Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/11
Theory

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Candidates are now taking better account of key words in their answers, especially for questions where they are asked to describe or justify.
- Awareness of context. Where applicable, candidates are now increasingly answering within the context of the question.
- Answers to more general IT questions were strong.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates need to improve their ability to deal with technical questions.
- Avoidance of trade names in answers.
- Avoidance of slang terms.
- Overall accuracy of answers, to match the quality of answers required at this level.
- Ability to provide explanations rather than just identify issues in response to a question.
- Provide answers that match the marks available for the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses
- Focused on the key word of describe.
- Candidates realised that they were required to do more than identify.

Limited responses
- Tended to identify rather than describe.
- Gave both sides of a single point of difference as two separate answers.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Focused on a single circumstance.
- Clearly explained why that circumstance meant that indirect data was the better option.

Limited responses
- Gave two circumstances, thereby negating the explanation.
- Gave generic answers about the use of indirect data.
- Gave generic answers about the use of data.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Answered within the context of the question.
- Gave full answers that addressed the process of scheduling a route.
- Gave answers that had sufficient depth and breadth to match the marks available for the question.

Limited responses
- Gave answers based on a scenario that used GPS and real-time feedback.
- Gave limited descriptions of the process.

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Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Focused on data validation.
- Clearly differentiated between two different methods.
- Showed good technical understanding of the use of spreadsheet software.

Limited responses
- Identified generic data validation methods.
- Gave features of spreadsheet software that were not relevant to the question.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Fully defined the term.

Limited responses
- Showed a lack of technical understanding.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Showed a good technical understanding.
- Realised the benefit of using relative cell referencing when creating a spreadsheet.
- Gave a single answer that answered the question.

Limited responses
- Gave more than one answer, thereby negating the explanation of the benefit.
- Showed little technical understanding of relative cell referencing.

(d) **Comprehensive responses**
- Fully explained the logic and decisions-making of the formula.

Limited responses
- Showed some technical understanding of how the formula produced the result to be displayed.
- Used language that did not evidence the technical understanding required for an IT qualification at this level.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Gave answers that were applicable to a model of population growth.
- Showed good understanding of what-if analysis.
- Showed good understanding of the factors involved in a model of population growth.

Limited responses
- Focused on one factor and expressed it in different ways.
- Made only a tenuous link between what-if analysis and the factors involved in population growth.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Showed clear understanding of the scenario.
- Gave clear and precise answers that allowed for a full evaluation of the use of a computer simulation.

Limited responses
- Gave generic answers.
- Gave answers that did not fit the scenario.
- Repeated answers already given.

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Question 5

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Gave a good description of an aspect ratio of 16 : 9.

Limited responses
- Used non-technical terms.
- Showed a lack of technical understanding.
- Gave vague answers that did not fully answer the question.

(b) **Comprehensive answers**
- Showed good awareness of the importance and prevalence of the 16 : 9 aspect ratio in modern equipment.

Limited responses
- Showed little technical understanding.
- Stated and described rather than explained why the aspect ratio had been chosen.

Question 6

Comprehensive answers
- Made two points of comparison.
- Showed good understanding of the role of MP3 and MP4a formats.

Limited responses
- Showed insufficient technical understanding.
- Gave one point of comparison without development.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Gave answers that matched the marks available for the question.
- Gave direct possible effects, rather than indirect effects.

Limited responses
- Gave indirect and tenuous possible effects.
- Gave answers that were of insufficient depth.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Worked with the mark weighting for the question, so that the answer reflected the six marks that were available.
- Gave focused answers that showed awareness of benefits and drawbacks of the use of physical methods to prevent ransomware attacks.
- Clearly identified types of physical protection that may be used.

Limited responses
- Gave non-physical methods of protection.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Identified input devices.
- Correctly identified suitable input devices.

Limited responses
- Gave answers that did not evidence the level of technical knowledge suitable for an IT paper at this level.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Showed clear technical understanding of the purpose of an actuator.
- Explained why an actuator is required.

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Limited responses
- Showed some technical understanding.
- Described the role of an actuator.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Described every part of the process.
- Followed the logic of the scenario.
- Used the code as exemplified in the 9626_y25_pseudocode guide.

Limited responses
- Attempted few steps.
- Followed the logic of the question occasionally.
- Did not follow the layout guide provided in the **9626_y25_pseudocode guide**.
- Sometimes used code other than that included in the Cambridge Pseudocode guide.

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Gave answers in support of the use of a GUI in an international airport.
- Gave answers that matched the marks available for the question.
- Supported points made to show how they may be considered to be positive points in support of the use of a GUI.

Limited responses
- Showed a lack of technical understanding of the topic.
- Both supported and attacked the use of GUIs in this scenario.
- Gave generic answers that did not match the scenario.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Worked with the peculiarities of the scenario to give answers that matched the scenario.
- Showed good technical understanding.

Limited responses
- Gave generic answers.
- Confused dialogue interfaces with other interfaces.
- Occasionally linked the identification and explanation of reasons.
- Made claims about the use of or impacts of dialogue interfaces that were not supportable.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/12
Theory

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Candidates are now taking better account of key words in their answers, especially for questions where they are asked to describe or justify.
- Awareness of context. Where applicable, candidates are now increasingly answering within the context of the question.
- Answers to more general IT questions were strong.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates need to improve their ability to deal with technical questions.
- Avoidance of trade names in answers.
- Avoidance of slang terms.
- Overall accuracy of answers, to match the quality of answers required at this level.
- Ability to provide explanations rather than just identify issues in response to a question.
- Provide answers that match the marks available for the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Focused on the key word of describe.
- Candidates realised that they were required to do more than identify.

Limited responses
- Tended to identify rather than describe.
- Tended to describe a process rather than a source.

(ii) Comprehensive responses
- Focused on the word **source**.

Limited responses
- Tended to describe a process rather than a source.
- Gave answers that were not indirect data (for example, ‘ask a 3rd party’).

