

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12 Reading
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Key Messages

- As preparation, candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a diverse range of 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 the form, structure and language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting elements from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.
- For **Question 2** candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of a text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, and organise information 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 generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. There were some overlong responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words. While there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, this is an aspect of the response's relevance to purpose. As such, adherence to the word limit is assessed as part of the second bullet point of AO2. Candidates should remember that they are being marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, though, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. Only a few responses did not demonstrate the language skills necessary for text analysis.

Question 1(a) is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session the original text was an article. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was the opening of a speech (150–200 words). Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates are expected to write clearly and accurately, with relevant content, and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the text produced for **1(a)** with the given text, analysing form, structure and language. Here, 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 to shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ some form of 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 linguistic elements. It is important to recognise that candidates are not asked to write a reflective commentary, which is a requirement for Paper 2.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as 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 responses, 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 uses strong words' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read an article about robots in the workplace. They were required to write the opening of a speech to give to their class, expressing their opinions about the issues.

Responses to this question generally showed compassion and genuinely touching concern for grandparents. Candidates often expressed a desire to care for their grandparents with human company. These points were used for comparative analysis in **Q1(b)**.

Most of the responses showed a courtesy to the listeners that was a pleasure to read. There was generally a good understanding of speech conventions.

In effective responses, tenses were clear and consistent, lifted material did not dominate and there was a credible sense of the opening of a speech. These responses included speech conventions more obviously, such as a salutation to the audience, and some actually began very emphatically and effectively, for example with a rhetorical question. These effective responses were, in recognition that the speech was to be delivered to their class, often informal, personal and conversational whilst incorporating the details of the text. Most importantly, these responses offered their opinions (as required by the question) rather than a summary of the article.

Limited responses showed a tendency to lose the specifics of the passage and in some cases the context of the response wasn't made clear. Responses were stronger when it was made clear whether the class had or had not read the article. Some candidates attempted to offer a full speech, including a conclusion and valediction, indicating that more careful reading of the instructions was needed. Where this was the case, it was clear that candidates had limited control of content and ideas, as they tried to incorporate most of the content from the given passage within the word guidance. Furthermore, these weaker responses often showed errors with use of grammar and incorrect tenses, frequently as a result of being over ambitious with language choices. Several of these weaker responses quoted large amounts from the given text, which was rarely justified.

The need for careful reading of the question was underlined by a number of responses that did not acknowledge that they were required to write from a different perspective and also that they needed to reflect on the issues in the passage rather than introduce completely new material such as extensive information on family background or extended content on emerging technologies including virtual reality, the metaverse continuum and robotic process automation.

Getting the balance between showing understanding of the passage and crafting an effective response is key to this question and the tendency was perhaps to be a little too safe. It is important for candidates to be aware that understanding is not necessarily demonstrated by rearranging chunks of the text. Often, the most effective writing came at the end of responses when candidates freed themselves from checklisting the text.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150–200 words). Several candidates wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified, and also compromised the marks awarded for AO2.

- (b) Candidates were asked to compare their speech opening with the autobiographical extract, analysing form, structure and language.

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

Most candidates wrote effective introductory paragraphs, showing their understanding of both texts and their purpose and audience. They showed understanding of the difference in terms of the purpose of the article and the opening of a speech and elaborated on this. Almost all responses found the clear differences of first- and third-person address and recognised the formality and neutrality of the article. In addition to this, a common feature mentioned was the use of voice, personal pronouns and direct address and the distinguished differences and similarities between the two texts in terms of how this was appropriate to their purposes. Those who had clearly used the speech form effectively in **Q1(a)** had a firm basis and greater range of material on which to comment.

Limited 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 an article or a speech. Some merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without reference to effect.

Clear responses compared the two texts throughout and referred accurately to specific techniques used in both, quoting them clearly and explaining the precise effects they created. For these responses, there was little generalisation such as 'Rhetorical questions ... making them think' or 'they have used simple words so that it is easier for the reader to understand', but precise consideration of the impact of individual examples of both writers' stylistic choices upon the reader. Responses such as these often fell into a clear pattern of identifying the technique, giving the example and the subsequent effect of its use as well as highlighting the broader effect in the passage. These answers also related the tone and purpose to precise features of the writing, showing awareness that language use creates tone, rather than relying on a broad identification of tone unconnected to language use.

In detailed and sophisticated 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 typical text conventions used in the original article and the candidate's own opening of their speech and the ways in which the different purposes affected the content and style of the two texts. They also commented successfully on the ways in which the article extract and the speech opening were relevant to their respective intended audiences, e.g. through the tone and register used in each text. These responses offered an integrated comparison of these elements with their own writing.

In terms of language, these stronger responses referred to the use of details from the given text as a basis for their comparison:

- the use of references to experts in the field and citing quotations from authoritative figures e.g. *Vic Rayner, the executive director of the National Care Forum, Dr Chris Papadopoulos at the University of Bedfordshire, Dr Sanjeev Kanoria, Advinia Healthcare;*

- factual information about the robots, e.g. *hold simple conversations and learn people's interests, move independently and gesture with robotic arms and hands, costs about £19 000*;
- the lexical fields of care requirements, robotic features and support, e.g. *initiate rudimentary conversations, company, play residents' favourite music, teach them languages, and offer practical help including medicine reminders; their conversations feeling superficial and lacking 'richness'; routine care of vulnerable people to reduce anxiety and loneliness*;
- positive and reassuring language, e.g. *boosted mental health, practical help, significant improvement, deeper and high-quality relationships*;
- vocabulary indicating limitations, e.g. *rudimentary, small, feeling superficial, lacking richness, distracting*; repetition to reinforce the point, e.g. *not intended to explore the replacement of human carers, not directly lead to job cuts, not likely to replace staff, no one is talking about replacing humans, not be seen as part of a frightening futuristic vision*;
- the repeated use of facts and figures for e.g. *120 000 vacancies, 15 000 people are over 100 years of age, £2.3m research project*.

