

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11 Reading
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Key messages

- 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, and 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 the 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, 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 selected texts for this paper offered different genre, style and context. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were some brief 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 candidates did not demonstrate the language skills necessary for text analysis. This session, only a few candidates seemed to struggle to manage their time appropriately, consequently not managing to complete their last response.

Specific language features were generally well understood. Candidates must ensure that the features they identify are genuinely present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Most candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage. There was also attention to the effects of punctuation, especially dashes and commas.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience –

in this session the original text was an extract from a book written by the gardener and writer, Monty Don. 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 text for a section of a leaflet offering advice to travellers from the West about going on a garden tour of Japan. 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 analysis of linguistic elements. Some candidates compared the given text for **Question 1** with that given for **Question 2**, generally writing their comparative commentary after writing their directed response. These candidates could not be credited with responding to the **Question 1(b)** text analysis task.

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 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' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read an extract from a book called *Japanese Gardens* by the gardener and writer, Monty Don. They were then required, assuming they worked for a travel agency in Japan, to write the text for a section of a leaflet offering advice to travellers from the West who are about to go on a garden tour of Japan.

Candidates employed characteristic features and conventions of a leaflet including a heading and subheadings and bullet points or lists, whilst outlining the purpose of their pieces to provide guidelines, tips, advice, dos and do nots to Westerners travelling to Japan for a garden tour. Only a few candidates wrote the response in columns, and a very few candidates drew rectangles or squares for images and gave captions; such layout features are not necessary for this exam. Most responses showed clear understanding of the text.

The most successful responses included reworked material from the source text to provide key advice for Western tourists: the importance of keeping an open mind; the importance of arriving on time; the importance of observing the strict rules of each garden; the importance of respecting cultural differences. Candidates used cultural differences as a springboard for more advanced exploration such as the concepts of respect and social etiquette and the importance of having a great time. They focused on the differences between Western gardens and those of Japan. They, generally, organised their responses in relation to the three garden types located in the source text (Rikugi-en, Zen and Tea) and offered the above advice accordingly. They were also confident in using literary features such as alliteration, imagery, and a range of linguistic and rhetorical devices. There were some beautiful descriptions of gardens and how they can delight the soul, for example, 'heavenly delight', 'journey of divine fragrance' and 'majestic flowers of beauty'.

Some candidates created textual cohesion in their leaflet sections by employing ordinal adverbs to enumerate their advice. Several candidates created a travel agency name and wrote explicitly from that point of view. This was addressed in their comparisons. Thus, candidates identified the primary purpose of their pieces – to advise – and their secondary purpose – to sell garden tours to Japan –

thereby demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the genre requirement and implied question focus too.

Some weaker responses made errors in the use of modals. Instead of advising, those responses suggested possibility or ability by the use incorrect modal verbs such as 'can' or 'could'. Some of these weaker responses employed a warning tone, rather than advisory or persuasive, by mentioning the consequences of violating rules in Japanese gardens. Those responses clearly dissuaded the audience rather than advising or encouraging them to sign up for the garden tour of Japan. Dwelling too much on punctuality was often a feature which dominated some of these responses, to the detriment of offering a full understanding of helpful advice on what to expect from a Japanese garden

The weakest responses were in longer pieces and gave a general response about viewing gardens in a foreign country. For instance, in one directed response, the word 'Japan' was omitted. Several of these weaker responses offered a summary of the extract, drifted from the focus of the question and original text or quoted large amounts from the original text in their Directed Response, which was rarely justified.

Getting the balance between showing understanding of the text and crafting an effective response is the 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 shorter pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b)** Candidates were asked to compare their leaflet with the extract from the book, 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 writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to have a more robust response in terms of their analysis.

Generally, stronger responses included appropriate and accurate critical terminology to link evidence and explanatory comments on the effects created by the writers of the original passage and directed response. For example, the candidates identified the impact of the different forms of past tense on the audience for the original passage, compared with the impact of present tense on the audience for their directed responses. They also included lexis of comparison such as 'similarly', 'likewise', 'contrastingly', 'whereas' to create coherence and unity in their response. Some candidates commented on the difference in the structure of both texts: chronological versus categorical. They also commented effectively on the lack of title for the extract and the presence of title and subheadings in the leaflet. Lexical field to suggest the difference in the writers' attitude was also focused on effectively by these candidates. For example, the use of positive connotating words in the leaflet was compared with the use of negative connotative words in the book extract. These stronger responses showed a clear distinction between a leaflet and its conventions and the conventions of Don's writing (which was generally identified as a memoir or informative writing); these responses regarded the extract and their own leaflet as of equal status and commented on both extensively. Such responses also offered a considerable amount of detail to illustrate points, showing a strong grasp of each feature and detail selected, and how each related to audience and shaped meaning. More successful responses did not take a reflective commentary approach when analysing their own writing, which is a requirement of Paper 2.

Comparative points in limited responses were often straightforward with little attempt to provide evidence from each text or to analyse the features identified. These responses were often brief, focused more on the extract, and occasionally entirely, than on their own directed response, and

tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, showing little awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of writing associated with the genres and merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. Some of these responses misidentified linguistic features. For example, points of view were misidentified (first, second, and third person) and *argy-bargy* was mentioned as an example of neologism. Weaker responses often focused on a comparison of content and neglected language analysis.

Specifically, in respect of **form** in detailed and clear responses, candidates compared the ways in which the conventions of the extract from *Japanese Gardens* and leaflet writing were adhered to in the texts. They compared the purpose of each text: to inform and/or entertain; to advise and/or inform. In addition, detailed responses addressed the implicitly advisory nature of Monty Don's text, given that he is a professional horticulturist and writer.

Many candidates compared the audience of each piece, noting that Monty Don's book is targeted at a broad but, mostly, Western audience (inferred by *in Japan your Western head ...*), whilst their pieces, which were also targeted at a Western audience, were more specifically directed at tourists. Candidates compared how each text addressed its audience. They noted that Monty Don employs first, second and third person (though very few commented on Monty Don's colloquial use of second person) whilst they generally employed second but, often, also first and third. Candidates compared the register of each piece, noting both the formality and the informality of Monty Don's extract; in particular his use of colloquialism and idiomatic language: *gardens are not intended for casual mooching; off piste is not an option; stony-faced reception committee*. Candidates referred to their own pieces as comparatively formal, given that they were writing on behalf of a travel agency, offering professional advice.

In respect of **structure**, many responses were limited in that they simply itemised the paragraphs in each piece and discussed their lengths – often, at length. Such responses also discussed long and short sentences in a limited manner. There were a few detailed responses. These attempted to compare types of sentences and their impact; in particular, they compared their own use of simple sentences to create impact with Monty Don's: *(g)oin' off piste is not an option* and *(i)t was a cultural chasm*. Such responses were also clear about how their responses were structured, employing headings and subtitles, compared to Monty Don's use of preamble, personal anecdote and concluding remarks. They were also clear that the chronological features that Monty Don provided in paragraph four of his extract served to provide anecdotal evidence about the importance of time keeping in Japan.

For comments on **language**, candidates considered number, person and tense, comparing Monty Don's switches from past to present tense to their own use of tense. Detailed/clear comparisons were made about colloquial language: *argy-bargy* in one, *(l)et's dive in* in another, for example. They compared Monty Don's use of listing, for example, *the place, plant, view* with their own examples of listing; in particular, where listing had been employed as a structural feature. They compared the uses of idiom, hyperbole, tricolon and repetition. Finally, they compared the tone and register of each piece, commenting on Monty Don's mixture of formal and informal register and his reflective humorous tone. They generally referred to the register of their own pieces as formal, given the purpose. Tone was referred to in a number of ways: serious, matter of fact, cautionary, advisory, friendly.

Candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of reading and especially analysis, analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally but also how specific effects are created that relate to audience and shaping of meaning. Furthermore, candidates' responses would benefit from clear references to the relevant text; this is particularly important when following a topical approach.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an extract from the novel *The Woman in Black*. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

Most of the responses began with the overview of the purpose and audience and commented on the descriptive nature of the excerpt.

There were many detailed and clear responses about the conventions of the **form**. Several candidates identified the extract as an example of Gothic fiction. For one candidate, the Gothic genre 'is designed to unsettle readers' and since it is Gothic 'the reader will already know that things are not what they seem'. Many more, without identifying the specific genre, provided detailed and clear commentaries about the conventions employed. Thus, candidates identified the writer's purpose: to entertain. They noted that this is exemplified in the ways that the writer takes readers on the protagonist's 'adventurous' journey in November (with 'its connotations of bleakness and finality') to the 'mysterious' Eel Marsh House, creating an ominous atmosphere of 'intrigue and tension throughout'. It was noted that 'the reader has to find out context clues'.

Several candidates commented on the title. For one candidate, it 'intrigues because it is foreshadowing what is to come'; the connotation of darkness both in the title and in the name of the house with its reference to 'dark eels' hinted at 'doom'. Further, the Gothic convention of death could 'prove to be the end of the narrator'. Candidates noted that the *Woman in Black* is both 'a mystery to the protagonist and to the reader'. She remains 'a dark, shadowy figure' throughout the text, in spite of the fact that 'the readers' expectations about her identity are, initially, raised'. She is associated with 'darkness and death' and the 'landscape has a ghostly presence', noted by candidates in the writer's personification of the 'beautiful but malevolent', 'silent, still and shining' marshes. For one candidate, the landscape and Eel Marsh house constituted a 'terrible beauty'.

Several responses commented that the mystery continues for the reader in that the identity of the protagonist is not revealed and neither is the reason for the protagonist's journey. As one candidate put it, 'the reader is completely clueless' about why the protagonist should need to go to Eel Marsh House, given that it is hyperbolically situated 'at the very edge of the world'. For another, the 'lacunae' of the narrative 'hints that there will be unexpected discoveries that the character does not yet realise'. Several candidates commented on the 'hybrid' features of this text. With its opening, *Today, all was bright and clear*, together with the protagonist's recollections of the events of a single day, the extract 'is reminiscent of a diary' or 'memoir'.

In respect of **structure**, whilst many candidates simply stated the chronological nature of the text, many more candidates engaged effectively and clearly with its linear sequencing and its variety of paragraphs and sentence structures. The progression of the day was noted: *the sky having lost the bright blue of the morning, to become almost silver*. The changing landscape and terrain was noted: *the absolutely flat countryside ... gave way to rough grass and dykes and ditches*. The distance travelled was noted – *perhaps three miles* – in a pony cart. Shifts in both tone and mood were noted, as was the dramatic, simple sentence, following lengthy paragraphs of complex and compound complex sentences, signalling the abrupt arrival at the protagonist's destination: *We had arrived at Eel Marsh House*. Several candidates commented on the narrator's 'zoom in' and 'zoom out' lenses. For one candidate, the 'lavishly described setting' makes for 'slow progression' of the story. For many candidates, the narrative arc of the plot was identified through the rising tension of the extract and the climactic arrival at Eel Marsh House. For several candidates, the climax was inconclusive because the extract ended on a cliffhanger, deliberately, leaving the reader in suspense.

In respect of features of **language**, most candidates commented on the first-person narrative voice. For one candidate, the writer's intentions were 'to play with the heartstrings of the reader'. For another, the writer's employment of first person was to enable the reader to 'perceive the surroundings through the character's senses making the reader feel personally connected to the character and the story'. Thus, sensory imagery was discussed, in the first instance, in terms of the visual imagery and the writer's use of colour and tricolon. Candidates commented on the vivid but fading light of the sky with its references to *blue*, *silver* and *pinkish tinge*. Candidates commented on the writer's juxtaposition of *gloominess and wonder: the hedgerows were dark and twiggy and low*, yet, upon seeing *the waters of the estuary*, the protagonist's *head reeled at the startling beauty* For one candidate, such 'perfection' provided 'a false sense of security'; something 'foreshadowed in the title might take place'.

The ominous and eerie tone that was detected in the first paragraph was 'heightened', for writers of many stronger responses, both by the writer's shift to auditory imagery and the writer's shift in the auditory imagery itself. The dynamic and onomatopoeic verbs of the *the trotting* and the *rumble* and *the creak of the cart* give way to the sibilant *silence save for a hissing, silky sort of sound*. For one candidate, the change to hissing 'gives a sense of a dangerous animal' and suggests that 'the character is not safe'. For another, the writer's use of sibilance is 'reminiscent of a snake' which has 'mythological connotations of being untrustworthy'. This creates 'a similar sense of distrust regarding the *beauty* that has enraptured' the protagonist. Other auditory imagery that intensified the tension and 'the reader's unease' for candidates included the dissonant *cries from birds*, the alliterative *bleached bone-pale* and the symbolic *rattle dryly* of the reeds – reminiscent, again, of a snake. Tactile imagery was also commented on by these candidates and this was, generally, linked to the feelings of emptiness, isolation, loneliness and dread that they detected, in spite of the mystery surrounding the writer's use of first-person plural (*the smart noise we had been making ceased*). Thus, the

country was *absolutely flat*; the hedgerows were ... *twiggy*; the grass was *rough*; the sand was *rippling*; the gravel was *rough scraping*.

In addition to sensory imagery, most candidates commented on the writer's use of simile and metaphor. One candidate noted that the writer's use of figurative language involved comparisons with recognisable, concrete nouns 'taken from everyday life' – *the water gleamed like metal* suggested 'coldness and austerity and an uneasy atmosphere'. *(E)verything shone and glistened like the surface of a mirror* suggested a 'majestic and fantastical setting'. Another stronger response commented on how the writer invested the marshes with pathetic fallacy: '*they lay silent, still and shining* as though lying in wait'. This ominous tone together with the *harsh, weird cries from birds* and the ever-present threat of being swallowed up by *the tide*, given that the *Nine Lives Causeway* could *quickly be quite submerged*, posed a 'potential threat to the protagonist's well-being', as one candidate put it. Candidates also commented on the writer's use of tricolon and simile in the writer's description of *Eel March House*. For one candidate, 'the house's presence in the wide expanse of marsh seems unnatural and raises question about why it is there'. This heightens the tension and creates 'an air of confused mystery'. Two candidates detected irony in the protagonist's description of the house as *handsome*, given that it is *surrounded by treacherous marshland*.

Finally, several candidates commented on the formality of the register, noting that the word order, for example, *I saw scarcely a tree ...*, seems 'archaic'. This, together with the protagonist's reference to a *martello tower* suggested that the narrative was set in Britain at an earlier time.

The implications of the title were ignored in weaker responses, which focused only on the descriptive details of the passage. These 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 'to paint a picture'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology to access the higher levels. These weaker responses listed techniques with no reference or example given or explanation.

Weaker responses did not recognise that the extract was a piece of fiction and there were instances where the candidates wrote as though the extract was from a travelogue. These responses demonstrated lack of understanding of the genre of horror, and this affected the analysis as it proved difficult to reconcile language choices with an inappropriate understanding of purpose.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered minimal 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. Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments. Candidates should be advised to: use quotations, evidence and evaluation to produce precise, meaningful commentaries; use appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments; and integrate quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument.

It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' is 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 repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point cannot be rewarded twice.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12 Reading
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Key messages

- 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, and 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 the 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, 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 selected texts for this paper offered different genre, style and context. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were some brief 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 candidates did not demonstrate the language skills necessary for text analysis. This session, only a few candidates seemed to struggle to manage their time appropriately, consequently not managing to complete their last response.

There were some strikingly perceptive and well-written text analytical responses. However, a few text analysis responses were inhibited where candidates did not demonstrate the necessary knowledge of critical terminologies.

Specific language features were generally well understood. Candidates must ensure that the features they identify are genuinely present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Most candidates clearly understood the

need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session the original text was an article published in a newspaper. 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 an email to the editor of the newspaper, in response to the article. 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 analysis of linguistic elements. Some candidates compared the given text for **Question 1** with that given for **Question 2**, generally writing their comparative commentary after writing their directed response. These candidates could not be credited with responding to the **Question 1(b)** text analysis task.

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 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' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read an article about happy and healthy ageing, published in a British newspaper. They were required to write a response to the editor, in the form of an email, expressing their opinions of disagreement with some points in the article.

Candidates understood the conventions of writing an email to 'the editor' and most adopted a formal register with an appropriately measured, indignant tone. Several candidates also employed the conventional headers of an email, including 'To/From/Subject'. These formed a point of structural comparison in **Question 1(b)**.

This text was very accessible to candidates. Most employed first, second and third person to present their opinions, address the audience and provide evidence for their views. Much like the source text, some candidates employed first-person plural to create an implicit sense of empathy to garner the editor's agreement and approval. One candidate offered their metaphor for life; 'happiness is like a heart monitor. It hits highs and then hits low, never at a steady position, or it will flat line'.

The most effective responses were clear about the difference between the editor and the writer of the article. They adopted an impersonal salutation ('Dear Editor' was usual); some adopted a more personal salutation by naming the addressee, however where this was followed by a sense of indignation in the content of the email, this was less convincing. Most candidates closed with an appropriate valediction, requesting that their views be taken into consideration.

More successful responses addressed the rubric in the opening paragraph, referring to the article in question whilst explaining their reasons for writing and the reasons for their disagreement with the article. Several candidates cited precise details in the source text to exemplify and develop their concerns and disagreements. One candidate challenged the writer's opinion that we *tend to look at*

the past through rose coloured glasses by reminding the editor that there 'are teenagers out there who are working tirelessly as the main breadwinner for their families'. For another, there was no point in waiting until the age of 82 to be happy because 'elderly people are equally prone to depression and other mental health issues'.

