

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0510/12
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Exercises 1 – 4**, it is suggested that candidates focus on the question word (*how, what, where, when*) to ensure they respond correctly.
- In **Exercise 1**, candidates should ensure that responses are brief but precise and should avoid trying to paraphrase the wording in the text.
- In **Exercise 2**, multiple matching reading comprehension, candidates are required to identify key details including attitudes and opinions, and to demonstrate understanding of what is implied but not explicitly stated. Candidates should be reminded to provide clear and legible responses.
- In **Exercise 3**, note taking, candidates should ensure that responses are brief and that they correspond to the headings of each section. There should only be one relevant note per bullet point as if candidates provide more than one, only the first one can be considered.
- In **Exercise 4**, candidates should be aware that the details in each option **A, B, C**, of a question will be mentioned in the text. However, only one option will contain the details that fully and correctly correspond to the central focus of the question.
- In **Exercises 5 and 6**, candidates should develop their response as fully as possible ensuring they fulfil the requirements of the task. For **Exercise 5**, all three bullet points must be addressed for candidates to access higher marks. For **Exercise 6**, if candidates use the ideas in the prompts, then to gain higher marks, they should further extend and develop these ideas or introduce ideas of their own.

General comments

Confident attempts were made on all exercises.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

This exercise was very well attempted with many candidates achieving full marks.

Question 1

This was very well answered. Occasionally, candidates incorrectly selected the distractor, '1858' or offered 'South Australia' but most recognised the correlation between '*constructed*' in the text and '*built*' in the question and supplied '1915'.

Question 2

This was well answered, and most candidates identified the link between '*development*' in the question and '*completed*' in the text and correctly selected '*Stuart Highway*'. Some candidates responded with the detail that opals were found, mines were opened and hotels were built but these did not make it easier for tourists to get to Coober Pedy.

Question 3

This was very well attempted. On occasions '*once a day*' was provided but this referred to travel by coach rather than by train.

Question 4

Most candidates identified the link between '*challenging*' in the text and '*worst*' in the question and selected the correct months to avoid visiting as '*January and February*' but occasionally some provided '*April to October*', mentioned in the text as being the best months to visit.

Question 5

Some candidates missed the focus of the question and described the unusual piece of public art '*the first tree*' and '*sculpture made of iron*'. Many incorrect responses simply mentioned '*in the vast Australian outback*' which was too vague and indicated that candidates may not have noted what followed in the text '*located on a hill nearby*'. Some candidates chose to rephrase the detail and offered '*near a hill*' which unfortunately did not convey the same meaning as in the text so could not be credited.

Question 6

This question required candidates to identify three points out of a possible four which could be found at any point in the text. Marks could not be awarded if key detail was omitted in responses such as '*can remain cool*' without '*in high temperatures*', '*no sounds can be heard*' without '*from outside*' and '*enlarge an underground house*' without '*easy to*'. Overall, this was very well attempted and most candidates were successful in recognising all the correct details and gained all marks.

Exercise 2

Question 7

Candidates attempted this exercise with varying degrees of success and marks were awarded across the full range. There were some candidates who achieved full marks and most gained at least five of the nine marks available. In this multiple-matching exercise, candidates had to read an article about four people who all have a family tradition which is important to them and then read and answer a series of questions by matching the correct person to the question. Candidates needed to ensure that information in the section of the text selected fully supported their choice of answer, while looking for the rephrasing of the ideas, rather than the same words or phrases in the question and text. Candidates should be reminded to always provide clear and legible responses. They should simply cross out responses they do not want to be considered and should not try to write over their initial answers since attempts that cannot be read may not be credited.

Questions **7(a)**, **(c)**, **(d)** and **(f)** were not answered as successfully.

Firstly, in **Question 7(a)**, candidates were required to find in the text someone who mentions that a part of their tradition has changed over time. **Text D** was a common incorrect response. Here, Marnie mentions taking her grandmother out for a birthday tea rather than giving her a present. She explains that they always go back to the same expensive hotel so the tradition has not changed although she suggests they might need to rethink their next trip. The key detail appears in **Text A**, where Benny mentions, '*As my parents have got older, we've chosen slightly shorter walks*'.

In **7(c)**, candidates had to consider which person contrasts their tradition with something that many people do. **Text C** was often supplied in error. Candidates did not always seem to connect 'most people like the excitement of opening a present but instead, she wanted to have an experience to look back on' in **Text D** with the requirements of the question.

In **7(d)**, the key phrase was '*different people*' and the answer was **Text A**, in which Benny explains '*for my brother and me, it's time to switch off from our busy jobs*' and also mentions what his mum enjoys about the tradition. Some candidates may have been misled by '*everyone who comes to my house*' in **Text B**.

In **7(f)**, candidates had to focus on '*the consequence of changing part of the tradition*' to correctly select **Text C** where this information was found. Here, Kieron explains how on one occasion while going for a swim with his sister, they decided to wear diving wetsuits over their swimming costumes but it felt like cheating so they

removed them before going into the sea again. Those providing incorrect responses seemed equally attracted to **Text B** and **Text D**.

Exercise 3

The topic of the text appeared to be accessible, and most candidates were able to extract the relevant information to score well underneath both headings. Notes could not be credited if they appeared as the second idea on the line or if they were added as extra points without previous ones being crossed through.

Question 8

This section was very well attempted, and many candidates gained full marks. The wording of the heading required responses to use a suitable verb for each answer and occasionally candidates did not do so. Hence, responses such as '*basic cooking skills*' and '*fitness plan*' made no sense without '*practise*' and '*complete*' respectively so could not be credited. In a few responses, slips with spelling meant that the meaning was changed e.g., '*sing up to the group chat*' so the mark could not be awarded. Incorrect answers such as '*set up camp every evening*' and '*contribute to the cooking*' did not belong under this heading as they referred to activities done during the actual adventure holiday rather than as preparation beforehand.

