

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12 Reading
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Key messages

- As preparation for the exam, candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources such as advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.
- Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic elements and features of texts such as parts of speech/word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph and text-level structure, formality/informality of tone, pragmatics.
- Candidates should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.
- For **Question 1(a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Response. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.
- For **Question 1(b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text with their own, selecting for analysis the aspects from both texts that demonstrate the specific effects that are created.
- For **Question 2** candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of the given text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, organise information clearly in their answers, and write using clear and appropriate language.
- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

The rubric was well understood, with only a very few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. There were some overlong responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates should remember that they are being marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. To achieve successful and clear text analysis, it is necessary for candidates to possess and employ a good level of linguistic skill; this session, only a few candidates were hampered in this regard. Largely speaking, the paper was handled with understanding and competence.

In **Question 1(a)**, candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the material in the passage provided to fit a specific form, purpose and audience. Their reworking of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was a letter (150 to 200 words) to the newspaper in which the given article was published, expressing opinions about the issues raised in the article. Careful consideration of the target audience was required. Candidates are expected to write clearly and accurately, with relevant content, and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

In **Question 1(b)**, candidates are assessed for their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of texts, with clear reference to characteristic features, and comparative analysis of form, structure and language and how a writer's stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ a comparative approach in their response to **Question 1(b)**. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a conclusion can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts. Those who adopted a topical approach tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive analysis of linguistic elements.

In **Question 2**, candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of a text in terms of meaning, context and audience with reference to characteristic features and their ability to analyse form structure and language. In the case of most candidates, there was a clear understanding of the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the given text. Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise use of language to link evidence with explanatory comments; phrases such as '*the writer is trying to persuade the readers*' and '*this helps the readers to imagine*' require expansion in order to constitute useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read the given text, an extract from an article about child prodigies, published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper. They were then required to write a letter to the newspaper in response to the article, expressing their opinions about the issues raised, using 150 to 200 words.

The task was well understood and produced some fluent and persuasive writing. Most responses showed clear understanding of the text. There was a mixture of approaches to the conventions of letter writing; some responses included addresses and letter headings whilst others missed salutations and valedictions. Whilst the inclusion of an address is not a requirement, the use of the characteristic features of a letter such as opening and close indicates clear understanding and relevance. Some candidates chose to write to a wider audience, some addressed their letter to the Editor, either approach being acceptable providing the correct form and register of address was used. There were some instances of excessively formal address and points of view; these, by definition, compromised relevance and clarity of writing.

Some of the most successful responses took a strongly critical line concerning the contents of the article – particularly the attitude of parents – and this produced lots of mature and well-argued writing. These successful responses focused on the issues raised and gave their opinions of them, e.g. the amount of time children devote to their passion, the intensity of the experience, the increasing demand to juggle time and the demands of study, the burden placed on both the child and their parents and the need for consideration of other family members.

Less successful responses tended to consider each of the prodigies in turn and reproduced the content of the text either by way of a summary, quote from the text or comment on the suitability of the prodigies for such a designation. Some candidates mistook 'prodigy' for 'prodigal', which limited their understanding of the text.

Several candidates invented helpful back stories to add to the material they could reference – these included ex-child prodigies and mothers of child prodigies. While this tended to create a convincing sense of attitude, it did not always demonstrate a complete understanding of the text. In weaker responses in which this approach was adopted, it led to a loss of focus and a different narrative was created.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150 to 200 words). Several candidates wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse form, structure and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, i.e. the text given and the one that they have just created. An integrated approach is more effective for this type of comparative task than dealing with each text separately. Examples of this were seen where

candidates clearly identified the impact of the writer's article heading and then examined the carefully chosen vocabulary used in their opening remarks of the letter in a comparative fashion.

Where textual evidence is selected, candidates should remember to offer clear analysis of how the writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

Weaker responses were often brief, focused more on the article than on their own Directed Response, and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of a written newspaper article, especially the use of heading, subheading and paragraph structure, needing to relate these to the specific text and effects created. This was also the case for those who pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without expansion. Some responses could have explored in more detail the level of formality in each text. Tone could have been contrasted as the article is generally positive whilst most letters took opposition to parents' management of their children's talent or hobbies.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of a range of conventions of an article and a letter. Candidates often began their comparisons by succinctly outlining the purpose and audience of each text (informative for the article, and persuasive for the letter). Most contrasted the structure of the article – the ways in which the headings and subheadings are used to introduce a scenario or case study of a prodigy – with the opening address (usually to a specific person), continuous writing and closing valediction of their letter. Candidates tended to focus on the article's rhetoric questions, designed to 'provoke a reaction', 'secure attention' and 'engage the audience' and also considered the use of a case study approach which made the issues seem 'more real', adding 'credibility'. A tendency towards comparison in content as opposed to comparative analysis of language needs to be addressed.

