

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.

Most candidates attempted to engage with features of language and it is worthwhile to note that very few fell back on the formulaic response of pathos, logos and ethos. However, too many candidates focused on punctuation and sentence structure without saying anything worthwhile about them: for example, with the use of commas – some guidance about the use of asyndetic listing to build up to, perhaps, the notion of ‘abundance’ or some other feature would be more worthwhile for candidates rather than just noting the fact of the punctuation. Where candidates noted features of punctuation in relation to the language used and provided evidence of the effect, this was noted and given credit. Commentary-writing in general would have benefited from a wider and more precisely used critical vocabulary. Terms such as ‘negative/positive implications’ 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 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 receiving more developed consideration than the conclusion.

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

There was much engaged and purposeful directed writing devoted to each passage, though the opening to the short story based in a boys’ prison was far less popular than the memoir based on preparing to escape

from Austria just before the Second World War. The colloquial style and its upbeat address to the reader was often well caught and most candidates replicated the cheery energy of the original in **Question 1**; there was some success in returning the antipathy of the narrator 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. A common weakness in sentence construction involved the use of the gerund form of verbs. A significant number of responses were overlong, and candidates should be reminded to observe the word guidance.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) There was general recognition of the chronological structure, the use of first person, the excited tone and sense of anxiety coupled with the use of punctuation to accentuate this. Furthermore, various references were made to the 'happiness' of the writer suggested by 'beaming smile' and 'smug face' and to hyperbole in 'jaw drops'.

Stronger responses gave developed attention to the colloquial tone which replicates personal conversational interaction and the use of first-person narrative throughout with almost no reference to other people (Steve, the dive master excepted). These stronger responses explored the sustained language of feelings and impressions: for example, 'the moment I'd been waiting for' and the repetition of the cliché, 'This was the one I'd been waiting for' which reinforces the excitement. They also explored the change of style around line 35 with more descriptive, lyrical imagery describing the underwater world and the fact that the specific marine details reinforce the knowledgeable status of the blogger.

Perceptive responses explored the excitement as seen in the form of very brief paragraphs, elision, replicating the sequence of events, use of exclamation marks, chronological narrative, the present tense and personal feelings. These responses noted the effect of listing builds up the sequencing of anticipation, and overall the enthusiasm is sustained and gathers throughout to the climax of excitement at the successful completion of the dive.

Some responses could have been improved by offering greater consideration of the language features involving marine life and changes in tense and the implicit direct address. The footnote explanation of 'giant trevally' was misunderstood in a few instances with some candidates suggesting that this was helpful advice offered by the writer.

The final triumphal declarative statement with its mix of superlatives; hyperbole and the clichéd 'must' do list was often overlooked. This was a pity because it might have been used to illustrate aspects of style and language.

- (b) Candidates were invited to write an online promotional feature for the website of a diving company.

The colloquial style and its upbeat address to the reader was often well caught and most candidates matched the energy and verve of the original while making the transformation to an online promotional feature.

Candidates understood the need to use direct address to engage an audience and features of the original were used to good effect – aspects of marine life were used together with the unique features of the wreck. Most candidates adopted the 'once-in-a-life-time' opportunity as part of their sales pitch together with the professionalism of the company in providing qualified staff for training first time divers. Most candidates recognised the need to end on a strong note and most employed the 'tick-one-off-your-bucket-list' technique.

A small but significant minority, wrote in the first person singular, as per the blog, and whilst a very short testimonial in that style, would have been acceptable, the first person singular narrative voice was not. Also, most responses kept very close to the material of the passage when there might have been more adventure in describing the attractions of the dive.

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 2

- (a) This was the more popular of the two optional passages but was not always analysed with much confidence.

Candidates tended to remark on the passage's "negative tone", "atmosphere of misery and sadness" and "mournful sad tone" but there was not always any detailed consideration of how this came about.

Successful responses explored features of language use: the list of three, 'had thought/prepared/overwhelmed' which prepares for the anti-climactic feeling followed by subsequent surprise; the metaphor 'bathed in tears' to emphasise volume; alliteration 'stroked.. stitching... sheets' to convey how Lisa cares for her home; added to the repetition of 'gentle/gently'; the references to touch to indicate her emotion and how she values and respects home, and the rhetorical questions which add to the feeling of her passion for home and sorrow to leave. These stronger responses commented on the relationship between mother and daughter via the dialogue, the need to take stock of all the things that Lisa would miss and the simile of 'like a broken china figurine'.

Perceptive responses offered developed comments on the contrasts in the second half of the text: noise, confusion, threats and official harassment of powerful soldiers reinforced by verbs connoting violence, 'pushed, shouted' and the love of the family contrasting with the authoritarian hatred and abuse from society. These responses also noted the elision at the end of the text which ensures the uncertainty; and tragedy of the future.

Some features were well understood by most candidates: the change of tone which comes with the family's arrival at the station, the presence of the Nazis and the simile of the broken figurine. Several responses commented on the symbolic importance of the heavy coat and there was some understanding of the suggestion of finality in the parting exchanges.

However, the contrast between Lisa's home and family and the Westbahnhof station and the Nazi soldiers was, largely, ignored. The sense of expectation in the first paragraphs was not often mentioned nor was Lisa's loving investigation of the significant details of the house fully considered. Some of the responses were surprisingly brief.

- (b) Candidates were invited to continue the account of Lisa's journey to safety.

There was some purposeful writing in response to this task, some candidates concentrating on Lisa's farewell to her family while others developed the journey and took her to safety, some concluding their own account on a stoical note, 'It was not time to cry. She stood firm and, despite her small stature, she kept a strong grip.'

Some successful responses used the piano music to signify Lisa's closeness to her family and previous life with a detailed continuation of the story concerning the journey and her feelings.

Most of the writing created a reasonable continuation but not many fully took the opportunity that the task offered. Some muddled the sisters and their relative ages; occasional responses were overly sentimental or offered a 'fairy tale' ending. Comparatively few responses made an easy adoption of the style and there was little imaginative use of dialogue. There was some inappropriate 21st century style colloquial discourse. Some of these weaker responses failed to recognise the tense and person of the original and wrote in first person. These were less successful.

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

Question 3

- (a) This was significantly the less popular of the two optional passages

Most candidates lacked detailed engagement with this text. Responses commented on the use of first person and the direct address of the narrator, and the contrast between the writer and the prison guards. Some commented on the list of metaphors, though the implications of these were rarely considered in specific detail. There was often recognition of 'pig-faced dukes and ladies' and the conditions at Borstal.

However, there was very little consideration given to the repetition of 'cunning', nor to the use of second person, nor to the admissions of the speaking voice. Many responses failed to comprehend the role of the long distance running and how it was perceived and used by the guards.

The most effective responses came from candidates who attempted to comment on the use of slang, non-standard grammar and cliché such as "freezing my belly off". There were several quite perceptive assessments of the tone and cynical humour of the narrator, the arrogance and steady hostility of the "voice" and the version of events "always from his perspective". Several specific language features, such as the listing of the guards, were noted, such as the list of three similes to describe the guards: spiders, jackdaws and German generals which made them seem cunning, clever and omniscient together with providing a sense of permanent threat and aggression. Perceptive responses explored imagery including that of the harsh and isolating environment created by the lexical field of winter and the runner's lack of warmth. These offered developed commentary on the final extended imagery of the ruling classes' attitudes towards the borstal boys as exhibitions and the juxtaposition of honesty with dishonesty as well as the general stupidity of those in a privileged position.

In general candidates did not approach the passage with developed attention to specific language examples.

- (b) Candidates were invited to imagine that they work as a guard in the prison and to record their thoughts and feelings about daily events in a journal.

The journal genre, overall, seemed to be understood and many candidates incorporated the custodial and caring perspective. There were several strong responses to this task, generally returning the antipathy of the narrator but sometimes echoing the language of the original too closely. One response in particular understood and mirrored the slightly emotionless and remote tone of the passage and made it quite sinister.

The voice of the prison guard was captured effectively in most instances with accounts of the day's activities and with references made to the 'sneaky' long distance runner who ought to know what's good for him. 'When the day comes that they intend to revolt, Oh, I'll be ready. They will taste my fist as it rams into their throats and it will immediately trigger regrets in their little heads.' Some were defensive accounts about the treatment meted out; some offered more critical and/or cynical views about the prison system and prisoners.

However, much of the directed writing offered a restricted view of the running from the guard's perspective with some comment on the job of being a guard itself. Few candidates included the racing and the irony behind it.

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Key messages

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General comments

All three passages on the paper were found to be generally accessible and engaging. The second text, taken from an autobiography, proved the more popular of the additional texts, but there were perceptive and developed responses to the third passage, an extract from an essay about a hospital for the poor in France in the 1930s.

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 redundant re-statement of the principal points as a conclusion. This framework for 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. The evaluation of effects continues to be an area where improvements can be made to allow candidates to be able to engage with the text rather than just list language features or to write descriptively. 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, specifically in **Question 3(a)** but without specifying the nature of the imagery or the effect created.

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.

There were some vibrant 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 significantly exceeding 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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This question generated some engaged and confident responses with a generally good understanding of the language features employed. Candidates had clearly been well primed for the possibility of a promotional passage and there was a general sense of ease and confidence in their approach. Many candidates commented on the modern connotations and contrasts of 'chill' and 'play'. Listing was frequently analysed effectively as connotative of endless choice, as was the relatively frequent use of the second person narrative voice to produce the tone of concerned caring for the reader from the resort. These language features were often clearly related to their specific effects.

Many responses noted the fact that the imagery was vivid, such as in 'clear-blue', but they did not offer developed comments about the language itself being vivid, poetic or artistic.

The personification in the passage was an issue, with many candidates showing no real understanding of the specific distinction between metaphor and personification. While most candidates recognised some structural features in the passage, very few considered the text in a holistic way. Weaker responses reacted to the passage in terms of social class – indicated to them by the use of 'luxury' – rather than analysing the features and patterns of language. These responses did not recognise that the text was a 'sales pitch' that might never live up to the advertising jargon.

The most effective responses came from candidates who recognised the 'hard sell' and/or 'soft sell' tactics of the advertising. Such responses recognised that the writer was exaggerating with references to the uniqueness of the resort, its isolation from the 'mundane stresses' of life (as several candidates observed) and that it had something for everyone. Some responses referred to the resort's easy yet exclusive access by noting how an exciting 'forty-minute seaplane ride ... on the lush private island' suggested a kind of celebrity appeal. These responses were aware, if not a little sceptical, of the 'too good to be true' aspect of its beauty, its purity and its offer of relaxation, sports, food, activities for the children, technology and more.

The most perceptive responses often noted that the appeal regarding technology was, actually, rather dated. They also recognised the irony of parents being able to relax while their children were being 'taken care of'.

Weaker responses typically 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) Candidates were invited to write a promotional feature for a luxury holiday resort (real or imagined) in a different part of the world and, in so doing, to follow closely the style and language of the original.

There was some confident directed writing which fully understood the task and confidently adopted the stylistic features of the original. Most candidates were able to emulate the adjective-laden style and produce some delightful pieces of writing which were very engaging. The inclusion of a range of audiences and the exclusivity of the place were often written about.

Most responses addressed their audience appropriately with second person and used present tense. There was some effective writing about other destinations involving relaxation and/or adventure: Table Mountain, skiing in Austria, and safari holidays, for example. Very few candidates were bold enough to offer imagined destinations such as Mars or a virtual reality station, but those who did wrote confidently.

The weakest responses failed to adhere to the rubric and wrote about the Maldives again; such responses also did not use the present tense effectively, as some candidates lapsed into the use of modals.

Question 2

- (a) This question was the more popular of the optional choices.

The naive excitement and sudden shock were commented on by many candidates, along with the contrasts between the interminable delays and then the intensity of action, and the documentary-like observation of the child's perspective. As with **Question 1(a)** there was some confident appreciation of key features and their effects.

Most candidates picked up on the structural features of this text and, to varying degrees, on its chronological sequence: the 'onrush' of people who 'seemed to have made it', then how the 'train halted' and 'suddenly [the] tracks had been destroyed'. The more successful commented on the cyclical structure of the passage, often referring to the calmness at the outset of 'waiting' and the 'standing more than moving', which is reconstructed at the end with the sense of anti-climax and, despite some wailing and crying, the stillness after the apparently imminent attack.

Some candidates also recognised and commented on the foreshadowing in 'seemed to have made it'. They also identified the child's perspective in 'waving to the passing soldiers and admiring' ... with the 'simple' language in 'three-cornered hats'.