Some candidates included use of authoritative figures, factual information, and reassuring language, or, alternatively, language expressing limitations (particularly when expressing their opinions) in their directed responses. Where they had done so, they were able to comparatively analyse these stylistic choices.

The very weakest responses offered no comparison and some only focused on the given text.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read the opening of a short story published in 1952, describing the arrival of a train in an unnamed village in Africa. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

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. Language features, especially personification and onomatopoeia were well understood, as was the use of differing paragraph lengths. There was some excellent understanding of the role of the train in the passage, with interesting disagreement as to whether it was a benign or sinister presence. There was some misreading of the scene of the vendors selling to the occupants of the train, but in general a demanding passage was well understood.

Stronger responses showed awareness of the characteristic features of narrative writing. In terms of language, these responses commented on the depiction of the train – the arrival of which is vital to the local people – as extraordinary, monstrous almost, and bringing important revenue and goods. Its introduction, in one sentence, has a paragraph to itself, signifying its importance – *The train came out of the red horizon and bore down towards them over the single straight track* – and the cinematic (often referred to as 'zooming') description of the train's arrival. They explored the way in which the contrasting characters, inside and outside the train, are presented: *squatting native vendors, the stationmaster's barefoot children, skin stretched like parchment over their bones, like performing animals; the young woman curved her body farther out, Look, said the young husband, if you don't mind!, the faces on the train, How much, they asked from the train, how much?, the faces, behind glass, drinking beer, her hand commanded*. They commented on the way in which the poverty of the local people is portrayed, e.g. *Give me penny, said the little ones with nothing to sell, the garden in which nothing grew, barefoot children, skin stretched like parchment over their bones*.

Detailed responses commented on the use of lexical fields/vocabulary related to heat, the station, and the local environment, e.g. *flushed and perspiring / the tin shed marked 'Goods', little brick station, tracks, a twirl of steam/the walled kraal, the sand*.

These candidates selected an appropriate choice of imagery for analysis (similes, metaphors, personification, pathetic fallacy, although it was predominantly the more insightful responses that used accurate critical terminology) and commented on its effect on the reader, e.g. *the sand, that lapped all around, from sky to sky, cast little rhythmical cups of shadow, so that the sand became the sea, and closed over the children's black feet softly and without imprint; The train called out; The engine flared out now, big,*

whisking a dwindling body behind it; the artists sprang, walking bent, like performing animals. In particular, the use of art imagery to describe how creative and talented the locals are, was explored, e.g. *carved, majestic, Vandyke teeth*, and the description of the carved lion's roaring, so well portrayed that it comes to life.

The writer's simple but vivid use of adjectives to describe setting – e.g. *the red horizon, his little brick station with its pointed chalet roof, the flushed and perspiring west, the grey tin house* – and choice of verbs and how they shape meaning and relate to the reader – e.g. *bore down towards them, the hunk of a sheep's carcass moved slightly, dangling in a current of air; creaking, jerking, jostling, gasping, the train breathed out the smell of meat cooking with onion; The two children careered over the sand, clutching the bread* – were noted for analysis.

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', with little further elaboration or 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 some responses, there was muddling of subject terminology and identification of techniques so that similes were called metaphors, stream of consciousness was applied very loosely to the text, and imperatives were named as declaratives. The wider the critical vocabulary of the candidates, the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

Comments on form were, generally, rather limited. However, many candidates noted the audience of the text and made clear reference to what they deemed to be characteristic features of an opening to a short story (establishing a setting, inclusion of descriptive elements, introduction of character and building a plot). More detailed commentaries noted the ways in which the text appeals to its intended audience through tone and register.

Clear and detailed understanding about structure was exemplified through engagement with the way in which the extract is structured to reflect the significant experience of the train's stopping at the remote station and the intriguing introduction of a character in the penultimate paragraph, whose walking alongside the train takes the reader on a journey with him: *passed beneath the arch, past the dogs, right to the end, to the engine itself.*

Limited responses focused on basic points about the arrangement and number of paragraphs of this text. Many candidates also focused on sentence types, but, generally, this amounted to feature spotting rather than effective, critical engagement. Some of these limited responses offered over-earnest reference to the presence of short, long and complex sentences, without clear analysis.

Many candidates who wrote limited to clear level responses used subheadings, or adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the ... paragraph'; others' analysis ranged haphazardly across the text. It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured', and similar descriptors, are a feature of 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 specific characteristic features. It is worth remembering that the same point cannot be rewarded twice.

Less successful, basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered limited analysis. These weaker responses tended to summarise the contents of the text, generally at great length. Selection of evidence by way of quotation was not always expertly used in these weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at far too great a length, or merely referring to a range of lines. Some candidates referred the examiner to a line number or gave the opening two words of a quotation followed by ellipsis; similarly, a line might be quoted and then two or three features mentioned without proper specific identification of any of them from the line provided. Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments.