In the strongest responses, candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their writing, for example by proceeding from a line-by-line approach to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of form, i.e. the ways in which the article and letter appeal to the respective audiences through tone and register. They also commented on structure: the fact that beginning the article with a rhetorical question hints at the writer's attitude to the subject matter, the way that the article develops the idea of increasing amounts of time being devoted to a child's talents. Whilst most noted that the inclusion of Dr Jung added credibility, the stronger responses commented on the way the article references two parents' viewpoints which are more in line with Dr Jung, which are then contrasted with the third parent's viewpoint which is less aligned with Dr Jung's view. The very strongest responses commented on the way the article ends with the view of Dr Jung emphasising the writer's attitude, which links back to the question in the title, ultimately offering a sensible, considered and balanced answer; they then compared this with the way that the letter ended.

In terms of language, these stronger responses made reference to quantities of time and adverbial phrases. They also noted the fact that quotes from parents provide a variety of perspectives and, if they had taken on the persona of a parent, compared this with their letter. Lexical field was also used for comparative analysis: education, hobbies, activities, sport and that of the letter. For these responses, specific adjectives such as *elite*, *successful* and *lucrative* were analysed as suggesting the writer's attitude; furthermore, vocabulary choices such as *gifted*, *sacrifice*, *devotes* and *nurture* were seen to imply the special nature of the prodigies and were used for comparison with the vocabulary used in the letter.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read a review of a virtual reality experience designed by the sculptor Antony Gormley and analyse the text focusing on form, structure and language.

Seemingly not all candidates appeared to manage their time appropriately. Several responses answered **Question 2** first and candidates need to bear in mind the mark allocations when deciding their time management strategy.

The text was generally well understood and was answered with obvious engagement by most candidates. There was a wide range of responses with a significant number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There were several answers which achieved a genuinely sophisticated level of understanding, particularly in tracing the shift from the specifics of VR to the wider implications for the future of the Earth.

There was often sustained and perceptive attention to structure, direction, imagery and a range of language features. There were very few short, undeveloped answers.

Stronger responses were often characterised by greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language. Conversely, weaker responses often described style, mood, and vocabulary as having 'positive connotations' or 'negative connotations', needing further elaboration and definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'creating an interesting image' or 'stopping the reader from being bored'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology to access the higher levels; for example, 'stream of consciousness' (instead of first-person narrative) and 'personification' were often used incorrectly. The wider the critical vocabulary candidates possess, the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

Stronger responses commented on the lexical field associated with astrophysics/space *lunar cycle*, *weightlessness*, *craters*, *Earth hovering*, *galaxies* and *cosmos*, the reference to Yale University, the link with NASA (and data collected) together with vocabulary choice such as *esteemed*, and *leading expert* which gives the VR experience its credibility. An astute point was the depth of emotion gained after experiencing space, 'almost like a spiritual awakening'. These more successful responses explored the striking balance between art and science which could trigger logical and emotional reactions, presenting a positive image of the product.

These stronger responses explored the philosophical nature of the of the final paragraphs, of man's *insignificance in the great scheme of things* balanced with our significance in terms of taking away Earth's *propensity to sustain life*, and how 'the project is much more than just a VR experience', coming full circle to *Kiritimati and Kiribati ... that are destined to become the first casualties of global warming*.

Only the strongest responses commented on the use of *Lunatick* as a title for the experience.

Many middle level candidates adopted a paragraph by paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the ... paragraph', or adopted an approach to analysis which ranged haphazardly across the text. Analysis needs to be coherent and effectively structured for responses to move through the higher levels; a whole text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of the line-by-line approach was the repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point can not be rewarded twice. There was sometimes confusion between Gormley (the designer), Natarajan (the astrophysicist) and the reviewer. Some candidates struggled with analysis of syntax and demonstrated a need for greater understanding of the possible reasons for simple or complex/compound sentence use and their effect on a text. These candidates showed clearer understanding and analysis in respect of such aspects as the inclusive use of *we* and direct address to the reader *you*. Most noted the powerful isolated sentence, *Your body has become its own spaceship*. These middle level responses also commented on the use of listing and repetition for emphasis in *sing about it, write about it, make films about it* Responses in the middle level selected the use of measurement data (*near zero gravity, diameter of which is 80 kms, 2 kms higher*) as examples of perspective and credibility.