Most candidates made effective points about the writer's use of onomatopoeic sounds of people and their dialogue – for example 'screams', 'resounded', 'thump', 'rattle', 'wailing' – and about the dynamic verbs such as 'scrambling', 'pushed', 'swooping', 'threw' and 'shielded'. The more successful explored the vocabulary of destruction, for example 'fire', 'smoke', 'exploding bombs', 'destroyed', 'dead' and 'target'.

Weaker responses demonstrated no real understanding of the difference between metaphoric use of language and personification. Some of these responses recognised a limited range of effects and resorted to narrative.

- (b) Candidates were invited to continue the account and, in so doing, to follow closely the style and features of the original.

The discriminator here was the handling of the reactions of the family and the people in the train. Whilst there were some sensitive and poignant responses, comparatively few responses managed an appropriate adoption of the style and there was little imaginative use of dialogue.

Weaker responses offered some overlong writing where the fluency declined as the length progressed, and there was some inappropriate use of twenty-first-century colloquialisms. Some of these weaker responses failed to recognise the tense and person of the original and wrote in first person. These were less successful.

Many candidates failed to recognise the sequence of events in the original text and/or the tense. These responses lacked confidence in developing the events of the passage and tended to echo the particulars of the attack and conclude with the planes returning. The very weakest candidates seemed to have failed to read the rubric and wrote inappropriately about terrorist situations in their own countries.

The most effective responses recognised the past tense and first person of the original and tried to continue the narrative from the place of the writer in the field, as a child, reacting to all that had gone before and anticipating, with a sense of dread, all that might come as a result of the loss of, possibly, their means of transportation and freedom.

Question 3

- (a) A significant minority of candidates answered this question.

Many candidates were able to explain how the writer created an impression of perceived inhumane treatment: most responses covered the use of first person, the callous disinterest of the staff, the figurative language used to put across the treatment, the sequence of unpleasant treatments, combined with the vulnerability of the narrator and other patients. Most candidates managed to avoid a descriptive, generalised approach to their commentary.

Successful responses commented on the chronological sequencing in this text and they were able to make effective points about the metaphoric use of language in 'interrogation', 'prison' and 'as tight as a strait-jacket'. These successful responses offered developed comments on the inhumane treatment suggested by 'they do to horses' and the unhygienic conditions of the hospital suggested by 'foul smell', 'badly lit room' and 'had not been sterilized'. Candidates often registered their shock at, and/or suggested the irony of, such appalling conditions, even if it was a hospital for the poor. Perceptive responses identified the very precise statement at the end of the passage emphasising that there was no sleep, 'not even [for] a minute', which cuts through the general cliché of people's vagueness at not being able to sleep and highlights the effects of this special agony.

The most effective responses offered developed points about the contrasting tones of the passage such as those of interrogation; detached, dispassionate treatment; adherence to following procedures; standing in the cold; and the sadistic humour in the agonies of the patient, a reversal of the expectation of hospital care. They also discussed the antiquated forms of treatment and the seemingly sadistic delight of patients in watching 'a patient have a mustard poultice' suggested by 'half-sympathetic grins'. There were those that misunderstood and commented that this was the behavior of the two 'unkempt nurses'; this led to issues in the writing task.

'Wind whipped' was frequently identified as an instance of personification, with very few candidates offering effective points about the weather seeming to be hostile to the writer too. The triplet 'humiliated, disgusted and frightened' was frequently identified, but very few candidates explored the implications of each word. There was some misunderstanding about the use of 'waiting to be grilled', with several candidates referring to the writer's treatment as a piece of meat. There was also some misunderstanding of temperature with several candidates citing 'over a hundred degrees' as an instance of hyperbole.

Some weaker responses gave a focus on punctuation which was far too generalised, including discussion of dashes for extra information and commas in long sentences. Candidates need to offer comments on whether there is any particular reason for specific punctuation and why this might be interesting.

- (b)** Candidates were invited to write a section of a journal written by a nurse at the hospital for the same day as covered in the passage, and in doing so to base their writing closely on the material in the original extract.

Most candidates handled this form successfully, either adopting the role of a sympathetic nurse ('It gets harder and harder everyday walking through the halls of this hospital, watching the pain peel off a little more') or one with callous indifference, with some suggesting an element of sadism emerging in this hopeless, underfunded system. A successful example of the latter began, 'The latest addition to this filth of a hospital arrived today, looking like a degenerate ... He seemed to get irritated when answering questions, as though he was paying to be taken care of ...'. More successful responses integrated the details of the original into a new whole: 'the larger sized slippers were kept on floor three and I was not about to go and collect those. Besides he lives on the streets; he must be used to this.'

Overall, the journal entries were straightforward recollections of the day's events often accompanied by a general or cynical grumble about the conditions of the hospital, the doctors and the lack of pay.

Weaker responses relied far too heavily on the material of the extract or showed a confused sense of purpose, while a number wrote in distant retrospect rather than producing a same-day diary entry. The balance between showing the inadequate and brutal system with some reference to the events of the day did prove a problem to some candidates. Candidates should be aware that they might be required to incorporate the general with the specific in their writing and centres should practise this. There was frequent shifting of tenses in some responses; candidates should always be advised to leave enough time to carefully check the accuracy of their directed writing.

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Key messages

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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 candidates wasted time by offering opening paragraphs that summarised the events of the passage, though some 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.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates usually recognised the genre of the newspaper article and many commented on the various juxtaposed elements it contained, including traffic problems, dangers to cyclists, social inequalities, a mushrooming city, hi-tech smartphones, and WhatsApp.

However, many candidates showed very little concept of the basic principles of investigative journalism, hence misunderstanding the writer's purpose in joining a group of cyclists on their way to work to gain first-hand experience of the issues in order to answer the question posed by the title. Similarly, some seemed to have very little concept of the role of balance in newspaper writing, such as in the reference to taxis offering 'a life line' and being 'in many ways fantastically efficient'. Many candidates felt that the text was simply biased and that the purpose was to persuade the audience to start cycling. More effective responses came from candidates who realised that this purpose was implicit or 'indirect' and that it was not the primary purpose of the article.

There was some attempt to deal with the implications of social class, but most missed the implicit race issue of 'predominantly black users'. Some candidates made reference to the 'liquid' image regarding the traffic issue. There was some sense of the contrast between cyclists and 'bakkie' or car users and the threat/danger posed to cyclists from inconsiderate taxi drivers. The state of the roads was referred to in most cases and the danger that this posed to cyclists. Many responses commented on the use of facts and statistics and authority figures, mostly in terms of newspaper article convention. More successful responses made reference to UN validation to show the scale and problems of the traffic and urban growth of the city. More perceptive responses noted that statistics were combined with case studies involving severe danger, and the way in which the ironic understatement ('No small matter') reinforces the severity.

On the whole, responses could have been strengthened with detailed engagement throughout. 'If you're lucky' was sometimes interpreted as sarcasm. There was misunderstanding of the 'minibus queue' in the first paragraph with candidates believing that this referred to taxis rather than the cyclists lining up at the minibus queue. There was also quite a lot of misunderstanding about the difference between metaphoric use of language and personification – the reference to 'stretches around the block' was the most common example.

Although most candidates commented on the opening sentences, the most effective responses came from candidates who realised that the opening was, in fact, purely rhetorical and that though there was official recognition of congestion problems, later in the text, the rhetoric there was clichéd ('shoot ahead', for example) and that no resolution was offered, merely an ambition. These more successful responses noted the use of simple sentences to reveal key problems, and the use of present tense to signify that the problems are ongoing and ever present. These responses explored the passage in detail, such as in noting how the sweeping statement 'just do not care' adds heartlessness and a likelihood of personal tragedy, alongside the irony that Johannesburg is built for cars, but most people cannot afford one.

Some also commented on the final upbeat local quotations from the Mayor indicating a promising finale that despite the current traffic problems and the aggressive, uncaring behaviour of other car users on the road, there was a sense of it being the 'end of the road' for the car owners.

- (b) Candidates were invited to write a section of a letter to a newspaper, as a Johannesburg taxi driver, to complain about the growing number of dangerous incidents involving cyclists. They were required to base their writing closely on the material of the original extract.

Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at providing straightforward counterclaims, on the part of taxi drivers, about cyclists. Some candidates wrote impassioned defences of overworked taxi drivers and poorly-behaved mobs of cyclists. They seemed confident with the letter genre although there was some use of lifted material and phrases such as 'WhatsApp to coordinate their journeys', 'safety in numbers' and 'they cut across your path' (transposing the taxi drivers' behaviour for that of cyclists).

Some successful responses adopted some of the language features of the original, such as rhetorical questions ('Innocent lives are being sacrificed every day. Who is to blame for this?'); listing ('These cyclists ... large masses, blocking sidewalks, weaving through traffic ...'); and the inclusion of an 'expert' to add credibility to the argument of the letter.

Weaker responses seemed to ignore who was writing to the newspaper and why. A minority of candidates failed to read the rubric or, perhaps, misunderstood the task. Such candidates were usually hampered in this because they had interpreted the text in **Question 1(a)** as a promotional article, in the first place, and felt that they needed to defend cyclists. Candidates are advised to carefully consider the purpose of the set task, who is meant to be writing a piece and to whom, and in what form.

Question 2

- (a) This was the more popular of the optional questions.

The implications of naming in this text were, for the most part, ignored – the use of the name Shiftlet as amusingly appropriate was rarely discussed, as was the seeming anonymity of the third person usage of ‘old woman’ and ‘daughter’.

Most responses tended to focus on the old woman and her defensive posturing, the daughter’s childlike responses and Mr. Shiftlet’s apparent role as a vagrant. Some commented on the detail used to describe the daughter and the use of a list of three (‘stamp ... point ... make excited speechless sounds’), noting that this and some of the later description most likely indicates a disability (‘fat helpless hands’). The more perceptive explored the beauty in ‘her long pink gold hair and eyes as blue as a peacock’s neck’. Other candidates did not, and instead simply made reference to the daughter’s innocence and to the description given.

Some effective responses came from candidates who were working towards an interpretation of this as a Gothic text, though without always explicitly doing so. They commented on the contrast of light and dark; the mystery of a stranger; the desolate environment; the sense of a business contract; the defensiveness of the ‘old woman’ in reference to the ‘cedar fence post’; the fact that the narrative raised more questions than it answered; the ‘nasal’ voice of Mr. Shiftlet and its suggestion of something nasty.

Perceptive responses commented on the limited use of dialogue to reflect the slow, deliberate pace of the encounter. They also explored the beautiful use of language and the descriptive detail, for example the metaphor of the ‘piercing sunset’ to indicate pain, potentially seen as a weapon but later ‘balancing itself on the peak of a small mountain’. They noted the contrast with the old woman ‘the owner of the sun’ and the ‘desolate’ setting combined with a sense of detachment and distance reinforced by the remote location. The most successful commented on how the glorious blaze of sunset is cut down by the colloquial elision of the old woman’s reply (‘Does it every evening’) at the end of the passage, exploring the connotations of this in the overall context of the passage.

- (b) Candidates were invited to continue the narrative in a similar style to the original.

There were few implausible continuations and the enigmatic nature of the original was often captured effectively. Most tried to continue the distrustful or defensive posturing of the old woman (‘The old woman raised an eyebrow. “What do you want from me?”’). Others created some plausible dialogue about Mr. Shiftlet seeking work.

The most effective pieces suggested the continuation of the mystery inherent in this Southern Gothic vignette, hinting at unspecified details such as an implied business contract or the unknown contents of the tool box. One memorable piece involved Mr. Shiftlet ‘dissolving into the dust’. Another superb response captured both the style and the detail of the original: ‘Mr. Shiftlet flicked open his tin tool box ... he pulled out a small black camera ... The tramp seemed to struggle with his small arm ... The sunset blazed away, lighting the sky with colours.’

Weaker responses offered a dialogue between Mr. Shiftlet and the daughter having failed to recognise the implications of ‘began to stamp and point and make excited speechless sounds’. Some candidates failed to recognise the tense of the original and wrote in present tense, which they sometimes had difficulty sustaining.

Question 3

- (a) This question was the less popular of the optional choices.