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Addressed both age of data and relevance of data directly.
- Expanded the concepts of age and relevance, so that answers not a repeat of the question.
- Showed awareness that data collected some time ago would be out of date and so not reflective of current trends.
- Showed awareness that direct data would include only the data required and so was more fit for purpose, would require less organisation and would result in more accurate conclusion.

Limited responses
- Repeated the question, so, for example, stated that direct data was more relevant.
- Made false claims about direct data, such that it was more accurate or suffered from less bias.

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(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Focused on two reasons other than relevance of data and age of data.
- Identified and then stated how the identified reason meant that indirect data had been used, thereby explaining their answer.

Limited responses

- Repeated the question.
- Stated two reasons which did not explain why these reasons were beneficial.
- Gave false claims, such as that indirect data was more accurate.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Answered every question.
- Followed the logic of the question.
- Realised that the count started with 0, not 1.
- Used the code as exemplified in the 9626_y25_pseudocode guide.

Limited responses

- Answered few questions.
- Followed the logic of the question occasionally.
- Sometimes used code other than that included in the Cambridge Pseudocode guide.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Showed clear understanding of the logic in the question.
- Gave reasons why both line 60 and line 70 were set to the value in line 50 and so explained their answers.

Limited responses

- Gave answers that showed little understanding of the code given.
- Gave answers that showed little understanding of the logic included in the code.
- Gave answers that did not match the context implied in the code.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Focused on features of spreadsheet software that could be used to enter data into a spreadsheet.
- Described rather than identifying features of spreadsheet software.

Limited responses

- Identified general features of spreadsheet software.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Described rather identified relevant features.
- Focused on the process of analysis.

Limited responses

- Identified general features of spreadsheet software.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Made points of comparison between visual checking and double data entry.
- Differentiated the points made so that points were clearly related to visual checking or double data entry.
- Worked with the mark weighting for the question, so that four points of comparison were made. Please note: one mark was available per point of comparison.

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Limited responses
- Confused visual checking and double data entry.
- Did not include similarities and differences.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Identified a method of verification other than visual checking and double data entry.
- Described how that method could be used to check integrity.

Limited responses
- Gave generic methods of verification.
- Gave a method of validation.
- Described a process which did not identify that process.

Question 5

(a) Comprehensive responses
- Gave equal weight to both flat file database structures and relational database structures.
- Focused on the use of both as methods of storage.
- Worked with the mark weighting for the question, so that four points of comparison were made. Please note: one mark was available per point of comparison.

Limited responses
- Gave answers based on other aspects of databases.
- Gave generic descriptions of either method which did not include descriptions of points of similarity or difference.

(b) Comprehensive answers
- Answers addressed all three aspects of the question, including why the validation check was important.
- The statement of importance was clear and in depth.

Limited responses
- Identified a validation check, with no supporting description or statement of why it was important.
- Where a statement of importance was given, this was usually quite superficial and tended to be in the nature of ‘data input would be invalid’ without the validation rule.

Question 6

(a) Comprehensive answers
- Gave arguments in support of the use of computer simulation.
- Gave non-generic arguments that were focused on the scenario.
- Showed good awareness of the scenario.
- Completed the argument to show why the point made showed a benefit of using a computer simulation.

Limited responses
- Made generic arguments.
- Made a small number of arguments.
- Made points rather than justified.
- Confused simulations and on-screen training exercises.

(b) Comprehensive answers
- Gave well structured answers that clearly addressed **one** drawback.
- Gave answers that fitted the scenario.

Limited answers
- Gave generic answers.
- Attempted to give more than one drawback, thereby negating the explanation.
- Gave vague answers of insufficient structure.

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Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Gave full and balanced answers that described components of an expert system.

Limited responses

- Repeated the components given in the question.
- Gave descriptions of insufficient depth and evidence of clear understanding of the components identified.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Worked with the mark weighting for the question, so that the answer reflected the eight marks that were available.
- Gave focused answers that showed awareness of benefits and drawbacks of the use of the expert system to diagnose faults.

Limited responses

- Described an expert system.
- Gave generic non contextualised answers.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Worked with the mark weighting for the question, so that four points of comparison were made. N.B. one mark was available per point of comparison.
- Showed full understanding of both methods of updating records.
- Gave clear answers that clearly discussed points of comparison.

Limited responses

- Gave answers that reflected a lack of technical understanding of the terms involved.
- Gave short-answers that did not reflect the level of demand of the question, nor the marks available.

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Gave a clear definition.

Limited responses

- Showed a lack of technical understanding of the topic.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Gave a type of utility software.

Limited responses

- Gave anti-virus or an alternative equivalent answer.
- Gave a type of software that did not protect files on the computer. This included ‘Firewall’ as an answer.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/13
Theory

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Candidates are now taking better account of key words in their answers, especially for questions where they are asked to describe or justify.
- Awareness of context. Where applicable, candidates are now increasingly answering within the context of the question.
- Answers to more general IT questions were strong.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates need to improve their ability to deal with technical questions.
- Avoidance of trade names in answers.
- Avoidance of slang terms.
- Overall accuracy of answers, to match the quality of answers required at this level.
- Ability to provide explanations rather than just identify issues in response to a question.
- Provide answers that match the marks available for the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- Focused on the key word of describe.
- Candidates realised that they were required to do more than identify.
- Included an example which applied to both data and information.
- Used the given example to improve the answer.

Limited responses
- Tended to identify rather than describe.
- Used two examples.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Gave three clear answers.
- Gave one answer per line.
- Gave answers that fitted the scenario.

Limited responses
- Gave irrelevant items of data.
- Gave more than one possible answer per line.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Gave two benefits with a clear explanation of why each was a benefit.
- Focused on the context of data storage in a hard disk.

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Limited responses
- Described what is meant by encryption.
- At times explained the cause of a benefit.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Showed clear understanding of the impact of high-quality data.
- Explained why the reason is important.

