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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/12
Reading

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:
- worked through the questions in the order set
- followed task instructions carefully
- responded appropriately to the command words
- considered the evidence of skills and understanding they needed to demonstrate for each of the three questions
- paid attention to the guidance offered to help them focus their answers – for example, the indication of marks available in **Questions 1(a)–1(e)**, and the instruction to use just one example from the text extract in **Question 2(c)**
- used their own words where instructed to do so, avoiding unselective copying and / or lifting from the text
- considered and used relevant ideas, opinions and / or details from the text rather than inventing untethered material
- returned to the text when necessary to check understanding of key ideas and important details
- planned and organised the ideas to be used in longer answers before writing the response
- paid equal attention to all aspects of each question
- selected only the material that was most appropriate for the response to the question
- avoided repetition
- checked and edited their responses to correct any errors, indeveloped ideas or unclear points.

General comments

Candidates' responses indicated that they were familiar with the format of the paper and showed understanding of the general demands of the three tasks. There were occasions where responses to part questions were incomplete, or missing, though instances where a whole task had not been attempted were rare.

Candidates appeared to find all three texts equally accessible and engaging. There were very few examples of significant misreading of the main points of texts, though on occasion misreading of important details and / or key vocabulary restricted the evidence of understanding and skills offered. Likewise, a failure to follow the rubric and / or complete all aspects of a task – for example, by attempting to explain the whole extract rather than choosing an example from it in **Question 2(c)** – limited the effectiveness of some answers.

In **Question 1**, candidates scoring highly had worked through the tasks in the order presented and made efficient use of their time, for example by paying attention in **Questions 1 (a)–(e)** to the marks and space available as a helpful indicator of the length and detail they needed to offer in their response. They did not add further unnecessary material and focused on answering each question as set. Most candidates followed the line or paragraph references in the questions carefully to help them to move down **Text A** in order and to direct their attention. Most, but not all, remembered that in a test of comprehension their responses to these initial short answer questions needed to be derived from the text in order to evidence their reading skills.

Less successful responses sometimes attempted to include extra points in response to **Questions 1(a)–(e)**, diluting evidence of their understanding by doing so. Some offered 'empty' answers, repeating some / all of the question at the expense of answering it. Some candidates appeared to have taken far longer on **Questions 1(a)–(e)** than they needed to – for example, by writing every answer in full sentences. Successful answers simply concentrated on providing clear, focused responses where the meaning was not in doubt. In

Question 1(f) some candidates relied heavily on the language of the text and / or copied whole chunks from the text, limiting the available evidence of their own skills and understanding as a result.

In **Question 2** candidates needed first to identify and / or explain words and phrases from **Text C**, moving towards an explanation of how language was being used by the writer via **Question 2(c)** and on to the language task, **Question 2(d)**. Stronger answers were careful to refer back to the text to locate specific relevant choices and consider carefully their meaning in context. Most were able to suggest three potentially useful examples for analysis in each half of the **2(d)** task and offer basic effect / meaning, though a number of candidates were not sufficiently clear, careful or detailed in the examination of their choices. To aim for higher levels in **Question 2(d)**, candidates need to use their own words to explore and explain in some detail the precise meanings and effects of the examples of interesting or powerful language use they have identified. In less successful responses, generalised comment, repetition of the language of the text and / or labelling of devices without explanation of how these were working meant opportunities to target higher levels were missed.

In **Question 3** responses for the most part had attempted to include ideas relevant to all three bullets of the task. Most candidates had remembered to talk from the perspective of one of the trekkers, with the best remaining focused on the evidence in this text and keeping in mind their audience and purpose throughout. Responses across the cohort covered a wide range of levels of achievement, with mid-range responses sometimes missing opportunities as a consequence of losing focus on either the task or text. Less successful responses either included only brief reference to the passage and / or repeated sections from the text with minimal modification. Reliance on the language of the text in order to communicate ideas is an indicator of less secure understanding and to be avoided.

Whilst Paper 1 is primarily an assessment of reading skills, 15 of the 80 marks available are for writing skills; these are divided between **Questions 1(f)** and **3.** In these questions, it is important that candidates consider the quality of their writing. It is advisable to plan and review responses to avoid inconsistencies of style, errors that impede communication of ideas and awkward expression. Candidates should be aware that unclear and / or inaccurate writing is likely to limit their achievement, as will lifting or copying from the passage. Leaving sufficient time to edit and correct responses is advisable.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Comprehension and summary task

Questions 1 (a)–(e)

Short answer **Questions 1(a)–(e)** required candidates to read and respond to **Text A.** Effective responses paid careful attention to the command words in the instructions, demonstrating effectively the evidence of understanding required. Whilst all questions were answered correctly over the range of responses, opportunities to score the full 15 marks available were often missed by individual candidates. Some mid-range responses for example missed opportunities to target higher marks, by offering overlong unfocused explanations and / or including fewer points than the maximum number of marks available. Less well-focused answers on occasion diluted the evidence of understanding by including additional unnecessary material and / or extra points.

The most successful responses demonstrated candidates had understood the need to interpret and use details in the text carefully in order to answer each of the comprehension questions. Candidates followed the order of the sub questions, working through the text from the beginning, and picking up on pointers where appropriate to help them to identify relevant material.

Whilst some candidates appeared to find it useful to frame their answers in sentences and / or repeat part of the question at the beginning of their response, for many candidates shorter, focused responses in **Questions 1 (a) – (e)**, offering just the answer itself, was a much more successful and efficient approach.

(a) Give the example used by the instructor to teach the value of a good opening to an article, according to the text.

In **Question 1(a)**, the majority of candidates reading closely recognised that the writer had identified the opening of this text as the example given by the instructor of a good opening. Some candidates offered the example in full, whilst others accurately explained the content of the example rather than copy it out. Either approach was acceptable.

Some repeated the whole question in full ahead of offering their answer – this was not necessary and rarely helpful, since doing so potentially added pressure in terms of both space and time available

(b) Using your own words, explain what the text means by:

(i) 'immense value' (line 3)
(ii) 'diverse destinations' (line 5).

In **Question 1(b)** task guidance made it clear that use of own words was required to evidence understanding. Simply reorganising all / some of the phrase was a feature of weaker answers. Where answers failed to score both marks it was often the result of having explained just one aspect of the phrases, for example in **Question 1(b)(i)** explaining 'immense' only and repeating the word 'value'. More effective answers were able to indicate that they had securely understood the meaning of the whole phrase in the context of the text – for example, in **1b(i)** that 'immense value' conveyed the idea that a good opening was 'essential'.

(c) Re-read paragraph 3, ('Having quit … that conference.').

Give two ways in which attending the conference changed the writer.

Candidates who followed the instructions in the task to re-read paragraph 3 were best placed to identify the two ways in which attending the conference changed the writer as detailed in the text. Well focused answers showed that both the improvement in their writing and the way in which it affected them as an editor had been understood – either by careful selection of relevant quotation from the text, or through precise use of own words. Answers that suggested the conference had resulted in the writer quitting their job as a software designer indicated misreading.

(d) Re-read paragraphs 4 and 5, ('Writers of … never visit.').

(i) Identify two mistakes made by writers of unsuccessful articles.
(ii) Explain why people like to read good travel writing, according to the text.

In **Question 1(d)(i)** well-focused answers identified two separate and distinct types of errors made by writers of unsuccessful articles according to this writer. Less well-focused answers sometimes repeated versions of the same idea or simply copied one of the illustrations offered such as 'Travel is wonderful' without making the mistake itself clear. Others indicated misreading by suggesting that articles needed extra padding at the beginning or should start the story with 'Our plane landed in …'. Whilst not a requirement of the task, in **Question 1d(ii)** some candidates used their own words to explain accurately and efficiently the reasons 'why people like to read good travel writing, according to the text.'

(e) Re-read paragraphs 6 and 7 ('I should point out … every August.').

Using your own words, explain why people might not accept the writer's advice about being a travel writer.

In **Question 1(e)** the most successful explanations showed that candidates were able to derive three of the five reasons and had not misread details of either the text or task. Explicit ideas such as the difficulties of earning a living as a travel writer, along with the fact that the writer themselves no longer worked as one, were among the most popular answers, though over the full range of responses all five of the available ideas were well represented and presented in various ways. Candidates who recast the relevant information using their own words as instructed were best able explore implicit ideas such as those around the value of the conference itself.

(f) According to Text B, what are the disadvantages of being a travel writer?

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should not be more than 120 words.

In their responses to **Question 1(f)** most candidates were able to demonstrate at least a general understanding of some relevant ideas from **Text B** and some understanding of the requirements of the task.

All points on the mark scheme were covered over the range of answers seen. Many offered clear evidence of understanding in relation to a good range of ideas, though repetition of the same idea and / or inclusion of excess material not relevant to the focus of the question – such as explaining details of how the author had spoken to some travel writers, and naming them in turn – indicated a loss of focus on the task.

Where responses were most effective, candidates had made a consistent attempt to use their own words appropriately, to keep explanations concise and to organise helpfully the relevant ideas they had identified. Less well-focused responses copied from the text, rarely rewording or reorganising the original. Whilst candidates are not expected to change all key words or terms in their prose response, they should not rely on lifting whole phrases and / or sentences from the text to communicate their ideas. Indiscriminate copying of the passage, repetition and adding comment or example should all be avoided as these do not allow candidates to successfully address the selective summary task. In some responses, inaccurate copying of words or phrases from the text indicated insecure understanding of ideas – for example, it was not correct to suggest that travel writers had to 'balance public requirements', or that it 'took months to get noticed by the public'. Similarly, evidence of understanding was undermined on occasion where candidates' attempts at own words distorted meaning – for example, the text did not suggest that a disadvantage for travel writers would be 'low payments' or 'no payment'.