The most effective responses challenged the views and opinions of the article by employing rhetorical questions and devices, such as the imperative mood, to appeal to the editor's sense of justice and pathos. They cited evidence from the source text, such as the World Health Organisation data and Dr Levitin, in order to challenge and discredit the opinions of the article whilst providing credibility to their own responses. These responses often personalised their evidence to support their views. 'Take my grandfather, for instance, he has coronary heart disease ...' was one such example. They also bolstered their credibility by outlining the areas in which they agreed with the article – *(h)appiness is intermittent throughout life* – in order to provide a balanced response. Personas ranged from young people to the elderly, all offering critical comments on the article. This clarity was evidenced by superior lexical choices that contributed to a particular tone (usually outrage) consistently.

Weaker responses misunderstood the main idea of the article and focused on the reasons for stress at different stages of life rather than happiness and ageing. Another feature of weaker responses was drift such as complaining about older people or the problems of the younger generation without reference to the original text. These 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 offered a summary of the extract.

Getting the balance between showing understanding of the text and crafting an effective response is the 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 shorter pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) Candidates were asked to compare their email to the editor with the article, 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 writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to give a more robust response in terms of their analysis.

Generally, candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of a range of conventions of an article and an email.

Specifically in respect of **form**, in more successful responses, candidates compared the ways in which the conventions of the article and email writing were adhered to in the texts. They compared the purpose of each text: to inform and/or entertain; to inform and disagree. Candidates compared the audience of each piece, noting that the audience of the article is broad: for one, the audience of the article comprised 'middle-aged people who often struggle with happiness and contentment in their lives'. The audience of the email was seen as specific: an editor. Candidates also compared the register of each piece, the article being considered semi-formal whilst their own pieces were considered 'formal' and even 'passionate'. The tone of each piece was compared. The tone of the article was considered 'conversational, congenial and chatty' with its use of contractions, whilst the tone of email was considered serious and 'quite authoritative'. They noted that both pieces contained opinion and rebuttal: 'I look back ... but I was not in any way in control of my life' and 'in my opinion ...' and 'I disagree with'. Where appropriate as per their responses, candidates noted

that both pieces made use of experts and numerical data to add credibility, and the use of personal examples, anecdotes and a concluding message.

In terms of **structure**, more successful candidates noted that the rhetorical heading and the subheading set the structure of the article, given that the writer addresses the opening question in the body of the response. This opening was compared to the conventional salutation of an email. For many candidates, the title 'clearly states the subject matter of the article and draws the reader in, while the email outlines the reason for writing: 'I am writing to you regarding ...'. Paragraph length and sentence types were compared. A few candidates noted that the article is divided into 'three different and discursive sections': the 'writer's experience and opinion, expert opinion and advice and concluding comments'. Their pieces had a similar structure: the writer's experience and opinion, rebuttals of expert opinion and advice (such as, 'we do not have to wait'; 'who says we will be as fit as a fiddle'; 'I find myself disagreeing with the sentiment') and concluding comments and valediction. A few candidates followed the convention of the article in establishing a balanced view. For one candidate, the article closed on a sarcastic note: 'the final paragraph uses sarcasm as the final nail in the coffin to bury the argument of 82 being a peak happiness age.' The writer's use of 'ecstatic button' serves 'to humiliate and make fun of the argument'. Their email to the editor was concluded on a philosophical, emphatic note: 'there is no logic in happiness peaking at 82.'

In terms of language, candidates compared how each text addressed its audience. They noted that both pieces employed first person, second person and third. Once again, the writer's use of second person in the article was not always clearly understood. There was some comparison of figurative language (simile and metaphor) where it was employed by candidates in their texts. Most often, candidates referred to the idiomatic language of the article (*rose coloured glasses*; *life is not a bed of roses*; *put me on cloud nine*) and compared the writer's usage with theirs ('fit as a fiddle'; 'sea of troubles'). Candidates commented on the writer's employment of asyndeton, repetition and ellipses to lay emphasis on the *worries* of life: *bills, bills, bills*. They compared this to similar features in their own texts; in particular, their employment of hyperbole ('problems are going to be endless') 'to exaggerate and make editor agree'.

Generally, stronger responses showed a clear distinction between an article and its conventions and the conventions of a communication in response to an article; these stronger responses regarded the extract and their own report as of equal status and commented on both extensively. Such responses also offered a considerable amount of detail to illustrate points, showing a strong grasp of each feature and detail selected, and how each related to audience and shaped meaning. More successful responses did not take a reflective commentary approach when analysing their own writing, which is a requirement of Paper 2.

Comparative comments in limited responses were often brief, focused more on the extract, and occasionally entirely, than on their own Directed Response, and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, showing little awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of writing associated with the respective genres, merely pointing out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. Some responses could have explored in more detail the formality of each text type. Comparative points were often straightforward with little attempt to provide evidence from each text or to analyse the features identified. These weaker responses focused on a comparison of content and neglected language analysis.

Candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of Reading and especially Analysis in this question, analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally, but also how specific effects are created that relate to audience and shape meaning. Furthermore, candidates' responses would benefit from clear references to the relevant text; this is particularly important when following a topical approach.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an extract from a travelogue describing the filming of a travel documentary called *Around the World in Eighty Days*. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

The text was mainly well understood and was answered with obvious engagement by most candidates. There was wide range of responses, with a considerable number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There were only a few short answers.

More successful responses addressed the conventions of travelogue writing. For one candidate, the title of Palin's travel documentary is 'instantly recognisable' as an 'allusion to the book of same name'. Palin's use of the headline *Day 22: Crossing the Arabian Sea* serves 'to chronicle his adventures on board the Al Sharma' and inform the audience of his current location. For another, Palin's 'self-conscious use of conventions' in the headline implies 'the intention to keep a record of events'. 'It can be inferred that the travelogue is a series', given that the title specifically 'mentions Day 22'. Moreover, the headline serves 'to structure the whole log from waking up at 5am to the exciting and memorable events of a Sunday afternoon'.

Candidates recognised the travelogue's primary purpose: to entertain. To that end, they commented on Palin's use of first-person singular to document his actions, experiences and feelings. They also commented on his use of first-person plural to create a sense of 'unanimity' amongst the sailing crew – *(t)heir life is communal* – whilst highlighting the cultural differences of his *materially overstocked and somewhat standoffish* Western film crew. It was noted that Palin's use of third person serves to describe the events of the day and to provide insight into the lives of this Indian sailing crew. In addition, 'apostrophising himself as "this traveller" serves to emphasise the significance to what he has learnt' on this trip: *those who have least are prepared to give most*. For one more successful candidate, 'the different standards of life and culture directly targets the reason why (the audience) reads such travelogues', adding value to the text. More successful candidates commented on Palin's unconventional use of present tense and on his friendly, conversational tone. They noted his intention being to immerse the reader in his log in 'real time'. In so doing, he employs a range of sensory detail 'to engage the reader further'. His optimistic outlook serves to 'mimic that sense of adventure and opportunity' that is found in most travelogues.

In terms of **structure**, more successful responses were often characterized by comments on the chronological sequencing of the given text. It was noted that the 'temporal markers' in addition to factual references to the temperature (*I'm awake today at 5; 100 degrees; Midday: 92 °F under the awning; Sunday afternoon*) are conventional features of such a text. Candidates noted that this sequencing is interspersed with other meteorological details (*(t)he wind has dropped and the sea is flat and calm; (t)he sea is so blue and clear*) and Palin's reports and reflections on the quotidian activities of all those on board whilst describing, in some detail, the domestic arrangements ('sleeping space, living space') and equipment of the boat. Sentence structure and paragraph structure were discussed; in particular, Palin's use of simple sentences and minor sentences (*(n)one of these is working; (n)o gold or guns*) and short paragraphs for dramatic effect (*Captain Suleyman says ...*), interspersed with dialogue to provide 'realism and credibility'. A few candidates referred to the climactic ending of the extract, pointing out that Palin's piece ends on a 'high note' of 'awe', given the unexpected delight of the 'sea-borne entertainment' provided by dolphins and 'the raising of the huge sail'.

For language, candidates discussed the sensory details of the text. They commented on visual imagery, making reference to the calm atmosphere and 'tranquil' weather conditions. For several candidates, Captain Suleyman's surprise that the sea was so calm, together with his reference to his brother's fate and the loss of his crew, served to reinforce Suleyman's experience and 'reverence towards the sea' and highlight 'the endless possibilities of dangers that lurk around and can occur anytime'. The precariousness of life at sea was not only highlighted, in more successful responses, by the *mercurial weather*, but also by the scarcity of resources: *(t)his crew has given up a lot for us – sleeping space, living space and precious fresh water*. The precariousness of life at sea and the crew's 'poverty' (*(a) new music centre and a pair of speakers are the only luxury*) was also highlighted by the fact that none of Captain Suleyman's navigational equipment was working – belied by Palin's 'humorous quip'.

The lexical field of sailing and jargon was referred to by most candidates (*foresail lashing; wheelhouse; RPM*) which 'lent credibility to the text'. Candidates also commented on Palin's use of auditory imagery, including sibilance, onomatopoeia and alliteration: *I can hear the soft sound of singing; the reassuring rumble of the engine; gold or guns*. These, together with 'the assonance of *stay and play* created a 'rhythmic and poetic effect' and serve to furnish the travelogue with 'vibrancy'. For one candidate, the rhythm of life on board the Al Sharma is 'amplified) through rhetorical devices'.

More effective responses commented on Palin's appreciation and humility when depicting Suleyman's crew. They noted that Palin demonstrates their *congenial and selfless personalities*: they are *unfailingly generous and helpful*. His use of dialogue provides realism, humour (candidates referred to the depiction of their accents) and some 'insight into the personalities of the crew'. His use of proper nouns *Kasim, Julian and Ron*

and *Dahwood* personalises the log. One candidate noted, 'they have taken advantage of these sailors to document their travel'.

A few candidates commented on the situational irony implied in Palin's observation of his map: *it had taken us a day to travel between the 'A' and 'R' of 'Arabian Sea': they have not travelled very far*; foreshadowing (that) their journey will be a long one'.

Stronger responses were often characterised by a greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language.

Weaker responses focused more on the descriptions of the sea and the sense of sound. Furthermore, these responses often included general comments and 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. These weaker responses listed techniques with no reference, example or explanation.

These weaker responses mostly adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the ... paragraph' or adopted an approach to analysis which 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 alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point cannot be rewarded twice.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features, but offered minimal 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 executed in these weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at far too great a 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 should be advised to: use quotations, evidence and evaluation to produce precise, meaningful commentaries; use appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments; and integrate quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument.

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 9093/13 Reading
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Key messages

- 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, and 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 the 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, 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 selected texts for this paper offered different genre, style and context. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were some brief 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 candidates did not demonstrate the language skills necessary for text analysis. This session, only a few candidates seemed to struggle to manage their time appropriately, consequently not managing to complete their last response.

Specific language features were generally well understood. Candidates must ensure that the features they identify are genuinely present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Most candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage. There was also attention to the effects of punctuation, especially dashes and commas.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience –

in this session the original text was an article from a newspaper. 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 text for an advertisement. 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 analysis of linguistic elements. Some candidates compared the given text for **Question 1** with that given for **Question 2**, generally writing their comparative commentary after writing their directed response. These candidates could not be credited with responding to the **Question 1(b)** text analysis task.

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 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' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read an article from *The Indian Express* newspaper. They were then required to write the text for an advertisement, as though from a travel agency, for a volunteering holiday during which tourists would join the conservationists tracking tigers and learning about them.

The characteristic features and conventions of an advertisement – i.e. naming the service, outlining what was involved, using data to support and employing a catchy heading (often in the form of a rhetorical question or making use of alliteration), subheadings and sometimes bullet points or lists and a call to action, whilst outlining the purpose of their pieces to provide persuasive information for a volunteering holiday – were generally used. Only a few candidates wrote the response in columns, and a very few candidates drew rectangles or squares for images and gave captions; such layout features are not necessary for this exam. Most responses showed clear understanding of the text.

The most successful responses included relevant material from the source text such as tigers having *shown up* at high altitudes and this was generally recognised as an extension of current knowledge. These responses linked this to where tigers could be found and referred to the National Parks mentioned in the text specifically, although some did not realise that Corbett was at the lowest altitude. These responses included a focus on the volunteers' potential learning, not only about tigers but also about their habits and the environment in which they live. In these responses there was proportionate inclusion of data and facts.

Several candidates created a travel agency name and wrote explicitly from that point of view. This was addressed in their comparisons. Thus, more successful responses identified the primary purpose of their piece – to persuade tourists – and their secondary purpose – to inform potential volunteers – thereby demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the genre requirement and implied question focus too.

Candidates who dwelled on the numerous detailed facts contained in the article struggled with lifting material into their own new text. In weaker responses, there was some confusion over where

the tourists would see the tigers, with several candidates citing the jungle or the rain forest. These candidates misunderstood the focus of the article which concerned the mountainous areas that the tigers are now moving to. There was also some misunderstanding about the role of conservationists, and therefore this was not clear or did not feature in the repurposed text.

The weakest responses tended to be longer pieces and consisted of a general response about going on an adventurous holiday. These weaker responses did not recognise that this was a volunteering holiday and, therefore, did not focus on the task context but rather on features of a resort ('award winning hotels, food ...') or 'working as a scientist', moving away from the focus of an expedition which focused on conservationists tracking the tigers and learning about them. Several of these weaker responses offered a summary of the extract, drifted from the focus of the question and original text or quoted large amounts from the original text, which was rarely justified.

Getting the balance between showing understanding of the text and crafting an effective response is the 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 shorter pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b)** Candidates were asked to compare their advertisement with the article, 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 are related to audience and shape meaning.

It is advised that candidates focus on the difference in formality, tone and registers, and collaborate language with form and structure to give a more robust response in terms of their analysis.

Generally, stronger responses included appropriate and accurate critical terminology to link their evidence and explanatory comments on the effects created by the writers of the original passage and directed response.

Stronger responses showed a clear distinction between an advertisement and its conventions and the conventions of an article; these responses regarded the article and their own advertisement as of equal status and commented on both extensively. Such responses also offered a considerable amount of detail to illustrate points, showing a strong grasp of each feature and detail selected, and how each related to audience and shaped meaning. More successful responses did not take a reflective commentary approach when analysing their own writing, which is a requirement of Paper 2.

Comparative points in limited responses were often straightforward with little attempt to provide evidence from each text or to analyse the features identified. These responses were often brief and focused more, occasionally entirely, on the extract rather than on their own Directed Response. They tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively, with few or no supporting examples from the texts. They were often very general, showing little awareness of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of writing associated with the genres; and merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. Some of these responses misidentified linguistic features. For example, points of view were misidentified (first, second, and third person). Weaker responses often focused on a comparison of content and struggled to comment on features of language, such as anecdotes, parentheses, and even the use of empathic language or imperatives and therefore, redirected most findings towards tone or structure, such as headings, subheadings and dates.

Specifically, in respect of **form**, detailed and clear responses compared the ways in which the conventions of article and advertisement writing were adhered to in the texts. They compared the purpose of each text: to inform; to persuade and/or to inform.

Many candidates compared the audience of each piece, noting that the article was from *The Indian Express* newspaper aimed at quite a broad audience from the scientific community through to those with a more general interest in wildlife and tigers, whilst their pieces were mostly targeted at a Western audience and were more specifically directed at (volunteering) tourists. More successful responses explored the differences between a specialist newspaper report related to conservation and the photographic evidence from *motion-triggered* cameras and the persuasive, direct and often informal audience address needed for an advertisement to help raise support and awareness for tiger conservation.

In respect of **structure**, many responses were limited in that they simply itemised the paragraphs in each piece and discussed their lengths – often, at length. Such responses also discussed long and short sentences in a limited manner. There were a few detailed responses. These attempted to compare types of sentences and their impact; in particular, they compared their own use of simple sentences to create impact with the article's more complex ones, for example in the first paragraph. Such responses were also clear about how their advertisements were structured, employing headings and subtitles, and the way the article traces the experiences the narrator has and the shifts in focus between local and global; they also commented on the dates with colons as a list and the way that the text ends on a moral note.

For comments on **language**, candidates considered number, person and tense and compared these to their own use of tense. In detailed and clear responses, comparisons were made about the use of figurative language such as alliteration, e.g. *ample anecdotal accounts*, the use of anecdotes, e.g. *Warming induced by climate change*, and *they argue*, and the use of parentheses, e.g. *(but in temperate broadleaf-mixed-pine and pure deciduous forests)*. The most successful commented on emphatic language used as a warning, e.g. *hasty proposals* and *There can be no trade off*; they also commented on choices about the use of data such as metres for altitude, dates and specific tiger sightings, geographical locations and the choice of vocabulary to reflect support of the government, e.g. *a testimony of Uttarakhand's success in tiger conservation*, and mention of organisations providing international endorsement, such as *BBC* and *WWF-UK*. Finally, most responses commented on direct address to audience using the imperative, e.g. *think Kasauli*, and language typical of informal journalistic writing, e.g. *made splashes around the globe*.

