

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11 Passages

Key messages

Learners need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources – such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspapers articles, blogs, advertisements – so that they can assess not only the conventions and language associated with different formats and genres but also comment on the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases; they should be able to comment on how a particular extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops in term of subject, mood and tone. Learners should be able to explore the contrasts and differences between the sections of a given extract; they need to move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as personification, alliteration, and punctuation so that the effects of such features are considered in relation to their context and the extract as a whole. Learners who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone, are those who tend to achieve best results. They also need to be able to adapt their own writing style to incorporate diverse directed tasks – for example, letters, articles, diaries – and demonstrate secure familiarity with their conventions and style. A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation, and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

This paper consisted of three passages of a very different nature, but all offered a range of language features and markedly individual styles.

The contrasting purpose of the two elements of each question was generally understood and the rubric of the paper well observed. The commentaries would often have benefited from a more immediate engagement with the specific demands of the question. A significant number of responses began with a summary of the passage, making no relevant language points but occupying valuable writing time.

Commentary-writing in general would have benefited from a wider and more precisely used critical vocabulary. Terms such as ‘negative/positive connotations’ tend to contribute to very generalised and unspecific accounts of the passages. Similarly, candidates needed to be aware that they should relate language features to their precise effects and how these contribute to the style, language, and purpose of the text. There is still a tendency for some candidates to identify a language feature but not its effect or purpose.

A number of responses did not give any developed consideration to the structure of the passage, yet this is an important consideration and can be crucial in determining authorial intention and how this is achieved. An appreciation of the writer’s use of structure has the added benefit of ensuring that the whole of the text is examined, rather than the opening of a passage arbitrarily receiving more developed attention than the conclusion.

There was some perceptive commentary-writing devoted to each of the three texts, but the speech given by Malala Yousafzai, in particular, produced some highly engaged and purposeful responses.

There was much engaged and purposeful directed writing devoted to each passage, though the text describing an American spelling bee was far less popular than the Malala Yousafzai speech. Many candidates succeeded in finding just the right note of comic exasperation when writing to the technically inept parents in **Question 1** and also the impassioned earnestness needed for writing on the social issues selected for **Question 3**.

Weaker responses still sometimes succumb to the temptation of lifting phrases or sentences directly from the original; this obviously prevents the candidates from demonstrating their understanding of the passage in their own words.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1A

The majority of responses picked up on the direct appeal of the opening sentences and the succession of rhetorical questions. There was also general recognition of the author's use of colloquial expressions and a conversational tone. Some candidates commented on the use of pronouns to further engage the reader and win their identification with the argument: 'Words such as "you" and "your" are used throughout the text in order to make the reader feel engaged.'

There was near unanimous recognition of the inclusion of the 'expert' voice to add weight to the passage: '...the author's idea is supported by the statement of a clinical psychologist, adding credibility to the argument.'

Stronger responses gave developed attention to the author's word choice and the way in which the prospect of becoming 'a geek dad' is made as attractive as possible: 'Adjectives such as "cooler", "connected" and "more engaged". Who as a father would not love to possess these parental qualities?' or 'the adjectives chosen have truly positive and optimistic connotations.'

Perceptive responses also detected a slightly bossy and commanding tone in the writing which did not allow much opportunity for dissent: 'imperative or modal verbs not only address the reader directly, but also urge them to try for themselves' or 'the use of imperative words convey the writer is in a stronger position'.

Some responses could have been improved by offering greater consideration of the passage's structure or the way in which the reader is guided through the argument by use of subheadings.

The final paragraph, with its tips on how to be a 'tech-savvy dad', tended to be overlooked. This was a pity because several features, especially the repetition of the word 'kid', might have been used to illustrate aspects of style and language.

Question 1B

Candidates were invited to write the opening of an article written by a teenager advising others on how to deal with parents who were not 'tech-savvy'.

There was some misreading of the question and a few responses continued in the same vein as the passage; that is, as an adult addressing an audience of parents. It is imperative to read the wording of the question carefully to avoid such mistakes.

There was a great deal of engaged, fluent and often amusing writing in the responses to this exercise. Many candidates adopted the use of urgently appealing rhetorical questions for the opening, often following directly after dramatic subheadings, which highlighted the pathetic ignorance of some adults: 'Do your parents act as if they are still living in the nineteenth century?'

Some of the most successful responses adopted a tone of pitying condescension towards their parents, which pushed the style of the passage to its comic limit: 'fathers are becoming increasingly involved in technology, probably in an attempt to interact with us' or 'if every time they ask for help we get angry with them, it will not help them to learn'.

There was evident pleasure taken in the opportunity of practising some role reversal: 'you should not judge him, but rather help him become involved'.

Less successful responses often leaned too heavily upon the phrasing of the original and failed to find any sense of independent expression. Problems also arose from writing which conveyed a clear sense of enjoyment and engagement, but had sacrificed accuracy of expression in doing so. Candidates should always be advised to leave sufficient time to carefully check the accuracy of their directed writing.

Question 2A

Comparatively few candidates opted to answer on this question; nevertheless, it was an interesting text which offered a full range of language features and effects.

The passage progressed from that of a sceptical view of the event, especially of the terminology it employed, to evident disapproval in the concluding paragraph. There was also generous use of the voices of the pronouncer at the event as well as one of the contestants; both of these might have been considered when examining the style and language of the extract. As it was, candidates tended to consider a relatively narrow range of features and there was a tendency to lose focus upon the specific effects of language and style.

Candidates often identified the disapproving stance of the author, sometimes defining it in a more extreme light: 'The text is presented in a sarcastic way and with a constantly mocking tone.'

Other responses seemed not to sympathise with the tone and purpose of the passage and consequently did not give it a sympathetic examination: 'The narrator deeply analyses people who have simply shown up to perform their jobs and highly dramatizes and intensifies them'.

Several candidates remarked on the use of 'the first-person perspective which allows the reader to see exactly what the spectator sees.' There was also some recognition that the use of short paragraphs was significant in creating the style of the passage, but this point was rarely fully developed.

Some responses speculated on the nature of the intended audience for the text and, as is often the case, this did not help to develop an understanding of style and language: 'clearly the readers are teenagers because the text talks about spellers, which are normally students from a school'. Some candidates clearly understood aspects of the progression of the passage, but needed a more precise critical vocabulary to demonstrate their points fully: 'From lines 1 – 14, the overall tone was one of positivity ... from lines 51 brings a tone of negativity'.

Isolated points were well made, such as the author's use of juxtaposition in her description of a candidate in the competition as 'both guarded and confident at the same time'. However, there were few fully developed responses and there was little attention to the final paragraph or to the sound of 'air-sucking sobs' in the Comfort Room.

This was a text which rewarded close and thorough attention. Candidates would have benefited from examining the whole passage and fully considering the author's intentions.

Question 2B

Candidates were asked to write the opening of an article about a competitive event that they had witnessed. Responses to this exercise were generally more assured than the commentaries and there was some purposeful and confident writing.

Most of the candidates followed the passage by including the voices of the participants and officials; these were often the most successful aspect of the exercise: 'In the unlikely circumstance that we do not [win], do not beat yourself up. We are a team, we have fun.'

The authorial style proved more elusive and few managed to convincingly emulate the tense, often ironic, delivery of the original: 'As soon as the referee whistles the kick off, the stadium pops' was an example of a response which sounded altogether too jolly and involved in the occasion.

However, a few candidates succeeded in hitting just the right note of precise observation and wry amusement: 'the sports headmaster starts by giving a speech about how the day is not to compete but for fun. Everyone laughs ... they will compete.'

Weaker responses followed the structure of the passage implicitly and sometimes lifted material almost unchanged from the original: 'I guess the real purpose of me sitting up here to commentate on this game is for you to know my voice'.

Candidates are reminded of the importance of paying particularly close attention to the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation in the 'B' sections of this paper.

Question 3A

The celebrity of the speaker, Malala Yousafzai, and the general approval of the message of her speech, ensured that this was a very popular choice of text. There were some highly engaged and sometimes passionate responses and also some perceptive understanding of the language techniques employed in the passage.

Many candidates picked up on the use of the final paragraph to create a sense of personal and local investment in the development of girl's education: 'mentioning her in our village ... gives the speech a personal and confident nature'.

There was also general recognition of the repeated address to listeners as 'Dear brothers and sisters': 'In this way, she enrols the audience as her family' or 'referring to the audience as brothers and sisters creates unity among people'.

Some responses also understood how the repeated use of personal pronouns adds drama to the delivery and furthers the engagement of the listener: 'Words like we, us, and our, help the audience feel connected with the speech'. There was also some informed understanding of how punctuation is used to heighten the effect of the pronoun listing: 'She uses full stops on a sort of enumeration. The full stops force the audience to think about how they can be protagonists of change and she is listened to with special attention'.

There was some perceptive understanding of the effects of individual word choice: 'Must is a strong word which leaves no one any other options, making clear that education ... cannot be avoided' or 'the contrast between the words "steps" and "leaps" emphasizes that small changes will do no good and big actions are needed'. The use of rhetorical questions to 'create uncertainty in the audience's thoughts' was also commented upon: 'This question is very straightforward, as Malala clearly portrays the contrast that she sees between the world's realities and the realities of the world leaders.'

There was also general understanding, and often approval, of the tone and syntax of the speech: 'the choice of words is simple because the speaker is young herself ... but she uses them in a powerful way' or 'she is a child whose tone is very strong' or 'Malala's language is simple and sturdy'.

Less effective responses tended to remark on language features such as listing and rhetorical questions but without making much meaningful comment on their effects. The weakest answers did little more than relate the contents of the passage.

However, this was a text which generally met with interest and understanding.

Question 3B

Candidates were asked to write part of a speech on an issue about which they felt strongly. As was suggested by much of the commentary writing, there were some highly-engaged and deeply-felt responses to this exercise.

Some candidates took their cue from the opening sentence of the speech and declared an immediate personal interest in the chosen issue: 'As I was growing up, I watched many films that I loved. But all of them were directed by men' or 'My world is home for males who kill females, because, and only because, they are female'.

Several language features of the text were adopted with great effect, notably the use of personal pronouns to create audience/reader involvement: 'We can change. Me, You, We. We can all do it if we want to'. The rhetorical question was another language feature which was generally adopted, often with considerable impact: 'How is it possible that while some people are buying the new iPhone, others are just dying of hunger' or 'Why should they (politicians) worry about brutal murders when they sleep safe and sound, monitored by private guards?'

Other features of the original which were successfully transposed included the use of repetition and the short, declarative sentences which contribute so much to the sense of determination in the original.

Weaker responses relied far too heavily on the material of the extract and failed to demonstrate a purposeful approach to their chosen issue or an understanding of style and language, even when they clearly did not lack conviction or sincerity.

However, this was an exercise in which the engagement of many candidates resulted in some very successful writing. There were excellent concluding sentences: 'People will always fight against change but it's time to move past them, to a new world, to a better world'.

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Paper 9093/12 Passages

Key message

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General comments

All three passages on the paper were found to be generally accessible and engaging. The second paragraph, describing Lake Baringo, proved the more popular of the additional texts but there were perceptive and developed responses to the third passage, an extract from J G Farrell's novel 'The Siege of Krishnapur'.

Most candidates demonstrated a clear sense of purpose in approaching both the commentaries and directed writing and there was a general sense that the commentaries were more fully developed than is sometimes the case. However, some candidates wasted valuable time by providing a summary of the passage as a prologue, and a re-statement of the principal points, as a conclusion. This topping and tailing of the response sometimes represented a sizeable percentage of the answer but offered only a minimal amount of information which could be credited. Most candidates seemed to understand that language features need to be related to their effects within the passage, but these effects were often generally stated and needed more specific application.

There was a similar tendency to generalise when referring to the use of imagery in the texts. The author's use of imagery was sometimes identified but without specifying the nature of the imagery or the effect created.

Language features more often associated with poetry, such as the use of rhyme and rhythm, were present rather more than usual, but were rarely convincingly related to language examples.

Punctuation and sentence lengths were sometimes credited with the capacity to affect reading speed, but genuinely purposeful examination of the effects of punctuation was rare.

The importance of reading the question carefully cannot be overstated. Candidates answering **Question 2(a)** didn't always sustain a focus upon 'the sense of place', as the question specified. In approaching **Question 3(a)**, some candidates stated this to be a travelogue, where they had been clearly told it was an extract from a novel.

There were some spirited and perceptive responses in the directed writing, though candidates needed to be aware of the necessity to check the accuracy of their work, which sometimes seemed to suffer in the imaginative involvement of the exercise. There were, however, relatively few significant cases of candidates wildly overshooting the word limit; there was some evidence of unintentional underwriting, which is no more acceptable than exceeding the specification. The stated parameters are always 120–150 words and it is between these two boundaries that candidates should aim to complete their response.

Question 1

- (a) This question generated some engaged and confident responses with a generally good understanding of the language features employed, though comparatively few candidates fully acknowledged the satirical intention and tone of the passage.

