

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11
Passages

Key Messages

In preparing for this paper candidates need to ensure that they read a wide variety of material from a range of diverse resources, such as travel writing, memoirs, reviews, biographies, autobiographies, newspaper articles, magazine features, diaries, advertisements and advertorials. They should also read online resources, including those which parallel the written mode such as on line newspapers and journals, reviews and blogs. This will better prepare candidates to recognise and assess the conventions and language associated with these different formats and genres. Candidates should also learn to analyse the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases. This is a critical procedure. Candidates should practice the procedure of using examples from the text and also, critically, to discuss these in terms of content, mood and tone.

Additionally candidates should be able to comment on how an extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops. Candidates should be able to explore any contrasts and differences between the sections of an extract. Candidates must know that they need to do more than write general comments on the content of a passage and references to language terms e.g. personification, alliteration, metaphor should be supported with an explanation of their effects. These features must be accompanied by a discussion of their effects in relation to the context and extract as a whole.

In terms of writing candidates need to use their knowledge of the conventions of different forms in order to adapt their own writing styles to recreate accurately from a range of directed writing tasks which may be in the question set; for example letters, short stories, diaries, reviews. The candidates may be expected to adapt and write in a similar style to the original extract. The task of writing approximately 150 words means that candidates must pay attention to technical accuracy, especially spelling, punctuation and tenses. Candidates should not borrow phrases from the original extract. The concise nature of the writing should be practised by candidates who should not aim to go very much beyond that word limit.

General Comments

The new exam format of a compulsory **Question 1** and a choice between **Questions 2** and **3** was observed by the vast majority of candidates. The extracts proved to be accessible and almost all candidates made a serious attempt to answer though with widely ranging outcomes. The weighting of marks for the **(a)** commentary section should indicate to candidates that brief answers such as half a page, are likely to be insufficiently detailed. The directed writing tasks enabled candidates to use their local knowledge which many did with enthusiasm.

There was evidence that some candidates are relying less on feature spotting and listing and are displaying a far clearer determination to connect example to effect. In such cases, even when this was not particularly sophisticated or successful, it was evident that teaching had been aimed at finding and showing connections.

A number of candidates spend too much of their time covering different literary and linguistic features, isolated from the contexts and purposes of the passages. Candidates often adopt a paragraph by paragraph approach which leads to a mechanical approach and often one involving repetition of points. A point, with a relevant example and effects needs to be made once only. Valuable time could be spent more effectively by selecting some of the identified features, quoting them, and then most importantly, commenting on the ideas and qualities they convey in terms of tone purpose and inference about the passage as a whole. Some candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time identifying genre and audience, a process which should be used only as a concise introductory approach before moving on to a detailed exploration of the distinctiveness of the text and language use. Candidates should read carefully for close meaning.

The directed writing questions gave scope for candidates to use their own knowledge and experience creatively and this gave authenticity to style and mood. The candidate's own voice is invaluable here. Many responses showed sophisticated, perceptive and fluent understanding of tone, viewpoint and style. Candidates should take care to spell correctly as far as they are able; there were some careless copying errors which can be avoided. Some answers were rather uneven in terms of content and style. Areas which candidates should take care with are the accurate and consistent use of tenses, and selection of tone and voice. A minority of candidates wrote in an unacceptably colloquial style however, many candidates impressed with their transformational skills.

Candidates must be careful not to make very general assertions that could apply to any text such as 'makes you want to read on' or 'draws the reader in'. These and other generalisations, especially those relating to punctuation and the length of sentences, are merely comments on content. Candidates who are inclined to make such broad statements should go one step further and consider the ways that language is used in order to raise interest in a text. That forms the basis for an engaged answer and rewards the candidate with higher marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The question from the newspaper article offering a guide to the city of Rio de Janeiro was generally tackled enthusiastically. Many candidates analysed the language and were able to relate this to the whole passage. Commenting on diversity and contrast was key to understanding this piece. Some candidates used the quotation at the start as a tool to explaining the piece. The passage was accessible and contained numerous linguistic features for analysis. Candidates who discussed the many contrasting features were successfully able to use this in various ways. Many candidates seemed able to comment on the opening quotation linking it to a challenge to the reader/ traveller. Candidates also discussed, and in some cases explored, the effectiveness of personification and the listing of activities. Candidates who introduced their analysis with words such as 'suggests' often stayed anchored in analysis. Some took an overview of contrasting and variety of activities throughout the day and into the night.
- (b) (i) Candidates had to write a similar guide for new visitors to a popular location within the candidate's own country. This question was generally dealt with competently and enthusiastically, though the style of the original proved elusive. In this question as in other **section (b)** tasks, candidates were asked to base their answers on the features of writing of the original extract and this was a discriminator in the writing standards. Many candidates who wrote about places in the United States wrote about Disney and in their enthusiasm omitted any contrasting features such as those evident in part (a) original text. Candidates close reading of the extracts should lead them to be aware of features of content and style such as the sustained contrasts in the Rio article. It is worth candidates remembering when writing, that popular phrases such as 'where your dreams come true' quickly become clichés which detract from the freshness of the candidate's own written expression. There was a considerable amount of material lifted from the passage which could not be assessed as the candidate's own writing. Most candidates understood the requirements of promotional writing and were able to recreate these using descriptive techniques.

Question 2

- (a) This was the autobiographical account written by a passenger who was on board the Titanic when it was hit by an iceberg. This passage was accessible and often the most successful question as well as being very popular. Some candidates used a summary approach rather than analysing the framework - an evaluation of the clear progression from an unsuspecting attitude and too great a trust, through to the horror of the lifeboat launch and subsequent rescue prospects allowed candidates to engage easily. Most candidates did make a good start identifying all the foreshadowing elements, although some became generalised and content based when dealing with the middle and end of the passage. The best responses made use of the many language features and considered them closely in the way that the writer revealed her thoughts and feelings. Narrative voice and metaphor featured in the best responses.

- (b) Again this was an accessible task and some candidates did well in this writing by moving between emotions although some found it difficult to maintain the correct tone. There was often an attempt to echo the original but some candidates took this too far by re-writing the events rather than extending the narrative. Some managed to further the emotions of the writer by writing in a moving way about conflicting emotions. Some successful candidates played with the metaphors of light and sunrise with confidence. Some candidates were driven by the knowledge of the film, 'Titanic', rather than the passage. Many candidates believed the narrator was a man. Given that her friend was Margaret this did inhibit the effectiveness of some of the answers but many of the responses were a pleasure to read.