Candidates would be well advised to note that 'comparative' is the most discriminating skill in terms of reading and especially analysis, analysis that not only explains how a technique works generally but also how specific effects are created that relate to audience and shape meaning. Furthermore, candidates' responses would benefit from clear references to the relevant text; this is particularly important when following a topical approach.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read a transcript of a voiceover for an informational video. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

Most of the responses began with the overview of the purpose and audience and commented on the informative nature of the transcript. Some candidates understood the conventions of a voiceover and were able to relay this information concerning how this would affect the audience in terms of a video format, and how well this conveyed the information in isolation, without the video content. Some noted fluency features, e.g. 'beginning a sentence with But ... or And ...' to indicate that this is a spoken text.

In terms of **form**, these more successful responses showed insight regarding the purpose of the video, linking the conventions to that of informational texts. In addition to this, the tone and register of the transcript were noted. These more successful responses noted the implication that 'listeners should build habits of yoga for the betterment of their own health ... for those that may be struggling mentally or physically'. Quite a few candidates viewed the article as being aimed at old people. Some gave reasons for this view such as 'the slow pace of the piece' and 'that yoga is for the elderly'.

More successful candidates commented on the **structure** of the voiceover and the fact that it reflects the history of the practice. One candidate commented that the text is 'divide(d) into four sections' from 'origins' to a final section where the author 'creates hope for the future' since yoga is 'evolving'. The most successful

comments on structure explored references to time/time passing: *ancient, longstanding*, specific dates, *over time, today, contemporary*. Other less successful responses simply stated the structure as 'chronological'. Stronger responses noted that the opening 'sets a positive stance' that would be maintained throughout the text and that in each notional 'section' the impacts of yoga were supported by citing specific examples. The more successful explored the somewhat objective view towards the end of the text, noting that it is similar to that of a research or academic paper, making it seem more credible, creating almost a balanced approach, by stating the proposed benefits but also stating the limitations in terms of their findings: *there's little conclusive evidence on how the practice affects mental health* and again in the last paragraph when stating *we'll need larger studies, incorporating diverse participants*. By doing so, they conveyed that this is a source that they felt could be trusted. Several candidates commented on the title. For one candidate, the title is 'explaining the benefits of yoga in a professional manner', whilst also recognising the balance of 'body and brain'; another focused on the 'direct address' of 'your' which 'immediately includes the audience'.

In respect of **language**, some responses linked logos to the roots of the practice – *between the 1st and 5th century, Over time, yoga came to incorporate ...* – whilst seeing the importance of the factual information and dates related to the beginnings of the discipline to suggest how yoga is much more than a fad – *between the 1st and 5th century, 196 manuals called the Yoga Sutras*. Most commented on lexical fields of medical terms to encourage listeners to believe in the benefits and trust the credibility of the speaker, and the more successful cited the text – *improving strength and flexibility, boosting heart and lung function, and enhancing psychological well-being, multiple muscle groups, muscles, ligaments, tendons, stem cells, collagen* – to strengthen their argument. These responses often noted the use of listing including triads, *muscles, ligaments and tendons*, the more successful exploring how the use of this feature relates to audience.

Furthermore, most responses noted the engagement using the rhetorical question, probing the audience to think about their own prior knowledge and thoughts on yoga and its benefits: *But what have contemporary studies shown regarding the benefits of this ancient tradition? / Let's start with ... your body*. The more successful commented on this stylistic choice as a tool to introduce data as confirmation thereof.

Additionally, in varying degrees, the writer's choice of positive vocabulary was explored: *a unique set of health advantages, improve, therapeutic, increasing, especially helpful, impact, most widely celebrated benefit*. This was coupled with the listing of the benefits of *collagen* that possibly encourage the audience and persuade them to take up yoga. By doing so, the candidates noted that these benefits created relatability as they mentioned chronic conditions: *Lung diseases like chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma*, which could be specific or linked to a wide general audience. They further explained that such conditions appeal to the audience as it may be a sensitive subject for which they want a solution.

More successful responses also commented on vocabulary 'groups' such as that indicating unity – *blend, incorporate, yoking, combination, mix, longstanding association between* – and that suggesting uncertainty – *potentially, evolving, difficult to prove, difficult to quantify, the impact is ... unclear, it's tough to make specific claims*.

The implications of the form and structure were ignored in weaker responses, which focused only on the overview and, to a certain extent, the language of the passage. The comments in the weaker responses often referred to aspects of stylistic choices having 'positive connotations' or being used 'to make the reader stop and think', with little further elaboration or definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'creating an interesting image' or 'to paint a picture'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology to access the higher levels. These weaker responses listed techniques with no reference or example given or explanation.

Basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features, but offered minimal 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. Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments. Candidates should be advised to: use quotations, evidence and evaluation to produce precise, meaningful commentaries; use appropriate language to link quotations and evidence with explanatory comments; and integrate quotations and evidence into a cohesive argument.

There were several candidates who used pathos, ethos, and logos as a thematic approach, however, mostly, these points needed further development and explanation, whether it be regarding evidence or effects. Other

language devices could be mentioned with such a thematic approach to show a more detailed or sophisticated understanding of language.

It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' is 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 repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point cannot be rewarded twice.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21 Writing

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 adhere to the guidance of writing no more than 400 words for their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They should avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the actual task. Candidates should also adhere to the rubric of writing a minimum of 600 words for their **Section B** response.
- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instruction is to write the text for a 'blog entry', focusing on 'what you are looking forward to about the expedition' to a 'remote location' and creating a 'sense of anticipation'.
- 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. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker responses lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. Two errors that again occurred quite regularly were those of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops and of writing in sentence fragments rather than in complete sentences. Sentence construction and demarcation are 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.
- 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, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- 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

Many 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, writing engaging blogs aimed at a wide variety of appropriate audiences. Traits of weaker responses were: mainly writing about how excited the writer was, without much specific detail about the expedition; accounts of the first day of the expedition; reports on the whole expedition.

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. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused entirely on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis, usually 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 (speech, review, or story), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally lost focus on what the task required. For example, some **Question 2** speeches only focused on one foreign language and many responses read more like an article than a speech. Some responses to **Question 3** were simple recounts of the cookery course and the dishes they made, needing more in the way of critique or personal evaluation of the course. Some **Question 4** stories were missing the required sense of drama and suspense and followed up the prescribed opening by going on to develop a largely unrelated narrative.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You are going to take part in a two-week expedition to a remote location, and you have decided to write a blog about it.

- (a) **Write the text for your first blog entry, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on what you are looking forward to about the expedition, and create a sense of anticipation.**

Most candidates understood the concept of a blog and used appropriate language and structural features. Most candidates wrote an introduction which included a greeting to the audience of their blog subscribers and a brief mention of the purpose of their first blog entry. Most responses were written in informal register with some use of teen and colloquial language. They created a sense of anticipation by using exclamation marks and mentioning specific activities such as discovering wild animals, plants and encounters with native inhabitants of remote islands.

Stronger responses demonstrated immediate engagement with features of a blog, including an appropriate start and finish. Many candidates opened their blogs with a direct address to their readers with phrases such as 'Dear readers'. Some of the stronger responses were set up as a travel blog right from the start with phrases such as, 'Hey fellow travellers'. They gave specific names of remote places like the Amazon rainforest, undiscovered islands in the Pacific or ice caves in Antarctica or the Arctic region and they provided descriptions of the remote destination based on research done before the expedition. This gave them a basis for what to look forward to during the trip, thereby creating a sense of anticipation, as required by the prompt. Stronger responses created immersive descriptions of the remote locations, constantly reinforcing a sense of anticipation and thereby contributing to the overall sense of purpose. For example, one candidate wrote: 'Being an island, Aruba possesses brilliant beaches that are always camera-ready. The sand is a fine white powder that tenderly cushions your toes; the gentle lapping of the waves on the shores is the ocean's invitation for a relaxing swim.'

In some of the most successful responses, candidates took the persona of a scientific expert, such as a biologist, botanist or geologist, who had received an invitation to join the special journey, thereby demonstrating a clear understanding of what an expedition is, as well as an awareness that the event had yet to take place. One strong example of this is seen here: 'There are a plethora of things that I'm looking forward to. It's the Arctic, after all! But what has gotten me giddy in particular over the last few days is the planned "Penguin Search" when we look for large penguin colonies and study how they survive in such a hostile climate. My undying love for these flightless birds motivates me the most to part from my family and head to the Arctic.'

Some stronger responses invited readers to participate, with comments such as, 'Let me know what you think in the comments below' and most also ended their blogs appropriately using phrases such as, 'This is Ava signing out' and 'Until the next post'.

Weaker responses mostly equated the two-week expedition to a holiday to relieve themselves from the stress of daily routine. The detail mentioned in the prompt about the location being 'remote' was also frequently overlooked, with some candidates writing about a vacation to places like Orlando, New York or Paris. The weakest responses often did not name the remote location, referring to it throughout as 'the place' or an unknown location and this was inevitably self-limiting. Other candidates wrote a retrospective account of the expedition and therefore overlooked an important element of the question focus. Use of the past tense for writing the blog had a significantly weakening effect on the overall impression created in quite a number of responses.

The use of the expressions 'I am very excited' and 'I can't wait' were commonly used in weaker responses to fulfil the required sense of anticipation. Blogs written in the form of one continuous block of text, without paragraphing, did little to define and elaborate on points raised. Some responses were more focused on the writer's narrative of packing and preparation for the trip, or their excitement at having a two-week vacation, and merely outlined activities typically available for tourists, such as swimming, ziplining or surfing. Other weaker responses did not address the prompt's detail that the expedition was to take place at a future date, providing a narrative recount of a trip they had already been on and not necessarily of an expedition in the conventional sense.

Many weaker responses were needing in the way of structure, very often without paragraph breaks. Many weaker responses were short, often under 200 words.

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

Most candidates started their commentaries with an introductory paragraph citing audience and purpose and most showed at least some linguistic knowledge, although quite often failed to get beyond simple identification of linguistic features.

Stronger responses maintained a close focus on the linguistic and stylistic choices made for writing the blog, as well as making use of appropriate terminology linked to effect. They 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: 'I juxtaposed my perspective of the busy journey there ("rammed overnight buses") with the calm that I hope to find when I arrive in "notoriously isolated" Norway. The opposing connotations of these phrases build a connection between me, as the writer, and my audience of travellers, many of whom enjoy the same sense of isolation.'

Another strong response also clearly connected the aim of using certain text features with the purpose of the text: 'I included a sub-heading "Conquering Antarctica" and a salutation, "LotsaLove, Lizzie." The alliterative qualities of the heading and salutation and the hard "c" consonance of "Conquering Antarctica" make them memorable. Alliteration and consonance have been used throughout the text, "sparse snowy landscapes" and "treacherous trails of tall mountains" for example. This gives the writing an element of musicality, allowing for it to be read with ease and fulfilling the purpose of entertainment.'

Some weaker responses identified a few basic language and structural features but stopped short of analysis. Some attempted analysis but used general phrases such as, 'This makes the reader want to read on' and, 'This makes the audience keep coming back for more.' Others used the vague phrase, 'it creates a picture in the reader's mind' when referencing imagery. The absence of linguistic terminology also negatively affected weaker responses' marks. Most comments in these were limited to the conventions of a blog and the language used without relating these to effects on the audience. Lower-level responses lacked exemplification; many weaker responses merely paraphrased the **1(a)** response or focused solely on structure, with little on language or form, or focused solely on language and gave no consideration to the structure of their text.

Some responses were extremely short and/or wrongly identified linguistic features. Some candidates wrote very little, sometimes just a few sentences.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Speech

You are going to take part in a debate at school about whether everyone should learn more foreign languages. Your headteacher has asked you to open the debate by giving a speech on the topic. Write the text for your speech, giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most responses focused quite well on the benefits of learning another language, and frequently linked this to employment opportunities. A summary of the contents of the speech was usually provided in the conclusion, often with a call to action and a valediction to close.

Stronger responses were well planned and gave valid reasons for argument, supported by explanations and clear examples in each paragraph. A strong conclusion usually included a presentation of the strongest evidence of the correctness of the candidate's viewpoint, for example: 'Many people learn multiple foreign languages for different reasons. Personally, I am near fluent in Spanish and know basic phrases in French. This has allowed me to have many conversations I would not have been able to have in English.'

Some of the most convincing responses assumed a role, for example the President of the school's student union, or in one case, a foreign language teacher. Many opened their speeches effectively by engaging the audience, for example: 'Firstly, I'd like to ask you, the audience, whether you are a citizen of your country or do you believe you are a citizen of the world?' Engaging responses had sound, credible arguments. Some candidates focused on 'time allocation' in an already packed curriculum, arguing convincingly that with very modern software, aiding translation, the need to spend hours learning languages was not realistic. Other engaging responses included effective arguments as well as a clear knowledge of debating conventions. Some candidates introduced the implications of prioritising a new language over one's own, highlighting the 'ramifications of language death and culture.' Most cited the need for an understanding of languages in different cultures in a global setting.

Weaker responses tended to be repetitive in their justification for learning a foreign language. Some did not address the key point of the prompt that everyone should learn *more* foreign languages, and were confined to the benefits of knowing *one* foreign language to increase job opportunities, improve ease of communication when travelling abroad, and aid the establishment of friendships within a specific foreign community. Weaker responses sometimes repeated ideas rather than developing them, for example: 'It will help you to communicate with family members. Lots of family members will want to communicate with you.' Some were inundated with statistics to the point that the reader was overwhelmed, while others argued too strongly for one side over the other.

Question 3 – Review

You recently did a one-day cookery course for complete beginners. Write a review of the course, which will be published on a food website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many candidates produced quite effective reviews, although some misunderstood the task, for example by choosing to write a recipe for their favourite dish. In other cases, there was a misunderstanding of form and, instead of writing a review, candidates produced a diary entry or a narrative recount of the day.

Stronger responses were structured deliberately, often focusing on different aspects of the course in sections rather than following a chronological structure. Strong responses were well balanced, believable and informative throughout. The top responses used the purpose and audience of the task to their advantage, making asides to the audience in parenthesis throughout the review, for example: 'While this may be obvious to some of you, it was incredibly helpful for us novices and showed an understanding that not everyone on a food website would be a beginner cook.' Convincing answers created an authentic voice that passed judgement on each aspect rather than just narrating a sequence of events. These were well structured and the audience was engaged. One candidate wrote: 'The kitchen was state of the art: stainless steel worktops and stoves, industrial size ovens, copper pots and pans, a plethora of cooking utensils, many of which were alien to me, and a walk-in pantry and freezer. I was ready to cook!'

Many stronger responses used subheadings to define the places or activities done during the one-day course. This enabled these candidates to produce a coherent piece of writing. Focus on specific highlights of the course – such as kitchen hygiene and sanitation, cooking equipment, safety guidelines, specific recipes prepared and evaluation of the chef/instructor's expertise in each paragraph – made stronger responses describe the place, comment on the experience, and evaluate the learning in an organised manner.

Most stronger reviews concluded well, ending with a sentence or paragraph that gave further credibility to the review and the persona that had been adopted, as in this example: 'Despite my shocking lack of skill in the kitchen, the course proved to be fantastic. For me, the deciding factor was the fact that we could eat the food we cooked, which in my case was not so nice, but everyone else loved it. I would recommend "Growing Beans" in a heartbeat!' A clear recommendation and star rating were often included in the conclusion, along with a justification for the rating.

Weaker responses mainly focused on describing the place and detailing a step-by-step account of cooking the dishes without expressing personal views or evaluating the course itself. A list-like approach to the meals (which included starter, main and dessert, or sometimes breakfast, lunch and dinner), contributed to the failure of some candidates to reach the minimum number of words required. Some candidates took little note of the keywords 'cookery course' in the question prompt and wrote extensively about problems with finding the venue, parking at the venue, or other irrelevant details before addressing the culinary aspects. Such responses lacked the sense of a review for a food website, as in this example: 'It took me 90 minutes to drive to the location. When I arrived, there were a small group of people waiting outside. We had to wait 20 minutes for the chef to arrive. We then went inside to find our work stations.'

Question 4 – Story

Write a story which begins with the following sentence: *Marc shouted as loudly as he possibly could, but the man did not hear him.* In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates attempted to adhere to the drama/suspense genre but with varying degrees of success; some candidates subverted the tone established in the opening sentence by writing long biographical details about the character Marc, such as his family, career, education, friendship group, even Marc's morning routine earlier that day. Inevitably, such responses were much less successful than those which maintained a close focus on the requirement for drama and suspense. In a commonly used narrative structure, responses began with the question prompt and immediately followed this with a flashback of the events that had led up to the given scenario.

Stronger responses continued the prompt with a vivid description of the elements of the scene, setting the atmosphere of both drama and suspense right from the start of the narrative, and making the piece both imaginable and engaging for the reader, for example: 'Marc shouted as loudly as he possibly could, but the man did not hear him. In the ferocious downpour, his voice was nothing but a whisper muffled by the heavy rain. Marc could hear his pulse singing loudly in his ears, and the vein in his forehead throbbing to the rhythm of his wide strides. He found himself sprinting, his sodden clothes sticking to his skin. The man's expression never faltered; he seemed calm, at ease, his eyes glued to an indefinite point on the dark horizon.' In another strong response, the candidate consistently sustained a powerful setting while building drama and suspense, culminating with a wronged son who sets out to avenge his father. As this candidate wrote: 'By the time the murderers kicked open the door leading to his study, Marc was already gone. All that remained in the room was a teardrop on the desk and a rose on top of the dead man.'