Less successful responses tended to offer very generalised comments. While these responses identified some language features, analysis was limited. These weaker responses tended to summarise the contents of the text and they generally did this at great length.

Selection of evidence by way of quotation required more expert use in these weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at great length, or merely referring to a range of lines. Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments.

Candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to the analysis of Reading texts. The categorisation of elements of a text as representative of 'ethos', 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, needs to be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22 Writing
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Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Candidates need to allocate a set amount of time to: identify factors for writing; plan to write; write; check; correct.
- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instruction is to 'write a letter', giving 'reasons to support your opinion'.
- Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question, leads to better crafted and well-shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and generic content.
- Candidates should consider the following as part of the planning stage: the *purpose* of the piece, the prescribed *form* and *audience* as well as the most appropriate *voice* or persona to adopt, the *mood* and *tone* that they should try to create in their writing and the most suitable *structure* to employ.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences, and would do better to aim for clear expression in simple and compound sentences with less variety. One error that occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops. Sentence demarcation is key, followed by accurate use of commas, and then the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates must also be aware of the need for correct spelling and paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech.
- In preparing for this paper, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates should be exposed to a wide range of tone, register and format by reading a broad variety of text types, as outlined in the syllabus, as background preparation.

General comments

Overall, English language proficiency was notably better in this series in comparison with previous March series.

A few candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and some candidates didn't answer **Question 1(b)** at all.

Stronger responses to **Question 1(a)** focused clearly on the question, writing about learning to play a musical instrument being a waste of time for children, as opposed to weaker responses which considered learning to play musical instruments in general or, weaker still, those that focused on music being either a good or a bad thing.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who were able to maintain a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. Most candidates made some attempt to comment on the form, structure and language of their letter, showing an awareness of how these aspects link to audience and shape meaning. Many were reliant on formulaic comments, for example to do with ethos, logos and pathos, and such responses were limited in their analyses. Candidates need to move beyond identifying features, by linking these features to their effects, and explaining their relationship to audience, meaning and purpose. A few responses focused entirely on the content of their piece of writing and therefore only provided minimal analysis of their writing, often indirectly by outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (review, narrative or essay), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** were generally in need of focus on the requirements of the task. For example, some film reviews were simple retellings of a film's plot, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion on the film, or comparison with other films by the same director. A number of narratives for **Question 3** became mundane stories of the horror/thriller genre with often clichéd attempts at creating a sense of mystery/drama. In some candidates' responses to the **Question 4** task, writing lost focus on why many teenagers are not interested in the news and instead discussed the rise of social media platforms such as *Twitter* and *Instagram*; these responses lost sight of the essay topic and therefore lost the required focus.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You recently read a newspaper article which said that it is a waste of time for children to learn to play a musical instrument. You disagree, and decide to write a letter to the editor of the newspaper about this.

- (a) Write the text for the letter, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, give reasons to support your opinion.**

Whilst the vast majority of responses adhered to the specified form for the task, some responses read more like an article, and lacked some of the conventions of a letter such as opening and concluding salutations.

Many candidates chose to focus on the numerous benefits of children learning to play a musical instrument, employing an upbeat and enthusiastic voice in their writing; many also chose to adopt the persona of a parent, a music teacher, or a successful musical instrument aficionado. Rhetorical devices were used with varying degrees of success in order to create an appropriate tone in the letter; these ranged from serious and indignant in some responses, to angry and sarcastic in others. Tone and register were key differentiating aspects of candidates' work, with the strongest responses demonstrating a solid awareness of audience and an ability to adapt tone and register to fully engage the newspaper editor.

The inclusion of anecdotes was another differentiating feature of the strongest work, often making letters highly credible and convincing; for example, candidates may have used a musician persona to develop a lively and creative response to the task: *'When I was but a kid, naïve, young and learning to acclimatise to the pressures of being in college, I decided to join a punk-rock band on a whim. It was a simpler time then – little to worry about, just living from moment to moment – content.'* A lively tone and a convincing voice are also highly effective: *'In a way, I find my whole existence antithetical to your article, "The Nobodies of Music". As a product of the very thing you oppose, I think I am uniquely qualified to respond to your odd little article.'*

Stronger candidates also used pronouns effectively, for example: *'Who are we to judge what is a waste of time and what is not? Nowhere is it written that academic work is more fruitful or more enjoyable. I think we should let people indulge in whatever hobby interests them.'*

Weaker responses were often hampered by grammatical errors, for example using commas instead of full stops between sentences. Ideas were mostly relevant, but at times these were undeveloped, or the range of language was limited and there were frequent errors: *'A person may not be able to speak another language but music of any language can be understood because music bring emotions to ourself while listning it. [...] Then why stop children from learning to play musical instrument?'*

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.

