

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/11

Paper 1

Key messages

- Do not write introductions of excessive length.
- Avoid long, complicated sentences which may make grammatical sense but are challenging for the reader to comprehend.
- Essays should be written in paragraphs.
- Meaningful conclusions are important, but do not list all the points already made.
- Avoid sweeping statements and assertions.
- Do not use slang and inappropriate idioms as they are unsuitable in formal writing.
- Do not use formulaic words and phrases to begin each new paragraph.
- Contractions, for example, *isn't*, *wouldn't*, *doesn't*, *can't*, *there'll*, should not be used in formal writing.
- The recommended word count is 600 to 700 words. Short essays are not penalised but usually they are self-penalising.
- A careful reading and understanding of the question is needed.
- Exemplification for each main idea is better included in the main body of the essay rather than in the introduction.

General comments

The paper was of equal difficulty to previous series and presented a wide range of questions that considered several contemporary issues. There were responses to every question with **Questions 3 and 6** being extremely popular choices.

There were a good number of well developed, thoughtful and engaging essays where the candidate had clearly understood the question and wrote a coherent, evaluative argument including a range of appropriate and interesting examples, used to support the points being made.

Questions involving the concept of 'extent' proved challenging for some candidates as there was less evidence comparative skills that considered several perspectives. Similarly, whilst most candidates were able to provide reliable examples, facts and some support, there was a lack of evaluation of material both in the body of the essay and in the construction of the conclusion.

For most essays, the quality of written communication was of an acceptable standard. Vocabulary was, at times, restricted to frequently used words or phrases, but in the case of some questions, the inclusion of topic words and phrases added sophistication. Grammar and syntax were employed with mixed success. A number of candidates seemed aware of the subject areas that make up the English General Paper syllabus, but required more control over essay structure, which sometimes resulted in fragmented arguments where viewpoints were not examined in enough detail or evaluated with enough clarity. It became clear that, as the time limit approached, the quality of many essays diminished, leaving the final paragraph as a reworking of previously introduced material, sometimes stated incorrectly. Many candidates could have taken more care over their essay planning, with several essays moving from one point to another without a clear framework for their opinions and arguments.

Many candidates wrote in appropriate, formal language, for an academic essay and sustained this throughout. A large number used an inappropriate register for a formal argument and included using abbreviations such as '*etc.*'. If candidates do not know what else to add to their examples, they should be content with what they have included. Candidates should avoid direct address as it is usually inappropriate, for example, '*What do you think?*'. It is also important to not write *pros and cons* or *one pro and con*. Several candidates resorted to these formulations, and they are inappropriate for a formal essay. The verb *to get* and its derivatives *got* and *getting* were overused and suggest a lack of verbal dexterity. The excessive use of

informal words and phrases should be avoided, including '*lots of*', '*alot of*', '*a lot of*', '*tons of*', '*way to*'. 'Researches' was often used instead 'research', there was some incorrect use of 'there'/'their' and frequent spelling issues with words such as 'opportunities'. Candidates often used 'less' instead of 'fewer', and 'The society' rather than 'society'. There were several disorganised responses, very often with no paragraphs.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

International sporting events no longer represent the true nature of sport. Discuss.

Better responses focused on the key words and phrases, 'international', 'events', and 'true nature'. These responses were strongly exemplified, referencing the World Cup hosted by Qatar, the Olympics, baseball, basketball golf, tennis and a variety of other sports. A few essays made comparisons between those sports where money is a key factor and those which provide enjoyment and rivalry at a local level. This was relevant because it was argued that the true nature of sport survives at school and college level, where what is at stake is not so crucial as at the international level. A few essays off-loaded all that was known about match fixing and performance enhancing drugs. These negative features of sport have an effect on how sport is viewed, but on their own do not constitute a balanced essay. Connections were made with the international make up of domestic soccer teams (in most European leagues), as some candidates considered that this meant that a country could not celebrate its own achievements in its purest sense. Related issues such as corruption, gambling, match-fixing, and the use of drugs emerged as key points that tarnished the true nature of sport. Some good examples included historical reference to the origins of the Olympics and other non- sporting themes such as comradeship, mutual respect, patriotism, and the ambition to set standards and achieve personal goals. There were some impressively passionate arguments put forward. Less successful responses focused on examples of sports people without linking them to the central focus of the question. Similarly, description of examples of events such as the Olympics with little relevant analysis was a feature of some weaker responses.

Question 2

To what extent is the main priority of education to teach people to read?

The question was asking for balanced view with some exploration of the fundamental need for reading from early years to graduation as well as considering other essential elements of education, such as numeracy and the gathering of knowledge from many disciplines which might be significant in future life. Better responses explored how reading was essential for understanding many other academic and non-academic subjects as well as other aspects of life. Many essays were imbalanced, with candidates writing exclusively about other subjects in the school curriculum, as well as life-skills and sporting experiences. Not all candidates recognised the process of reading as a key concept and skill on which their progress in life would depend. There were examples of candidates expressing the view that reading might not be so useful or necessary in the future as they might listen to information online without using printed text. This ignored the whole spectrum of how literacy – reading and writing – is intertwined.

Question 3

Evaluate the benefits and difficulties of working from home.

Whilst it was possible to construct a cogent and successful argument by focusing on school experience, the best essays considered the implications for parents, whole families, and the economic effect on business. Many arguments were based on the strengths and weaknesses of computer-based learning and processes. One excellent response noted that depending on our individual personality type we can either benefit or suffer from working either at home or in the office. The candidate wrote 'while working from home may be beneficial to introverts or those with social anxiety it is very debilitating for those who are very social or personable.' There is evaluation here together with sophisticated vocabulary. Another candidate who achieved a high mark wrote that 'group chats and video conferences can provide some form of social cohesion.' Once again there is a clear effort to grasp the intricacy of a question that has the potential to unlock considered judgements.

There was only brief consideration given to the impact of home working for those in society whose jobs could not be adapted to the home environment and to consider alternative approaches which might mitigate this happening in the future. Weaker essays became anecdotal and trivial in their description of events at home. In some cases there was fantasy-like speculation of how home-based work would sever links with management and enable employees to work unmonitored from their couch or bed. There was also speculation around the ability of workers to work effectively, whilst at the same time in the same number of working hours complete all of their household tasks, such as caring for children and walking their dogs. Whilst this was an attractive and inviting choice for many candidates, the overall weakness was in failing to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of home working and to produce a reasoned conclusion.

Question 4

People should always base their actions on the opinions of experts. Discuss.

Stronger responses grappled with definitions of experts, how expertise can be developed and in which areas we perhaps need to heed their advice – e.g. health and nutrition. There was also a recognition that experts are fallible, and opinions can be varied and sometimes incorrect. Some thoughtful approaches were evident. In one essay the candidate pointed out that scorning expertise can have ‘disastrous political appeal’ especially in electoral or medical matters. Another candidate pointed out that ‘self-appointed experts often have a popular following in the world of social media that they do not deserve’. This candidate went on to say that expertise in any field of human activity is recognised by those trustworthy institutions that take their duty of care to others seriously. Another thoughtful essay contained the remark that ‘innumerable failures are what makes one an expert’ in order to challenge the notion that experts are self-satisfied know-alls. Less successful responses did not clarify ‘what actions?’ and ‘who are the experts?’ One essay considered experienced friends and relatives as experts. Another referred to family members with life experiences. This was a very open-ended question but required the explanation of actions and how the expertise of experts would be helpful (or not, as the case may be). Weaker arguments suggested we should always adhere to expert opinion. A number of responses did not contain many or any examples.

Question 5

The work of scientists should never be restricted. Evaluate this statement.

Responses to this question were often thoughtful and appropriately exemplified. Absence of restriction, in particular historical periods, was referred to with several candidates citing the appalling research that took place during the Second World War on those that were incarcerated. The most successful responses recognised ethical dilemmas, but sought to understand the different positions that are taken, for example in animal testing and genetic modification. The question did not attract many candidates, but those that responded were able to discuss how important it was for people to understand and appreciate the work of science if they were to trust things such as vaccines, medical procedures, and be persuaded to adopt or support original approaches to the management of everyday life. The command word of the question was not fully appreciated meaning that many responses were concerned with the notion that science should never be restricted, without considering the other view, that certain work needs to be protected and kept secret.

Question 6

To what extent do you agree that computer technology has decreased our quality of life?

Many arguments recognised that our quality of life is enhanced by computer technology in a variety of ways: its role in education; in medical and surgical procedures; in the detection of crime; in space exploration and everyday journey planning. A few candidates unfortunately read the word ‘decreased’ and ignored its opposite. This led to essays where all that could conceivably be seen as negative about the technology was presented as fact. For example, one candidate wrote that we are so addicted to our screens that ‘every other aspect that makes up a good life is totally ignored.’ However, many responses had an evaluative edge; one candidate, while recognising the benefits of IT, warned that followers of influencers or celebrities can form a ‘false idea of a relationship when interaction is not face to face.’ Many candidates did not appreciate that the command ‘to what extent’ requires some balanced examination and consideration of a range of views. Most essays were positively framed since the candidates could only see how technology made their life better. Negative perspectives tended to focus on cyber security, online bullying, and the dangers of excessive access to, and the control of, social media. Despite the vast range of broadcasting about how technology has helped in the reduction of crime and improved home security, this rarely emerged. The most successful essays were those that understood what was meant by ‘quality of life’ and offered a broad base of examples that covered home life, the workplace, education, and innovation.