In some stronger responses, candidates interpreted the prompt creatively and with originality, for example, one candidate had Marc getting stuck in a grocery store after it closed, missing an important dinner, which effectively balanced humour and suspense. These responses also interpreted the 'man did not hear him' portion of the response in original ways, such as a fighter ignoring the taunts of an opponent; this response also made use of the countdown to fight throughout their response in order to create suspense and tension. In another story a post-apocalyptic scavenger called out to someone who they know is dead: 'Marc knew the man was dead, but kept shouting and shouting. When was someone going to be alive for once?'

Strong responses tended to focus on a smaller, more limited narrative arc in order to give more attention to establishing setting and character. Setting was often ominous and dark; more effective responses achieved this through imagery such as: 'behind the canopy of the forest, a storm seemed to be brewing, leeching the bright blue from the afternoon sky.' Additionally, showing the character's feelings, such as in 'the words leapt from my throat, worry coating each syllable like thick paint' and reactions rather than merely stating them is what separated the stronger responses from the rest.

Some of the weakest responses were limited to beginning the story as prescribed in the prompt then going on to develop a largely unrelated narrative. A crime, a ghost in a haunted mansion, a misadventure in a remote location and places where there is no help available were some of the common background stories provided to justify the use of the prompt line, which was sometimes written again at the end of the narrative.

In some weaker responses, candidates did not use paragraphs as tools to effectively create the required atmosphere of drama and suspense. Some weaker responses were incomplete, lacking a convincing ending.

Errors which hampered the effectiveness of many responses tended to be centred in grammatical frameworks, with a significant number of candidates making tense and sentence demarcation errors throughout their responses. Another common error was the sudden switching of narrative voice without intention; this frequently took the form of a third person to first person switch as the candidate became more involved in their story.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22 Writing

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 adhere to the guidance of writing no more than 400 words for their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They should avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the actual task. Candidates should also adhere to the rubric of writing a minimum of 600 words for their **Section B** response.
- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instruction is to write the opening to a story about an 'answerphone message', creating a 'sense of drama and suspense'.
- 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. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker responses lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. Two errors that again occurred quite regularly were those of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops and of writing in sentence fragments rather than in complete sentences. Sentence construction and demarcation are 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 tense.
- 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, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- 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

Many 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, writing engaging story openings which successfully created drama and suspense, leaving the audience wanting to read on. Weaker responses often featured poor plot management, an absurd sequence of events, and/or little sense of trying to make the story engaging for an audience.

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. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused entirely on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis, usually 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 (speech, review, or story), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally lost focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were simple accounts of the holiday and the activities, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion about the holiday. Some **Question 3** descriptions focused too much on the journey to the building and its outside, while some **Question 4** emails lacked an appropriate tone and did not refer to any specific details from the article.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

Your teacher has asked you to write the opening of a story called *The Voice*, about an answerphone message that someone received from a complete stranger.

- (a) **Write the text for the opening of your story, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense.**

In general, candidates managed the **Question 1(a)** task quite well, although some attempted to write a whole story rather than a story opening as prescribed in the question prompt. Effective planning by some candidates meant they created a sense of drama and suspense in their work.

Stronger responses showed an immediate engagement with the question by focusing attention on building drama and suspense, creating vivid settings and tense atmospheres, as seen in this extract: 'It is never a good look when thunder welcomes your arrival. The dark, cold and fearsome house stood in front of Mark. He lowered his glance from his phone up to the highest tower of the stone Edwardian house. It beckoned him to look straight at it, as if it demanded respect.'

'The Voice' aspect of the question should have been an important focus for candidates, both in terms of creating a voice for the protagonist and the 'voice' for the speaker on the answerphone message. Stronger responses excelled in this regard with some quite sinister openings being born out of a simple, but eerie setting. One candidate skilfully created a convincing, child-like voice for a young girl who picks up a message whilst she is all alone in her parents' home. Through carefully chosen lexis, the reader can discern that all is not well for the child. References to a 'dripping spot from the ceiling' and 'Mummy had stopped moving', coupled with the total innocence of the girl, made for a gripping read. The climax was achieved when the girl with her 'tiny fingers' heard the voice on the machine telling her she had 'been selected to play a game called Eternal Happiness'.

Many stronger responses ended their story openings with successful cliff-hangers, as in this extract: 'My heart sank for a second in a mix of confusion and fear, like a child lost in the dark. A chance? What could it mean? I pondered over the various possibilities of what could follow should I ever visit that address. As I went to bed, I thought, "What do I even have to lose? Who knows, maybe Fate is on my side."' Some stronger responses were written in shorter paragraphs and effective sentence fragments that gave the dramatic and suspenseful effect for the opening of the narrative. To quote one of these effective responses: 'Strange. He had just come home from his office job. No wife, no kids, no parents. He certainly didn't have any friends. Who would be sending him a voicemail? No one he could think of. There was no one.'

Weaker responses were written in narrative form but many were needing in terms of structure, very often without any paragraph breaks at all. Descriptions of scenarios that stretched to more than two paragraphs in length and/or using extremely long sentences weakened the desired effects of drama and suspense. Many weaker story openings were short, often under 200 words.

In some weaker responses, candidates spent too long on exposition and only then introduced the answerphone idea, so that little drama was created for much of the narrative. Many responses did not maintain an appropriate tense, regularly switching from past to present and back again. Dialogue was frequently attempted, but appropriate punctuation and paragraphing was often lacking. Some candidates tried to impress by using adjectives, for example listing two for most nouns, and too many employed rather clichéd phrases, such as ‘raining cats and dogs’ and ‘rushing around like a headless chicken.’ Such attempts often produced the unintended effect of weakening the overall impression of the piece.

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

Most candidates started their commentaries with an introductory paragraph citing audience and purpose and most showed at least some linguistic knowledge. Quite often, responses stopped short at simple identification of linguistic features.

Stronger responses maintained a close focus on the linguistic and stylistic choices made for writing the story opening, as well as making use of appropriate terminology linked to effect. They identified features 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 explained: ‘I have used the rule of three as “dark, cold and fearsome” to create a tone of foreboding atmosphere. This serves to introduce the audience to the aura of the setting which is not bright, modern and welcoming’.

Another strong response also clearly connected the aim of using certain text features with the purpose of the text: ‘Alliteration is used when describing the heatwaves as “shimmering and shaking”, which helps the reader picture the setting and the world around the characters as hazy and unclear. This sense of disorientation is clear even in the descriptions of the girl’s reaction, where she is unsure whether her “vision is blurry or her hands are shaking.”’

Some weaker responses identified some basic language and structural features but stopped short of analysis. Some candidates attempted analysis but used general phrases such as, ‘this makes the reader want to read on’ and, ‘this makes the audience interested’. Others used the vague phrase, ‘It creates a picture in the reader’s mind’ when referencing imagery. The absence of linguistic terminology also negatively affected marks for weaker responses. Many limited their comments to the structure of their story opening and the language used without relating these to their effects on the audience. Lower-level responses lacked exemplification; many weaker responses merely paraphrased the **Question 1(a)** response, or focused solely on structure with little on language or form, or focused solely on language without consideration to structure.

Some responses were extremely short and/or wrongly identified linguistic features. The weakest responses simply described or paraphrased the story opening, as in this example: ‘In this paragraph, the character of the main character was described. It can be proven from the sentence ‘I am usually a forgetful person’. It shows the character will react and respond to the upcoming problem.’ Some very weak responses were very short, sometimes just a few sentences.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

You have just returned from a one-week activity holiday for teenagers. Write a review of the holiday, which will be posted on a travel website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

The most common scenarios given by candidates were about a camping trip, a stay in a resort, or a trip abroad.

Stronger reviews included detail about specific activities rather than extensive descriptions of accommodation, food, or the journey to the facility. They both narrated the activities done during the trip as well as effectively expressing personal opinion of the experience. The evaluation of the week-long events was essential for this review task, such as in this example: ‘Everyday we had a new activity to do. Although some may have been fun, some just dragged on. One day, we had to get into groups and create something from scratch for five hours. Coming from someone who is not creative at all and has accepted he will never be, this was most certainly not my idea of fun.’

Stronger responses included a sustained description of the setting whilst also reviewing the features provided by the organisation hosting the activity holiday, such as in this example: 'Moving on to rooms, you can expect to receive ones comparable to those of the oligarchs and royalty, fully equipped with the best technology available such as 5G terabit Wifi, 55 inch OLED TVs and surround systems forming the perfect combo with soft quilted sheets and pillows on the king size single beds.' There was a number of mature responses that considered the benefits of going away in order to mature, be more independent, take a well-earned break from school and family, and of the restorative features of a break, for example: 'These little escapes are so good for one's mental and physical health since no one can be perfectly fine for their entire life. It is better to give oneself enough freedom to enjoy life as much as we exhaust ourselves. I took time out to do this, and if you haven't yet, when will you?'

Most stronger reviews were concluded well, with a clear recommendation and star rating often being included in the conclusion, along with a justification for the rating, as in this example: 'Overall I would definitely recommend this holiday to anyone interested in water sports. The food and accommodation were excellent, the coaching was superb and the variety of activities was outstanding, with the kitesurfing being the wild, wet and windy highlight! 10/10 from me (and the same from all the others with me on this top-quality holiday)!'

Weaker responses, on the other hand, often consisted of a daily account of the holiday without considering that the piece was supposed to be intended for a travel website. A listing of the activities without personal comments did little to encourage or discourage the audience and therefore defeated the purpose of a review. Furthermore, a few candidates chose to write a whole continuous piece and did not make use of paragraphs to organise their text. Even though they were meant to be reviews of an activity holiday for teenagers, to be published on a travel website, many answers were fixated on self, cost, luxury travel, a luxurious holiday experience, and sightseeing that related more to restful holidays for mature adults. Such holiday accounts had little to do with activity other than making or cementing friendships or interacting with animals and observing scenery in commodified outdoor settings.

Question 3 – Descriptive piece

Write a descriptive piece about a busy office. In your writing, focus on the sound, light and movement inside the office to help your reader imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.

There were some well-written answers with carefully crafted phrases as well as precise imaginative and descriptive detail. Most candidates demonstrated some focus on sound, light, and movement, to varying degrees.

Stronger responses used appropriate and imaginative choices of language that captured the mood and atmosphere. One such response described the office with a conscious crafting of language: 'Looking outside the window, a short escape can be felt, only for the realisation to sink in that the outside world is just as automated for the working man as this very office we seek escape from. The yellow streaks of natural sunlight barely make it through the opposing buildings, another beacon of hope stripped away. Humanity amongst this environment of an official warzone seems an alien concept, a plastic jungle with animalistic laws.' The overall feeling was that busy offices were not very pleasant places. The offices were varied and the people recognisable to all adults which resulted in quite a lot of mature, tongue-in-cheek, and entertaining writing. The attention to detail in the strongest responses was excellent, and many candidates successfully focused on the minutiae of people and their actions in the working environment.

Many candidates made use of figurative language to effectively describe the activity in a typical office, which usually included staff movements and the sounds of office equipment. They focussed on sound, light and movement effectively, for example: 'The air hummed with activity. The rapid click of the stapler was drowned out by the deep voices of the gray-haired men stepping out of the elevator. Early morning sunlight streamed through the windows and highlighted the thin layer of dust on the young receptionist's desk.'

Many stronger responses incorporated the descriptive elements of the piece within a narrative of an office activity, such as in this example: 'Yet more unfortunate news. One of the editors slammed the fax machine in frustration, breaking it. He was given a stern lecture by the vice editor-in-chief. When it rains, it pours. Slowly but surely as the day concluded, things were starting to wrap up. The yelling died down and was instead replaced by sighs of relief.'

In weaker responses, descriptions of the office were in need of development and coherence. Some candidates relied too much on narrative instead of focusing on detailed descriptions, along with overusing

onomatopoeia in an attempt to achieve the 'sound' aspect of the task. Many weaker responses provided descriptions of the elements of a busy office as independent pieces from each other. This resulted in some repetition of descriptive vocabulary. In some weak responses, paragraphing was not observed, which resulted in one long piece of writing. Other weaker responses were mainly narrative and many did not construct any imagery around an office, being limited to factual accounts, such as: 'There was coffee brewing and lots of people at computers.'

Question 4 – Email

You recently read a newspaper article which said that having a lot of possessions does not always make people happy. You decide to write an email to the editor, in response to this article, giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Nearly all candidates acknowledged the article in their opening address and many created quotations from the imagined article in order to develop their opinions, for example: 'Your journalist spoke about appreciating the little things in life. I wholeheartedly agree.' Those who did reference the article gave various reasons for agreeing with the statement in the prompt, while a few candidates justified the contrasting viewpoint, such as in this example: 'I enjoyed reading your recent newspaper article about the negative effect that a lot of possessions can have on our happiness. Whilst I agreed with many of the points raised in the article, I felt that the author did not focus on pressure placed on us by society to have a lot of possessions. In daily life we are bombarded by advertisements for new goods and products.'

Successful answers were well organised, got straight to the point and used discourse markers effectively. A large majority of responses were appropriately formal and of the general opinion that you need at least some possessions to make you happy, with one candidate noting: 'Possessions really do make you happy because I have never seen a man sad in a Bugatti.' Nearly all made the point that family and friends were important for happiness. Many candidates chose to include fictitious statistics or quotes from experts to prove their points; generally these were quite sensible.

Stronger responses not only included reasons points of view, but provided insights on the effect of possessions on people's happiness, for example: 'When people view the world as an everlasting race to the top, they rarely stop to notice that they're wasting their lives on pointless things. It is so unfortunate that they never realise this issue because society could potentially crumble if generations ahead care about their personal belongings and fame above all else.' Stronger responses also gave reasonable, balanced arguments on how accumulating possessions does not always make people happy, as expressed here: 'In terms of money, the relentless barrage of possessions will leave one in debt. The valued costs after depreciation will raise one's anxiety, sending pangs of agony through your worn-out skin. Furthermore, there is the crippling siege of fear, marred only by insecurity.'

Weaker responses demonstrated minimal attempt at organisation, with inaccurate sentence demarcation errors further affecting the coherence of the writing. Candidates seemed to struggle with conveying many relevant ideas and some seemed to go off track very easily, resulting in a rant to the editor. Weaker responses were commonly in need of more developed rationale behind opinions, and were also categorised by generalised content with a loss of focus, as in this example: 'Money is a very important and basic need for daily life. Everyone could make statements saying that money does not buy happiness. But at the end of the day we still need it and cannot buy happiness but it is a source through which we can get happiness.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23 Writing

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 adhere to the guidance of writing no more than 400 words for their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They should avoid lengthy preambles before addressing the actual task. Candidates should also adhere to the rubric of writing a minimum of 600 words for their **Section B** response.
- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instruction is to write the text for a 'leaflet', giving 'advice on how to reduce household waste' and creating a sense of the 'importance' of doing this
- 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. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker responses lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. Two errors that again occurred quite regularly were those of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops and of writing in sentence fragments rather than in complete sentences. Sentence construction and demarcation are 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 tense.
- 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, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- 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

Many 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, writing effective leaflets which gave clear and sensible advice. Weaker responses wrote poorly structured leaflets about recycling or reducing the amount of rubbish without much, if any, specific detail.

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. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused entirely on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis, usually 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 (speech, review, or story), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally lost focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were simple recounts of a camping trip, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion about the campsite. Some **Question 3** stories lack the required sense of drama or suspense, while some **Question 4** letters lacked an appropriate tone and did not refer to any specific details from the article.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You belong to an environmental organisation which is concerned about the amount of rubbish that people throw away. You have offered to produce a leaflet which explains how people can reduce their household waste.

- (a) **Write the text for the leaflet, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, give advice on how to reduce household waste, and create a sense of the importance of doing this.**

Although the question was well-received, some candidates overlooked the initial wording of the question about belonging to an environmental organisation. The question generated some passionate responses from candidates with genuine concerns about climate change and the factors that are attributed to it being expressed by many. Most candidates recognised and handled the explanatory and motivational nature of the assignment well. Some responses did not quite meet the form and style of a leaflet. Some candidates strayed into green issues more generally and offered advice on saving resources such as water and electricity. A great many mentioned climate change and were able to effectively create a sense of urgency, especially with the use of statistics.

Stronger responses made use of a varied vocabulary and a variety of rhetorical and argumentative techniques. They outlined the problem of not dealing with household waste with references to 'eco systems', 'destroyed habitats' and how 'Things Can Change.' Stronger responses demonstrated effective use of emotive language, such as with this rallying cry for action: 'Earth is in our hands, and it is our responsibility to take care of it. We only get one planet and pollution caused by excess trash is slowly killing it. Join us in taking a stand for the environment and for our futures.'

Many candidates adhered to the form of a leaflet by presenting the advice in sections, often using subheadings in question form to directly address the reader, and following these up with relevant advice. Positive language with a friendly tone were hallmarks of stronger responses, which also offered practical solutions such as recycling and reusing, as in this response: 'Another great way to reduce waste in your household is to invest in a composter. Composters take food and other trash and turn it into soil that can be used in gardens, backyards and more. Not only will you be cutting back on waste, but you'll be helping the environment in the process!'