Question 9

This section was not as well answered by some candidates. On occasion, key detail was omitted such as '*never to give up*' in point 3 and '*in other people*' in point 4. Some candidates misunderstood '*personal qualities*' in the heading and provided examples of possible skills acquired during the holiday e.g., '*more helpful*', '*make friends*' and '*contribute to cooking*' and possible benefits e.g., '*impressive stories to tell*' and a '*programme of challenges*'.

Exercise 4

Questions 10 – 15

This exercise requires candidates to answer six multiple choice questions. Each one provides three options **A**, **B** and **C**, and candidates enter their answer by placing a tick in the box of their chosen response. In this series, the text was about a young artist. In general, this exercise was very well attempted with many candidates achieving full marks. Candidates seemed to find **Questions 12** and **15** most challenging.

In **Question 12**, candidates had to consider the idea being suggested in paragraph 3. While many candidates chose answer **B**, possibly tempted by '*people come to find her because she's an artist they have heard about*', it was answer **A** that was correct since Lisa mentions '*she'd miss making art outside*' if she decided to teach full-time to allow her to earn the money to afford a bigger home.

In **Question 15**, candidates were required to consider the text as a whole, and the purpose of the article. Those providing incorrect responses seemed equally attracted to answers **B** and **C** and were possibly unfamiliar with the word '*profile*' in answer **A**, the correct answer. This article offers, in fact, a short profile or a description of Lisa's work, life, feelings and hopes. We also learn in the text that '*her artwork is different to the usual things people see*', confirming that she is an unusual artist.

Exercise 5

This exercise was generally very well attempted this series and candidates were able to engage with and relate to the task. Many candidates achieved content marks at the top level and their email was fully developed and relevant in an appropriate style and register, with an excellent sense of purpose.

Many responses showed familiarity with the conventions of email writing – opening with a suitable greeting, closing with an appropriate farewell and setting an informal, conversational tone. Candidates are advised to maintain this informal style throughout the response, as inconsistency in tone can affect the mark awarded. Some responses were characterised by a mix of informal and formal language with the introduction of cohesive devices such as '*moreover*' and '*in conclusion*' which are not appropriate in writing emails.

In this task, candidates were required to write about a new place which had recently opened in their town for young people. The most effective emails provided a realistic sense of excitement about the new place and an obvious desire to persuade the friend to visit or join. A small number of candidates appeared to have

misinterpreted the rubric and made suggestions for improvements to the place, rather than suggesting how the place could improve the lives of young people in the area. Such an approach did affect the content mark.

Some candidates started the email effectively by enquiring about their friend and their family and then giving the reason for their email. They referred to the recipient in a natural and easy way *'Hey, you remember me telling you about the new sports centre being constructed...?'* and *'Guess what! A new library's just opened in town and I think we should pay a visit together'*.

The first bullet point was often the most developed. There was an interesting variety of different places such as study cafes, malls, careers advice centres and gaming zones. Stronger responses provided a well-developed description of the place including the location, décor, facilities and reasons for opening it. Less developed responses tended to just list the different sports and facilities on offer, with no additional detail.

A variety of plausible suggestions was provided for the second bullet point. Responses suggested how the study café, for example, provided a quiet environment to study and internet access for those students who might not have either at home and how the careers centre had multiple courses to help develop students' skills and experts on hand to advise on possible future careers. Some candidates however just briefly mentioned how the place provided a suitable opportunity for young people to hang out, relieve stress or improve their fitness.

The third bullet point tended to be the least developed of the three and often consisted of a brief invitation to the friend to accompany them on their next visit. Some candidates managed successfully to expand here by providing some extra detail such as an appropriate reason for visiting, linking this to the facilities on offer *'How about we go and check this place out together? Being an adrenaline junkie yourself, you'll love the thrilling rides this park has to offer. This place will give us the perfect opportunity to spend some quality time together'*.

From a language point of view, most responses were communicated clearly, using a range of language and a consistently appropriate style and register. Some candidates used phrasal verbs effectively e.g. *'check out'*, *'hang out'*, *'look forward to'* and *'catch up'* and many were successful in using language suited to the task e.g. *'top-notch'*, *'talk of the town'*, *'pocket friendly'* and *'like-minded people'*.

Additionally, there were many examples of ambitious language and more complex structures, for example, *'This new gaming zone is the perfect addition to our town. It not only provides an array of exciting games but also boasts the latest generation of gaming computers'*.

Language slips were evident in verb and subject agreements, e.g., *'my friends who has been there'* and when candidates were using the passive voice *'a football ground has built for young people'*.

Tenses and spelling were both generally sound this series, apart from some candidates producing *'were'* for *'where'* and *'quite'* for *'quiet'* and *'exited'* for *'excited'*.

Exercise 6

Overall, this task was very well attempted. Candidates were required to write an essay about whether all teenagers should do exercise. The audience, in this instance a teacher, provided guidance as to the style and register required for this more formal piece of writing. The most successful responses fulfilled the task with an introductory comment on the content of the essay, an analysis of both sides and a clear and concise conclusion although responses did not need to necessarily include both arguments for and against to achieve higher marks.

It was clear from the responses overall that the vast majority of candidates were familiar with the genre of the writing task and found the topic entirely accessible. Four prompts were provided – two relating to the positive and two relating to more negative aspects of exercising – and while there was heavy reliance on these in many responses, a large number of candidates managed to successfully expand, develop and add to these ideas. Occasionally, candidates wrote too many words on an overlong generalised introduction which explained about what exercise is or focused on the importance of eating a healthy diet, rather than providing an introductory comment about exercising. This often had an impact on the content mark if the rest of the response was then not developed fully.