Limited responses
- Identified a reason.
- Gave more than one reason.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Showed clear understanding of the scenario and applied it in their answer.
- Gave clear and precise answers that allowed for a full evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of using a report found in an online national newspaper.
- Showed good awareness of the benefits and drawbacks of using national data to draw conclusions about local customers.

Limited responses
- Gave generic answers.
- Gave answers that did not fit the scenario.
- Repeated answers already given.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Gave a two-sided, balanced discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of using a supercomputer.
- Worked with the context of the question.

Limited responses
- Focused on one side of the discussion.
- Gave unbalanced discussions.
- Used non-technical terms.
- Showed a lack of technical understanding.
- Gave vague answers that did not fully answer the question.

Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Gave a description of disk defragmentation.
- Showed good technical understanding.

Limited responses
- Showed minimal technical understanding.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Gave a clear explanation of why disk defragmentation is less likely to be used in modern computers.

Limited responses
- Showed minimal technical understanding.
- Described disk defragmentation.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Clearly identified and then described the specific purpose of two types of utility software.
- Used the layout of the answer area on the exam paper to guide the structure of their answers.

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Limited responses
- Repeated disk defragmentation, backup and file deletion as answers.
- Showed limited understanding of the topic of utility software.
- Identified utility software.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses
- Gave answers that matched the marks available for the question.
- Gave realistic possible answers.
- Ensured that each point made covered a unique possible reason.

Limited responses
- Gave tenuous possible reasons.
- Gave answers that were not of depth.
- Gave examples of reasons that were, in effect, repetitions of reasons already given, expressed in a different way.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Described two ways in which the contents of cell B2 had been formatted.

Limited responses
- Identified formatting that had been applied to areas other than the contents of cell B2.
- Described the contents of cell B2 without discussing formatting.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Clearly described defining characteristics of each type of test data, linking the description of each so that it was clear which type of test data was being described.

Limited responses
- Showed some technical understanding.
- Confused extreme test data and abnormal test data.
- Correctly defined normal test data.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Identified suitable test data.

Limited responses
- Identified one piece of suitable test data.
- Described the data rather than giving an example.
- Gave more than one item of data per answer.

(d) **Comprehensive responses**
- Showed full understanding of how the formula achieved the outcome that it did.
- Showed clear understanding of what the formula was intended to achieve.
- Successfully compared the two above to identify the errors in the formula.

Limited responses
- Gave limited vague answers.
- Occasionally identified errors in the formula.

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Defined the term relational database.
- Stated that a relational database included more than one linked table.

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Limited responses
- Showed restricted understanding of the term.
- Confused the term ‘table’ and ‘database’.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses
- Described two characteristics.

Limited responses
- Described the role of a primary key in a relational database.

(ii) Comprehensive responses
- Described the role of a primary key.

Limited responses
- Identified rather than described.
- Identified benefits of using a primary key.

(c) Comprehensive responses
- Described one difference between a compound key and a primary key.

Limited responses
- Showed no technical understanding.
- Identified rather than described.

(d) Comprehensive responses
- Gave answers that matched the marks available for the question.
- Showed good subject knowledge.

Limited responses
- Showed limited subject knowledge.

(e) Comprehensive responses
- Described four benefits.
- Showed a good understanding of normalisation.

Limited responses
- Occasionally gave more than one benefit.
- Made generic comments about normalisation.
- Identified rather than described.

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses
- Showed good technical understanding of the role of the inference engine, typically using IF,,,,THEM+N reasoning as part of their answer.

Limited responses
- Confused the role.
- Confused the component.
- Gave answers that were of insufficient depth for an IT qualification at this level.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Showed good understanding of the role of the knowledge base.
- Described two aspects of the role of the knowledge base.

Limited responses
- Confused the role.
- Confused the component.
- Gave answers that were of insufficient depth for an IT qualification at this level.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/02
Practical

Key messages

General

What candidates did well
- Most candidates submitted all required spreadsheet, image, audio and video files.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates need to understand the importance of following the instructions given in the question paper
- Candidates need to take greater care with the accuracy of data entry
- Candidates must save or export files with the specified file names and file types. File formats and file names not specified in the question paper will **not** be marked.

Spreadsheets

What candidates did well
- Most candidates performed well and created the required spreadsheet.
- Most candidates successfully created appropriate data validation.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates need to carefully read the rubric for a question and apply the information in the rubric to get appropriate data ranges in their spreadsheet.

Video and audio editing

What candidates did well
- Most candidates performed well and created video clips as specified in the question paper.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates must follow the instructions on the question paper when placing text (with no transitions) at specified times.
- Candidates need to be precise in their timings within a video, in terms of trimming clips and adding backgrounds or text to the clips.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates created this video clip as specified.
- Most candidates trimmed the video clip as specified.
- Most candidates exported the video clips with the required filename in mp4 format.
- Some candidates resized the image j26bg.png to match the frame height and width of their video clip.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not set the aspect ratio to 16:9.
- Future candidates must ensure that trimmed videos are trimmed and not just replace the frames (in the first 4 seconds in the first video) with a black background.
- Some candidates did not trim the end of the first video clip to precisely 43 seconds.