The most effective responses to the selective summary task showed evidence of candidates having planned the content and organisation of their answer before writing to establish a clear path through their response. For example, some had organised and linked points related to finance, family and time, others approached the material from the two aspects of home and away. There were some extremely effective and well-crafted responses that demonstrated both concision and precise understanding of an impressively wide range of relevant ideas.

The majority of candidates showed at least some awareness of the need to avoid excess and most did not make reference to any of the more obviously redundant details such as Gothanji's desire to visit Paris and / or a café. Less effective responses tended to quote the words of the travel writers named in the article – most commonly, Duncan West's examples of the effect on home and family life. They also often included extraneous details surrounding Sanghita Chatterjee's extended journey.

More effective responses were not dependant on either the structure or language of **Text B** to communicate; these responses dealt with both explicit and implicit ideas. Less effective responses sometimes relied on trying to offer a précis of the whole text in the order it was presented. In these answers excess material was commonplace and evidence of understanding more limited. In low to mid-range answers, some candidates indiscriminately lifted longer sections of text, occasionally substituting words and / or altering word order, without careful selection of a central idea. This diluted evidence of understanding of both task and text. Candidates need to be aware that simply rearranging words within a sentence and / or slotting in substituted words here and there, is a not a short cut to providing secure evidence of reading skills and understanding. This kind of formulaic approach is likely to result in confusion and / or errors that further betray weaknesses in candidates' comprehension – for example that 'the city is so packed that you don't get to see Paris at all' or that 'the PR professionals at the hotel are annoying and not wise'.

Most candidates appeared to be aware of the need to try to use their own vocabulary where feasible without changing or blurring the original idea. The best kept in mind the general audience for the task, writing informatively and often adopting a more formal register than the original text. On occasion, candidates overlooked the need for concision in a selective summary task and significant excess arose as a result of lengthy explanation, with some candidates continuing to write far more than the maximum of 120 words advised in the task guidance. Others adhered to the advised length of the response, but took far too long to explain just a few ideas and offered more limited evidence of understanding as a result. Candidates producing effective answers were able to demonstrate that they had understood a fairly wide range of relevant ideas, communicating these accurately and concisely in their own words.

Advice to candidates on **Question 1(f)**:

- after reading the task instructions, re-read the text to identify potentially relevant ideas you can use in your answer
- plan the ideas you are going to include ahead of writing your response – draw a neat line through your planning afterwards
- identify and discard any extra details which are additional illustrations or not relevant to the focus of the question

- reflect on the ideas you have highlighted in your plan, checking that they are distinct and complete – for example, whether there are repeated ideas which could be combined or ideas which might need further explanation
- return to the text to check any ideas you are unsure of before you try to use them
- organise and sequence your ideas helpfully for your reader – do not rely on repeating ideas in the order of the original text
- make sure that you have explained ideas in a way that someone who had not read the passage would understand them
- do not include quotation from the text
- write informatively and accurately in your own words, avoiding errors which affect meaning
- do not add details, examples or comment to the content of the passage
- keep in mind the guidance to write 'no more than 120 words' and aim for concision.

Question 2

(a) Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:

(i) Charlie and the others in his group would be completing a walk at a great height.
(ii) Walkers had to collect a specific amount of funding for their trip before they could be allowed to take part.
(iii) Charlie also asked people he did not know well to sponsor him.
(iv) The organisers told trekkers that they needed to be very fit.

Focused responses to **Question 2(a)** clearly identified in each part the correct word or phrase from **Text C** to correspond with the meaning of the underlined example – simply giving the word or phrase as their answer. Other responses unnecessarily copied the entire sentence in each case, substituting the word or phrase and then bracketing or underlining their answer. Marks were sometimes missed where answers were unfocused (for example, copying out sections of text that went beyond the sense of the sentence in the question such as 'pester friends, family and casual acquaintances for support' in response to **2(a)(iii)**) or were incomplete (for example, in **2(a)(iv)** giving 'good shape' without 'seriously'). Candidates are reminded that the word or phrase they select from the text needs to cover the whole sense of the underlined word or phrase – for example, in **2(a)(ii)** candidates needed to identify that the text uses the expression 'raise the required sponsorship money', to communicate the three aspects of 'collect', 'funding' and 'a specific amount'. Very occasionally, the specific instruction to 'identify a word or phrase from the text' was overlooked and candidates attempted to offer their own alternatives for the underlined words, missing the opportunity to evidence relevant reading skills and understanding.

(b) Using your own words, explain what the writer means by the words underlined:

Trek-training began in earnest. My carefully planned route passed fortuitously close to a favourite café in case of emergency. I'd anticipated I'd need a few jabs for Peru, but the cheery list of disorders I needed vaccinating against was reeled off by my doctor with more than a little glee.

(i) in earnest
(ii) fortuitously
(iii) anticipated.

In **Question 2(b),** successful answers had considered the precise meaning in context of each of the words underlined, recognising for example that whilst 'anticipated' indicated Charlie's awareness or knowledge of the need for vaccinations, it did not suggest in context that he felt any pleasure in relation to that or was looking forward to it. Less successful answers to **2(b)(i)** often confused 'earnest' with 'earliest' and offered incorrect suggestions of meaning as a result.

(c) Use one example from the text below to explain how the writer suggests his attitude to preparing for the trip.

Use your own words in your explanation.

Trek-training began in earnest. My carefully planned route passed fortuitously close to a favourite café in case of emergency. I'd anticipated I'd need a few jabs for Peru, but the

cheery list of disorders I needed vaccinating against was reeled off by my doctor with more than a little glee.

In **Question 2(c)**, where candidates had focused clearly on using just one example taken from the text extract, as instructed to do, they were best placed to demonstrate their understanding. Some candidates copied out their chosen example to help focus their explanation, whilst others underlined it in the extract from the text provided; both approaches were acceptable. Successful responses noted that the question asked about Charlie's 'attitude to preparing for the trip' and looked for clear examples of Charlie's initial approach to his preparation such as his 'carefully planned' training route and his expectation that he would need 'a few jabs'. Many responses centred on the example of the 'cheery list of disorders …' and were able to offer sound evidence of understanding – recognising that Charlie's tone indicated he considered the list 'reeled off' by his doctor as anything but cheery. Similarly, candidates targeting full marks effectively often offered convincing explanations in relation to 'in case of emergency' – either interpreting it as a sign that Charlie was genuinely nervous about his fitness / ability and relieved to have a potential point on his training route for assistance, or that he was not intending to engage in particularly rigorous training and had already planned rest breaks on his training route. Candidates who had read less closely incorrectly suggested that there was a café in Macchu Pichu which Charlie was planning to visit and / or that he had planned the route for the group's trek in Peru. Opportunities were missed by candidates who discussed the trek itself rather than Charlie's attitude to preparations and / or did not select an example from the extract of the text provided.

(d) Re-read paragraphs 18 and 19.

- **Paragraph 18 begins 'What? No Jed? …' and is about Charlie's reaction to the news about Jed.**
- **Paragraph 19 begins 'We set off …' and is about Charlie's memories of the trip.**

Explain how the writer uses language to convey meaning and to create effect in these paragraphs. Choose three examples of words or phrases from each paragraph to support your answer. Your choices should include the use of imagery.

Successful responses to **Question 2(d)** offered analysis of three relevant selections in both parts, often beginning with explanations of meaning in their own words and moving on to consider the precise effect intended. Such responses demonstrated understanding of how the writer was using language in each case through detailed discussion of sharply focused choices. Where candidates considered all of the key words in slightly longer choices they were able to avoid those more generalised comments of less effective responses. Candidates responding in note form and / or relying on repeating the language of the text within their explanation were less well-placed to demonstrate understanding fully and often offered only partially effective explanation as a result. The strongest responses examined words within their choices individually, as well as exploring how they worked within the longer phrase and / or in the context of the description as a whole. Rather than selecting the first three choices in each half they came across, or the most 'obvious' literary devices, successful responses had taken time to identify those relevant selections that they understood and felt best able to explain. Some of the strongest responses explored, first individually and then together, how their judiciously selected choices worked to influence the reader's impression, building to an overview.

In **part (a)**, many candidates had identified 'devastated', 'cruel' and 'brooding with dark thoughts of betrayal' as potentially interesting examples to discuss, often noting in general terms the exaggeration suggested. Fewer though were able to explain with any precision the meanings and / or intended effects – sometimes diluting evidence of understanding by repeating the language of the text in circular explanations such as 'dark thoughts of betrayal shows how he feels betrayed' or 'devasted' (sic) 'suggested that the writer had been cruelly betrayed'. Repetition of the vocabulary of the text in the explanations offered for many of the choices was common in less effective responses, whilst more convincing responses were able to find explanations of precise meaning in their own words which then led them on to consider effect. Candidates are reminded of the need to ensure that their explanations in **Question 2(d)** use their own vocabulary and can be clearly understood. Whilst the task does not assess writing skills, encouraging candidates to explore their choices as fully as they are able to do, it is nevertheless important that candidates read back their explanations to check that what they have written is what they mean and evidences their understanding. Candidates are reminded it is the quality of their analysis which attracts marks.