Question 7

Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of mathematical modelling.

Only a very small number of candidates attempted to answer this question. The key was to explore what mathematical modelling might be and how it might be applied in everyday life. Better responses considered a wide range of areas such as science, architecture and the use of statistics in everyday circumstances. Less successful responses had a narrow range of ideas and mostly chose to look at how mathematics was used in general.

Question 8

Assess the significance of superheroes in our lives.

It was uplifting to see superheroes that were not just the stars of DC and Marvel comic books. Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, close friends, teachers, all took their turn across a wide range of responses to this popular question. However, there was a tendency to be descriptive of their feats and achievements. This was acceptable to a point, but candidates should have considered the significance of superheroes and what they did for individuals, a country, the world, beyond saving someone or a race from an evil force. The best essays considered exemplary behaviour, high moral standards, patriotism, and the will to live a pure life unaffected by despicable acts or criminal, antisocial behaviour. The examples cited were, in some cases, moving and impassioned, when they involved reference to a significant event in the candidates' life. Sometimes, these examples were linked to the behaviour of fictitious superheroes in their pursuit of all that is good. Several referred to the superhero genre populated by fictional characters such as Superman, Batman and others in the world of entertainment. Many went on to point out that their powers are unrealistic, although they might be seen as role models of bravery and concern for others. These observations brought many to the persuasive conclusion that superheroes are to be found all around us. One candidate wrote 'my superhero is not my favourite footballer but the soldier who sacrifices his life for others'. There was some interesting discussion around the importance of diversity and representation in fictional superheroes. A common feature of weaker responses was to take this question very literally and discuss fictional superheroes and what they do for society (such as Spiderman reducing crime rates) so the nuance of the question was often lost within such responses.

Question 9

Theatrical plays written before the twenty-first century have no relevance to life today. Discuss.

Of the small number of candidates who attempted this question there was a range of examples from Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett to contemporary dramatists. The majority of these responses made the argument that relevance is not conditioned by time or place. Very few candidates explored how some plays remain rooted in their own time and space and therefore are unlikely to be of significance or impact today. Better arguments were able to link specific examples of plays to modern life. There was some reasonable exemplification in how specific events and characters portrayed in plays from before the 21st century are still very relevant today, such as the problems caused by love and family values in *Romeo and Juliet*, but these ideas were not often fully developed.

Question 10

Printed newspapers, magazines, books and comics are no longer needed in our digital age. Discuss.

For the majority of candidates who answered this question the significance of the printed text in our digital age was never simply dismissed. There was a recognition of how digital versions are easy to access and more affordable than printed versions, however it was recognised that the physical book, magazine, newspaper, or comic, have their inherent attraction either simply to hold or collect. A few candidates pointed out that not all countries or people have access to computers, tablets, or cell phones, and they rely on the printed word provided in school or in libraries. One candidate who constructed an excellent essay drew attention to sacred texts that 'people may not want to download amongst other distractions on their smart devices.' This candidate emphasised the importance of 'holy books' to many who adhere to different religions. Observations like this suggest a breadth of thought. Several essays consisted of verbatim repetition of the rubric in trying to group all four media and produce a common view. Whilst advancements in media availability through digital sources was a common thread, the argument that this was free revealed the

naivety of some candidates who do not have to pay for their internet or telephone connection. There were a number of underdeveloped and superficial essays that made the 'digital age' their main source of inspiration.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/12 Paper 1
--

Key messages

- Read all the questions carefully.
- Make a short plan.
- Keep the introduction brief and focused on the question.
- Address the key words of the question throughout the response.
- Develop and exemplify all arguments.
- Analyse and evaluate instead of describing.
- Apply examples to the points being made.
- Conclude by evaluating and not summarising.
- Use punctuation correctly and appropriately.
- Choose precise vocabulary and appropriate idioms.
- Maintain a consistent formal register.
- Check for grammatical errors, especially in spelling, agreement, articles and tenses.

General comments

There continues to be an interesting range of responses and a good number of impressive performances on this paper. There were also variations in the way candidates handled different questions and, in the selection, and application of examples. The majority demonstrated a lot of care and consideration in the responses with a great deal of effort evident.

The best responses were from candidates who had clearly reflected and chosen questions where they understood and were able to address and explore effectively all the key elements. Weaker responses were those who made a hasty choice and could not demonstrate more than a basic understanding of the question. Specialist and detailed knowledge are not required for the questions, but some knowledge of common facts is helpful and careless generalisations or inaccuracies should be avoided.

Most responses were able to offer at least two or three examples, but often the examples were generic and vague. Quite often, candidates used a range of examples but did not always explain their relevance or how the examples supported their argument. Candidates are encouraged to support responses with authentic external data but should not fabricate statistics or information as this is easily discoverable by readers.

Although the vast majority of responses were paragraphed, more thought could be put into how paragraphs can be effectively used to organise ideas and arguments. Paragraphs should have clearly defined topic statements with supporting development and exemplification. These paragraphs should be linked with appropriate logical connectors that guide readers through the discussion.

Better responses focused firmly on the wording of the question, analysing and arguing rather than merely explaining. Weaker responses tended to offer generalised and sometimes tangential responses, though these were in the minority. Far larger in number were those responses that offered relevant explanation with support from examples but did not progress to analysis or evaluation of the issues raised.

The general issue with the conclusions in many responses was the tendency to re-visit or summarise points which had already been raised or in some cases, to introduce new ideas without elaboration. Some conclusions were vague or indecisive, for instance, 'Therefore, a careful diet is the most important part of a healthy life though not always.' or 'This can be good neither bad, around the boundary line. Thus it is acceptable but it can lead to disadvantages but it is not common or can be seen clearly.'

Candidates should allocate sufficient time to writing a conclusion that appropriately closes their arguments and makes clear where they stand on the question.

In terms of communication, many answers contained large numbers of linguistic errors, particularly errors of grammar. In most cases these did not intrude on meaning and the expression in most scripts was reasonably clear with serviceable, if often unambitious, use of vocabulary. Weaker scripts often combined basic vocabulary with frequent errors and a loss of control which impacted on clarity.

Common errors

- Colloquialism – ‘legit’, ‘pretty bad’, ‘a lot of stuff’, ‘kids’, ‘a bunch of guys’.
- Informal tone – ‘Well, let’s look at...’, ‘Do not you think it’s high time...’ or ‘Sure...’.
- Use of pronouns – ‘it’ and ‘the’ were often used when it was unclear what the pronouns were referring to.
- Failure of subject-verb agreement – using singular verbs for computer games as well as cartoon and animations.
- Missing articles – ‘careful diet’ and ‘healthy life’.
- Incorrectly joined words – ‘alot’, ‘infact’, ‘incase’, ‘aswell’, ‘afterall’.
- Incorrectly separated words – ‘can not’, ‘where ever’, ‘now a days’.
- Verb tenses – confusion about using present or past tense; confusion about which past tense to use for example, ‘did/have done’ and ‘have said/had said’.
- Plural form – ‘Television programme is watched by everyone’, ‘video games...it is’ or ‘There is lots of language that people can learn.’.
- Preposition errors – ‘towards’ often used incorrectly for ‘to’ or ‘for’, ‘in the internet’, ‘arguing on how’, ‘different than’.
- Misspellings – ‘seperate’, ‘goverment’, ‘comit’, ‘arguement’, ‘morden’ and ‘recieve’.
- Confusion of words – ‘their/there/they’re’, ‘specially/especially’, ‘till/until’.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Circumstances produce great leaders when they are needed. Discuss.

This was one of the less popular questions. Where candidates maintained a focus on ‘circumstances’, this generated some very good answers. However, this was often not the case and many responses offered little more than pen portraits of leaders from the past or present with only limited consideration of the role of circumstances in bringing their leadership qualities to light. Candidates usually wrote about general qualities desired in a ‘great leader’ and often referenced topical figures like Ukraine’s Zelenskyy and historical figures like Gandhi. More successful answers were able to not only provide detailed information about the leader, but also demonstrated a strong knowledge of the social, historical and cultural context of the time in which they came to power and so were able to discuss what they did or how they responded to the challenging circumstances and why that made them ‘great’. Some candidates also considered prominent leaders in areas such as sports, business, social and environmental activism.

Question 2

Evaluate the importance of the architecture of your country in understanding its history.