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- Some candidates did not change the speed of the clip to precisely 1.25 times the speed of the original clip.
- Some candidates exported the videos in alternative formats such as .mov and .avi, or saved it in package specific formats such as .wlmp or .pproj.
- A significant number of candidates cropped the image j26bg.png.
- Many candidates did not match their resized image to the frame height and width of their video clip.
- Some candidates did not save their image as bg.png.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates created this video clip as specified.
- Some candidates set all the timings as specified.
- Some candidates formatted all text appropriately.
- Some candidates added appropriate credits to their video clip.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not place the text on the screen at the correct time in the video clip, allowing their software to add transitions when each item of text entered or left the frames.
- Some candidates did not use the diagram in the question paper to assist them in selecting font styles for their text.
- A significant number of candidates did not replace the text 'A Candidate' with their name.
- Future candidates must ensure that application of appropriate credits to a video should include appropriate information supplied to them as context in the question paper. In this case it should have included who recorded the video and created the audio track used as well as the required text Video edited by: followed by the candidate's name, centre number and candidate number. This must also be displayed so that it is easily read, including the style, size and colour of the text, as well as the speed at which the text scrolls up the screen.
- Some candidates did not save the screen shot of the final frame of the video with an appropriate resolution, so that when added to the end of the video for 4 seconds the text in this screenshot was blurred.
- Future candidates must ensure that if text is present in a screenshot or in the credits it can be read easily and is of a professional standard.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates added the audio track as specified.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not add reverb to the clip.
- Some candidates used echo rather than reverb.
- Some candidates did not lengthen the clip so that the voice starts after 7.5 seconds.
- Some candidates exported the videos in alternative formats such as .mov and .avi; or saved it in package specific formats such as .wlmp or .pproj.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses
- Many candidates created the workbook as specified.
- Some candidates deleted row 1 from the 'Data' worksheet.
- Most candidates used a COUNTA function in cell B1.

Limited responses
- Although the workbook was often saved as WQ_ followed by the candidate details there were many candidates who did not set the tab names 'WordQuest' and 'Data' with the case as specified in the question paper.
- Some candidates did not delete row 1 of the Data sheet, instead leaving a blank row and removing the contents of row 1.
- Many candidates set a range of B1:B8 rather than an expandable option like the range B:B.

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Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates created the validation rule as specified, using a List from a range of cells.

Limited responses
- Many candidates often used a range such as A1:A8 rather than an expandable option like the range A:A in their validation rule formula.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses
- In cell B4, most candidates used a look up function, often VLOOKUP, XLOOKUP, LOOKUP and occasionally INDEX and MATCH to display the word for this question from the Data worksheet.
- Many candidates used appropriate error trapping to display a null string if the word could not be located.

Limited responses
- Many candidates used ranges such as A1:A8, B1:B8 or A1:B8 depending upon the function used, rather than expandable options like the range A:A, B:B or A:B.
- Some candidates did not attempt to add error trapping to their formula.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses
- In cell B8, many candidates used a MATCH function to identify the row number of the word in the 'Data' worksheet.
- Many candidates used appropriate error trapping to display a 0 if the word could not be located.

Limited responses
- Many candidates used ranges such as A1:A8 or B1:B8 depending upon the function used, rather than expandable options like the range A:A, or B:B.
- Some candidates did not attempt to add error trapping to their formula.

Question 8

- This question was discounted from the paper.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses
- In cell B11, some candidates used an IF statement to see if the word was one of the accepted words from the Data worksheet and displayed the text 'Correct', otherwise displaying the text 'Incorrect, try again'.
- Some candidates tested cell B6 to see if it was blank using =IF(B6="","", …) or IF with an ISBLANK function and placed a null string if it was blank.

Limited responses
- When candidates' formulae were tested with the original word placed in B6, many gave 'Correct' rather than 'Incorrect' which did not meet the criteria of a 'word within another word'.
- Some candidates did not attempt to add a test for cell B6 being blank to their formula.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses
- Most candidates formatted the horizontal cell alignment as shown in the question paper.
- Some candidates set the text size in B4, B6 and B11 to 24 point, enlarged row 3 and wrapped the text in cell B11 to match the diagram in the question paper.

Limited responses
- Some candidates did not wrap the text in cell B11 as shown in the question paper.

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Question 11

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates applied conditional formatting to cell B6 using a formula.

Limited responses

- Some candidates applied conditional formatting to cell B11 rather than cell B6.
- Some candidates applied conditional formatting to other cells.
- Some candidates did not apply the white text to cell B6 if B11 did not display ‘Correct’.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/31
Advanced Theory

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Comprehensive responses used precise Information Technology (IT) terminology.
- Candidates used detailed and concise language when responding to describe, explain, justify, discuss and evaluate type questions.
- Candidates used prose for questions requiring a statement rather than using single words.
- Most candidates used prose for questions requiring benefits and drawbacks or differences rather than using bullet points with brief statements using or hand-drawn tables.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates should use precise and accurate terms when stating or defining IT concepts.
- Candidates should carefully read the whole question to ensure that their responses address the focus of the question and do not target key words in the question.
- Candidates should not repeat the question in their answers. This is especially important when the question explicitly states that details 'other' than those already given in the question are required.
- Candidates should avoid using bulleted lists of statements when answering questions that require a more in-depth exploration of a topic.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses
- Candidates described the process from the initial request to the closing of the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) connections.

Limited responses
- Some candidates gave vague, imprecise answers with no detail of the transfer process.
- Some candidates described packet switching.
- Some candidates included details of encryption which is inaccurate as, by default, FTP does not use encryption.

(b) Comprehensive responses
- Candidates correctly explained that Hypertext Transfer Protocols (HTTP and HTTPS) do not require additional software.
- Candidates correctly stated that FTP transfers can easily be, and often are, blocked by firewall settings whereas HTTP(S) is rarely blocked.

Limited responses
- Some candidates used vague and inaccurate statements by, for example, describing HTTP as 'faster' than FTP.
- Some candidates inaccurately described HTTP(S) as 'more recent' than FTP.

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Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates gave reasons for the need for both types of topology.

Limited responses
- Some candidates repeated the statements in the question by, for example, stating that a physical topology is 'a physical representation' or 'shows the physical infrastructure'.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates gave valid reasons for the use of network switches.

Limited responses
- Some candidates gave answers that were vague and inaccurate.
- Some candidates gave answers that only identified the role of a network switch. Without further explanations or reasons, these answers did not justify the use of a network switch.
- Some candidates confused network switches with other network devices.

Question 4

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- None seen.