Apart from the obvious health benefits of exercising which many candidates listed, many original ideas were offered such as the fact that it does not only have a positive impact on physical health but also mental health too, since it releases feel-good hormones which help lift your mood. Also, some maintained that exercising

helps decrease stress, improve concentration and your sleep cycle. Many sensibly pointed out that it is not necessary to spend a lot of money on expensive gyms and equipment, since you can do simple exercise in the comfort of your own home or consider regularly walking or jogging to school.

The majority of candidates concluded that exercising plays a key role in helping young people lead a healthy lifestyle and they favoured a balanced approach, finding some regular time to exercise while not neglecting their studies. Many also mentioned that determination and consistency were two keys to success. Candidates who provide an appropriate conclusion and avoid repetition of the same ideas, vocabulary and expressions used in the main body of the essay are rewarded with higher marks.

Paragraphs and linking words were generally well used and provided a balance when conveying points. Expressions such as *'one notable advantage is'* and *'a common counterargument is'* significantly helped cohesion when there was additional content or change of direction in the essay. In less successful responses, candidates used commas instead of full stops, writing paragraphs that should have been composed of several sentences, which instead consisted entirely of one sentence. Additionally, in some responses there was an overuse of awkward, poorly chosen idioms such as *'Exercising isn't always peaches and cream. It costs an arm and a leg but there is a silver lining'*. When candidates introduce learned idiomatic language inappropriately, this affects the quality of the language.

Errors were evident in the use of comparatives e.g., *'more fitter and more healthier'*, in the omission of articles e.g., *'if they join gym or hire trainer'* and when pronouns were used inconsistently within the sentence e.g., *'it will keep your mind and body active and improve their sleeping cycle'*.

However, many candidates had a good range of suitable vocabulary to address the topic e.g., *'time consuming'*, *'sedentary lifestyle'*, *'couch potato'* and *'stress buster'*. Candidates are generally encouraged to increase their topic-related vocabulary to achieve marks at the higher level. Additionally, in more successful responses, many candidates showed good control of tenses and sentence structure and attempted greater complexity and a wider range of vocabulary such as: *'There are countless ways in which exercising can enrich a teenager's life, both physically and mentally. It not only increases strength and stamina but also improves a teen's appearance, which is something most teens are insecure about. Also it releases the hormone dopamine that provides a sense of joy when exercising and helps instil confidence in an individual'*.

Overall, most of the candidates succeeded in communicating the message clearly in this series, writing a developed, appropriate essay, which fulfilled the task.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0510/22
Listening Multiple Choice

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	C	11	B	21	B	31	H
2	D	12	A	22	B	32	A
3	B	13	C	23	A	33	B
4	C	14	B	24	C	34	A
5	B	15	A	25	A	35	B
6	C	16	C	26	B	36	C
7	A	17	C	27	G	37	B
8	C	18	B	28	E	38	C
9	A	19	B	29	D	39	C
10	C	20	C	30	F	40	A

Key messages

- Candidates should be reminded to take care when transferring their answers from the question paper onto the answer sheet and to shade only one lozenge for each question.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read each question/statement very carefully to ensure they listen for and select the correct relevant detail/idea. When reading questions, candidates should pay particular attention to words, such as *this year*, *both*, *before/after*, *the best*, *first*, *particularly*, etc.
- Candidates should listen carefully all the way to the end of each speaker's turn, to ensure they select the correct detail and can effectively rule out any other detail that acts as distracting information.
- Candidates need to ensure that the idea the speaker says in the recording fully matches the idea in the option on the question paper before they select the option as their response.
- Candidates should also be encouraged to listen to a wider range of listening text types, including longer monologues to ensure they can follow and *navigate* themselves through these texts (e.g., talks and presentations).

General comments

The paper consisted of 40 multiple-choice questions and, overall, they were attempted fairly well by most candidates.

Candidates listened to five exercises which consisted of monologues (e.g., voicemail messages, extended explanations and semi-formal announcements), informal dialogues, informal and semi-formal interviews and a longer semi-formal talk. The exercises gradually increased in difficulty and complexity and tested a range of listening skills from listening for specific information (e.g., locations, weekend plans, preferred school subject) to listening for more complex ideas (e.g., opinions, attitudes, feelings, advice, reasons, personal preferences, and experiences) and understanding the connections between these ideas (e.g., mutual decisions and agreements). The script for each question also contained distracting information, in addition to the targeted key idea, in order to test the level of detail and the range of grammatical and lexical structures candidates are able to understand.

Overall, most candidates dealt better with items that focused on identifying specific information which was stated rather than implied. Only about half of all candidates dealt very well with items which focused on more complex ideas, such as speakers' opinions, and items in which key information was implied rather than directly stated. On the whole, candidates were also less successful in items which took the form of a monologue (e.g., informal telephone messages, semi-formal announcements) and which tested gist understanding (e.g., the speaker's reason for calling).

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

In this part of the test, candidates listened to eight short recordings on familiar topics and selected one visual prompt from four options. The vast majority of candidates performed extremely well in this part, particularly in **Questions 5 and 6**. On the whole, candidates showed very good understanding of listening for a specific detail focusing on, for example, future intentions, decisions and preferences. Candidates also seemed very familiar with the lexical items set around topics, such as free time activities, food, holidays and studies.

Some candidates were occasionally less successful with **Questions 7 and 8**. Both questions were in the form of a semi-formal monologue. However, there were no clear patterns in incorrect responses.

Exercise 2

In this exercise, candidates answered two multiple-choice questions per recording. Many candidates tended to be more successful with **Questions 13, 15 and 16**, which targeted feelings, opinions and reasons in the context of sport, food and learning.