Responses to this question tended to contain many detailed examples of candidates’ local architecture which, at times, became descriptive. Answers would have been improved through the application and discussion of these examples and the relevance of the architecture to historic events or developments. There were some strong arguments about the conflict between modernity and history and that one needs to be balanced with the other. Some candidates explored notions of architecture being only one form of understanding history and that it needs to be taken in context of other historical records to help us make sense of these monuments

Question 3

Giving people complete freedom of speech can cause more harm than good. Discuss.

This was a moderately popular question though most who attempted it, assumed that the focus is on the importance of giving people freedom of speech rather than the more contentious idea of giving people 'complete' freedom of speech. The minority of answers which considered the full implications of complete freedom invariably produced developed and frequently analytical responses. Many candidates had relevant ideas on this topic and considered a range of scenarios in which freedom of speech may be permitted for good or ill. Answers dealt with the negative impact of racism, prejudice, bullying and fake news as a consequence of people having free speech. Although the majority of answers were of an adequate standard, often there was a lack of nuance and a tendency to assert in some of the weaker responses.

Question 4

To what extent have computer games had a positive impact on people?

This was the most popular question as many candidates were clearly well-versed in this topic and sufficiently aware of both the benefits and drawbacks of computer games to generate informed and balanced responses. The use of specific examples was often the key to success on this question and weaker answers contained few or in some cases, no references to actual computer games, thus hindering development of responses. The best responses often considered whether the same games or features of computer games possess the potential for both positive and negative impacts.

Most candidates competently discussed the various ways in which playing computer games have had a positive effect on people (entertainment, stress relief, companionship, strengthening of existing relationships, enhancement of physical and mental skills, job opportunities, etc.) whilst also acknowledging the possible negative effects (addiction, toxic players, physical problems associated with prolonged use of computers, etc.).

The least successful responses wrote in very polarised terms, asserting that all gamers would suffer the dire consequences associated with these negative impacts, such as obesity and reclusiveness. Better answers took a more rational and subtle approach, acknowledging that, as with everything else in life, it is only in the minority of cases where gamers become obsessive, resulting in serious problems. Strong responses were able to evaluate how the benefits of playing computer games can radiate out into other areas of a gamer's life, enabling them to enhance their mental, physical and social skills. The very weakest answers devoted too much time to describing particular games, whereas the better responses used specific games to illustrate their points regarding positive and negative impact.

Question 5

Assess the issues which some countries have in achieving and maintaining an adequate food supply.

Although a less commonly attempted question, some very good responses to it were seen. Almost all candidates mentioned geographical and climatic reasons, such as altitude in Nepal or drought in Middle East while better answers analysed how political and economic factors such as poor leadership, corruption and international relationships negatively impact imports and food distribution. Many candidates demonstrated a good grasp of the wider issues and often seized upon the word 'adequate' as a gateway to nuanced and evaluative discussion. The few answers that were not successful did not address the factors that affect food supply and instead focused on the importance of food supply for a country's population or simply criticised a specific country's policies without linking this criticism specifically back to the question.

Question 6

A careful diet is the most important part of a healthy life. Discuss.

This was the second most popular question. Most responses acknowledged the importance of diet on health, discussing a careful diet's role in nourishing the body, maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding chronic illness. Candidates tended to focus on what constituted a healthy diet rather than considering whether a careful diet is indeed the most important part of a healthy life.

Responses were often focused; candidates made relevant arguments about diet and food and some balanced the ideas of what constitutes a healthy life while applying examples from their own experiences. As with **Question 4**, the familiarity of the subject sometimes led to quite straightforward arguments without engagement with more complex ideas. Most responses acknowledged the importance of diet on health, discussing a careful diet's role in nourishing the body, maintaining healthy weight and avoiding chronic illness. Better answers weighed up the importance of other lifestyle choices like exercise, adequate sleep and avoiding smoking and drinking and generally concluded that diet is not the most important aspect of health as a balance in actions is required. Some of the best answers skilfully dealt with the importance of mental health as well as physical health, discussing how diet can influence mood and self-esteem but also how restrictive diets can become detrimental to health and lead to eating disorders. References were also made to social media, in understanding what is a healthy diet and the misinformation that can be found and therefore the dangers that pursuing a 'healthy diet' can cause.

Question 7

The digital book is never likely to replace the printed one. How far do you agree?

This topic was quite a popular choice, probably because books, whether printed or accessed on devices, are an important part of a candidate's life. The least successful answers cited a few of the advantages and disadvantages of both printed and digital books, whereas the best responses discussed a wide variety of points whilst, at the same time, evaluating how the benefits and drawbacks of each medium might increase or decrease the likelihood of printed books being replaced by their digital counterparts. Most answers covered areas relating to convenience, cost, study requirements, eyestrain and aesthetic factors, with a few candidates looking at the wider repercussions of digital books becoming dominant, for instance, the effect on jobs in the print industry, the preservation and archiving of rare books and the possibility of an author's work being altered or lost. The most popular argument for printed books was in emphasising the emotional attachment people have to books, like swapping with friends or accumulating an impressive home library, and the sensory experience enjoyed by readers with a traditional printed book). Weaker answers spent too much time describing the rapid digitalisation of all aspects of life and technology such as phones and tablets.

Question 8

Censorship of the arts can never be justified. Discuss.

When candidates who attempted this question focused on the arts, they generated some very good responses, with some interesting historical examples of censorship and a consequent consideration, to good effect, of the ability of art to survive changes in value systems. However, some responses were more general in their approach and neglected artistic examples in favour of wider censorship issues. Even here, some good points were often made, though less consistently. The majority of answers did not agree with censorship but concluded that there are circumstances in which censorship is necessary such as when art incites hate or is exploitative. Some of the most sophisticated responses questioned who should be in a position to make decisions about what needs to be censored and whether a work of art simply being offensive is adequate reason for censorship.

Question 9

English is the world's most common language. To what extent is this desirable?

Many candidates struggled with the intended focus of this question, producing responses that considered whether it was desirable to learn English rather than whether having English as a common language was desirable. Often, candidates described learning English (or aspects of English that are hard to learn) or gave reasons why English is popular around the world – colonialism was often mentioned – without saying if it was agreeable. Most answers covered the more obvious points about ease of communication where English is the most likely common language for use in travel, diplomacy and business; its being taught in schools in many countries and its wide usefulness for careers. Some considered the importance of language as part of one's identity, and why there might be reservations about the widespread use of English and its impact on other languages.

Question 10

Cartoons and animations have no serious purpose. To what extent do you agree?

This was a popular question and a great range of quality in responses. Practically every response established some purpose of cartoons and animations though weaker responses did not focus on the issue of 'serious purpose' or refer to specific cartoons and animations. Many responses discussed the potential of cartoons to educate, and examples were offered of cartoons that teach young children numeracy and literacy skills. Additionally, some responses included thoughtful evaluation about how cartoons and animation offer life and moral lessons such as various anime shows having messages like being true to oneself. Inspiring creativity was another popular reason for candidates to argue for animation's serious impact. Another serious purpose that was regularly presented was the cartoon and animation industries employment of creative people and contributing significant sums of money to countries' economies. Although very few responses could find no serious purpose, some candidates did not see pure entertainment as a valid purpose and some mentioned that cartoons can be a source of distraction or present negative role models. Some weaker responses simply described the impact of cartoons and animations on audiences without linking these to purposes.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/13 Paper 1
--

Key messages

- Remember that evaluation is a vital element of any response to any question.
- Good answers always have a range of meaningful examples.
- The meaningful use of sophisticated vocabulary improves the quality of an essay.
- Make sure your point of view on the topic discussed is clear.
- Always acknowledge that there are points of view that you may disagree with.
- Aim for grammatical correctness in matters such as tense, number and agreement.
- Develop an academic style of writing and be wary of the casual and informal.
- Engage in as much debate as possible in the classroom.
- Increase the time you devote to traditional reading; books, newspapers and magazines
- Attempt the question that interests you and the one that you have ideas about

General comments

Generally, candidates are not short of ideas, examples, or arguments. The Assessment Objective (AO3), communication using written English, is where candidates find the most difficulty and where the overall mark can be lower. For some taking this examination, English may not be their first language. Examiners understand this and essays which communicate clearly, despite the frequency of error, are still able to achieve a level 3 mark under objective AO3.

Bearing in mind the last of the 'key messages', it is important that candidates write about what interests them, what they understand and what really engages them. When faced with choosing to respond to one question from the 10 offered, it is probable that a candidate will find one question that can be confidently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Protest groups have every right to adopt disruptive tactics. Examine this statement.

There were a few responses to this question and one engaged in debate and provided examples. This candidate considered what might be disruptive in relation to the public good and distinguished between the violent and peaceful expression of opinion and feeling. Relevant examples were provided; Roe v Wade, women's rights, and the Capitol riot. Surprisingly none of the candidates referred to historical protest movements such as struggles for independence or equal rights.

Question 2

To what extent has government enabled YOUR country to develop and prosper?