Question 3

- (a) This was the review of Rachel Khoo, her cooking style and television show. A significant number of candidates attempted this question many of whom found it hard to engage with the tone of the passage and many missed the humour and so their answers became very summary based. Many candidates however did pick out the elements of humour and the emphasis on the small size of her kitchen. Some candidates were able to comment on the contrast between her tiny size and her enormous determination with 'talked her way' and 'marched'. The majority of candidates seemed comfortable with the topic and successful candidates were able to discuss the relevance of size with the rest of the piece.
- (b) There was quite a sharp divide here between candidates who were able to write a successful advertisement which included relevant information and those who lifted chunks from the original passage. Some candidates wrote in a very imaginative way with clever play on words relating to contrasts in size and captured the style of an advert successfully. Some candidates failed to connect the passage with the television series and so limited their context mark.

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Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) The promotional style of the website advertisement of Cousine Island was the task in this question. Candidates tended to respond enthusiastically on the ways in which travel writing promotes the resort. Candidates tended to take the effusive and ingratiating tone at face value. In all cases of promotional travel writing, those candidates who were able to tackle their answer cohesively, looking at an overview of purpose, audience and style, did much better than those who summarised or even evaluated the passage paragraph by paragraph. This passage has many features which related to the luxurious nature of the resort. Many candidates summarised and concentrated on the general purpose of the passage, however better candidates were able to explain how the language communicated the luxury of the island. Some candidates were distracted by the weddings to the detriment of the rest of the passage. Many candidates were able to comment on the range of items Cousine Island offered along with explaining how the language of the passage gave rise to sensations of luxury, exoticness, reclusiveness and relaxation. Some candidates merely commented on the wedding planning and the tropical feeling of the island. As with all other questions, points made are credited only once. Many candidates reiterated the 'luxury' point extensively and unnecessarily.
- (b) This writing task of writing a promotion for another holiday destination and its benefits was generally well done as candidates recognised the features, tone and purpose of the original and wrote accordingly. Many wrote as extravagantly as the original which was perfectly reasonable. Generally these answers were very entertaining as candidates chose areas they knew well. A few candidates used the Cousine Island venue, hardly rewriting at all and candidates did less well with this approach. Candidates must read the rubric instructions carefully. Those who did less well often had numerous lapses in expression.

Question 2

- (a) The account of the moment when the ship Titanic hit an iceberg was the subject of this question. Many candidates selected this question probably because they knew about the events and then clearly struggled with the different narratives. Some candidates responded to the tone, atmosphere purpose and structure which showed that the passage itself was at the right level but some only focused on a limited range of phrases rather than the whole. Stronger candidates commented on the purpose and atmosphere created by the writer by exploring the language devices and tone. Perceptive answers discussed the relevance of the clock with 'honour and glory crowning time', the oddities of the apparent behaviour of some passengers and the roaring steam. The weaker candidates described the events without further comment.
- (b) The candidates were asked to continue the story and many seemed to find the events too open for the relatively limited number of words. Some candidates had graphic and sensational ideas while others had a waiting period before events happened. Answers ranged from graphic descriptions of the ship upending and passengers jumping to passengers merely milling around waiting for sense to be made of what needed to be done. Not many candidates used the style and features of the original. Some candidates wanted a definitive ending which resulted in a rushed piece of writing, causing problems of style.

Question 3

- (a) The extract, dealing with the introspective teenager on the school bus, brought wide variations in the answer. Most candidates completed this quite well fully grasping the state of the individual and how language is used to develop character. Not all candidates were able to recognise the humour. The fractured interior monologue seemed to confuse some candidates - as did the tenses, though most recognised the present tense. Many candidates wrote a superficial account of the bus journey or school day rather than addressing the detailed expression. Many candidates offered more than one quotation to show the speaker's feelings. The weakest candidates gave a superficial account of a journey or a summary. In this question, as in many others there was a tendency to describe the content and ideas, thereby showing that the passage had been understood but there was no analysis beyond that. As always, comments on content will place the answer in the lower mark bands.
- (b) As with all the answers, the achievements of the written task depended on candidates carefully reading the passage for tone as well as content. The style of the passage meant that the writing was a challenge for some candidates who, in some cases almost copied the original. However, the diary writing style was taken up confidently by many candidates, some of whom wrote sensitive reflections about the narrator of the passage and the extent of support provided by the diarist friend. These original pieces were sharply observed and fully fitted the purpose of the task.

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Comments on Specific Questions

Overall there were fewer candidates for this component so Examiner comments relate to a smaller number of scripts marked.

Question 1

- (a) The compulsory question for this component was another piece of promotional writing for the Pembroke luxury apartment in Cape Town.

Candidates found this text accessible and responded well to the range of persuasive devices and the luxury advertised. There were some candidates who repeated the idea of luxury throughout, whereas the point once made with examples and effects is sufficient. Candidates usually got off to a good start with the ideas of exclusiveness and luxury but this was not always sustained. Points relating to the personal tone, exclusiveness, appeals to senses, use of superlatives to reinforce the attention and care given, the attractions of natural and manmade features intensively modified to reinforce the excellence of the environment could form the basis of an analysis though of course any relevant, exemplified and justified viewpoint explored by candidates would form the basis of an engaged answer.

- (b) The writing here was well done with a collection of destinations, all persuasively written. It was pleasing to see that candidates wrote confidently in this style of writing and incorporated highly descriptive language to develop their piece.

Question 2

- (a) The question concerned the present day underwater exploration of the wreck of the Titanic, which sank in 1912. This was a popular question. Candidates responded well to this and were able to comment on the personification of the ROV and the atmosphere inside the wreck of the ship. Sensitive candidates were able to comment on the grandeur and the ghost like quality on the ship, including personal effects from those drowned. Perceptive candidates were able to highlight the feelings of the writer's account with the language devices used.

- (b) The writing task asked candidates to closely parallel the style of the commentary and to describe the exploration of another unusual location and to create a strong sense of atmosphere. Candidates responded well with some unusual explorations, often crossing the boundary into science fiction of time and place and this was entirely reasonable as long as the style requirements were met. However some candidates were unable to sustain the accuracy and fluency of their chosen scenario and the writing became far fetched.

Question 3

- (a) The question asked the candidates to discuss the ways that language and style are used to represent the writer's thoughts and feelings. Close reading of the question was vital here as many candidates discussed the content – i.e. the thoughts and feelings and not the ways in which they are represented. Candidates could have discussed points concerning the first person narration and its effects; the child/adult layers of narration including the choice of vocabulary; the contrasts of

dialogue, narration and description, the impact of the extended commentary of the lizards and the context of time and place. There were very varied responses here. Some candidates merely commented on the historical event and the author's thoughts, whereas more successful candidates were able to engage with the language and use of metaphor and transformation of mother/father as Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette. Less successful candidates concentrated on the lizards to the exclusion of other parts of the extract. This seemed to be generally more difficult for candidates perhaps because the context was unfamiliar.