Most candidates appeared least successful with **Questions 10 and 17**. In **Question 10**, candidates were tested on understanding the speaker's feeling and her implied intention. Many were tempted by option **B** here, possibly because of the speaker mentioning 'online clips'. However, the speaker does not say she was pleased about those. **Question 17** was a gist question and targeted the reason why the speaker was calling the dentist surgery. The recording took the form of a semi-formal monologue. A large majority of candidates selected option **B** in error. Candidates who selected this option were most likely unfamiliar with the phrasal verb 'bring forward' which led to them selecting the idea of 'postponing an appointment' in option **B**.

Questions 11 and 12 also produced a lower level of success. Both questions were a formal monologue set in the context of work. **Question 11** targeted a description of someone who would be the most suitable candidate for the advertised job. Many candidates were most likely mistakenly tempted by '*there may be the possibility of joining our team permanently*' in the incorrect option **A**. In **Question 12**, candidates were required to select the benefit of the advertised job, which was 'overnight accommodation' in option **A**, but many candidates provided option **C** instead. While the speaker does mention food, this is not to take home, as per option, but to eat on the premises: '*You'll be provided with food during your shift in our newly-built canteen*'.

Exercise 3

This part of the test required candidates to follow a longer talk about the sport of ice-climbing and complete each of the eight statements with one of the three multiple-choice options. Candidates generally dealt very

well with most of the questions in this exercise, particularly with questions targeting the speaker's feelings and opinions. **Questions 23 and 26** saw the highest level of success; **Questions 20, 22 and 25** were also attempted fairly well by many.

Candidates did not show the same level of success when answering **Questions 19 and 21**. **Question 19** targeted the place where the speaker first saw people ice-climbing. Less successful candidates seemed to have missed the reference to *first seeing* the sport '*I'd never thought about ice-climbing until a colleague invited me to an indoor ice-climbing venue. I took one look at the guys on the ice wall, and said 'No way!', and selected option C in error, which was the place where the speaker first tried the sport: 'It was only when I came across it again at a snow sport festival that I even considered trying it'.* **Question 21** focused on the experience that *finally* convinced the speaker to try ice-climbing. The correct response here was 'considerable heights' in option B supported by '*I convinced myself I'd be able to give it a good go ... I'd no fear of being really high up*'. This reference in the script was missed by many and incorrect options A and C were selected in equal measures instead. Candidates were most likely tempted by the mention of '*strong rock-climber*' and '*colder months*'.

Exercise 4

In this multiple-matching part of the test, candidates were required to match statements to the correct speakers. The statements expressed a range of ideas on the topic of achieving an ambition. These ideas included opinions, feelings, reactions, a future probability, results, etc. Candidates chose six correct statements from a list of eight. The majority of candidates attempted all questions very well. They were particularly successful at matching the correct ideas in **Questions 28, 29 and 32**.

It was only **Question 31** that was not attempted with the same level of proficiency. The speaker expressed the idea in statement H – '*It was physically demanding*'. However, many candidates provided the idea '*I was excited to have inspired other people*' in statement C as their responses. Candidates who selected this statement were most likely distracted by the word 'people' and the mention of '*would want to be me*' in the script: '*I'd had this idea there'd be people lining the roads, cheering, and little kids would want to be me*'.

Exercise 5

In this part of the test, candidates were required to listen to a semi-formal interview with a man who paints pictures of his local area and answer eight multiple-choice questions. Overall, there was a fair level of success in this exercise, as many candidates gained six out of the available eight marks. They particularly excelled in **Questions 35 and 40**. They were also successful in selecting the correct responses to **Questions 33 and 39**.

However, **Questions 36 and 38** did not reflect the same level of success. **Question 36** targeted the reason why the speaker prefers to paint cities to landscapes. Less successful candidates tended to select the distracting information in options A and B in equal measures. They seemed to have been distracted by the speaker's reference to '*I'm fortunate enough to live within easy reach of a range of interesting places to paint*' and '*potential customers seem willing to pay more for paintings of landscapes, so I do plenty of those too*', but most likely missed the fact that these do not refer to the reason why he prefers painting city scenes. In **Question 38** candidates were tested on how the speaker felt before his first exhibition. Less successful candidates seemed to be tempted by the mention of '*wait to see who'd turn up*' and '*a shortage of visitors*' and gave option B as their response. However, the speaker does not state that he was concerned about this aspect.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0510/32
Speaking

Key messages

- Conduct of the tests in this series was exceptionally good. Both timings and the wording of the exam scripts were in the most part accurately followed.
- In a few cases examiners appeared uncertain about intervening to elicit further response in candidates who had little to say. Whilst examiners should be careful not to speak too much, it is preferable to ask an extension question, e.g., 'Tell me more about ...' than to allow the candidates to sit in silence until the time specified for that section of the exam has elapsed.
- There was an overall pattern of slightly severe to severe marking and scaling was recommended for almost all the centres in the allocation.
- **Part 2** preparation should be one minute.
- Short **Part 2** talk – many examiners are moving on to **Part 3** when a candidate stops speaking, however, there are candidates who are able to speak for longer. Examiners should ask if the candidate wants to say more *before* moving on.
- Candidates who consistently give well developed responses and maintain communication with ease should be awarded level 5 marks.
- Development and pronunciation were where the centres tended to be the most severe/generous.
- Please remember that intonation is part of the pronunciation criteria and should be considered when giving a mark.
- Please put the candidates in candidate number order on the SESFs.

General comments

Introduction: Most centres completed the introduction as required using the correct examiner script. A few examiners missed out the date of the test and a few chose to paraphrase the script, which sometimes led to confusion.