Stronger candidates consistently and confidently used appropriate terminology and linked their use to their effect, for example: *'Triple structures have been used throughout the text. "School. Classes. Homework." is a list of three one-word sentences that mimics the fast pace of students' lives. Another list, "instruments and genres and styles" implements polysyndeton to enhance the idea that there is a "vast variety" by slowing down the pace of the text.'*

Stronger responses showed an understanding of language and the need to provide some evaluation and analysis of how language functioned in the letter. This can be done from the outset, by including a clear opening section defining the purpose of the letter and linking it to audience, with supporting examples of language for analysis. Demonstration of a secure understanding of a linguistic framework adds to this: *'To begin with, the use of quotations validates the writer's argument. Providing evidence in this way encourages the reader to accept arguments being made due to legitimate facts. Credibility is established using anecdotes throughout the letter. Hyperbolic language is used, including strong adverbs as in "vehemently disagree."*

Some weaker responses showed attempts at analysis, and demonstrated some understanding of structural and linguistic choices, for example, *"Music is like a big ocean of knowledge" – the writer is using the literary device simile as he is connecting music and ocean with a like.'* Such commentary would be improved by linking the device to its effect.

Weaker responses included basic general commentary such as the use of paragraphs to make the text easier to read or commas to make the sense clearer. They needed to reference specific words or phrases from their letter and to move focus away from describing or summarising the content of the letter, to making more relevant and specific points on language and structure.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Film review

You have recently seen the latest film by a popular director, and you decide to write a review of it. The review will be published in your school magazine. In your writing, give your opinion of this film, and explain how it compares to the director's previous ones.

Many responses to this question showed clear engagement with the topic. Most candidates tackled the review with appropriate attention to the readership of peers, with some light-hearted comments. Stronger responses showed a high level of adeptness at this particular genre of writing, employing a range of stylistic conventions in order to create a sophisticated response.

An example of a highly convincing and authentic film review with a keen sense of audience being sustained throughout the writing could be: *'La La Land by Damien Chazelle is a new-age classic with Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling taking on the roles of Mia and Sebastian, two passionate artists turned lovebirds. The film was bound to be a success; but the true magic of the movie lies in the direction, which takes it from modern romance to timeless masterpiece.'* Strong responses heeded the instruction to discuss the director's previous films, and an effective way of achieving a sense of audience was to address them directly in a tone appropriate to the form: *'Chazelle has made two blockbuster films at 27 and, by the looks of it, will make many more. The reason La La Land will stand the test of time is the heavy sadness that underscores the action. Be sure to carry a tissue (box) when you watch La La Land's magic unfold.'*

Weaker responses were often in need of the stylistic conventions one would expect to find in this genre of writing; others laboured these conventions, resulting in a weakening of the overall effect achieved, for example: *'Personally, I thought this was one of Philip's best movies, if not the best. It sure does have competition, mainly with the iconic thriller "Battle of Blood", and the classic western "Old Man Jaw". However*

I can firmly say this was his best cast performance, as none of them failed to disappoint, as they all helped create a memorable performance. One that will be cherished for decades to come.'

The weakest responses focused on plot retelling or, sometimes, describing the activity of going to the cinema to watch the film in question. Such responses highlight the need for candidates to keep the focus of their writing relevant to the task.

Question 3 – Story

Write a story called *Forgotten*, about a place that nobody has visited for many years. In your writing, create a sense of mystery and drama.

Some responses were partial, rather than complete, stories. Most candidates who opted for this question produced narratives which were largely first-person recounts, with a few candidates attempting to construct a narrative involving multiple characters. Some responses were expressed clearly but needed to have more of a sense of purpose.

Stronger responses had evidence of suspense and mystery from the start, and these candidates came up with quite interesting and original ideas for the forgotten place, such as a dystopian Earth in the future. Such responses were effectively structured; a highly effective device was that of using a strong opening line of dialogue that became an internal cohesive device through the story.

Stronger candidates were able to use complex structures and less common lexis, together with a high level of accuracy.

Weaker responses were often in need of the sense of mystery and drama required by the task. This tended to be the case where candidates used a 'telling' rather than a 'showing' technique. These candidates often wrote about someone going to a place from which others had not returned in the past and coming to some sort of gruesome end. Others lost narrative control as they employed elaborate plots with numerous characters.

Question 4 – Essay

In class, you have been discussing the reasons why many teenagers are not interested in the news. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay on the topic, giving your opinion.