Potentially stronger answers sometimes missed opportunities to demonstrate their reading skills by skimming over the meanings of words within choices that they could have explained – for example, 'extracting precious writerly secrets' was a popular choice, though it was comparatively rare for answers to discuss the meanings

of each of the words within it. Similarly, answers that might have gone on to discuss profitably how particular devices were working missed opportunities to do so by limiting their explanation to simple identification, such as offering a choice as an example of an 'auditory image'. Answers which simply list the literary devices used are unlikely to evidence the skills and understanding necessary to target higher marks in a language analysis question.

Careful reading might have helped some candidates avoid errors such as trying to explain Jed or Charlie's 'hollowed life' and / or suggesting that Jed was already Charlie's friend. Similarly, opportunities for precise and imaginative explanation of images were sometimes missed where candidates attempted to explain the meaning of words without considering how they were being used in context. Candidates reading closely were able to explain what 'bleaker' suggested about the change in the landscape (scenery) as they climbed, rather than trying to explain it as describing the weather.

Selections in **Question 2(d)** need to be clear and deliberate, helping to focus the analysis which follows. Long quotations with only the first and last words identified are less likely to be useful and result in very thin general comments at best. Some of the least successful answers attempted to copy sections of text and offer a very general comment, blurring any evidence that they had understood meanings of individual words. Opportunities were missed in some answers where task guidance had not been followed, such as where most / all choices offered were from one paragraph only.

The most successful answers were often able to 'talk their reader through' their understanding of words within relevant choices, considering different possibilities of meaning, associations and connotations, ahead of arriving at an understanding of how and why they might have been used by the writer in this particular context. Some of the strongest answers successfully explored the idea that the description of the trip offered a cliched account and / or that it had been deliberately overwritten by a writer prone to exaggeration – as exemplified in paragraph 18. Some profitably contrasted the melodrama of the depths of despair suggested in paragraph 18, with the 'trip of a lifetime' as described in paragraph 19.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- any quotations you select from the text need to be focused – for example in **2(d)** do not copy out whole lines or chunks of text
- be precise and accurate when selecting from the text – do not miss out key words, copy spelling incorrectly or include only part of the choice
- ensure that your selections in **2(a)** cover the whole meaning of the underlined phrase and no more
- in **2(c)** pay attention to the focus of the question and select **one** example only from extract you are given to help you to explain
- in **2(b)**, **(c)** and **(d)** try not to repeat the words of the choice in your explanations
- when trying to explain the meaning of words from the text in **2(b)**, **(c)** and **(d)** use the most precise words you can – even if you are unsure of the spelling. Writing is not assessed in **Question 2**.
- in **2(d)** avoid comments such as saying that 'the writer really helps us to imagine what it is like'
- discuss each of the key words within an identified choice separately as well as how they work together
- when you are trying to suggest effect and are unsure, start by explaining the exact meaning in context of the word(s) in the choice
- when you are trying to explore and explain images, consider the connotations and associations of the words within choices to help you to suggest the effect the writer might have wanted to create
- allow time to edit your answers – for example, to add in further detail and / or correct errors to help show you have read carefully and understood.

Question 3

You are one of the people who trekked with Charlie to Machu Picchu. You have been invited by the charity to speak to a group of people who are thinking of taking a similar trip.

In your speech you should:

- **outline what the trip involves and the preparation required beforehand**
- **explain the different reasons people might have for choosing to go on a trip like this**
- **persuade your audience why trips like this are important to the charity.**

Already familiar with **Text C** after having worked through **Question 2**, candidates following the order of tasks as set were best placed to think their way into the perspective of another group member addressing prospective trekkers to persuade them of the importance of what they are considering doing for the charity. A few candidates lost focus on the task, for example by writing as Charlie – explaining at length his

disappointment as a result of Jed not appearing and /or making inappropriate jokes about accidents or deaths and adding further speculation on the potential dangers that might lie ahead. Most however, recognised that shifting to a different perspective was an invitation to alter both the style of writing to take account of the audience and purpose specified in the task and to evaluate, rather than simply repeat, ideas in the text.

The question offered candidates three bullets as prompts to help them identify a range of relevant ideas in relation to such treks and interpret them effectively for their audience and purpose. Most candidates were able to demonstrate that they had understood the text and task in at least general terms and referred to some of the main ideas from the text. Many had engaged with both task and text to offer competent responses, evidencing some evaluation and interpreting ideas from the perspective of a speaker intending to both inform and persuade their audience. Where candidates had paid careful and equal attention to each of the bullets they were often able to develop ideas (explicit and implicit) from the text to create a convincing and often compelling argument for taking part in such a venture.

Where responses attempted to rely on just tracking back through the text, replaying the passage, answers were less well-placed to target higher marks. Such answers often became over reliant on the language of the text to communicate ideas, signalling insecure understanding of both task and text. The least successful responses copied sections of text with minimal modification and / or included inaccuracies as a result of misreading of key details and information. The most successful answers had often re-organised their ideas from all three bullets beforehand in order to persuade their audience of the appeal of such a trip, both to them as individuals and to the charity.

The first bullet invited candidates to revisit the narrator's description of the main stages of the trip itself and the preparation required before setting out. Most candidates were able to refer to explicit ideas such as the need for fitness and medical preparations, and many outlined the travel to Cusco and the requirement to buy your own equipment in addition to raising a set amount of money through sponsorship. Stronger answers often provided an explanation of the potential highlights of such a trip balanced against any concerns and / or preparation beforehand, and sometimes chose to weave in some of the benefits to individuals (bullet two) and / or the charity (bullet three) in this early stage before fleshing them out in more detail later.

Bullet two directed candidates to reflect on the different reasons there might be for choosing to go on such a trip; almost all candidates recognised the appeal of an adventure and many noted that the experience of travelling itself offered various attractions, with more successful answers teasing these out. Many noted the awe-inspiring beauty of the landscape as suggested by the details in Charlie's description as a potential attraction, and references to the camaraderie and friendships made were common too. Some responses relied on repeating details from the text in relation to bullet two rather than interpreting them and missed opportunities for development as a result.

To target higher marks and evidence close reading of Text C when dealing with ideas relevant to bullet three, candidates needed to do more than repeat the words of the events manager. Whilst these proved a useful starting point for many, unpicking the differing aspects of the importance of such trips to charity allowed more successful responses to offer a wider range of ideas, along with some well related development interpreting and extending those ideas for the specified audience.

Where candidates had kept in mind the audience and purpose throughout their response, they were often able to capitalise on that to integrate details and sustain development. Aware that the speech was to be delivered to people thinking of taking a similar trip, and that they needed to persuade their audience of the value of such trips to the charity, some candidates set out from the start to persuade their listeners that they should be involved. For example, the strongest responses had drawn out suggestions from Charlie's account of his experiences the various positive effects that involvement might have on participants –socially, culturally and professionally – to offset against the potential downsides of preparation beforehand.

On the whole, candidates seemed familiar with the requirements of a speech and remembered to address the audience, though some only did so at the beginning and end of their writing. Many made effective use of persuasive devices, though in some responses awkward expression and / or insecure use of vocabulary detracted from the overall effect. In some speeches, frequent errors with punctuation and grammar in otherwise stronger writing resulted in loss of clarity and limited effectiveness. Candidates are advised to leave sufficient time to read back through their response to correct any mistakes or inconsistencies in their use of language – for example, to ensure that meaning is clear and the register sounds consistently appropriate. Where responses lapsed into more mechanical reproductions of ideas and / or tended towards lifting, the audience had often been forgotten and opportunities to use language convincingly were overlooked.

In the least effective answers, lifting in relation to all three bullets was an issue, with copying of whole sections of text not uncommon in these responses. This affected evidence of both Reading and Writing skills. Meanwhile, answers at the top end were often presented in engaging, convincing and persuasive style.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

- read Text C carefully, more than once, and reconsider any points that you are unsure of
- remember to base your answer on the ideas in Text C
- keep in mind the new perspective required for the task
- remember the audience and purpose for your response throughout your answer
- decide on the voice and style you want to create and maintain that in your answer
- do not invent information and details beyond the scope of the passage; look for the clues and evidence in the text to help you make judgements and develop ideas
- give equal attention to each of the three bullet points: the bullet points are designed to help you to identify a wide range of relevant ideas you can use in your answer
- plan a route through your answer beforehand: you can choose not to follow the order of the bullet points and / or link ideas from each
- do not copy directly from the text: use your own words as far as you can to express ideas
- try to do more than just repeat details of what happened
- leave sufficient time to edit and correct your response
- the number of words suggested by the question is a guide to help you plan your time, not a limit.

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/22
Directed Writing and Composition

Key messages

This paper was mainly assessed for writing, although there were fifteen marks available for reading in **Question 1**.

In order to achieve high marks, candidates were required to:

- use an appropriate form, style and register in both questions
- structure ideas and organise the response effectively to inform, persuade and engage the reader
- produce detailed and evocative descriptions and engaging, credible narratives
- be sure you know the different kinds of content required for description and narration
- construct varied sentences accurately, with a clear attempt to create an effect on the reader
- use precise and wide-ranging vocabulary, appropriate for the task and style required.