Warm-up: This was generally well-conducted; however, they were sometimes too short to be effective. The best examiners used the questions provided to put candidates at ease. Follow-up questions were used effectively by some examiners to prompt more reticent candidates to elaborate on their responses and to ensure that candidates spoke for one to two minutes. Some examiners chose warm-up questions from different cards however these were used as printed, and timings were observed.

Part 1: Interview: This section was generally well conducted. In most cases, the examiner used the general discussion to put candidates at ease. Some of the examiners expanded on the questions to extend the time to two to three minutes. Most examiners used the script and questions provided. Problems arose when examiners rephrased the script or questions. The best examiners elicited further discussion by using the prompts provided on page 6 of the handbook. There were a few cases where the interviews were slightly long. These tended to be stronger candidates who gave lengthy responses, but not a real trend in the series. One or two examiners added extra questions rather than prompting further responses. However, there were some centres where the interviews were too short, and examiners did not elicit any further discussion.

Part 2: Short talk: This was generally well-conducted with most examiners reading the script and giving the one-minute preparation time and keeping to two minutes for the short talk. Some of the examiners read out the topic on the candidate card before or after the preparation period. This often resulted in too short a period being allowed for preparation and other times longer periods being allowed. Some examiners risked misdirecting candidates when they attempted to explain how candidates should approach the talk.

Instructions such as '*You must say which one is better*' do not encourage candidates to relate the topic to their own circumstances and preferences and discourages hypothetical reasoning or consideration of how different options may be preferable for different people. Some candidates who had little to say were allowed to sit in silence until their time was up, rather than being encouraged to continue or examiners did not use the examiner script to encourage further discussion but moved straight on to **Part 3**. Centres should be reminded to make sure candidates use the whole two minutes. Some candidates actually spoke for longer than two minutes, confidently and fluently. However, candidates should not be allowed to go too far beyond two minutes.

Part 3: Discussion: Overall, this was well conducted; most centres used the examiner script. In most cases, examiners used the questions in the order given. Some examiners asked open-ended questions to extend the time to three minutes but at times this resulted in discussions extending to four–five minutes. Most used all the questions on the card, but a few did not use all of them in order to avoid asking questions on aspects the candidate had already spoken about. Most of the discussions lasted around three minutes, however some examiners moved through **Part 3** too quickly, structuring this part as a question-and-answer session than a discussion. Hesitant candidates were often left in silence rather than being encouraged to speak with a follow-up question.

Application of the marking criteria

Grammar – Marking for grammar was predominantly accurate, with some more able candidates being marked severely while less successful candidates were often rewarded too generously.

Some centres were fairly accurate and placed candidates in the correct level but there was a general pattern of being severe to very severe.

Vocabulary – Tendency for severe marking. Candidates need to be credited for using a range of vocabulary with a good degree of precision.

Development – An occasional tendency for slightly severe marking, especially those in lower bands. In minor cases, full marks were awarded to those whose responses were not 'consistently' well-developed in all parts of the test. However, there were examples of overly generous marking for candidates who spoke quickly and for a relatively long time *without* really developing their responses much being given top marks.

Pronunciation – Marking showed a tendency towards generosity. It either mirrored the other three criteria or in a few cases, was marked as a 10 as default. Use of intonation is important for accessing top bands. There was a tendency to penalise accents severely and be overly generous with candidates who speak in a monotone or use intonation incorrectly.

Administration

Recordings – The recordings were mostly clear with very few instances of noisy recordings. In some instances, there was some background noise (traffic) from open windows or some noise from students (i.e., break time). It was more noticeable with candidates who speak softly.

Most of the recordings were good quality with a few minor anomalies.

Documentation – Very few instances of clerical errors or candidate numbers out of order.

Internal moderation

Internal moderation was generally carried out competently, although there were some instances of internally moderated marks being too generous, when the initial marks were much closer to the moderated marks, which resulting in scaling. Centres are reminded that moderation is not necessarily if there was only one examiner.

Comments on specific questions

Speaking Assessment A

Part 1

Interview – Reading

This card was utilised quite frequently so giving a chance for students to develop their enjoyment of reading as well as exploring any recent texts they have enjoyed. The first two questions were usually managed well by the less successful students with many able to express opinions about whether or not they enjoyed reading. With responses ranging from simple phrasing ‘...I like to read’ or ‘I like to reading adventure story.’ To more descriptive language ‘reading fills my time and gives me pleasure...’ and ‘I find I like novels which make me feel good.’ The final question gave stronger candidates opportunity to explore the options of the future with some depth. The less-able candidate found it more stretching trying to use the future tense. In some really good examples, candidate used conditionals to express ‘what if the world...’.