Others explored ideas of more thoughtful shopping, such as using refillable containers and sustainable bags for carrying, avoiding pre-packaged food and planning in advance so that only food which could be eaten within a certain time was bought. Some advised against impulse buying of something which might have only limited use and might soon end up in landfill sites. On the subject of re-using, one candidate wrote: 'The possibilities are endless, but our environment's resources are not.'

Some weaker responses presented the advice as a sequence of brief bullet points, in some cases disregarding the need to assess the importance of reducing household waste. A small number of candidates misunderstood 'household waste', and wrote about the importance of people keeping

their homes clean and tidy, sometimes with the help of a paid cleaner. Some of the weakest responses offered a generalised response to the question which focused on environmental issues and/or climate change without giving advice on ways for readers to reduce their household waste specifically. Such responses lacked clear focus on the question. Other weaker responses tended to repeat arguments and became wordy, for example: 'Step three. After all that if the item is able to be recycled then recycle it. So it is not thrown away but used in another way. The final step, just keep up with the first steps and you'll start to make your healthy impact.'

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

Most candidates started their commentaries with an introductory paragraph citing audience and purpose and most showed at least some linguistic knowledge, although did not often get beyond simple identification of linguistic features.

Stronger responses maintained a close focus on the linguistic and stylistic choices made for writing the leaflet, as well as making use of appropriate terminology linked to effect. They identified some features in the **1(a)** response, 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 explained: 'I used parallelism in my sentences in order to draw analogies that will help the reader understand my suggestions and why they are important. For example: 'The best way to take out fewer trash bags is to take in fewer shopping bags!' The double use of the word 'bags', with the change in out/in and trash/shopping, helps to illustrate the intended change in the readers' actions.'

Another strong response also clearly connected the aim of using certain text features with the purpose of the text: 'I ask a question about how much waste the average household produces each day and then respond with "too much". This accomplishes both the task of drawing the audience's attention and directing them to the central focus of the text, which is that waste is a major issue. The answer of "too much" creates a sense of curiosity as to why it is excessive as well as a sense of worry because too much of something carries a negative connotation.'

Some weaker responses wrongly identified linguistic features. The weakest responses simply described or paraphrased the story opening, as in this example: 'The text I just wrote about trying to stop people wasting rubbish is persuasive. I say that because I stated that the leaflet would help them to stop wasting and I state why they should stop wasting it in the first.' Some very weak responses were extremely short, sometimes just a few sentences.

Some weaker responses identified a few basic language and structural features but stopped short of analysis. Some attempted analysis but used general phrases such as, 'This makes the reader want to read on' and, 'This makes the audience interested.' Others used the vague phrase, 'It creates a picture in the reader's mind' when referencing imagery. The absence of linguistic terminology also negatively affected the marks of weaker responses. Most comments were limited to the structure of the story opening and the language used without relating these to their effects on the audience. Lower-level responses lacked exemplification; many weaker responses focused solely on structure, with little or nothing on language or form, or focused solely on language and gave no consideration to structure.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

You have just returned from a camping holiday in another country. You decide to write a review of the campsite that you stayed on, which you will post on an international travel website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

A number of candidates overlooked the key words 'camping holiday' in the question and referenced luxurious hotels instead. Audience was also overlooked by some candidates, with there being little sense of the response being written for an international travel website. Most candidates did recognise the need to comment on the location, which sometimes included some travel details, though a few candidates spent too long describing a journey.

Many stronger responses seemed to have been written from personal experience and showed a believable enthusiasm for locations as diverse as Japan (where the wide range of outdoor activities was praised), Canada (where glamping and a breakfast of pancakes with maple syrup dripped straight from the branch of a tree had left a good impression) and Bulgaria (where the basic lifestyle and simplicity of the artwork reflecting the country's culture were eloquently appreciated). Some emotive lexis was used to persuade the audience of the delights available; however, practical snags, for example in the booking system or the lack of hot showers, balanced the aspects which were recommended.

Stronger responses balanced description, personal experience and recommendations, with many mentioning the helpful campsite owners, availability of fuel for campfires and clean facilities. Many stronger responses had a clear introductory section giving a brief resume of the location/site/overall rating. Selection of material was important for a successful response, which included opinion and an assessment of the campsite. One successful review began thus: 'Last week I had the honour of staying in what I now consider to be the best campsite I have ever seen; perhaps the best campsite in the world! I have visited many campsites before but I have never been in such a nice community-centred one. I got the opportunity to meet multitudes of new, interesting people, many of whom shared similar interests to mine'

Stronger reviews typically ended with an effective conclusion, summing up the holiday, as in this example: 'My experience at the campsite was wonderful, and I highly recommend it to anyone and everyone. Whether you are traveling alone, with family, or with friends, I guarantee that you will enjoy a trip there. I have already booked it for my summer trip and I am sure it will become my favourite camping location.' A clear recommendation and star rating were often included in the conclusion, along with a justification for the rating.

A common oversight observed in the work of some weaker responses was overlooking the need to review the event and these 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. Such responses often read like accounts of a holiday, rather than a review. Other weaker responses produced were quite one-sided, either being unrelentingly negative about the facilities available or praising the range of activities with little information about the practicalities of arranging the trip or accessing the campsite.

Question 3 – Story

Write a story called *Gone!* about an important object that mysteriously disappears. In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

There were many engaging and, in some cases, well-crafted responses. Answers were varied, ranging from security guards and directors discovering missing museum relics/artefacts to lost jewellery/watches that were often family heirlooms. A significant number were written in the horror genre with the important object being a kidnapped or missing person; such stories were often overly complex or not well enough explained, leaving the reader confused.

Stronger responses made use of dialogue and strongly descriptive verbs and adjectives to create drama and suspense, as seen in this example: 'My fingers groped around the fabric, connecting with nothing. I took a breath, trying to ease my fears, and searched my other pocket.

'Viv?' one of the other girls said, likely noting my frantic movements. 'Where's the key?'

The 'important object' was subject to a variety of interpretations, from a missing piece of jewellery, a wedding gown, a scientific report, to a hamster called 'Biscuit'. The latter involved a young, rather lackadaisical young man, hamster-sitting for his sister. The story was full of humour which led to outrageous panic when the hamster went missing. From such a simple idea, the candidate was able to create a world of chaos and frenzy as the lazy young man desperately searched his sister's home, having become 'Biscuit-less'. The 'rodent', with its 'bulging eyes', appeared in the end and peace was restored. Strong responses, such as this one, created variations in mood and atmosphere, often building towards an intense feeling of despair.

Drama and suspense were created in stronger responses by a variety of means, including short sentences, such as, 'Rage thrummed in her ears.' One very moving story centred on the narrator's lucky socks having gone missing before an important interview, which proved unsuccessful. It gradually emerged that the socks had regularly been played with by the owner's dog and that the real problem was, in fact, the death of the dog.

Some weaker responses gave overly long accounts of the search for the missing object, with whole responses sometimes being given over to searching drawers and cupboards, only to express relief at the

close when the mysteriously disappeared object reappeared. In addition, weaker stories tended to include sudden endings which were not particularly effective. The choice of the important object was key to creating the sense of drama and suspense required by the question. However, some candidates chose poorly with mobile phones, homework, and other such everyday items being at the centre of the 'mysterious' disappearance, and such responses inevitably lacked the required level of drama and suspense to be successful.

Many stories were not planned well, resulting in unsatisfactory endings or poorly managed cliffhangers. There were issues of poor paragraphing, poor punctuation – especially of dialogue – and poor control of tenses. Candidates should be aware that short stories rarely work well if there are too many characters, if the timeline is prolonged, or if they try to recreate a movie plot.

Question 4 – Letter

You recently read a newspaper article which said that maths should not be a compulsory school subject. You decide to write a letter to the editor, in response to this article, giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Many candidates who opted for this question produced quite convincing arguments. Most thought that maths should be compulsory at school, and certainly at primary/elementary school. Reasons offered were generally quite thoughtful and included that maths is nearly always helpful in later life and it teaches skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, self-discipline and determination. A few candidates rather overused mathematical jargon. Some candidates chose to include fictitious statistics or quotes from experts/teachers/professors to prove their points; generally, these seemed quite sensible. Contrastingly, some candidates cited maths as a stressful and difficult subject, which most candidates did not understand, and which should not, therefore, be a compulsory subject.

Stronger responses were well balanced and organised, stressing the importance of maths in everyday life and for future careers, usually making reference to the imaginary article, which made for more convincing and authentic letters. Most pointed out many of the everyday uses of basic principles in balancing household budgets, checking bills and tax demands and measuring quantities. More sophisticated responses put forward 'influential historical contributors' such as Einstein and Turing, elaborating on what the benefits to mankind of their mathematical calculations had been. Many kinds of technological and medical advances whose pioneers had to rely on their mathematical abilities were eloquently cited. A key strength in some candidates' work was the acknowledgement of the editor as the audience, using an appropriately judged voice.

Stronger responses were often written from the role of a concerned parent or candidate. Much attention was given to the wide range of applications that require skills in mathematics, as in this example: 'As a mother of three children, I cannot explain the joy and frustration that the word 'mathematics' brings to me. My youngest son, Raj, absolutely hated math but one day he went to school and came back smiling and laughing, and jumping into my arms. His teacher had begun using a Rubik's cube. She had taught the children how to solve it and then connected it to math.' Stronger arguments took examples from real life, whilst also making use of rhetorical techniques, for example: 'Would you really trust a building that was designed by an architect that did not know how to accurately calculate lengths of critical support structures?'

Weaker responses were often repetitive. They sometimes veered from the topic, or did not develop ideas beyond a few simple points: for example, commonly used arguments were that most people do not use any maths in their adult lives and that some people are just not good at the subject. Often, the conventions of formal discursive writing, such as clear, logically arranged paragraphs and discourse markers, were not observed.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31 Language Analysis
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Key messages

In June 2023 the question paper presented candidates with stimulus material which invited sustained analytical responses which synthesised language data alongside supportive ideas from wider study of the language topics.

The key skills required were outlined in the four assessment objectives which were applied to the question paper overall: AO1 (Understanding), AO2 (Writing), AO4 (Conceptualisation) and AO5 (Data handling). Crafting of responses needed to take account of the ways in which the different weightings of the assessment objectives were applied to each of the two compulsory questions.

One of the two compulsory questions appeared in each section of the question paper: **Question 1** in **Section A** related to the topic of *Language change* and **Question 2** in **Section B** related to the topic of *Child language acquisition*. For each question, there were 25 marks available, giving a total of 50 available marks for the whole paper.

General comments

Most responses used an appropriate register for discussion which was crafted into logical sequences and ideas. There was a reasonable level of supporting scholarship noted although, at times, reference to wider study was not always relevant to the specific language topic.

Brief and meaningful planning was seen which sometimes included useful points which were developed in full responses.

Overall, responses tended to be shorter than in previous series which meant that analysis was not always sustained, nor cohesive.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The question paper clearly states that all three data sources should be used. In the June 2023 series, this requirement had been observed by most candidates, even where Text B and C were seen as separate entities and where they were analysed to a mostly limited extent towards the end of a response.

Cohesive responses, and therefore those which were clearer or more effective, incorporated detailed analysis from all three sources throughout the body of the analysis, with each point made being supported by relevant theoretical references.

Writing

In June 2023, there was more evidence of structural organisation than had been seen in previous series. Paragraphing was generally clear, although paragraphs often began with colloquial discourse markers which led to an overall lapse in register. At times, the discourse markers '*As previously stated ...*' or '*As I said earlier ...*' led to comments which became repetitious or simply provided points which had already been discussed.

It was noted that more candidates than in previous series were confident in structuring analyses which moved through a logical sequence of linguistic frameworks. These usually included a selection from graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, semantics or pragmatics. This approach is not a requirement of **Section A** although, where it had been used, responses tended to offer a clearer linguistic standpoint, even in responses which were not sustained. The approach also led to a more thorough observation of AO2 by using technical terminology, leading to enhanced analytical writing skills.

Nonetheless, more generally, weaker responses were structured in a way which reflected the order of presentation of the texts in the question paper. In such responses, analysis of Texts B and C were not given sufficient consideration for the response to be described as cohesively crafted and therefore clear or effective writing skills were not always seen.

Clearer or more effective discussions began analysis immediately. Some limited responses began with a long paragraph which detailed historical discussion. In analytical writing, it may be useful to briefly identify the place of the stimulus material on an historical timeline but long accounts of the history of the English language can only provide irrelevant material if they are not directly tied to the stimulus material.

Conceptualisation

In June 2023, observation of AO4 was often limited to very brief mention of a linguistic concept such as amelioration or pejoration, or historical influences such as technological advancement in the printing industry, vowel shift or the industrial revolution. As Text A was from 1833, consideration of Caxton or Jespersen could only offer the most basic of support. Most responses which considered the Great Vowel Shift used it to support Text A's archaic orthographical presentation of *ancle* thus the reference was not relevant. Moreover, credit for AO4 often relied on a theorist's name or reference to a theory which may not have been fully relevant or that was incorrect. As in previous series, the discourse marker '*Some theorists believe ...*' with no further referencing only led to further basic or limited support.

Basic responses misunderstood the concept of collocation in Text B and provided discussion on how the plural *themselves* and verb *please* had, over time, become singular *myself* and noun *hopes* respectively – inaccurately indicating that linguistic conversion had taken place. Such responses would have benefited from closer reading of the preamble to Text B which clearly described *Collocates of the verb 'flatter'*. Some candidates attempted to ascribe the idiom 'flatter to deceive' to Sir Walter Scott or Shakespeare.

However, clearer analyses of text B revealed understanding of pragmatic shift in the use of the verb *flatter* as it is now used more to compliment physical qualities in contemporary English, yet interestingly *deceive* remains a collocate in both columns. Text B's *selues* was analysed in clear or effective responses in relation to Latin etymology synthesising Text A's Roman numerals **PART IV**. Development of analyses using the concept of etymology and lexical borrowing were effective in consideration of *Pantaloons* with knowledge and understanding of French, Spanish or the stock character from Commedia dell'arte being offered.

Overall, the most frequently seen theoretical models and approaches were Crystal's Tide, Schmidt's Wave, Hartl and Clark's concept of cultural transmission, Hockett's random fluctuation theory, Aitchison's Damp Spoon or Crumbling Castle, Halliday's functional linguistics including lexical gaps and Chen's S-curve. Effective responses incorporated an increased level of detail from such models which was insightful and sophisticated at times.

Data handling

Most candidates engaged well with the many and varied graphological aspects of Text A, also noting how these might differ in a contemporary instruction manual. The formal register of this text was explored as was the syntax of the long sentence constructions, often separated only by comma or semi-colon.

A lexical framework was most frequently used to analyse the change in use of *breeches*, *pantaloons*, *trowzers* and *trousers* with clearer analyses tying incidences seen in Text A to the data in Text C. Most candidates offered 'pants' as a contemporary abbreviation of *pantaloons*. The adjective *disgusting* drew much comment as to how it has become more emotive in contemporary use. The adverb *hitherto* was often labelled obsolete but candidates should be aware that just because lexis is not used in their own everyday discourse community it does not mean that lexical items are obsolete. Similarly, in Text A, the adverb *well* was used to intensify *convinced*. This construction was also often described as obsolete whereas it may have been better described as used frequently in contemporary colloquial sociolects.

Grammatical change in capitalisation of nouns was often analysed in limited responses as was the consistent use of closed punctuation in the graphological features of lines 1 to 9, whereas clearer and more detailed responses explored the unexpected subject-verb disagreements: *which make five measurements* and *is sufficient*, and syntactical transposition of the definite article in *PART THE FOURTH*.

The *n*-gram of Text C was interpreted well although limited responses only provided a replication of the numerical data without reference to where those items which also appeared in Text A might sit on the timeline offered in Text C, and how or why development over time had taken place.

Section B

Question 2

The data source for **Question 2** was a transcription of a conversation involving two boys called Alfie and George, a girl called Lily, and their teacher. The children were all 5 years old and at school, painting pictures for a competition. Candidates were required to analyse ways in which the children and their teacher were using language in this 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, there was a clear understanding of most of the stimulus material and the ways in which the interlocutors interacted. Where phonemic representation of speech sound was shown in the data source, understanding was not always clearly demonstrated, despite the reference table having been provided on page 8 of the question paper. Candidates are encouraged to check the reference table, rather than rely on their own interpretation of the phonemic representation.

An approach seen in limited responses was to analyse the characteristic features of the utterances of each of the interlocutors separately. Such approach was rarely fruitful as some of the features described were relevant to more than one interlocutor, such as prosody, mispronunciation, pause or paralanguage. Such responses therefore became repetitious in their descriptions of, for example, intonation. On the other hand, clearer and more effective responses made a careful selection of features seen throughout the transcription, therefore firmly rooting the analysis in a linguistic standpoint. Careful selections of features included deictical reference, non-standard construction, turn taking, fulfilment of adjacency pairing, negation, contraction, conditional construction, continuous form of tense, questioning technique, emphasis and phonological competence. All of these were seen in the transcription and those candidates who had selected from these features detailed their responses clearly or effectively.

Moreover, effective responses made an accurate use of linguistic terminology to label characteristic features selected for analysis which demonstrated deeper understanding of the language topic overall. More limited responses described only a few utterances, or a selection of minor linguistic features, or indeed merely used the transcription key to identify speech patterns which were then described in general terms.