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. Sometimes the time spent on Section A seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in Section B or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Q1(a)** and Section B tasks. For example, in Question 4 the key instruction is to write a review of the conference.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. One error that occurred quite regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; another common error was writing in sentence fragments, such as participial phrases not linked to a main clause. Sentence demarcation is key, followed by accurate use of commas, and then the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past.
- 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 be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, as it is fundamental to the clear organisation and development of candidates' ideas.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types, to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some Section B responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and some candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger responses focused clearly on the question, with effective speeches including both advantages of doing voluntary work and suggestions of ways in which students can volunteer. Weaker responses usually did consist of speeches, but they were sometimes very general, with little or no comment on the speaker's own experiences. Candidates should avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the task; the guidance of *no more than 400 words* means candidates are being guided to provide a purposeful, succinct response.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were maintained a close focus on linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused entirely on the content of the **1(a)** response and therefore only provided minimal analysis, usually only 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 (article, story or review), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions, as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on Section B generally lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some articles in **Question 2** lacked any specific examples of museums and were disorganised; some responses to **Question 3** lacked any sense of drama or mystery; while some **Question 4** responses were simple accounts of the conference, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You recently started doing some voluntary work in your free time. Your headteacher has asked you to give a short speech to your school to encourage others to do something similar.

- (a) **Write the text for your speech, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on the advantages of doing voluntary work, and suggest ways in which students can volunteer.**

Most responses achieved the targets of writing a short speech with focus on encouraging others to take part in voluntary work, and most responses adhered to the specified form for the task. Some responses did not address the audience, apart from a brief introduction, with some reading more like magazine articles and others like simple lists of potential voluntary work.

Stronger speeches began with a sharp focus on the question, which was sustained throughout, and provided philosophical and pragmatic reasons to volunteer as well as a range of tangible and abstract advantages that can be gained from the experience. These included the development of skills such as problem solving, teamwork, communication, critical thinking, leadership, organisational and strategic; and qualities such as humility, empathy, compassion, patience, and resilience.

Stronger responses had a clear structure with apparent reasons for volunteering – such as young people becoming tired of scrolling on social media all day and parents nagging their teenagers to do something. Many candidates stressed the benefits of volunteering, making clear the benefits of volunteering for activities which they enjoyed. For example, a love of food inspired one volunteer to help in a kitchen, cooking and serving food to the homeless, therefore offering companionship to the needy whilst also providing a sense of gratitude for the volunteers' 'privileged' lives. Specific details were hallmarks of all stronger responses, for example one candidate described a homeless person's intense hunger as he 'demolished' a plate of food. The experience provided the volunteer with a sense of purpose and a genuine desire to help.

Stronger speeches addressed the audience clearly, encouraging them to help by using a range of emotive and persuasive language. Thoughtfully chosen verbs and phrases were indicative of such stronger responses, for example, 'inspires you', 'become part of a community', 'humbling experience', 'give back to society' and 'challenge yourself'. Such use of emotive language made for credible speeches.

One strong speech included successful use of pathos, including questions for the audience such as, 'What separates us from them?' and 'What makes this seventeen-year-old deserving of an air-conditioned car and prestigious school and condemns that one to selling toys under the afternoon sun?'. Phrases like, 'In a country plagued with inequality', 'the strange guilt of privilege that gnaws at our soul', and, 'that subtle shame that results from the awkward acknowledgement of our privilege,' were used to develop a sensitive and rather profound speech in response to the task.

Weaker speeches sometimes included lengthy preambles involving conversations with parents or teachers, giving little room for development of relevant and clearly focused content. The advantages of volunteering were implied, as opposed to being explicitly stated. A generalised sense of satisfaction, and the fact that volunteering looks good on college applications, were sometimes the only advantages cited. This, combined with a simplistic statement to conclude the speech, was quite typical of some of the weakest responses.

Other weaker speeches lapsed into lengthy accounts of working for an NGO, for example. A few did not really comprehend the nature of voluntary work and spoke about something closer to what we might think of as work experience with a company, for which there might even be payment made to the volunteer.

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

Most candidates started their commentaries with an introductory paragraph citing audience and purpose. Most responses showed at least some linguistic knowledge, though they were quite often limited to simple identification of linguistic features.

Stronger responses maintained a close focus on the linguistic and stylistic choices made for writing the speech, as well as making use of appropriate terminology linked to effect. These candidates identified some features in their writing, using correct linguistic terminology, then subsequently exemplified how and why they had been used to relate to the audience and achieve the intended purpose. For example, one candidate wrote: 'The second person pronoun "You" is used to be direct in addressing the audience and calling them to action. For instance, "find a cause that moves you" uses the imperative "find" and the pronoun "you" to call to action, and makes use of pathos to engage the audience emotionally as well.'

Another candidate also clearly connected the aim of using certain text features with the purpose of the text: 'The use of the phrase "frantically flipped" makes use of alliteration creating a rhythm and conveying the panic of the moment. The paragraph ends with "This year I am planning to change that." The short sentence here draws emphasis to the resolution to fix the problem.'

In some stronger responses, candidates explained vocabulary choices in detail, for example: 'There is constant urgency created in the speech. The repetition of the word "crisis," the phrases, "everything else wrong with the world" and "call to action", all create an urgency and a sense of need, acting as a persuasive technique and convincing the audience of the necessity of volunteering.'