A few responses took the creation of Marcus entirely seriously and overlooked the improbabilities of the 'letter' and of its unconventional approach. Most candidates assumed that there was an element of genuine salesmanship involved in the 'letter' and justified it with some convincing argument: 'The structure of the passage ... and the title itself has its own effect ... symbolising the finish line of a marathon race. It pumps a sense of optimism and accomplishment'; 'The passage employs a sense of chronology ... implying the writer is instructing the readers ... and coaxing the reader into joining the company without realising it.'

Several language features were consistently recognised and clearly demonstrated: 'The repetition of the personal pronoun "you" emphasises the informal tones that the article takes on'; 'Sarcasm is generously used in the passage'; 'Exclamation marks are used to bring out a tone of excitement and concern.'

There was some good understanding of the conversational approach and colloquial language employed, the majority of candidates using 'Hey buddy' as an illustration of this. Most of these responses assumed that a 'soft sell' was the purpose of the passage and the use of social media was employed as free advertising rather than a comment on current social values.

There was, however, some sharp understanding of the full intention of the passage and this was often trenchantly expressed: 'The passage... is aimed at those people who only see running as a new social event or as something to post on Instagram'; 'The magazine article's sole purpose is to mock the pretend-athlete'; 'by using the word "idiot" allows his true opinion to be revealed'.

Weaker responses failed to develop much beyond recognising some of the supposed 'persuasive' techniques employed, and the weakest did little more than repeat the contents of the passage.

- (b) It was evident in the responses to the commentary that candidates enjoyed this passage, and this was confirmed by the directed writing, which was generally purposeful and thoroughly engaged. Enthusiasm for the text created a drawback in that some candidates tended to use the structure of the passage as a pro-forma, making substitutions of their own but adhering too closely to the structure of the original. A typical example of this made only marginal adjustments to the original: 'Hey buddy! I recently saw you playing football. It's vacation! ... You laced up your sneakers and went off playing!' Answers such as these relied far too much on paraphrasing the original and were, more or less, simply gap filling with slightly alternative words or phrases. This is clearly a problem, as too much reliance on the original construction cannot fully test sentence accuracy or expression.

Many responses echoed the cheery salute of the opening: 'Listen up there', 'Hey you, yes you' and 'Hello Pal' were variants of the original and they often helped establish the suspect bonhomie that 'Marcus' employs, often followed in the manner of phrases such as 'GUESS WHAT?! YOU HAVE A TALENT!! I know what you're thinking – Me!' or 'You're reading this because you have it in you. You have got what it takes!!'

The strongest answers utilised features of the original such as sarcasm, bracketed asides and straightforward insults: 'Ever thought of learning golf? What better way to show off your elitist edge and inherited wealth?'

Less successful responses either missed the satirical intent of the writing or failed to impose their own sense of purpose upon the material.

Question 2

- (a) This passage, relating 'the attractions of Lake Baringo ... as a holiday resort' was the more popular of the two optional choices and resulted in some purposeful examinations of the text.

The majority of candidates identified the more obvious stylistic features of the writing, the repetition of the word 'stunning' was often noted and well understood: 'the sibilance of the phrase "stunning sight upon setting sail" creates a calm and tranquil atmosphere by conveying exactly how the boat glides over the water'. The sense of the lake's relaxing qualities and how these are reflected in the author's choice of language was also well recognised: 'This harmony of language emulates the harmonious way that the flora and fauna, as well as the humans, live in Lake Baringo' or 'We are given a sense of greeting, as if Lake Baringo was waiting for us.'

Many responses picked up on the magical atmosphere evoked by the author and of the suggestion that the human and the natural world live in happy co-existence '... the impression of a small barrier between humans and nature, how both are so close and how we can be close too.'

Perceptive responses also understood the way in which the potential dangers of the setting are minimised and even used to add to the lake's appeal: 'The word "leisurely" conveys how the crocodile swam aimlessly, furthering the relaxing atmosphere ...'; 'The word "droopy" produces an image of the owl's eyelids sagging ... almost in a sense of relaxation.'

There was also some excellent examination of the importance of colour in the presentation of both the landscape and the fauna: '...hundreds of red-rumped swallows ... suggest that the birds act as jewellery or decoration' or 'the juxtaposition of "slashes of red aloes" and the "monotony of the rocks" create an image of how the colours stand out'.

Less successful responses restricted themselves to a very narrow range of language features or failed to relate them to specific language effects: '...clear use of diction, tone, register, emotive language and imagery has been excellently executed to give his audience a sense of place'.

Some inflated, critical language was employed but without making precise and illuminating reference to the text: '...adjectives are all connotated positively, which is holistically decorating the writer's experience.'

Some responses would have benefited from the use of a wider critical vocabulary and there was a particular reliance on 'positive' and 'negative' as definitions of the tone and language, where much more exact usage was called for.

There was some misunderstanding of aspects of the text, notably the reference to a Goliath heron, which was not always understood as a specific type of heron – rather than a very large standard heron.

There was surprisingly little comment on the use of bold type and subheadings and even less consideration of the structure and the winding down of the passage in the final paragraph.

Candidates should always look at the structure of a text as this often serves to reveal specific language features as well as the author's broader intentions.

- (b) Candidates were invited to write the opening of an article relating to a tourist destination in their own country and, in so doing, to follow closely the style and language of the original.

There was a largely enthusiastic and engaged response to this exercise, the Taj Mahal and the Victoria Falls both making frequent appearances.

Strong answers contrived to echo both the emphasis on colour which is evident in the text and its weakness for superlatives: 'The first serene sight upon nearing the Taj Mahal is a royal blue peacock standing in all its glory on the wet, green grass. It's the world's smallest peacock.'

Some responses showed a perceptive understanding of the passage's sensory appeal and produced some highly effective writing: 'The sun strikes the algae green waters like a sword, creating a golden streak through the waters ... not a sound, except for our oars pulling lazily through the backwaters.'

Various waterfalls were successfully utilised to create a clear sense of atmosphere and involvement, '... tiny rainbows forming at the bottom, following swirl, the mother of all rainbows, that juts across the skyline.'

Some candidates were unambitious in their approach and replicated both the structure and some of the specifics of the original. This was the case with repetition of the colours specified in the passage; green and jade green were too often those used to describe the waters.

A confusion of tenses was evident in some work and candidates should be aware of the need to check for discrepancies.

Question 3

- (a) This was the less popular of the two optional passages and though there was some perceptive examination of particular aspects of the text, there were far fewer fully developed responses. Some candidates misread the passage and assumed it to be a travelogue, whereas the question clearly states it to be an extract from a novel: 'The genre is travel writing ... the intention of the extract is to ... document his sightings.'

There was general recognition of the monotony and melancholy of the landscape and several strikingly fluent appreciations of the effect: 'The effect is of a massive space where everything is connected but in the grand scheme of things, all seems hopeless' or '...a dreary ocean, a contrast between earth and seas, creating a sense of things that don't match'.

There was general recognition of the use of personification in the case of the village which 'crouches' in a grove of bamboo but little acknowledgement of the 'frightful' pond accompanying it.

In addition, the effect of the personification, suggesting that the village itself was trying to avoid being noticed, was rarely commented on; some candidates simply offered too broad a definition of the feature: 'This personification allows the reader to imagine that scene by distilling human characteristics into them'.

Relatively few responses had a thorough understanding of the structure of the passage and the progression towards the revelation that the 'supposed town' was a cemetery. A surprising number of answers overlooked the final paragraph altogether or mentioned only the 'rustling leaves' as contribution to the general mournfulness of the tone. This was an omission which would almost certainly have been avoided if the structure and direction of the passage had been understood.

The author's use of pronouns, especially the switch from 'he' to 'you' caused some confusion, and only a few answers credited it with any intention to involve the reader in the scene. Few candidates fully engaged with the sense of a journey, and this resulted in only a minority of candidates fully understanding the overall impact of the text, and especially the conclusion. However, there were some perceptive insights into aspects of the writing and some responses demonstrated a mature understanding of language and style: '... nothing is happening, nothing is alive in any sense' or 'The traveller is presented as the odd one out in the land, as if out of place. Referring to him as an "European" puts him at odds with Krishnapur'.

- (b) Candidates were asked to describe a place they knew well from the point of view of someone seeing it for the first time. They were also asked to base their answer closely on the style and language of the original.

Some responses were limited by concentrating entirely upon describing a place but without enough attention to either style or language or to the sense of an observer seeing it for the first time. Others were hampered by candidates adopting the construction of the original text as a template. This tended to limit independent expression and often led to material being lifted directly. This was particularly evident in the opening sentences, which were sometimes far too close to the text: 'Anyone who has never before visited Akori and approaches it from ...' or 'Anyone who has never visited the Victoria Falls and who approaches it for the first time will be utterly shocked!'. Copying the exact construction of the original text clearly restricts the candidate's ability to make a purposeful response and makes it difficult to assess their own sentence structure.

A significant number of the more successful responses aimed to replicate the style and language of the original but made the setting a place of intense activity rather than lifelessness. This was particularly effective when the opening sentence suggested the contrary: 'Old Road. The street name suggests a lack of creativity or perhaps the hope of a newer road'.

Ambitious responses took the opportunity to emulate the slightly detached and elegant style of the original: 'life may seem hectic for those around, but it is unbearably slow for a new comer.'

As with **Question 2(b)**, there were persistent problems with tense slippage, some otherwise fluently written responses had problems in this respect: 'The sun seemed to shine brighter in Lee than any other city, or is it the fact that everywhere she looks she saw smiles'.

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Key message

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General comments

The passages selected for this component offered a wide and diverse range of styles and linguistic features and there were many perceptive and purposeful responses.

Most candidates seemed to manage the organisation of exam time very well. There were very few unfinished papers and there was little evidence of desperately rushed conclusions.

Relatively few responses wasted time by offering opening paragraphs that summarised the events of the passage, though some candidates gave undue consideration to the nature of the audience when this had little useful bearing on the demands of the question.

Candidates seem increasingly aware of the need to relate language features to their effects within the whole passage and to the value of providing clearly defined language examples.

There also seemed to be an encouraging development in the range of the critical vocabulary used in the commentaries. The stronger responses, in the case of all three passages, were often characterised by the use of succinct and precise examination of language effects.

There was some confident and imaginative directed writing in all three exercises but there is still a need for greater attention to accuracy of expression, which is sometimes lost as candidates strive to achieve effects of style and language.

Question 1

- (a) This passage was clearly relished by many of the candidates and there were some perceptive responses to the task. There was some uncertainty about the presentation of the central character, and the concept of the anti-hero was not always fully grasped. However, the principal language features employed by the author were generally well understood and related to specific effects within the passage.

The use of rhetorical questions to whet the interest of the reader was particularly well explained: 'Why does someone of such brilliance dedicate himself to criminal activities? Colfer delays his answer, creating an atmosphere of suspense' or 'Extensive use of the rhetorical questions partially elucidates information about Artemis'.

There was some interesting consideration devoted to the tone of the writing, which was described as 'mysterious' or 'sinister', and there was some recognition of the element of humour which underlies it.

There was perceptive examination of the narrative voice, which some candidates regarded as omniscient, but others recognised as a slightly different presence: '... our narrator is an onlooker who doesn't know everything' or '... the ellipsis suggests that the narrator doesn't know what to make of the information'. These responses were typical of some sophisticated understanding of narrative devices.

Alliteration was another feature which was generally mentioned, 'villainous venture' being widely quoted and there was some excellent understanding of features being used in conjunction: '... plunge the planet' is an example of alliteration abetting the effect of hyperbole'.

There was intelligent assessment of the author's style and in particular the language used by and about Artemis: 'The juxtaposition of "soft and clipped", "sighed and topped the table" elicit an air of intrigue about his ultra-mature traits' or "'A ragged apron does not a waiter make" conveys his intellect and authoritative tone'.

There was even a backhanded compliment about the lightness and ease of the style adopted: '... the reader is kept awake and reading without being punished for poor knowledge of the English language'.

There was recognition of the effect of the adult/child role reversal created by Butler and Artemis and enjoyment of 'medical minds sent ... gibbering to their own hospitals'.

Among other well-understood language features was the effect of the capitalisation of the mysterious 'Book': 'The capitalisation of the word Book, even in Artemis's thoughts adds to the implication that this is something big'.

There were some weak responses to the task; these tended to identify a very limited range of examples and failed to relate their effects to the passage clearly. However, the majority of candidates found the passage engaging and gave it purposeful consideration.

- (b)** Candidates were asked to write a continuation of the passage and to base their answer closely on the style and features of the original.

There was a great deal of engaged and sometimes polished writing in the responses to this exercise, with characters well realised and the situation imaginatively exploited. Candidates appeared to relish the clearly defined dramatic situation and, in particular, the idiosyncrasies of the language.

There was some skilled development of the comic menace of the situation: 'Butler knows more ways to kill you with his bare hands than you have fingers. Nguyen gulped. He had finally realised what he was dealing with' or 'Artemis looked up from the table, pale eyes stared into Nguyen's soul. Although he was young, he was as menacing as a drill sergeant'.

The tenseness of the dialogue was recognised and used to great effect, sometimes involving the precise placing of words on the page: 'Artemis crossed his arms in front of his chest and leaned back, eyeing the man: Continue'.