Candidates who attempted this question generally grasped the meaning of the ‘Patagonian paradox’ and the contrast between the infinite and the minuscule: the ‘enormity of the desert space’ and the ‘tiny flower’; the metaphor of ‘an ant on a foreign hill’. The more successful explored in detail the ways in which the writer sustains this use of scale and distance throughout (‘distance’, ‘nearby’, ‘close-up’) alongside the concept of being nowhere (‘Nowhere is a place’). Most were able to comment on the dereliction and dreariness of the place, the lack of people, and the isolation suggested by ‘one-story houses’ and ‘one-roomed huts’.

Some candidates wrote superbly about the language features they identified. The most effective responses came from candidates who commented on how the landscape of Patagonia had resulted in 'an existential crisis' for the writer, while commenting on the irony of the 'nothingness' being 'an ending' rather than a 'beginning' for the writer. Very few candidates commented on how unexpected this was for a piece of travel writing. Successful responses considered the initial dialogue and compared the idea with the writer's discovery. They also noted the use of first person, how the location's ordinariness is stressed at first ('It's a dreary place ... don't go'), and the use of very simple sentences and statements. These successful responses noted the unexpected beauty in small elements of the landscape and the noun phrases bringing colour to a bland description.

Perceptive candidates discussed the fact that Patagonia was a symbol for coming of age and how perhaps it was the writer himself who was the 'Patagonian paradox'; they noted the final rueful laugh from the writer about the distance and style of his journey.

There was some misunderstanding about personification with candidates commenting on the wind rather than the landscape's 'gaunt expression'. Some candidates did not read the rubric about the location of Patagonia and the fact that it is a region; this led to some confused directed writing responses.

- (b)** Candidates were invited to write a section of an advertisement about Patagonia for a specialist travel brochure.

Most candidates were successful in promoting Patagonia as 'a sought after' destination. There was general recognition of the need to use direct address to engage an audience and of the need to exaggerate Patagonia's virtues regarding its landscape and flora and fauna: 'An unblemished sky stretches its azure clarity over picturesque mountain ranges, glaciers and gorgeous flourishing flora and fauna. The serene tranquil haven ... a little slice of Heaven.'

There were some innovative transformations of Patagonia as presenting a holiday destination for those relishing a challenge. Candidates seemed to enjoy offering something presented as not initially very appealing, as a place worth discovering: 'You arrive in a deserted place. Nothing looks serviced. But beyond your sight is a vast area to explore: valleys, rolling hills and seas of bushes. You are no more than a single dot surrounded by an uninhabited stamp on the earth's surface.'

Weaker responses, however, tended to mirror the writer's ambivalence and this resulted in some unevenness in style and tone, and also in purpose, at times. Some of these responses picked up on the 'dreariness' of the original without adding a promotional style.

In some instances, accuracy of expression deteriorated in the directed writing, just when candidates must be most conscious of avoiding mistakes. Tenses were a regular issue for many candidates. In several cases, spelling and punctuation were 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.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21 Writing

Key messages

Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. More successful candidates also tend to allocate a set amount of time to each of the following, for both sections of the paper: identifying key instructions in each question they choose; planning their writing; writing; checking and correcting their work.

When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and should carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. They should look at the key instructions in the questions they choose. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write a descriptive piece' and the key areas of focus are 'colours, sound and movement'. In **Question 5** the key instruction is to 'write two contrasting reviews', one positive and one more negative. To ensure that candidates do fully understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Though it is not directly assessed, planning is key to a successful composition; candidates should plan for the prescribed form, purpose, audience, voice, mood and tone of the piece. Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to better-crafted and more effectively shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and generic content. Candidates should give careful consideration to the particular effects they need to create, the most appropriate persona to adopt, the content to include, and the structure to employ.

Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation. Many scripts that had good content were let down by weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. While stronger and more confident candidates may well achieve a good level of control over complex constructions, others would benefit from choosing clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety instead of long, rambling sentences that do not flow easily. Often, weaker responses lose control of grammar when candidates attempt to write in long complex sentences. They must also be aware of the need for paragraphing in their responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work. The key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator/persona.

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, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts. The key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are an authentic sense of voice and a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure.

General comments

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of time management and should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length. Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit, while other candidates apparently ran out of time.

More responses were paragraphed effectively than in previous series. Technical accuracy tended to be more secure in **Section B** than in **Section A**, where tense errors and confusions often caused problems. **Section B** responses were also often structured more effectively than in **Section A**.

In **Section A**, **Question 1** was the most popular, followed by **Question 3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required, but fewer candidates made this error than in previous series. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere. For example, the reader was able to relate to the sense of drama and excitement in **Question 1**; describe the contrasting scene and atmosphere in **Question 2**; or appreciate the beauty or power of the river through descriptions of colours, sound 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 devoid of paragraphs) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create a feeling of excitement 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 – And The Winner Is ...

Candidates were asked to write the end to a story called *And The Winner Is ...*, about a competition which has a surprising outcome. They were asked to create a sense of drama and excitement.

Form was an issue for a number of candidates on this question, with some producing at least half a side of writing recapping on events, rather than producing a more natural ending. In some cases, the candidate recapped for the entire response. Many candidates opted to write about a traditional race and had the start of the race as the starting point of their writing. Better answers seemed to have planned well so that the plot leading up to the finale had been clearly thought through. This was also evident in the use of clear paragraphing, which often supported an appropriate structure to the narrative.

Stronger responses created a sense of drama and excitement through sensory description and imagery: for example, 'The deafening sound of the oven alarms, the ticking of the mighty clock ...' was written in the climax to a cookery competition. Drama was also achieved by some candidates through the introduction of an unexpected twist in the story. They crafted characters with unusual backstories rather than simply providing a predictable outcome: for example, for one character, 'The ceremony was over but my torment wasn't'. One effective piece of writing explored the lead drivers in a Grand Prix race, giving the feel of a quest as, 'a titanic three way battle for the lead ensued,' yet, 'a pathetically inferior car prevailed over the two Goliaths'.

Weaker responses tended to consist of a linear story of a race from start to finish as a running commentary along the lines of, 'Number 4 passed number 6 and then number 3 came up on the outside', while a number of responses were hampered by inconsistent use of tenses.

Question 2 – Contrasting pieces about a music venue

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, about a music venue; the first before the audience arrived and the second during the performance. They were asked to focus on the sound, colour and atmosphere in the venue.

Achieving a sense of contrast in atmosphere was an issue for some candidates on this question. Content was sometimes repeated, with little sense of a difference in mood. The descriptive focus was best achieved and sustained where candidates adopted a first-person voice. Some candidates adopted the persona of a participant in the concert or of the concert director, which gave the piece a sense of immediacy, and a convincing tone.

Stronger responses effectively linked the pieces, lending a sense of cohesion, and provided a clear contrast between the two sections while keeping focus on the 'sound, colour and movement' element of the question. Effective verb choices were also notable in some of the stronger responses, and contributed to achieving atmosphere: 'People began to *flood* into the venue' and 'The curtains *peeled* away from each other...'.

Weaker responses were too generalised, offering description of the stage, the people and the weather without providing a clear focus on the question; in such responses, ideas were presented quite simply, such as in the description of the setting as 'filled with joy and colourful music that gave a good looking image to the place'. There were a number of candidates who did not effectively differentiate between the two pieces, sometimes apparently writing just one piece rather than the required two. This approach was generally self-penalising.

Question 3 – The River

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *The River*, focusing on colours, sound and movement to help the reader imagine the scene.

This was generally answered well, and a number of unusual approaches were seen.

Stronger responses conceptualised the piece as a cohesive whole: for example, one candidate described the changes of the river from its source to its journey to the sea, while another effective piece of writing was purportedly reporting on an ancient mythological river with changing moods, where the blue water reflected this, becoming 'black and malign'. One candidate wrote impressively in the voice of the River, while other strong responses included engaging descriptions such as 'its body curving and conforming to the landscape' and 'similar to movements in a tango as it battled to synchronize'. Other ideas included the description of a journey, as in the case of one candidate who revisited many memories on a special journey and showed evidence of carefully selected vocabulary choices: 'A flickering sensation travelled through my whole body as I noticed that everything remained the same. My river, my river, our river would welcome me with its inviting arms.'

Weaker responses tended towards mere lists of description of colours and sounds, without much sense of cohesion: 'The water was brown and rushed along'; 'the sun's rays causing a rainbow on the surface of the water'; and 'the birds chirping in the trees by the sides of the river'.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Article about sports lessons at school

Candidates were asked to write an article for their school magazine, giving their opinion about whether children should have sports lessons at school, or if this is something they should only do in their free time.

This question was not especially popular but most candidates who answered it clearly understood how to write an article. Candidates of all abilities had something to say about sports lessons, with many arguing the need for exercise given the current levels of obesity. Overall, the question was usually answered in a balanced way and the magazine article register was adhered to.

Stronger responses managed to engage the reader's attention immediately, sometimes through an anecdote, before presenting a variety of well-structured arguments. For example, one candidate began the article like this: 'A couple of nights ago I was finishing a bag of Pringles potato crisps and sipping on my Coca-Cola when I stumbled upon a heated discussion on the radio.' Stronger responses tended to demonstrate in-depth reasoning and gave examples to back up points, along with anecdotes to add weight to the piece. Awareness of counterarguments was also a feature of stronger responses, which generally led to an evaluation of these arguments and a reasoned conclusion.

Many of the weaker responses were undeveloped and lacked detail, often presenting points in a list-like fashion, with little development of each point.

Question 5 – Contrasting reviews of a television comedy programme

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting reviews, of 300–450 words each, of a new television comedy programme. They were asked to write one very positive review and one more negative review, both to be published on an international media website.

Stronger responses generated a strong critical voice, often through the use of humour or exaggeration: 'I'd rather stare at a concrete wall for five hours than watch this guy tell "jokes" for five minutes.' One humorous piece was written using a good range of vocabulary to satirise the genre of TV sitcoms, claiming in the opening that, 'This putrid shell of a show is the embodiment of quintessentially vulgar comedy'. Another particularly strong response took the format of 'Saturday Night Live' as its subject, with the two contrasting voices representing a supporter and a critic of President Trump. It succinctly and intelligently captured the opposing views about fake news, as well creating a clever commentary on the state of US politics.

Some weaker responses tended towards description rather than review, while others resorted to ranting, containing little in the way of constructive criticism and at times conveying no more than a very personal and rather simplistic set of ideas: 'I could not be happier than I am now. Literally I can't stop laughing while watching that programme. That joke about a cell phone app.'

Question 6 – Script for a talk to school about volunteering

Candidates were asked to write the script of a talk, to be given to their school, about the experience they had when volunteering for a local organisation over the past year. They were asked to describe the good work that the organisation does and how they have gained from volunteering.

Generally, candidates responded very well to the requirements of writing a speech. Many incorporated a range of rhetorical and persuasive features into their writing. The audience was generally clearly considered, as in this simple but effective address: 'Hi. My name is Alan Evans and I have been part of this local organisation since last year. For those of you who don't know, we are a local organisation called, "For a better change".'

Stronger responses often had a specific organisation in mind and gave clear examples of the work carried out, together with a developed description of how the individual had gained from volunteering. For example, one candidate wrote about the organisation 'Chasing Coral' and how they document the disappearance of coral off the Florida coast and demand action from government, such as new boating restrictions to limit pollution. Such an approach enabled the candidate to engage in a meaningful way, saying, 'If not us, who? If not now, when? I challenge you to go diving this weekend and see the beauty of it for yourself.'

Weaker responses tended to consist of a monologue of feelings and emotions and a list-like description of work done.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22 Writing
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Key messages

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When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and should carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. They should look at the key instructions in the questions they choose. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write a descriptive piece' and the key areas of focus are 'sound, movement and colour'. In **Question 6** the key instruction is to 'write the text for the director's speech' with the aim of creating 'a sense of gratitude and encouragement'. To ensure that candidates do fully understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Though it is not directly assessed, planning is key to a successful composition; candidates should plan for the prescribed form, purpose, audience, voice, mood and tone of the piece. Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to better-crafted and more effectively shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and generic content. Candidates should give careful consideration to the particular effects they need to create, the most appropriate persona to adopt, the content to include, and the structure to employ.

Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation. Many scripts that had good content were let down by weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. While stronger and more confident candidates may well achieve a good level of control over complex constructions, others would benefit from choosing clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety instead of long, rambling sentences that do not flow easily. Often, weaker responses lose control of grammar when candidates attempt to write in long complex sentences. They must also be aware of the need for paragraphing in their responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work. The key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator/persona.

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, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts. The key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are an authentic sense of voice and a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure.

General comments

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of time management and should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length. Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit, while other candidates apparently ran out of time.