General comments

Examiners found that the majority of responses showed a secure understanding of how marks were awarded for both tasks, directed writing and composition. Although there were few very brief scripts or responses nearly all candidates understood the instructions for the examination and attempted **Question 1** and either a descriptive or narrative writing task. In **Question 1** few responses were mostly or wholly copied from the texts in the Reading Booklet Insert, although some lifting of phrases or sentences was fairly common. Where this lifting of material was more extensive, marks were inevitably limited for both Reading and Writing. In ***Section B***, most candidates understood how the content of descriptive and narrative writing differs, although there were stories submitted for the descriptive writing tasks which made it difficult for examiners to award high marks for Content and Structure. In some cases, mostly for the 'Looking Back' title in the narrative writing, the response was largely discursive and lacked real narrative progression and shape.

Nearly all responses showed a clear understanding of and engagement with the topic of the reading texts in **Question 1**. Most responses were written in an appropriate style and format for a letter addressed to a known, specific audience of a head teacher. The register required was well understood, with most responses reflecting the authority and formal position of the recipient. More effective answers here also tended to structure responses independently, selecting and commenting on the details in the texts in a coherent response. Some opinion was often given as a conclusion to the letter and most candidates remembered to include an appropriate valediction. Comments made about the potential benefits and pitfalls of using Artificial Intelligence in schools were rooted in the ideas given in the reading texts. In the middle of the mark range, responses tended to reproduce the points made in the texts, sometimes with an opinion given about some of the points made, with some beginning to evaluate. A substantial number of responses at this range made some comments about the ideas in the texts, though not always probing or offering judgements about them. In many cases, responses reflected the judgement made in Text A, that teachers should be assisted rather than replaced by AI, although more successful responses included more considered, evaluative ideas about why teachers should not be replaced or how classroom relationships and dynamics would be altered by reliance on AI.

Less effective responses tended to repeat the ideas in the texts, rather than selecting points and commenting on them. In some responses at this level, this resulted in a lack of cohesion with conflicting viewpoints given side by side as well as some straightforward listing in the same sequence as Text B.

Most candidates made good use of the bullet points in the question to help structure the response and the ideas in the texts were scrutinised thoughtfully in more effective responses. The ways in which a teacher's empathy was essential to learning was often effectively evaluated. Less effective responses sometimes showed limited awareness of the specific audience for the letter, providing a summary of the ideas in the texts but without the focus of persuading the head teacher to a considered point of view. Overall, however, there was often a clear adaptation of style and register to appeal to an authoritative figure able to make decisions about school life. Introductions and conclusions and the structure and organisation of ideas required in a letter were well understood by a majority of candidates.

In ***Section B***, effective responses to the composition questions were characterised by a clear understanding of the genre selected, descriptive or narrative, and of the features of good writing in each.

Descriptive writing at the highest level was evocative and subtle and most responses gave a range of descriptive detail without resorting to narrative. Many responses to the descriptive writing questions were very effective and sustained. There were some imaginative evocations of varying landscapes under moonlight, both pleasant and threatening, which examiners found engaging and effective. A wide range of approaches and scenarios was employed in this task, with some highly effective and detailed descriptions of parties on beaches, eerie forests and the sky itself. Less effective responses to this question tended to become more narrative or the details given were rather cliched or stereotypical. For the second question, a wide range of descriptions of the homes of older people was submitted with the most effective selecting details which reflected in interesting ways the character and personality of grandparents or elderly neighbours. Less effective responses sometimes included some cliched details such as the absence of technological devices in older people's homes or stereotypically darker décor or old fashioned furniture.

Both narrative questions elicited a very wide range of approaches and interpretations and examiners awarded marks across the range here. Effective and engaging responses to the first question, on the title of 'Looking Back', sometimes used a reflective approach to recall events from the past involving family dramas, criminal events or other incidents which were looked back on with regret, satisfaction or sometimes a haunting poignancy. Less effective pieces tended to include more obvious or more mundane events or, conversely, a series of unlikely actions in responses which paid limited attention to characterisation and setting. While some included rather ordinary events, other less effective narratives were less credible or were under-developed in style and less cohesive in structure.

Some composition responses would have benefited from a clearer understanding of the features of writing in specific genres. The best descriptive writing was specific, used some original and thought-provoking imagery and effectively evoked the atmosphere of the time and place described. The conscious shaping of narratives to interest and intrigue the reader and the creation of credible characters were features understood by the most effective writers who chose narrative writing options. The tendency for descriptive writing questions to be answered by straightforward narratives with limited descriptive detail was noted by examiners, sometimes in responses where the writing was accurate and fluent.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Imagine you are a pupil in a school which is considering introducing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom.

Write a letter to your head teacher explaining why you would or would not want to see Artificial Intelligence used in your school.
In your letter you should:

- **evaluate the views about AI in the classroom in both texts**
- **explain, based on the texts, the extent that you feel Artificial Intelligence could affect school life.**

Base your letter on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words.

Address both of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.

Examiners awarded high marks for Reading where there was some probing and evaluation of the ideas in the reading material, rather than a straightforward listing and reproduction of the points in the texts. Where the letter was also both accurate and ambitious in vocabulary and style, with a clear understanding of the appropriate style and register for the specific task and audience, the highest marks for Writing could be awarded. More effective responses here focused carefully on the arguments in the texts, with the highest marks awarded for those which handled the different, often conflicting views with confidence and perceptive evaluation. The extent to which the implicit ideas and opinions contained in the texts were probed and scrutinised tended to determine the level of candidates' achievement. These implicit ideas often involved the quality of the relationship between teacher and pupil and how students depended on this human interaction for success in their learning. The phrase in Text A that 'teachers have superhuman levels of empathy, resilience and organisation', in particular, needed some probing and interpretation beyond paraphrasing or the use of synonyms to show clear evaluation for Level 5 and 6. While most responses offered some personal opinion about the benefits or pitfalls of using AI in the classroom, many reflected with only limited evaluation the judgement of the writer of Text A that a 'collaborative role' or the use of AI as 'a helping hand' would be more appropriate.

The range and number of different ideas in the two texts required some organisation and selection for the higher Levels in both Reading and Writing. Text B, especially, needed some overview of the main advantages of using AI in schools to avoid simple replication of a list. More effective responses, for example, used points made in Text B to amplify and interpret ideas in Text A. Similarly, some candidates saw Text B's assertion that customised learning, facilitated by AI, detracted from the classroom dynamic where students could learn from each other as much as from their teachers.

While most candidates argued that AI could be useful in the classroom but had its limitations, some used the material to argue that AI would expand and enrich students' educational experience and was an opportunity not to be missed. This was a point of view which could be supported by careful evaluation of some of the ideas in both texts.

In responses given marks in Level 6 for Reading, examiners often rewarded some careful grasp of the implications suggested by the texts. For example, some responses showed some effective challenge to the idea that teachers were less well equipped to provide a varied, appropriate and wide-ranging education for students than AI. Teachers could use their human skills as well as their years of training and experience to intuitively interpret a student's state of mind and could develop such trust over time that a student would confide in them, obviating the need for cold statistics and data-mining.

Marks for reading

The most effective responses adopted a consistently evaluative, critical stance and read effectively between the lines of the texts, drawing inferences and making judgements about the advantages and pitfalls involved in using AI in schools.

Most responses included the reference in Text A to the uniquely human skills teachers possess and how these could or could not be replicated, augmented or compensated for by AI. More thoughtful responses considered carefully how essential human teachers were to a student's progress and whether machines would undermine or supplement their skills. In some effective responses, this idea elicited some sensible consideration of the wider role teachers play in students' lives as trusted guides in developing the moral and social characters of their students. Some wrote about the assumption of a parental role by teachers in school that outweighed their responsibilities as educators. Others argued that this implied trust between student and teacher was not always consistent and some students would find it easier rather than more difficult to confide in a machine.

Some healthy scepticism was shown about the ability of AI to create a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, suggesting that individualised learning may be lonely or isolating. Conversely, some saw virtual learning environments as empowering, more entertaining and more conducive to developing personal responsibility in students for their own progress.

Many responses included some comments about the usefulness of allowing AI to carry out more routine activities, as suggested in both texts. While many judged this to be a way to free teachers to teach more creatively or to preserve teachers' energies so that they could teach more enthusiastically, others wrote about how AI could eliminate bias in assessments or could ensure curriculum changes were quickly and accurately adopted and reflected in students' lessons. In some cases at the highest level, this probing approach provided a useful route into Text B's more straightforward, less nuanced summary of AI's benefits. Combining some of these points and considering their underlying implications sometimes produced a sensitive commentary.

A fairly common approach in Level 5 and 6 responses was that AI could have its uses in education but that its benefits could be overstated and much would be lost without human teachers. The high costs of adopting AI could be offset by its smaller running costs but many were sceptical about computer systems that would never make mistakes or malfunction. AI systems were considered to be only as good as their human programmers by some candidates, picking up a point made in Text B that humans would have to '*step in' if the machines encountered a problem*'. In other responses, the collection of personal information by AI, even if benevolent in intention, was considered highly problematic.

Responses given Level 6 marks for Reading showed a grasp of the underlying ideas and implicit views shown in the texts. Most of these saw empathy and trust as essential to learning and could explore and develop how these qualities contributed to school life. The most effective responses combined an evaluation of ideas in both texts and arrived at a thoughtful overall judgement about the impact AI could have on both the principles and practice of teaching. Responses awarded marks in Level 5 characteristically highlighted this idea in some detail but may have accepted at face value most of the points made in the texts.

