to start with what is in front of them.

Question 2: English as a global language

Astute readers noticed the provenance of the passage provided on the question paper: it was an extract from a 2007 article published in the world news division of the *New York Times*. Starting from this understanding of purpose and audience, it was then possible to argue that since the source was a country from Kachru's

Inner Circle, one might expect the kind of linguistic triumphalism evident in the opening paragraph: *Riding the crest of globalization and technology, English dominates the world as no language ever has, and some linguists are now saying it may never be dethroned as the king of languages.*

The best answers achieved both a balance of argument and a balance between exploration of the source material provided in the question and reference to individual wider study. However, not everyone understood the arguments and examples offered in the passage, and some weaker answers did not understand the parallel between English and Latin that was being put forward.

Answers often referred to Kachru's 'Circles' Model, and to ideas associated with Crystal; less successful answers tended simply to repeat a list of the topics in the syllabus (such as the cultural implications of language death) whereas good answers presented close linguistic analysis of the passage.

Question 3: Language acquisition by children and teenagers

Candidates who chose this question were clearly engaged by the transcription of interaction between Tom (age 4 years 8 months) and his Mother as they play an imaginary game with Tom's toy cars.

Many were expecting to find signs of Child-Directed Speech, and were able to comment on how Mother uses the collocation *the breakdown man* to refer to the rôle Tom is playing, seeing this as simplified language, with Mother converging downwards. Although this would not be a conspicuously simplified form of words in British English, readers more familiar with American English would perhaps have expected a term like 'recovery truck driver'.

Similarly, well-focused answers included comment on how Mother uses short utterances with multiple pauses to ensure Tom has understood: *well (.) hold on (.) ive broken down (1) but you need to know where ive broken down.* Some went on to discuss ways in which Mother is teaching Tom new language and/or reinforcing his existing knowledge, for example by using adjectives of colour.

There was some well-developed explanation of how Mother avoids directly correcting Tom's choice of vocabulary when he says *your radar has broke* but does correct his grammar by modelling the correct past participle form *broken*.

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