More responses were paragraphed effectively than in previous series. Technical accuracy tended to be more secure in **Section B** than in **Section A**, where tense errors and confusions often caused problems. **Section B** responses were also often structured more effectively than in **Section A**.

In **Section A**, **Question 1** was the most popular, followed by **Question 3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required, but fewer candidates made this error than in previous series. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere. For example, the reader was able to relate to the sense of urgency and anticipation in **Question 1**; explore the contrasting outlook and mood provided by the two characters in **Question 2**; or appreciate the excitement of the circus through descriptions of sound, movement and colour 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 devoid of paragraphs) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create a feeling of urgency 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 – David woke up and realised he had forgotten to set his alarm

Candidates were asked to write a story which began with the sentence: *David woke up and realised he had forgotten to set his alarm*. They were asked to create a sense of urgency and anticipation.

This was the most popular choice. A large number of candidates focused their writing on the idea of being late for work, an interview or an exam. However, some took more original routes, with differing levels of success. One candidate was saved from a shooting at his school because of missing the alarm, whereas another used the prompt to launch into an unrelated adventure. Rather too many had David rushing only to find he had got his days or times confused. Many did not write a full short story, and ended their writing on a cliffhanger or part way through the narrative.

Stronger responses contained engaging and original content that was focused on the opening line and continued to refer back to this throughout, thus giving the piece a clear internal coherence. They typically focused on creating the mood of the protagonist, David, often setting him up for our sympathy or empathy as readers, before involving him in a dramatic situation. Some created original and clear motivations for David's determination to reach his destination, despite the hardships endured. For example, in one response David was looking forward to leaving home and 'pushed on, mindful of his impending eviction and the unnerving thought of his mother saying to him, "You'll have to live again with me!"'

Weaker responses had little or no focus on the opening line of the story, or dwelled too long on David's struggles to prepare to leave his house, describing his long, and often tedious, morning routines. They wrote about rather ordinary, mundane events in a school or college setting, often 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 day. Frequent references to time or waiting for time to pass were a common feature of these responses.

Question 2 – Contrasting pieces about selling a valuable item

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, the first from the perspective of a shop assistant selling a valuable item, and the second from the perspective of the customer. They were asked to create a sense of outlook and mood.

Many were set in mobile phone, jewellery or antique stores and there was sometimes a tendency to produce contrasting voices by merely having the voices say the opposite to each other.

Stronger responses utilised clever parallel structures to suit assistant and customer personas in direct contact during their exchanges in the shop. One particularly inventive piece imagined a grandchild searching antique shops for her grandmother's collection of individually crafted globes. The value was more sentimental than monetary and produced a sharp contrast in perspectives. There were also some very effective descriptions, for example of a beautifully made cuckoo clock, with some very convincing details about craftsmanship. Some bitter-sweet plots were livened up with effective introspection: 'Styling myself as a traditional gentleman, I loathe how I am seeking to take advantage of such a naïve, sweet young woman'.

Weaker responses often constituted narrative pieces purely based on the candidate's opinion of what makes a valuable item, which limited their ability to create differing voices and outlooks. Alternatively, the two voices expressed mainly disparaging views about each other. In some pieces there was little or no evidence of contrast across the pieces with candidates writing two very separate pieces that did not link.

Question 3 – The Circus

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *The Circus*, focusing on sound, movement and colour to help the reader imagine the scene.

Some candidates wrote about what seemed more like a funfair or carnival with lots of stalls and rollercoaster rides, whereas others wrote about the more conventional 'big-top' circus in a tent, while some combined the two.

Stronger responses consistently focused on the descriptive element, using language to create descriptive effects: 'La Cirque Berserk was like dipping your head into a pool of moonlight.' The subject offered plenty of opportunities to focus effectively on colour, sound and movement: 'A joyous fanfare sounded, excited notes tumbling out of unseen trumpets' and 'He was clad in a crimson cloak of crushed velvet that whispered tales of royalty.' One imaginative and very descriptive piece was about the 'ringmaster' controlling 'the circus' that was the school playground, a metaphor that was sustained well throughout.

Weaker responses often merely listed colours, sounds and movements, or became distracted by adjectives and spent rather too much time, for example, detailing the 'gigantic, welcoming, red and white striped tent'. 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 detracted from the effects which the vocabulary selection was intended to create. Other weak responses often lapsed into narrative, rather than descriptive, writing.

The weakest responses did not focus on the idea of a 'circus', but used the phrase in the first line and then wrote a wholly narrative response that did not focus on the task: for example, one candidate wrote a narrative entitled 'Circus of Love', about a relationship, the only descriptive element being about the blue eyes of the object of her affection. Other responses lacked any paragraphs or any form of structure. A number of responses were shorter than is required within the rubric, and hence were self-penalising.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Music review

Candidates were asked to write a review for their school magazine of the latest music produced by their favourite band or singer. They were asked to give their opinion of the music and of how it compares with the band or singer's previous work.

This question was very popular and generally answered well. Most candidates engaged well with the topic and managed to write in detail, with an appropriate sense of audience.

Stronger responses fulfilled both elements of the question – opinion and comparison – while also creating a strong sense of voice that was appropriate to the audience and engaged them in the topic. Such responses showed familiarity with the genre and an ability to use the language of the music press: 'An appalling defeat to the onslaught of consumerism' and 'Magnum is easily the best album release of the year – perhaps the band's magnum opus.' They also made strategic use of teen jargon to convincingly convey the reviewer's opinion in relatable terms, for example the use of hashtag phrases catering for a social-media savvy audience, such as '#sodeep #tothecore'. The audience was sometimes suggested very subtly, in phrases such as, 'So I would like to believe we have all heard Ariana Grande's new album ...' or 'This has been our 6th form tune of the summer so far...'.

Weaker responses mainly exhibited less ability to produce clear explanations and arguments, although the level of engagement was frequently just as good as that exhibited by stronger responses. They often only focused on describing why the candidate (or the persona they were assuming) liked the artist, without fully exploring the task. Such responses sometimes developed a voice intended to be appropriate to their audience merely by using slang or textspeak. The weakest responses merely gave potted, autobiographical histories of groups, while some had no specific artist to comment on and so produced very generalised material about how music has affected them.

Question 5 – Contrasting letters about space exploration

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting letters to a newspaper, of 300–450 words each, about whether countries should spend money on space exploration; the first in favour of spending money and the second against 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 question specified that candidates should write letters. A number of candidates needed to use a more recognisable letter format and, if they did write a letter, might have more clearly distinguished between the article's author and the newspaper's editor in selecting to whom the letter should be addressed.

Stronger responses consisted of some highly convincing letters that were sufficiently credible for publication in a newspaper. The candidates in such cases created a strong sense of voice through the use of language and ensured their writing was appropriate to the form and audience. They focused clearly on the task and developed ideas about specific reasons for each side of the debate, often managing to bring about a subtle contrast of voices. This was sometimes done by having one letter-writer focussing on the longer-term needs of humanity in respect of the necessity of finding a planet that was habitable or one which would help to replace Earth's dwindling resources, while the other correspondent wrote about the more immediate needs of some of the human population living in poverty now.

Weaker responses did not focus on the task and often comprised a description of the candidate's apparent opinions on the topic, giving the pros and cons of space without developing these ideas.

Question 6 – Speech about a local environmental project

Candidates were asked to write the text of a speech, to be given by the director of a local environmental project to college students, to thank them for taking part in the project and to talk about the importance of this work. They were asked to create a sense of gratitude and encouragement.

The conventions of a speech were deployed on most occasions, and most candidates were able to establish a voice and to use rhetorical devices, creating a sense of gratitude and encouragement quite successfully. The subject matter gave scope for realistic details of what the students had accomplished.

Stronger responses fully achieved the purpose of the task, drawing on the candidates' knowledge and sometimes strongly-held views on ecological issues. The persona of the project's director was often addressed in an autobiographical section that explained how the speaker developed his or her own environmental awareness. Stronger responses developed a clear idea of a specific environmental project, what the students had done, and what the results would be. In such cases, the candidates also made sure that the 'local' project was feasible for a group of students, for example a neighbourhood litter pick.

Weaker responses sometimes placed too much emphasis on what the audience would already know, especially the details of the project they would have already worked on by the time the speech was delivered. They sometimes lacked focus on exactly what the project had involved, often just referring to it through the wording in the question: 'a local environmental project'. These candidates tended to slip into colloquial language and became repetitive and non-specific in their effusive thanks. Others forgot the audience and form and, being rather caught up in demonstrating their ecological knowledge, produced texts that seemed more like lectures. Such answers missed the 'encouragement' and 'gratitude' prompts in the question.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23 Writing
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Key messages

Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. More successful candidates also tend to allocate a set amount of time to each of the following, for both sections of the paper: identifying key instructions in each question they choose; planning their writing; writing; checking and correcting their work.

When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and should carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. They should look at the key instructions in the questions they choose. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write a descriptive piece' and the key areas of focus are 'colour, sound and movement'. In **Question 6** the key instruction is to write a 'voiceover script' and to create a 'sense of the importance of being environmentally friendly'. To ensure that candidates do fully understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Though it is not directly assessed, planning is key to a successful composition; candidates should plan for the prescribed form, purpose, audience, voice, mood and tone of the piece. Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to better-crafted and more effectively shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and generic content. Candidates should give careful consideration to the particular effects they need to create, the most appropriate persona to adopt, the content to include, and the structure to employ.

Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation. Many scripts that had good content were let down by weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. While stronger and more confident candidates may well achieve a good level of control over complex constructions, others would benefit from choosing clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety instead of long, rambling sentences that do not flow easily. Often, weaker responses lose control of grammar when candidates attempt to write in long complex sentences. They must also be aware of the need for paragraphing in their responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work. The key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator/persona.

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, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts. The key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are an authentic sense of voice and a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure.

General comments

Candidates need to be aware of the importance of time management and should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length. Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit, while other candidates apparently ran out of time.

More responses were paragraphed effectively than in previous series. Technical accuracy tended to be more secure in **Section B** than in **Section A**, where tense errors and confusions often caused problems. **Section B** responses were also often structured more effectively than in **Section A**.

In **Section A**, **Question 1** was the most popular, followed by **Question 3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required, but fewer candidates made this error than in previous sessions. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere. For example, the reader was able to relate to the sense of drama and anticipation in **Question 1**; explore the effect of age and experience on the contrasting outlook and mood of the character in **Question 2**; or appreciate the liveliness of the playground through descriptions of colour, sound 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 devoid of paragraphs) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create a feeling of anticipation or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**.

In **Section B**, **Question 5** was easily the most popular, followed by **Question 4**. 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 Secret

Candidates were asked to write a story called *The Secret*. They were asked to create a sense of drama and anticipation.

This was the most popular choice and the title offered ample scope for a story strong in drama and anticipation; many candidates wrote in the horror genre.

Stronger responses involved engaging and original content that was focused on the revelation of a secret. They focused on creating the mood of the narrator or character, setting him or her up for our sympathy or empathy as readers, before involving him or her in a dramatic revelation. One candidate described a father's disappearance and his secret behind a door to which his son had a rusty key. Other candidates wrote about a variety of secrets and themes, such as sexuality, mental health issues, and personal loss.

Weaker responses either constituted incomplete stories or overly complex storylines that showed a lack of narrative control and a lack of any sense of drama or anticipation. One story involved a long-lost twin sister, blackmail, an anonymous murderer and an affair with an English teacher, all within 600 words. Quite a number of responses were not complete stories, with too many ending on what the candidate felt was an acceptable cliffhanger, but failing to reveal what the secret was, leaving the reader unsatisfied.

Question 2 – Contrasting diary entries about participating in an activity

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting diary entries, of 300–450 words each, the first by a young person who has just tried a new activity for the first time, and the second by the same person, now older, who has just won a major prize for this activity. They were asked to create a sense of the person's outlook and mood.

This was not a very popular choice of question, although it did produce some good responses. Most candidates attempted to create two different voices, with varying degrees of success. There was evidence that many candidates wrote about activities that they knew well, for example sailing, piano-playing, athletics, football and even knitting in one case. Such an approach enabled candidates to write with some authenticity.

Stronger responses were successful in communicating clearly different voices, sometimes evoking a child's voice in the first piece by using colloquial language and tone. They subsequently wrote with a more mature voice in the second piece and made subtle reference to the aging process, for example mentioning 'grey strands' and 'a few creases'. One candidate wrote quite perceptively about working in a home for the elderly

with initial negative expectations, in contrast to how it actually turned out and the positive impact the experience had on her future career.