Where some comment or opinion was offered, mostly without specific reference to particular points in the texts but generally relevant to the ideas in them, marks in Level 4 were usually awarded. These comments usually focused on the qualities teachers possess and advocated using AI as an assistant in the classroom, reflecting but not really probing the attitude of the writer in Text A.

Examiners usually awarded marks in Level 3 for Reading where there was adequate breadth of coverage of the texts, and some selection of ideas from them, but without the more implicit meanings mentioned above or with less scrutiny of the points made in the passages. Often, there was a clear paraphrase of both texts but limited comment on the ideas in them. Where there were some brief opinions, usually at the end of the response, they tended to be more general and not strongly anchored in the specific ideas in the texts.

Comments made at this level were given mostly in candidates' own words. Less successful responses tended to paraphrase and list ideas and many given marks in low Level 3 and below contained much copied material. Copying of phrases was also very common, especially 'empathy, resilience and organisation' and some misunderstanding of expressions such as AI can 'augment the educational experience for learners with disabilities' was evident. Where a mark of 6 was awarded, some firmer links with the passages were needed, whereas 5 was generally given for thin or mainly lifted responses in which there was some insecure grasp of the ideas in the passage.

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Marks for Writing

25 marks were available for style and register, the structure of the answer and the technical accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Style and audience

Candidates needed to adopt an appropriate style and register for a formal letter to a familiar but authoritative figure in their school lives. Most responses showed a clear understanding of this required register, even where technical writing skills were weak, and this allowed for examiners to consider marks for Level 4 and above where a 'sometimes effective style' was required. Although not always sustained, many letters began with a suitable address and an introduction, many stating their purpose in writing the letter and their credentials as students in the recipient's school. Some effective responses used a more rhetorical style, presenting their arguments in an engaging way but making their case effectively and with some impact, while consistently adopting a respectful tone. This balance was quite subtly maintained at the highest level, ensuring that sometimes strong opinions were given in a persuasive style but always pitched in formal language and couched in expression which conveyed respect. Rhetorical questions or exclamations were used judiciously at the highest level to engage the audience: '*Can you imagine how enthusiastic and cheerful pupils will be to come to school and learn with virtual reality machines?*'

In the middle range of marks, examiners awarded marks in Level 4 even where more technical writing skills were lacking if the style and register adopted were appropriate for the task and the audience. A clear, consistent attempt to engage and persuade a figure in authority could sometimes compensate for other elements of style such as weak spelling or insecure grammar. Conversely, some responses which were generally accurate read like reports or summaries of the reading material rather than formal letters with a specific audience. In these cases, while letters often began appropriately, valedictions were forgotten and there was limited awareness of the style appropriate for a letter. Sometimes, a more colloquial, less formal style and language crept into responses, which created a somewhat jarring tone for the task and audience. Expressions such as '*It's gonna be a lot easier …*' and '*the costs are humungous*' affected the overall appropriateness of the register and sometimes imited the marks.

Level 3 marks were usually awarded where the reading material was largely reproduced so that the organisation and sequence of sentences and paragraphs reflected the original and were not adapted to create a coherent letter. Where the reading material was heavily lifted or copied, there was often little of the candidate's own style for examiners to reward.

Structure

Responses awarded high marks for Writing handled the material confidently and presented their arguments cogently. The issues addressed were combined so that the judgements which emerged was clearly derived from the ideas in the texts but the response was not dependent on them for its structure and sequence. At the highest level, the lines of argument were set from the first paragraph and the issues in the two texts were addressed but as a whole. The opening and concluding paragraphs of these effective responses tended to introduce and sum up the main points, with the intervening sections arguing a coherent case. The argument being pursued determined the sequence of ideas in these responses rather than the sequence of the original texts.

Responses given Level 5 marks for Writing tended to reflect a range of points made in each text but were reordered in a response which was sensibly structured and paragraphed. This often avoided the clashing of contradictory points from each text or the repetition of similar ideas, such as the idea of tailoring learning to individuals using AI which is mentioned in both texts. One sensible way at this level to combine the ideas in both texts, for example, was to argue that while there were many routine tasks which AI could do, as suggested in both texts, the assertion that AI 'could function without a teacher present' in Text B should be mitigated by the empathy skills of human teachers mentioned in Text A. An overall coherence and structure were required for this Level which was usually less evident in responses below Level 5.

Less effective responses sometimes struggled to provide a coherent argument and were more tied to the sequencing of the texts. In most cases the information given in the texts was offered with some rewording but not reordering of ideas. While some brief opinion was sometimes given at the end of the response, these

views were imposed on the structure of the original texts rather than argued for. The listed points in Text B, in particular, needed to be grouped or selected rather than simply reproduced as a disconnected sequence.

Accuracy

Accomplished writing which was accurate and controlled as well as appropriate in tone and register was given a writing mark in Level 6. These responses were not only authoritative in style and convincing in their arguments but fluent and virtually free of error. There was a range of precisely selected and complex vocabulary and sentence structures varied and were consciously used, often rhetorically, to engage the reader.

Some complex sentences structures were chosen which helped to balance and weigh up contending views and complex clauses were controlled by careful punctuation within sentences.

Level 5 responses were usually purposeful and clear, though perhaps not as ambitious and wide ranging in vocabulary or as precise in register or style as those given higher marks. Level 4 responses, as described in the marking guidelines, were 'sometimes effective' but not consistently so. Although the style was usually fairly plain, the language used was apt and generally accurate. A range of quite basic errors was made at this level which limited the effectiveness of the style but did not affect clarity of meaning. There were occasional lapses in the use of definite and indefinite articles (usually omission) and some grammatical misagreement, often between plurals and verb forms. Common spelling errors in this range included 'artificial' and 'intelligence' and other words used in the texts.

Faulty sentence structures, fluctuating tense use or too much lifted or copied material often kept writing marks for **Question 1** below Level 4. These responses often showed reasonable clarity in conveying meaning but there was a wide range of quite basic punctuation and grammar errors which meant that examiners could not award marks in Level 4. The omission of definite or indefinite articles was very common, as were tense errors, and agreement errors were more frequent and more damaging to meaning at this level. In rare cases, material from the texts was copied and responses where this occurred more substantially could not be given marks in Band 4 for Writing or for Reading because neither the content or the style of the response was the candidate's own.

Ways in which this type of answer could be improved:

- **be prepared to challenge the ideas in the reading texts**
- **look for ideas in the texts that you disagree with and explain why**
- **group ideas from both texts together and discuss them rather than repeat them**
- **think carefully about the kind of style which suits your task and the audience**
- **check your writing for basic punctuation errors, such as missing definite or indefinite articles, weaknesses in grammar or misspellings of key words which are in the passage.**

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Section B

Descriptive writing

Write a description with the title, 'By the Light of the Moon'.

Describe the house of a person much older than you.

Both descriptive writing questions were popular choices for candidates and examiners awarded a wide range of marks for these responses. Both questions were interpreted in a wide variety of ways which examiners could reward appropriately. In the first task, various scenarios and landscapes were described using the idea of a moonlit night, from beach scenes to forests and townscapes.

Responses were more effective if they contained vivid and specific details rather than more general or stereotypical ideas and images. This generalisation and lack of specific detail was a more common weakness in the second question, where some responses were more generic than concrete in the selection of objects to describe. Relevance to the topic was sometimes a little insecure in both questions, with some incongruous choices of scenes which were unlikely to occur in moonlight and some 'houses' which were a little unconvincing, such as caves.

Some effective responses to the first question described convivial parties on beaches under moonlight and made good use of sense impressions such as the lapping of waves on the shore or the wafting of music through the still night air. New Year's Eve celebrations were often effectively described, ending with the blast of fireworks and suffused with an atmosphere of carefree happiness and these scenarios helped to give structure and cohesion to the responses. In one successful response, an empty townscape was revealed by moonlight to be a menacing place and a range of details helped to build a sense of threat and intimidation. Forest scenes were also quite popular, in which more effective responses included some striking images: '*Looming trees, black against the moonlit sky, stood impenetrable and oblivious to my ponding heart*.'

Other responses featured the night sky itself with some engaging descriptions of the moon and stars which often made striking use of personification and detail: '*She kept watch over us, stilling the rancorous waves to a regular, mesmeric rhythm*.'

In the second descriptive writing question, more effective responses were often given coherence by the use of a familiar character whose personality was reflected in the house described. Grandparents or elderly neighbours were usually benevolent figures whose homes were imbued with a sense of their generosity or kindness, though there were also houses occupied by lonely, isolated elderly people whose homes betrayed their empty lives: '*Yellowing monochrome photographs took pride of place on the dusty mantelpiece, portraying happier days in times gone by, now mocking the old man shuffling painfully in his slippers in this huge, empty house*.' In more welcoming homes, cooking smells, bright colours and comfortable surroundings were used to evoke an atmosphere of modest comfort: '*The open fire crackled, luring me in to the battered old armchair by its side just as it had when I was a little boy, while my grandmother bustled about in the kitchen making the cakes which were my favourites long ago*.'

In both descriptive writing questions, unusual, closely observed details created convincing, evocative scenes in the best responses. Most were sustained and developed and at the highest level showed skill in building a detailed, often emotionally charged scene. These consciously crafted pieces held the reader's attention by linking the different elements described in an engaging, cohesive response. Level 6 responses were characterised by this cohesive structure as well as carefully chosen detail and striking images.