The conclusion of the passage left the story in perfect dramatic balance and there were some extremely imaginative plot developments, as well as some that were less plausible. A few candidates allowed Nguyen to turn the tables on his tormentor, but most enjoyed the dominance of the twelve-year-old too much to alter the status quo: 'It was a strange sight. The pale, small boy seemed to tower over the two larger men ... it was another strange day in Ho Chi Minh'.

The confidential narrative voice was not always adopted but most responses took advantage of the author's fondness for rhetorical questions. In weaker answers this sometimes led to the use of material which was virtually unchanged from the original: 'How could one uncover the identity of Artemis Fowl? The criminal with a high level of intelligence'.

There was surprisingly little use of ellipsis, which had been generally noted in commentaries; likewise there was little attempt to include alliteration. Despite these omissions, there was a generally purposeful effort to adopt the style and language of the original.

Question 2

- (a) This passage, taken from an autobiographical memoir by the Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina, is laden with distinctive language features. There is a striking, but clearly marked, change of focus half way through the passage, and possibly some candidates were deterred by this apparent change of direction. Candidates who devoted careful and thorough attention to the whole passage understood the connection between the two points of focus; one looks at self-indulgent individual liberty, the other at a mass of people from whom liberty has been removed.

Candidates on the lookout for examples of alliteration, onomatopoeia and most of all, personification were amply rewarded in the opening paragraphs of the passage: 'A conveyor belt of teeth creates a sense of malicious intent' or '... the alarming idea that the zips and luggage ... were alive and constantly moving'.

'Snap' was largely cited as an example of onomatopoeia, and there was general appreciation of the use of alliteration, particularly in the case of the 'plastic playground pyramids' of Johannesburg. In addition to the recognition of the more evident language features, some perceptive responses commented on the use of the 'laid back bag' as a transferred epithet for the 'tanned and wiry' surfer.

There was further confident and observant commentary on aspects of the opening paragraphs, candidates clearly understanding the way in which the author created the flurry of activity around the surfer: 'Repetition of the conjunction "and" creates a sense of disarray and energy' or 'the effect is created by long, complex sentences filled with active verbs – screams, snaps – etc.'.

Not all responses recognised the reason for the contrast between the two halves of the text, but those that did offered some perceptive explanation: 'He does so to dramatically contrast the man's disorganisation to the pristine organisation of Johannesburg' or '... the slight discomfort, (felt by the author) due to a strange passenger [is compared] to the extreme disturbance of political issues'.

There were varying opinions of the nature of the tone adopted by the author and how he regarded both his fellow passengers and the view of Johannesburg. Some candidates remarked on a sardonic or sarcastic tone but also on a 'reflective and philosophical approach' and 'a tone of bewilderment' at the sight of Johannesburg.

The extended metaphor of the city as an 'Excel spreadsheet city' was another aspect of the passage which was generally understood. There was some fluent and perceptive writing related to the effect of the closing paragraphs and the author's vision of the city below: 'almost a social critique of the compulsive systematising of humanity' or '... – thousands of match box homes – gives a sense of fragility to the celebrated institution of home'.

Some responses commented on language features without relating to their larger effects and a few found little of relevance to say. But there were some excellent responses which demonstrated a very full understanding of the whole text and its language devices.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write a description of a journey that they had taken, basing their answer closely on the style and features of the original.

Some candidates mistook the purpose of the exercise and devised responses which clearly echoed the events, rather than style and features of the original: 'I took my bag and unzipped it, making a screeching noise. I looked at the bag ... with its teeth showing, frowning at me'.

Other responses struggled in their efforts to accommodate an account of a dystopian landscape, similar to the author's view of Johannesburg, when this was not a necessity: 'Bricks shatter in a million pieces unable for anyone to fix. The atrocities of war remain in the streets'. In fact, the most successful responses were often quite modest in the scale of their settings, which allowed candidates to concentrate on demonstrating their understanding of stylistic features rather than replicating the events of the passage: 'An infant two rows back takes a deep breath and lets out a long wail'. The personification of the traveller's surroundings proved a popular and successful language feature: 'Black eyes and stares pass by me, flicking to and fro. The ticket gate, whose automated machines furiously swipe open and closed ...'

The outstanding feature of the text is the capacity of the author to make workaday events and objects seem unusual and even sinister; several responses achieved this effect: 'The attendant pushes a metal cart down the passage, it hisses with every step'. One quite outstanding response reversed the awkwardness of the situation in the plane and made it a mini-flirtation: 'I look at her reflection off the window ... Music – if you could call a patchwork of heavy beats and high-pitched squeaks music – leaking out of her ... She changes songs and I wish I could change seats'.

As is so often the case, the accuracy of some candidate's expression deteriorated in the directed writing, just when they must be most conscious of avoiding mistakes. Tenses were a regular issue for many of the candidates who chose to adopt the author's use of present tense: this often wavered and found itself located in the past, before reverting again to the starting point. In several cases, spelling and punctuation were similarly inconsistent and marred otherwise effective responses. Nonetheless, there was some imaginative and fluent writing devoted to this exercise, demonstrating a clear appreciation of the original passage.

Question 3

- (a) This passage, taken from a lifestyle advice column, offered a range of stylistic features for candidates to consider; notable among these were the use of listing, extended metaphors, parenthesis, and the paradox of the central proposition such that failure can lead to success.

There was some observant and well-developed consideration of the address of the article, especially relating to its gradual development of the reader's trust and its final, quite authoritative tone: 'throughout there is an empowering and motivating tone' or 'these are subtle changes of tone from the sympathetic positive to the authoritative positive'.

There was particularly astute recognition of the passage's use of personal pronouns to gain the reader's interest and trust: 'The use of we and us ... tells us that the author may even share our qualms about success and failure' or 'Later, as the article shifts towards telling the reader how to change the pronouns change to – you – rather than – we'.

The author's personal alignment with the reader and the resulting sense of intimacy and engagement was also well understood. There was fluent and succinct commentary on the use of triplets and parenthesis: 'The iconic repetition of – Maybe – illustrates the possibilities of progressing from failure to success' or 'The writer uses parenthesis to add to the conversational style of the piece'.

Most candidates devoted some attention to the use of extended metaphor which is very much a feature of the concluding paragraph. There was particularly good understanding of how the translation from 'monster' to 'teacher' alters the reader's understanding of failure: 'The use of monster converting a sinister creature into a helpful person shows the reader that success can be achieved with the right mind set'.

The concluding metaphor, of a 'winding road', beset by potholes but leading ultimately to the reader's destination, was generally identified, and often well understood: 'This [the winding road] serves as a creative way to positively reiterate the ideas presented in the article'.

There was a tendency in less focused responses to outline and slightly amplify the advice that the passage offers: 'In the second paragraph, she explains to the readers when to stop trying to succeed, she uses a quote from the book to reassure readers'.

Interestingly, several candidates seemed to think that this conclusion was overly simplistic and were quite sharp in their assessment of the metaphor: '... this simplifies life down to just one common road, rather than a lifetime of the unknown'.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write a column for their secondary school newspaper entitled 'How We Can Reach Our Goals'. They were asked to base their answer closely on the style and features of the original passage.

Most candidates adopted the optimistic tone and creed of the passage and sometimes hit precisely the right note: 'Start with single ones [goals], homework or texts and slowly begin working your way up to exams, university, life'. The passage carefully avoids any moral judgement of failure or success, but this was not always the case with candidates: 'Getting a big F slapped on your paper is probably the worst feeling you can get, most students fail because of one evil habit, laziness'.

There was some confident and wholly appropriate use of metaphor: the road and all its variants were repeated, but the most popular was the image of life as a mountain: '... reaching goals set for us is an impossible task, like climbing the Everest in a t-shirt and jeans'.

Other stylistic features making regular appearances included listing, rhetorical questions, and the inclusion of an 'expert' to add credibility to the argument of the passage. Some features which might have been thought of as both obvious and amusing to include were hardly used at all. There was very little use of the pessimistic 'inner voice' of the original or the parenthesis which allows the author to take the reader into their confidence. However, most candidates made a purposeful attempt both to adopt the style of the text and to give genuinely useful advice to their peers: 'Clarity and confidence, mixed with some passion and determination, is the recipe for achieving goals galore'.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21 Writing
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Key messages

When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the prescribed instructions and focus within each question. For example, in **Question 1** the key instruction is to 'write the opening of a story' and the key focus is 'drama and suspense'. In **Question 6** the key instruction is to 'write the script of a voiceover' and the key areas of focus are to 'offer advice and guidance' and to create a 'sense of fun and enthusiasm'. To ensure that candidates do fully understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question. As part of their exam preparation, it may also be beneficial to give practice to pupils in highlighting significant words/phrases in questions from past papers to help them to focus on what they are being asked to produce.

Within the time limits of the exam, candidates should be prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about, and writing out, a short plan to ensure their response has a sound and effective structure. Planning should help candidates to structure their writing as well as to sustain and develop it into a coherent, cohesive, shaped response. For **Section B** responses in particular, a paragraph plan is advised.

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In preparing for **Section A**: Imaginative writing, candidates should develop skills in sustaining narratives in the tense they start out with, and safeguard against confusion of tense forms. Candidates should differentiate between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make the reader feel as if they are in the world created in their narrative, and seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work.

When preparing for **Section B**: Writing for an audience, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles, both print and online, as background preparation. Candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles and newspaper correspondence.

General comments

A number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length. Some candidates recorded their word count for each response incorrectly. Examiners will perform their own check on the length of responses, which should fulfil the rubric requirements outlined on the paper.

In **Section A**, **Question 1** was easily the most popular, followed by **Questions 2** and **3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Some who did write descriptive pieces loaded sentences and phrases with excessive and inappropriate adjectives. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere: for example, where the reader was able to relate to the sense of drama and suspense in **Question 1**; see a clear change in outlook and mood of the two diary entries in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of sounds and movement in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes a complete response was rendered less clear by inadequate paragraphing) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**.

In **Section B, Question 5** was easily the most popular, followed by **Questions 4** and **6**. The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – *Hide!*

Candidates were asked to write the opening to a story called *Hide!* They were asked to create a sense of drama and suspense.

This was easily the most popular choice but seemed to pose some candidates a few problems with meeting the rubric: the reason for the protagonist to have to hide sometimes had little to do with what the character had witnessed, although the drama and suspense element was usually attempted to some purpose.

A significant number of candidates chose crime-based stories – kidnap, espionage, organised crime – while others used science fiction-based storylines. Quite a few candidates described fairly ordinary events and failed to capture the interest of the reader, so a sense of drama was consequently lacking. On occasions, the structure of the opening of a story was not fully apparent.

Stronger candidates produced a clear storyline about witnessing an incident that prompted the narrator/protagonist's fear or courage, and this provided a focused sense of drama. Such candidates also created a sense of suspense, since that was typically generated by the possibility of being found. They also successfully evoked the reader's sympathy or empathy.

Weaker candidates wrote rather formulaic narratives with little original thought and little obvious form of a story opening. They sometimes did not reveal engage with the theme of 'hiding' until late on in the answer, typically after the drama of escaping some nasty opponents.

Question 2 – Contrasting diary entries by a young woman and the same woman in her eighties

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting diary entries, of 300–450 words each, one by a young woman wondering what her life will be like when she is older and the other by the same woman in her eighties. They were asked to create a sense of the woman's outlook and mood.

Many candidates did manage to create a sense of changed perspective, with the younger version often being optimistic and hopeful; the older version, meanwhile, featuring a sense of disappointment and regret.

Stronger candidates successfully established a credible and sensitive contrast between the two diary entries. Some candidates produced quite imaginative and engaging responses, which often centred on regrets over relationships – stronger answers were written from the ironic detachment that old age often brings, putting these relationships and other events in their diarists' lives into quiet perspective after the overly optimistic hopes of their younger selves.

Weaker candidates often offered straightforward storytelling, with control of tenses proving problematic. Such candidates often simply focused on the woman's expectations for the future, followed by a report on whether or not those expectations had been met, with little contrast in point of view or mood.

Question 3 – *Flying*

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *Flying*, focusing on colours, sounds and movements.

This was not a very popular choice of question, although it did produce some good responses. A number of candidates chose to respond in unusual ways, such as interpreting the title in a metaphorical way or writing from the perspective of a bird in flight. Such approaches were acceptable but not very successful.

Some stronger candidates focused on the transition from day-time to night-time to provide them with an effective structure and wrote some vivid descriptions of the different kinds of life visible below, in a variety of landscapes.

Weaker candidates often merely listed 'colours', 'sounds' and 'movements' or became distracted by adjectives and spent rather too much time, for example, detailing the 'bright blue, enormous, majestic sky'. There seemed to be a number of candidates who felt that fragmented sentences enhanced the descriptive quality of their writing when, in fact, the lack of appropriate sentence demarcation sometimes detracted from the effects which the vocabulary selection was intended to create. Other weak responses often lapsed into narrative, rather than descriptive, writing. Many responses lacked paragraphs or any other apparent form of structure.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Review of a new sports magazine

Candidates were asked to write a review, for their school newsletter, of a new sports magazine aimed at teenagers and young adults.