- (b)** Candidates were asked to write a diary entry mirroring the first person reflections of the passage. They were asked to record the mother's reflections on the events of the day. The responses were often dependent on the understanding of the passage, as well as the quality of expression. A common limitation leading to an uneven response was to describe the mother's feelings only about the overthrowing of Batista.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21

Writing

Key Messages

On the whole, the questions seemed to differentiate a range of candidates successfully, with answers ranging from the very mature and thoughtful to those marred by significant lapses in technical accuracy. At the high end, there were some very creative and highly imaginative narrative/descriptive responses and some sophisticated and well exemplified argumentative/discursive compositions. These sophisticated and mature responses were highly enjoyable to read and very impressive, considering the time constraints they were produced in.

At the lower end of the range some answers tended to rely on often undirected and drifting plots while other responses tended to be undeveloped, with lapses in technical areas and expression. The usual areas of concern emerged: tenses commonly confused; the incorrect use of punctuation in dialogue, especially with speech marks; evidence of 'prepared' answers that did not quite fit the examination questions. On the whole, there were not many rubric infringements and time management seemed satisfactory.

The majority of candidates made real efforts to meet the prescribed task. A number needed to address the question focus and consider the nature of the guidelines of the task in **Section A**, e.g. prescribed instructions such as 'character and motivation', 'setting', 'mood', 'mystery' and/or 'suspense'; or a prescribed structure: novel or short story; or indeed simply an 'opening' to a short story.

The candidates' sense of audience, form and purpose in **Section B** was convincing on the whole: candidates were prepared well in terms of appropriate register, form and tone for such tasks as discursive texts, letters, arguments and magazine articles. One area for improvement is to use two different tones in letters opposing each other, and not keep to the same sort of 'voice' for the two.

General Comments:

Problems with tenses can occur when candidates begin work in the present tense but then shift into past. The advice would be to have the time frame in a definite time in the past so past tenses can be used, rather than drifting into present. Often candidates attempt to replicate urgency and immediacy by using the present tense, but control is lost. Another issue is sequence of tenses. When one event follows another in the past they have to use past perfect, not simple past.

Revision of punctuation would be useful. Accurate punctuation is important: candidates can make their work more effective by apposite punctuation between and within sentences, noting especially the correct use of the apostrophe and the semicolon. Reading the work quietly to oneself helps in hearing the fall of cadence in the sentence. Semicolon/colon use is disappointing even in the higher band essays. Apostrophe in genitive singular and plural needs revision just before the exam takes place. Punctuating direct speech correctly is also important. All punctuation has to go INSIDE the speech marks. When speech is reported/indirect, candidates need to remember to 1) go back one tense 2) change the pronoun 3) change the time word. The most frequent error in punctuation is using the comma instead of a full stop. There were often many paragraphs which were one sentence long, and much absent punctuation pegged the mark to lower bands.

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of a varied vocabulary. Frequently, in weaker answers, a word is repeatedly employed. A teaching recommendation is that candidates should select the key words/phrases from the question and note alternatives. This would provide a vocabulary bank.

Paragraphing has seen some improvement. It is important that the paragraphing and discourse markers are used to help the reader navigate around the work. Topic sentences should be taught. Paragraphing, topic sentences and connectives are helpful structures are important props which add to the structure and coherent progression of ideas in a text. When conversation is used in stories, candidates should remember

to start a new paragraph for each change of speaker.

There was much more evidence of planning in this examination session. In some cases the plan was too detailed and too long. It took time away from the writing of the actual essay. There has to be a balance approach here. Plans are useful for sequencing ideas in a **Section A** narrative or a description, and of course with **Section B** responses where careful argumentation and explanation are often central to the tasks set. Candidates should be advised that 5-10 minutes worth of planning would be sound practice. Also, five minutes could be set aside for the checking of work for accuracy.

Comments on Specific Questions

Paper 21:

Question 1 (The Tower)

There were some very evocative and focused responses which created atmospheric suspense. Candidates employed a range of descriptive and narrative effects in a substantial number of answers. Stronger compositions involved subtle mixtures of place and mood, often highly subjective points-of-view from a single protagonist. Many compositions situated the tower in a forbidding forest, or on a lonely island, though there were a few that involved a tower as a part of an urban cityscape. Some candidates used the idea of the tower as a metaphor. Answers worked well when the prescribed instructions were followed- i.e. to create a sense of mystery and suspense; and to create the opening to a short story. Less successful answers wasted time by creating lengthy preambles, building up to the introduction of 'the tower', attempting to develop many characters - then failing to achieve the 'sense of mystery and suspense' that the narrative needed. Some less secure compositions drew on horror conventions alone at the expense of originality. The use of tenses was often precarious in the weaker answers.

Question 2 (The Comedian)

This question was often very well done. The element of contrast seemed to focus the candidates on a restricted number of key points and so led to some structured essays. The two sides of a comedian provided some interesting and imaginative answers usually with a good contrast between the public and private persona. The noise, laughter and liveliness of the performance sections were well described and contrasted starkly with a range of gloomy, lonely and tragic personal lives. The 'character and mood' aspect was done well, with candidates sensibly recycling those words to anchor the material to the question. Often, the jolly comedian was sketched as a grumpy manic depressive at home, which is a fairly obvious choice, but it was done well and subtly in some cases. Just a few had their comedian as a woman. The onstage section was often better than the at home character. The most successful answers used cohesive devices to structure the contrasting sides into an effective whole. The most successful writing adopted a first person narrative voice, which allowed for implicit meanings, rather than stating the obvious from an observer's point of view. With less successful compositions, a common weakness here was inconsistency with tenses.

Question 3 (Rain)

This popular title has a descriptive pointer which encouraged candidates to deploy the full panoply of devices: adjectives, emphasising adverbs, compounds, adjective stacks, simile, metaphor, extended metaphor, personification, imagery etc. The colour and sounds were a helpful focus in that respect, but they were not adequately exploited. Many candidates simply narrated a piece with references to rain threaded through. The narrative ought to act as a spine to hold the descriptive elements together. There were many essays which narrated the beginning of a day, and only managed to get to the rain element towards the end. Several candidates used the rain as a parallel to the events/moods of the narratives. So rain fell as news of a death/illness/disaster became known. Rain was also used as a positive, life enhancing symbol, as the rain fell the long lost son/lover/soldier returned. However clever the use of pathetic fallacy, successful answers were ones that managed to sustain an appropriate level of depth in their description, using structure to cohere their ideas, instead of simply listing. The balance between narrative and descriptive elements had to be right - taking too long to 'set up' a story would mean less focus on the description itself. The Examiners' advice for a descriptive piece would be to begin 'in medias res' and aim for the lower end of the 600 to 900 word range.

Question 4 (Two Homes for Sale)

Although a popular question, with very varied submissions, it was disappointing when candidates forgot about writing to an audience and offered just a stream of attributes of the homes without expanding on their

merits and desirability. As these essays were intended to be advertising copy, a distinct tone and sense of audience were essential but were often lacking. The biggest problem then became a lack of cohesion, and rambling descriptions. Simply deploying contrasting language to list the differences between the two homes was not enough for a complex 'argument'. Those with a distinct tone/attitude were often well done - and these successful answers deployed persuasive devices and some appropriate specialist vocabulary to imitate real estate advertising copy - creating a real sense of voice, audience and purpose.