In weaker responses, candidates did not link features to their effects, or explain their relationship to audience, meaning and purpose. There were many who mainly focused on describing or summarising the content of the speech with no relevant language or structural points being made, for example, with comments such as: 'I have focused on the advantages of doing voluntary work and in fact my majority of essay is centred around it. I provide a glimpse of my own activity and the feelings associated with it.' Others gave a commentary on the content of their speeches, without writing about linguistic choices.

Some weaker answers contained a lot of listing of figures of speech and syntactical terminology without exemplification or with incorrect examples. Some candidates threw in terms and then gave a general, often incorrect, definition of the terms. Very basic punctuation such as commas or 'hyphens' (actually dashes) were quite often listed in weaker responses as though they were features worthy of note. On some occasions, features were incorrectly labelled, such as the simple factual comparison 'I think like my mother' being labelled as a simile.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Article

In class, you have been discussing the idea that many teenagers find museums boring. You decide to write an article about this, which will be published on a museum website. In your writing, focus on what would make museums more appealing to teenagers, and how museums can benefit from more teenage visitors. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Stronger articles were structured thoughtfully, for example with well structured-opening sections exploring what a museum represents, followed by a resume of the issues facing museums as far as young people are concerned. These candidates used emotive language to emphasise the importance of 'saving' museums, for example: 'teenagers are the citizens of tomorrow', 'history may die'. Phrases such as 'cherish our history' and 'preserve our culture/heritage' demonstrated a passion for the subject though well-chosen language.

Stronger responses highlighted the importance of learning about the past to 'keep us grounded', as one candidate wrote.

One outstanding article began with the topic-focused title 'Museums: a thing of the past?' and made effective use of subtitles to create a very logically organised text. The title succinctly and successfully established what the article was going to be about, while the conclusion – subtitled, 'Conclusion: An Age for Reinvention' – provided a concise answer to the question set out at the beginning of the piece: 'Museums need to reinvent themselves, and there is no better time than now. This is an age of change and with it comes the opportunity for museums to consider how they entertain and engage visitors. If they fail to do so, museums could very well transition from teaching us about history to becoming history.'

Effective use of social media platforms was also suggested in several very good responses to this question, with Instagram and TikTok both being suggested as places for museums to post interesting facts about exciting art pieces and new exhibits. Having a stronger social media presence, as well as introducing QR codes, Artificial Intelligence and even robots were cited as ways to appeal to teenagers. One candidate suggested a wall where teenagers could write a note saying what they felt about a particular artefact or painting. Credible arguments had evidence of meaningful examples to attract teenagers, bringing the 'Instagram Age' to museums where 'the sharing of History should be fun'.

More engaging responses paid attention to form by providing clear headings with a title in the first instance. One candidate structured their response according to the current problems for teenagers but gave each problem a title in the form of an 'exhibit.' For example: 'Exhibit A: The Internet'. The concluding section of the response listed 'Solutions'.

Candidates who wrote weaker responses tended to spend too much time focusing on describing museums, a specific visit to a museum or on the reasons that teenagers find them boring, and listed some other activities which might appeal more. This meant that the focus on 'ways' to attract more teenagers and the 'benefits' to museums of doing so was somewhat lacking. Those who did find a few suggestions to make tended to run out of new ideas and to become rather repetitive.

Many weaker articles were littered with errors of all kinds, including long, rambling sentences such as in this section: 'Museums contains different and various aspects of the time. It gives you information about the wars, the people who fought it, dynasties and kingdoms that no more exist. Different types of events some joyful and some saddening.'

Question 3 – Story

Write a story which begins with the following sentence: Clara carefully opened the envelope and saw that it contained one thing only – a single photograph of a group of people. In your writing, create a sense of drama and mystery. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Quite often, candidates focused their attention on over-emphasising details regarding people in the photograph, to the extent that there was insufficient focus on a sustained narrative or a sense of completion. Many candidates opted for a scenario where one person in the photograph had a cross over their face. Not all candidates paid attention to creating a sense of drama.

Stronger stories were engaging and focused on Clara's feelings as she studied the people in the framed photograph. Events then unfolded as Clara sought to find a lost family member, journeying to Vietnam in one case, only to find an empty house with faded memories of childhood. In this story, the candidate engaged the reader with details of the long journey and the dream of Clara reunited with her father, only to find the same photograph on an empty mantelpiece: 'as she clenched it tightly to her chest, crying as the last shred of her childhood came to a close.'

One of the strongest responses involved a high-speed car chase as the narrative came to a climax, before Clara, the protagonist – a freedom fighter in a dystopian world out to avenge her sister's kidnap and murder – made her escape on a boat. This was very effectively managed by the candidate, with paragraphing being used both to speed up the pace of the writing and to mirror the action taking place, as the story, like the car being pursued, hurtled towards its conclusion: 'Her heart began beating wildly. They were after her. But then she spotted the sea. A sheet of glittering water. Hope surged within her. Ben started the motor and, pretty soon, the docks were just a hazy line on the horizon. Clara glared at it, vowing never to stop fighting until the people responsible for her sister's death were gone, and her sister avenged.'