This question was less popular than Question 5, and the sense of both form and audience were not always certain. Few candidates totally grasped the particular language and structure needed for a review, whether positive or critical. Many answers lacked development and felt too list-like. Most reviews focused on good points; a few offered slightly more balance by including negative comments too.

Stronger candidates structured their reviews clearly, with some effectively deploying subheadings. They gave clear recommendations or criticism; the rare critical reviews were usually the more insightful as they provided clear suggestions as to how the magazine could be improved.

Weaker candidates provided rather plodding lists of the magazine's 'features'. Some of these reviewers were taken aback by the alleged bulky size of the publications, which included far too many different types of sporting activity for their consumption. There was some confusion of the review format, with occasional examples of candidates writing for the new magazine, instead of reviewing it.

Question 5 – Contrasting letters to headteacher about a trip to a museum

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting letters, of 300–450 words each, to their headteacher, providing feedback on a school trip to a museum. They were asked to write one letter from a student who gained from the experience and one from a different student who found the experience less useful.

This was by far the most popular question choice in Section B and it produced a good number of successful responses. The requirement to write two contrasting letters was generally achieved by candidates across the ability range. Most candidates were comfortable with the letter form and adopted an appropriate tone and register – voice was therefore generally well observed through the writing.

The stronger candidates addressed specific reasons for their opinions and centred their observations on a particular type of museum (art and history were the favourites). The stronger candidates wrote two very convincing and contrasting views related to the same experience. There was some good use of imaginative language to recreate, for example, the beautiful paintings and artefacts seen at the museum.

Many weaker candidates tended to give an account of the day's events from two different perspectives, rather than create clear contrast. While most candidates managed to set out the letter format properly, quite a few did not – and this led to some of these responses being in the form of a two-part essay without a clear sense of audience. Others struggled with the nature of the feedback, writing in a tone which was not appropriate for formal feedback to a headteacher.

Question 6 – Voiceover for opening segment of *Goodbye Boredom* TV documentary

Candidates were asked to write the script of a voiceover, aimed at teenagers, for the opening segment of a TV documentary called *Goodbye Boredom*. They were asked to offer advice and guidance and to create a sense of fun and enthusiasm.

Some candidates struggled with the voiceover format, using either pseudo-scripted exchanges or (more often) simply writing an article. Stage directions or descriptions of the TV 'shots' were sometimes used excessively, at times at the expense of the text of the voiceover itself. Some candidates struggled to define what information and material should be in an opening segment of a voiceover.

Stronger candidates did just what the question asked: wrote a voiceover with obvious visual elements briefly described and linked to the words, and included a variety of scenes showing a range of activities, for all ages, to relieve boredom. The sense of audience was well observed in these cases and candidates used well-chosen language to create a sense of fun and enthusiasm.

Weaker candidates were less able to produce a convincing voice, and content typically consisted of a list of possible activities, often with a slightly over-exaggerated and repetitive sense of fun.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22 Writing
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Key messages

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In **Section A**, **Question 1** was easily the most popular, followed by **Questions 2** and **3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Some who did write descriptive pieces loaded sentences and phrases with excessive and inappropriate adjectives. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere: for example, where the reader was able to relate to the sense of mood and drama in **Question 1**; explore, from the same person's perspective, the different atmosphere of the countryside and the city in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of sounds and movement in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes a complete response was rendered less clear by inadequate paragraphing) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**.

In **Section B, Question 4** was easily the most popular, followed by **Questions 5** and **6**. The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – *The Longest Day of My Life*

Candidates were asked to write the opening to a story called *The Longest Day of My Life*. They were asked to create a sense of mood and drama.

This was easily the most popular choice. It posed a challenge by requiring a balance between the creation of some tension and the idea of waiting through some tedious or trying times: in describing ‘boring’ events quite a few candidates failed to capture the interest of the reader, and a sense of drama was consequently lacking. In some cases, the first person narrative form suggested by the title became a third person account, thereby compromising structure and cohesion. Many candidates apparently wrote from their own experience (for example, an account of a memorial day for a deceased grandparent) or perhaps one not too remote to them in experiential terms, such as a car breakdown during a family holiday. When such an approach successfully created a sense of drama and mood, this was a very effective way of answering the question. On occasions, the structure of the opening of a story was not fully apparent.

Stronger candidates focused on creating the mood of the narrator and/or characters, setting them up for our sympathy or empathy as readers, before embroiling them in dramatic situations. These responses invariably included some suspense, especially when the time element was included, and the better ones avoided the slightly clichéd approach of writing the time down minute-by-minute. Some very effective answers had a time cut-off (for example the end of an exam) and we were left wondering what had happened after that point in time.

Weaker candidates typically wrote about rather ordinary, mundane events, often in a school or college setting, with a murder or some other shocking incident occurring in an attempt to create drama. Others focused on a character who did not know what to do with his or her day; frequent references to time or waiting for time to pass were a common feature of these responses.

Question 2 – Contrasting pieces about living in the countryside and the city

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, one about a person living in the countryside, and another about the same person living in a city a year later. They were asked to create a sense of atmosphere and place.

‘Atmosphere and place’ was a challenging direction for some candidates. In most cases, the countryside was seen as a positive environment, against the polluted, noisy and swarming metropolis. However, some candidates inverted this convention quite convincingly (opting for indoor plumbing and modern conveniences over the arduous daily tasks necessary for life in a rural setting).

Some of the stronger candidates drew on personal experiences, often writing vividly and with a lot of convincing sensory language. In some such descriptions, particularly of the country, candidates managed to write quite movingly about their own homes and childhoods.

Weaker candidates ignored the time element altogether and merely listed descriptions of the charms of country life and the frictions of the city. While often addressing the concerns of ‘atmosphere’ and ‘place’, these descriptions often did not really link countryside and city in an engaging sense. In many cases, actual descriptions of places, which would have given a concrete and realistic description of either environment, were ignored, to concentrate solely on the atmosphere.

Question 3 – An Airport

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece about an airport, focusing on sounds and movements to create a sense of atmosphere.

It was evident in many responses, including some of the most evocative, that an airport lounge was a familiar place for a good number of candidates. This again shows the potential benefit for the candidates of writing from their own experience.

The question enabled candidates to subsume narrative elements successfully within the descriptions without losing the descriptive element altogether. This combination was seen in a lot of the stronger responses, where the physical environment was described, with engaging vignettes of travellers' pleasures and frustrations within the airport. The more successful answers built an effective and directed atmosphere in this fashion, employing the various sounds and movements always seen and heard in airport environments to good purpose. Successful variations on perspective included those of a baggage handler and a trainee pilot, which enabled the reader to vicariously feel their nervous and slightly detached view of the masses of ordinary people swarming around the airport.

Weaker candidates often merely listed 'sounds' and 'movements' or became distracted by adjectives and spent rather too much time, for example, detailing the 'shiny, smooth, enormous, white, tiled floor'. There seemed to be a number of candidates who felt that fragmented sentences enhanced the descriptive quality of their writing when, in fact, the lack of appropriate sentence demarcation sometimes detracted from the effects which the vocabulary selection was intended to create. Other weak responses often lapsed into narrative, rather than descriptive, writing. Many responses lacked paragraphs or any other apparent form of structure.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Magazine article called *Fame – Is it worth it?*

Candidates were asked to write an article for their school magazine called *Fame – Is it worth it?* In the article they were asked to show their interest in this issue.

This question was very popular and generally answered quite effectively. Most candidates managed to write with an appropriate sense of audience, with candidates across all bands attempting to use engaging devices and techniques – direct address, rhetorical questions and anecdotes, for example. This is obviously an area of life about which candidates had plenty of ideas and the form was largely managed successfully.

Although the wording does not specifically call for a balanced argument, most candidates who chose this approach did so with relative success. The overwhelming majority of responses included relevant examples of famous people, almost exclusively in the arenas of music or sport, but some worthy philanthropists and saints were included. Additionally, the trait of philanthropy was sometimes included in the descriptions of singers and athletes to demonstrate the subtleties of their struggle to survive their privileged lifestyles. Candidates usually clearly delineated perceived pros (wealth, ability to set trends, humanitarian ventures) and cons (rampant egotism, materialist culture at the expense of family bonds and friendship, psychological and medical issues) of fame.

Stronger candidates often took this approach, and they also typically gave a nuanced and thoughtful sense of how the unrestrained embrace of fame can also lead to the slippery slope of drug or alcohol abuse: philanthropic gestures were seen as an antidote to the egotistical acceptance of admiration. The most successful responses usually adopted a deliberative approach, appealing to their readership to make up their own minds on the issue.

Weaker candidates gave the clichéd opposition of received adulation against the annoyance of being pursued by paparazzi, without further elaboration. Some responses had a somewhat narrow focus about 'being famous' at school or college, but very few of these answers went beyond the application of the clichés of worldwide fame to a school lifestyle in a limited way.

Question 5 – Contrasting reviews of a new computer game

Candidates were asked to write two reviews for a technology website, of 300–450 words each, of a new computer game. They were asked to write one review praising the game and one criticising it.

The requirement to present two contrasting viewpoints was achieved by candidates across the ability range, but some seemed to overlook the fact that the reviews were intended for a technology website. There was a trend here of some candidates writing with greater accuracy, engagement and conviction than on Section A; their obvious interest in and knowledge of computer gaming was probably the reason for this.

Stronger candidates produced some highly convincing pieces of writing that were sufficiently credible for use on a real website. Form was carefully observed and a lively and relaxed style was employed. Some thoughtful candidates even had a glossary of words and phrases for the computer game-illiterate. Some candidates successfully compared the game to previous editions carrying the same name, thus enabling them to make detailed and engaging commentaries on the merits and demerits of not only the game itself, but also the providers.

Weaker answers, on the other hand, merely listed the technical capabilities, often with overly emphatic punctuation or phrasing (multiple exclamation marks for the positive review, ranting in the negative review). Weaker candidates sometimes did not refer to any specific game and, in some cases, ran out of reasons for or against the game, tending to be rather repetitive in order to meet the minimum word requirement.

Question 6 – Talk about the benefits of taking up a creative or expressive hobby

Candidates were asked to write the text of a talk, to be given by a teacher to students and parents, about the many benefits of taking up a creative or expressive hobby. They were asked to create a sense of passion and enthusiasm.

The conventions of a speech were deployed on most occasions, usually quite successfully. Passion and enthusiasm was usually generated through the sharing, from a personal perspective, of detailed observations about the teacher's enjoyable pursuit of a hobby. This was quite a difficult question for the less able candidates, as they struggled to find a convincing voice for the teacher delivering the talk.

Stronger candidates identified a number of specific benefits to taking up a creative hobby and added specific examples. The most successful candidates clearly conveyed the persona of a thoroughly charismatic teacher, with the benefits chiefly advocated to be a reduction in stress levels, engagement with one's inner artist, the formation of strong and lasting friendships, potential lifelong involvement in an activity, and meaningful connections made between children and their parents.

Weaker candidates tended to be rather vague on the whole, and understanding of what comprised 'The Arts' was often lacking, with few concrete examples provided. They spoke generally about how the arts were creative and, therefore, beneficial, without any detailed reasoning. Often 'parents' (specifically mentioned in the question) were not included, therefore cutting off one obvious choice of encouragement, whether through supporting their offspring with money to buy materials or sharing the passion/enthusiasm themselves.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23 Writing
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Key messages

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When preparing for **Section B**: Writing for an audience, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles, both print and online, as background preparation. Candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles and newspaper correspondence.

General comments

A number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length. Some candidates recorded their word count for each response incorrectly. Examiners will perform their own check on the length of responses, which should fulfil the rubric requirements outlined on the paper.

In **Section A**, **Question 1** was easily the most popular, followed by **Questions 2** and **3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Some who did write descriptive pieces loaded sentences and phrases with excessive and inappropriate adjectives. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere: for example, where the reader was able to relate to the sense of drama and mystery in **Question 1**; explore the differing outlook and mood of a taxi journey to the airport, revealing the different perspectives of the taxi driver and the passenger in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of colours, sounds and movement in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes a complete response was rendered less clear by inadequate paragraphing) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in

Question 1.

In **Section B**, **Question 5** was the most popular, followed by **Questions 4** and **6**. The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – As she approached the house, she was sure she saw a face in the upstairs window

Candidates were asked to write a story beginning with the given sentence, *As she approached the house, she was sure she saw a face in the upstairs window*. They were asked to create a sense of drama and mystery.

This was the most popular choice, and produced some highly imaginative responses. Some candidates, however, mistakenly interpreted that the instruction meant that they should write only the opening of a story. Such responses were consequently incomplete, with too many ending on what the candidate felt was an acceptable 'cliff-hanger'; to the reader, meanwhile, it felt like a poor, unsatisfactory conclusion. Many of the candidates wrote in the horror genre.