Question 5 (Stress)

This was a popular question that was done well. Candidates appeared more comfortable with the content of this question than the previous, and most responses had an appropriate audience, voice and form. There were a good number of very successful answers which offered practical advice and explanation in an appropriate register for the target audience. Candidates were able to develop a lively approach to this text due to the subject matter and the intended audience. However, some candidates needed to address the audience directly ('aimed at teenagers') rather than talk *about* teenagers. The question specifies that the candidate 'offers guidance' and this clear directive was not always followed. The crux of the essay is about the stress generated by teen life, not about the problems encountered in teen life. That is a definite split that has to be addressed to access the higher bands. The question also asks for practical advice: therefore prayer, thinking straight, being happy, being yourself are more 'theoretical' and do not qualify as practical advice. Sound, practical advice included asking for guidance and help, using planners to organise time better, making sure to factor in enough sleep/rest, play and work. A few candidates managed to develop their responses to a deeper level by considering the morality of competition and how far success was linked to personal happiness. This, of course, was only done after the initial stipulations of the questions were met.

Question 6 (The Joys of Reading)

The question states no specific audience so the range needs to be broad in appeal. It is a leaflet, and the format needs addressing. Because a lot of candidates read, there was much valuable material including references to specific books, authors and genres. Pleasures and benefits were well considered. Often candidates recycled the words, and so anchored themselves to the question. A very good idea. Candidates who appear to have been writing from their own experiences, wrote with excitement and passion and presented very convincing essays, combining theories with some book recommendations. Less successful answers tended to be repetitive, talking about the benefits of an increased vocabulary and being able to impress at an interview, spending a lot of time discussing how reading helps you learn more but often missed the point about the pleasure of reading.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22

Writing

Key Messages

On the whole, the questions seemed to differentiate a range of candidates successfully, with answers ranging from the very mature and thoughtful to those marred by significant lapses in technical accuracy. At the high end, there were some very creative and highly imaginative narrative/descriptive responses and some sophisticated and well exemplified argumentative/discursive compositions. These sophisticated and mature responses were highly enjoyable to read and very impressive, considering the time constraints they were produced in.

At the lower end of the range some answers tended to rely on often undirected and drifting plots while other responses tended to be undeveloped, with lapses in technical areas and expression. The usual areas of concern emerged: tenses commonly confused; the incorrect use of punctuation in dialogue, especially with speech marks; evidence of 'prepared' answers that did not quite fit the examination questions. On the whole, there were not many rubric infringements and time management seemed satisfactory.

The majority of candidates made real efforts to meet the prescribed task. A number needed to address the question focus and consider the nature of the guidelines of the task in **Section A**, e.g. prescribed instructions such as 'character and motivation', 'setting', 'mood', 'mystery' and/or 'suspense'; or a prescribed structure: novel or short story; or indeed simply an 'opening' to a short story.

The candidates' sense of audience, form and purpose in **Section B** was convincing on the whole: candidates were prepared well in terms of appropriate register, form and tone for such tasks as discursive texts, letters, arguments and magazine articles. One area for improvement is to use two different tones in letters opposing each other, and not keep to the same sort of 'voice' for the two.

General Comments:

Problems with tenses can occur when candidates begin work in the present tense but then shift into past. The advice would be to have the time frame in a definite time in the past so past tenses can be used, rather than drifting into present. Often candidates attempt to replicate urgency and immediacy by using the present tense, but control is lost. Another issue is sequence of tenses. When one event follows another in the past they have to use past perfect, not simple past.

Revision of punctuation would be useful. Accurate punctuation is important: candidates can make their work more effective by apposite punctuation between and within sentences, noting especially the correct use of the apostrophe and the semicolon. Reading the work quietly to oneself helps in hearing the fall of cadence in the sentence. Semicolon/colon use is disappointing even in the higher band essays. Apostrophe in genitive singular and plural needs revision just before the exam takes place. Punctuating direct speech correctly is also important. All punctuation has to go INSIDE the speech marks. When speech is reported/indirect, candidates need to remember to 1) go back one tense 2) change the pronoun 3) change the time word. The most frequent error in punctuation is using the comma instead of a full stop. There were often many paragraphs which were one sentence long, and much absent punctuation pegged the mark to lower bands.

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of a varied vocabulary. Frequently, in weaker answers, a word is repeatedly employed. A teaching recommendation is that candidates should select the key words/phrases from the question and note alternatives. This would provide a vocabulary bank.

Paragraphing has seen some improvement. It is important that the paragraphing and discourse markers are used to help the reader navigate around the work. Topic sentences should be taught. Paragraphing, topic sentences and connectives are helpful structures are important props which add to the structure and coherent progression of ideas in a text. When conversation is used in stories, candidates should remember

to start a new paragraph for each change of speaker.

There was much more evidence of planning in this examination session. In some cases the plan was too detailed and too long. It took time away from the writing of the actual essay. There has to be a balance approach here. Plans are useful for sequencing ideas in a **Section A** narrative or a description, and of course with **Section B** responses where careful argumentation and explanation are often central to the tasks set. Candidates should be advised that 5-10 minutes worth of planning would be sound practice. Also, five minutes could be set aside for the checking of work for accuracy.

Comments on Specific Questions

Paper 22:

Question 1 (The Unsolved Crime)

This was a very popular question, written with a wide range of levels of success. A good proportion of candidates developed inventive ideas and effectively created tension and suspense. Many answers included the idea of an unsolved crime right at the end of their writing. However, as this was only the beginning of a story, this was in many ways justifiable. With the less effective answers, a common pitfall was the tendency to overdo the build-up, leading to a marked lack of tension and suspense. The better essays had generally established an appropriate atmosphere by the end of page one. Weaker answers also tended to just relate the outline of the story rather than use any narrative techniques, speech etc. In these answers, there was often much confusion of tenses and little originality, with unnecessary concentration on blood and guts.

Question 2 (Tourist attraction - contrasting pieces)

This was a popular choice of question, which was generally well-handled and with a clear contrast evident in most answers. The best answers described a specific place, probably known to the candidate, while weaker answers seemed to be writing about general places, such as a beach scene. Many responses tried hard to use descriptive language which was often imaginative and appropriate. There were some fine examples of writing which created a sense of setting and mood. The better essays seemed to be authentic descriptions based on personal experiences. Weaker responses were often characterised by confusion with tenses and simply outlined what they saw. A number of these responses missed the point of the contrast of this piece and did not talk about the place becoming a busy tourist attraction. There were some very successful responses where candidates integrated the two and used a character in both to illustrate the changes.