Level 5 responses tended to use a wide range of details and were well-constructed, if a little less effective and cohesive overall. At the bottom of Level 5 and in Level 4, responses were sustained and competently organised but usually a more predictable. Selected scenes and details at this level tended to involve less striking images and more stereotypical ideas. In the first question, some responses did not really make use of the moonlight to enhance their descriptions and there were some descriptions which only made passing reference to it. For example, some beach party scenes were described up until the moment the moon rose. Some homes described for the second question were fairly straightforward, room-by-room descriptions of houses which didn't reflect effectively the owner of the house or their history. In both cases, the opportunities provided in the question were sometimes missed.

Level 4 descriptions for Content and Structure tended to become a little unbalanced or to slip into narrative with less descriptive detail. Some more cliched features also appeared at this level, particularly in the second question where an imagined older person's house was characterised by the absence of electronic devices or by worn, faded décor. Stereotypically old-fashioned objects such as ticking clocks or old televisions and telephones were often used to reflect a more generic scene which did not capture as effectively the atmosphere of a specific home owned by a particular person. At this level, there were also responses which described derelict or abandoned homes which did not really address the question relevantly throughout.

Less effective responses given marks in Level 3 or below often included less well organised lists of details briefly given rather than developed. Other responses at this level became a series of events, often narratively recounted, of a visit to a grandparent's home or a shortcut through a forest or alley at night. An approach seen more commonly than is usual involved discursive responses to the first question. Although some of these were organised and paragraphed, they contained limited descriptive focus. Some lack of awareness of the essential elements of descriptive writing was evident in these responses, although some were well written and accurate.

High marks for Style and Accuracy often reflected the precise and varied vocabulary used as well as the technical accuracy of the writing. In both descriptive tasks, similar details were often included but better responses had a much wider range of vocabulary, precisely deployed to create specific effects. Highly effective responses showed an ability to use both simple and complex language and sentence structures to create subtle, complex atmospheres. In less effective responses, vocabulary was sometimes wide-ranging and complex but used with less precision. In a few cases, this insecure use of language resulted in a style which was difficult to follow and the credit which could be given for a wide ranging vocabulary was lost by its imprecise use and lack of clarity. Obscure, sometimes archaic language was not helpful where it was not used with understanding.

As is often the case in less secure descriptive writing, tenses switched between past and present, sometimes within sentences. Incomplete or verbless sentences also affected marks given in the middle range, even where other technical aspects of style were more accurate. Lapses in grammar, perhaps minor in isolation but more damaging when persistent, also kept responses out of Level 4 for Style and Accuracy. These included misagreement, especially between pronouns and verbs, and the omission of definite and indefinite articles was also common and damaging to otherwise quite accurate style at this level.

Ways in which the writing of descriptions can be improved

- **try to avoid clichéd scenarios and consider a more individual and original selection of content; choose a scenario which gives you a range of details on which to focus**
- **keep your focus on details which will help you evoke a particular atmosphere**
- **write sentences with proper verbs and do not switch tenses**
- **use vocabulary precisely: complex words used wrongly do not help your style.**

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Narrative writing

Write a story with the title, 'Looking back'.

Write a story which involves a moment of panic.

Both narrative writing questions were popular choices for candidates across the mark range and there was a very wide range of plots, characters and scenarios in these responses. Examiners sometimes saw narratives which did not comfortably fit with either title and which, on occasion, seemed more suited to titles set in previous examinations. In a few cases, this lack of relevance affected the mark for Content and Structure.

Effective responses were well organised and thoughtful interpretations of the title which used engaging, credible ideas to create developed stories. An ability to shape the narrative and to produce moments of tension or drama and to vary the pace of the story were credited by examiners as essential elements of narrative writing, as was the use of characterisation to create believable protagonists and characters. In the first question, the title set sometimes elicited rather discursive stories based on the protagonist 'looking back' on a long period of their lives and these sometimes lacked the drama and interest expected in more developed narratives. However, in some cases, highly effective stories were created from these plotlines by dialogue, characterisation and shaping the narrative to create moments of tension or hiatus which were satisfying for the reader. Some candidates interpreted the 'Looking Back' title more literally and there were both effective and less engaging stories where this interpretation was employed. One story was constructed around the moment when a daughter turned back to wave at her father as she left for college, little knowing that she would not see him again, lending the moment a huge significance which kept replaying in the daughter's mind.

There were various structures employed in effective responses to the first question, as well as more straightforward chronological recount. Prisoners looked back on the events which had led up to their imprisonment, narrators recalled with nostalgia or regret some incident or event which had been a seminal moment in their lives or, where candidates were drawn to other genres, kings looked back on epic battles lost or won in fantasy or science fiction scenarios. More effective responses showed an ability to create credible characters, even if the scenario itself was fantastic or unfamiliar. More commonly in the middle range, family arguments or disputes between friends were used to highlight a sense of regret while looking back after time.

For the second question, there were many different plotlines, characters and events which allowed candidates to show their narrative writing ability. A common scene at all levels was the examination room where the 'moment of panic' occurred before or during an important test. While many of these were fairly prosaic, with a brief moment where minds went blank or the wrong question paper was given out, some more effective responses used description and carefully plotted structural devices to heighten the anticipation and sense of climax on which the story depended.

Other plotlines involved confrontations with various types of criminals, violent attackers, burglars and bank robbers. While many of these worked well, examiners found that the choice of similar plots, characters and events were rewarded very differently, depending on how successfully the stories were managed and crafted with the reader in mind.

Narratives given marks in Level 5 were usually more straightforward in structure and approach but nonetheless engaging for the reader. Examiners could award marks in Level 5 for Content and Structure where the narrative was organised and there was a clear attempt create a developed story which was relevant to the task. Responses in this range, were more usually chronological accounts, but were cohesive and balanced and contained a suitable ending depicting some satisfying resolution.

For the second narrative question, Level 5 responses often drew on the idea of the 'moment of panic' to help structure the narrative, often with some build-up created or a sense of mounting fear and tension. One Level 5 response developed a sense of mounting anticipation in planning a surprise party for unsuspecting parents, calibrating the tension as things seemed to go wrong and plans were thwarted. Another, based on the examination room scenario, highlighted how the protagonist was amused by the nervousness of his fellow students, secure in an arrogant belief in his own ability, only to be struck by a 'moment of panic' as the examination began.

Whichever interpretation was given to the tasks, for Level 5 marks for Content and Structure stories needed to be well-managed with some conscious shaping of the narrative beyond a simple retelling of events.

Level 4 marks for Content and Structure were awarded for stories which were relevant to the task but were less developed and used fewer elements of effective narrative writing. Characters and narrators tended to be more simply drawn and responses were often more dependent on a series of events, lacking attention to characterisation and setting. A simplicity of content or a lack of development rather than weaknesses in organisation were typical at this level. Similar plots and scenarios were used as those in more effective narratives but at this level there was a tendency to say what happened or to state who the characters were rather than drawing the reader in by shaping the narrative. Characters were identified but there was more time and emphasis given to relating events than developing characters as credible and rounded. In many responses at this level, the delay itself was the subject of the story.

In the first question, narrators looked back on their progress through school or towards success in a sport but there was less conscious inclusion of specific moments to focus on and the piece sometimes became a straightforward account of their lives so far rather than a narrative. While the majority of less effective narratives had some simple but clear sequence of events, there were fewer features of a developed narrative and the reader was less engaged as a result. Some responses became confusing and muddled in attempting to control stories. This was particularly seen in responses to the second question where some panic-inducing events were recalled, such as a burglary or confrontation, but there was limited attention paid to setting the scene or creating the characters: events themselves rarely induce a sense of tension in a reader in the way a film or TV production might. In the 'Looking back' question, less effective responses tended to become confusing for the reader because of the implied sense of a protagonist looking into the past from the present. In some responses, there was a simple chronology but without the sense of 'looking back' from the vantage point of later recall, while others at this level struggled to control tenses and perspectives.

High marks for Style and Accuracy were given for responses where the writing was engaging and varied in vocabulary and where different sentence structures were controlled and used to create particular effects. The characteristics of Level 6 writing included a fluent and flexible use of language which was subtle enough to create a range of effects which helped to engage the reader. Punctuation within sentences, especially in the use of dialogue, was secure in responses in Level 6 and where coupled with a sophisticated and precise range of vocabulary, the highest marks were given.

Responses awarded marks in Level 5 tended to be less ambitious and complex but still mostly accurate and largely fluent while Level 4 responses were plain in style and lacked some range in vocabulary. At this level, the writing had few serious errors which affected the clarity of meaning, such as weak sentence control, sentence separation and grammar errors. Common errors of grammar and expression appeared increasingly in responses given low Level 5 and Level 4 responses, such as misagreements, missing articles and imprecise, sometimes over-ambitious vocabulary. Errors in sentence control and separation, as well as lapses in tenses, limited otherwise competently told stories to Level 4, as did frequent errors in basic punctuation or grammar. The omission of definite and indefinite articles, the incorrect use of participles or errors in grammatical agreement contributed to a lack of fluency and accuracy which kept many responses out of Level 5. Similarly, basic punctuation errors and the mis-spelling of simple words and wrongly selected homophones sometimes appeared in otherwise competent writing and were sometimes frequent enough to affect the mark for Style and Accuracy.