Stronger candidates produced a clear storyline, with drama and mystery often being created by the unknown face in the upstairs window. This often focused the narrator/protagonist's fear or courage, which provided a sense of drama. Other candidates incorporated creepily normal conversations with an obvious ghostly presence into their stories, or introduced weird, time-warp situations which plummeted the narrator/protagonist into an impossible past or future, thus fulfilling the 'mystery' element of the question.

Weaker candidates wrote rather formulaic narratives with little, or no, clear link with the face in the upstairs window. They often struggled to come up with a convincing conclusion to the story, and this resulted in some rather long pieces of writing which lacked overall structural control.

Question 2 – Contrasting pieces, one from the perspective of a taxi driver and the other from the perspective of the passenger

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, one from the perspective of a taxi driver driving to the airport, and the other from the perspective of his or her passenger. They were asked to create a sense of outlook and mood. Most candidates attempted to create two different voices, with varying degrees of success.

Stronger candidates subtly linked the driver's and passenger's thoughts about each other or similar people/events seen out of the window, in their separate parts of the vehicle. Narrative drama and suspense were often brought into play with the situation of the passenger rushing to avoid missing their flight. While many of the taxi drivers were grumpy, sometimes their positive or cheerful attitude to their work contrasted nicely with a stressed tourist or jobseeker in the back of the taxi.

Weaker candidates tended to mirror events in both pieces and just switched characters. The differences in outlook and mood were often not very apparent.

Question 3 – The Ocean

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece about the ocean, focusing on colours, sounds and movements to create a sense of atmosphere.

This was not a very popular choice of question, although it did produce some good responses. Some responses entailed visits to the beach, which were accepted as instances of oceanic observations.

Stronger candidates wrote some vivid descriptions of the different kinds of life visible below the ocean, successfully creating a sense of atmosphere through the sustained use of the descriptive form in effective descriptions of marine biology. They structured their answers clearly in a variety of ways, such as writing paragraphs on different marine creatures, or describing from the surface of the ocean down to the depths.

Others successfully utilised the viewpoint of a diver, describing the creatures he or she encountered while moving silently through the water.

Weaker candidates often merely listed colours, sounds and movements, or became distracted by adjectives and spent rather too much time, for example, detailing the 'beautiful, deep, blue ocean' or the 'enormous, scary, majestic shark'. Other weak responses often lapsed into narrative, rather than descriptive, writing. Some responses lacked paragraphs or any other apparent form of structure.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Review of the latest book by a well-known author

Candidates were asked to write a review of the latest book by a well-known author, to be published in their school magazine. In the review they were asked to give their opinion of the book and how it compares with the author's previous ones. This question encouraged candidates to talk about their reading enthusiasms and most candidates who opted for it seemed to be keen readers.

Stronger candidates had detailed knowledge of their authors' books, as well as being fully familiar with the style and form of literary reviews. This was clearly evident in the imaginative and engaging responses they produced. Such candidates also spent some time making comparisons with the author's previous texts, often in trilogies or series. This led to most of the best answers talking convincingly about real authors and books.

Weaker candidates sometimes did not seem to have a real book in mind and wrote rather unconvincing reviews, which were often heavily reliant on storytelling, rather than providing the reviewer's opinion of the book.

Question 5 – Contrasting letters about pocket money

Candidates were asked to write two letters, of 300–450 words each, one in favour of giving children pocket money and the other against it.

This was the most popular choice of question in Section B and the requirement to write two contrasting letters was achieved by candidates across the ability range. It produced some interesting arguments for and against pocket money, with some mature and well thought out answers, with developed arguments and thoughtful conclusions.

Stronger candidates produced some highly convincing, contrasting pieces of writing that were fully credible. Form was carefully observed and a lively and passionate style was employed with some quite subtle ideas and arguments about the social, cultural and moral aspects of this topic. Candidates were able to impersonate parents' views quite readily.

Weaker candidates tended to produce short answers which lacked development, often merely listing the pros and cons of giving pocket money. They struggled to differentiate the two voices clearly, and many pieces lacked contrast, instead only presenting conflicting arguments concerning pocket money.

Question 6 – Principal's welcome speech to new students

Candidates were asked to write the text of a speech, to be given by a principal to new students on the first day of the school year. They were asked to create a sense of enthusiasm and motivation for the year ahead.

The conventions of a speech were deployed on most occasions, usually quite successfully. Enthusiasm and motivation was usually generated through the sharing of the activities the students would be involved in during the year ahead. Most candidates successfully employed a convincing voice for the principal delivering the talk and tone, register and form were generally well sustained even in those responses which were technically weak.

Stronger candidates had a mature voice and provided varied reasons for looking forward. They focused on specific aspects of school life, did not pull any punches about the necessity for discipline, and talked frankly about their own experience of being a principal, often reminiscing in a not overly indulgent way about their own memories of adolescence.

Weaker candidates tended to be rather vague and lacked clear focus on the requirements of the speech. They often relied on repetition and exclamation marks to create a sense of enthusiasm while presenting general platitudes about success and following dreams.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text, candidates ought to concentrate on making 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 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly 'gleaning hints' from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. Only a few candidates produced short passages of extremely superficial commentary.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this series a review of the film *Bang Bang*. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this series it was the blurb appearing on the back of a DVD version of the film. Careful consideration of the target audience (the question specified 'a buyer' of the DVD) was required when producing an appropriate 'promotional text'. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively 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 style and language of the blurb appearing on the back of the DVD version of the film *Bang Bang* produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the review of the film. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose, register, format and choices of lexis, and also their ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of the language found in both texts. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the article and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for the following: comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions, and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both centres and candidates that **Question 1(a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for Questions **1(b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates chiefly responded enthusiastically to this directed writing task, showing secure familiarity with the purpose and conventions of a promotional blurb. Most candidates provided an appropriately enticing heading followed by a brief summary of the film's plot (selecting appropriate details gleaned from those presented in the review) and made some attempt to appropriately sensationalise aspects of the film that were criticised in the review. For example the suggestion that the film suffers from 'an especially awful script and a truly incompetent director' (lines 5–6) was reworked as 'action that will keep you on the edge of your seat' and 'award-winning director'. Most responses concluded with an upbeat endorsement of the viewing experience the potential purchaser could expect, such as 'Be prepared for action. Be prepared for romance. Be prepared for ... *Bang Bang*'.

In weak responses candidates usually summarised the film's plot without a clear focus on reworking the language of the film review to create an effective promotional text. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to praise some of the film's positive qualities. A few responses more closely resembled a positive review of the film rather than exhibiting solid engagement with the form and style of a promotional blurb intended to attract a buyer's interest.

In strong responses candidates demonstrated the ability to select the details from the review that might be positively represented to appeal to potential purchasers of the DVD version of the film: the protracted contest for possession of the valuable Kohinoor diamond; the promise of romance between the protagonists; the frequent spectacular stunt scenes and change of setting featuring beautiful locations from around the world. Rhetorical questions featured prominently – 'Will they escape with their lives and fall for each other?' – as did strap lines ('the most action-packed film of 2017') and supposed quotations sourced from positive reviews of the film: 'A thrill a minute! You won't want to miss it! – *New York Times*'.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the review of the film *Bang Bang* and the promotional blurb for the DVD version of the film produced for **1(a)**.

Some candidates did not adopt an integrated approach and sought to deal with each text separately. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choices made by the film reviewer and then examined the carefully chosen vocabulary used in their promotional blurbs in a comparative fashion. By so doing such responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis of 50:50 or 60:40 on the review and promotional blurb.

Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the film review and likely to primarily summarise the content of both texts rather than endeavouring to comparatively analyse their style and language. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of written texts they could identify in the film review and their promotional blurbs, especially the use of a variety of sentence types and punctuation marks, with brief and infrequent comparison of the texts' language.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the conventions of a film review and a promotional blurb. They could briefly examine and compare the level of formality exhibited by the texts (most candidates employed a modified formal register in their promotional blurbs) and appreciate both the informative and critical intent of the review. The writer of the review was found to be especially accommodating of the reader through the strategic use of the second person (the subheading 'The film isn't unwatchable but certainly tests your patience' and 'If you've ever watched a James Bond-style spy thriller in your life ...' appearing in the second paragraph) and occasional use of informal register ('Both actors look a million dollars', the female protagonist being characterised as 'a pathetic ditz'). Candidates usually examined the sarcastic tone of some of the reviewer's remarks that might also be directed straight at the reader as well as incorporating figurative language (e.g. the metaphor 'How many times have you ordered a dish that looks terrific photographed in a menu, but disappoints when it shows up on the table? *Bang Bang* is that kind of meal'). Candidates usually demonstrated an appreciation of how the writer uses sensationalistic language to occasionally praise ('eye-popping stunt scenes, a slew of beautiful locales') but chiefly criticise aspects of the film ('dialogues so clunky they make you cringe', 'blatant product placements that are embarrassing').

In stronger responses, candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. The reviewer's use of adjectives with both positive and negative connotations ('gorgeous', 'hummable'; 'threadbare', 'incompetent') and clichéd use of verbs ('dodges' and 'sucked into' relating to the main characters' activities) were frequently carefully examined to demonstrate his successful manipulation of the reader's mixed impressions of the film. The metaphor 'produce fewer sparks than a box of soaked matchsticks' to evaluate the lead actors' on-screen interaction was usually appreciated as particularly scathing (as was, though less frequently examined, the female lead compared to 'the kind of insufferable character you wouldn't want to be sitting next to on a long-haul flight'). Some candidates noted that this strong condemnation appears to be somewhat tempered by the reviewer's praise of the male lead actor (through yet more adjectives – 'charming and charismatic' – and colloquial expressions: 'he appears to be having a good time', 'actually looks like he could pull off those action scenes for real'). There was some perceptive examination of the reviewer's jaundiced evaluation of the film's plot conventions ('teary back-story', 'a twist that anyone ... can predict from a mile away') and the use of movie semantic field jargon (chiefly those addressing generic conventions – 'prized diamond', 'mysterious thief', 'criminal mastermind', 'fast-paced actioner' – but also the film industry: the opening listed identification of the 'Director' and 'Cast' in addition to 'official remake' and 'movie star').

Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. Some candidates often dealt too much with the content of both Texts and with listing techniques they could identify. In such responses there was exhibited some recognition of the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a secure grasp of Text A as a transcription, an extract from a television programme in which a motivational speaker – Philip McKernan – is interviewed about how people attempt to make and fulfil their New Year's resolutions, and the conventions of written language exhibited by Text B, an extract from a newspaper article by Harriet Walker chiefly conveying her perspective on the topic. Candidates could usually establish how the audience for both Texts is potentially large and general given the subject matter and how both Texts could be sourced by the use of internet searches (in cases where the TV programme and newspaper article were not immediately accessible to interested viewers and readers at point of transmission and publication respectively). Candidates showed they were aware of the strong

human-interest element evident in both Texts but were particularly drawn by two features: Philip's lengthy explanation (Text A, lines 13-30) of why he thinks people either make or break their resolutions and Harriet's anecdotal exploration of how she is not one of those people who possess sufficient 'willpower' to keep their resolutions.

Many candidates focused on the conventions of spoken language they could identify in Text A, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Philip: his voiced pause 'er' and perseverating use of the conjunction 'and' to extend his account of how people find it difficult to make resolutions at one point in the year given how busy their daily lives are; a false start at the beginning of his first response ('well you know (.) er i think...') and hesitation ('well i i think') at the beginning of his second; his persistent repetition of 'challenge' to remind listeners of his main point about how many people tend to perceive resolutions; and, use of second person plural address 'you' in consideration of the television programme's audience. They also examined how the Interviewer guides the conversation ('i want to get you started on...'; '...why do you think that is') and that his use of a statistic with a stress on a key word ('seventy five per cent of people who make resolutions break them') suggests that at least one of his questions was prepared in advance and was possibly rehearsed. It was also frequently noted that the exchange does not deviate from a question and answer structure with respectful turn-taking throughout. In relation to Text B there was usually some consideration of Harriet's use of short paragraphs to better engage her readers and the single-sentence paragraph 'I am not like those willpower people' (line 10) to clearly state her position on the topic of keeping resolutions. Candidates usually appreciated how her article is structured by progressing from generalisation ('Some people have willpower', 'people like that') to more concrete personal experience with a corresponding change in pronoun use from 'they' to 'you' to 'I'. Some candidates noted how Harriet employs a richer low frequency vocabulary ('sinewy', 'percentile', 'flimsy', 'hulks') than Philip does and resorts to second person pronouns, an informal register and conversational, colloquial constructions to demonstrate her sympathy for readers who have themselves also struggled to keep resolutions ('[they] aren't for everybody, you know, so consider which camp you're in before you start beating yourself over the head with whatever flimsy pretence of health you're trying to embark upon this January').