Part 2

Short talk – Keeping in touch

Here the candidates needed to discuss writing emails to friends and speaking to a friend on the phone and what were the advantages and disadvantages. The stronger candidates managed within the allocated time to cover both options and to express their own preferences many finding writing emails to be of greater advantage. Weaker candidates struggled within the allocated time, finding it difficult to cover both options fully. Candidates largely understood the importance of ‘keeping in touch’. In the short talk some of the more able candidates used effectively cohesive devices (*however, on the other hand* etc.,) to link the discussion and express their preferences.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to modern technology, use of handwriting, staying in touch and how to make new friends. The first prompt was easily accessible for candidates when they discussed their use of mobile phones. Sometimes this elicited a good range of gadget vocabulary and more able candidates found themselves explaining in some detail the ways they have improved our lives ‘...iPhone has made life easier’ ‘...I find technology has transformed the way we live.’ The second prompt required candidates to envisage the idea that we would not need to learn handwriting. Some took it as a given that handwriting had to be taught and did not expand much of their reasons. However, others did extend the discussion here to understanding how handwritten items were becoming less common and our reliance on computers was affecting the teaching of handwriting. More able candidates really developed this well using a range of structures, and especially conditionals to express their opinions: ‘if we don’t teach handwriting we will find it difficult when our computer goes wrong.’ In **Question 3**, candidates agreed generally with the view that staying in touch with someone far away was not easy. This gave candidates the chance to develop some of the difficulties and elicited a range of phrases from ‘it’s a bit tricky’ to more ambitious language where stronger candidates would use figurative speech... ‘It would put me in a pickle...’ ‘this can put us in a bind.’ **Question 4** invited candidates to develop discussion on how to make new friends. For the stronger candidate a range of vocabulary was offered here ‘joining clubs’... ‘going to social events.’ Able candidates could extend the discussion to include some skills such as becoming a good listener or showing an interest in someone’s interests. For less-able candidates, the responses were often shorter here, mentioning joining in an activity to make new friends but not fully evaluating the benefits of doing it.

Speaking Assessment B

Part 1

Interview – The importance of music

The first question elicited frequency modals and able candidates were able to say how music ‘kept them entertained’. Less successful candidates gave shorter responses simply stating the type of music they listened to. **Question 2** asked the candidate to discuss a musical event or celebration. Those who were able to extend the question elaborated on the event using phrases like ‘the concert was amazing’ and using more

sophisticated level of vocabulary to describe the participants in the event such as *'artist.'* In the final question modal auxiliary verbs were used as they explored their opinions and reasons of why music is played in shops or restaurants, with the stronger candidates able to develop some justifications for using music in these contexts where the less-able candidates struggled to go much beyond where they had heard music.

Part 2

Short talk – Transport

The majority of candidates spoke about using airports and taking a plane and developing the convenience and time-saving aspect of this kind of travel. Use of more extended structures including comparative adjectives was evident for those who evaluated the advantages and disadvantages but also the merits of the options. Many talked about *'the faster option'* being by air. How to get somewhere *'more quickly.'* Some were able to use conditionals to extend the discussion especially when talking about the advantages of travelling by train: *'if you go by train, you have more freedom to move around' ... 'more able to talk with friends.'*

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to travelling in a group, travelling to different countries, speaking the language of the country visited and the benefits of school trips. When exploring the second question candidates mentioned *'getting to know culture'* and *'ways of living'* as suggestions for travelling to other countries. The able candidates explored those differences with some detail, but the less-able candidates often gave shorter responses and were less successful in developing reasons and contrasts. Where candidates did well, they were able to apply a range of vocabulary from travel, accommodation, food and common situations. With a range of prepositions, verbs and modals used extensively by the more able candidate. In response to **Question 3**, most agreed about the need to speak the language when travelling as a means of avoiding *'getting scammed'* or *'paying too much for something.'* With **Question 4**, the benefits of school trips was often well developed by more able candidates, extending the benefits with examples including, *'usefulness to life'* *'allowed you to make friends' ... 'have memories'* and *'educationally valuable.'* The use of discourse markers helped to make the discussions more interesting: *'that's a good point...' 'how can I put this' ... 'I suppose you can...'* which helped discussions to flow naturally.

Speaking assessment C

Part 1

Interview – Other countries

There were strong responses to all three questions, all of which were relevant and well developed using a wide range of vocabulary and a range of simple and complex structures. There was a particular emphasis on appropriate verb tenses (e.g., **Question 1** *'I'd like to visit Dubai because it has a good vibe, and the shopping centres are very different to those we have in India. I have family over there so it would be good to hang out with them.'*) Pronunciation was clear and intonation used effectively. Weaker responses were limited to simple vocabulary and a range of simple structures with inaccuracies in (subject/verb agreement, plurals) but there were attempts at complex structures with inaccuracies (*'Having go to...'*). Pronunciation was mostly clear, but intonation was rarely used to convey intended meaning. To achieve the best marks, candidates should ensure they use, or attempt to use, a range of past tenses when asked about a past event and future tenses when asked to speculate about the future.

Part 2

Short talk – Imagination

Strong responses included a range of structures (conditionals, comparatives, relative clauses, participle clauses) and topic-specific language. Candidates frequently developed the talk by explaining how easy and difficult each option would be, giving reasons for their responses. The most popular choice by a small margin was writing a story about living on another planet. Stronger candidates used linking devices, for example (*'Writing an article about transport in the future would be interesting' 'On the other hand, I'd prefer to write about living on another planet. If we could go to...'*). Weaker responses focused on one option, or did discuss both options but needed encouragement from the examiner to state which option they would prefer.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to imagination, reading, future lives, and jobs requiring a good imagination. Strong responses included a wide range of precise vocabulary to discuss a variety of ideas, facts and opinions and using a wide range of structures and responding relevantly. For example, *'When you watch a film, you can visualise everything clearly'*, *'Reading is not my cup of tea'*. Pronunciation was clear, and intonation used to convey meaning. Weaker responses included mainly relevant answers with a limited range of structures and vocabulary, and some attempts to develop responses.

Speaking assessment D

Part 1

Interview – Daily routines

Good responses to all three questions, all of which were relevant and mostly well developed using a sufficient range of vocabulary and a range of simple and complex structures with particular emphasis on appropriate verb tenses (e.g., **Question 2** *'Last weekend we went hiking in the mountains.'*) Pronunciation was clear, and intonation used to good effect. Weaker responses were limited to simple vocabulary and a range of simple structures with inaccuracies (subject/verb agreement, plurals), but attempts were made at more complex structures. To achieve the best marks, candidates should ensure they use, or attempt to use, a range of past tenses when asked about a past event and use a wide range of vocabulary.