Another successful response was entitled 'Mountain out of a Molehill?' The mystery at the heart of the story was Clara's discovery that her mother had secretly joined a band and was playing in local clubs and bars. This was an entertaining story which began in a suitably dramatic and mysterious way, with Clara encountering an unfamiliar man outside of her house one day, before coming to a rather humorous and comical conclusion: 'Barely daring to breathe, she walked in. Her eyes took some time to adjust to the dim light cast by candles only. A group of people sat on benches, swaying to the jaunty tunes coming from the blue stage. Her eyes strayed to the stage. She almost uttered a scream as she saw the sinister man looking not so sinister and playing a riff on the guitar. Suddenly, a very familiar voice filled the room, lilting and melodious. Clara ran forward to witness her mom singing ...'.

Some weaker stories did not begin with the sentence provided. This generally meant that the narrative got off to an unfocused start and drifted further away from the mystery/drama focus of the question as it progressed. Many of the weakest stories drifted into horror/murder mystery genre; these usually featured poor plot management, an absurd sequence of events, and little sense of trying to make the story engaging for an audience.

Some candidates tried to write almost too vividly and produced the unintended effect of weakening the overall impression of the piece. In one such example, the candidate wrote: 'The candlelight flickered by the frivolous wind, making the eerie, long, dark tree branches come to life. The stunning girl that is Clara stood close by, silent like a monk, still as a statue, observing the low moon that hung in the bright sky, illuminating the meadow by basking the cherry blossoms in silvery glow.' Other weaker responses contained frequent errors of all kinds which got in the way of the narrative, as in this example: 'It tuded her heart at the sight of them both together close apporimate. There hands entagled together. Thoguh the only thing is she couldn't remember who he was. The man looked handsome and that will never go unseen. The sharp yet soft features in his face.'

Question 4 – Review

You recently attended an international youth conference on how to make the world a better place. You decide to write a review of the conference, which you will post on your blog. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many candidates offered praise for the conference, choosing The United Nations as the popular setting for serious debates on issues such as world hunger, climate change, animal welfare, rainforest conservation, and violence against women and girls. In stronger responses, candidates noted the word 'blog' and adopted an informal register whilst clearly addressing audience through the opening section of the response, and at various relevant points. The successful integration of pronouns (second person and first-person plural) together with uplifting, positive language in phrases such as 'a fantastic experience', 'refreshing', 'sharing common goals' all made for credible responses that highlighted and explored controversial and worrying global issues with solutions.

Stronger responses showed clear understanding of the form, style, and purpose of a blog, with some of the strongest demonstrating the sense of an established blog for a familiar audience, with a convincing voice. The sense of the blog forming part of a series of blog posts was another feature that marked out some of the best work for this question.

One strong response was from a candidate who used content and tone to positive effect right from the very start of their writing: 'Welcome (or welcome back) to my blog! I hope you enjoyed reading my previous blog about my trip to Italy. If you did, don't forget to comment and share!' This had the effect of the writer writing for a well-established blog with a familiar audience. Subheadings were also used to very good effect to structure the text and organise the content logically for the reader. Each section of the review was concluded with a numerical score rating to lend a sense of authenticity to the work, (Service 10/10; Sessions 4/10; Food 7/10; Objectives 7/10), with a final, overall score being given at the end of the review.

A similar approach was taken in another stronger response, which also began by addressing an obviously familiar audience and conveying the sense of an established and authentic blog: 'Greetings my lovely readers! Today's post is an exciting one.' As was the case for several good responses to this question, the review was appropriately critical and evaluative in its style, with the positive aspects of the conference being outlined, as well as one or two of the not so positive details.

A common oversight observed in weaker work was overlooking the need to review the event, instead giving guidance/advice on how to make the world a better place, for example: 'On the topic of how to make the world a better place we can start by being more open minded. This can be done in many ways such as ...'.

Other weaker responses were almost wholly recount in nature with perhaps a cursory nod to the review form/purpose in the penultimate or final paragraph of the response. Some weaker responses lost focus on – or showed little understanding of – the main issues under discussion and became mired in complaints about comparatively minor problems with practical arrangements.

Many weaker reviews were littered with errors of all kinds, such as in this opening section: 'The conference was held in the grand location of the Dubai, which we all are heard off "Burj Khalifa" the tallest and most renowned pieces of building architecture in the world.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32 Language Analysis
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Key messages

Paper 3 of syllabus 9093 is divided into two sections: **Section A** contains compulsory **Question 1** and **Section B** contains compulsory **Question 2**. Although each of the questions carries 25 marks – giving a total of 50 marks for the paper – the questions are marked by applying assessment objectives which differ in their weightings. This means that **Question 1** is marked by applying AO2 (5 Marks), AO4 (5 marks) and AO5 (15 marks), whereas **Question 2** is marked by applying AO1 (5 marks), AO4 (15 marks) and AO5 (5 marks).

Overall, in March 2023 it was clear that most candidates had observed the different weightings of the assessment objectives and had crafted their responses accordingly, thereby allowing themselves to achieve their potential by demonstrating understanding of text, writing skills, knowledge and understanding of linguistic concepts, models and approaches, and handling of linguistic data.

General comments

In March 2023, candidates generally engaged well with the stimulus material presented in both sections, although there was some evidence that weaker responses to **Question 2** in **Section B** were written rather hurriedly, indicating perhaps that those candidates had not divided the examination time equally between the sections.