Weaker responses tended to include a less convincing second piece, often simply describing an award ceremony without offering any reflection on the time that had passed between the writing of the two pieces. In such cases, the differences in outlook and mood were often not very apparent.

Question 3 – The Playground

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *The Playground*. They were asked to focus on colour, sound and movement to help the reader imagine the scene.

Stronger responses picked out ideas about ways in which playgrounds invite ‘pretend play’ which were successfully linked to imagery, for example describing how ‘mangled sticks become shining swords’ while ‘sand became deadly lava’. Some covered a whole day in the playground and one more inventive response explored the playground at night. Other, more creative, interpretations of the title included a coral reef which became a playground for a variety of sea life.

Weaker responses often merely listed colours, sounds and movements or became distracted by adjectives and spent rather too much time, for example, detailing the ‘big, red, frightening roundabout’. They often resorted to listing items and produced less original imagery, such as children ‘running around like ants’ and ‘the birds were chirping’. Many responses lacked any paragraphs or any form of structure.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Magazine article about studying history

Candidates were asked to write an article for their school magazine describing the benefits of studying history. In the article they were asked to create a sense of the importance of history and an enthusiasm for learning about the past.

Candidates were generally able to state the importance of learning history, but the extent to which they were able to craft these thoughts into an engaging magazine article varied widely.

Stronger responses often included suggested that the candidates felt strongly about the benefits of studying history. Some were very focused on their own country’s history, expressing strong sentiments; for example, one candidate wrote, ‘The very foundation of our nation was the destruction of hope, family and human life ... embrace your Kiwi heritage, its beauty and lightness, its wars and diplomacy, oppression and freedom.’ Other candidates wrote with graphic imagery, for example about ‘how much blood Caesar’s body left on the tiles’. Another account expressed gratitude, ‘People from the past have done so much for us.’

Weaker responses tended to describe events from the past and write about professions in which a knowledge of history might be an asset. However, many of these responses failed to create either a sense of the importance of learning history or any enthusiasm for learning about the past.

Question 5 – Contrasting speeches about computer games

Candidates were asked to write the text of two students’ speeches, of 300–450 words each, for a debate on computer games. One of the students believes that playing computer games is good for you and the other student feels they are harmful.

This was easily the most popular choice of question in **Section B** and the requirement to write two contrasting speeches was achieved by candidates across the ability range. It produced some interesting arguments for and against computer games, with some mature and well-thought-out answers, with developed arguments. Candidates usually argued that computer games improved co-ordination and cognitive skills, enabled players to connect with others throughout the world and kept players away from harmful activities. On the other side of the debate, they argued that computer games could be addictive, contributing to the deterioration of students’ mental health and could lead to isolation and spending very little time with family and friends.

Stronger responses assumed an authoritative stance and maintained the appropriate form. They used a range of rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions, statistics, different sentence structures, direct address and powerful vocabulary, including such figurative language as ‘ensnared and enslaved’ and ‘a

wave of anger takes over.' The best responses were formal in tone and convincing, challenging others' opinions in an incisive, yet polite, manner.

Weaker responses were often in the form of essays, which resulted in the loss of immediacy that the speeches required. They also repeated ideas and even whole sentences in both parts of the task, the only difference being the stance, either for or against computer games. Many weaker responses also neglected to use paragraphs, which affected the organisation of ideas and arguments.

Question 6 – Voiceover for environmental video

Candidates were asked to write the voiceover script for a short video to raise awareness of the need to protect the environment. They were asked to create a sense of the importance of being environmentally friendly.

Stronger responses suggested that candidates had a good grasp of what a voiceover should sound like, skilfully combining an appropriate level of description of each of the video shots with the voiceover that accompanied it. They focused closely on certain aspects of the environment and avoided the potential trap of being too general in their approach. They presented a relatively detailed visual illustration of the footage – limited to the amount that would be needed by the voiceover artist – which was then well supported by the verbal component of the voiceover text.

Weaker responses showed little discernible understanding of the format and purpose of a voiceover script and appropriate form and content was not always clear; for example, some candidates simply wrote an article about protecting the environment.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31 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. 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 its instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a transcription of a scripted conversation taken from a British comedy series in which a guest called Mrs Richards is complaining about her room to the hotel manager, Basil Fawlty. 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 a letter of complaint to Basil's wife asking for a refund. Careful consideration of the target audience (Mrs Fawlty) and the requirement to lodge a complaint as well as requesting a refund was 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 letter of complaint produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of a transcription of the discussion between Mrs Richards and Basil Fawlty. 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 two written 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. 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 comparative 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 letter of complaint. Candidates most often wrote in a formal register so that the grounds for the complaint and the request for a refund could be lodged effectively. Most letters of complaint satisfactorily projected the persona of Mrs Richards as a disgruntled customer with not unreasonable expectations about the standard of a hotel room's amenities and features: a regular bath, adequate heating, a functioning radio and a view of the sea. They mainly consisted of a few short- to medium-length paragraphs that successfully achieved a number of topic shifts for a transactional purpose: a brief introduction of the writer as a recent guest of the hotel; addressing of the specific deficiencies found in her room; her polite request for a reduction in the room's price. It was usually clear that many candidates thoughtfully incorporated their own perception of what constitutes satisfactory standards of accommodation at a small, family-run hotel and reasonable expectations about the professional conduct of its manager.

In weak responses candidates tended to include unnecessary introductory remarks (often speculative observations about Mrs Richards' purpose in visiting Torquay, e.g. 'I am here to care for an ill and elderly relative') and declarations about Mrs Richards' past hotel experiences being, by implication, far superior (e.g. 'Never have I stayed in such a run-down establishment with such rude staff'). A number of candidates quoted or paraphrased much of what Mrs Richards states in the transcription and recycled specific phrases ('its not big enough to drown a mouse' about the bath, also 'the room is cold (.) the view is invisible (.) ... and the radio does not work') with no (or very little) shaping of the material to lodge a reasoned complaint. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to clearly explain that there are fundamental grounds for a complaint and compensation in the form of a reduction in price.

In strong responses candidates consistently presented a reasoned complaint with supporting arguments clearly corresponding to details carefully selected from the transcription. Candidates provided appropriate salutations (most frequently 'Dear Mrs Fawltly', occasionally 'Customer Complaints, Fawltly Towers' or similar) and polite closings (often simply signed 'Mrs Richards', occasionally with the addition of a given name to suggest a friendly persona despite the transactional purpose of the letter). Reworked details were often cast in a suitably humorous tone in substantiating the grounds for Mrs Richards' complaint, especially in relation to the size of the bath: 'an overgrown sink', 'a wash-bucket', 'too small to dip my toe'. Many incorporated the snide observation that the hotel should be called 'Faulty Towers' given the number of obvious deficiencies found by Mrs Richards. Requests for a refund were usually addressed succinctly in the final paragraph, motivated by Mrs Richards' twice-stated intention in the transcription (lines 24 and 40) to seek a reduction in the room rate – e.g. 'I expect you to reduce the cost immediately'. Some candidates concluded that Mrs Richards would have found Basil was unprofessional in his discourse, especially being insulted by Basil's sarcastic comments (especially lines 13–16 where he mockingly accuses Mrs Richards of 'expecting to see' famous landmarks from her present day, Torquay hotel room's window – 'sydney opera house perhaps (1) the hanging gardens of babylon (.) herds of wildebeest') – found on other continents and in other historical periods). Others judged she suspected Basil made derogatory comments about her when he spoke in a low volume. There were thus valid grounds for having Mrs Richards, upon further consideration, seek enhanced compensation through a request for 'a full refund' as a few candidates successfully argued in

relation to Basil's unprofessional manner. Some perceptive candidates had Mrs Richards make the additional disconcerting observation that Mrs Fawlty's husband had been very unkind about her hearing impediment (especially exhibited by the loud volume he used: 'A HEARING AID'), which amounts to an insult to someone with a disability.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a number of candidates 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 scripted conversation taken from a British comedy series in which a guest called Mrs Richards is complaining about her room to the hotel manager, Basil Fawlty and the letter of complaint produced for **1(a)**. A number of candidates did not apply a suitable methodology to analyse the transcription although, overall, it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription featuring two speakers and a transactional purpose.

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 letter of complaint 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 letter of complaint.

In weak responses candidates tended to list the elements of spontaneous speech they identified in the transcription with little attention paid to examination of their own letter of complaint. Some candidates reiterated at length what they know about Grice's maxims with little supporting and comparative examination of pertinent aspects of the transcription. Little comparative analysis was attempted, however, especially by candidates who appeared to regard the transcription as an account of a real customer and hotel manager in dispute. Some candidates could focus briefly on distinctions in purpose (entertainment as opposed to a customer's complaint and request for a refund), audience (broad for the televised comedy programme from which the scripted conversation is taken, very narrow in the case of the letter of complaint for Mrs Fawlty's attention only) and register (semi-formal and usually formal), with some identification of high and low frequency lexis in the transcription (especially 'paying for', 'asked for' and 'something' as opposed to 'sweeping majestically', 'telescope' and 'erupting' respectively). They attempted to distinguish between the pieces on the basis of tone, offering oppositional pairs of terms such as 'humorous and sarcastic' and 'serious and authoritative' albeit with little substantive textual support, and attempted to examine Basil's use of sarcasm that creates a comic effect for the audience ('this is the view as far as i can remember', in addition to the examples cited in **1(a)**, above).

The majority of candidates appreciated the transcription had a high level of fluency as may be expected in a scripted television programme whilst demonstrating an adequate knowledge and understanding of some of the non-fluency features to be found in the transcription, especially pauses (a few candidates noted how Mrs Richards' opening statement has a measured cadence to make her initial point clearly: 'ive booked a room with a bath (.) when I book a room with a bath (.) I expect to get a bath'), and the use of stress for emphasis (especially Basil's strong exclamation 'there is your bath' and Mrs Richard's observation 'the view is invisible'). The conversation was usually deemed to be mainly co-operative (occasionally in recognition of its scripted nature and how its audience was a general TV audience) with a structure dependent on regular turn taking with some confrontational overlaps: '... wildebeest sweeping majestically//do not be silly'. The dynamic nature of the conversation gave candidates ample opportunities for comparison, on the basis of both language and style, with their letters of complaint, explaining how they were designed to reflect Mrs Richards' character and the humour of the original piece, though her persona utilises formalities polite enough to elicit the refund she wants.

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. They appreciated how care was taken to render the dialogue more

like natural speech in order to make it seem a realistic exchange for the audience's benefit. In some instances candidates explained that Basil attempted to preserve the demeanour of a suitably sympathetic hotel manager through the use of politeness strategies including modal verb-fronted questions ('may i ask', 'may i suggest'), hedges ('by any chance', 'perhaps'), negation ('dont think me rude') and deferential use of the title 'madam', in opposition to the use of imperatives by Mrs Richards ('now listen to me') which make her seem haughty and demanding. A few candidates examined the dramatic irony operating through Basil's asides, indicated by his use of quiet volume when he directly insults Mrs Richards without her hearing him – 'I wish you were a mouse', 'or preferably in it' – whereby the audience hear what Basil says but Mrs Richards cannot – and examined how she employs a witty rejoinder to Basil's sarcastic observation about the supposed basis of his guest's demand for a price reduction: 'why (.) because krakatoa is not erupting at the moment or//because the room is cold'. The task of composing Mrs Richards' letter of complaint was perceived as an exercise of reproducing her character – 'self-important and snobbish' – in an 'emphatically persuading' and 'declamatory' style featuring the use of negative abstract nouns – 'horror', 'disrespect' – and commanding modal auxiliary verbs e.g. 'You will send me an amended invoice'.

Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created.

In the weakest responses candidates often dealt too much with the content of Texts A and B and 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 – including how both texts are written mode – and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a grasp of the purpose, audience and context of Text A, an extract from a museum curator's blog introducing an exhibition in London about home sewing from between 1600 and 1900, and of Text B, an editor's introductory letter appearing in a monthly magazine about sewing. Candidates usually established that the audience for Text B is narrower than Text A's (today sewing is a niche activity whereas the blog can be accessed on the internet and would likely be found by people who frequently visit museums, including tourists, in addition to persons with a specific interest in sewing). It was also occasionally observed that the museum curator's blog is directed towards 'mature, educated people', where the magazine is addressing a 'more youthful audience' on the supposition that they are the ones who typically buy magazines. Many candidates contrasted the historical content of Text A with the modern, 'on-trend' one identified in Text B. In relation to Text A candidates noted the frequent use of complex sentences, typical of writing to inform, and considered the use of extended metaphor to convey how sewing may be viewed as a performance – 'for every stitch in time there is a common thread binding them together', whilst in Text B they focused on the repeated use of the second person pronoun to directly address the reader ('you can get', 'show you') and numerous positive adjectives – 'amazing', 'iconic', 'pretty' – to create a sense of enthusiasm.