Part 2

Short talk – Finding information

More able candidates incorporated a wide range of vocabulary and structures into their talks (comparatives, superlatives, conditionals). Most candidates talked about the advantages and disadvantages of each option before expressing their preference with reasons why. The most popular choice was to research information online. Stronger candidates used a wide range of vocabulary (*'less appealing, unique way, veterans, mix it up, grab information'*). Weaker responses focused on one option and its merits.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to school projects, learning history opposed to science, studying online, neighbours. Strong responses included using a wide range of vocabulary precisely to discuss a variety of ideas, facts and opinions and a wide range of simple and complex structures (comparatives, conditionals, relative clauses) whilst responding relevantly at length. Pronunciation was clear and intonation used frequently to convey intended meaning. Weaker responses included relevant answers using a limited range of structures and vocabulary, with some attempts to develop their responses. To achieve the best marks, candidates need to use a wide range of topic-related vocabulary and ensure they use a range of structures.

Speaking assessment E

Part 1

Interview – Young people

Strong responses to all three questions were relevant and well-developed, with most candidates able to use a good range of vocabulary such as *'hanging out and chilling'* and *'playing pranks'*. Many strong candidates used a range of simple and complex structures accurately. Pronunciation was frequently clear, and natural intonation was used to good effect. Weaker responses used a sufficient range of vocabulary and simple and complex structures. Pronunciation was not always as clear as it could be but did not impede meaning. Intonation was sometimes used to convey intended meaning but could be 'flat' at times or lacking in a natural rhythm. To achieve the best marks, candidates should ensure they attempt to use a wider range of more complex grammar and demonstrate clear pronunciation and effective intonation.

Part 2

Short talk – Helping the environment

Strong responses included a range of structures such as modals and environmental specific language e.g., *'rainwater harvesting'* or *'biodiversity'*. The most common approach was to introduce the topic and options and then develop the talk by explaining how easy or difficult each option would be for them. Many used *'in conclusion'* to give a final opinion on which option they would prefer and why. Most were able to talk in detail about both options; many focused more on the 'not buying new clothes' option. Stronger candidates used phrases like – *'In my opinion'*, *'according to me'*, *'I would have to say'* etc.. Weaker responses still talked about each option but tended to run out of ideas or forget to say which one they would prefer.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to polluting the environment, plastic pollution, growing your own food and reducing air pollution. Strong responses included using a wide range of vocabulary using environmental specific language such as *'carbon emissions'* or *'micro plastics'* to discuss a variety of ideas, facts and opinions about pollution. Many used a range of structures and were able to respond relevantly at length and in detail. For example, *'People should be encouraged to grow their own organic food in a more sustainable fashion, but we should be aware of not making farmers poorer'*. Pronunciation was usually clear, and intonation used to convey intended meaning. Weaker responses included relevant answers but missed the opportunity to develop their ideas fully.

Speaking assessment F

Part 1

Interview – Food

Strong responses to all three questions that were relevant, detailed and well-developed using a wide range of vocabulary related to food and eating. Many gave detailed and interesting responses to when and where they had a meal. *'We went for ramen and we were so looking forward to it but they were very bland so we were super disappointed'* and *'The waiter was very rude and slow so we complained to the manager and we ended up fighting with him'*. An accurate and wide range of simple and complex structures were used with few errors. Pronunciation was often clear, and intonation used to good effect to give detailed and longer responses. Weaker responses used a sufficient range of vocabulary but made errors when attempting to use more complex structures. To achieve the best marks, candidates should ensure they use, or attempt to use, a range of different tenses and a wider range of vocabulary. They should show clear pronunciation and effective intonation.

Part 2

Short talk – Buying clothes

Strong responses included a range of structures (conditionals, comparatives) and good topic-specific language. The most common approach was to introduce the topic and options and then develop the talk by explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Many used good summarising techniques, *'Finally / to conclude / I would have to say...'*, to give a final opinion on which option they would prefer and why. The candidates were able to discuss both options well and most chose being with their friend at a shopping centre. *'In my opinion, I would prefer to go to the shopping centre as the last time we went there we caused a ruckus and I must admit that was so much fun!'* Weaker responses did discuss both options though they did not always develop the advantages and disadvantages clearly and sometimes omitted which one they would prefer.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to whether it is important for clothes to be comfortable or fashionable, whether wearing smart clothes makes people more confident, no one will use cash in the future and whether students should be allowed to choose their own clothes they wear to school. Strong responses used a wide range of vocabulary to discuss their ideas, facts and opinions about clothes and fashion. Most used a range of structures and responded relevantly, in detail and at length. For example, *'It is important to go out of your comfort zone when it comes to clothes and sometimes you need to give good impression of yourself and wear something appropriate'*. Pronunciation was often clear and natural, and intonation used effectively to convey intended meaning. Weaker responses included relevant answers with a sufficient range of vocabulary.

Speaking assessment G

Part 1

Interview – Helping each other

Strong responses used a range of grammatical structures including past tenses in **Question 2** and passives with a good degree of accuracy in **Question 3**: *'Everyone should be helped as good deeds will come back to you and helping other people gives a sense of humanity.'* Most candidates talked about their peers helping and supporting each other with difficult subjects (*'so you can have a better understanding'*) with stronger candidates able to develop their ideas by highlighting more interpersonal skills *'you can give a hand when a friend is in need.'* Many candidates spoke about an incident with elderly neighbours with health issues in **Question 2** and developed in detail. Stronger responses made use of *'I was pleased with myself; they were very grateful'*. Weaker responses were limited to the use of simple vocabulary and simple structures (present simple), especially with prompt 1.