In the strongest responses candidates tended to focus confidently on Philip's view that the people who 'attain goals' are both realistic and demonstrate perseverance as illustrated through his optimistic and possibly rehearsed extended metaphor of climbing progressively higher summits ('theres a small hill (.) theres a larger hill (.) and theres a huge mountain' until they are 'on top of that hill and look at the big one (.) lets just say it's the mount everest (.) it looks more attainable') in direct contrast with Harriet's hyperbolic, extended metaphor of her 'whole existence' being like her untidy childhood bedroom – 'simply pushed all the toys, clothes and books under my bed' – that serves as a precursor of her adult life, 'littered with the rusting hulks and bare bones of things I couldn't be bothered to finish'. There also was frequent examination of Harriet's use of active verbs and alliteration to describe the actions of people with willpower ('They plough through projects and wrestle workloads'). Occasionally it was observed that willpower is depicted through figurative imagery: 'You can see it holding them up – all can-do and sinewy, it wraps around their bones and fortifies them'). Her self-deprecating sense of humour ('Ever since I can remember, I have been utterly incapable of sticking to any resolution I have ever made'; 'I am a relentless self-improver of the very worst kind: the kind that never really improves herself at all') usually interpreted to be a coping mechanism. It is through the use of direct speech in the voice of her '[physio-]therapist' that Harriet eventually introduces an element of pragmatism: "Well, Harriet, given you couldn't be bothered to do most of the exercises I gave you, I hardly think you'll be training for a marathon any time soon, will you?" In contrast Philip concludes by using an effective triadic syntactical structure – 'they set what they think they want (.) they set what they think their parents want for them (.) they set what they think society wants for them (.)' to explain that people fail to keep a resolution 'because they realise its not what they want in the first place'. A few candidates could point out that Philip (as an expert in motivation) and Harriet (as a journalist investigating her own life experiences) concur on one essential point: a person needs to set the goal they want to achieve for themselves, not for parents and society in general (Philip), nor for mothers and therapists specifically (Harriet).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text, candidates ought to concentrate on making 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 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly 'gleaning hints' from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. It is good to note that very few candidates produced short passages of superficial commentary.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a transcription of a radio interview with the owner of the largest collection of vinyl musical records in the world. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the question's instructions; in this session it was 'the text of a job advertisement' produced by the collection's owner. Furthermore it is stipulated the collection's owner 'would like to employ a new member of staff to work on the cataloguing of the records'. Careful consideration of the target audience (potential new employees) and the requirement to provide a concise description of the cataloguing position is thus required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively 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 style and language of the job advertisement produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of a transcription of an interview with Zero Freitas, the owner of the record collection. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register, format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of the language found in both texts. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the transcription and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for: comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach this session – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both centres and candidates that **Question 1(a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1(b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The directed writing candidates produced usually featured solid engagement with the form and style of a job advertisement. Reworking chiefly consisted of selecting and using pieces of information conveyed by Zero Freitas in the transcription (although candidates did also make gainful use of the information imparted in the Interviewer's introduction and by his topical questions).

In weak responses candidates often wrote semi-formally in the first person voice of Freitas, apparently in imitation of the enthusiastic nature he exhibited during the interview; such responses also tended to include non-essential information, such as how he started collecting vinyl records. When candidates used an email format, often incorporating casual salutations not clearly directed to the required target audience (e.g. 'Hi friends', 'Hey everyone') alongside a personal signing off by Freitas, few conventions of a job advertisement could usually be identified. These responses often mentioned that the job involved records, but made little reference to cataloguing or to the nature of Freitas' record collection and tended to offer little indication of who should apply for the cataloguing position and how.

Most candidates showed secure understanding of the conventions of a job description by usually providing an appropriate and succinct title (often aligned centrally and either underlined or set in block capitals) and presenting directly beneath it appropriate generic subheadings so as to organise information pertaining to the position – 'responsibilities', 'past experience', 'contact details' (telephone numbers plus email addresses or website links incorporating Freitas' name were prevalent) and 'application process' (submission of applications and whether interviews would be conducted in person or via electronic means) – with appropriate details in bullet-pointed lists and short paragraphs presented beneath or alongside the subheadings. Most candidates judiciously selected information from the transcription to indicate the staggering size of the collection and the formidable cataloguing task still to be completed ('this former candle factory houses an incredible six million vinyl records' that is continually growing – 'just received a collection of a hundred thousand vinyl records from cuba' – with only 'two hundred and eighty thousand' catalogued over the past four years) and to specify that the successful applicant would be joining an established team of interns (presently 'sixteen', up from 'two interns then four' initially).

In stronger responses, candidates also provided purposeful titles ('Vinyl Record Cataloguing position available') and either provided opening statements describing the collection (including a careful selection of the many musical genres, specific artists and national musical traditions mentioned by Freitas) or one or two rhetorical questions designed to appeal to the target audience (e.g. 'Do you have a passion for music? Have you ever dreamt of working with the world's largest vinyl record collection?') There was usually some careful selection of details from the interview concerning the cataloguing process (suggesting that Freitas is a responsible employer, as interns wear 'masks and protective clothing' when they are 'painstakingly removing dust from each of the covers') and how Freitas' mission is to eventually make his enormous collection 'accessible to the public'. Occasionally, candidates incorporated music-related figurative references to good effect (e.g. 'work in an environment saturated with music', 'work to the pulsating beat of every culture in the world').

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words), although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the transcription of a radio interview with the owner of the largest collection of vinyl musical records in the world and the job advertisement for a new member of staff to work on the cataloguing of the records produced for 1(a). Only a few candidates did not apply a suitable methodology to analyse the transcription. Overall, it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription of a transactional conversation in the form of an interview (with the Interviewer directly soliciting information about the collection from its owner).

Some candidates did not adopt an integrated approach and sought to deal with each text separately. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by the speakers in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in the job advertisement in a comparative fashion. By so doing, such responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis of 50:50 or 60:40 on the transcription and the job advertisement.

In weak responses candidates exerted a lot of effort to merely list the elements of spontaneous speech they found in the transcription, with little attention paid to their own job descriptions. Some candidates reiterated at length what they know about Grice's maxims, with little supporting examination of pertinent aspects of the texts for comparison. There was some focus on distinctions in purpose (informative and persuasive), audience (broad and limited to job seekers) and register (semi-formal and usually formal) between the transcription of the radio interview and advertisement respectively, with some identification of high and low frequency lexis in each text as appropriate. In such responses, however, limited comparative analysis was attempted.

The majority of candidates demonstrated at least adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the conventions of an interview (especially the question-answer format and turn-taking in adjacency pairs) and non-fluency features such as pauses (a few noted the significant pause the Interviewer employs – perhaps for dramatic effect – before he asks his final question: '(3) what's the aim [of possessing such a large collection of vinyl records]'). They could usually reflect on how the Interviewer controlled the conversation, although Freitas held the conversational floor with the length of his most substantive responses. There was some consideration of the Interviewer's introductory remarks (lines 1–7) as setting the scene with use of adjectives such as 'incredible' and 'mammoth' and repetition and repair ('an old turntable a really dusty old turntable') intended to secure the audience's attention. Candidates usually recognised that the Interviewer had likely prepared his questions in advance, and also the fact that a job advertisement could be drafted, edited and polished prior to publication in a suitable medium (most speculated it would be either in the classified section of a local newspaper or a job bulletin either printed or accessed electronically), and that as the number of words or space available is directly related to cost, it would need to be concise and somewhat telegraphic in meaning in regards to deliberately omitted words.

In the strongest responses candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance – to whole text-level in their examination of the texts. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and evaluated the effects produced. It was usually recognised that the conversation was a highly cooperative and efficient exchange with the Interviewer asking a number of questions to solicit increasingly detailed information, ('what number are we up to', 'did you have a dream or was this just a hobby that got right out of control') and Freitas readily providing it (although some candidates noted the question 'how many decades do you need to complete the cataloguing of your records' is not answered directly, Freitas instead talking about expanding his operation perhaps in an attempt at saving face). A few candidates noted that the Interviewer solicited Freitas' longest utterance by making a statement ('you've just received a collection of a hundred thousand vinyl records from cuba') rather than posing yet another question. They examined how Freitas' use of stressed syllables for emphasis ('crazy for music', 'a whole new world') helped convey his passion for

collecting vinyl records and his use of music-related semantic field jargon in categorised lists (e.g. different national types of music 'brazilian', 'american (.) english' differentiated from recording artists 'frank sinatra (.) doris day', 'bach (.) mozart') demonstrated both his knowledge and recognition that his role here is to be an expert for the edification of the listening public. There was usually consideration of figurative language in the transcription employed by both speakers (e.g. 'mammoth task', 'every day its like coming into a sweet shop') and some consideration of how Freitas has a command of low frequency lexis ('intimate', 'entirety', 'eclectic') in addition to colloquialisms, and can use balanced turns of phrase for emphasis in points he particularly seeks to make ('for forty years I searched for records (.) in shops (1) today the records come to me').

Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion typically demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and little awareness of the effects created. Some candidates dealt too much with the content of both Texts or with merely listing techniques they could identify. Such responses tended to exhibit some recognition of how form and language are used in each Text to inform readers and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts, and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a sure grasp of the purpose, audience and context of Text A, an extract from a book called *Writing a Novel* by Nigel Watts (part of the 'Teach Yourself' series) and of Text B, an extract from an article by Radhika Jones (taken from an online literary magazine) that includes an interview with the writer Peter Carey. Both Texts address the topic of writing fiction. Candidates usually established how the audience for Text A is likely narrower than Text B's, typically by reasoning that budding fiction writers would be a very small subsection of the adult population and *Writing a Novel* would likely require purchasing to be most useful on an ongoing basis, whereas in addition to the fact that Carey may have a significant pre-existing fan base, the article containing the interview with him is easily accessible online, with at most a small fee being required to access it. They could identify that the positive and encouraging tone of Text A is directly related to the purpose of guiding readers to become successful novel writers, often citing the way Watts' helpful use of instructional imperatives like 'Trust' and 'Remember' tends to front key sentences. They could also identify Carey's more exuberant tone in Text B, his consistent use of the first person singular pronoun, and the leavening effect of colloquialisms used to expound on his personal view of the writing experience: 'Every day's a miracle: wow, I did that, I didn't know any of that yesterday'. It was usually appreciated that both Texts consist of a rich mixture of simple, compound and complex sentence types and frequent low frequency lexis (e.g. in Text A 'a matter of balancing preparation and spontaneity', 'procrastination' and 'libations'; in Text B 'broad schematic idea', 'stubbornness' and 'belief') used confidently by educated, experienced writers to impart literary concepts to more than casual readerships. Watts' use of informal direct speech ("Okay, I know I don't know what I'm doing but I've got to start somewhere") and Carey's confessional elements ('I'll have some rough idea of the characters involved. But I might not have fully invented the place') both have the intended effect of sharing insecurities about the difficult task of writing fiction well. There was usually identification of the complex extended metaphor in Text A in which Watts compares the lengthy process of writing a novel to how a plant must be nurtured if it is to grow successfully (introduced in lines 1–2 and developed in 4–9) and Carey's comparatively simpler and clichéd simile that writing is 'like standing on the edge of a cliff' but often with little accompanying sustained analysis or careful consideration of context (Watts has had ample time to craft his metaphor whereas Carey is responding directly to the Interviewer's opening question – 'Now that you've published nine novels, do you have a routine?' – while it is possible that what is presented in the online literary magazine is an edited and polished version of the interview that took place).

In stronger responses candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language more efficiently and accurately, selecting an element to compare and contrast in each paragraph, and demonstrating a consistent appreciation for language features. They confidently discussed Watts' manner and tone as he directly addresses his reader's presumed anxieties about writing by using rhetorical questions (e.g. 'How long is the gap between idea and first word?') and by providing sincere reassurances based on his own conclusion that perseverance is required: 'as long as you keep the words coming they will find their way onto the page'; the personification of 'words' here was also occasionally noted and examined. This was usually compared with Carey's manner of speaking directly to the interviewer, Jones, but simultaneously remaining mindful of his fans as the secondary but personally more significant audience, involves appealing to them with (possibly rehearsed) metaphoric statements such as 'Every day you're making up the earth you're going to stand on' and the concluding declarative 'I can't leave a chapter alone until I think it's as good as I can make it'. A few candidates suggested Carey concurs with Watts about the importance of perseverance by utilising simple

repetition for effect – ‘So I wrote it and wrote it and wrote it until it worked’ – while Watts’ triadic phonological phrase ‘falling, falling, falling’ establishes a persuasive rhythmic quality more commonly associated with speech than a written text in conveying a similar, basic piece of advice for his readers: ‘if you can do this [writing] enough ... you’ll find you’ve written something which looks like a novel’.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33 Text Analysis
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Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text, candidates ought to concentrate on making 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 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly 'gleaning hints' from the information provided in the Questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. Only a few candidates produced short passages of extremely superficial commentary.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this series a review of the film *Bang Bang*. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this series it was the blurb appearing on the back of a DVD version of the film. Careful consideration of the target audience (the question specified 'a buyer' of the DVD) was required when producing an appropriate 'promotional text'. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively 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 style and language of the blurb appearing on the back of the DVD version of the film *Bang Bang* produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the review of the film. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose, register, format and choices of lexis, and also their ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of the language found in both texts. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the article and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for the following: comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions, and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both centres and candidates that **Question 1(a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for Questions **1(b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates chiefly responded enthusiastically to this directed writing task, showing secure familiarity with the purpose and conventions of a promotional blurb. Most candidates provided an appropriately enticing heading followed by a brief summary of the film's plot (selecting appropriate details gleaned from those presented in the review) and made some attempt to appropriately sensationalise aspects of the film that were criticised in the review. For example the suggestion that the film suffers from 'an especially awful script and a truly incompetent director' (lines 5–6) was reworked as 'action that will keep you on the edge of your seat' and 'award-winning director'. Most responses concluded with an upbeat endorsement of the viewing experience the potential purchaser could expect, such as 'Be prepared for action. Be prepared for romance. Be prepared for ... *Bang Bang*'.