Conceptualisation

Most responses were able to position the child interlocutors in the post-telegraphic stage of acquisition using knowledge of the children's ages. Cognitive ability was described by reference to Piaget: in general, responses detailed the preoperational stage using the same criterion, although there was some more confident analysis of Lily's ability to form a complex sentence with the conditional: *so if you were in that team we wouldn't have enough in our team* and George's reasoning in *yeah but it cant be /fri:/ teams* leading to consideration of whether there was an indication of those children approaching the concrete operational stage.

The teacher's use of child directed speech was generally analysed in terms of her abbreviation of Alfie's name to *Alf*, the way in which she used upwards intonation to complete declaratives in order for them to function as questions, as in *that's all i can ask from you okay↗*, and emphatic stress as in *his best picture*. Where scaffolding was perceived in, for example, *guys* or *pick up the painting*, Bruner and Vygotsky were referenced mostly relevantly and mostly in a developed manner.

Examples of a range of Hallidayan functions were evident in the transcription, for example, the representational function in *alfies gonna CRY*, the regulatory function in the teacher's imperatives, the personal function in Alfie's *thats all i can do* and the interactional function in the question *george↗*. These

were mostly accurately referenced although limited responses tended to label the functions as stages and there was some confusion as to the heuristic function.

Prosodic features drew much attention, in particular Lily's raised volume in *alfies gonna CRY* and the way in which the children generally used emphasis with ease, mirroring the teacher's utterances. Mirroring was also analysed in Alfie's *do you think my best paintings good*, giving rise to the opportunity to introduce Skinner and imitation.

In general, there was some tendency to introduce theories and theorists before points were made and without any supporting evidence from the text. Candidates should be fully aware that AO4 is designed to support AO1 and AO5, and not the other way round: in other words, the conceptualisation is there to reference the analysis – the analysis is not there to substantiate theoretical models and approaches.

Data handling

Candidates found ample opportunity to analyse phonological competence of the child interlocutors. At times this was detailed and accurate but mostly it was less so. Often, Alfie's non-standard *i /wɪfn/* was misinterpreted and described as mispronunciation of the central phoneme which was inaccurate – in fact it is the final phoneme which is pronounced incorrectly, with the colloquial substitution of /n/ for /ŋ/. Close attention to the IPA chart would have avoided this inaccuracy.

There was more accurate analysis of George's phonological competence in his *fri*, with some responses correctly identifying substitution of the fricative /f/ in place of the more difficult /θ/. Candidates should be aware, however, that the /θ/ is a phoneme, and not a consonant cluster as was most often described.

Further inaccurate analysis discussed Lily's *he wish he was in that team* which was also labelled as mispronunciation rather than virtuous verb form error. Further verb errors were shown in the transcription in Alfie's omission of the copular 'was' in line 20.

Overall, in terms of data handling, responses demonstrated analytical skills which ranged from basic comments on the extent to which the children had reached expected milestones, to limited to clear discussion on spontaneous adjacency pairing, questioning or simple virtuous errors, through to some keen engagement with the rich variety of features provided in the transcription.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32 Language Analysis
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Key messages

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The key skills required were outlined in the four assessment objectives which were applied to the question paper overall: AO1 (Understanding), AO2 (Writing), AO4 (Conceptualisation) and AO5 (Data handling). Crafting of responses needed to take account of the ways in which the different weightings of the assessment objectives were applied to each of the two compulsory questions.

One of the two compulsory questions appeared in each section of the question paper: **Question 1** in **Section A** related to the topic of *Language change* and **Question 2** in **Section B** related to the topic of *Child language acquisition*. For each question, there were 25 marks available, giving a total of 50 available marks for the whole paper.

General comments

In the June 2023 series, analyses tended to be sustained in responses to both compulsory questions. Candidates had used an appropriate examination technique to allocate sufficient time in which to plan and craft work, which was usually clear. Most responses used an appropriate register in paragraphs which formed logical sequences of ideas. There was a good overall level of supporting scholarship noted which was usually relevant and appropriately positioned to support points made.

Brief and meaningful planning was seen which had included useful ideas which were developed in full responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The question paper clearly stated that all three data sources should be used and in the June 2023 series, this requirement had been observed by most candidates, even where Text B and C were seen as separate entities and where they were analysed to a mostly limited extent towards the end of the response.

Cohesive responses, and therefore those which were clearer or more effective, incorporated detailed analysis from all three sources throughout the body of the analysis, with each point made being supported by relevant theoretical references.

Writing

In June 2023 there was more evidence of structural organisation than had been seen in previous series. Paragraphing was generally clear. It was noted that more candidates were confident in structuring analyses which moved through a logical sequence of linguistic frameworks. These usually appropriately included a selection from graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, semantics or pragmatics. This approach is not a requirement of **Section A** although, where it had been used, responses tended to offer a clearer linguistic

standpoint, even in responses which were not sustained. The approach also led to a more thorough observation of AO2 by using technical terminology, leading to enhanced analytical writing skills.

Nonetheless, many responses were structured in a way which reflected the order of presentation of the texts in the question paper. In such responses, analysis of Texts B and C were not given sufficient consideration for the response to be described as cohesively crafted and therefore clear or effective writing skills were not always seen.

At times, colloquial discourse markers and lapses in grammar led to an overall decrease in register. In some responses, there was evidence of the temptation to write about everything known about the topic rather than keeping the response focused and succinct. Moreover, the discourse markers 'As previously stated ...' or 'As I said earlier ...' led to comments which became repetitious. A lengthy response does not necessarily mean that it is thorough and candidates should be aware of the specific requirements of the question at all times.

As in previous series, some limited responses began with a long paragraph which detailed historical discussion, whereas clearer or more effective approaches began analysis immediately. In analytical writing, it may be useful to first identify the place of Text A briefly on an historical timeline but long accounts of the history of the English language can only provide irrelevant material if they are not directly tied to the stimulus material.

Conceptualisation

In June 2023, weaker observation of AO4 was often limited to very brief mention of a linguistic concept such as amelioration or pejoration, or historical influences such as technological advancement in the printing industry, vowel shift or the industrial revolution. As Text A was from 1904, consideration of Jespersen could only offer the most basic of support, although Caxton and the origins of printing and broadcasting were relevant when used sparingly. At times, only a theorist's name or reference to a theory which may not have been fully relevant or incorrect was provided. As in previous series, the basic discourse marker 'Some theorists believe ...', with no further referencing, only led to basic or limited support.

Clear and effective responses understood the relationship of Text A's date of publication and subject matter to the changing technological and sociological progression of the time and made women's suffrage and advancement due to the industrial revolution relevant to the discussion.

Text B was generally analysed well although, at times, separately from Text A. The concept of synonym seen in the word table was understood, as were the concepts of pragmatic shift and pejoration where, over time, *satisfactory* in the second column of the table had developed a less than flattering connotation moving, for example, from *pleasing* to *tolerable*.

Overall, the most frequently seen theoretical models and approaches were Crystal's Tide, Schmidt's Wave, Hartl and Clark's concept of cultural transmission, Hockett's random fluctuation theory, Aitchison's Damp Spoon or Crumbling Castle, Halliday's functional linguistics including lexical gaps and Chen's S-curve. Effective responses incorporated an increased level of detail from such models and were insightful and sophisticated at times. Less fruitful approaches were extended references to genderlect models such as those from Lakoff, Cameron or Tannen as Text A was a written and not spoken text, even though the leap forward of women able to participate in *automobiling* in 1904 was a great sociological advancement.

Cultural transmission was particularly relevant as Text A had appeared as an advertisement in an American newspaper, yet there was an opportunity to discuss the concept of etymology and borrowing in Text A's *Madame Fashion* and the further transmission of *her majesty*.

Data handling

Most candidates engaged well with the graphological aspects of Text A including varied font size, column presentation and closed punctuation. The chatty register of this text was explored through its ability to engage with its target audience with direct address, including rhetorical questioning, and was compared with similar contemporary advertisements.

A lexical framework was frequently used to analyse the change over time in the use of English. Basic or limited responses stated that much of the lexis in Horne's advertisement had become obsolete, referencing lexical items such as *serge*, *foulard* and *lisle*. On the contrary, these words were part of a lexical field which targeted an audience of readers who were seeking high quality fashion items of the day. Candidates should be aware that just because certain lexical items are not used in their own everyday discourse community it

does not mean that lexical items are obsolete, and an open mind should be used when assessing older prose texts. Another lexical item which resulted in some confused analysis was *kid*, with responses stating that the word had undergone complete pragmatic change and was now only used in reference to a child. This is not the case: a kid is a term for a young goat and that has resulted in the contemporary colloquial noun for child.

The grammatical items and the ways in which the *n*-gram of Text C demonstrated change were mostly interpreted well. Limited responses only provided a replication of the numerical data without reference to how, why and where the item which appeared in Text A might sit on the timeline offered in Text C, and how or why development over time had taken place. However, *'Tis but* sits prominently in Text A, and developed analysis of this and other possibly archaic constructions such as *Every one all wool with pure wool lining* and *there is none better, very few so good* were analysed in an insightful manner in some responses.

Section B

Question 2

The data sources for **Question 2** were transcriptions of two parts of a conversation between India (age 1 year and 10 months) and her mother. The interlocutors were at home, playing with some toy monkeys and other toy animals. Candidates were required to analyse ways in which India and her mother were using language in this conversation. Candidates were further required to refer to specific details from the transcriptions, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

Overall, there was a clear understanding of most of the stimulus material and the ways in which the interlocutors interacted. Where phonemic representation of speech sound was shown in the data source, understanding was not always clearly demonstrated, despite the reference table having been provided on page 8 of the question paper. Candidates are encouraged to check the reference table, rather than rely on their own interpretation of the phonemic representation.

Limited responses merely described a limited selection of characteristic features seen without further analysis, whilst some basic responses had used the transcription key to identify items from the transcription. Clearer and effective responses analysed features such as the mother's questioning technique, use of onomatopoeia, prosodic features used for specific effects, diminutives, imperatives and recasting – all seen as components of the mother's child directed speech. In India's utterances, there was evidence of her language acquisition which included deletion of unstressed syllable (*nana*), competent turn taking, fulfilled adjacency pair, negation (*no*), adjective (*little*), and a variety of items indicating her phonological competence.

Effective responses made an accurate use of linguistic terminology to label characteristic features selected for analysis which demonstrated deeper understanding of the language topic overall. More limited responses described a small selection of data in general terms, with some candidates demonstrating misreading of the preamble to the question, indicating that they understood that the dialogue had been taking place in a zoo.

Conceptualisation

Most responses were able to position India in the holophrastic stage of acquisition using knowledge of her age, as provided in the question paper. Some responses did not develop their diagnosis, but clearer or more effective responses used evidence from the transcription to support claims. Cognitive ability was described with reference to Piaget: in general, responses detailed the preoperational stage using the criterion of age, although there was some more confident analysis of the extent to which India had emerged from the sensorimotor stage. Basic responses took India's *indecipherable speech sounds* as a clear indication of her sensorimotor and babbling stage without further exploration of any utterances such as the telegraphic *bye bye mummy*.

Examples of a range of Hallidayan functions were evident in the transcription, for example the representation function in *dan/fit mummy* and *MORE*, the imaginative function in *brum brum brum*, the instrumental function in *no*, and the interactional function in *bye bye mummy*. These were mostly accurately referenced although limited responses tended to label the functions as stages and there was some confusion as to the heuristic function in particular.

The mother provided positive reinforcement as India tried to count: *one two three four (.) thats right* which enabled discussion of Skinner's theory and behaviourism. There was some further development to this concerning India's imitation of the mother's *jump*. Effective responses saw their own development as an opportunity to contrast Skinner's approach with that of Chomsky, detailing a suggestion that India's omissions of certain grammatical items were her being systematic rather than her utterances being provided in imitation.

Further methods and approaches were relevantly referenced, including Vygotsky and Bruner, applied to a selection of utterances which evidenced scaffolding. However, at times there was a tendency in weaker responses to introduce theories and theorists before points were made and without any supporting evidence from the text. Candidates should be fully aware that AO4 is designed to support AO1 and AO5, and not the other way round: in other words, the conceptualisation is there to reference the analysis – the analysis is not there to substantiate theoretical models and approaches.

Data handling

Candidates found ample opportunity to analyse India's phonological competence. Overall, this was detailed and accurate but at times it was less so, with inaccuracies demonstrating that no reference to the IPA chart had been made. The most common lexical items under phonological scrutiny were /*lelaʊ*/, /*æməlz*/, /*dɒn*/ and /*dɔːtʃiː*/ with the features of assimilation, deletion of syllable, selection of final phoneme and substitution being identified and discussed.

The data also revealed competencies in reduplication in *jump jump jump*, *brum brum brum* and /*dɔːtʃiː*/ /*dɔːtʃiː*/ /*dɔːtʃiː*/ /*dɔːtʃiː*/ /*dɔːtʃiː*/ possibly indicating that India was relying on rhythmic patterns to assist her language acquisition. On the other hand, there were suggestions that her acquisition was being progressed by her own confidence in language play such as her *weeee*, which was described by one candidate as 'the onomatopoeia of joy'.

Overall, in terms of data handling, responses demonstrated analytical skills which ranged from basic comments on the extent to which the children had reached expected milestones, to limited to clear discussion on spontaneous adjacency pairing, questioning or simple virtuous errors, through to some keen engagement with the rich variety of features provided in the transcription.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33 Writing
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Key messages

In June 2023 the question paper presented candidates with stimulus material which invited sustained analytical responses which synthesised language data alongside supportive ideas from wider study of the language topics.

The key skills required were outlined in the four assessment objectives which were applied to the question paper overall: AO1 (Understanding), AO2 (Writing), AO4 (Conceptualisation) and AO5 (Data handling). Crafting of responses needed to take account of the ways in which the different weightings of the assessment objectives were applied to each of the two compulsory questions.

One of the two compulsory questions appeared in each section of the question paper: **Question 1** in **Section A** related to the topic of *Language change* and **Question 2** in **Section B** related to the topic of *Child language acquisition*. For each question, there were 25 marks available, giving a total of 50 available marks for the whole paper.

General comments

In the June 2023 series, responses tended to be shorter than in previous series, which meant that analysis was not always sustained nor cohesive. However, some responses used an appropriate register for work which was crafted into logical sequences and ideas. In most responses there was some supporting scholarship noted although, at times, reference to wider study was not always relevant to the specific language topic. On the other hand, a number of responses were seen which provided insightful reference to fully relevant models and approaches.

Brief and meaningful planning was seen which sometimes included useful points which were developed in full responses. There were some elaborate plans which had clearly taken up a lot of the examination time, leaving insufficient time for the full response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The question paper clearly stated that all three data sources should be used and in the June 2023 series this requirement had been observed by most candidates, even where Text B and C were seen as separate entities and where they were analysed to a mostly limited extent towards the end of the response.

Cohesive responses, and therefore those which were clearer or more effective, incorporated detailed analysis from all three sources throughout the body of the analysis, with each point made being supported by relevant theoretical references.

Writing

In June 2023 there was more evidence of structural organisation than had been seen in previous series. Even in basic or limited responses, paragraphing was generally clear although paragraphs often began with

colloquial discourse markers which led to a lower register overall. At times, the discourse markers ‘As previously stated . . .’ or ‘As I said earlier . . .’ led to comments which became repetitious.

However, in this series it was noted that more candidates than in previous series were confident in structuring analyses which moved through a logical sequence of linguistic frameworks, even in brief responses which used only two or three frameworks. These usually included a selection from graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, semantics or pragmatics. This approach is not a requirement of **Section A** although, where it had been used, responses tended to offer a clearer linguistic standpoint, even in responses which were not sustained. This approach also led to a more thorough observation of AO2 by using technical terminology, leading to enhanced analytical writing skills.

More generally, weaker responses were structured in a way which reflected the order of presentation of the texts in the question paper. In such responses, analysis of Texts B and C were not given sufficient consideration for the response to be described as cohesively crafted and therefore clear or effective writing skills were not always seen.

Some limited responses began with a long paragraph which detailed historical discussion, whereas clearer or more effective approaches began analysis immediately. In analytical writing, it may be useful to briefly identify the place of the stimulus material from Text A on an historical timeline but long accounts of the history of the English language can only provide irrelevant material if they are not directly tied to the stimulus material.

Conceptualisation

In June 2023, observation of AO4 was often limited to very brief mention of a linguistic concept such as amelioration or pejoration, or historical influences such as technological advancement in the printing industry, vowel shift or the industrial revolution. As Text A was from 1833, consideration of Jespersen could only offer the most basic of support. Most responses which considered the Great Vowel Shift used it to support Text A’s archaic orthographical presentation of *waggon*, thus the reference was not relevant. Moreover, credit for AO4 often relied on a theorist’s name or reference to a theory which may not have been fully relevant or that was incorrect. As in previous series, the basic discourse marker ‘Some theorists believe . . .’ with no further referencing only led to further basic or limited support.

Basic responses demonstrated misunderstanding of the concept of collocation in Text B and provided inaccurate discussion on how a linguistic shift had taken place, meaning that *illiterate* as seen in the first column had changed over time to take on the new meaning of *aggressive* as seen in the second column. However, clearer or effective responses detailed how *rude* had undergone the concept of narrowing over time. Further narrowing was seen in the noun *habit* used in Text A to mean ‘clothing’ whereas contemporary English would use it to describe clothing specific to a religious order and some effective responses incorporated both of these items to develop their conceptual discussion.