Part 2

Short talk – Spending your money

Most candidates were able to develop in good detail, both by talking about the advantages and disadvantages of buying a bicycle versus buying a meal at an expensive restaurant. Strong responses included a range of structures and tenses: *'Spending my money on a bicycle would not be cost-effective.'* The most popular approach was to develop the talk by choosing the most preferred option (the bicycle) and then adding some supporting comments explaining why the other option was not so popular. *'A bicycle encourages stronger bones, boosts stamina and brings health benefits. It is durable and it is practical as it helps with the commute. I can decide the speed and the timing.'* The meal was described as *'a short time pleasure, a one-time payment where money vanishes. Food can be tasty but the situation is seen as extravagant'*. Weaker responses tended to generalise about the benefits of the bicycle as a means of transport but did not develop a response as to why the meal at an expensive restaurant is not suitable.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to saving money, how to pay for things and the suitability of teenagers working part-time to earn money. Stronger candidates developed all four points in detail, such as by mentioning *'the need to save money as you might get into emergencies unexpectedly / how online payments have been on trend since the development of advanced technology.'* Some candidates were supporting arguments to encourage finding a part-time job. This section also gave stronger candidates the opportunity to demonstrate a range of vocabulary and structures – *'it would be more memorable; they would all cherish the effort that you have put into buying the present, which is more thoughtful. However, this may mean you might not be able to purchase something you have been wanting so you have to compromise'*.

Speaking assessment H

Part 1

Interview – Television

Most candidates talked in detail about TV serials and different genres in their country. Some candidates expanded on the topic with supporting arguments of what these programmes show (*'daily family drama'*), what the plot is or why they appeal to a wide audience. Stronger candidates made a connection between these programmes and daily issues in real life – *'they help to face problems and daily struggles in daily life'*. Prompt 2 allows candidates to look back, using descriptive language and emotions felt when watching cartoons in their childhood: *'I used to watch cartoons because they were the only thing I could understand'*. Prompt 3 links the idea of TV and language learning, with most candidates seeing the benefits of it, using language of comparison, e.g. *'They might be as useful as books'*.

Part 2

Short talk – An afternoon with the family

Candidates developed ideas in good detail, often referring to their personal experience with relatives when it came to having a picnic in the local park – *'seeing animals if the park is connected to a zoo / developing relationships with people'*. One of the most common argument against the picnic was *'the impact on environment and the amount of litter produced, which may cause added pollution.'* This gave candidates an opportunity to use language of speculation. They were more limited with the idea of a walk in the forest; the average response for advantages were, *'to enjoy nature / look at the greenery and landscapes / see wild animals.'* Some disadvantages mentioned that *'a walk in the forest is not suitable for everyone, especially for those with reduced mobility'*.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to spending time indoors (*'the craze of spending more time indoors because people have become lazier'*), with friends (*'family members are still more important than friends, though it may be different if the friends are best friends or close friends'*), the suitability of walking everywhere (*'which, on the one hand, can cause pains and on the other, reduce air pollution as they are not using any vehicle'*) and how to stop people from littering. Stronger responses used a wide variety of vocabulary to support their ideas, with strong arguments on the need of *'heavy fines, placing dustbins instead of throwing litter on the ground, spread awareness amongst people and running many campaigns around the local area will encourage people to be more careful'*.

Speaking assessment I

Part 1

Interview – The way we dress

Candidates expressed views about the importance of clothing and comfort. Strong responses deployed a wide range of vocabulary (*'baggy outfits, on trend'*) and made effective use of collocation and idioms (*'make an impression, reflect my personality, feel the vibe'*). A range of simple and complex verb structures were deployed in anecdotes about occasions when candidates had to dress smartly (*'I felt as if I was suffocating'*). Strong answers to Prompt 3 used conditional and modal structures to speak about the need to dress well (*'if we didn't look smart, we wouldn't show respect'*).

Weaker answers tended to be simply agreement or disagreement with the prompts, and used a limited range of simple structures and vocabulary. Intonation was used to stress strength of opinion or convey humour, particularly in response to Prompt 2, while weaker responses tended to be delivered in a monotone.

Part 2

Short talk – The last day of term

The most effective talks structured the responses carefully, presenting arguments for both options and using a good range of topic-specific vocabulary before stating which option would be the preferred one. Most candidates chose having a party with live music at school. Stronger responses made good use of the conditional to discuss the hypothetical situations. Present continuous for future action was also used effectively (*'at the cinema we're just not going to talk to each other', 'music means we're going to dance...'*) Weaker responses used simple structures and were focused on one option alone.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to school holidays, further education, music and working in film. Strong responses used a range of vocabulary and structures to reply relevantly and at length. They made good use of intonation as well as conversation markers and modal forms to reinforce opinions (*'Actually, I think school holidays should be longer..'*).

Speaking assessment J

Part 1

Interview – Communication skills

Strong responses to all three questions used a good range of present, past and future tenses. The topic elicited a wide range of vocabulary (*'debating skills, stage fright, spend time on mobile phones'*) and stronger answers effectively used linking devices to explain how people may or may not talk less to each other in the future (*'people will have more time, it'll be easier to communicate moreover, because...'*, *'they won't need to communicate, due to other entertainment.'*).

Part 2

Short talk – Making things by hand

Most candidates chose the option of making clothes rather than learning to paint, citing the possible economic and practical benefits of clothes-making. Strong answers were carefully structured to compare the two activities, consider whether the candidate had the appropriate skills, and then evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of doing each, using a wide range of structures including conditional and modal verbs.

Part 3

Discussion

This Part contained four questions based on the short talk relating to hobbies, collecting, learning online and fashion. Stronger responses used a wide range of structures and vocabulary to discuss facts and provide opinions and conclusions. Weaker responses tended to agree or disagree with the questions without developing reasons.