There were a few responses to this question and all of them were detailed and well exemplified. Better responses struck a balance between criticism and praise and had a historical as well as contemporary perspective. All of them were mindful of the '**YOUR** country' instruction, although one candidate successfully used comparisons with other countries to illustrate successes and failures within their own country. None of the responses were imbalanced. One candidate cited instances of governmental corruption but also drew attention to instances of good governance.

Question 3

To what extent is freedom of movement a fundamental human right?

There were no responses to this question.

Question 4

Science has caused more problems than it has solved. Discuss.

There were only a few responses to this question with two or three being very brief. Candidates are asked to write between 600 and 700 words. If they write considerably less, it is very unlikely they will achieve creditable results. Medical advances featured strongly in the effective responses. One candidate wrote an evaluative essay by drawing a distinction between science and scientists. In discussing nuclear technology the candidate wrote '*science cannot be blamed for destruction of human life but its application can be.*' Another candidate argued, again with evaluation, that scientific exploration and its uses may need to be subjected to ethical considerations.

Question 5

To what extent have high-rise buildings improved city life?

An informative and interesting response to this question offered as one example the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the world's tallest building. The candidate included references to New York City's tallest buildings. These were seen as iconic; however, this response could have made more of these examples by demonstrating how such buildings attract visitors from all over the world, and thereby improve the economic and social life of cities. The reader had to infer the writer's intention in offering these examples. This essay would have attracted a higher mark if the examples had been more explicitly linked to the wording of the actual question. Examples should be meaningful, as stated in the key messages. Other essays focused on environmental matters, job opportunities and community life.

Question 6

Evaluate the extent to which the use of mathematics is essential in the world today.

This proved to be a fairly popular question and all the responses contained relevant examples of how important mathematical calculation is in everyday life. Examples included: money management; data gathering; ratio, quantity and measurement; engineering and construction; information technology and many other situations where knowledge of mathematics is crucial. All the respondents to this question were able to write well-supported answers.

Question 7

To what extent has advertising been improved by digital technology?

This was a popular question. This question was generally answered well, and a significant number of the responses achieved level 4. Many began by defining advertising and all of the candidates took note of the word 'improved'. This meant that knowledge of advertising in the pre-digital age had to be shown in order to make a comparison with advertising today. One candidate wrote about iconic advertisements from the past, that have an artistic status that perhaps might never be attained in the digital era. This was an interesting and original approach. Many wrote about the benefits and irritations brought about by algorithms, the employment provided by the marketing world and the effects of advertising on young people. It became clear that this question stirred the candidates' imagination and thought. One candidate discussing advertising observed that 'the only option to see less of them digitally is to pay the media that allows them in the first place.'

Question 8

Wild creatures have a special appeal to the artistic imagination. Examine the basis for this statement with reference to any poems OR novels you have read.

There was only one response to this question, and it referred to J K Rowling's Harry Potter novels, fantasy creatures and the movie 'Avatar'. It was a descriptive response and therefore restricted in marks.

Question 9

Non-verbal communication can be very effective. To what extent do you agree with this judgement?

Only a handful of candidates responded to this question. They referred to sign language, morse code, the power of silence, and how emotion is communicated by gesture and facial expression.

Question 10

Involvement in performing arts, such as learning a musical instrument or performing in a play, can benefit people's lives. Discuss.

There were a few responses to this question. Respondents mostly interpreted it in a very general and unfocused way. Examples were uncommon and most of the candidates never mentioned 'learning' or 'performing', referring instead to the pleasure of watching a performance or listening to music. One stronger response exemplified participation in a school play and the social bonds that were created. This fully grasped the meaning of the question, although the title of the play was not disclosed.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/21

Paper 2

Key messages

- In **Question1(a)**, some candidates showed that they had excellent organisational and analytical skills. These candidates used connectives and conjunctions to good effect. 'Considering the fact that', 'resulting in', 'seeing as', 'in addition' and 'moreover' were incorporated into responses, so that they were fluent and well structured. Considerations were signposted clearly as advantages or a disadvantage (e.g. 'another reason for choosing Movie Making', 'however' and 'though'). Their answers were nuanced, gaining credit by employing modal verbs (e.g. 'may affect Piotr's decision', 'Piotr might prioritise' and 'could make Piotr doubt') and/or by incorporating words such as 'possibly' (for example, 'possibly inspire Piotr'). They exhibited a good command of the language and used the correct register: 'he has a background in', 'he has a bias towards', 'he would enjoy the prospect of' and 'only junk food is available'. Most candidates followed the instruction to answer in continuous prose. However, responses that were too generalised, assertive and/or speculative were seen, so that a significant number of responses matched the criteria found in the two lower levels.
- It is crucial that candidates read the question carefully and respond to the focus required by that question. For example, in **Question1(a)**, some candidates did not focus on Piotr; instead, they offered the advantages and disadvantage for anyone in general choosing Movie Making.
- Many candidates noted the word limits in **Question 2(a)** and/or **Question 2(c)** and adhered to them; however, some candidates offered responses that were longer than allowed. One of the key skills examined on this paper is the ability to compose succinct responses, resulting in responses appearing after the word limit not gaining credit. It is highly recommended that a candidate does not include an introduction or repeat the question as part of their response.
- In **2(d)(ii)**, some candidates copied words and phrases from the material and placed them in quotation marks. Unfortunately, when responding to questions requiring the use of the candidate's own words, words and phrases that are copied from the material cannot be credited even when the candidate acknowledges and attributes them by placing them in quotation marks. The practice of using the same words but changing the word order is also not creditworthy.
- It is highly recommended that if a question does not instruct the candidate to write a response in their own words or within a certain word limit, candidates copy the relevant wording from the material. Responses in own words to certain questions (for example, **2(d)(i)** and **2(e)**) were often not precise enough to gain credit. The use of the candidate's own words had unnecessarily affected the accuracy of their responses.
- It is essential that candidates note the section of material that they have been directed to in the question. In **1(d)**, some candidates did not note the instruction to offer explanations with reference to the online reviews, while some responses to **2(d)(i)** and **2(d)(ii)** referenced the work of Emily Thompson rather than that of the Sound Archive, or offered information found in lines 5 to 17 rather than lines 25 to 58.

General comments

- It is recommended that candidates write their answers as legibly as possible to ensure that responses can be read in their entirety and gain the most credit.
- It is recommended that candidates indicate clearly if their answer to a question is not in the correct response area for that question. When candidates cannot fit their response into the response area, they are advised to request an additional booklet rather than write in the margins.
- It is recommended that when candidates are allowed to copy from the material, they copy words carefully. For example, the words '*trophy*', '*field*', '*situated*', and '*digitisation*' all proved to be difficult words to copy out correctly for some candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates gaining the most credit exhibited the ability to interpret the evidence offered in the material and read between the lines to show understanding of the considerations informing Piotr's decision with regard to **only** the Movie Making fun day out, making no references to the other fun days out. In addition, they understood that the most convincing responses are those that are nuanced. Candidates attaining high marks collated pieces of information from across **Section A** to create four cogent considerations, including one disadvantage. They offered considerations that had been developed, whether by explanation or by linking two pieces of information from different places in **Section A**, thereby highlighting the ability to present sustained and relevant analysis. For example, many candidates offered the point that Piotr was a longstanding member of his local amateur theatre group, with developments such as 'taking part in this activity will give him the opportunity to feel like a real actor, celebrity or director'. The stipulation about team size was developed well when understood by candidates: 'the flexibility of group arrangements is helpful as it is a minimum of eight people to a group. Since we do not know if Mrs Xavier is attending, it allows Piotr to set groups for both scenarios.' Many candidates cited the company facing possible financial difficulties as a disadvantage. They offered developments such as Piotr feeling that he and his colleagues might not get the full experience as outlined by MakingStars, as the company might not be able to continue offering professional-standard equipment and staff, or that the company might fall into bankruptcy before the date intended for their fun day out, meaning that the fun day out would not take place. Valid points beyond the mark scheme included the following: references to the negative online review for MakingStars actually being 'no reflection on the company itself', so Piotr would not have to take it into account, and the idea that Piotr might take into consideration the fact the MakingStars offers opportunities in front of and behind the camera, so it would be 'inclusive considering that there may be some introverted or camera-shy people'.