Responses were stronger where candidates demonstrated that they had understood the assumption built into the question – that teenagers are not interested in the news. Some of these candidates took this as an opportunity to challenge that assumption and to explore the whole idea of news. This enabled them to develop a well-structured essay in which they considered the different ways that news is consumed by teenagers, and to offer their opinions on why some teenagers are not interested in news in certain formats, such as broadcast news on the television or in printed media. Some candidates referred to world events and some presented complex and very emotive arguments displaying strong viewpoints, such as: *'Every news show has morphed into a grotesque and blatant attempt to sell an opinion to indoctrinate its fanbase and cultivate a generation of easily manipulated citizens.'*

Stronger essays were clearly structured, with topic sentences – in the way of statements or questions – utilised as a starting point for paragraphs, for example, *'One of the most influential platforms in the life of a teenager is social media.'* There was evidence in stronger responses of conscious crafting of language. For example, a reference to a protest and how it had been reported in the news using *'distorted'* language, describing a *'savage group of rioters and looters.'* There was evidence of a wide and appropriate vocabulary, such as in an argument that *'the protestors were displaying diametrically opposing views.'*

Responses were often weaker where the candidate accepted the assumption within the question without providing an alternative viewpoint. These responses tended to give reasons for teenagers' lack of interest in the news, with many veering off the task to talk about how big a role social media now plays in teenagers' lives.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32 Language Analysis
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Key messages

This was the first presentation of the revised 9093 syllabus. From March 2021 the Question Paper will be set into two sections: **Section A**, containing **Question 1**, and **Section B**, containing **Question 2**. Both of the questions are compulsory. The duration of the examination is 2 hours and 15 minutes. There is a new topic in **Section A** – *Language change*, and **Section B** – *Child language acquisition* – contains some updates of the legacy 9093 Paper 4 topic of this name.

Key skills required by Paper 3 are outlined in the four assessment objectives applicable to the paper: understanding (AO1), writing (AO2), conceptualisation (AO4) and data handling (AO5). Candidates should be aware of the demands of the assessment objectives and the ways in which available marks are weighted under each one. **Section A** has the following marks available: AO2, 5 marks; AO4, 5 marks, and AO5, 15 marks. In **Section B**, this is different: AO1, 5 marks; AO4, 15 marks, and for AO5, there are 5 marks.

There are, therefore, 25 marks available for each question. With that in mind, candidates are advised to divide the examination time equally in order for them to provide as full a response as possible in both of the two sections. In this series, there was evidence of candidates providing a very long response to one question but only a short response in the remaining section.

General comments

Overall, it was clear that candidates had engaged at a good level in both sections of the examination paper. Most candidates insightfully drew meaning from each of the sections and presented sustained, cohesive responses using an appropriate register.

Short responses may be described as 'limited' according to the levels of response outlined in the Mark Scheme as they are limited by their own brevity. In some cases, elaborate response plans had been produced at the detriment of the full essay. Although planning is advised to an extent, these should remain short with useful pointers to be used in the sustained final response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Three data sources were presented in this question. Candidates were advised to refer to specific details from Texts A, B and C, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of language change in order to produce their analysis. Where fewer than three data sources were used, it was not possible for marks to be awarded above level 3 of the Mark Scheme for AO5.

Writing

Overall, responses demonstrated a clear control of expression. Stronger responses made accurate use of a wide range of technical terminology. Ideas were generally sequenced logically, moving through a series of linguistic frameworks which included graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, pragmatics or semantics. Although it is not a requirement for a response to be structured in this way, more confident responses demonstrated clear analytical skills by using this approach.

At times, relevance of content was obscured by historic or sociological consideration rather than linguistic analysis. Some responses relied too heavily on such discussion, which weakened their analytical standpoint and resulted in some loss of focus.

Most responses attempted to include analysis from each of the data sources. Weaker responses tended to analyse each source in the order in which it was presented in the Question Paper whereas stronger responses interwove examples of data to achieve synthesis. Where cohesion was achieved, an increased level of development was demonstrated.

Conceptualisation

Strong responses provided examples of why the theory to which they made reference was relevant and how it was represented in the texts. Weaker responses demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of linguistic issues, concepts and approaches but were not always fully developed.

Overall, a wide range of relevant linguistic approaches was referenced. These included Hallidayan functional linguistics, the theory of lexical gaps, tree and wave models, Hockett's random fluctuation theory, Jespersen's thoughts on the Great Vowel Shift, and those of Chen on an S-curve model. Such references were generally clearly understood, with stronger responses incorporating an increased level of detail, some of which was insightful and sophisticated. The approaches listed above are not prescribed by the syllabus and it should be borne in mind that any approaches which are relevant to the discussion in hand will be credited.