A frequent reason for keeping an otherwise clearly written story out of Level 5 was weak demarcation of sentences, most commonly the use of commas where full stops were needed. Though the mixing of tenses and the use of incomplete sentences were perhaps more prevalent in the descriptive writing, these weaknesses also limited the marks available in the narrative writing.

Ways in which the writing of narratives can be improved:

- **think about how to interest and intrigue the reader in shaping your narrative**
- **consider imaginative ways to tell your story, apart from a chronological account**
- **characters' thoughts and feelings help to engage your reader; do not rely on events**
- **check your writing for errors which will badly affect your mark, such as basic spelling and punctuation mistakes**
- **use complicated vocabulary with precision and consider the power of simple words and sentences to create particular effects.**

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/03
Coursework Portfolio

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- read critically and gave a thorough response to the implicit and explicit ideas, opinions and attitudes they had identified in a text
- assimilated ideas from a text to provide developed, thoughtful and sophisticated responses
- supported their analysis, evaluation and comments with a detailed and specific selection of relevant ideas from a text
- wrote original and interesting assignments which reflected their personal ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world about them
- sequenced sentences within paragraphs in a way which maintained clarity of arguments, description or narrative
- wrote with confidence using a wide range of vocabulary with precision and for specific effect
- adapted their writing style to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of different audiences and context for each of the three assignments
- demonstrated a high level of accuracy with their writing
- engaged in a process of careful editing and proofreading in order to identify and correct errors in their writing.

General comments

A significant number of candidates produced interesting coursework portfolios which contained varied work across a range of contexts. There was evidence to show that centres set tasks which allowed candidates flexibility to respond to subjects related to their personal interests or experiences.

Administration

The Moderators noted that many centres had correctly followed the instructions to provide summative comments in relation to the mark scheme at the end of each completed assignment. All centres provided the texts that had been used for Assignment 1. There were very few clerical or mathematical errors on the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms and the Individual Candidate Record Cards.

The Moderation team noted the following administrative points for development:

Indicating all errors in the final version of each assignment

- Teachers' marking of coursework is more accurate when teachers indicate all errors in final, completed assignments (see Section 1.1.7 in the Coursework Handbook). This process helps effectively and accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of work and to apply the most appropriate 'best fit' mark from the mark schemes.

Internal moderation

- Coursework is also more accurately marked when candidates' portfolios go through a process of internal moderation; this also helps to establish a single, reliable rank order for all candidates, it is essential that a process of internal moderation is carried out. The Coursework Handbook (sections 1.1.7,

2.2, 2.4 and 4.5) gives guidance on how to implement and manage internal moderation and how to record the process on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form and on the coursework portfolios

Individual Candidate Record Cards (ICRC)

- To ensure that the candidates are moderated correctly, each candidate's portfolio should have an Individual Candidate Record Card attached. There are instructions in section 4.6 in the Coursework Handbook and Point 4 on the electronic version of the ICRC.
- Centres only need to send the ICRCs (attached to the coursework portfolio) for the candidates in the sample submitted for moderation.

Assignments: general comments

The majority of centres set tasks which showed that they fully understood the requirement for candidates to write in three different genres.

Comments on specific assignments:

Reading

Most candidates responded to texts which were of an appropriate length and challenge, and which appealed to the interests of the candidates. The most successful texts relevant to the lives and interests of the candidates and resulted in some thoughtful and interesting comments. Less successful texts were those which were longer than the recommended two sides of A4, or which tended to be informative in style and lacked ideas and opinions with which the candidates could engage. Candidates responding to this type of text often struggled to meet the higher-level assessment criteria.

There was a trend for centres to award marks from the highest-level assessment criteria to work which more appropriately met the lower-level assessment criteria. Candidates who successfully met the higher-level assessment criteria were those who demonstrated a consistently evaluative approach to most points in a text, and provided developed, sophisticated responses which made direct reference or included quotes from the text. Candidates who engaged in a general discussion about the topic or subject of a text, or those who did not thoroughly evaluate a text, tended to produce work which more appropriately met the Level 4 assessment criteria in Table B (reading). The most common reason for adjustments to a centre's marks for reading was when Moderators identified a trend for candidates to engage in a general discussion about the topic of a text, or when the number of points covered were 'appropriate' rather than 'thorough'.

Writing

Many candidates responded to texts in an appropriate form and style. Letters and speeches were the most popular choice of form and many candidates demonstrated some understanding of audience and purpose. Moderators noted an increase in the number of responses to Assignment 1 tasks in which the form, audience and purpose was unclear; some points made were less effective because it was not clear who the audience was. This made it difficult for the candidates to meet the highest-level assessment criteria and was a reason for adjustment of writing marks for Assignment 1. Successful responses to Assignment 1 tasks were those in which the writing was highly effective, almost always accurate and consistent throughout with the application of form and style. Work which showed insecurity with form and style, such as the omission of an appropriate ending to a letter, a limited or inconsistent use of rhetorical devices for speeches, or lack of clarity of the intended audience, tended to meet the assessment criteria for Level 5, Table A (writing) or below.

There was a tendency for some candidates to rely on ideas and quote texts found as part of their research of a topic instead of using their research to help them to respond in their own words and with their own ideas and opinions. This was another reason for adjustment with some candidates.

Although the marking of writing for Assignment 1 tended to be more accurate than with Assignments 2 and 3, Moderators noticed a tendency for centres to award marks from the highest-level assessment criteria to work which contained frequent errors which impacted on the overall meaning and effect of candidates' work. Writing given marks from Levels 5 and 6 in Table A should be 'mostly' or 'almost always' accurate. Errors made with sentence construction and grammar, typing, the incorrect selection of vocabulary from spellcheck, or the incorrect choice of vocabulary can affect overall meaning and clarity and should be taken into account

when awarding marks from Table A. Issues with accuracy was one of the more common reasons for adjustment of marks.

Advice to candidates for Assignment 1

- be prepared to thoroughly explore, challenge and discuss the ideas in the text
- try to avoid quoting from texts other than the one you are responding to: all research should be used to help you to form your own opinions about the text on which you are focused
- try to present your judgments or ideas in your own words
- try to select texts about issues or subjects that interest you
- try to avoid making general comments about the topic or subject of the text, instead, try to make sure that your comments are specifically related to the ideas, opinions or attitudes that you have identified in the text
- look for, and use in your response, inferences made indirectly in the text
- look for contradictions or misleading assumptions in the text and comment on them
- try to develop your points to create a thorough, detailed and clear line of argument or discussion
- make sure that the audience and purpose of your writing is clear to the reader and adapt your style accordingly
- make sure that you carefully proof-read your work and check that your punctuation, vocabulary choices and grammar are correct.

Assignment 2 (description)

Many of the tasks set for Assignment 2 were appropriate for descriptive writing and most candidates maintained the descriptive form without slipping into narrative; this was most effective when candidates did avoided narrative preambles explaining the events leading up to the focus of the description.

The most engaging and successful descriptions were those in which the candidates carefully selected vocabulary to create a realistic and credible sense of atmosphere, place or person, and which were well sequenced and carefully managed for deliberate effect. Moderators read interesting and thoughtful descriptions of busy hotel kitchens, the streets of the town or city in which the candidates lived, and descriptions of important and familiar places that the candidates had visited. Effective descriptive writing included the thoughts and feelings of the narrator, as well as the physical surroundings: for example, a description of the physical surroundings, as well as the emotion and feelings, that an important place of worship invoked in the narrator. Candidates' descriptive writing was also effective when there was a clear and definite sense of time, place and atmosphere.

Candidates' descriptive writing was less successful when vocabulary choices were inappropriate; when it included imagery or idioms which did not fit the context of their writing, or when it included unrealistic and unconvincing scenarios. Spooky / haunted houses or forests, car crashes, places that were unfamiliar to the candidates. Writing that lacks credibility and realism is more likely to achieve marks from Level 4 in Table C. One of the most common reasons for adjustments to marks was when the moderators identified a trend of awarding marks from the highest-level assessment criteria for content and structure to writing which displayed the characteristics more typical of Level 4 or below.

Another common reason for adjustments to marks was when Moderators identified a trend of the awarding of marks from the higher-level assessment criteria to writing that contained a limited range of sentence structures, incorrectly constructed sentences, or contained frequent errors with punctuation and grammar. Writing achieving marks from Levels 5 and 6 of Table D (style and accuracy) is expected to be consistently accurate, consistent with the chosen register and to demonstrate an ability to use a range of sentences for specific effect. Moderators saw some writing which displayed these characteristics, but a significant majority of the writing awarded marks from Levels 5 and 6 in Table D more frequently displayed the characteristics of writing expected from Level 4 or below. Many candidates 'told' the reader about the scene being described, rather than 'showing' the reader with a careful and precise use of vocabulary and images. Repetitious sentence structures and listing added to this effect.

The most frequent errors in writing were missing prepositions and articles, changes in tenses, typing errors, commas used instead of full stops and grammar errors; the meaning of sentences was blurred or was lost. Errors which affect the meaning and clarity of writing cannot be considered as 'minor'. As mentioned earlier in this report, the absence of the indication of all errors made it difficult for the moderators to determine whether errors had been taken into account when marks had been awarded.

Information and guidance on how to apply the mark schemes are given in sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6 of the Coursework Handbook. Examples of the standard of work expected at the different levels of the mark scheme are also provided in the Coursework Handbook.