Some candidates could have achieved higher marks if they had taken into consideration both the advantages and one disadvantage as instructed, therefore making sure that they offered a balanced response by including a disadvantage. Some candidates gave a creditworthy disadvantage, but did not explain why it was a problem, only developing it with a mitigation (the reason why it would not be a problem). A few candidates communicated either more disadvantages than advantages or an equal number of advantages and disadvantages. Some candidates did not note that the focus of the question was Piotr and offered the advantages and disadvantage for anyone choosing Movie Making (for example, 'you will be able to use professional equipment...', 'it allows you to act out your creation' and 'you get ice-cream and popcorn'). Some responses were too vague to gain any credit (e.g. Movie Making was going to give them the best time', 'this was going to be fun for them to experience' and 'it is a nice advantage'). Some responses were too generalised to gain credit, meaning they could apply to **all** three of the fun days out (e.g. 'the equipment is completely free', and 'it is giving the workers a break from the office' and 'there is a negative review'). Responses that could apply to two of the fun days out gained limited credit, such as general references to the activity encouraging team building and so leading to better communication skills. Some were too speculative: claims that Piotr felt sorry for the company and/or wanted to help them out of their financial difficulties; that the distance to MakingStars was either an advantage (it was not the nearest) or a disadvantage (it was not the furthest), especially as no information was provided in the material about where all the staff lived or how congested the city might be; that it would be too physically strenuous for either Mrs Xavier or the retired member of staff, or that taking part in this particular fun day out would lead to a mass exodus of staff. Common misunderstandings noted included the following: the person behaving as if he were a world-class director was an employee of MakingStars, so Piotr would be exposing his staff to an unpleasant environment, turning a day that was supposed to be a reward into one that could end up demotivating the staff, and references to the cost of this fun day out, as these candidates had not taken into account Point 10 in the Additional Information. A few candidates misunderstood the meaning of '*amateur theatre group*' (e.g. Piotr was 'an amateur of the theatre'). Some candidates selected random facts, then cited them in their answers without any development or indication as to whether they were advantages or disadvantages, so that their response was more of a narrative than an analysis. Other candidates copied out the description of Movie Making, with no input of their own, so again offered only a narrative. Weaker responses were also characterised by the repetition of considerations, and/or a consideration and its development being separated from each other in the answer, thus affecting the clarity and fluency of the response.

- (b) In (i), candidates gaining higher marks were able to interpret the evidence and read between the lines to show that they understood the various disadvantages if Boat Building were to be chosen. They gathered pieces of information from the material to create disadvantages that had been developed, whether by providing an explanation or by linking two disparate pieces of information in the material. Many candidates noted the factors that there would be various safety concerns (regarding Mrs Xavier being unable to swim or teams not being allowed to make repairs during the race), that Boat Building was located the furthest away from No 1 Ace Recruiters, and that there would be problems creating teams of four. Some candidates used nuanced language in their responses: 'they might not be able to build a study boat', 'she might be reluctant', 'it could scare her off' and 'she may be deterred from attending'. Valid points beyond the mark scheme included the following: the idea of staff members of No 1 Ace Recruiters perhaps being unhappy about having to cope with wet clothes on the return journey, the issue that there might be staff who suffer from travel sickness who would not be able to face such a long round trip, the problem that a journey to such a distant and remote area could be tiring for staff even before they eventually arrived and that the amount of travelling involved would eat into the time left for the actual activity.

A few candidates did not note the focus of the question and the instruction not to refer to the other fun days out, and cited the disadvantages and/or the advantages of the other fun days out. Some responses were too speculative to gain credit (e.g. claims that the journey would take longer than a day and/or that they would need to book a hotel). Other responses offered generalised disadvantages (for example, references to skills), meaning that these responses needed to be developed with specific information relating to Boat Building to gain credit.

In (ii), many candidates showed understanding of the factors that would motivate Mrs Xavier to choose Chocolate Making, by either developing the point that she enjoyed baking (e.g. 'this would broaden her knowledge of cooking' and 'she could relate to Chocolate Making as it also deals with ingredients and flavourings') or the point that she was friends with the owners of ChokkXtreme (e.g. 'so she may want to support her friends').

Weaker responses offered reasons that were too generalised as they could apply to **all** three of the fun days out, such as references to taking pictures of the staff working happily. A few candidates referred to the other fun days out.

- (c) Many candidates did not realise that Mrs Xavier being prepared to cover the bill for the day out, whatever the cost (Point 10 in the Additional Information), meant that the cost per person of each fun day out (Point 4) was the piece of information that was the least relevant. Instead, they offered pieces of information that were relevant and that they had cited in responses to previous questions.
- (d) Candidates gaining the most credit followed the instruction to refer to the online reviews.

In (i), valid points seen included the following: employers facing reduced productivity, the cost of paying replacement workers and lower levels of profitability. Weaker responses included disadvantages noted from the other reviews or from other parts of the material (for example, safety concerns, friction within or between the teams, the team sizes and/or the cost).

In (ii), many candidates gained this mark, quoting only the key piece of information about Ricardo winning a trophy. However, some candidates offered information about the truffles he made.

In (iii), some candidates offered the valid point that some locations might have poor ventilation meaning that the sickly, sweet smell would linger. Weaker responses were characterised by candidates offering their own opinion (such as hygiene concerns, cramped conditions or safety issues).

In (iv), insightful responses were seen: 'If he/she is considering a change in career, that could make them seem untrustworthy or disloyal to the company' and 'To see such an abusive review from a co-worker may offend the person, which in turn may lead to a strained relationship between Annoyed and this person'. Some candidates simply rephrased the question, offering only the idea that the two did not want to be identified. Common misunderstandings were that the director was an employee of MakingStars and that Annoyed did not want the director to know about their review.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) Candidates gaining the most credit noted the word limit and offered a summary of three of the relevant factors within the word count. Weaker responses included a repetition of the question, an introduction, factors lacking important details (e.g. he went to 'a shop', he visited 'a museum' or he tried 'various places') or referred to lines 5 and 6 in the material. A common misunderstanding occurred when candidates did not realise that 'no records' meant 'no vinyl records'.
- (b) Responses gaining credit noted the instruction to identify the single words in lines 5 to 17 and quoted only the relevant word that had exactly the same meaning (for example, offering '*Herculean*' in (iii), rather than '*a Herculean task*' which was not creditworthy). Some candidates misread the question and offered definitions of the word, such as 'beginning' in (i). Some candidates did not copy out the words very carefully (e.g. 'inseption', 'nondiscript', 'Hurculean' and 'haraguing' were all seen).
- (c) Candidates scoring the highest marks noted the word limit and offered a summary of four of the relevant factors within the word count. Some candidates would have gained more credit if they had not included a repetition of the question, an introduction or referred to irrelevant material (e.g. cited answers to 2(d)(i) rather than those for 2(c)). Some responses were too vague, such as 'she wrote a book called *The Soundscape of Modernity*', 'she created a website', 'she presented sounds' and 'she recovered sound'. A few candidates were confused by the phrase '*tunes our modern ears to the pitch of the past*' (for example, 'listening to the sounds of the past with the same pitch that was used'). A few candidates were unable to copy out '*modern*' correctly (e.g. 'mordern').
- (d) In (i), candidates gaining credit noted the instruction to identify the advantages of the work done by the Sound Archive, located these advantages whilst ignoring the disadvantages that were interspersed throughout the relevant part of the material, and copied out the key information in full, so that all the relevant details of the advantages were included. Candidates paraphrasing the material sometimes gained credit; however, some of these candidates offered responses that were too vague, either by omission (e.g. citing 'It preserves the context of each sound' rather than '*preserves the context and technical details of each sound*') or by offering answers in their own words (e.g. 'all sounds are the same' for the advantage that everyday occurrences are given equal weight to significant events or moments of cultural interest; 'understand history' and 'learn about history' for '*anyone who listens to a recording can understand where it is situated historically*', and 'irritating sounds will eventually become history' for the idea that current sounds irritating us will soon become history too).
- In (ii), candidates gaining credit offered some excellent synonyms: for example, 'we are very centred around sight' for '*we're a visually oriented culture*'; 'it is gone forever', 'gone with no way for people to hear it again' and 'there will be no trace of the existence of such a recording' for '*then it's completely lost to humanity*'; 'very fragile' and 'very sensitive' for the idea of '*vulnerable*'; 'degrade over time', 'the deteriorating state of the records' and 'decaying formats' for the idea of '*erosion*', and 'the equipment needed to play the recordings might no longer exist' for '*the equipment necessary to listen to it could very well become obsolete*'. The phrases most commonly lifted from the material were '*to understand the past is a slow process*', '*If our copy is lost*', '*stored on formats that are vulnerable*', '*grow closer to erosion*', '*necessary to listen to it could become obsolete*' and '*finding technicians to operate it is tricky*'. Some candidates did answer using their own words, but the content of their responses was too vague. Common misunderstandings seen included the following: candidates citing issues such as donations; factors pertaining to the internet, websites and online companies, and Saul having to harangue wealthy donors. Some responses did not focus on the material, but offered generalised comments or personal opinions on the internet, websites and/or the work of the Sound Archive. Some candidates cited factors answering 2(c), 2(d)(i) and/or 2(e) rather than 2(d)(ii).
- (e) Some candidates noted the focus of the question and identified a positive aspect of websites, offering the idea of the sounds of history being freely available to people without specialist knowledge or equipment, while a few communicated the idea of access to the internet democratising the sound of history. However, some candidates identifying the relevant material offered answers in their own words that omitted key details, so were too vague. Many candidates cited disadvantages, such as '*The archive's careful considered work is arguably a contrast to an*

emerging model of preservation’ and/or ‘websites, or the internet more broadly, act as inadvertent and inadequate archives.’