In this series, essay plans had been kept brief and meaningful. Analytical skills were generally clear, with some development required in weaker responses. Ideas tended to move through a logical sequence of paragraphs, which indicated clear organisation of the analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Candidates were required 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. The three texts presented drew a strong level of engagement in most responses. The question required analysis of all three texts, and a very small number of candidates did not observe this requirement. This meant that their responses could not move through the higher levels of the mark scheme – even where the response had shown clear or effective analysis of only Text A together with either Text B or C.

Writing

Most responses demonstrated clear control of expression and were written in an appropriate register, as relevant to the analytical task. Assessment objective 2 does not only award for expression, however. The mark scheme also awards for relevance of content and development of ideas; in March 2023 development was not always full, which led to more of a listing effect than well-crafted analysis.

Weaker responses tended to analyse the texts as standalone items rather than to provide cohesive commentary. Although the main requirement of **Question 1** is to *analyse how Text A exemplifies the various ways in which the English language has changed over time*, it is important to support the analysis with reference to Texts B and C. In responses which had analysed the texts separately, there was often only basic or minimal commentary on Texts B and C, which detracted substantially from the overall analysis.

Some candidates had opened their response to **Question 1** with extended reference to the history of the English language instead of addressing the stimulus material. In some cases, this led to irrelevant material which was not rewardable. A more fruitful approach had been taken in stronger responses, which was to begin analysis immediately, using a series of linguistic frameworks selected from lexis, grammar, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, graphology or orthography, as appropriate to the point being made. Where this latter approach had been taken, it was felt that there was an increase in the use of technical descriptors which added to the linguistic standpoint of the analysis.

Conceptualisation

Text A comprised extracts from the women's clothing section of an international fashion retailer's website in 2020 and therefore provided a springboard for reference to how technological change had affected the English language over time. Generally, responses cited Crystal, although McCulloch would also have been appropriate. References to Caxton's printing press or historical methods of block printing were of limited value when not contrasted with ways in which language was presented in Text A. Other concepts, methods or approaches which were not always relevant to the analysis included those of Shakespeare, Johnson or Jespersen.

However, there was a clear understanding of the nature of linguistic prescriptivism and descriptivism, although references could have been made more specific by citing a relevant theorist. There was also mainly limited to clear understanding of Halliday's theory on lexical gaps and Chen's S-Curve; random fluctuation and cultural transmission were often seen as incomplete reference. Other concepts which were known and understood were narrowing and broadening, coinage, compounding and neologism. Despite Text C's inclusion of *all-rounder* in contrast to Text A's *allrounder*, not all responses explored the concept of compounding even though Text A had presented *white-T-under-black-jumpsuit*, *best-fitting* and *YouTube-fitness-star* as examples of contemporary experimental hyphenation.

The most effective conceptualisation seen in March 2023 involved application of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, where responses analysed carefully selected items and described how ideational, interpersonal and textual functions were driving the field, tenor and mode of the stimulus material.

Data handling

Weaker responses tended to take a deficit approach by discussing what was not present in the stimulus material, for example the medial *s*, archaic inflected endings or continuous use of semicolon in place of sentence demarcation. Furthermore, there was a tendency in such responses to describe the sentences in Text A as 'short and snappy' whereas in fact there were many instances of complex or compound sentences which may not have been expected in a contemporary text.

Most responses demonstrated clear understanding of the collocates table in Text B, with some insightful analysis of how *squad* in Text A identified a group of friends as being like a 'social team', one such response suggesting that feminism has allowed women to adopt a term which would once have been used only in reference to groups of men, in a form of empowerment.

Lexical analysis included *gorge*, *pro-fesh*, *sesh*, *athleisure*, *pinging* and *bling* among many other items from Text A. The paralinguistic **Yawns** was also a popular item for consideration. Grammatical analysis did not always include the anticipated consideration of juxtaposition of sentence length, including the elliptical construction *Feeling bold?* followed by the command *Channel positive vibes in a floral jumpsuit*. However, most responses included analysis to some extent of the tenor of Text A and the various ways in which it strove to reach its contemporary, younger female target audience.

Weaker responses tended to include longer sections of graphological analysis which included the use of hyperlink, emboldened headings and discrete paragraphing, although these items could have been seen as of minor importance when compared to the analysis of pragmatics which was evidenced, seen in more detailed responses.

Section B

Question 2

The data source in **Question 2** was a transcription of a conversation between James (age 4 years) and his mother. The interlocutors were at home, playing with toy houses and characters. Candidates were required to analyse ways in which James and his mother were using language in the conversation and to refer to specific details from the transcription, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

Overall, responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription, although there were comments in basic or minimal responses that James and his mother had omitted punctuation in their utterances. On the other hand, there was much evidence of clear understanding of the content of the transcription and the characteristic features it contained. Of note, however, is that some weaker candidates misidentified James' relaxed affirmative *yeah* when answering his mother's closed questions as backchannelling.

Weaker responses evidenced that candidates had not always referred to the appended IPA chart in order to decipher James' /stjə/, with some using it to misidentify 'babbling'. More confident responses demonstrated a phonological understanding of how James was eventually able to differentiate between sounds at the beginning of words, possibly in preparation for school.

Other characteristic features which were identified included James using turn taking competently to produce fulfilled adjacency pairs, with exchanges initiated by the mother, his use of pronoun, negation, intonation and stress, and the ability to use a range of sentence constructions.