Limited responses
- Candidates confused the stages of data mining and gave answers that were related to stages other than the business understanding stage of data mining.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Candidates precisely described the activities giving at least three descriptions.

Limited responses
- Candidates identified only one activity. Descriptions are required.
- Candidates gave answers that were related to stages other than the data understanding stage.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates gave valid reasons for the use of virtual reality (VR) in healthcare.
- Candidates used appropriate examples to illustrate their reasons.

Limited responses
- Candidates gave descriptions of the use of VR in healthcare that were vague and inaccurate.
- Some candidates confused VR with video conferencing/calls.

Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Candidates correctly filled in the relevant squares in the table to show the activities and their durations.
- Candidates correctly positioned the activities to show their dependencies.
- Candidates showed the correct critical path.

Limited responses
- The Gantt charts did not show all of the required information from the table.
- Candidates used unusual methods of indicating the placement of the activities and their durations by, for example, ticking the boxes or placing numbers in the boxes.

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(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates precisely described one benefit of using Gantt charts.

Limited responses

- Candidates described a benefit that did not relate to Gantt charts.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates precisely described one drawback of using Gantt charts.

Limited responses

- Candidates described a drawback that did not relate to Gantt charts.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- None seen.

Limited responses

- Candidates confused the incremental method with other methods of software development.
- Candidates gave brief statements of the steps in the incremental method without making comments about the importance or benefit of the steps. Answers to 'evaluate' questions require candidates to judge the importance of, for example, steps in the process.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- None seen.

Limited responses

- Candidates confused masking tools with other tools found in bitmap imaging software.
- Some candidates described the use of layers without explaining how they could be used for masking.
- Some candidates gave answers that were vague and inaccurate.

Question 9

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates precisely described the features/characteristics of beta testing that distinguish it from other types of testing.

Limited responses

- Candidates confused beta testing with other types of testing, for example, white box, black box or alpha testing.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates precisely described at least two drawbacks of using beta testing.
- The descriptions given by candidates expanded upon the drawbacks of using beta testing.

Limited responses

- Candidates gave brief statements about only one drawback. The wording of the question indicated that more than a brief statement was required.

Question 10

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Answers included precise descriptions of the ways that data can be transformed.
- Candidates gave at least two ways that data can be transformed. The wording of the question indicated that more than one description was required.

Limited responses

- Candidates gave very brief statements about only one drawback.
- Descriptions were imprecise, for example, 'by software'.

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(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Answers were precise and accurate, for example, valid data meets the preset criteria or valid data complies with the rules.

Limited responses

- Candidates repeated the question with statements such as valid data is data that has been validated.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates gave the required number of characteristics. The wording of the question indicated that at least three characteristics were required.
- Answers were precise and clearly described the characteristics.

Limited responses

- Some candidates included the characteristic that was given in the question stem. The question explicitly states that characteristics 'other' than that the data is valid are required.
- Candidates did not give the required number of characteristics.

Question 11

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates gave accurate descriptions of the collection and processing carried out by the JavaScript code.

Limited responses

- None seen.

Question 12

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates' answers were well structured and in depth.
- The benefits and drawbacks of using CGI animations were explored in detail.

Limited responses

- Candidates used brief, bulleted statements.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/32
Advanced Theory

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Comprehensive responses used precise Information Technology (IT) terminology.
- Many candidates used detailed and concise language when responding to describe, explain, justify and analyse type questions.
- Many candidates used prose for questions requiring a statement rather than using single words.
- Many candidates used prose for questions requiring benefits, drawbacks or differences rather than using bullet points with brief statements.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates should use precise and accurate terms when stating or defining IT concepts.
- Candidates should address the command word when constructing their responses. For example, the command word 'justify' requires a supporting argument (page 66 of the current syllabus).
- Candidates should carefully read the whole question to ensure that their responses address the focus of the question and do not just target the key words in the question.
- Candidates should not repeat the question in their answers. This is especially important when the question explicitly states that details 'other' than those already given in the question are required.
- Candidates should stop using bulleted lists and/or hand-drawn tables for answers that require comparisons or contrasts and should use prose instead.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates focused on the JavaScript code.
- Candidates correctly identified and described, in order, the steps in the processing of the code.
- Candidates described the steps in detail.

Limited responses
- Some candidates focused on the HTML code and did not give enough emphasis to the JavaScript code.
- Some candidates gave only a brief outline of the assignment of variables.
- Some candidates copied the statements from the question. Candidates should have written these out in full and explained how these worked.

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses
- Candidates correctly identified the differences between augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).

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Limited responses

- Some candidates described similarities which were not required by the question. 'Contrast' requires only differences (see page 66 of the current syllabus).
- Some candidates included 'uses' of AR and/or VR which were not required by the question.
- Some candidates confused augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR).
- Some candidates confused augmented reality (AR) with artificial intelligence (AI) giving answers that did not address the question.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly identified valid uses of augmented reality (AR) in healthcare.
- Candidates correctly identified a professional/worker who would use augmented reality (AR) in healthcare.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave uses of virtual reality (VR).
- Some candidates included 'uses' of AR in healthcare which were either not suitable or not possible.

Question 3

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly identified four benefits to the school of the use of a proxy server.
- Candidates explained in detail the benefits that they had identified.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not explain the required number (four) of benefits.
- Some candidates described drawbacks which were not required by the question.
- Some candidates confused other servers with the proxy server required by the question.
- Some candidates included network roles that are carried out by network components/devices/servers other than a proxy server.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly described two drawbacks to the school of the use of a proxy server.
- Candidates described in detail the drawback(s).

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave vague, imprecise answers such as 'slows the network' or 'slows the internet' when the answer should have been a reference to 'reduced network performance' or 'an increase in access times to resources on the internet'.
- Some candidates gave references to 'hacking'.

Question 4

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly stated that the sending device is not notified of the receipt of data packets or stated that there is no guarantee that data packets will arrive at their intended destination.
- Candidates gave their answer in a full sentence.