Overall, the most frequently seen theoretical models and approaches were Crystal’s Tide, Schmidt’s Wave, Hartl and Clark’s concept of cultural transmission, Hockett’s random fluctuation theory, Aitchison’s Damp Spoon or Crumbling Castle, Halliday’s functional linguistics including lexical gaps and Chen’s S-curve. Effective responses incorporated an increased level of detail from such models which was insightful and sophisticated at times.

Data handling

Most candidates engaged well with the varied graphological aspects of the headings of Text A, also noting how these might differ in a contemporary fiction text. Of particular note was the different font sizes and the possibly Germanic font style used to indicate the form of the text, the use of closed punctuation and the inclusion of an alternative title.

The formal register of this text was explored, as was the syntax of the long sentence constructions, often separated only by comma or semi-colon. Further analysis explored the hyphenated nouns *door-way*, *sign-board* and *fire-side* which have become compounded to form single words. Effective responses observed the change over time for compound nouns to begin by being written with a space, then to be hyphenated, then written solidly.

A lexical framework was most frequently used to analyse the change in use of *limner* and *yclept* as provided in the notes on the question paper. Other archaic lexis of note included the conjunction *ere*, meaning

'before'; the adjective *leathern* meaning 'made of leather' with clearer analyses tying *tale* seen in Text A to the data in Text C.

The adverb *exceedingly* was often labelled obsolete but candidates should be aware that just because lexis is not used in their own everyday discourse community it does not mean that lexical items are obsolete; more appropriately they should keep an open mind about archaism and obsolescence when reading previously unseen older prose texts.

The n-gram of Text C was interpreted well although limited responses only provided a replication of the numerical data without reference to where those items which also appeared in Text A might sit on the timeline offered in Text C, and how or why development over time had taken place. Most responses commented on the way in which *tale* was most commonly used in contemporary English to indicate folklore or as seen in popular material by Disney or similar franchises. *Story* as seen in Text C was generally perceived to describe a work of fiction, like that provided in Text A.

Section B

Question 2

The data sources for **Question 2** were transcriptions of extracts from two video messages from Ella (age 2 years) and her mother. The messages had been recorded for Ella's grandparents. Candidates were required to analyse ways in which Ella and her mother were using language in their conversations. Candidates were further required to refer to specific details from the transcriptions, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of child language acquisition.

Understanding

Overall, there was a clear understanding of most of the stimulus material and the ways in which the interlocutors interacted. Where phonemic representation of speech sound was shown in the data source, understanding was not always clearly demonstrated, despite the reference table having been provided on page 8 of the question paper. It seemed that in some basic or limited responses, candidates had relied on their own interpretation of the phonemic representation rather than checking against the reference table, which is a data source itself.

In some clear and more effective responses, a careful selection of features seen throughout the transcription was made, therefore firmly rooting the analysis to a linguistic standpoint. Examples of features included the mother's frequent questions to propel the conversation forward, varying intonation as in *what did we do yesterday ↗* (.) *did we go somewhere ↗* (.) *did we go to the beach ↗*, recasting as in *cock a doodle doo*, competent turn taking, some fulfilled adjacency pairs, and phonological competence which demonstrated substitution and deletion.

Clear or more effective responses made an accurate use of linguistic terminology to label characteristic features selected for analysis which demonstrated deeper understanding of the language topic overall. More limited responses described only a few utterances, or a selection of minor linguistic features, or indeed merely used the transcription key to identify speech patterns which were then described in general terms.

Conceptualisation

Most responses were able to position Ella in the holophrastic stage of acquisition using knowledge of her age as provided in the question paper. Cognitive ability was described by reference to Piaget: in general, responses detailed the preoperational stage using the same criterion of age, although there was some more confident analysis of Ella's telegraphic utterance, *had little boy ball* in an attempt to pinpoint her competence more accurately.

The mother's use of child directed speech was generally analysed in terms of her scaffolded approach with *bucket and spade* and her efforts to bring out a Vygotskian zone of proximal development which was achieved, as seen in Ella's *ella got /beɪd/*.

Examples of a range of Hallidayan functions were evident in the transcription, for example the regulatory function in *catch it* and the interactional function in *hi* (.) */gænpa:/ and nanny*. These were mostly accurately referenced although limited responses tended to label the functions as stages and there was some confusion as to the heuristic function.

Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device was frequently referenced with some relevance. Candidates commented on Ella's omission of certain grammatical elements suggesting that she was operating systematically rather than imitating what she has heard. However, the LAD was most notably applied to Ella's *caking* which was generally perceived accurately to be a virtuous error, which she had probably derived from a previous activity of baking a cake.

In general, there was some tendency to introduce theories and theorists before candidates had made specific points on the data and without any supporting evidence from the text. Candidates should be fully aware that AO4 is designed to support AO1 and AO5, and not the other way round: in other words, the conceptualisation is there to reference the analysis – the analysis is not there to substantiate theoretical models and approaches.

Data handling

In the June 2023 series the transcription provided a good deal of opportunity to analyse phonological competence of the child interlocutor. At times, this was detailed and accurate but mostly it was less so. There was misinterpretation of /deə/ and /eəki:p/, even though substantial contextual clues were present in the transcription and close attention to the IPA chart would have avoided these inaccuracies.

Ella's competence in negation demonstrated by her *no* was frequently noted, as was her misinterpretation of the mother's *morning* to which she replied *monday* and which was swiftly followed by the mother's negative reinforcement in *its saturday*. There was also discussion of Ella's stream of consciousness which was accompanied by paralinguistic features between lines 31 and 36. Such discussion was not always detailed, however, and only insightful responses provided a full analysis of Ella's longer utterances, with basic or limited responses tending to focus on the more minor features evident in the transcription. Nonetheless, there was some detailed analysis of utterances such as *wanna have it back now* which demonstrated elision, possession and the beginnings of understanding of the concept of time as well as competence in construction of an almost full, fluid sentence.

Overall, in terms of data handling, responses demonstrated analytical skills which ranged from basic comments on the extent to which Ella had reached expected milestones, to limited to clear discussion on her willingness to participate in adjacency pairing or her simple virtuous errors, through to some keen engagement with the rich variety of features provided in the transcription.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41 Language Topics
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Key messages

In June 2023, candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics by providing sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to two compulsory questions. Responses in the form of discursive essays were required to be supported by evidence from the stimulus material provided and relevant reference to linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches.

The two compulsory questions presented in Paper 41 targeted the language topics *English in the world*, presented in **Section A** and *Language and the self*, presented in **Section B**. There were 25 marks available in each section indicating that candidates should demonstrate examination technique by dividing their writing time equally between the two questions. In June 2023, although there was evidence of this approach, as in previous series, brief work was seen, particularly in responses to **Question 2**. It is important to note that although AO2 offers fewer marks than AOs 1 and 4, it is not only the clarity and control of expression, for example spelling, punctuation, grammar and paragraphing, which is under consideration. This assessment objective also considers the extent to which ideas are developed and whether they are relevant to the direct focus which is presented in the question.

There was evidence that candidates had attempted to analyse the writing of the stimulus material, particularly in **Question 2**. This is not required in Paper 41. Such analysis diminished the discursive qualities of some weaker responses because it ran the risk of becoming irrelevant content and was therefore not rewardable.

General comments

Although it was clear in some otherwise sound responses that there was an enthusiastic engagement with the language topic overall, particularly in **Question 1**, there was less engagement with the focus presented by the stimulus material. In June 2023, a strong tendency was seen to name as many theories and theorists as possible in an effort to address AO4, with only limited reference to the text provided. This was particularly marked in responses to **Question 2**. Throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the specific context provided; a demonstration of knowledge gained from wider reading is not sufficient to gain marks across all three assessment objectives. Candidates should also be aware that lengthy responses do not always mean that the work is fully creditable. Any theoretical reference should support points made: such references are there to support ideas and evidence; the text is not there to support theories.

At times, responses provided long paragraphs which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of historical or sociological events which were not tied into the specific context provided. Conversely, some responses made no reference to theoretical examples at all. Both of these approaches led to loss of marks either in AO1 or AO4.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Understanding

In June 2023, the text provided for **Question 1** was an article from *The New York Times*, published in 2019. 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 to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the linguistic issues put forward in the text provided, which included how *Europeans speaking perfect English ... may be a threat*, how *the number of Europeans who speak English has soared*, particularly among younger people, how this might be a threat to native English speakers and countries, the threat to the status of American university programmes, that *younger people in particular ... increasingly speak a nuanced English that can rival native speech*, how *native English may cease to be the gold standard*, how *natives are losing their competitive edge* and how *the ubiquity of English lulls ... Anglophones into thinking that it's O.K. to be monolingual*.

Clear or more effective responses made a careful selection from these examples relating them directly to the specific focus of the question, thinking creatively around the present and future status of the English language. Some limited responses worked through each of the points in the order in which they appeared in the text with only basic development or paraphrase.

Writing

Clear or more effective responses were structured clearly in a logical, fluent sequence of developed ideas which made an immediate introduction to ideas from the text. Many weaker responses, however, began with an introduction that demonstrated wider study of the overall language topic *English in the world*. Often, this historical information bore little relevance to either the context provided or to the key points of the main body of the response, including statistics of the number of English speakers in the world, the number of languages currently existing globally and some unconnected statements made by language theorists. With careful crafting, this wider knowledge and understanding of the overall language topic could have been made relevant had it been tied to specific points raised later in the discussion. There were also some weaker conclusions which were long reiterations of previous points instead of reinforcements which confirmed strong linguistic standpoints.

In general, an appropriate register was used although weaker responses tended to use colloquial discourse markers to head paragraphs, for example 'Moving on . . .', which detracted from the tone of the writing. Candidates should be aware that if they find themselves writing, for example, 'As I said earlier . . .' then they are running the risk of becoming repetitious and repetition will only provide material which is not rewardable.

As in previous series, some responses used rhetorical questioning to stylise work. This approach is not advisable as it results in loss of register and does not add to the required discursive quality. When employed, it can only be successful where questions are followed by the candidate's own ideas.

A further trend in limited responses was seen in June 2023 which was to use long quotes from the text to add length to the overall response. Such an approach led to fewer specific points being made overall because writing out lengthy quotes had clearly taken a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, clear, effective or sophisticated writing skills were demonstrated through the selection of succinct evidence and use of low frequency lexis, appropriate discourse markers and accurate linguistic terminology inside logically sequenced structural frameworks.

Conceptualisation

Most responses made reference to Kachru's Circles of English model although there was some confusion in labelling the circles which are inner, outer and expanding. There was further confusion in some attempts to position France according to Kachru's initial work, which should have set France in the expanding circle and not the outer circle. Moreover, limited responses attempted to develop demonstrations of knowledge and understanding of Kachru's model with full explanations of the original work which led to some material becoming irrelevant to the discussion. Nonetheless, clearer and more effective responses had selected the

relevant and accurate sections of Kachru's model to explore how and why speakers of English originally positioned in the expanding circle might now – and in the future – be seen to shift linguistic boundaries.

General knowledge was seen to be weak in some basic or limited responses which described Paris and Europe as countries and not a city and a continent, respectively. Similar inaccuracies were seen in descriptions of Germany, Berlin, Stockholm and Slovenia which were all seen in the text provided.

There was some sustained discussion on the value of the concepts of monolingualism or multilingualism which was usually mostly relevant but there were also some pertinent personal examples used to add depth to the presented argument. However, as in previous series, basic or limited responses introduced linguistic concepts and approaches with, 'Some theorists believe . . .' without acknowledging the source of their wider reading.

As the stimulus material had introduced the concept of *lingua franca*, there was an opportunity to introduce knowledge and understanding of the continuum of language growth from contact through dialect levelling, borrowing, pidgin, creole to standardisation which, when applied succinctly and tied clearly to ideas from the text, was handled effectively. A further opportunity was presented by the text to discuss the effect of conflict, specifically *World War II*, on the present and future status of English in an international context.

In June 2023, many responses were based on a long series of theories which were not always relevant or accurate. Candidates should be aware that conceptual reference should be used to support ideas and evidence from the text and not the other way round. Such an approach led only to a demonstration of lack of detailed understanding and often was not creditable.

Overall, a clear but not always detailed variety of linguistic concepts, methods and approaches was discussed. These included reference to Crystal, Diamond's steamroller, Schneider's dynamic model, Pakir's notion of English as a killer language, McCrum's default position, Phillipson's view on language imperialism, Widdowson's spread and distribution, Tree and Wave models, Modiano's circles and the channels described by Galloway and Rose.

Section B

Question 2

In June 2023, the stimulus material for **Question 2** was an extract from an article published on the BBC website in 2021. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Understanding

Overall, responses demonstrated a clear level of understanding of the specific points made by the extract provided. These included the idea that *some of our most common, ingrained expressions have damaging effects on millions of people*, how the connotations of words like 'deaf' *are almost exclusively negative*, how 'ableist' *language is omnipresent in conversation* and how such words *can do real, lasting harm*, how 'ableist' *language crops up in the slang we use*, the Whorfian view that *use of disableist language 'acts to construct a world-view in which existing as a disabled person is negative'*, how language can construct other ways of perceiving the world and how *we build a world with the language we use*.

Basic responses focused on the examples provided by the author in the third paragraph, such as *making a 'dumb' choice, turning a 'blind eye' to a problem, acting 'crazy', calling a boss 'psychopathic', having a 'bipolar' day*, attempting to develop the argument that *for the most part, people who utter these phrases are not intending to hurt anyone* and so they should continue to be used. Furthermore, basic responses demonstrated misreading of the text at times, interpreting *deaf* as 'death' or indicating misunderstanding by describing the author as 'blind'.

Nonetheless, there was also some clear, effective or even insightful discussion of how we can develop our responsibility towards ableist and disableist language to improve the world-view of different abilities. There were also many ideas on the *lasting harm* that candidates had personally experienced which, for the most part, strengthened an already confident discussion, although where such discussion formed the whole of the response without introduction of any other points, the response remained limited.

Writing

As in previous series, brief responses were seen to this question despite the engaging content of the stimulus material. Basic responses merely paraphrased the text presented; limited discussions took the points in the order in which they were presented in the stimulus material; clear or more effective responses had made a careful selection from the text to develop discussions which included some creative thought around the specific topic of how language can shape the ways in which individuals think.

Clarity and control of expression was generally limited by the brevity of responses although in clear or effective responses an appropriate register was maintained. Low frequency lexis and accurate technical terminology was used in effective responses and, at times, there was a sophisticated level of clarity and control of direction. Where this was evident, there was an elevated register and enhancement of the linguistic point of view.

At times, irrelevant discussion was evident in attempts to introduce points which were not evident in the stimulus material. Candidates should be aware that AO2 does not only assess writing skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar but also considers the level of development and relevance of discussion.

Conceptualisation

Most responses to **Question 2** made reference to wider study of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches to some extent. In clear or more effective discussions, these were accurate and relevant and were used to support both the points made and evidence from the text. However, in limited responses these references appeared as undeveloped lists of theories and theorists which were only sometimes accurate and relevant, such as Labov's work on rhoticity in New York, Trudgill's Norwich study, Milroy's social networking or genderlect theories put forward by Lakoff, Tannen or Cameron.

More relevant theoretical reference was made to Goffman's notion of face threatening acts, Giles' communication accommodation or Gricean cooperative principles. Further fruitful referencing discussed language affecting muted groups (Kramerae), linguistic standpoint according to Harding and Wood, Tajfel on social identity, Boroditsky on language and thought, and Pinker's ideas on euphemism and dysphemism.

Most references to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Boas-Jakobson or Fodor tended to be incomplete or inaccurate. There was further generalised discussion of universalism although where conceptualisation was relevant to ideas presented by the stimulus material, sustained and cohesive discursive essay writing was seen.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42 Language Topics
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Key messages

In June 2023, candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics by providing sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to two compulsory questions. Responses in the form of discursive essays were required to be supported by evidence from the stimulus material provided and relevant reference to linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches.

The two compulsory questions presented in Paper 42 targeted the language topics *English in the world*, presented in Section A and *Language and the self*, presented in Section B. There were 25 marks available in each section indicating that candidates should demonstrate examination technique by dividing their writing time equally between the two questions. In June 2023 although there was evidence of this approach, some very lengthy work was seen which candidates had not always controlled according to the requirements of Assessment Objective 2. It is important to note that although AO2 offers fewer marks than AOs 1 and 4, it is not only the clarity and control of expression, for example spelling, punctuation, grammar and paragraphing, which is under consideration. This assessment objective also considers the extent to which ideas are developed and whether they are relevant to the direct focus which is presented in the question.

There was evidence that candidates had attempted to analyse the writing of the stimulus material, particularly in **Question 2**. This is not required in Paper 42. Such analysis diminished the discursive qualities of some weaker responses because it ran the risk of becoming irrelevant content and was therefore not rewardable.

General comments

Although it was clear in some otherwise sound responses that there was an enthusiastic engagement with the language topic overall, particularly in **Question 1**, there was less engagement with the focus presented in the question paper by the stimulus material. In June 2023, a strong tendency was seen to name as many theories and theorists as possible in an effort to address AO4, with only limited reference to the text provided. This was particularly marked in responses to **Question 2**. Throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the specific context provided; a demonstration of knowledge gained from wider reading is not sufficient to gain marks across all three assessment objectives. Candidates should also be aware that lengthy responses do not always mean that the work is fully creditable. Any theoretical reference should support points made: such references are there to support ideas and evidence; the text is not there to support theories.