Advice to candidates for Assignment 2

- when you read through your work make sure that you have created a realistic sense of time, place or atmosphere with your description
- make sure that the vocabulary you use matches the context and content of your description
- make sure that the images you create matches the context and content of your description
- try to 'show' readers your imagined scenario instead of 'telling' them about it
- keep your focus on the details of your description and avoid slipping into narrative
- try to avoid repetitive sentence structures, instead, use a range of sentences to create specific effect
- carefully check and proof-read your work to identify and correct common errors such as missing articles and prepositions, switches in tenses and typing errors.

Assignment 3 (narrative)

Much of the task setting for Assignment 3 was generally appropriate and a number of candidates created engaging, effective narratives which were well managed and convincing. Moderators saw some interesting and engaging science fiction and mythological narratives. When candidates wrote horror, action, murder, mystery or revenge stories they struggled to create convincing and credible narratives and engage the reader. These stories were often unrealistic and incredible, or lacked development of character or plot. This sort of writing is 'relevant' or 'straightforward' and should expect to be awarded marks from Level 4 or below from Table C (content and structure).

The most engaging and successful narratives were those in which the candidates created stories which featured well-defined plots and strongly developed features of fiction writing such as description, characterisation and convincing details and events. Less successful narratives were those which did not convince the reader of the imagined situation or character or had limited development of plot or character.

When Moderators saw very accurate work containing precise well-chosen vocabulary, and which maintained a consistent register throughout, they could agree when centres awarded marks from Levels 5 and 6 in Table D (style and accuracy). As with Assignment 2, moderators noticed a significant trend for centres to award marks from the highest levels of the mark scheme to work which contained frequent and persistent errors which more accurately met the assessment criteria from Level 4 or below in Table D. This was a common reason for adjustment of marks. The comments made for Assignment 2 with regards to accuracy and the annotation of errors are also relevant to Assignment 3 and should be noted by all who mark coursework.

Advice to candidates for Assignment 3

- try to create stories that are realistic, credible and convincing
- ask yourself if you believe the events of the story could be real
- if you use techniques such as dialogue, make sure it helps you create an interesting character, or that it moves the plot forward
- remember that characters' thoughts and feelings help to engage your reader; do not just rely on events
- try to avoid clichéd scenarios and consider an individual and original selection of content
- carefully proof-read your work and check your writing for errors that will affect your mark, such as punctuation, your use of prepositions and articles, tenses and construction of sentences.

Good practice for the production and presentation of coursework portfolios was when

- centres followed the guidelines and instructions set out in the Course syllabus and the Coursework Handbook
- centres marked assignments to the same standard of writing illustrated in the exemplar scripts in the Coursework Handbook
- a wide range of appropriate texts were used for Assignment 1 which contained ideas and opinions to which candidates could respond, and were relevant to their interests
- centres set a range of appropriately challenging tasks which allowed candidates to respond individually and originally to topics and subjects they were interested in, or of which they had personal knowledge or experience
- teachers gave general advice for improvement at the end of the first drafts

- candidates revised, edited and carefully proofread their first drafts in order to improve their writing
- candidates revised, edited and carefully proofread their work in order to identify and correct errors
- teachers provided informative summative comments relating to the mark scheme at the end of the final version of each assignment
- teachers indicated all errors in the final version of each completed assignment
- centres engaged in a process of internal moderation and clearly indicated this on the CASF and in the coursework portfolios.

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/04
Speaking and Listening Test

Key messages

The administration of the component was mostly accurate by all the centres that entered candidates for the March 2021 series; in most cases, centre assessment was accurate and in line with the standard.

The responses to the Individual Talk in Part 1 overwhelmingly continue to be in the form of formalised talks; this is acceptable although other approaches are also welcomed. The range of topics chosen by candidates continues to be thoughtful and varied and highlights the deep sense of empathy many young people have for the world they live in. Generally, the 3–4 minutes allowed for Part 1 were utilised effectively by the candidates and timings were adhered to; this is particularly important when looking to award the content descriptor in the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Part 2 now takes the form of a conversation that should evolve naturally through the 7–8 minutes time period allowed and be closely focused on the content from Part 1. A Part 2 that depends largely on a rigid question and answer format is not as successful as a naturally developing conversation; neither is a conversation that drifts away from the topic covered in Part 1 into more general and unfocused areas.

Administration – General points

As with the March 2020 series, centre administration was of a high standard. Where there were issues the following guidelines may help to clarify administrative requirements:

- Every test should begin with a full introduction to include the date on which the candidate is being examined; it is the examiner who should complete the introduction.
- Centres may choose to create and use their own versions of the Oral Examinations Summary Form (OESF) as opposed to utilising the one provided by Cambridge Assessment but in these cases the form used must accurately reflect the information required.

Conduct of the test – General points

Generally, the standard of examining was very good with candidates being given many opportunities to express their views and demonstrate their range of oratory skills.

Where there were concerns, the following advice is offered.

- In some centres, examiners engaged in an 'off topic' conversation with candidates before asking them to begin their Part 1 task. While this was aimed at putting candidates at ease before the test, it was not a necessary part of the process and is potentially distracting for candidates who want to focus on their prepared talks. It is strongly advised that each test should begin with the examiner's formal introduction and be followed immediately by the candidate performing Part 1, the Individual Talk. If an examiner feels that a candidate is very nervous and needs a moment of calming prior to the formal test beginning, it is recommended this is done before the recording is started.
- The importance of timing within the test should be appreciated. Where a Part 1 response is significantly short of the minimum 3 minutes required, please consider whether the assessment criteria can be adequately met and assess accordingly. It is difficult to see how a response can meet higher level criteria in a performance lasting significantly less than the prescribed minimum time allowance.
- Given that both Speaking and Listening are assessed in Part 2, it is important that the conversations last long enough for candidates to clearly demonstrate their strengths in both mediums. It is the examiner's responsibility to ensure this minimum expectation of 7 minutes is met.

Comments on specific sections of the test

Part 1 – Individual Talk

Formal presentations were almost exclusively the medium for approaching this part of the test. Many of the presentations were memorised which is acceptable, but this often leads to a stilted delivery as opposed to a natural fluency. The most successful tasks attempted were those where the candidates displayed a strong base knowledge of their chosen topics and were genuinely interested in what they were saying. Less successful, in terms of the marks achieved, were those talks where the candidate had chosen a topic but had little real in-depth knowledge of the subject. This was not such an issue in Part 1 where thorough preparation often disguised the lack of depth but in the Conversation in Part 2 the paucity of understanding of the topic was exposed and the performance suffered as a result. The best topics are often chosen on the basis of personal interest and knowledge. When deciding on a topic for Part 1, candidates should bear in mind that half the total marks for the test are awarded in Part 2 so it is vital that candidates choose topics that they are confident they can converse on in depth and at length.

A strong element of presentations achieving Level 5 in Part 1 was the structure underpinning the talks. A clearly defined persuasive argument or a cyclical arrangement that brought the concluding statement back to the initial point often helped candidates to fulfil 'the full and well-organised' descriptor for Level 5. Less successful structures tended to meander from point to point without such a strong sense of purpose. While structure itself does not confirm a mark in Level 5, it does provide a strong basis for candidates to exhibit their linguistic and presentational skills. Talks awarded marks in Level 5 also consisted of more than just linear narratives that described one event after another. Self-reflection and analysis are important elements in moving a talk beyond the adequate.

It should be noted that almost any topic chosen can be productive or less successful based on the candidate's own knowledge of the subject, the depth of research undertaken and the degree of preparation attempted but clearly some topics offer more opportunities for development and discussion than others.

Part 2 – Conversation

In Part 2 the examiner should not feel the need to correct or contradict statements made by the candidates if they disagree with them and the examiner should not try to monopolise the conversation. Effective examiners are empathetic to the candidates, take an interest in the topics chosen and are flexible in their manipulation of the conversation to tease out the very best the candidates can offer by using lots of open questioning and subtle prompts. These approaches in Part 2 allow candidates to thrive and express their ideas with greater fluency. Examiners understood their role in Part 2 was to provide stimulus for the candidates to express their ideas and opinions on their chosen topics. Examiners do not need to agree with the statements the candidates make but may seek to challenge more able candidates if they feel this will

stimulate them to develop their ideas more fully. This is a judgement call for the examiner and should only be made if the examiner is certain a candidate's reaction will be a positive one.

Where there were issues and improvement can be made in examining Part 2 the following advice is offered:

- The timing of Part 2 is controlled by the examiner. It is the examiner's responsibility to ensure Part 2 lasts for at least 7 minutes in order to give the candidates the fullest opportunity to demonstrate their skills and accrue marks.
- Part 2 conversations solely conducted on a question and answer basis, where the series of questions is only loosely connected and responses from the candidate are then ignored in favour of the next question on the list, do not fulfil the descriptors in the higher levels.
- It is important that questions are open and not closed. Closed questions do not allow candidates to consistently answer in the necessary detail to move beyond adequate.
- Allowing the conversations to progress beyond the maximum time allowed of 8 minutes is unnecessary and may be counter-productive for the candidate.

Advice to centres

- Keep preparing your candidates as you have for this series.
- Helping a candidate choose the most appropriate topic is key to them being successful in the test.
- Dissuade candidates from memorised talks in Part 1: this approach may lack fluency and emotional attachment. It is much better to prepare using a cue card so that what is said has some level of spontaneity.
- Adhering to the correct timings for each part of the test will allow candidates the best opportunity to be successful.