Limited responses

- Some candidates restated the question by stating that an unreliable network is 'not reliable'.
- Some candidates explained the word 'unreliable' as meaning that it could not be trusted rather than referring to the term in a networking context.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly stated that, in networking terms, 'connectionless' means that there is no set/fixed route for data packets to follow between the sending and receiving devices.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates gave vague, imprecise answers referring to routes used by data packets.
- Some candidates stated, illogically, that 'connectionless' meant that there was no connection used for the connection.
- Some candidates stated that there were no wires/cables used for the connection.
- Some candidates stated, incorrectly, that 'connectionless' meant Wi-Fi.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly stated a valid reason for using a connectionless connection, such as there being no need for authentication.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a use rather than a reason.

Question 5

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly described the establishment/use of a fixed route between sending and receiving devices.
- Candidates included relevant details in their answers.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused circuit switching with packet switching and described the latter.
- Some candidates gave a use of circuit switching, for example, telephone calls with no additional details.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly stated that circuit switching can be more secure or that it can make full use of the available bandwidth.
- Candidates gave answers in full sentences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave inaccurate references to bandwidth, data transfer speed or to long distances.
- Some candidates gave a use of circuit switching.
- Some candidates gave a drawback of circuit switching.
- Some candidates gave a benefit of packet switching.
- Some candidates gave answers as a single word.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explained the use of manual completion fields in a mail merge.
- Candidates justified the use of manual completion fields by explaining why they are used in a mail merge.

Limited responses

- Some candidates described the use of mail merge in general.

Question 7

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates correctly identified two appropriate labels for the columns in the table.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave the same answer for both C and D.
- Some candidates gave answers for C and D that were slightly different wordings of the same concept, for example, 'duration' and 'time taken'.
- Some candidates gave answers that were not in the context of a table that would be used for creating a PERT chart, for example, 'completed' and 'unfinished'.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates accurately described the differences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates included references to where the activities are shown on the PERT chart despite these being explicitly excluded in the question.
- Some candidates gave confused answers having transposed the concept of activity-on-arrow and activity-on-node PERT charts.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates explained, with reasons, the purpose of user documentation.
- Candidates identified the content of user documentation and then explained why this is needed.
- Candidates expanded their answers with accurate details of the reasons for the identified content.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused user documentation (referenced in Topic 16.6, page 48 of the current syllabus) with user requirements specification (referenced in Topic 16.2, page 47 of the current syllabus).
- Candidates described user documentation as a means of collecting user feedback for analysis at the start of/during the development of the new software application.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave good explanations of the reasons for having marketing documentation for a new software application.

Limited responses

- Some candidates explained marketing documentation as part of an evaluation of the new software application.

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates correctly expanded upon the details given in the question that the colour depth depends on the number of bits used for each pixel in a bitmap image, by describing the consequence of an increase and/or a decrease in colour depth.
- Candidates described, with accurate examples, how changing the number of bits used for colour depth affected the overall file size of the image.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the file size of an image with its physical size or resolution.
- Some candidates incorrectly stated that the colour depth of an image depends upon the number of pixels in the image.
- Some candidates incorrectly stated that changing the colour depth changes the number of pixels.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave descriptions of how a change in colour depth affects how an image appears when viewed, referring to changes in the perceived quality or realism of the bitmap image.

Limited responses

- Some candidates incorrectly referred to changes in the size or to the file size of the image.
- Some candidates referred to changes in the appearance that would not be altered by changing its colour depth, for example, the number of pixels in the image or the dimensions of the image.

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Question 10

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates explained why data mining would be used by supermarkets rather than just giving a definition of data mining.
- Candidates gave several reasons for the use of data mining by supermarkets and included additional, supporting details of these uses, for example, to determine which goods items were purchased together so that these could be displayed near to each other to increase sales.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave a definition of data mining, which is stated in the question, without any further comment.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave descriptions of data mining being time consuming and requiring large amounts of computing power.
- Candidates made references to the effect on supermarket sales or profits as a result of poor outcomes due to small datasets or to anomalies in the data used in the process.

Limited responses

- Some candidates referred to the need for skilled analysts which is given in the question. In this case, a valid additional detail would be to include that this increases the cost to the supermarket.

Question 11

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates identified a use of wearable computing in healthcare and added arguments as to why this would be important, for example, the ability to monitor heart rate or blood sugar which can be used to alert patients/doctors of abnormal readings so that medical assistance can be provided promptly.

Limited responses

- Some candidates described devices that are not body worn computing devices within the current definition, for example, prescription glasses, prosthetics, heart pacemakers, dialysis machines, brain implants.
- Limited answers gave descriptions of a use in healthcare without additional arguments as to why this was used.
- Candidates gave answers describing the use of augmented reality and/or virtual reality without explaining why it would be used.

Question 12

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates gave detailed descriptions of the characteristics of both vector graphic images and bitmap graphic images in the context of the use of images on a website of an online shop.
- Answers gave an appropriate use for each type of image on the website, for example, vector graphic images for logos/icons and bitmap graphic images for the photographs of products.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the characteristics of the two types of images.
- Some candidates did not analyse both types of images.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/33
Advanced Theory

Key messages

What candidates did well
- Comprehensive responses used precise Information Technology (IT) terminology.
- Many candidates used detailed and concise language when responding to describe, explain and discuss type questions.
- Many candidates used prose for questions requiring a statement rather than using single words.
- Many candidates used prose for questions requiring benefits and/or drawbacks rather than using bullet points with brief statements.

What candidates needed to improve
- Candidates should use precise and accurate terms when stating or defining IT concepts.
- Candidates should carefully read the whole question to ensure that their responses address the focus of the question and do not target key words in the question.
- Candidates should not repeat the question in their answers. This is especially important when the question explicitly states that details 'other' than those already given in the question are required.
- Candidates should stop using bulleted lists and/or hand-drawn tables for answers that require benefits and drawbacks and should use prose instead.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**
- Candidates clearly described two rules other than the rule given in the question.