In weak responses candidates usually summarised the film's plot without a clear focus on reworking the language of the film review to create an effective promotional text. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to praise some of the film's positive qualities. A few responses more closely resembled a positive review of the film rather than exhibiting solid engagement with the form and style of a promotional blurb intended to attract a buyer's interest.

In strong responses candidates demonstrated the ability to select the details from the review that might be positively represented to appeal to potential purchasers of the DVD version of the film: the protracted contest for possession of the valuable Kohinoor diamond; the promise of romance between the protagonists; the frequent spectacular stunt scenes and change of setting featuring beautiful locations from around the world. Rhetorical questions featured prominently – 'Will they escape with their lives and fall for each other?' – as did strap lines ('the most action-packed film of 2017') and supposed quotations sourced from positive reviews of the film: 'A thrill a minute! You won't want to miss it! – *New York Times*'.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the review of the film *Bang Bang* and the promotional blurb for the DVD version of the film produced for **1(a)**.

Some candidates did not adopt an integrated approach and sought to deal with each text separately. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choices made by the film reviewer and then examined the carefully chosen vocabulary used in their promotional blurbs in a comparative fashion. By so doing such responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis of 50:50 or 60:40 on the review and promotional blurb.

Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the film review and likely to primarily summarise the content of both texts rather than endeavouring to comparatively analyse their style and language. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of written texts they could identify in the film review and their promotional blurbs, especially the use of a variety of sentence types and punctuation marks, with brief and infrequent comparison of the texts' language.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the conventions of a film review and a promotional blurb. They could briefly examine and compare the level of formality exhibited by the texts (most candidates employed a modified formal register in their promotional blurbs) and appreciate both the informative and critical intent of the review. The writer of the review was found to be especially accommodating of the reader through the strategic use of the second person (the subheading 'The film isn't unwatchable but certainly tests your patience' and 'If you've ever watched a James Bond-style spy thriller in your life ...' appearing in the second paragraph) and occasional use of informal register ('Both actors look a million dollars', the female protagonist being characterised as 'a pathetic ditz'). Candidates usually examined the sarcastic tone of some of the reviewer's remarks that might also be directed straight at the reader as well as incorporating figurative language (e.g. the metaphor 'How many times have you ordered a dish that looks terrific photographed in a menu, but disappoints when it shows up on the table? *Bang Bang* is that kind of meal'). Candidates usually demonstrated an appreciation of how the writer uses sensationalistic language to occasionally praise ('eye-popping stunt scenes, a slew of beautiful locales') but chiefly criticise aspects of the film ('dialogues so clunky they make you cringe', 'blatant product placements that are embarrassing').

In stronger responses, candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. The reviewer's use of adjectives with both positive and negative connotations ('gorgeous', 'hummable'; 'threadbare', 'incompetent') and clichéd use of verbs ('dodges' and 'sucked into' relating to the main characters' activities) were frequently carefully examined to demonstrate his successful manipulation of the reader's mixed impressions of the film. The metaphor 'produce fewer sparks than a box of soaked matchsticks' to evaluate the lead actors' on-screen interaction was usually appreciated as particularly scathing (as was, though less frequently examined, the female lead compared to 'the kind of insufferable character you wouldn't want to be sitting next to on a long-haul flight'). Some candidates noted that this strong condemnation appears to be somewhat tempered by the reviewer's praise of the male lead actor (through yet more adjectives – 'charming and charismatic' – and colloquial expressions: 'he appears to be having a good time', 'actually looks like he could pull off those action scenes for real'). There was some perceptive examination of the reviewer's jaundiced evaluation of the film's plot conventions ('teary back-story', 'a twist that anyone ... can predict from a mile away') and the use of movie semantic field jargon (chiefly those addressing generic conventions – 'prized diamond', 'mysterious thief', 'criminal mastermind', 'fast-paced actioner' – but also the film industry: the opening listed identification of the 'Director' and 'Cast' in addition to 'official remake' and 'movie star').

Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. Some candidates often dealt too much with the content of both Texts and with listing techniques they could identify. In such responses there was exhibited some recognition of the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a secure grasp of Text A as a transcription, an extract from a television programme in which a motivational speaker – Philip McKernan – is interviewed about how people attempt to make and fulfil their New Year's resolutions, and the conventions of written language exhibited by Text B, an extract from a newspaper article by Harriet Walker chiefly conveying her perspective on the topic. Candidates could usually establish how the audience for both Texts is potentially large and general given the subject matter and how both Texts could be sourced by the use of internet searches (in cases where the TV programme and newspaper article were not immediately accessible to interested viewers and readers at point of transmission and publication respectively). Candidates showed they were aware of the strong

human-interest element evident in both Texts but were particularly drawn by two features: Philip's lengthy explanation (Text A, lines 13-30) of why he thinks people either make or break their resolutions and Harriet's anecdotal exploration of how she is not one of those people who possess sufficient 'willpower' to keep their resolutions.

Many candidates focused on the conventions of spoken language they could identify in Text A, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Philip: his voiced pause 'er' and perseverating use of the conjunction 'and' to extend his account of how people find it difficult to make resolutions at one point in the year given how busy their daily lives are; a false start at the beginning of his first response ('well you know (.) er i think...') and hesitation ('well i i think') at the beginning of his second; his persistent repetition of 'challenge' to remind listeners of his main point about how many people tend to perceive resolutions; and, use of second person plural address 'you' in consideration of the television programme's audience. They also examined how the Interviewer guides the conversation ('i want to get you started on...'; '...why do you think that is') and that his use of a statistic with a stress on a key word ('seventy five per cent of people who make resolutions break them') suggests that at least one of his questions was prepared in advance and was possibly rehearsed. It was also frequently noted that the exchange does not deviate from a question and answer structure with respectful turn-taking throughout. In relation to Text B there was usually some consideration of Harriet's use of short paragraphs to better engage her readers and the single-sentence paragraph 'I am not like those willpower people' (line 10) to clearly state her position on the topic of keeping resolutions. Candidates usually appreciated how her article is structured by progressing from generalisation ('Some people have willpower', 'people like that') to more concrete personal experience with a corresponding change in pronoun use from 'they' to 'you' to 'I'. Some candidates noted how Harriet employs a richer low frequency vocabulary ('sinewy', 'percentile', 'flimsy', 'hulks') than Philip does and resorts to second person pronouns, an informal register and conversational, colloquial constructions to demonstrate her sympathy for readers who have themselves also struggled to keep resolutions ('[they] aren't for everybody, you know, so consider which camp you're in before you start beating yourself over the head with whatever flimsy pretence of health you're trying to embark upon this January').

In the strongest responses candidates tended to focus confidently on Philip's view that the people who 'attain goals' are both realistic and demonstrate perseverance as illustrated through his optimistic and possibly rehearsed extended metaphor of climbing progressively higher summits ('theres a small hill (.) theres a larger hill (.) and theres a huge mountain' until they are 'on top of that hill and look at the big one (.) lets just say it's the mount everest (.) it looks more attainable') in direct contrast with Harriet's hyperbolic, extended metaphor of her 'whole existence' being like her untidy childhood bedroom – 'simply pushed all the toys, clothes and books under my bed' – that serves as a precursor of her adult life, 'littered with the rusting hulks and bare bones of things I couldn't be bothered to finish'. There also was frequent examination of Harriet's use of active verbs and alliteration to describe the actions of people with willpower ('They plough through projects and wrestle workloads'). Occasionally it was observed that willpower is depicted through figurative imagery: 'You can see it holding them up – all can-do and sinewy, it wraps around their bones and fortifies them'). Her self-deprecating sense of humour ('Ever since I can remember, I have been utterly incapable of sticking to any resolution I have ever made'; 'I am a relentless self-improver of the very worst kind: the kind that never really improves herself at all') usually interpreted to be a coping mechanism. It is through the use of direct speech in the voice of her '[physio-]therapist' that Harriet eventually introduces an element of pragmatism: "Well, Harriet, given you couldn't be bothered to do most of the exercises I gave you, I hardly think you'll be training for a marathon any time soon, will you?" In contrast Philip concludes by using an effective triadic syntactical structure – 'they set what they think they want (.) they set what they think their parents want for them (.) they set what they think society wants for them (.)' to explain that people fail to keep a resolution 'because they realise its not what they want in the first place'. A few candidates could point out that Philip (as an expert in motivation) and Harriet (as a journalist investigating her own life experiences) concur on one essential point: a person needs to set the goal they want to achieve for themselves, not for parents and society in general (Philip), nor for mothers and therapists specifically (Harriet).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 41 of syllabus 9093 is designed to examine knowledge and understanding of three key topics in the study of English language: spoken language and social groups; English as a global language, and language acquisition by children and teenagers. Only two of the three questions should be answered.

Marks are awarded positively through the bands. Candidates are expected to analyse the language and issues presented in the contexts provided in the questions using a linguistic stance. Responses will move towards the higher bands where the analysis is developed by applying appropriate theoretical examples to an argument (and possible counterargument). Candidates should carefully select quotations from the context provided as justification for points made.

In the lower bands, the candidate's control of English may be partial or there may be a simple or generalised response to the passage provided. In the middle bands, there will be a developing analysis including a detailed and informed exploration of language, structure, purpose and context (**Questions 1 and 3**) or a detailed and informed exploration of the linguistic issue (**Question 2**). In the higher bands, the response will be full, comparative, balanced and articulate.

General comments

The source materials for each question provided ample opportunity for candidates to engage well in each of the three topic areas. These allowed candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading. In this series, there was evidence that candidates were informed well regarding the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription; thus most candidates were able to respond to **Questions 1** and/or **3** from a linguistic stance. In **Question 2**, confident responses demonstrated wider reading which enabled fuller explorations of the linguistic issue presented. However, some less successful candidates only paraphrased the context provided without a detailed discussion or argument.

More successful candidates tended to make short plans before beginning the essay, which generally led to focus being maintained on the question throughout the response. Confident candidates ensured that theoretical examples were entirely appropriate to the point being made. Less confident responses offered brief comments on language theory which was not applied to the context provided, thus leaving the essay undeveloped and the passages not fully explored. Some candidates attempted to provide a response which demonstrated all of their learning whether or not it was applicable to the question and context. It is important to maintain focus on the question and source material throughout the response.

Stronger responses were from those candidates able to use a full range of linguistic terminology with precision. Weaker responses used basic descriptors to identify language features, but did not go on to provide a linguistic analysis. The terms elision and ellipsis continue to demonstrate confusion, as does the concept of deixis, although more confident candidates are able to evidence these appropriately. Responses which demonstrate a tendency to assertion or in which linguistic features are spotted and described with a generalised comment are unlikely to move towards the higher bands.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There was a keen understanding by confident candidates of the necessary enthusiasm of Holly Willoughby (HW) and the restrained response of Andy Murray (AM) given the scale of achievement. There was ample

opportunity to discuss the ways in which HW used language (often figuratively and with hyperbole) to encourage AM to participate in the interview more fully.

Most candidates were able to apply genderlect theory in their responses, with Tannen, Lakoff, Cameron and Coates being used. Confident candidates offered a counterargument regarding genderlect using Beattie's model or those of Zimmerman and West. Weaker candidates did not fully explore the tension between gender theory and the nature of the interview context and the role of an interviewer, regardless of gender.

Stronger candidates acknowledged the extent of HW's role in creating excitement for the viewers and support for AM, applying politeness principles, positive and negative face (Goffman) and accommodation theory (Giles). Engagement with these elements of language and power widened the scope of the responses, which often consequently rewarded in the higher bands.

Grice's maxims were applied widely, although sometimes without developed comment. Candidates should ensure that the theory they are quoting is entirely applicable to their argument.

Few candidates commented on the situational irony of AM's apparent lack of interest in the media and HW's opening utterance 'you tweeted', although confident candidates presented a full analysis of the way in which the interview succeeded as a cooperative conversation due to HW's continuing enthusiasm to produce information from AM that would be interesting to a television audience.

Question 2

More confident candidates took issue with points made in the passage provided, exploring any perceived bias and the reason that may have existed. These candidates demonstrated a wide knowledge base on English as a global language obtained from wider reading and personal experience. Weaker candidates continued to paraphrase the passage rather than create an argument and counter-argument on the points that the passage is making. Responses which demonstrated skill in writing discursively were often rewarded in the higher bands.

There was ample evidence of using past papers in the responses to widen the candidate's knowledge of the linguistic topic – particularly evidence of consideration of Nerrière's concept of Globish. Weaker responses made brief reference only to Kachru, although Crystal and Diamond were also referenced in discussion regarding social, economic and cultural benefits of the existence of a global language.