Question 3 (Heatwave)

This was a fairly popular choice of question, with some effective description. There were some impressively written pieces which delighted with a developed description of intensely hot weather. In less successful answers, a lot of time was spent listing colours and sounds rather than creating a developed description. Unfortunately, a number of candidates wrote a story with hot weather as a backdrop, rather than focusing on a purely descriptive piece; or ones which succumbed to the pitfall of preambles which went on and on, leading to a lack of focus on describing the "colours and sounds" of unusual weather. Some candidates' writing became supernatural or sci-fi narrative, leading to irrelevance regarding the purpose and topic. Sometimes, while there was relevant form and content, there was a struggle to find appropriate structure.

Question 4 (Media Representation of Young People)

This was a popular question though a good number of candidates struggled to write meaningfully to present "opposing viewpoints and attitudes" in their magazine articles. The question was misinterpreted by quite a few candidates, who discussed the benefits and disadvantages of teenagers using media, or about their views of the media in general, rather than how young people were being represented by the media. The best answers made good use of examples of positive and negative representations in the media (for example, Malala Yousafzai and Justin Bieber) and wrote two persuasive articles.

Question 5 (Radio Script - Young at Heart)

This was a popular question and was generally well-handled, with a number of very successful answers which offered practical information in a lively format. These were characterised by a strong sense of voice, employing rhetorical devices such as direct address, facts and anecdotes. Such scripts were often quite lively with a sense of audience.

Question 6. (Sports Centre Website)

This question was equally popular. Answers were always relevant in their form and content with some answers almost professional in their approach, while weaker candidates did little more than list activities on offer - with perhaps too many diverse suggestions lacking depth and argument/persuasion. Some essays missed the audience focus of "interested beginners", tending to address more accomplished or expert enthusiasts.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23

Writing

Key Messages

On the whole, the questions seemed to differentiate a range of candidates successfully, with answers ranging from the very mature and thoughtful to those marred by significant lapses in technical accuracy. At the high end, there were some very creative and highly imaginative narrative/descriptive responses and some sophisticated and well exemplified argumentative/discursive compositions. These sophisticated and mature responses were highly enjoyable to read and very impressive, considering the time constraints they were produced in.

At the lower end of the range some answers tended to rely on often undirected and drifting plots while other responses tended to be undeveloped, with lapses in technical areas and expression. The usual areas of concern emerged: tenses commonly confused; the incorrect use of punctuation in dialogue, especially with speech marks; evidence of 'prepared' answers that did not quite fit the examination questions. On the whole, there were not many rubric infringements and time management seemed satisfactory.

The majority of candidates made real efforts to meet the prescribed task. A number needed to address the question focus and consider the nature of the guidelines of the task in **Section A**, e.g. prescribed instructions such as 'character and motivation', 'setting', 'mood', 'mystery' and/or 'suspense'; or a prescribed structure: novel or short story; or indeed simply an 'opening' to a short story.

The candidates' sense of audience, form and purpose in **Section B** was convincing on the whole: candidates were prepared well in terms of appropriate register, form and tone for such tasks as discursive texts, letters, arguments and magazine articles. One area for improvement is to use two different tones in letters opposing each other, and not keep to the same sort of 'voice' for the two.

General Comments:

Problems with tenses can occur when candidates begin work in the present tense but then shift into past. The advice would be to have the time frame in a definite time in the past so past tenses can be used, rather than drifting into present. Often candidates attempt to replicate urgency and immediacy by using the present tense, but control is lost. Another issue is sequence of tenses. When one event follows another in the past they have to use past perfect, not simple past.

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to start a new paragraph for each change of speaker.

There was much more evidence of planning in this examination session. In some cases the plan was too detailed and too long. It took time away from the writing of the actual essay. There has to be a balance approach here. Plans are useful for sequencing ideas in a **Section A** narrative or a description, and of course with **Section B** responses where careful argumentation and explanation are often central to the tasks set. Candidates should be advised that 5-10 minutes worth of planning would be sound practice. Also, five minutes could be set aside for the checking of work for accuracy.

Comments on Specific Questions

Paper 23:

Question 1 (Moonlight)

This was hugely popular and enjoyed some degree of success. Stronger responses veered away from the mythical (werewolves, vampires etc) and clichéd writing with 'spooky' description. Less successful answers either referred to 'moonlight' too frequently throughout their piece, rather than working to actually create a sense of a threatening and fearful exposition, or else forgot to include any reference to moonlight at all in their story. Contrived responses – i.e. standard horror stories - did not achieve high marks. Successful answers managed to create a real sense of threat and fear.

Question 2 (Contrasting Views of the Same Location)

This was a successfully answered question although it was not popular among candidates. Successful responses used a character to convey the differences between the two views. Some answers were more successful at creating ground level descriptions, but struggled for ideas when dealing with the view from a high altitude.

Question 3 (Sense of Wonder at the Natural World)

This was not a particularly popular question. There were some impressively written pieces which contained a developed description of the natural world. In less successful answers, a lot of time was spent listing colours and textures rather than creating a developed description. Focus was lacking in these answers.

Question 4 (Contrasting Job Applications)

This was a relatively popular but rather problematic question for candidates. Almost all wrote in the appropriate form but the level of 'complex argument' was not always achieved. Candidates did try to create differing voices but they struggled to write appropriate content in both letters, often talking a lot about their friends or that their parents are forcing them to get a job etc. Candidates often forgot to create different voices for the two parts, so that the applicants tended to sound exactly the same, creating letters that were list-like, with only slightly different content. Some neglected to say what the job was, which made the two parts of the answer too general. Some answers went into hugely personal tales of their hard lives to show why they deserved the job, which seemed inappropriate.

Question 5 (Letter to a Newspaper about Making Retirement Compulsory)

This question was better answered. Candidates took the viewpoint seriously and argued well on either side with development. Less successful answers struggled with this, not understanding when people retire, often talking about 30/40 year olds stealing candidates' jobs. Some responses spent a lot of time 'stating that they feel strongly...the writer should be ashamed etc' but did not respond to the topic itself. Conversely, another problem was when candidates ignored the fact it said letter and wrote an essay about the subject instead. Successful answers remembered to use language techniques for persuasive writing.

Question 6 (Script for a TV Voiceover for a Charity Organisation)

This was very popular and resulted in some varied responses. Most candidates wrote in depth, using the appropriate form and created a strong sense of voice. More successful responses used specific examples of how their charity has helped others. Some were very short and did not develop well, others included some emotive and persuasive language. Some less successful candidates did not really understand what they were writing or how to structure it.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/03
Paper 1 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 topic 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.

For Question 1 Part (b) candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the two texts, with an emphasis on selecting interesting aspects of language in both texts and comparing the specific effects they create.

For Question 2 candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, link these to supporting textual details to describe the effects produced and compare how the texts' (subtly) different purposes, contexts, and audiences create different meanings.