Data handling

Weaker responses mistook the use of the medial, or long, S in text A to be a phonemic symbol rather than the archaic grapheme which was in use at the time of writing (1731). The origins of the medial S were in classical Greek which used two forms of the grapheme sigma. Early written forms of English incorporated a long S in the initial and medial positions of lexical and grammatical items until advancements in printing technology led to its gradual obsolescence and the round S was favoured in its place. Stronger candidates were able to describe the change and compare this feature to present day use. As Text A represented written material with no phonological representation, analysis of how the medial S was affected by the Great Vowel Shift was somewhat out of place.

Further comparisons were demonstrated where candidates observed the use of capitalisation of nouns – which was a strong feature of Text A –, compounding and hyphenation over time seen in *Colly-flower*, and orthographical changes such as *Artichoaks* and *Sellery*. Weaker responses either tended to provide a list of all nouns seen in Text A which have undergone orthographical change, or needed to provide more examples to evidence their argument.

Most responses observed the concept of semantic narrowing in *Plantations* represented in Text B, and that of lexical broadening in *transplant*. Both were generally described with a good level of development and synthesis from data sources demonstrated in more confident responses. Further semantic analysis included discussion on the use of *noble* in Text A. Insightful development included a reflection on how a *noble fruit* may sacrifice itself to relieve hunger – an act which would be considered noble in its contemporary semantic meaning.

Text C offered the opportunity to analyse the comparative use of lexical items *Bigness* and *Size* over time. Graphic representation of data was clearly understood. A few of the most sophisticated and insightful responses analysed the morphological gap represented by *Bigness*, where according to the morphemic rules of English it is possible for the word to exist, but it would now be perceived as a grammatical error or used as a neologism for comedic effect.

Section B

Question 2

The data source for **Question 2** was a transcription of a conversation between Kaylee, aged 2, and her mother. Candidates were required to analyse how the interlocutors were using language, referring to specific details from the transcription and to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

The revisions for this question include the provision of an IPA chart to assist reading and understanding of any phonemic representation in the data source. A very good level of understanding was demonstrated in most responses of how this should be interpreted.

Most responses acknowledged the way in which the mother was using child-directed speech in terms of questioning technique, intonation, recasting and positive and negative reinforcement and how this aided the child's speech patterns to progress. Confident responses demonstrated understanding of how the mother led the fulfilled adjacency pairs and how the child participated in turn-taking.

Stronger responses used a wide range of technical terminology with accuracy, demonstrating their deeper understanding of characteristic features.

Conceptualisation

Weaker responses described Kaylee's level of linguistic competence as holophrastic. In many cases, at age 2 years, children's utterances are indeed holophrastic in nature. However, this does not mean that all children aged 2 years remain in a holophrastic stage of competence. There are examples in the data source of Kaylee's telegraphic utterance, including in the very first line of the transcription. Stronger responses analysed a variety of Kaylee's utterances in order to conclude that although there was evidence of holophrase, the child had entered the telegraphic stage and at times was able to converse quite freely.

Similarly, weaker responses which made reference to the Piagetian stages of cognitive development placed Kaylee in the sensorimotor stage because Piaget recognised that children under two years of age demonstrated (at the time he was writing) certain competencies. In the transcription, there was much evidence to place Kaylee in Piaget's pre-operational stage. Insightful responses acknowledged that contemporary early years' experience and education may have led to children approaching various stages of linguistic competence at a younger milestone than those indicated by Piaget.

There was reference to the approaches taken by a variety of theorists, which included Chomsky, Bruner, Skinner, Halliday and Vygotsky. Weaker responses needed more analytical development, providing sufficient evidence from the data source. Where no data were provided there could be no synthesis or cohesion. Examples of Hallidayan functions which were included in stronger responses were the representational – *i use my chair momma*; imaginative – *baby go nap*; regulatory – *sit down*, and instrumental – *i want my /beɪslæt/ on*.

Stronger responses also analysed the mother's scaffolding technique which led to Kaylee reaching her Vygotskian zone of proximal development, and further explored how, in terms of Bruner's LASS, the mother was progressing Kaylee's linguistic competence: Kaylee: *she /f/*, then Mother: *she fell* ↗.

Data handling

Most responses attempted phonological analysis to an extent and generally selected the noun */beɪslæt/* to exemplify the child's competence in pronunciation. Weaker responses used this to suggest that Kaylee had not reached her expected milestone, while stronger responses analysed the deletion of the rhotic phoneme where there appeared a thus far inability to produce the consonant cluster at the beginning of the word.