In the strongest 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. It was usually noted that Text A exhibited a formal register and Text B a mixed one tending towards informality, with candidates usually contrasting some of Text A's low-frequency lexis ('prudence and virtue', 'minuscule', 'sustainability') with Text B's colloquialisms ('whip up', 'laid-back' and 'synch'), effervescent phrasing ('super-simple', 'completely confident') and rhyming ('name of the game', 'sneak a peek') to deliberately create a friendly, conversational tone. Many cited the technical lexis of 'cut-steel buttons', 'steel studs', 'facets' and 'riveted' with which it is assumed the reader is familiar, the specialist use of the portmanteau word 'craftivism', and scholarly references to a historical figure ('Matthew Boulton') and a recent advocate of sewing ('Rozsika Parker published *the Subversive Stitch* in 1983') as lending authority and credibility to Text A; in contrast the writer of Text B utilised a wide range of subject-specific lexis focused on women's garments – 'dress', 'frock', 'culottes' – and a mix of consonant-laden adjectival and adverbial phrases – 'floral fabric for a relaxed feminine style', 'cool charcoal linen teamed with a cream shirt' – to specifically address fashion-conscious, female readers. Some candidates also noted how in Text A there is balanced use of the second person ('you address a small problem') as well as the plural first person ('We can think of sewing') whereas Text B is focused as much on the magazine's editorial team, evident in the use of the first person plural both in the form of pronouns ('we've made ours',

'We've also got', 'We've short-listed') and determiners ('our designers', 'our selection', 'our favourites') to suggest professional knowledge and taste, as it is on readers who are repeatedly prompted to take specific courses of action through the frequent use of imperatives ('Stitch yourself', 'Check them out', 'Take a look', 'Turn to page 46', 'give The Practicals section on page 61 a good read') and a rhetorical question ('why not book yourself on to a workshop'). A few candidates observed that the texts show how sewing has developed from being a necessary domestic craft to a hobby for those wanting to have designer clothing on a budget.

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. 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 session a page from the website for Counterbalance, a company which sells height-adjustable desks. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was an email message to express dissatisfaction with the product and to persuade them to provide a refund. Careful consideration of the target audience (the question specified 'the company' so a manager in either the sales or customer relations departments would be appropriate) was 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 email produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the page from the company's website. 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 website page 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. 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 comparative 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, demonstrating sound familiarity with the purpose and conventions of an email message lodging a complaint and arguing that a refund should be provided. Most candidates ensured their email messages contained conventional features for organising prefatory information, usually on separate lines: the date plus the designations 'To:', 'From:', and 'Subject:' (or 'Re:'); occasionally candidates incorporated conventions such as the date and time of sending and the statement 'This email has been scanned for viruses' to overtly convey a sense of the form specified. Email messages mainly consisted of a few short to medium length paragraphs that usually specified the specific mechanical fault with Counterbalance's height-adjustable desks; indicated how the fault(s) had a negative effect on the office workers' productivity in direct contradiction to the positive claims for the desks made on the website page; and argued that a refund should be forthcoming as the desks were not fit for purpose and directly led to a degradation of employees' performance. Some of the work produced more resembled letters rather than 'an email message', however when written in a formal register they successfully conveyed the importance of the task's transactional purpose.

In weak responses candidates tended to include unnecessarily lengthy introductory remarks, often superfluous details about the nature of the company that has been using Counterbalance's product and the writer's position within it, and how they had reached the decision to order the product (with often verbatim reproduction of the product's features contained in the promotional website page). Occasionally candidates produced details of inappropriately serious injuries suffered by office workers who were hospitalised as a consequence of Counterbalance's product falling off of standard desks and details about the replacement product provided by a competitor of Counterbalance they are considering purchasing with the proceeds of the refund being sought. A number of candidates quoted or paraphrased many of the webpage's descriptions of the height-adjustable desks ('comes out of the box fully assembled, sits right on top of your existing desk', 'easy to use') to simply refute such claims with none or very little shaping of the material to support a reasoned complaint. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to clearly explain that there are fundamental grounds for a complaint and compensation in the form of a refund (whether a partial one or in full).

In strong responses candidates consistently presented a reasoned complaint with supporting arguments clearly corresponding to details carefully selected from the transcription. Candidates provided appropriate salutations (most frequently 'Dear Manager', occasionally 'To Whom it may concern', or an invented persona with a surname provided alongside a suitable designation e.g. 'Customer Complaints Department, Counterbalance' or similar) and polite closings (often simply signed with a surname and appropriate title, occasionally with the addition of a given name to suggest a friendly persona despite the transactional function of the email message). Reworked details were often cast in a suitably serious tone with inventive grounds for complaint encompassing late deliveries and incomplete orders; the poor quality of the product's materials or construction (or both); unsatisfactory 'adjusting' performance, often attributed to loose screws or to degrees of adjustment; the inadequate area and instability of the work surface afforded; collapses which resulted in employees' injuries; and prolonged use of the product leading to greater (rather than reduced) instances of chronic back and neck pain. Some candidates successfully argued that compensation be provided in addition to a full refund for the faulty product owing to loss in

productivity, employees' prolonged absence from work and, in more serious cases, claims against the affected business' health insurance policy; references to potential legal proceedings and seeking redress from a manufacturing ombudsman often reinforced the conviction underlying such additional requests. A few candidates recast some of the stylistic features they noted in the website page, especially its rhetorical questions – 'Why should we be out of pocket?' – and tricolon constructions – 'no speedy delivery, no easy adjustment, no peace in the workplace' – to signal and summarise the multifaceted nature of the problems experienced.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a number of candidates 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 page of the website advertising Counterbalance's height-adjustable desks and the email message expressing dissatisfaction with the product and persuading Counterbalance to provide a refund 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 lexis appearing in the website page and then examined the carefully chosen vocabulary used in their email messages 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 website page and the email message.

Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the website page 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 website page and their email message, especially the use of a variety of sentence types and punctuation marks, with brief and infrequent comparison of the texts' levels of formality. Sometimes tone could be contrasted, as the website page is chiefly positive (with the exception of sections addressing how competitors' similar products are expensive and challenging to assemble and how sitting for long periods poses 'a serious health risk' especially for people who suffer with 'chronic back pain'), whereas the email messages produced by candidates generally exhibited dissatisfaction and disappointment.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of a range of some of the conventions of the website page and the email message. Candidates usually focused on how the website page's sentence and paragraph structure facilitated its dual informative and persuasive purpose. They could also examine and compare the texts' respective audiences (potentially broad for the website page, very limited for the email message) and the level of formality exhibited by both (most candidates employed a modified formal register in their email messages). In terms of the website page's language candidates chiefly made reference to the use of plural first person ('we created Counterbalance...', 'We are inspired by...'); imperatives ('picture this...', 'Check out our reviews!'); rhetorical questions ('What makes Counterbalance so great?', 'What inspires us?' with more astute candidates also noting the use of hypophora as in both cases the writer proceeds to provide an answer to the question posed); and tricolon constructions to differentiate Counterbalance's superior product and service from its competitors e.g. 'make it easy for anyone to work smarter, work healthier, and perform at their very best', 'it's easy to order, ships quickly, and arrives fully assembled and ready-to-use'. Some examples of figurative language were also selected and examined, especially more clichéd examples: 'the orders were pouring in!', 'burning calories like crazy'.

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 analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. They clearly appreciated the more transactional and perfunctory nature of their email messages in comparison to the exuberance of the website page. They explained how an informal conversational tone is in part created in the website page by elliptical sentences such as 'Still need convincing?' and 'No tools, no middle man, and no huge expenses', the informal use of 'pretty' as an adverb

(‘pretty frustrating’, ‘Pretty soon...’) and ‘pricey’ as an adjective. Some identified ‘heavy hitters’ and ‘crazy’ as hyperbolic lexis rather than simply contributing to the creation of an informal tone. There was also exhibited some focus on low frequency lexis that lends credibility to the claims made for the product and the company’s ethos: ‘accessible’, ‘energized’, ‘simplicity’, ‘tirelessly’. Some candidates pointed out that ‘Working Elevated’ was a play on words that made the desk sound as though it gave a ‘lift’ to the user’s entire working life and that the expression could adopted as an appropriate motto for the company.

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 dealt too much with the content of both texts and 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 the conventions of written language in Text A, the introduction section of a cookery book written by Nigel Slater, and of spoken language in Text B, a transcript of an extract from a British radio programme in which Jo Wheatley is making pancakes while talking to the presenter, Jenni Murray. Candidates could usually establish how the audience for both texts is potentially large and mainly argued that the audience for Text B would be greater in size than that for Text A: regular, casual listeners of the radio programme would swell its audience whereas Nigel’s cookery book would need to be sought out by readers with an interest in cooking as well as by fans of that specific cook. Some candidates did not fully appreciate Jenni’s role as the interviewer in Text B with limited examination of her spoken features and the context of the interview as a consequence.

In recognition of Text A’s written mode candidates understood that the paragraphs and sentences within Nigel’s introduction remained relatively uniform in length and complexity. There was occasionally some consideration of how the introduction’s topics were arranged in a structure that is not fully consistent with that suggested by its title, ‘Cheese, Snacks and Puddings’: the first two topics are treated in reverse order in the first two pairs of paragraphs, with ‘desserts’ addressed in the final two paragraphs in its anticipated position. It was usually noted that Nigel initially uses the plural first person form of address and consistently employs a mixed register and the present tense to draw in his audience and to sustain a sense of immediacy. Some candidates focused on his use of a series of short – ‘No ceremony. No fuss. No trouble.’ – and incomplete sentences – ‘Inspired food for hungry moments’ – to increase the pace of the writing and enhance its vibrant tone. It was noted that in the final two paragraphs Nigel employs the singular first person (‘I would’, ‘I often find’) to signal his prerogative as a chef to guide his readers and so anticipate the series of recipes that follow this introduction. A number of candidates took his metaphoric phrasing – ‘throw together’, ‘fill a hole’, ‘simply fuel’ – as evidence of Nigel’s intention to develop a close affinity with his readership whilst a range of phrases incorporating lower frequency lexis – ‘drippingly ripe’, ‘hurriedly concocted’ – demonstrate both his and the reader’s assumed high level of education as well as the effort and time he has taken in preparing, editing and proofreading the section introduction.

Many candidates could also focus on the conventions of spoken language they identified in Text B, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Jo: the occasional use of the voiced pause (‘erm’, ‘um’), vague lexis (‘sort of’, ‘a little bit’) and repairing (‘just to get (.) enrich it’). Most candidates judged Jo to be quite lucid given that she is speaking whilst preparing pancake mix and then cooking some and that Jenni, in her role as interviewer, successfully informs listeners of the programme’s topic – ‘now this morning (.) we’ve got things started (.) its american pancakes’ – and uses a series of questions to elicit information about Jo – e.g. ‘how did you become so fond (.) of baking’ – and also important explanations that enable the listening audience to more fully understand exactly what she is doing and in what order – ‘so whats in the mix’, ‘what do you mean you let it go through your fingers’, ‘why did you separate the eggs’ – with some candidates interpreting these as the subtle efforts of an experienced interviewer encouraging her guest to hold the conversational floor. Jo’s few overlaps were found to be chiefly cooperative as they reinforce the ideas previously mooted by Jenni e.g. ‘that’s sizzling quite nicely is not it//it is’. The British context of the radio programme was usually ascribed to Jo’s use of the informal nouns ‘gran’ and ‘nan’ (for grandmother).