General Comments

The candidates who were evidently prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion formed a minority this session. There was clear evidence, from the carefully structured nature of their responses that these candidates 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**). From plans written within the examination booklet it can be safely inferred candidates first read each question carefully, then annotated and labelled distinctive features of the pertinent text(s) contained in the question booklet and finally created detailed plans that linked pertinent linguistic concepts with selected textual details that would enable the candidates to satisfy the requirements of the question set.

Most candidates, however, attempted little planning work or did not create plans at all. The answers produced suggest that many of these candidates resorted to primarily "gleaning hints" from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than analysing the texts themselves in any purposeful way; some others simply quoted large tracts of the relevant text(s) linked together with short passages of superficial commentary; and others produced responses which were no more than summaries of the texts in a style resembling that of an "unseen" comprehension exercise.

As the majority of responses seen this Session suggest candidates did not utilise useful methodologies to meet the challenges presented by each Question, it is important to understand the nature of each Question to fully appreciate the specific linguistic elements candidates should have recognised and then incorporated in their responses.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. The candidate needed to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, a transcription of a video presentation entitled *The Connection between Scent and Spending*, though not slavishly imitating it (as the purpose of **Question 1 (b)** is to compare the style and language of both the original text and the one the candidate has produced, and texts that are too similar do not cater very well for penetrating analysis). The text the candidate was instructed to write was to be an email to the management of a shopping mall or department store, complaining about an experience during which the writer sneezed violently and later, after returning home, developed a skin rash that lasted several days. As per the instructions these physical reactions are to be attributed by the writer to artificial scents being released into the atmosphere of the

shopping venue and this justification for the complaint should consist of a reworking of pertinent information contained in the accompanying transcription. In order to produce a successful piece of Directed Writing the candidate needed to: identify and understand the email's specific purpose and audience, balanced in this case by a recognition that the physical reaction symptoms experienced were certainly unpleasant though not life-threatening; form an understanding of both the purpose of the transcription (to inform the public of the existence and intention behind introducing artificial scents into retail venues) and the linguistic concepts informing it to ensure there is appropriate differentiation between it and the Directed Writing piece to be produced so that the latter incorporated a reworking of both the information and linguistic features contained in the transcription; adopt a range of strategies to persuade management that a tangible health issue has afflicted the writer (e.g. a concise chronology of events and description of the symptoms experienced, the use of strong emotive language); and, assert that management is culpable and that other customers are also at risk. The candidates were asked to make the email complaint 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

In **Question 1 (b)** the candidate was required to compare the style and language of the email complaint produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the original video transcription. A working knowledge of linguistics is invaluable here, especially in relation to detailed examination of aspects of style, and the candidate should have endeavoured to compare the effects of a good range of the lexical choices made in composing the email complaint with those used by the two speakers in the transcription. The candidate also requires the confidence that comes from regular practice to produce a coherent, comparative response evaluating both the style and language of the original text and that of the piece of Directed Writing the candidate produced earlier. Here the candidate is assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register, format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference any evaluation of intention and bias.

In **Question 2** the candidate was required to compare the language and style of two Texts relating to the 2009 film *Knowing*: Text A is from the review of the film on its official website and Text B is a selection of (three) reviews from a film review website which is open to the public. Again, a sound knowledge of linguistics is required as the candidate is 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 voice and linguistic techniques.

In order to satisfy the requirements of **Question 2** it is important that the candidate employs some form of comparative approach. A very few candidates adopted a primarily topical approach – these tended to be the candidates who demonstrated through their responses very strong linguistic knowledge. By its nature the topical approach guarantees continuous comparison and so a concluding section could then 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 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 in the second part of the response. It should be recognised that the second approach 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 very short and do not offer any new insight.

No rubric infringements as such were noted (as **Questions 1** and **2** are both compulsory) although it was apparent that many candidates devoted considerable time and effort in composing their Directed Writing pieces for **Question 1 (a)** and then produced very brief responses to **Questions 1 (b)** and **2**. Centres and candidates need to appreciate that **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available. Nevertheless, in a few cases only **Question 1 (a)** was attempted.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 Part (a): Directed Writing

The composition of the text of the email was usually approached with considerable enthusiasm and no little skill. Nearly all candidates adopted an appropriate formal or semi-formal style (often opening with a business letter style salutation; sometimes a suitable subject line preceded the salutation). They were able to utilise the suggested narrative of events provided by the question's instructions, suitably amplifying some of the details of the physical reaction experienced: violent sneezing became uncontrollable fits of sneezing (often accompanied by additional symptoms such as puffy, streaming eyes and a hacking cough that embarrassed the sufferer as the reaction takes place in a public space) and the skin rash became a most uncomfortable one due to vivid descriptions of how red and itchy it became and how far it spread across the

sufferer's body. Sympathy was often solicited through explanations that the shopping trip was prompted by the need to make a special purchase for a family member or friend, but it was cut short by the onset of the symptoms experienced before the purchase could be made due to the necessity of making a hasty and wholly unexpected exit from the mall or store. Often candidates explained that the shopping mall or department store was their favourite one and they were ordinarily its best customers, but they were now concerned they may not be able to return due to health reasons. Some sort of restitution was often sought, usually in the form of financial compensation for loss of income and for medical consultation and treatment fees incurred, on the presumption (promoted by the content of the transcription, ll. 23–32) that the release of artificial scents was a marketing tactic designed to make shoppers more relaxed and so prolong their stay in the retail environment and therefore increase the likelihood that more purchases may be made. Many candidates clearly relished explaining in very strong terms that, on this occasion, the artificial scents had had the direct opposite effect of that intended by the management's marketing gurus and issuing stern warnings that there may well be many other innocent victims including the very young and old and asthma sufferers unless the scents are no longer released or a safer variant used instead. Most candidates produced responses with many if not all of these elements incorporated into their complaints and thus produced responses that at least adequately satisfied the requirements of the question.

There were a few pitfalls in terms of the content produced, however. Many weaker candidates did not seem to grasp the idea or the significance of 'ambience scent' (l. 29 of the transcription) and therefore used the perfume department or store as the venue for their unpleasant experience. Some were confused about the nature of allergies – they initially stated they were not subject to allergies and had never before suffered an allergic reaction, yet went on to describe their experience in classic allergic reaction terms. The conclusions were often the weakest aspect of the emails, as candidates did not make it clear what action they wanted the management to take or overstated their claim for compensation; some threatened legal action albeit on rather tenuous grounds given the circumstances. Stronger candidates included reference to having done research on scents released in the shopping environment or having seen the video presentation itself and selectively quoting (or accurately paraphrasing) from it to support the grounds for their complaint. The candidate's written accuracy and expression is assessed in **1 (a)** and this often proved to be an important discriminator in both the weakest and the strongest responses.