There was an occasional need for a higher degree of accuracy in labelling phonemes; for example, Kaylee's */f/* was sometimes described as a plosive instead of an unvoiced fricative. Moreover, in phonological discussion it is inaccurate to describe these sounds as 'letters' as clearly the transcription is a representation of spoken and not written language.

Further deficit approaches were taken in weaker responses. These included description of – although without accurate labelling – deletion of final phoneme in */fel/*, substitution of initial phoneme in */deə/* and suggestion that by uttering */æ/* (.) */æ/* Kaylee remained in the babbling phase. A deficit approach is not recommended as it does not include the competencies of the child which in this case could have included ability to use past and present tense, pronunciation of final phoneme */t/* with rising intonation in *you got it* ↗ and the ways in which Kaylee appeared to understand much more than she could say, for example */bu:n/*.

Overall, responses provided a careful selection of language data to evidence analysis which was at times synthesised in an insightful manner by confident candidates.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42 Language Topics
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Key messages

The March 2021 series saw the first presentation of the revised 9093 syllabus. The question paper is now set into two sections, each of which contains one compulsory question. The duration of the examination is 2 hours and 15 minutes. Fifty marks are available overall; 25 marks are available in each section.

Section A contains **Question 1**, which addresses the former topic *English as a global language*. Revisions for this question include the new title, *English in the world*. **Section B** contains **Question 2** and addresses the new topic, *Language and the self*.

Key skills required by Paper 4 are outlined in the three assessment objectives applicable to the paper: understanding (AO1), writing (AO2) and conceptualisation (AO4). Candidates should be aware of the demands of the assessment objectives and the ways in which available marks are weighted under each one. **Section A** and **Section B** both have the following marks available: AO1, 10 marks; AO2, 5 marks, and AO4, 10 marks.

Candidates are advised to divide the examination time equally in order for them to provide as full a response as possible in both of the two sections. In this series, there was evidence of candidates providing a very long response to one question but only a short response in the remaining section.

In Paper 4, it should be noted that there is no requirement to analyse the language of the texts provided. Any such analysis becomes irrelevant content and this material is not rewardable.

General comments

Most responses were sustained and demonstrated engagement with the stimulus material in both sections. Short responses may be described as 'limited' according to the levels of response outlined in the mark scheme, as they are limited by their own brevity. In some cases, elaborate plans had been produced at the detriment of the full essay. Although planning is advised to an extent, these should remain short with useful pointers to be used in the sustained final response.

The demands of this paper lie in the candidates' ability to produce two discursive, cohesive essays which highlight understanding of the stimulus material as well as knowledge gained from wider reading of the topic. Throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the text in order to gain marks across all three assessment objectives. Moreover, responses must present ideas gained from wider reading in order to be credited against AO4.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The text provided was an extract from an article published on the BBC website in 2017 which presented ideas on the ways in which international companies use English. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the growth of English as a 'global' language, to refer to specific details from the text and to provide ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Understanding

Most responses to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the linguistic issues put forward in the article, making clear reference to points made in the text. Reliance on knowledge of historical context relating to *colonialism* or *a play for cultural superiority* at times led to loss of focus. Similarly, some weaker responses made limited reference to the idea that *materials might be translated into fewer languages in future*, but provided extended discussion on language death. While the issue of language death was a relevant topic for exploration, stronger responses kept each point firmly focused on the question and the stimulus material.

Other issues which were effectively discussed included the ways in which international business could *become more efficient by collaborating across geographies* and the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of *speaking doesn't mean always fully understanding*.

Limited responses tended to select the idea of English as *one of the most succinct, simple languages to learn* without necessarily applying it to why, if the idea were robust, English has become a successful lingua franca.

Writing

Overall, responses demonstrated a clear control of expression using a structural framework of logically sequenced ideas. Stronger responses maintained an appropriate register, using low frequency lexis and relevant linguistic terminology. There was some insightful discussion with the stimulus material used as a springboard; ideas were then developed in a sophisticated manner in well-crafted responses.

Weaker responses tended to provide a long introduction which lacked relevance at times. Generalised statements should be avoided; these were seen in introductions and conclusions, both of which should focus on the overall understanding of the text. Furthermore, there was evidence of rhetorical questioning without an answer provided to develop the thought. At times, relevance of content was obscured by historic or sociological consideration. Where this was sustained throughout the response, the linguistic standpoint was weakened.

Conceptualisation

Overall, a variety of linguistic approaches was discussed clearly. There was a general need for more detailed discussion. Strong responses provided examples of why the theory referenced was relevant and how it was represented in the stimulus material. Weaker responses demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of linguistic issues, concepts and approaches, with a need for more developed discussion.