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/22
Paper 2

Key messages

Candidates are advised to read all parts of the material, and the questions, carefully. They should ensure that they understand the precise requirements of each question before answering. Considerations would include the marks available since a 10-mark question, **1a** for example, requires a longer response than a 2 marks question, such as **1fi** or **1fii**. A question for 4 marks requiring two disadvantages (e.g. **1b**) necessitates development or explanation of both the points selected. Where there are single-mark questions, only the first attempt is considered.

Candidates may be required to respond mostly in their own words, thereby demonstrating their understanding of the selected information. For questions with a word limit, it is essential for candidates to write as succinctly as possible and without offering extraneous detail, irrelevant material, an introduction, or repeating or reworking the question stem.

The exact wording of the question and reference to line numbers, directs candidates to the location of the relevant ideas in the material.

General comments

Candidates seemed to engage well with the material in both sections (A and B), with the vast majority attempting all, or almost all, the sub-questions. Responses were nearly always communicated clearly in written English. Meaning could, almost universally, be fully understood, but answers sometimes lacked the required precision to gain all the available marks or had missed important details or nuance of the original material. Answers to the longer, levels-based **Question (1a)** were usually of suitable length and range to cover sufficient points, and nearly always written in continuous prose, as the rubric demanded.

Relatively few candidates exceeded the recommended word count, where this formed part of the rubric (**2c**, **2d**, **2ei** and **2eii**), and those who did write too much generally did not do so excessively. Attempts at rendering ideas from the material in one's own words, however, were not often fully successful (**2bi – 2biii**).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The material and context (the search for a new job and increased work-life balance) seemed to resonate with candidates, and there was generally a good level of understanding demonstrated of Jos's desires, Marika's preoccupations, and the essentials of the job offers. Some of the nuance or detail was not always understood or recalled when formulating responses. For example, much of the information contained in the Background was not used in candidates' answers, while the reference to the 40 hours per week at TeknoKratz 'initially' was often missed, i.e. meaning this was subject to alteration and not guaranteed for Jos. Some candidates mistakenly thought that the two stipulations under Terms and conditions, for TeknoKratz, were interdependent in some way, or that Jos would be forced to pay the company \$1000 after working for it for one month, or on leaving. Hence the term 'Golden Hello' even in context and explained, was not always understood. There was some misunderstanding over relative salaries and the actual amount payable at TeknoKratz. Some calculation was required, given that theirs was presented as a weekly figure, and Pumpkin Pot's as the annual remuneration. Some candidates also took this to mean that Jos would receive the money weekly, or only once a year, respectively.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to offer sensible responses to all the sub-questions in **Section A**. There was some reliance by a number of candidates in **Section A** on general description of the whole situation, or Jos's aspirations in seeking these new roles, which were too vague to gain credit in the specific context of a particular question. Examples included Jos's wanting better work-life balance or more family time, being tired, overworked and stressed, or Marika's money concerns. Some candidates repeated the same general points in more than one sub-question response. They are reminded that, in general, questions are purposely formulated to avoid the possibility of credit being gained more than once for provision of exactly the same material.

- (a) Most candidates managed to find at least two advantages to cite as reasons why Jos might select TeknoKratz's offer, rather than Pumpkin Pot's. These most commonly included the more flexible working schedule and location, the closer proximity of premises to visit when the need arose, the shopping discount and the welcome bonus ('Golden Hello') payment. Others correctly identified the relatively good salary and the likely positive impact on Jos's children. Some of the attempted developments of these points, however, were repetitive in nature, for example citing increased family time or improved work-life balance more than once. A succinct connection across the material (the grid and the Additional Information, point 7) is exemplified here: *'Jos would be most likely to choose the TeknoKratz job because the pay for it in a year is not far from his current job's pay. A thoughtful rendering of the family point was: Jos's children want him to spend more time with them and TeknoKratz allows Jos to set his own working day and time. With this, Jos can prevent working in his children's free time.'*

Other connections across the material might have been accurate but lacked some logic in the context of advantages of the TeknoKratz offer, over that of Pumpkin Pot, such as suggesting that the salary would alleviate Marika's financial concerns. While this might have been true in contrast to the much lower salary on offer at Pumpkin Pot, it showed some lack of understanding that Marika was worried at present, even with Jos earning more than he would do if accepting either of these two roles. Such a consideration could gain credit, however, when connected to the bonus or the discount, as these were features specific to TeknoKratz. Similarly, there was frequent mention of Jos's liking for his hometown in relation to the proximity of the work locations taken to mean he would not have to move house. However, the Pumpkin Pot offices were located only 30 km away. This was a clear disadvantage of that offer, but it seemed unlikely that Jos would feel the need to move house when required to make that return journey only three times a week, hence this was not really a valid concern. The connection with his hometown related more obviously to not wishing to relocate, likely to be demanded by KQX Accountants, and thus could be credited in responses to **1e**.

The '40 hours' angle was quite often cited as an advantage. It may well have been so in comparison with Jos's current workload, but it represented significantly more scheduled hours than the Pumpkin Pot offer, so was more logical as a disadvantage in **1a**. Some candidates appeared to think Jos would be working these hours across two days only, i.e. under 48 hours. Similarly, it was not widely understood the one-month notice period is considered a positive, demonstrating the difficulty of finding a new high-level role within a matter of weeks were he to be dismissed. When made clear as an advantage to Jos however, i.e. he could move on quickly if he wanted to, or if he found something better, then this could gain credit, as it contrasted with the permanent position offered by Pumpkin Pot.

The requirement to offer balance (one developed disadvantage) was challenging to some candidates here, since too many focused on the reduced pay offered by TeknoKratz, compared with Jos's current job. While accurate, this was an example of an illogical point, since Pumpkin Pot's intended salary was significantly lower still, making the much smaller reduction he would face with TeknoKratz an unconvincing disadvantage. Several responses referred to thwarting Marika's desire to live abroad and experience different cultures, but the question focus here was on Jos, and this angle again related much more obviously to the KQX relocation.

More successful negative points were relating to the duration of the contract being only as long as that between TeknoKratz and Triple C. The work therefore probably lacked security of tenure, given the high-interest loans taken out by Triple C to fund recent expansion, which they may be unable to pay back. A successful example of a developed balance point was *'Jos will have to consider the sustainability of Triple C's growth carefully, as the security of his job depends directly on that, and it appears to be expanding too fast'*. While many candidates tended to see the rapid

growth of both TeknoKratz and Triple C as a positive omen, more perceptive responses recognised that this was not necessarily beneficial to Jos, especially in light of the relative youth and inexperience of TeknoKratz's founders. (Again, this could be argued positively, as indicative of a more innovative and up-to-date approach to business matters.)

- (b) As with **1a**, it was necessary here only to consider contrasts between the two job offers, and choices needed to be logical disadvantages of the Pumpkin Pot position. One of the most commonly credited ideas here related to the distance between Jos's home and the Pumpkin Pot offices, where it was important to note that he had to attend three times per week, so would have long travel times, increased costs and less time than expected to spend with his children. Many responses also noted the likely stress of the cramped and busy office environment, again which he would have to experience regularly. Some perceptive candidates noted that he would find this especially hard, having previously been a Director of Finance, and so likely to have benefitted from a private, possibly even luxurious office. This was a good example of inference from the material.

Pumpkin Pot offered the lowest salary by some margin. A number of responses developed this successfully and concisely, recognising the potential large drop (more than 50 per cent) in salary from his current one. This developed point demonstrated good linking of ideas from two different places in the material (the grid and Additional Information point 7). Another possible development of the salary point was to emphasise the worsening of Marika's current money worries, e.g. *The company is offering Jos a rate of pay of just \$30000 a year. This might worry Marika even more about the family finances.* The stipulation that Jos would not be permitted to work again in the banking sector for six months after the Pumpkin Pot contract was another frequently credited disadvantage, but few candidates managed to develop this successfully, relying instead on general claims about unemployment or Marika's worries. Occasional responses thought he was forbidden to take *any* work within that time. More thoughtful responses recognised that banking was Jos's area of expertise and thus the most likely sphere in which he would seek his next position. For example: *Jos would be forbidden to work in the banking sector for half a year after terminating his contract which means he could squander many great opportunities to work with other similar companies that could give him a higher salary.*