Question 1 part (b): Commentary on language and style

Most candidates were able to briefly comment on the differing purposes of the texts (to complain and effect change in the email message, to inform in the case of the transcription), how the former is planned and possibly edited and the latter at least partly scripted (the Presenter's questions, much of the content of the Marketing Expert's responses) and the important contrasts in the texts' formality and tone (depending on how formal and strident the accompanying email message is, of course). In terms of the transcription many candidates noted how: the conversation is cooperative ("friendly") in nature as the speakers engaged in turn-taking without any over-lapping; the ME's responses incorporate many non-fluency features such as fillers and repetition (sometimes attributed to either nerves or insufficient rehearsal on his part); and, both speakers use language to cater for a potentially broad audience of adult viewers - the Presenter providing an introduction designed to appeal directly to any viewer's olfactory senses before announcing the specialised topic of the programme, the ME employing both low-frequency, business lexis ("marketers", "consumer protection", "retailers", "marketing tactic", etc.) and colloquial language ("pumping in scent and stuff", "in the space", "really sensitive") on a relatively equal basis to consistently appeal to all potential viewers.

Weaker candidates often referred to the conversation as a monologue and misconstrued the ME's purpose as recommending the use of ambient scents in a retail environment, not noticing the guarded nature of some of his comments: "Sometimes there's this concern that marketers out there are manipulating us..." and "...we need to be really sensitive to the possibility of you know doing no harm" (ll. 24 and 40–41). Stronger candidates often also analysed the ME's use of hedges, his false start (l. 26: "So, uh, and yet") and reformulation (ll. 24–25: "...uh in a lot of my studies ... in my studies") and how he and the Presenter constituted a discourse community with a high level of shared familiarity with the subject as exhibited by the prevalence of adjacency pairs (constituted by the question-answer format of most of the conversation and especially in relation to the final two lines of the transcription which additionally incorporates a hospitality token). On occasion, stronger candidates deliberated whether one speaker could be understood as the dominant one, either the Presenter on the basis he controls the discourse with his deliberate mix of open and follow-up questions, or the ME as he provides the information and knowledge of the topic under discussion in long replies marked by strong sociolect before going on to contrast these observations with the clearly dominant status of the customer complaining to the management in the email. There was some mention of Grice's maxims, but they were usually only employed in relation to the transcription without benefitting the analysis of the two texts in a comparative fashion. The strongest responses tended to begin with concise comparison of the texts' different stylistic features to show their appreciation of how audience, form, purpose

and conventions create effects, followed by detailed, comparative analysis of a carefully-selected range of lexical choices for their specific effects with a more or less equal emphasis on both texts.

Question 2: Compare the language and style of Text A and Text B

Although the Texts were of a type – the film review - that arguably most of the candidates should have been familiar with, many candidates struggled to discern key aspects of style and language in each Text and thus only very superficially compared them with insufficient attention to detail. In some instances only very broad comparisons were made in brief responses.

A significant number of candidates compromised their ability to produce satisfactory responses by not reading the instructions carefully. Thus despite the Question's instructions clearly stating that Text A "is from the review of the film on its official website", some candidates assumed that Text A consists of three different reviews of *Knowing* (instead of consisting of three sections of the same review) and then proceeded to make side-by-side contrasts with Text B's three reviews resulting in three discrete sets of limited comparisons (instead of the single substantive comparison the Question was designed to enable the candidates to produce).

Many candidates identified much more strongly with the content of Text B and proceeded in some cases to "take sides" with the public reviewers at the expense of the "boring, long-winded and elitist" writer of Text A; objective comparisons were not made under these circumstances.

Weak responses often amounted to nothing more than summaries of the texts. Weaker candidate's lack of linguistic knowledge was evident as they criticised a couple of the reviewers in Text B for not using "proper" or "decent" English. There was often limited appreciation of how the advertising purpose of Text A influences its language and style and fundamental problems with the concept of bias, leading candidates to assert Text A is 'biased' and B is 'unbiased' (as it contains "honest" appraisals of the films). Weaker candidates primarily identified contrasts in formality (as exhibited in vocabulary and sentence structure); in purpose (Text A as professional advertising versus Text B's personal opinion agenda); and, in context (Text A's historical overview and cinematic background as opposed to the divulging of plot details in Text B). There was often some comparison of the graphology of the Texts, especially the use of sub-headings in each.

Stronger candidates carefully identified specific features of written language for different purposes and audiences and showed an informed understanding of the contexts for both Texts. They recognised how the elevated, low frequency lexis in Text A accommodates the reader's powers of interpretation to create individual meaning whilst the more spontaneous language in Text B chiefly supports the direct communication of personal preferences and opinions independent of consideration of the reader's own thoughts and views. The work of stronger candidates often included perceptive consideration of: details of contrasting voices in the Texts with examples, details of spoken language found in Text B and the significance of the grammatical errors committed there and engagement with the differing biases exhibited in both Texts. Some candidates maintained that the reviewers in Text B were self-conscious "netizens" relishing the "anonymity" provided by the internet and one referenced Deborah Tannan's genderlect theory to claim that the second reviewer was a young female owing to her use of the formulations "What I loved most:", "What I really hated:" at the beginning of her review.

The most discriminating and sophisticated responses included careful attention paid to the sophisticated mixture of different order lexis found in Text A, specifically that relating to the cinema ("box office", "cinematic depiction", "pitch his movie idea", "the final reel") and the disaster sub-genre of film ("catastrophic", "social upheaval" and "apocalypse", etc. plus the listing of appropriate actors and the titles of similar films in which they appeared). They also usually contained consideration of the introduction of more colloquial language in the final section of Text A ("give the last man something to do", "killing her off") in an attempt to preserve a connection with its mature and well-educated audience, in comparison with Text B's writers' regular use of aspects of spontaneous speech – the direct address of a reader ("you"), diction usually associated with spoken language ("I was like", "WHAT!?!?!?!") - and the use of slang ("OK", "cos", "gen", "creepy") more indicative of teenage writers catering for a peer audience. Finally, they often included some consideration of the grammatical lapses and idiosyncratic use of language ("lady actor", "she super hysterical") exhibited by Text B's first reviewer to conclude he is likely not a first language English speaker and how the second reviewer in Text B is not only witty ("*Knowing*? Or better not *Knowing*") but objective in her assessment of the film's ending ("You may or may not like the ending. I don't. But I can't see any other satisfying alternatives"), leading to the conclusion that there is much more affinity here with the reviewer of Text A than exhibited by either of the other Text B reviewers.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/04
Paper 1 Text Analysis

Key Messages

This is a technically demanding paper. Candidates have to answer one question on each of two (out of a choice of three) Language Topics – currently Spoken language and social groups, English as a global language, and Language acquisition by children and teenagers.

The questions provide candidates with linguistic data (such as transcriptions of spoken language) or more discursive and theoretical material (such as extracts from research, articles or reviews) relevant to issues significant in linguistic study. Candidates then need to combine understanding of this material with reference to examples from independent research and study.

Balancing these two elements is crucial to ensuring that candidates do themselves justice in this paper. Good answers show proficient awareness of ramifications beyond the specific context offered in the question: they combine detailed and thoughtful exploration of examples in the extracts provided with well-chosen instances from their own wider study.