In the strongest responses candidates tended to focus confidently on the effects produced that relate directly to the texts' shared context of food. They explained that Nigel 'tantalises his audience' with a series of increasingly vivid references to a range of desserts – 'chocolate mousse', 'vast plate of pie and custard', 'cold blackberry and apple crumble', 'apple pie, when the pastry crust has gone slightly damp from the juice in the apples' – and uses rhetorical questions featuring active verbs and low-frequency adjectives to forge a confidential affinity with his readership based on the guilty pleasure to be found in consuming an ubiquitous dairy product: 'Who has not hacked off a hunk of cheese to kill a hunger pang? Or even scoffed the entire block in a moment of supreme, gluttonous laziness?' His emphasis on consumption is further signalled through use of anaphoric construction ('the food we raid the fridge for; the food we eat on the run'), metaphor ('A lump of cheese is the best friend of the ravenous') and adverbial sibilance ('breaks softly, silently under the fork'). Some candidates noted that whilst Text A is an introduction to a section of a cookery book there are only a few references to the preparation of food, both prosaic and more frenetic descriptions – 'make a satisfying supper, snack or savoury', 'a hurriedly concocted supper' – and only two brief references to measurements ('spoonful', 'teaspoon'). In comparison Jo was found to put a little onus on the consumption of food through a few sparing, modest descriptions: 'wonderful apple pies', 'rich and fluffy', 'you get the really good flavour'. Rather she conveys a highly methodical approach to the preparation of pancakes though the use of a range of simple verbs ('pop', 'mixing', 'add') and more precise ones demonstrative of her culinary skill: 'whisked', 'separate'. Jo's expertise is also shown in her precise use of nouns to identify key ingredients ('whites', 'yoke', 'sunflower ... groundnut oil'), quantities ('knob of butter', 'pinch of salt') and specialised equipment ('heavy based [frying pan]') appreciated by those members of her radio audience with at least some culinary experience of their own. The adjectives both speakers use succinctly indicate the desired outcomes of each step of the process: 'sizzling', 'browning', 'higher rise'. A few candidates summarised their comparisons of the texts by noting that food preparation and consumption are represented as immensely pleasurable activities that need not be overly complicated or too formal.

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. 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 its instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a transcription of a scripted conversation taken from a British comedy series in which a guest called Mrs Richards is complaining about her room to the hotel manager, Basil Fawlty. 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 a letter of complaint to Basil's wife asking for a refund. Careful consideration of the target audience (Mrs Fawlty) and the requirement to lodge a complaint as well as requesting a refund was 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 letter of complaint produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of a transcription of the discussion between Mrs Richards and Basil Fawlty. 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 two written 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. 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 comparative 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 letter of complaint. Candidates most often wrote in a formal register so that the grounds for the complaint and the request for a refund could be lodged effectively. Most letters of complaint satisfactorily projected the persona of Mrs Richards as a disgruntled customer with not unreasonable expectations about the standard of a hotel room's amenities and features: a regular bath, adequate heating, a functioning radio and a view of the sea. They mainly consisted of a few short- to medium-length paragraphs that successfully achieved a number of topic shifts for a transactional purpose: a brief introduction of the writer as a recent guest of the hotel; addressing of the specific deficiencies found in her room; her polite request for a reduction in the room's price. It was usually clear that many candidates thoughtfully incorporated their own perception of what constitutes satisfactory standards of accommodation at a small, family-run hotel and reasonable expectations about the professional conduct of its manager.

In weak responses candidates tended to include unnecessary introductory remarks (often speculative observations about Mrs Richards' purpose in visiting Torquay, e.g. 'I am here to care for an ill and elderly relative') and declarations about Mrs Richards' past hotel experiences being, by implication, far superior (e.g. 'Never have I stayed in such a run-down establishment with such rude staff'). A number of candidates quoted or paraphrased much of what Mrs Richards states in the transcription and recycled specific phrases ('its not big enough to drown a mouse' about the bath, also 'the room is cold (.) the view is invisible (.) ... and the radio does not work') with no (or very little) shaping of the material to lodge a reasoned complaint. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to clearly explain that there are fundamental grounds for a complaint and compensation in the form of a reduction in price.

In strong responses candidates consistently presented a reasoned complaint with supporting arguments clearly corresponding to details carefully selected from the transcription. Candidates provided appropriate salutations (most frequently 'Dear Mrs Fawltly', occasionally 'Customer Complaints, Fawltly Towers' or similar) and polite closings (often simply signed 'Mrs Richards', occasionally with the addition of a given name to suggest a friendly persona despite the transactional purpose of the letter). Reworked details were often cast in a suitably humorous tone in substantiating the grounds for Mrs Richards' complaint, especially in relation to the size of the bath: 'an overgrown sink', 'a wash-bucket', 'too small to dip my toe'. Many incorporated the snide observation that the hotel should be called 'Faulty Towers' given the number of obvious deficiencies found by Mrs Richards. Requests for a refund were usually addressed succinctly in the final paragraph, motivated by Mrs Richards' twice-stated intention in the transcription (lines 24 and 40) to seek a reduction in the room rate – e.g. 'I expect you to reduce the cost immediately'. Some candidates concluded that Mrs Richards would have found Basil was unprofessional in his discourse, especially being insulted by Basil's sarcastic comments (especially lines 13–16 where he mockingly accuses Mrs Richards of 'expecting to see' famous landmarks from her present day, Torquay hotel room's window – 'sydney opera house perhaps (1) the hanging gardens of babylon (.) herds of wildebeest') – found on other continents and in other historical periods). Others judged she suspected Basil made derogatory comments about her when he spoke in a low volume. There were thus valid grounds for having Mrs Richards, upon further consideration, seek enhanced compensation through a request for 'a full refund' as a few candidates successfully argued in

relation to Basil's unprofessional manner. Some perceptive candidates had Mrs Richards make the additional disconcerting observation that Mrs Fawlty's husband had been very unkind about her hearing impediment (especially exhibited by the loud volume he used: 'A HEARING AID'), which amounts to an insult to someone with a disability.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a number of candidates 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 scripted conversation taken from a British comedy series in which a guest called Mrs Richards is complaining about her room to the hotel manager, Basil Fawlty and the letter of complaint produced for **1(a)**. A number of candidates did not apply a suitable methodology to analyse the transcription although, overall, it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription featuring two speakers and a transactional purpose.

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 letter of complaint 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 letter of complaint.

In weak responses candidates tended to list the elements of spontaneous speech they identified in the transcription with little attention paid to examination of their own letter of complaint. Some candidates reiterated at length what they know about Grice's maxims with little supporting and comparative examination of pertinent aspects of the transcription. Little comparative analysis was attempted, however, especially by candidates who appeared to regard the transcription as an account of a real customer and hotel manager in dispute. Some candidates could focus briefly on distinctions in purpose (entertainment as opposed to a customer's complaint and request for a refund), audience (broad for the televised comedy programme from which the scripted conversation is taken, very narrow in the case of the letter of complaint for Mrs Fawlty's attention only) and register (semi-formal and usually formal), with some identification of high and low frequency lexis in the transcription (especially 'paying for', 'asked for' and 'something' as opposed to 'sweeping majestically', 'telescope' and 'erupting' respectively). They attempted to distinguish between the pieces on the basis of tone, offering oppositional pairs of terms such as 'humorous and sarcastic' and 'serious and authoritative' albeit with little substantive textual support, and attempted to examine Basil's use of sarcasm that creates a comic effect for the audience ('this is the view as far as i can remember', in addition to the examples cited in **1(a)**, above).

The majority of candidates appreciated the transcription had a high level of fluency as may be expected in a scripted television programme whilst demonstrating an adequate knowledge and understanding of some of the non-fluency features to be found in the transcription, especially pauses (a few candidates noted how Mrs Richards' opening statement has a measured cadence to make her initial point clearly: 'ive booked a room with a bath (.) when I book a room with a bath (.) I expect to get a bath'), and the use of stress for emphasis (especially Basil's strong exclamation 'there is your bath' and Mrs Richard's observation 'the view is invisible'). The conversation was usually deemed to be mainly co-operative (occasionally in recognition of its scripted nature and how its audience was a general TV audience) with a structure dependent on regular turn taking with some confrontational overlaps: '... wildebeest sweeping majestically//do not be silly'. The dynamic nature of the conversation gave candidates ample opportunities for comparison, on the basis of both language and style, with their letters of complaint, explaining how they were designed to reflect Mrs Richards' character and the humour of the original piece, though her persona utilises formalities polite enough to elicit the refund she wants.

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. They appreciated how care was taken to render the dialogue more

like natural speech in order to make it seem a realistic exchange for the audience's benefit. In some instances candidates explained that Basil attempted to preserve the demeanour of a suitably sympathetic hotel manager through the use of politeness strategies including modal verb-fronted questions ('may i ask', 'may i suggest'), hedges ('by any chance', 'perhaps'), negation ('dont think me rude') and deferential use of the title 'madam', in opposition to the use of imperatives by Mrs Richards ('now listen to me') which make her seem haughty and demanding. A few candidates examined the dramatic irony operating through Basil's asides, indicated by his use of quiet volume when he directly insults Mrs Richards without her hearing him – 'I wish you were a mouse', 'or preferably in it' – whereby the audience hear what Basil says but Mrs Richards cannot – and examined how she employs a witty rejoinder to Basil's sarcastic observation about the supposed basis of his guest's demand for a price reduction: 'why (.) because krakatoa is not erupting at the moment or//because the room is cold'. The task of composing Mrs Richards' letter of complaint was perceived as an exercise of reproducing her character – 'self-important and snobbish' – in an 'emphatically persuading' and 'declamatory' style featuring the use of negative abstract nouns – 'horror', 'disrespect' – and commanding modal auxiliary verbs e.g. 'You will send me an amended invoice'.

Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created.

In the weakest responses candidates often dealt too much with the content of Texts A and B and 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 – including how both texts are written mode – and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a grasp of the purpose, audience and context of Text A, an extract from a museum curator's blog introducing an exhibition in London about home sewing from between 1600 and 1900, and of Text B, an editor's introductory letter appearing in a monthly magazine about sewing. Candidates usually established that the audience for Text B is narrower than Text A's (today sewing is a niche activity whereas the blog can be accessed on the internet and would likely be found by people who frequently visit museums, including tourists, in addition to persons with a specific interest in sewing). It was also occasionally observed that the museum curator's blog is directed towards 'mature, educated people', where the magazine is addressing a 'more youthful audience' on the supposition that they are the ones who typically buy magazines. Many candidates contrasted the historical content of Text A with the modern, 'on-trend' one identified in Text B. In relation to Text A candidates noted the frequent use of complex sentences, typical of writing to inform, and considered the use of extended metaphor to convey how sewing may be viewed as a performance – 'for every stitch in time there is a common thread binding them together', whilst in Text B they focused on the repeated use of the second person pronoun to directly address the reader ('you can get', 'show you') and numerous positive adjectives – 'amazing', 'iconic', 'pretty' – to create a sense of enthusiasm.

In the strongest 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. It was usually noted that Text A exhibited a formal register and Text B a mixed one tending towards informality, with candidates usually contrasting some of Text A's low-frequency lexis ('prudence and virtue', 'minuscule', 'sustainability') with Text B's colloquialisms ('whip up', 'laid-back' and 'synch'), effervescent phrasing ('super-simple', 'completely confident') and rhyming ('name of the game', 'sneak a peek') to deliberately create a friendly, conversational tone. Many cited the technical lexis of 'cut-steel buttons', 'steel studs', 'facets' and 'riveted' with which it is assumed the reader is familiar, the specialist use of the portmanteau word 'craftivism', and scholarly references to a historical figure ('Matthew Boulton') and a recent advocate of sewing ('Rozsika Parker published *the Subversive Stitch* in 1983') as lending authority and credibility to Text A; in contrast the writer of Text B utilised a wide range of subject-specific lexis focused on women's garments – 'dress', 'frock', 'culottes' – and a mix of consonant-laden adjectival and adverbial phrases – 'floral fabric for a relaxed feminine style', 'cool charcoal linen teamed with a cream shirt' – to specifically address fashion-conscious, female readers. Some candidates also noted how in Text A there is balanced use of the second person ('you address a small problem') as well as the plural first person ('We can think of sewing') whereas Text B is focused as much on the magazine's editorial team, evident in the use of the first person plural both in the form of pronouns ('we've made ours',

'We've also got', 'We've short-listed') and determiners ('our designers', 'our selection', 'our favourites') to suggest professional knowledge and taste, as it is on readers who are repeatedly prompted to take specific courses of action through the frequent use of imperatives ('Stitch yourself', 'Check them out', 'Take a look', 'Turn to page 46', 'give The Practicals section on page 61 a good read') and a rhetorical question ('why not book yourself on to a workshop'). A few candidates observed that the texts show how sewing has developed from being a necessary domestic craft to a hobby for those wanting to have designer clothing on a budget.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 43 offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two topics of their choice from the three topics offered. Candidates should present their arguments and counterarguments in a logically sequenced way, using a good command of English. **Question 1** asks for a discussion on ways in which speakers use language to communicate in social groups and how language is affected by context; a linguistic analysis of the transcription provided is required and ideas should be evidenced by examples from the text, supported by relevant theoretical examples. **Question 2** is different from this in that the analysis required is that of the ideas presented in the text provided, and those surrounding the notion of English as a global language. **Question 3** presents a transcription of language acquired by children and that of a caregiver – here a linguistic analysis is required of the ways in which all interlocutors are using language to communicate. As in **Question 1**, ideas should be supported by relevant theoretical examples.