Conceptualisation

Weaker candidates used James' age (4 years) as the only means of identifying his stage of language acquisition instead of analysing his utterances. Those who made more of an exploration correctly stated that he had reached the post-telegraphic stage and gave reasons for their opinion using evidence from the transcription. Moreover, whilst most responses making reference to Piaget identified James as being at the pre-operational stage, more confident candidates analysed utterances such as *they dont actually open* to position him as possibly progressing into Piaget's concrete operational stage.

Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of Halliday's functions of language. Those seen in the transcription included representational (*theres some in the drawers*), imaginative (*im going to be bob*), personal (*the milk in my house is really good*) and interactional (*you can come to my house if you want*).

The mother's use of child-directed speech was recognised in most responses by the way in which the mother supported James with positive reinforcement in *good boy*. Developed responses identified the mother's Brunerian approach as she scaffolded with *whats at the beginning* and then led him into Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development as he uttered the phoneme /s/ as the correct answer.

Overall in March 2023, only a limited number of theories and theorists were applied to points made, although there was evidence in the transcription which could have indicated a broader range of linguistic concepts, models and approaches. For example, Bellugi's stages of pronoun or negation acquisition, Dore's functions or Aitchison's labelling and packaging may all have been appropriate.

Data handling

Some responses to **Question 2** were rather brief which, meant that the analysis was limited. Basic responses had listed only features which could be identified by using the key included at the foot of the transcription without any further analytical commentary. Most responses included at least a clear, careful selection of data from the transcription, although there was a tendency in limited responses only to describe the features or utterances without providing the evidence for points made.

James' use of adverbs *actually* and *seriously* were of particular note in the transcription, but were not analysed in most responses. Also of note in James' utterances was his competence in using a variety of sentence structures, which included the complex *you can come to my house if you want*.

Those responses which analysed James' use of a variety of pronouns (*my* (possessive singular) and the plural in *we can pretend*) maintained a linguistic standpoint using technical terminology. James' level of confidence drew some effective commentary in terms of his ability to use stress for specific effects as in his *it has stuart's name on here*, which was then immediately followed by his use of contrast in *and it has bobs name on here*.

Fewer of the mother's utterances were analysed, although they could have been seen as being of equal importance in the conversation. Of particular note was the way in which she propelled the drama of their playing forward using her own imagination, in, for example, *can i bring my boomerang?*, allowing for the role reversal confirmed by James' *yep if you want*.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 42 of syllabus 9093 requires candidates to demonstrate their skills and techniques in discursive essay writing by presenting two sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to stimulus material presented in the question paper. Discursive essays should build on ideas contained in the texts provided and contain evidence of knowledge and understanding obtained by wider study of the language topics and relevant linguistic issues, methods, models and approaches.

The question paper is structured into two sections, each of which contains one compulsory question. Fifty marks are available overall: 25 marks are available in each section. **Section A** contains **Question 1** which addresses the topic *English in the world*. **Section B** contains **Question 2** and addresses the topic *Language and the self*. Responses are assessed by three assessment objectives: Understanding (AO1 – 10 marks); Writing (AO2 – 5 marks), and Conceptualisation (10 marks). Candidates should be aware of the demands of each assessment objective and their weightings in order to craft cohesive, sustained responses.

In general, in March 2023, responses across the two compulsory sections were well-balanced in terms of development indicating that candidates had divided their examination time equally in order to demonstrate their confidence in both language topics.

In recent series, some candidates have attempted unnecessary analysis of the language presented in the stimulus material. This is not required by Paper 42 and provision of such analysis is not rewardable under any of the assessment objectives. In March 2023, however, there was only minimal evidence of such an approach.

General comments

The stimulus material presented in both sections provided focus on very specific contexts. These were found to be engaging and meaningful to most candidates. At times, less successful responses provided a generalised approach whereas clear, effective and occasionally insightful responses evidenced a technical, linguistic standpoint.

The different weightings of the assessment objectives had generally been taken into account and most responses demonstrated a clear and cohesive balance of development of ideas contained in the stimulus material with support from theoretical examples. Nonetheless, there were some missed opportunities which included the potential for a greater selection of ideas from the texts provided and an indication of deeper knowledge and understanding of the theories which had been referenced.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Understanding

In March 2023, the source text provided for **Question 1** was an article from *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, which had been published in 2020. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the present and future status of English in an international

context. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Overall, responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the linguistic issues put forward in the article, making clear reference to points made in the text. These included the ways in which English is constantly evolving globally, the prevalence in many countries of localised forms such as *wasei-eigo* in Japan, the benefits and drawbacks of machine translation software including confusion caused by mistranslation such as in the example *sumai* and *sumanai*, how *poor punctuation* can lead to *national embarrassment*, and the impact of *mangled English* on the Japanese need for *official English to be decent and presentable to the rest of the world*.

Basic or limited responses tended to discuss the concept of language change or the origins of English in generalised terms instead of retaining specific focus on the present and future status of English in an international context. Furthermore, there were some isolated incidences of candidates replicating the text and presenting it by altering the order in which the paragraphs appeared in the question paper. That approach is not rewardable. However, clear or detailed essays made a careful selection of ideas from the text as a springboard for their own views on the current status of English and the ways in which it may evolve over time throughout the world.