- (c) The majority of candidates selected the correct 'least relevant' option here.. Since very few candidates made reference to it elsewhere (for example, as an advantage in **1a**, for someone seeking to escape the more cut-throat corporate culture to which he was accustomed), the most common distractor was Point 8. An occasional response cited something not found in the Additional Information at all.
- (d)(i) While the meaning was often understood and the correct idiomatic phrase identified, some responses lacked precision in offering a phrase which could be directly substituted into the same place in the material, while still making full grammatical sense. Additional and unnecessary words from the material had sometimes been included in the answers, for example *can not afford...*
- (ii) Of the two vocabulary questions, candidates tended to find **1dii** slightly more accessible than **1di**. Certainly there seemed to be fewer inclusions of extraneous words, e.g. *I've been....* Occasional responses only supplied *mulling*, which has a different meaning from the required *mulling it over*.
- (e) Most candidates demonstrated some understanding of, and empathy with, Jos's and Marika's relative viewpoints and emotions in relation to the position with KQX Accountants that Marika was proposing. There was, for example, reference to the fact that Jos had not, so far, shared his intentions or the specifics of the two offers with his wife, and did not wish to disappoint her; to Marika's excitement at the high salary, compared with those of the two job offers Jos had sourced; to the likelihood of having to relocate at short notice, something Jos would resist but which his wife would relish, and to the likely levels of stress and corporate expectations imposed on him once again in such a role. Some less successful responses took literally the idea of Jos's face 'clouding over', thinking that Marika was covering it in shadow by waving the newspaper at him. Some answers focused on the likelihood of there being 'lots of competition' for KQX Accountants as a reason for Jos's dismay, which seemed an illogical concern, since he very clearly did not want that post. There was some reliance on description of the general situation, KQX Accountants, Jos's wishes or Marika's concerns. An example of a well-developed point was *'Marika sounded extremely delighted about the job offer, which Jos knew he would have to reject and was sad about hurting Marika's feelings.'*

- (f) (i) Most candidates failed to make the connection with Mateus' success, referred to in the Background of the material for **Section A**, and relied too heavily on the idea that Jos would struggle for money and, given Marika's worries, that this would be a problem. The most common correct point related to the likely 'gaps' between contracts, while some more perceptive responses intuited the contrast between Mateus being alone and Jos as a family man who has more responsibility than merely his own wishes and aspirations. Some candidates also suggested that Marika might be concerned that Jos too would spend too much time 'doing nothing' and become lazy. This inference also gained credit.
- (ii) Perhaps reflecting a lack of experience, as yet, of the working world, responses to this more open question tended not to be especially strong. They frequently relied instead on assumptions about self-employment, repetition of ideas mentioned elsewhere/in the material, or making general observations relevant to any type of employment. Occasional answers focused on consequences of not achieving work-life balance, such as not having a proper routine, or becoming socially isolated. More focused ideas included that, even if self-employed, there would *still* be someone overseeing one's work, deadlines to meet, standards of work and performance to uphold etc. Some candidates were able to mention concepts such as tendering (for contracts) and potentially being undercut by competitors, thus having to offer one's services at a lower rate of remuneration, or to work even harder. Some reference was also made to having to take sole responsibility for one's work, and the resulting anxiety and stress. A few candidates incorrectly inferred that Jos was setting up his own business, so referred to premises, set-up costs, staffing, marketing and similar.

Section B

While much of the material seemed to be quite accessible, there were cultural references and nuances which led to some misunderstandings. Candidates tended to be less successful, in terms of where they scored their marks, in **Section B** than in **Section A**.

Question 2

As mentioned (erroneously – please see below) by some candidates in their responses to **2f**, the 'bite-size' format of the information presented clearly did not appeal to everyone. The 'own words' **Questions (2bi – iii)** and **2f** proved especially challenging. The location of the correct material for **Questions 2c, 2ei and 2eii** also proved difficult for some candidates. (Please see detailed comments below.) Very few, however, attempted to 'circumvent' the word limits by answering in note form, which would not be in the spirit of such questions.

- (a) The entry question to **Section B** required candidates merely to identify the author's target audience, as stated at the start of the material. A number of responses were vague (*visitors/tourists/those wishing to learn about Austria*), and demonstrated a lack of understanding (*for locals/Austrians/the government*) or supplied their own ideas (*those wanting citizenship, anyone interested in Austria*). There was occasional confusion over the country concerned, with references to *Australia*. In attempts to render the term 'pass for a local' in own words, it became clear that this was not always understood.
- (b) (i) Of the three 'own words' **Questions (2bi, 2bii and 2biii)**, this was the most challenging, with a number of candidates not scoring any of the three available marks. There were occasional references to irrelevant parts of the material, for example the pledge to become carbon neutral (an answer to **2c**). While some technical terms from the material with no obvious synonyms ('government', 'cabinet', 'minster', the names of the political parties and personnel, for example) could be used without alteration, too many candidates merely copied the phrases relating to the Chancellor's relative youth and position, the first coalition between these two parties, and the cabinet's inclusive composition. Successful attempts at re-working some of the creditworthy points included: *Sebastian Kurz is in his second term of leading the Austrian nation./Austria's very first dual alliance of the People's Party and the Greens was elected./The cabinet consists of equal numbers of males and females.*
- (ii) Similar principles applied here as in **2bi**, where the names of countries and organisations ('the United Nations', for example) could be included in responses. As in all such questions, it was also permissible to form nouns from verbs and vice versa, to use an adjective as a noun (e.g. *the military*) and to use a different form of a verb provided. There were some misunderstandings here regarding the compulsory nature of 'conscription', whether or not one serves one's time in a military or non-combatant role, and the reference to Germany. Where this was included, it was taken to refer to Austria's being – or not – at war with Germany, rather than understanding that Austria, in

contrast, had not been a divided nation after World War II. The most common correct points credited related to the work in care-based roles locally, Austria's non-aligned status, and her international duties alongside the United Nations. Examples of creditworthy renderings of points included: *The military contributes in recovering areas struck by calamity./Their military does not side with any nations./They have backed up the U.N. in maintaining order and stability across the globe.*

- (iii) As with **2bi** and **2bii**, precision was essential here, as was the requirement not to repeat words from the material which could be rendered in own words. The vast majority of candidates, for example, were seemingly unable to replace the term 'woman' with 'lady', 'female' or similar, often also missing the fact that she was first-ever global female recipient (not just the earliest Austrian woman) to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Candidates struggled to render any element of the details of her work sufficiently in their own terms, and while there was not always sound understanding of the numbers involved in their prizewinning history, these two points were the ones which most commonly did gain credit. Creditworthy examples included: *Baroness Bertha von Suttner, was the first female to achieve the Nobel Peace Prize./...the author of 'Lay Down Your Arms', which opposes the idea of war./Relative to other nations, Austria ranks tenth for creating Nobel Prize awardees./On top of that Austria is the tenth largest creator of Nobel Prize receivers, currently holding 22. (2 marks)/The country has seen 22 of its people win a Nobel Prize, with only 9 countries that can boast of more. (also 2 marks).*

- (c) Here, as in all the 'word count' (summary) questions (also **2d**, **2ei** and **2eii**), precision was key to successful answers, both in identifying valid points and then conveying only the essential part of the information, so as to remain within the word limit. Quite a lot of irrelevant material was offered, relating back to aspects of **2b**, such as the Nobel Prizes or the military conscription. The presence of The Alps and hiking trails was also erroneously included in some answers, as was the role of the zoo (answers to **2eii**), 'using up' the available words. It was unclear why the **2b** points, especially, had been selected for inclusion in a response relating to improved environmental credentials. Those ideas most commonly gaining credit related to nuclear power's rejection and never having been used to produce electricity, the proportion of energy currently generated by renewables (though some candidates conveyed 'nearly a third' as 'most', which was inaccurate) and the presence of the new Nightjet train, though the comparative and/or specific elements were sometimes omitted, leaving a too general a comment about trains. There was some misunderstanding regarding the decision not to generate electricity by means of nuclear power, with some candidates suggesting this as a positive, greener alternative to fossil fuels, and others implying that Austrian attempts at this technology had been unsuccessful, rather than rejected following a referendum.
- (d) Few candidates scored the single available mark here, since it was necessary to refer to all three breakfast items and their having been invented by Austrians, within approximately 10 words. This was possible but, as ever with summary questions, required precision and no introduction to achieve. Some responses omitted one or more elements (usually 'cappuccino') or referred only to *common breakfast items* in general, or selected too much information on one of the three items. An occasional answer incorrectly identified all three as having been created *in Austria*. A successful rendering of the key points using a colon was: *'Austrians invented continental breakfast staples: croissants, Danish pastries, and cappuccino.'*
- (e) (i) As with **2c**, brevity and precision were the necessary skills, in order to convey the essentials of five distinct points within about 50 words. Here, candidates tended to have selected appropriately from the material, but often missed an important detail, such as the names of the cooperatives and exactly what they did, the significance of the chair designed in Vienna, or the attraction to 'top' architects of 'Innsbruck', specifically. Other responses spent too many words describing, for example, the decorative signboards and/or the cooperatives, and either did not attempt any further points or, if they did, these then appeared after the permissible word limit had been reached. There was fairly frequent misunderstanding of the term 'set up shop', taken to refer to retail premises. These were global architectural firms establishing themselves and 'beautifying the city and region', so this point, along with those linked to the ski jump, was rarely credited.
- (ii) There was some reuse of material irrelevant to this question, which focused on tourism generally, especially from the environment (**2c**), breakfast (**2d**) or the design (**2ei**) questions. The three most common points attempted and credited were the ample hiking trails, the historic restaurant and the zoo, but precision was quite often lacking in these last two, which required the sense of 'Europe's oldest' and 'the oldest in the world' respectively. Several responses did exceed the 30-word limit

here, while a fair number also selected only one point (usually the Alpine trails or the restaurant) and offered all the associated detail, rather than selecting three distinct features for the three available marks. A particularly succinct example scoring full marks was: *'Tourists would want to hike the Alps, visit the oldest operating zoo in the world and dine in Europe's oldest restaurant.'* (20 words).