Limited responses
- Some candidates repeated the rule given in the question.
- Some candidates identified or described two different Internet Protocols (IP) instead of describing the rules specified by network protocols.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**
- Candidates correctly described the Internet Protocols (IP) as assigning a unique address to network interface devices.

Limited responses
- Some candidates gave only a partial answer. Both the assigning of an address and the fact that the assigned address is unique were required.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**
- Candidates correctly indicated that the available number of addresses available with Internet Protocol version 4 (IPv4) is now limited and that IPv6 provides a far larger number of addresses.

Limited responses
- Some candidates' answers were vague and inaccurate referring to 'more precise addressing' or to 'faster addressing' with IPv6.

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(d) **Comprehensive responses**

- Descriptions of the content of IP headers were accurate including precise details of, for example, the source and destination addresses of the packets.
- Candidates used the correct terminology.

Limited responses

- Some candidates' answers included incorrect details of the contents of the headers.

(e) **Comprehensive responses**

- Descriptions of the differences in the IP headers were accurate including precise details of, for example, the lengths of the headers and the positioning of the bits used for information.
- Candidates used the correct terminology.

Limited responses

- Answers included incorrect differences.
- Some candidates gave very brief answers that were without context, for example, answering with the single word 'encryption'. The command word 'State' as defined on page 66 of the current syllabus requires answers to be 'in clear terms'.
- Some candidates did not answer this question.

Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates clearly described the critical path as the longest path through dependent tasks and the shortest possible time through these tasks in a project.

Limited responses

- Candidates transposed the references to longest and shortest by answering with longest time and shortest path.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates clearly and accurately described the steps in a logical order.

Limited responses

- Candidates described steps that would not result in finding the critical path.
- Answers included too few of the steps that a manager could take.

Question 3

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates clearly described two features other than those given in the question.

Limited responses

- Candidates included features that were given in the question.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates clearly focused on the web-based version of project management software (PMS).

Limited responses

- Answers included generic references to project management software (PMS). The focus of the question was on the 'web-based' version of PMS.
- Candidates included drawbacks. The question asked only for benefits.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates clearly described technical documentation and its contents.
- Candidates described the benefits to software technicians, engineers, end-users and future developers of providing technical documentation with a new software application.

Limited responses

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- Some candidates gave an inaccurate description of technical documentation.
- Candidates confused technical documentation with other types of documentation.

Question 5

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates focused their answers on the risks of cryptocurrency to the global economy.

Limited responses

- Some candidates included risks to personal users. The focus of the question was on the global economy.
- Some candidates included descriptions of cryptocurrency.
- Some candidates included details of the contents of cryptocurrency records.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Answers included references to making cryptocurrency illegal, closer monitoring or increased regulation.

Limited responses

- Answers suggested ways that would not reduce the risks.

Question 6

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates identified several specific vision enhancement technologies and described how these could assist people with vision problems to go about their everyday tasks.

Limited responses

- Some candidates included technical details of augmented and/or virtual reality without relating these to assisting people with vision problems.
- Some candidates described outcomes of vision enhancement technologies that are not feasible, for example, full restoration of colour vision.
- Some answers gave only brief, superficial comments on the technologies that are available.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Answers included valid uses of vision enhancement technologies by persons with no vision problems.
- Answers were clear, precise and in full sentences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave answers that were not related to vision enhancement technologies.
- Some candidates did not give the required number of responses. The question clearly asked for two ways and there were two sets of response lines provided.

Question 7

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave two valid reasons why an input form would have form controls.
- Answers were clear, precise and in full sentences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave answers that were vague and imprecise, for example, ‘it’s easier to use’ without expanding as to why or how it may be easier. Reasons such as ‘…because there is a limited choice of options’ should have been included.
- Answers described various different types of form control with no reference as to why they would be included.
- Some candidates did not give the required number of responses. The question clearly asked for two ways and there were two sets of response lines provided.

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(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave four valid drawbacks of using dropdown boxes.

Limited responses

- Some candidates described other forms of input control.
- Some candidates did not give the required number of responses. The question clearly asked for four drawbacks.

Question 8

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Answers included details of the characteristics of portable network graphics (PNG) images and why these are important to a graphic designer.
- Candidates gave answers that were clear, precise and in full sentences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates gave answers about types of bitmap image other than portable network graphics (PNG) with answers about, for example, Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) types. The question was solely about PNG.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates correctly identified and described the file format as GIF (Graphics Interchange Format).

Limited responses

- Some candidates identified and described other types of image format.

Question 9

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Answers included precise details of how the JavaScript statement is used.
- Candidates gave answers that were clear, precise and in full sentences.

Limited responses

- Some candidates confused the statement with other JavaScript style properties.
- Some candidates used incorrect property values.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates gave valid reasons why a JavaScript programmer would prefer the statement over others.
- Answers were expressed using the correct terminology.

Limited responses

- Some candidates repeated the question by writing out the given statement without explaining why JavaScript programmers preferred its use over other JavaScript statements.
- Some candidates used incorrect property values.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Answers were clearly expressed giving in depth comments on the various possible uses of augmented reality (AR) by tourists and how these could enhance the tourists' visit to a city.
- Candidates clearly identified and explained/described the various possible drawbacks to a tourist of using AR when visiting a city.

Limited responses

- Some candidates referred to the use of AR in gaming or other unrelated scenarios. The question specifically referred to the use of AR by a tourist visiting a city.
- Some candidates used bulleted lists of brief statements.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 9626/04
Advanced Practical

Key messages

Mail Merge

What candidates did well
- Candidates were able to create the template document and use the spreadsheet to create most of the necessary source file data. Many were able to discern all the inclusions needed to complete the merge successfully.