Writing

Although most responses demonstrated clear to effective control of expression, there was a pattern in more limited essays to introduce the response with a paragraph of generalised knowledge of the topic of *English in the world*. This was sometimes, but not always, relevant to the context provided, nor was it always relevant to the points made in the main body of the essay. Furthermore, a pattern of rhetorical questioning was seen at times: this writing approach is not generally appropriate in discursive work as the questioning interrupts the register and fluency of the writing. Candidates need to be aware that if this approach is used, an answer which fulfils development of the idea should be provided by themselves.

Responses to questions in Paper 42 should evidence ease of use of a wide range of technical terminology. In detailed and effective responses to Question 1 this was demonstrated, although even in otherwise clear responses there was a tendency to generalisation which led to a reduced linguistic standpoint. Overall, however, there was clear control of expression and ideas moved through a logically sequenced framework.

Candidates should be aware that AO2 also assesses the level of development and the relevance of the discussion. In some responses an effective or sophisticated level of expression was seen but points were only developed in a limited manner or reference was made to items of only minor relevance – thus marks could not be awarded across the full range offered by AO2.

Conceptualisation

The opposing concepts of prescriptivism and descriptivism were widely discussed in relation to potentially dangerous or humorous results of mistranslation. Such discussion was not connected to a particular theorist, however, Honey, Crystal, Aitchison or Trudgill may have been useful. Similar treatment of the concept of linguistic imperialism was also seen, where detail from Phillipson would have provided fuller reference.

On the other hand, Kachru's concentric circles model was usually detailed although, at times, reference was limited by long explanations of how the model was originally constructed. More effective responses scrutinised Japan's position within the model and explored how that may change if Japan were to succeed in satisfying its need for its *official English to be decent and presentable to the rest of the world*.

It was clear that in a number of responses, there was some underlying knowledge of contemporary Japanese culture in terms of anime, for example, which led to fruitful conceptualisation at times. This was complemented by reference to technological developments in popular culture activities such as gaming which include *kanji* as part of their visual presentations.

The text's description of *wasei-eigo* was developed in most responses with reference to hybridisation examples which included Chinglish, Singlish and Hinglish. The differences between the concepts of pidgin, creole, hybridisation and standardised new variety were not always illustrated well, however.

Overall, discussion of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches was generally clear although not detailed. Not all theoretical reference was relevant. Effective responses will always provide examples of how and why a particular linguistic theory is significant. As such, in March 2023 conceptualisation revealed a generally broad knowledge base rather than deep understanding of issues and approaches.

Section B

Question 2

Understanding

The stimulus material for **Question 2** comprised two accessible and stimulating texts: Text A was the opening of an article published on the Psychology Today website in 2020; Text B was an extract from an article published in 2020 on Insider.com, an online magazine. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the texts relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. They were further required to refer to specific details from the texts as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of the topic Language and the self.

Discussion of specific points from the texts included how teenage talk is a key pathway to personal and social linguistic development because the teenage years are when *our linguistic preferences and patterns get set*, how *our linguistic style ... carries the message of who we are* and how *our identities are referenced and reinforced by the linguistic choices we make*, how slang, used particularly in a teenage speech community, is employed to create personal or social identity, the notion that teenagers are *linguistic trendsetters* and how as such *new forms of language will eventually become the norms for the wider community*.

In response to **Question 2**, there was a considerable dependence on generalised discussion with only limited reference to the specific points made by the stimulus material in weaker responses. However, those responses which maintained focus on the context provided had made a careful selection of succinct quotations to support the discussion.

Writing

There was a pattern in basic or limited responses to paraphrase the texts provided, therefore, the required level of discussion was not seen. Maintaining focus on the context is different from simple paraphrase. If understanding of the ideas presented in the stimulus material is not clear, this will limit responses.

Furthermore, in some less successful responses, there was a tendency to over-develop material which was not fully relevant. This approach led to a loss of focus on the specific topic of *the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity*.

There was occasional analysis of the writing of Text A which included the writer's perceived bias or intention, language choices and target audience, none of which was required by the question. Nonetheless, responses demonstrated clear control of expression overall with clear paragraphing which framed generally fluent sequences of ideas. Those responses which maintained accurate use of linguistic terminology and an elevated register were seen to be effective or sophisticated.

Conceptualisation

Most responses discussed the descriptivist view that *what comes out of the mouths of teens is not linguistic revolution but instead its evolution* and the alternative, prescriptivist, view with its *notions of correct or incorrect speech*. These ideas contained in the text were developed by demonstrating relevant knowledge and understanding of the concept of code switching and Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was widely known but not always detailed in relation to the stimulus material. Linguistic determinism, reflectionism or relativism were applied in varying levels of effectiveness. However, the main conceptual focus was on the use of slang with some appropriate development into the construction, purpose and use of cryptolect. Genderlect was also explored, as was African American Vernacular English - both in response to Text A's *Whether we are male or female, black or white, band or jock, hipster or nerd*. At times, however, there was a long description of Tannen's Difference approach which ran the risk of becoming irrelevant material. Candidates should be aware that to prove relevance, theoretical examples should be tied to an argument as a demonstration of the skills and techniques required in discursive writing.

Although in clear responses a range of relevant theoretical approaches was applied, depth of knowledge and understanding was not always evidenced, often leaving the essay not as fully referenced as it could have

been. Behaviourism, Nativism and Innatism were known, to some extent, but not well detailed, as was Orwell's 'Newspeak'. Minor reference to Shakespeare was not always relevant to the discussion.