Stronger candidates made counterarguments regarding the examples provided in the passage, although most candidates commented on the influence of technology and the way English and the internet – and their inextricable involvement – enhances contemporary lifestyles albeit with possible detriment to local languages and cultures.

Question 3

The source material led to candidates being able to demonstrate a clear theoretical base, with many responses applying knowledge of Halliday, Piaget, Bruner, Skinner, Chomsky and Vygotsky. Stronger candidates often included Aitchison and Berko in their arguments. Candidates do not necessarily need to include all of their learning where it is not appropriate to the analysis. This can lead to a deficit approach with candidates commenting on what is not there in the language presented rather than that which is apparent.

Most candidates correctly identified Adam as being between the holophrastic and telegraphic stages of linguistic competence, with positive comments on Adam's acquisition of negation, mimicry, understanding of interrogative, object permanence, possession and use of pronoun which all aided him in his meaning-making. The transcript was rich in these elements for analysis and more confident candidates engaged well, providing a full and rounded discussion of language, structure, purpose and context.

Weaker candidates commented in a general way, without specifically linguistic development, about how Adam was able to identify colour. Weaker candidates tended only to mention the name of a theorist without explanation of how a certain model was applicable to the language presented.

Most candidates explored the role of the mother in her range of questioning and reinforcement techniques, together with the way in which adjacency pairs were fulfilled. Stronger candidates applied a wide range of linguistic terminology with precision when discussing the way in which Adam reduplicates syllables to produce lexis with appropriate comment on phonemic and morphological development evident in Adam's utterances.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 42 of syllabus 9093 is designed to examine knowledge and understanding of three key topics in the study of English language: spoken language and social groups; English as a global language, and language acquisition by children and teenagers. Only two of the three questions should be answered.

Marks are awarded positively through the bands. Candidates are expected to analyse the language and issues presented in the contexts provided in the questions using a linguistic stance. Responses will move towards the higher bands where the analysis is developed by applying appropriate theoretical examples to an argument (and possible counterargument). Candidates should carefully select quotations from the context provided as justification for points made.

In the lower bands, the candidate's control of English may be partial or there may be a simple or generalised response to the passage provided. In the middle bands, there will be a developing analysis including a detailed and informed exploration of language, structure, purpose and context (**Questions 1 and 3**) or a detailed and informed exploration of the linguistic issue (**Question 2**). In the higher bands, the response will be full, comparative, balanced and articulate.

General comments

The source materials for each question provided ample opportunity for candidates to engage well in each of the three topic areas. These allowed candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading. In this series, there was evidence that candidates were informed well regarding the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription; thus most candidates were able to respond to **Questions 1** and/or **3** from a linguistic stance. In **Question 2**, confident responses demonstrated wider reading which enabled fuller explorations of the linguistic issue presented. However, some less successful candidates only paraphrased the context provided without a detailed discussion or argument.

More successful candidates tended to make short plans before beginning the essay, which generally led to focus being maintained on the question throughout the response. Confident candidates ensured that theoretical examples were entirely appropriate to the point being made. Less confident responses offered brief comments on language theory which was not applied to the context provided, thus leaving the essay undeveloped and the passages not fully explored. Some candidates attempted to provide a response which demonstrated all of their learning whether or not it was applicable to the question and context. It is important to maintain focus on the question and source material throughout the response.

Stronger responses were from those candidates able to use a full range of linguistic terminology with precision. Weaker responses used basic descriptors to identify language features, but did not go on to provide a linguistic analysis. The terms elision and ellipsis continue to demonstrate confusion, as does the concept of deixis, although more confident candidates are able to evidence these appropriately. Responses which demonstrate a tendency to assertion or in which linguistic features are spotted and described with a generalised comment are unlikely to move towards the higher bands.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The transcript was rich in material for analysis, with ample opportunity to discuss the impact of language in specific social groups.

Stronger and more confident candidates identified and made a full analysis of the difference between the standard American English of the three interviewers and the African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) construct presented by the British artist, Tinie Tempah. Weaker candidates merely identified Tempah's use of 'man' as British slang and opportunities to discuss sociolect and idiolect were missed.

Some candidates reflected well on the nature of inclusive and exclusive speech and most attempted discussion on the genderlect with reference to Lakoff, Tannen and Coates. Genderlect discussions were more successful where the tension of Angela's role as interviewer were included in the argument and less successful where candidates had a predetermined idea of how her utterances conformed readily to feminine speech patterns. Genderlect was not the major focus of this transcript.

Strong candidates typically made a full exploration of Tempah's AAVE construct, which he contrasted with the use of the low-frequency polysyllabic word 'juxtaposition' and a literary reference. Confident candidates referred to accommodation theory and the different ways in which each of the interlocutors strove to achieve a fruitful conversation with which to engage a radio audience.

Weaker candidates spotted features such as upward intonation and pause without developing commentary as to how these were of value to the context. Stronger candidates used these features to question whether pause aided rhythm and cadence to the rapper's idiolect which provided an extra dynamic to a confident response.

Question 2

The stimulus material proved fruitful for candidates to achieve a series of arguments and counterarguments, reinforced by areas of wider knowledge and personal experience. Kachru, Crystal and Diamond were widely used as theoretical models, with confident candidates building theory into arguments and showing a sympathetic understanding of issues such as cultural domination and language death/shift. Particularly effective were responses which succinctly outlined personal experience of such issues within the host country, although some weaker responses lost focus on the true relevance of such experience in relation to the question.

Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase the passage provided, whereas stronger candidates were able to provide an articulate discursive response which included carefully selected, brief quotations from the passage provided.

The context provided allowed candidates to look to the future of English whilst drawing on the ways in which English has developed to its current status. Weaker responses provided a long – and in some cases, not entirely accurate – timeline of historical development, leaving little time for discussion of other issues included in the passage.

Stronger candidates often undertook an imaginative exploration of the future wider ramifications of English as a global language in the light of endangered languages, language death/shift, and the relationship between linguistic and cultural issues. These explorations included ways in which recording techniques may assist in the preservation of moribund languages.

Stronger candidates also explored McWhorter's notion of how languages may become simplified, using a wide range of examples drawn from wider study of language and technology, thus demonstrating a direct focus on the future of English as required in the question.

Question 3

Candidates engaged well with the transcript provided, with most correctly identifying the linguistic stage of development of Leila. Often, Piaget was central to the discussion with appropriate examples provided from the context. Strong candidates reflected on Hallidayan functions when providing examples for their arguments and most candidates were able to refer to Skinner, Bruner or Chomsky.

Most candidates based their response on Leila's utterances, with less discussion on the caretaker role of Melinda which was underappreciated by weaker candidates. Likewise, more candidates could have benefited by engaging with the considerable evidence of questioning technique used for different purpose by Melinda. The most confident candidates also examined the role and linguistic competence of Aneesha whose nonverbal communication was key to understanding the purpose and structure of Leila's concluding utterances.

Weaker candidates took a deficit approach, commenting on what was not evident, or perceived 'mistakes', as well as discussing Leila's competence in differentiating colour without much specifically linguistic development. Strong candidates used technical terminology with precision to explore the way in which deixis, deletion, substitution of pronoun, use of adjective and morphological and phonological development were all taking place in Leila's acquisition of language.

There was some evidence of candidates not taking full account of what was written at the beginning of the question, leading to misunderstanding of the roles and relationships between the three participants in the transcript.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 43 of syllabus 9093 is designed to examine knowledge and understanding of three key topics in the study of English language: spoken language and social groups; English as a global language, and language acquisition by children and teenagers. Only two of the three questions should be answered.

Marks are awarded positively through the bands. Candidates are expected to analyse the language and issues presented in the contexts provided in the questions using a linguistic stance. Responses will move towards the higher bands where the analysis is developed by applying appropriate theoretical examples to an argument (and possible counterargument). Candidates should carefully select quotations from the context provided as justification for points made.

In the lower bands, the candidate's control of English may be partial or there may be a simple or generalised response to the passage provided. In the middle bands, there will be a developing analysis including a detailed and informed exploration of language, structure, purpose and context (**Questions 1 and 3**) or a detailed and informed exploration of the linguistic issue (**Question 2**). In the higher bands, the response will be full, comparative, balanced and articulate.

General comments

The source materials for each question provided ample opportunity for candidates to engage well in each of the three topic areas. These allowed candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading. In this series, there was evidence that candidates were informed well regarding the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription; thus most candidates were able to respond to **Questions 1** and/or **3** from a linguistic stance. In **Question 2**, confident responses demonstrated wider reading which enabled fuller explorations of the linguistic issue presented. However, some less successful candidates only paraphrased the context provided without a detailed discussion or argument.

More successful candidates tended to make short plans before beginning the essay, which generally led to focus being maintained on the question throughout the response. Confident candidates ensured that theoretical examples were entirely appropriate to the point being made. Less confident responses offered brief comments on language theory which was not applied to the context provided, thus leaving the essay undeveloped and the passages not fully explored. Some candidates attempted to provide a response which demonstrated all of their learning whether or not it was applicable to the question and context. It is important to maintain focus on the question and source material throughout the response.

Stronger responses were from those candidates able to use a full range of linguistic terminology with precision. Weaker responses used basic descriptors to identify language features, but did not go on to provide a linguistic analysis. The terms elision and ellipsis continue to demonstrate confusion, as does the concept of deixis, although more confident candidates are able to evidence these appropriately. Responses which demonstrate a tendency to assertion or in which linguistic features are spotted and described with a generalised comment are unlikely to move towards the higher bands.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There was a keen understanding by confident candidates of the necessary enthusiasm of Holly Willoughby (HW) and the restrained response of Andy Murray (AM) given the scale of achievement. There was ample

opportunity to discuss the ways in which HW used language (often figuratively and with hyperbole) to encourage AM to participate in the interview more fully.

Most candidates were able to apply genderlect theory in their responses, with Tannen, Lakoff, Cameron and Coates being used. Confident candidates offered a counterargument regarding genderlect using Beattie's model or those of Zimmerman and West. Weaker candidates did not fully explore the tension between gender theory and the nature of the interview context and the role of an interviewer, regardless of gender.

Stronger candidates acknowledged the extent of HW's role in creating excitement for the viewers and support for AM, applying politeness principles, positive and negative face (Goffman) and accommodation theory (Giles). Engagement with these elements of language and power widened the scope of the responses, which often consequently rewarded in the higher bands.

Grice's maxims were applied widely, although sometimes without developed comment. Candidates should ensure that the theory they are quoting is entirely applicable to their argument.

Few candidates commented on the situational irony of AM's apparent lack of interest in the media and HW's opening utterance 'you tweeted', although confident candidates presented a full analysis of the way in which the interview succeeded as a cooperative conversation due to HW's continuing enthusiasm to produce information from AM that would be interesting to a television audience.

Question 2

More confident candidates took issue with points made in the passage provided, exploring any perceived bias and the reason that may have existed. These candidates demonstrated a wide knowledge base on English as a global language obtained from wider reading and personal experience. Weaker candidates continued to paraphrase the passage rather than create an argument and counter-argument on the points that the passage is making. Responses which demonstrated skill in writing discursively were often rewarded in the higher bands.

There was ample evidence of using past papers in the responses to widen the candidate's knowledge of the linguistic topic – particularly evidence of consideration of Nerrière's concept of Globish. Weaker responses made brief reference only to Kachru, although Crystal and Diamond were also referenced in discussion regarding social, economic and cultural benefits of the existence of a global language.

Stronger candidates made counterarguments regarding the examples provided in the passage, although most candidates commented on the influence of technology and the way English and the internet – and their inextricable involvement – enhances contemporary lifestyles albeit with possible detriment to local languages and cultures.

Question 3

The source material led to candidates being able to demonstrate a clear theoretical base, with many responses applying knowledge of Halliday, Piaget, Bruner, Skinner, Chomsky and Vygotsky. Stronger candidates often included Aitchison and Berko in their arguments. Candidates do not necessarily need to include all of their learning where it is not appropriate to the analysis. This can lead to a deficit approach with candidates commenting on what is not there in the language presented rather than that which is apparent.

Most candidates correctly identified Adam as being between the holophrastic and telegraphic stages of linguistic competence, with positive comments on Adam's acquisition of negation, mimicry, understanding of interrogative, object permanence, possession and use of pronoun which all aided him in his meaning-making. The transcript was rich in these elements for analysis and more confident candidates engaged well, providing a full and rounded discussion of language, structure, purpose and context.

Weaker candidates commented in a general way, without specifically linguistic development, about how Adam was able to identify colour. Weaker candidates tended only to mention the name of a theorist without explanation of how a certain model was applicable to the language presented.

Most candidates explored the role of the mother in her range of questioning and reinforcement techniques, together with the way in which adjacency pairs were fulfilled. Stronger candidates applied a wide range of linguistic terminology with precision when discussing the way in which Adam reduplicates syllables to produce lexis with appropriate comment on phonemic and morphological development evident in Adam's utterances.