In preparation for this paper, learners need to develop sound understanding of spoken language and of the conventions of transcription. They should be aware of relevant concepts and research in the fields of Spoken Language, Global English and Language Acquisition. Lastly, candidates need to demonstrate sufficient command of written English to be able to communicate complex ideas clearly and succinctly.

General Comments

This was the first session of this new paper in what is a new syllabus.

Although specimen papers and mark schemes have been available for some time to Centres and candidates, Examiners were not surprised to see that some had still to absorb the requirements fully. Some candidates were not entered appropriately, either because their English language skills were not of sufficiently high calibre or because the A Level qualification was beyond their current level of conceptual understanding. A small number of candidates had painstakingly copied out all of the passages provided but had offered either no other response or only the briefest of comments. Some candidates' work was extremely brief, therefore giving minimal scope for reward.

However, there were also many encouraging signs: candidates who were well-prepared, who clearly had an interest in the subject beyond what they might have studied in class, and who wrote with fluency and control. For such candidates, the paper was accessible and engaging.

All three questions offered candidates ample scope to demonstrate understanding of a wide range of linguistic concepts, supported by sound knowledge of relevant research. As is always the case in an English Language examination, the discriminating factor was how fully candidates applied what they had learned: the best answers were those in which appropriate knowledge was directed to the specific demands of the questions and texts.

Examiners saw a wide range of responses to each of the three questions. Since candidates choose two from the three Language Topics, they might have prepared for only two, which is of course a perfectly valid way for Centres to prepare for the examination. All three questions came with supporting passages, and these were as contrasting as the requirements of the questions, providing plenty of choice for candidates to play to their strengths.

It is always good practice for candidates to annotate the question paper as part of their planning for an answer, especially where (as was the case for all three questions in this session) the supporting passages

are of spoken English, transcribed or scripted. Although Centres are not asked to send annotated question papers with the scripts, some had done so, and examiners were pleased to see evidence that candidates were identifying significant features of language which they could later comment upon. There are no marks awarded simply for the act of annotation, but there is a clear link between thoughtful annotation and good, developed answers.

Centres are reminded of the syllabus wording: Each question will incorporate a short stimulus (such as a relevant text extract or speech transcription) relating to the topic area. Candidates will be expected to refer to this and to their own wider reading and research in answering. For this paper, all three stimulus texts had been in the nature of linguistic data – that is, they provided material which candidates could draw on for specific examples of language which they could then analyse. It may be that some questions in future will offer material which explores a linguistic issue in more abstract terms, in which case candidates would need to draw on their own wider study for specific examples of language use. Good answers will strike a balance between exploring the material provided on the question paper and referring in a relevant way to prepared examples.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1: Spoken language and social groups

Most candidates acknowledged the specialist requirements of an interview being broadcast on television, and some showed a more developed awareness of the specific context of this interaction, i.e. a public televised interview between professional men. The most proficient answers suggested that the main purpose was to promote the current work of Kenneth Branagh.

There was some variation in how candidates perceived the degree of collaboration between the speakers. Some argued that there was competition or even hostility, while others found evidence of amicable co-operation. There was some helpful reference to linguistic theory (for example to Grice's Maxims or Giles's Accommodation Theory) in more developed and informed exploration of the passage. However, some candidates insisted on over-emphasising theories of genderlect (e.g. Lakoff, Tannen or Cameron) and rather distorted the transcript evidence to fit a prepared interpretation.

Most candidates knew how to analyse the speaker turns, and some successfully applied knowledge to discover how the passage demonstrated language in context; the extract allowed all but the least prepared to respond to the general dynamics of structured, but informal, conversation.

There were some ingenious readings of specific detail. One candidate analysed Branagh's 'Tickety-boo' as an appropriate and amusing use of old-fashioned slang because the conversation was about theatre tickets. Sometimes readings were more ingenious than helpful, over-interpreting the evidence.

Less successful answers came from candidates who seemed unfamiliar with the concept of a transcript of spoken language and who spent most of their time explaining how the conventions of transcription worked to represent spoken language. Candidates for this paper must become practised in the habit of analysing 'unseen' transcripts.

Question 2: English as a global language

A significant number of answers relied almost wholly on prepared material and examples from their wider study, which was much to the detriment of the quality of their answer. Some barely mentioned the extract which had been provided with the question.

The better responses to this question were those where previous study meant candidates were prepared to consider the range of effects of new 'Englishes'. Those candidates who commented merely from their own experience were less able to assess the positive aspects portrayed in the extract and saw it mostly as 'wrong'. Candidates who were prepared to acknowledge that in some areas 'Englasianness' is a reality responded with greater enthusiasm to the question and, in some cases, with a perceptive understanding of the overall situation portrayed, though only a few really got to grips with the grammatical and syntactical details of the passage, and hardly any seemed to have seen the humour it provided.

Most successful responses used ideas associated with Crystal and Kachru, and it was clear that linguistic theory had been taught well and understood well. Whilst many candidates acknowledged the wider

ramifications of the issue in question, a great many were muddled as to the differences between dialect, variety, pidgin and creole. Some could see that a *lingua franca* was being developed; some maintained that Oz was not a native speaker of English.

Question 3: Language acquisition by children and teenagers

Most answers managed to grasp the essentially co-operative nature of the exchange in the passage of transcribed spoken language which was provided in this question, but did not go on to develop this understanding in terms of language development. Some answers worked through the main theories of child language development, even if these were clearly not relevant to the age of the participants in the transcript.

It seemed helpful to a number of candidates that they were able to identify with some of the conventions of teen and pre-teen language. However, the topic proved a distraction to others, who concentrated on discussing attitudes to clothing rather than on exploring and analysing the language in which opinion and attitudes were being expressed and shared.

More advanced answers used appropriate theorists of language acquisition, and managed to integrate their knowledge into an informed analysis. Some provided a discussion of the work of Piaget, and understood which particular operational stage the speakers in the passage had reached. However, a number of candidates had based all of their response on Piaget, describing each of the operational stages in detail instead of using the theory to inform exploration of specific exchanges in the passage.

Candidates who had prepared for a question on language acquisition in young children tended to fall back on rehearsing their learned knowledge. For example, some worked through the relevant areas for study in the syllabus, explaining the Hallidayan functions of language, or trying to distinguish between Chomsky and Skinner. Centres need to remember that this topic extends to teenagers, so candidates need to be prepared to discuss language acquisition amongst older as well as younger children.

Examiners were pleased to see evidence of good examination technique in answers which kept coming back to the terms of the question – the ways in which the speakers use language to share and develop their ideas. This kind of clear focus on the question is to be encouraged. On the other hand, Centres would do well to discourage candidates from taking what might be called a deficit approach to transcriptions of spoken language, where what is said by the interlocutors is criticised for being wrong or ignorant.