At times, responses provided long paragraphs which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of historical or sociological events which were not tied into the specific context provided. Conversely, some responses made no reference to theoretical examples at all. Both of these approaches led to loss of marks either in AO1 or AO4.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Understanding

In June 2023, the texts provided for **Question 1** both discussed Singlish, a hybrid form of English. Text A was an extract from the launch speech of the Speak Good English Movement, given in 2000 by Singapore's then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. Text B was an extract from an article from *AsiaOne*, a Singaporean news website, published in 2020. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the texts relating to the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world. They were further required to refer to specific details from the texts as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Some basic or limited responses discussed points from only one of the texts, usually Text A, although clearer or more effective work compared a mix of points from both, which led to a much fuller, rounder and more cohesive overall discussion.

In general, responses to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of some of the points put forward in the text provided, which included the prevalence of hybrid forms of English around the world, the notion that *If we speak a corrupted form of English that is not understood by others, we will lose a key competitive advantage*, the idea that *The ability to speak good English is a distinct advantage in terms of doing business and communicating with the world*, that hybrid forms are seen by some as *corrupted* or *Poor English*, how *condescension and juvenile humour* can be associated with vernacular forms of English, notably when *various sounds and gestures ... replace complex vocabulary*, how hybrid forms of English *can reinforce class structures at the level of language itself* and can be *condescending*, how many Singaporeans *proudly identify with a creole to call their own*, how the same may be true in other countries and cultures, how people may view their local variety as integral to their local culture, the concepts of code-switching and language death, and the reasons that, and extent to which, government policies might affect the use of English in the world.

Clear or more effective responses made a careful selection from these examples relating them directly to the specific focus of the question and thinking creatively about the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world. Some limited responses worked through each of the points in the order in which they appeared in the text with only basic development or paraphrase.

Writing

Many weaker responses began with an introduction that demonstrated wider study of the overall language topic *English in the world*. Often, this historical information bore little relevance to either the context provided or to the key points of the main body of the response, including statistics of the number of English speakers in the world, the number of languages currently existing globally and some unconnected statements made by language theorists. However, clear or more effective responses were structured in a logical, fluent sequence of developed ideas which made an immediate introduction to ideas from the text. With careful crafting, this wider knowledge and understanding of the overall language topic could have been made relevant had it been tied to specific points raised in the main body of the discussion. There were also some weaker conclusions which were long reiterations of previous points instead of reinforcements which confirmed strong linguistic standpoints.

As in previous series, some responses used rhetorical questioning to stylise work. This approach is not advisable as it results in loss of register and does not add to the required discursive quality. When employed, it can only be successful where questions are followed by the candidate's own ideas. Further loss of tone was seen in those responses which had become overly long in an effort to sustain work by using ideas which were not relevant to the focus of the question or ideas from the stimulus material.

In general, an appropriate register was used, although weaker responses tended to use colloquial discourse markers to head paragraphs, for example 'Moving on . . .', which detracted from the tone of the writing. Candidates should be aware that if they find themselves writing, for example, 'As I said earlier . . .' then they are running the risk of becoming repetitious and repetition will only provide material which is not rewardable.

A further trend in limited responses was to use long quotes from the text to add length to the overall response. Such an approach led to fewer specific points being made overall because writing out lengthy quotes had clearly taken a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, clear, effective or sophisticated writing skills were demonstrated through the selection of succinct evidence and use of low frequency lexis, appropriate discourse markers and accurate linguistic terminology inside logically sequenced structural frameworks.

Conceptualisation

Most responses made reference to Kachru's Circles of English model with some weaker responses providing full explanations of Kachru's original work, including diagrams which were not required, instead of maintaining focus on Singapore's position in the model. Such an approach led to some material becoming irrelevant to the discussion. Nonetheless, clearer and more effective responses had selected the relevant and accurate section of Kachru's model to explore how and why boundaries might shift due to the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world.

There was some sustained discussion on the value of the concepts of linguistic hybridisation and New Varieties of English which was usually mostly relevant with specific examples such as Konglish or Chinglish being provided by candidates.

As the stimulus material had introduced the concept of prescriptivism, it was often contrasted with that of descriptivism with Crystal often cited. Linguistic prestige was also discussed to some extent, including the British received pronunciation, although RP was often inaccurately cited as the British standard rather than, correctly, as used by the acrolectal minority. The stimulus material also provided an opportunity to introduce knowledge and understanding of the continuum of language growth from contact through dialect levelling, borrowing, pidgin, creole to standardisation which, when applied succinctly and tied clearly to ideas from the text, was handled effectively.

In June 2023, many responses were based on a long list of theories which were not always relevant or accurate. Candidates should be aware that conceptual reference should be used to support ideas and evidence from the text and not the other way round. Such an approach led only to a demonstration of lack of detailed understanding and often was not creditable.

Overall, a clear but not always detailed variety of linguistic concepts, methods and approaches was discussed. However, as in previous series, basic or limited responses introduced linguistic concepts and approaches with, 'Some theorists believe . . .', without acknowledging the source of their wider reading.

The most frequently seen conceptual references included colonialism, Diamond's steamroller, Schneider's dynamic model, McCrum's default position, Phillipson's view on language imperialism, Widdowson's spread and distribution, Tree and Wave models, Modiano's circles and the channels described by Galloway and Rose. Language death was also explored in relation to the stages described by UNESCO and Pakir's notion of English as a killer language.

Section B

Question 2

In June 2023, the stimulus material for **Question 2** was an extract from an interview with the author of *How You Say It: Why You Talk the Way You Do – And What It Says About You*, a book published in 2020. The review was published on *SciTechDaily.com*, a science and technology news website. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think about each other. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Understanding

Responses generally demonstrated a clear level of understanding of the specific points made by the extract provided. These included that *the way you talk may determine who you're friends with (and) the job you have*, that *the way you talk may determine ... how you see the world*, the author's belief that *the way we speak is, in a very real way, a window into who you are and how other people see you*, how speech *underpins all facets of social life*, the author's belief that *there is a bias against what's perceived as non-standard speech*, how difficult it can be for people *to feel marginalized based on their speech*, that *at more*

societal and institutional levels there's a bias ... that's kind of baked in, the role of parents and educators in speech discrimination, the idea that the way we think is shaped by categories in our language and whether categorising stereotypes about groups of people can easily lead to prejudice against individuals, and how the way we talk both unites and divides us.

Basic responses focused on speech discrimination only, although, as seen above, there were many ideas from the text which could have been developed. Nonetheless, there was also some clear, effective or even insightful discussion of how our idiolects, (including accent and dialect), and sociolects develop the ways in which individuals think about each other.

Writing

Responses to this question were, at times, either very brief or very long. Short responses can only ever be described as basic or limited due to their own brevity. Responses which are very long run the risk of loss of tone and, although they may appear sustained, often evidence loss of focus.

There was some simple paraphrasing of the text presented and some lack of developed discussion where the points from the text were discussed briefly in the order in which they appeared in the question paper. However, clear or more effective responses had made a careful selection from the text to develop discussions which included demonstration of creative thought about the specific topic of how language can shape and reflect the ways in which individuals think about each other.

In clear or effective responses, an appropriate register was maintained and paragraphs formed a logical sequence. Low frequency lexis and accurate technical terminology was used in effective responses and, at times, there was a sophisticated level of clarity and directed control. Where this was evident, there was an elevated register and enhancement of the linguistic point of view.

At times, irrelevant discussion was evident in attempts to introduce points which were not evident in the stimulus material. Candidates should be aware that AO2 does not only assess writing skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar but also considers the level of development and relevance of discussion.

Conceptualisation

Candidates were able to draw upon their knowledge and understanding of African American Vernacular English and other minority sociolects to develop their arguments on speech discrimination, although not all took care to maintain focus. Often, there were long, undeveloped lists of theories and theorists which were only sometimes accurate and relevant, such as Labov's work on rhoticity in New York, Trudgill's Norwich study, Milroy's social networking or genderlect theories put forward by Lakoff, Tannen or Cameron.

Much more relevant and useful theoretical reference was made to Goffman's notion of face threatening acts, Giles' communication accommodation or Gricean cooperative principles. Further fruitful referencing discussed language affecting muted groups (Kramerae), linguistic standpoint according to Harding and Wood, Tajfel on social identity, and Boroditsky on language and thought.

Most references to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Boas-Jakobson or Fodor tended to be incomplete or inaccurate. There was further generalised discussion of universalism although where conceptualisation was relevantly tied to ideas presented by the stimulus material, sustained and cohesive discursive essay writing was seen.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43 Language Topics
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Key messages

In June 2023, candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics by providing sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to two compulsory questions. Responses in the form of discursive essays were required to be supported by evidence from the stimulus material provided and relevant reference to linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches.

The two compulsory questions presented in Paper 43 targeted the language topics *English in the world*, presented in **Section A** and *Language and the self*, presented in **Section B**. There were 25 marks available in each section indicating that candidates should demonstrate examination technique by dividing their writing time equally between the two questions. In June 2023 although there was evidence of this approach in clear or more effective responses, some short or very short work was seen.

There was evidence that some candidates had attempted to analyse the writing of the stimulus material, particularly in **Question 2**. This is not required in Paper 43. Such analysis diminished the discursive qualities of some weaker responses as it ran the risk of becoming irrelevant content which was not rewardable.

General comments

Although it was clear in some otherwise sound responses that there was an enthusiastic engagement with the language topic overall, particularly in **Question 1**, there was less engagement with the focus presented in the question paper by the stimulus material. In June 2023, a strong tendency was seen to name as many theories and theorists as possible in an effort to address AO4 with only limited reference to the text provided. This was particularly marked in responses to **Question 2**. Throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the specific context provided; a demonstration of knowledge gained from wider reading is not sufficient to gain marks across all three assessment objectives. Any theoretical reference should support points made: such references are there to support ideas and evidence; the text is not there to support theories.

At times, responses provided long paragraphs which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of historical or sociological events which were not tied into the specific context provided. Conversely, some responses made no reference to theoretical examples at all. Both of these approaches led to loss of marks either in AO1 or AO4.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Understanding

In June 2023, the text provided for **Question 1** was an article, from the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, published in 2020. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English in the world. 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.

In general, responses to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of some of the points put forward in the text provided, which included the idea that in the past *African languages were downgraded to 'the*

vernacular', the meaning of *vernacular* and how this term is seen as inappropriate for a *nation's language*, with its own history, politics and literature, how the attempt to discourage Africans from speaking our own languages failed and how the attempt has had the glorious result of backfiring, the inclusion of African words in the Oxford English Dictionary, the notion that language waits for no-one, how Standard English was once associated with superior education and intelligence but now attracts derision under the acronym LAFA – locally acquired foreign accent, and the concept of code-switching.

Clear or more effective responses made a careful selection from these examples relating them directly to the specific focus of the question, thinking creatively about the changing use of English in the world. Some weaker responses discussed only a limited number of examples, such as the lexical items from the text's second paragraph, or worked through each of the points in the order in which they appeared in the text with only basic development or simple paraphrase.

Writing

Many weaker responses began with an introduction that demonstrated wider study of the overall language topic *English in the world*. Often this included historical information which bore little relevance to either the context provided or to the key points of the main body of the response, including statistics of the number of English speakers in the world, the number of languages currently existing globally and some unconnected statements made by language theorists. However, clear or more effective responses were structured in a logical, fluent sequence of developed ideas which made an immediate introduction to ideas from the text. With careful crafting, this wider knowledge and understanding of the overall language topic could have been made relevant had it been tied to specific points raised in the main body of the discussion. There were also some weaker conclusions which were long reiterations of previous points instead of reinforcements which confirmed strong linguistic standpoints.

Clearer or more effective responses maintained an appropriate register, although weaker responses tended to use colloquial language which detracted from the tone of the writing. Moreover, candidates should be aware that if they find themselves writing, for example, 'As I said earlier . . .', then they are running the risk of becoming repetitious and repetition will only provide material which is not rewardable.

A further trend in limited responses was to use long quotes from the text to add length to the overall response. Such an approach led to fewer specific points being made overall because writing out lengthy quotes had clearly taken a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, clear, effective or sophisticated writing skills were demonstrated through the selection of succinct evidence together with the use of low frequency lexis, appropriate discourse markers and accurate linguistic terminology inside logically sequenced structural frameworks.

As in previous series, some responses used rhetorical questioning to stylise work. This approach is not advisable as it results in loss of register and does not add to the required discursive quality. When employed, it can only be successful where questions are followed by the candidate's own ideas. Further loss of tone was seen in those responses which had become unfocused in an effort to sustain work by using ideas which were not relevant to the question or to the stimulus material.

Conceptualisation

Overall, a clear but not always detailed variety of linguistic concepts, methods and approaches was discussed. However, as in previous series, basic or limited responses introduced linguistic concepts and approaches with, 'Some theorists believe . . .', without acknowledging the source of their wider reading.

A lack of general knowledge was seen, at times, with some basic responses identifying Africa as a country rather than a continent.

Most responses made reference to Kachru's Circles of English model with some weaker responses providing full explanations of Kachru's original work instead of maintaining focus on the position of different African countries in the model, such as Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana and Kenya which appeared in the text provided. Often, such an approach led to some material becoming irrelevant to the discussion. Nonetheless, clearer and more effective responses had selected the relevant and accurate section of Kachru's model to explore how and why boundaries might shift due to changing use of English in the world.

There was some sustained discussion on colonial legacy which referenced Widdowson's notion of spread and distribution and Phillipson's language imperialism. The stimulus material also provided an opportunity to introduce knowledge and understanding of the continuum of language growth from contact through dialect

levelling, borrowing, pidgin, creole to standardisation which, when applied succinctly and tied clearly to ideas from the text, was handled effectively. The concept of code switching was widely understood with some creditable personal examples being used to develop the discussion.

In June 2023, many responses were based on theories which were not always relevant or accurate. Candidates should be aware that conceptual reference should be used to support ideas and evidence from the text and not the other way round. Such an approach led only to a demonstration of lack of detailed understanding and often was not creditable.

The most frequently seen conceptual references included Crystal, Diamond's steamroller, Schneider's dynamic model, McCrum's default position, Tree and Wave models, Modiano's circles and the channels described by Galloway and Rose. Language death was also explored in relation to the stages described by UNESCO and Pakir's notion of English as a killer language. Where discussion was developed to language revitalisation, there was creditable reference to language policy in operation in New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

Section B

Question 2

In June 2023, the stimulus material for **Question 2** was an extract from an article from the *Language Magazine* website, published in 2019. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Understanding

Responses generally demonstrated a clear level of understanding of some of the specific points made by the extract provided. These included how *words in one language do not have a translatable counterpart in another*, how *emotions can vary greatly in their meanings across languages and culture*, how humans make *socially-learned inferences about the meaning of the word and the actual bodily feeling associated with the word*, how these inferences can vary across cultures, how *emotion concepts had different patterns of association in different language families*, examples of other differences between languages, for example colour, space, time or orientation, how the study's findings show *both universal and culture-specific patterns*, and the implications of these findings.

Basic responses tended to focus only on the lexical items which appeared in the first paragraph of the stimulus material, although there were many ideas from the text which could have been developed. Nonetheless, there was also some clear, effective or even insightful discussion of how the language of emotion can develop an interrelationship between language and thought.

Writing

Responses to this question were often rather brief. Short responses can only ever be described as basic or limited due to their own brevity. There was some simple paraphrasing of the text presented and some lack of developed discussion where the points from the text were discussed briefly in the order in which they appeared in the question paper. However, clear or more effective responses had made a careful selection of ideas from the text to develop discussions which included demonstration of creative thought around the specific topic of how language can shape and reflect the ways in which individuals think.

In clear or effective responses an appropriate register was maintained and paragraphs formed a logical sequence. Low frequency lexis and accurate technical terminology was used in effective responses and, at times, there was a sophisticated level of clarity and directed control. Where this was evident, there was an elevated register and enhancement of the linguistic point of view.

At times, irrelevant discussion was evident in attempts to introduce points which were not evident in the stimulus material. Candidates should be aware that AO2 does not only assess writing skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar but also considers the level of development and relevance of discussion.

Conceptualisation

Most references to the scholarship on language and thought included Pinxton, Boroditsky, Boas-Jakobson or Fodor but tended to be incomplete or inaccurate – or, for example, in the case of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, included long paragraphs which detailed the Hopi community. There was further generalised discussion of universalism, nativism and innatism, although where conceptualisation was relevantly tied to ideas presented by the stimulus material, sustained and cohesive discursive writing skills were seen.

Some knowledge and understanding of *language families* was detailed in effective or sophisticated responses as was the concept of *colexification*, as seen in the text provided. The *culture-specific patterns* described in the stimulus material also drew discussion in effective or sophisticated responses where development was formed by reference to specific discourse communities which communicated through cryptollect, for example, those which sought to gain overt or covert prestige, or where speech acts were controlled by external forces as in Orwell's *1984*.

Further useful conceptual reference was made in response to this question to Goffman's notion of face threatening acts, Giles' communication accommodation theory, linguistic standpoint according to Harding and Wood, Tajfel on social identity, Fairclough's linguistic prestige and Lindquist on language and emotion. Less fruitful were inaccurate quotations from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* or explorations of genderlect theories such as those put forward by Tannen, Cameron or Lakoff, for example.