General comments

Candidates should read the preliminary notes to each question very carefully. In the November 2018 examination, there was evidence, particularly in **Question 1**, that some candidates had missed important information contained in the preamble.

Candidates should present their work as neatly as possible, paying attention to paragraphing in order to separate ideas.

Where theoretical examples are applied, successful candidates will explain fully why a theory is relevant to the idea being presented, giving the relevant reference to the text. Textual references need only be brief, but it is not sufficient merely to provide the name of a linguistic theorist without relevant discussion.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Strong responses explored the language used by Zoe and Louise with relevance to the context of a vlog in the process of being created. The preamble informed candidates that both interlocutors were speaking to camera throughout; candidates often acknowledged the natural way in which the conversation developed, despite that aspect, often focusing on how the colloquial choices ‘on point’ and friendly nicknaming ‘chummy’ proved that the interlocutors were very familiar with each other, as well as the ways in which a vlog can be crafted in order to engage large audiences.

Weaker responses tended to focus on Zoe’s apparent nervousness whilst opening her gift but did not infer that this professed nervousness was part of the crafting process of the vlog, and which was used purposefully to create tension and excitement.

Most candidates reflected on the inclusion of language used in the electronic mode, such as ‘tweet’ although weaker responses described this lexical choice as slang, instead of relating the lexis to the age and experience of the interlocutors. Confident responses acknowledged this aspect of the sociolect, using politeness theories to support arguments regarding the ways in which the interlocutors responded to each other in adjacency pairs to provide a fluent, humorous conversation. Strong responses tended to demonstrate each interlocutor’s idiolect, for example Zoe’s repetition of ‘oh my gosh’ and Louise’s self-deprecation, choosing to discuss language and identity. Weaker responses, on the other hand, relied on

language and gender which may have been obvious as the interlocutors were both female although examples from the text may not have been easily sourced.

Question 2

Candidates appeared well-engaged with the extracts provided, providing many confident discussions on the ways in which English is continuing to cross 'national boundaries' and the many reasons that English is developing as a global language.

Strong responses offered ideas regarding the logical linguistic progression of border-crossing, dialect-levelling, lingua franca, development of pidgin, hybridisation, creolisation and ultimately standardisation. Weaker responses often demonstrated confusion in this terminology, although most candidates discussed social class and ethnicity competently using the first paragraph of Extract A as a springboard for ideas.

Confident responses explored the changing nature of Kachru's concentric circle model, using the idea of English becoming 'fragmented and mobile' as well as discussing the various ways in which the English language has different 'roles and functions' which can only be served by its 'different varieties'. It was pleasing to see candidates applying local and personal examples to support ideas; these are valuable additions in responses, demonstrating first hand knowledge of how language varieties are entirely suitable in certain situations.

Weaker responses tended not to make a full exploration of the opportunities offered by the examples in Extract B, often dismissing the Islander Creole as something unrelated to English. All candidates of English language should be aware of the importance of training one's mind's ear as well as the eye when looking at unfamiliar texts in order to gain knowledge and understanding.

Question 3

The transcription of two extracts showed a young boy in his post-telegraphic stage of language acquisition, in a fluent and relaxed conversation with his mother. Most candidates identified Nathan's stage of linguistic competence, allowing for his virtuous error in 'tooths' and applying Chomsky's notion of the language acquisition device. However, only confident responses were able to describe this aspect of the proposed universal grammar with the full range of technical terminology, thus allowing them to progress through the higher bands.

Weaker responses tended to focus only on the language of the child, rather than acknowledging that the question asked for discussions on the way in which Nathan *and his mother* were using language. Confident responses took the idea of the Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development to assess how far the caregiver's scaffolding aided the child in his linguistic progression and the ways the mother crafted the scaffolding she was providing. For example, the mother has an interesting use of onomatopoeia ('whee') and teasing ('you'll never guess') which offer a sense of play as opposed to formality in her teaching. These aspects were explored in more confident responses, while less successful responses tended to spot features such as the repetition in Nathan's 'for ages' without recognising the playful nature of the conversation.

Hallidayan functions were often discussed, in particular the heuristic way in which Nathan wanted to gain understanding from the photographs; normally the caregiver would use a range of questioning techniques to elicit a response from the child – here the roles were reversed to an extent.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 42 offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two topics of their choice from the three questions offered. Candidates should present their arguments and counterarguments in a logically sequenced way, using a good command of English. **Question 1** asks for a discussion on ways in which speakers use language to communicate in social groups and how language is affected by context; a linguistic analysis of the transcription provided is required and ideas should be evidenced by examples from the text, supported by relevant theoretical examples. **Question 2** is different from this in that the analysis required is that of the ideas presented in the text provided, and those surrounding the notion of English as a global language. **Question 3** presents a transcription of language acquired by children and that of a caregiver – here a linguistic analysis is required of the ways in which all interlocutors are using language to communicate. As in **Question 1**, ideas should be supported by relevant theoretical examples.

General comments

Candidates should read the preliminary notes to each question very carefully. In the November 2018 examination, there was evidence that some candidates had missed important information contained in the preamble.

Candidates should present their work as neatly as possible, paying attention to paragraphing in order to separate ideas. In order to move through the higher bands, responses should be written articulately and in a formal register, making accurate use of technical terminology to describe language.

Where theoretical examples are applied, successful candidates will explain fully why a theory is relevant to the idea being presented, giving the relevant reference to the text. Textual references need only be brief, but it is not sufficient merely to provide the name of a linguistic theorist without relevant discussion.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The interlocutors participating in the transcribed conversation were Laurence Reed (male) and two female speakers, Jane Vass and Gillian. Most candidates relied on genderlect theories to support ideas; although it may have been plausible to make this the core focus of a response, there was much more in the transcription which many candidates chose not to acknowledge, therefore not taking full advantage of the opportunities which the transcription presented.

Strong responses explored the structure of the transcription, in which there was a shift at line 25 when Gillian began speaking. The first part of the conversation was structured as an informative discussion between Laurence and Jane whereas the second part of the conversation became an interview between Laurence and Gillian. Confident candidates discussed the varying dynamics of these different conversational genres and how Laurence's utterances were crafted to ensure that the conversation ran as smoothly as possible given the context of a live radio broadcast. These candidates included exploration of the different levels of formality used by Laurence to engage his speakers and how his conversational flow was lost when speaking with Gillian, his resulting loss of confidence seeming to echo the perceived 'invisibility' which Gillian reported.

With regard to the context, candidates demonstrated understanding that interlocutors' lexical and grammatical choices need to be relaxed to be understood by a wide audience, whilst remaining polite and

calm in tone, with some considerable prosody being used for emphasis as paralinguistic features such as facial expression and gesture are not visible for a radio audience. Some responses spotted features such as voiceless and voiced pauses, typically ascribing these to the speaker's weakness, nervousness or attempts to buy thinking time, with weaker candidates providing generalised explanations as to why these features might occur in unscripted speech.

Question 2

Candidates appeared well-engaged with the extracts provided, providing many confident discussions on the ways in which English is continuing to form hybrids and extend its progress towards being used as a global language.

Stronger responses typically provided a brief explanation of how colonisation introduced English into many countries, and how English has undergone change and development, whereas weaker candidates relied on this aspect and made history the focal point of their response, tending not to acknowledge the changing use of English and the different roles and purposes its varieties may serve in different contemporary societies. Stronger responses also often applied judiciously-chosen local and personal examples to support ideas; these are valuable additions in responses, demonstrating first hand knowledge of how language varieties are entirely suitable in certain situations.

Confident responses discussed English and identity along with levels of formality and the merits of bilingualism, referring to Crystal, Diamond, Sapir-Whorf and Milroy. Weaker responses often used the names of such theorists but were not fully able to demonstrate the appropriateness of the ideas and did not make full use of the examples provided in Extract B.

Strong responses typically extended the discussion by providing examples of other hybrids and their uses, either acknowledging their influence within adapted versions of Kachru's model of concentric circles, considering descriptivist stances on the use of English, exploring language in the electronic mode, and discussing the consequences of governmental interventions such as the 'Speak Good English' campaign in Singapore.

Question 3

The transcription, set in two extracts, showed the way in which Becky and her parents were using language to communicate. Candidates were asked to discuss use of language and any changes which took place in Becky's speech over the course of a three-month period. Weaker responses tended to spot features of Becky's language in both extracts but many did not explore any progression in her linguistic competence.

Most candidates identified Becky's utterances as holophrastic, with stronger responses providing examples from the transcription as to how Becky was progressing into the telegraphic phase. These candidates identified lexical and grammatical items using technical terminology with accuracy. In Extract B, Becky has emerged from the holophrastic phase and is able to construct short sentences; most candidates made reference to Chomsky's language acquisition device and demonstrated knowledge of the way Becky's parents conformed to the caregiver model of Bruner's language acquisition support system. Confident responses compared the ways in which the mother and father used language when speaking to Becky and referred to Vygotsky when analysing the different scaffolding techniques each of them used.

Weaker responses often stated that Becky uttered 'baa' because she did not know the lexical item 'sheep'. A more accurate description of this phenomenon would be that Becky may indeed know 'sheep' but her phonological competence is such that she is unable to pronounce the necessary initial phoneme and therefore makes herself understood by relating sound to object. With regard to phonological analysis, confident responses successfully discussed Becky's use of 'dakter' and her difficulty in producing the initial consonant cluster /tr/ at age one year five months, and comparing that with the ease of production of initial consonant cluster /pl/ in 'play' at one year eight months.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43 Language Topics
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Key messages

Paper 43 offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two topics of their choice from the three topics offered. Candidates should present their arguments and counterarguments in a logically sequenced way, using a good command of English. **Question 1** asks for a discussion on ways in which speakers use language to communicate in social groups and how language is affected by context; a linguistic analysis of the transcription provided is required and ideas should be evidenced by examples from the text, supported by relevant theoretical examples. **Question 2** is different from this in that the analysis required is that of the ideas presented in the text provided, and those surrounding the notion of English as a global language. **Question 3** presents a transcription of language acquired by children and that of a caregiver – here a linguistic analysis is required of the ways in which all interlocutors are using language to communicate. As in **Question 1**, ideas should be supported by relevant theoretical examples.

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Candidates should read the preliminary notes to each question very carefully. In the November 2018 examination, there was evidence, particularly in **Question 1**, that some candidates had missed important information contained in the preamble.

Candidates should present their work as neatly as possible, paying attention to paragraphing in order to separate ideas.

Where theoretical examples are applied, successful candidates will explain fully why a theory is relevant to the idea being presented, giving the relevant reference to the text. Textual references need only be brief, but it is not sufficient merely to provide the name of a linguistic theorist without relevant discussion.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Strong responses explored the language used by Zoe and Louise with relevance to the context of a vlog in the process of being created. The preamble informed candidates that both interlocutors were speaking to camera throughout; candidates often acknowledged the natural way in which the conversation developed, despite that aspect, often focusing on how the colloquial choices ‘on point’ and friendly nicknaming ‘chummy’ proved that the interlocutors were very familiar with each other, as well as the ways in which a vlog can be crafted in order to engage large audiences.

Weaker responses tended to focus on Zoe’s apparent nervousness whilst opening her gift but did not infer that this professed nervousness was part of the crafting process of the vlog, and which was used purposefully to create tension and excitement.

Most candidates reflected on the inclusion of language used in the electronic mode, such as ‘tweet’ although weaker responses described this lexical choice as slang, instead of relating the lexis to the age and experience of the interlocutors. Confident responses acknowledged this aspect of the sociolect, using politeness theories to support arguments regarding the ways in which the interlocutors responded to each other in adjacency pairs to provide a fluent, humorous conversation. Strong responses tended to demonstrate each interlocutor’s idiolect, for example Zoe’s repetition of ‘oh my gosh’ and Louise’s self-deprecation, choosing to discuss language and identity. Weaker responses, on the other hand, relied on

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