What candidates needed to improve
- For the final merged letters to be fit for purpose, the creation of the initial blank document was important. Candidates need to pay close attention to reproducing any examples provided accurately. In tasks such as these, the appearance of tables and text must be matched exactly.

Vector Graphics

What candidates did well
- The simple task of creating the shape to represent the Proton proved no problem for candidates. The shapes to create the impression of light blooms were added in almost every case. Resaving edited versions of the Proton to create images of a Neutron and an Electron was also commonly successful.

What candidates needed to improve
- Whilst candidates demonstrated the skills necessary for all parts of this task, there needs to be more emphasis on reproducing images shown in the question paper accurately. This does require very close inspection of the images.

Animation

What candidates did well
- The animation was completed by almost all candidates and most included all the required elements. Most timings were accurate and the animations progressed smoothly.

What candidates needed to improve
- Care must be taken to make sure that background images fit and fill the frame. A number of submissions showed whitespace at least one edge.
- For looping animations, no visible adjustment to the position of the background or any static elements must be seen at the restart. Candidates need to ensure that the looping is seamless.

Comments on specific questions

Task 1 – Mail Merge

(a) Comprehensive responses
- All candidates were able to create the template document complete with the logo and closure as shown in the question paper.

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Limited responses

- The final merged letters were not often fully fit for purpose; the creation of the blank template document was important. Candidates need to pay close attention to accurately reproducing any examples provided. In tasks such as these, the appearance of tables and text must be matched exactly. In this part of the task, the positioning of the conditional text was crucial and candidates needed to realise the need to create a fourth column without boundaries.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- To complete all elements of the task successfully, candidates had to create a data source that included the student scores and the corresponding results as Credit, Pass or Fail. This part of the task was carried out successfully by almost all candidates and most were accurate with setting the boundary inequalities.

Limited responses

- There were also requirements to hide sections of the worksheet and insert Student and Tutor names to match the Student IDs. Candidates needed to add these fields accurately by using appropriate lookup and concatenation formulas. Copying and pasting the student names did provide accurate information, but the method cannot be recognised as efficient since changes to the student data would not be updated in the source sheet.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Some conditional text to match the Credit, Pass, Fail result was also needed. Efficient solutions showed the creation of the text in the spreadsheet. Almost all candidates did manage to create the conditional fields, and the vast majority created the required text accurately.

Limited responses

- It was possible to use conditional fields in the merge document to generate some of the necessary text to match the results. This method was often less successful.
- It was important that all the fields required for the merge were seen in the source data which, for a mail merge, must be a single source. Candidates who did not tackle this part of the task with sufficient insight often showed evidence of attempts to revise their original data source. Centres would benefit from providing practice exercises that showed how important it is to analyse the requirements of the outcomes before finalising the merge document.

(d) Comprehensive responses

- Almost all candidates demonstrated the required level of skill in this task and produced merged letters.

Limited responses

- Inspection of the data would have shown that there should only be seven valid letters. For mail merge tasks it is unlikely that solutions will require a merge of the whole dataset.
- It is important that candidates are reminded that even when the correct number of letters are merged, there must be evidence of the method they used to filter the outcomes.
- Of minor note, candidates need to provide files with the correct names as specified in the question paper. In tasks such as this there are likely to be three files that candidates need to produce. There should be the blank template document, the merge document with the mergefields shown and the final merged letters. Each of these documents has its own set of requirements. Candidates need to be aware that each of the documents needs to be discrete. In a number of cases the source data was linked to both the blank template and the merge document. For this session this was not a cause for concern, though similar tasks might require greater precision.

Task 2 – Vector Graphics

(a) Comprehensive responses

- All candidates created a valid image to represent the Proton. The impressions of light blooms were usually added, and the images of a Neutron and an Electron were provided as versions of the Proton.

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Limited responses

- A precise colour gradient was specified for the first image, the Proton. A continual change in shade over the vertical diameter of the shape was required. Many submissions showed more abrupt changes in the shade of red.
- The simple method of creating a circular shape would entail the shape having an outline. An outline was not shown in the question paper, though it was often seen in candidates' submissions.
- The shape and position of the light blooms on the images of the Neutron and the Electron needed to match those created on the image of the Proton and the colours of the blooms needed to be changed to be compatible with each image. Merely recolouring the circular shape would not be sufficient. Candidates need to look closely at the examples and compare their submissions.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Successful reproductions of the Orbit image showed differing thicknesses of the dark green colour with the image angled as shown in the question paper.

Limited responses

- It was particularly important to reproduce the image of the Orbit accurately since it was clear that it was not just a simple ellipse.
- Only a few candidates produced the contours of the orbit shown in the question paper with sufficient accuracy. A simple result could be obtained by combining 2 ellipses and filling the overlapping areas. Candidates need skill in combining overlapping shapes and refining fills.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- The images for the Proton, the Neutron, the Electron and the Orbit were used to create the final composite image of a Carbon atom. The images were correctly positioned by all candidates.

Limited responses

- Whilst the images were always in roughly the correct positions the accuracy of their placement was not often sufficient.
- In particular the three orbits should have had a common centre. Very often the rotations did not create a symmetric result. Using a common centre for multiple objects is an important skill.
- Whilst the cluster of Protons and Neutrons was usually correct, the nucleus was not always carefully positioned in the centre of the intersection of the orbits.

Task 3 – Animation

Comprehensive responses

- The animation as a whole was completed by most candidates. Very few omitted any elements or stages.

Limited responses

- There were a few issues with the gas cloud. All candidates seemed to attempt to create it as required, with varying levels of transparency achieved.
- Elements like the background, the flame, the bang and the atoms had to be resized to match the screenshots shown in the question paper. This element of the task was essential and candidates needed to be careful with the placement and size of the images.
- Some submissions showed that candidates were not using layers to full advantage and their re-positioning of images affected the positions of other objects and the background. This sometimes resulted in small 'twitches' as the animation of other elements progressed. Experience with using layers is crucial to successful results in tasks like these.

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