Most responses introduced Kachru's approach, acknowledging how Claassen's professional position and nationality may place her in the expanding circle. Insightful responses developed the idea in discussion of how Kachru's boundaries may be subject to change as English moves through the contemporary world for different reasons and in different ways from those originally identified in the first diaspora in the 1980s.

There were clear ideas on the issue of teaching and learning English in the world, using the heading from the stimulus material *English for everyone*. There were also effective references which provided local examples of how this issue was dealt with in schools and higher education establishments. These were detailed in their development of the text's description of the European situation where English is learnt as a foreign language, and the *2013 survey ... in Beijing* outlining English teaching and learning in China. Clear ideas were presented on the continuing need for *lower level staffers to receive communications in different languages*, challenging Sodexo's language policy in terms of sociological equality and fairness.

Confident responses challenged the notion that English must be made available to *everyone*, with detailed reference to UNESCO's stages of language death and consequences on local cultures and beliefs. Most responses introduced Crystal's concept of the spread of English being due to it being the mother tongue of powerful nations, as well as Diamond's metaphor of English steamrolling its way through the world. Often, discussion of these approaches would have benefitted from fuller analysis in relation to the quotation, *'if we decided to make French the company's global language we would have had a revolt on our hands'*.

Section B

Question 2

The stimulus material for **Question 2** was an extract from a 2018 article published on the website of *Metro*, a British newspaper: *Can we have gender equality if we're still using gendered language every day?*

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text in relation to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. Specific details from the text as well as ideas and examples from their study of Language and the self were also required.

Understanding

Overall, responses demonstrated a clear level of understanding of the specific points raised in the stimulus material. These included acknowledgement of how *language is a powerful tool and we should use it to encourage inclusivity*. The article developed the idea that gender inequality may be brought about by gendered pronouns in some languages, outlining how contemporary language policies were being introduced in, for example, Sweden to reduce this linguistic issue and *male-centrism in society*.

Furthermore, there was a clear level of understanding of the wider issue that if, as the article stated, *gender is now regarded as a fluid concept* then language should maintain its own fluidity as it changes to be of most benefit to its users. There was some insightful discussion on the concept that countries where *non-gendered languages are spoken* would be *automatically* perceived as superior to those with gendered languages.

Most responses demonstrated careful selection of quotation from the stimulus material to evidence their understanding, which included how gendered professional titles were changing from the default masculine, how a *binary way of thinking* may be part of contemporary education and how *generic statements* may be used in business or professional settings. Discussion on the concept of epicene and the English singular *they* were particularly effective developments.

Some weaker responses relied on paraphrase of the stimulus material without the introduction of ideas for development which demonstrated only a limited understanding of the most important points raised and how gendered language can shape and reflect personal and social identity.

Writing

In more confident responses, discussion was cohesively paragraphed into a logical and fluent sequence of ideas. Generally, control of expression was clear or effective where an appropriate register was maintained and low frequency lexis and technical terminology was used. At times, a sophisticated level of linguistic terminology was used, increasing the register of the response and enhancing the linguistic point of view.

Some responses were limited by the inclusion of irrelevant material such as analysis of the language used in the text. At times, over-development of irrelevant material led to a loss of focus on the question and the stimulus material. In a discursive response, all ideas should be relevant to the task and developed fully.

Conceptualisation

Some candidates took the topic of gendered language into a detailed discussion of genderlect theories, such as lists of the elements from Tannen's difference model. Lakoff and O'Barr and Atkins were similarly used. Where these were listed at length, the material became irrelevant because it was not applied to the ideas contained in the stimulus material; thus, such material was not rewardable. Some insightful discussion was provided by confident candidates on how Locke's Empiricism theory made explorations of how women themselves have been suggested to use language and how language describes women.

A wide variety of theoretical approaches was referenced overall. These included Stanley's, and Timm and Turner's work on epicene, Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory, Mills' work on gender-neutral job titles, and Harding and West's Standpoint theory, all of which were made relevant to ideas presented and which were represented in the stimulus material.

Cheris Kramarae's Muted Group theory and Gingerbread Person were often referenced, as was linguistic relativism vs. determinism as outlined by Sapir and Whorf. Developed responses discussed the 'lopsided perspective' of British parliamentary language and Tajfel's work on social identity and intergroup behaviour.

Where issues, concepts and theoretical approaches are discussed it is important to demonstrate their relevance and to provide evidence of how these are represented in the text. Some limited responses mentioned the names of theorists without explanation of the relevance of the approach to the topic. In responses with no reference to the linguistic issues, concepts or approaches represented in the text, this meant there was no rewardable material at AO4. Overall, there was clear and effective referencing to relevant theoretical considerations, evidenced by sustained and cohesive discursive essay-writing.