- (f) It was evident that the term 'anecdotes' was not universally understood, since some candidates mentioned what was missing from the material, in their opinion, sometimes inadvertently defining an 'anecdote' in the process. This made the question quite challenging to most. Very few candidates scored either of the two available marks here, possibly since there were few anecdotes presented. Occasional responses did pick up that it might be difficult for the reader to distinguish between 'facts' and 'anecdotes' and that this could cause confusion. Perceptive responses recognised that anecdotal information could, therefore, be taken as factual, but such answers were few and far between. Most candidates commented on levels of interest and engagement, what more a prospective visitor or curious reader might prefer to know, or the structure and layout of the material. There was some comment on the use of German terms and technical vocabulary. A successful response, meriting the award of both marks, was: *'Mixing anecdotes with facts may easily confuse readers with mistaking everything in the article as a true fact.'*

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/23
Paper 2

Key messages

Candidates should read the rubric for each question carefully; clear instructions are given regarding use of own words and word limits. This exam paper assesses a range of skills including the ability to develop extended answers, the ability to write concisely and the ability to write in own words using clear English.

As in previous exam series, candidates will face questions when they are required to answer using their own words. Candidates should assume that all but very technical language, which cannot be easily translated, should be written in their own words. If they simply identify and lift a relevant portion of the text, little credit can be awarded. As this sort of question is challenging, future candidates would benefit from plenty of opportunity to practice writing extracts of a text in their own words to prepare well for the exam.

In questions where a word limit was imposed, some candidates wrote much more than was allowed. When word limits were quite short (for example 30 words), it was clear to see that a response was too long. Candidates should avoid repeating back parts of the question as this uses up the word limit and gains no marks. Where applicable, the word limit is specified in the question rubric and candidates should use this as their guide when answering. The ability to write concisely is an important skill: if a candidate writes beyond an imposed word limit, this part of the answer will not be marked no matter how good it is. Future candidates would benefit from a range of opportunities to practise writing concisely within a given word limit in preparation for the exam.

The material in the Insert is the basis on which candidates should answer the questions. Therefore, it is very important that candidates read the material carefully before starting to write their answers. Whilst some questions may require candidates to answer from their own knowledge and experience, candidates are expected to focus their thinking and answers on the material given in Section A and Section B.

General comments

Most candidates engaged with the material and found it accessible. Most candidates attempted every question, and only a small number found the questions very challenging in terms of comprehension and answering in clear English. Occasionally, a candidate did not attempt a question. The majority of candidates wrote with reasonable grammatical accuracy and fluency. There was no evidence to suggest that candidates were short of time.

Most candidates wrote in legible English but in some cases, handwriting was difficult to read.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) In this question like this, where candidates are required to give arguments in favour of an opinion or an activity, they should aim to select pertinent information from one part of the material and link it to that in another or develop the original information they selected themselves. In the case of this question, candidates needed to focus on Thomas's perspective and not refer to the point of view of any other character. Candidates are expected to give a concise but developed answer. Many candidates were able to pick out the idea of saving time and money due to not commuting to work and therefore being able to, for example, save money each month on the existing salary or being

able to keep in touch with colleagues via an online meeting which would avoid a sense of isolation would have been examples of developed answers. In most cases these points were not well developed. Future candidates would benefit from the opportunity to practice this skill using other material.

- (b) This question focused on the disadvantages Louisa felt stemmed from working at home. Again, some candidates were required to identify a disadvantage and develop it. For example, not being able to socialise with colleagues after work is a disadvantage and this means that a sense of teamwork or belonging cannot be achieved as workers do not get to know colleagues well.
- (c) This question assessed candidates' ability to use their own opinion, not information in the Insert, of why the company Forex might choose to keep a smaller office in the city centre in the future. This was well answered by some candidates many of them citing the need to have a place to meet for important decision making or for clients to go to; others suggested that it was important for a company to have a place for those workers who did not like working from home, another valid point.
- (d) Several candidates were successful in identifying ways, in their own opinion, the company Forex, could monitor the work of their employees at home; in questions like this, candidates need to be careful that they take notice of the rubric. In this case they were expected to avoid using anything they had mentioned in **Question 1(a)** so a reference to video conference would not have gained marks if a candidate had already used in their response to **Question 1(a)**. Some good responses were seen including providing the right technology and workspace at home to ensure effective working and using software to track keyboard activity.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) (i) In this question candidates were required to find evidence in the text which suggested that climbing at The Arch was a popular activity. The response had to be focused on The Arch. Many candidates were successfully able to identify the 'crowd', 'scores of people' and that The Arch was 'packed'. Less successful answers did not focus on the information about The Arch itself which the question required.
- (ii) This question required candidates to write in their own words. When this is needed, candidates must use words and phrases other than those in the material in their answer. Only very technical words in the material, for which there is no alternative, may be allowed in their answer, however this question there were no technical words requiring translation. Candidates may use alternative forms of verbs but not plurals of the words in the text. An easy way to translate 'more' is to use a comparative adjective instead so 'more sociable' could be translated by 'friendlier'. The answers given needed to focus on ways that the atmosphere of The Arch was positive.

Examples of acceptable responses:

- *Participants are talking to each other* as an alternative to 'chatting'.
 - *Climbers are not pushing in the queue* as an alternative to 'waiting their turn'.
 - *They are occasionally cheering on each other* as an alternative to 'offering the odd shout of encouragement'.
- (iii) In this question, candidates were, again, required to write in their own words. In this case, the technical word 'gym' was allowed. Examples of creditable responses:
- *They like to unwind after a day at the office* as an alternative to 'young professionals letting off steam after work'.
 - *It is friendlier that lifting weights at the fitness centre* as an alternative to 'as a more sociable alternative to pounding treadmills or pumping iron in a gym'.
- (b) When candidates are required to provide the meaning of a word or phrase in the material, they must use the same grammatical form as the word or phrase they are given to gain credit; in this way they are providing the correct meaning of the chosen word or phrase. Therefore, if the word or phrase given, for example, is in the perfect tense then they must also use the perfect tense of an

alternative word in their answer. Giving the incorrect tense is a common mistake that candidates make. A different form of the same word in the questions is also not creditable. In addition, candidates should be reminded that is the first answer only that will be marked.

Examples of creditable responses:

- (i) bringing it into the mainstream: making it popular amongst many people
 - (ii) selling out- abandoning their principles
 - (iii) recanted – retracted his statement
 - (iv) boycott-refuse to go
- (c) Most candidates were able to write within the 30-word limit; some candidates were able to understand that skateboarding and the other sports in question were described as countercultural and anti-establishment and have less participants than others; credit was also given if candidates recognised that these activities are more art than sport and can also be described as ‘extreme’, which is not what has been witnessed at the Olympics before.
- (d) When candidates are required to identify a word in the material that has the same meaning as a word or phrase in the question, they should pick **only** the **exact** word or phrase that matches. If they copy the sentence or phrase that the synonym is in, they will not gain any credit. Some candidates found it challenging to find the matching word ‘festoon’ for ‘adorn in **d(i)**’ however in **d(ii)**, many candidates were able to identify ‘frank’ as the synonym for ‘honest’. Future candidates would benefit from plenty of practice of this kind of question in preparation for their exam.
- (e) This question was again assessing candidates’ ability to write in their own words and recognise that the Olympic Committee is looking to attract a new audience, of more youthful people, who do not have so much knowledge about the traditional Olympic sports, like equestrianism or track and field. Candidates found this challenging however some were able to gain credit. As mentioned above, future candidates would benefit from lots of practice of this kind of task.
- (f) Candidates were expected to use both the material and their own knowledge in this question. Future candidates should note that full marks can be scored only if they follow the rubric and use their own knowledge and the material.

A range of good answers was provided ranging from:

Own knowledge:

- Wanting to represent their country.
- The chance to hear their national anthem sung at a medal ceremony.
- The potential to earn more money by attracting big sponsorship.

The material:

- The chance to seek global recognition or be the best in the world (NB the idea of world or global was needed for credit).
 - They want to reach the pinnacle of the sport and excel at what they do.
- (g) In this question, many candidates were successful in using their own knowledge to provide benefits for a country of hosting a large sporting tournament. Creditable responses ranged from the large potential revenues gained from visiting spectators and sponsorship, to the chance to improve existing sporting facilities.
- (h) This question was well answered by most candidates who were able to write within the word count and gave a range of responses about the problems hosting such a large tournament could pose, such as the excessive amount of investment needed (which could be damaging economically) to the security issues posed by lots of dignitaries and competitors to look after.