



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education

## Example Candidate Responses – Paper 2

# Cambridge O Level English Language 1123

For examination from 2024



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge O Level English Language, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the syllabus requirements. This document helps teachers to assess the standards required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme.

In this booklet candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2024 exam series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with examiner comments about where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by comments on how the answer could be improved. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates.

Please refer to the June 2024 Examiner Report for further details and guidance.

The questions and mark schemes are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

**1123 June 2024 Question Paper 22**

**1123 June 2024 Mark Scheme 22**

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

## How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- or low level response for each question. In the left-hand column are the candidate responses, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>1</p> <p>1 “ Respected teacher and my dear fellows;                      Goodmorning. I am [redacted] and today I will                      be shedding light on whether from class 10A                      (as you know). I want you all to take a                      moment and ask yourself if you enjoy a trip to                      the zoo or if it saddens you to see observe                      these poor animals locked in cages for their                      entire lives, locked away from their real 2                      homes in the wilderness. Today, I will be                      shedding light on whether or not zoos                      should be banned.</p> <p>The concept of animal treatment can often be                      controversial. While many believe that a</p>	<p>1 The level of formality and tone required of the classroom debate context is consistently appropriate in this response, shown at the outset with the variation on the given ‘Good morning, everyone’.</p> <p>2 The response begins with an evaluative tone prompting the audience to consider whether they enjoy a trip to the zoo or are saddened by seeing the plight of the animals confined there. The candidate uses emotive vocabulary (‘poor’</p>
<p><b>Responses</b> are written by real candidates in exam conditions, demonstrating the types of answers for each level. These could be used to discuss and analyse the answers with learners in the classroom to improve their skills.</p>	<p><b>Examiner comments</b> explain where and why marks were awarded. These help to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams to help learners refine their exam technique.</p>

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Reading

- The response could have included greater development of the ideas selected. For example, suggestions around what specifically could have been learnt about different animals, e.g. ‘an opportunity to see different animals and learn about their diet, characteristics and habits’, or by providing an example of how a visit to the zoo appeals to all ages, e.g. ‘Zoos are the best means of an enjoyable family to the zoo, both my 80-year-old grandfather and my five-year-old nephew, who are so many non-native animals up close’.

This section explains how the candidate could improve each response. It helps learners to improve their exam technique.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

### Reading

- The response would have benefited from greater development of some of the ideas selected. For example, through elaboration on what specifically there was to entertain each of the mentioned age groups at the zoo, and development of a wider range of the ideas selected. In the response, the ideas could have been exemplified and the effect of prioritising

This section lists common mistakes as well as helpful guidance from the examiner. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes. You can use this alongside the relevant Examiner Report to guide your learners.

## Question 1

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

- 1
- 1 " Respected teacher and my dear fellows;  
 Goodmorning. I am [redacted] and today I will  
 be shedding light on whether from class 10A  
 (as you know). I want you all to take a  
 moment and ask yourself if you enjoy a trip to  
 the zoo or if it saddens you to see observe  
 these poor animals locked in cages for their  
 entire lives, locked away from their real  
 homes in the wilderness. Today, I will be  
 shedding light on whether or not zoos  
 should be banned. 2
- 3 The concept of animal treatment can often be  
 paradoxical. While many believe that a  
 trip to the zoo gives them an opportunity  
 to see and learn about different kinds of  
 animals, others believe that the bustling  
 nature of zoos undermines the health of these  
 animals. 4 Zoos are the best means of an  
 enjoyable family outing with no age threshold.  
 However, it is an incontrovertible fact that  
 these animals have been robbed of their  
 natural environment and habitat due to  
 which many of them live shorter lifespans  
 than they would have in the wild. 5 6
- In addition, many have argued that zoos are  
 the perfect element to impart and raise  
 awareness about the rising environmental  
 problems which cause ~~them~~<sup>animals</sup> to become  
 endangered or even extinct. In contrast to  
 this, polls have proved that 70% of the

1 The level of formality and tone required of the classroom debate context is consistently appropriate in this response, shown at the outset with the variation on the given 'Good morning, everyone'.

2 The response begins with an evaluative tone prompting the audience to consider whether they enjoy a trip to the zoo or are saddened by seeing the plight of the animals confined there. The candidate uses emotive vocabulary ('poor' and 'locked away') also implying evaluation.

3 The candidate uses a wide range of sentence structures accurately throughout the response, including a simple construction shown here with, 'The concept of animal treatment can often be paradoxical'.

4 The candidate develops an idea suggesting that animals' health is compromised by the overcrowded nature of the zoo.

5 The candidate gives acknowledgement of the 'paradoxical' nature of animal treatment and the use of the phrase 'While many believe' is indicative of evaluation. Further evidence of evaluation is to be found with the use of the phrase 'it is an incontrovertible fact' and the use of the emotive vocabulary choice 'robbed'.

6 The candidate uses a wide range of sentence structures accurately throughout the response, including a complex construction shown here with, 'However, it is an incontrovertible fact that these animals have been robbed of their natural environment and habitat due to which many of them live shorter lifespans than they would have in the wild'.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

7 staff in zoos are not specialised in animal care which often leads to lousy care of animals. Furthermore, zoos enable scientists to safeguard animals by observing and studying their behaviour; this would be near to impossible to carry out in a wild habitat. In addition to this, a trip to the zoo not only leaves visitors with a flood of joyous memories but also aids in protecting endangered species by using the money paid by visitors to observe and impart knowledge about the various species present in the zoo. However, 9 it should not be forgotten that, nowadays, 10 it is more important for zoos to make money rather than protecting the animals. At the end of the day, zoos are businesses which make money from animals. ~~caged~~ caged animals often living in poor health and living conditions.

7 The candidate uses a wide range of sentence structures accurately, including a compound construction as shown here with, 'In contrast to this, polls have proved that 70% of the staff in zoos are not specialised in animal care which often leads to lousy care of animals'.

8 The candidate develops an idea suggesting that a visit to the zoo is an enjoyable day out at least in part because of the 'flood of joyous memories' which visitors are left with.

9 The candidate uses a range of vocabulary precisely and effectively, such as 'impart'. Spelling of this vocabulary is also highly accurate.

10 The phrase 'it should not be forgotten that' implies agreement with the validity of the idea that zoos prioritise making money over animal welfare.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

According to my perception,<sup>11</sup> it will be more beneficial if zoos are banned. In recent days, many species of animals have become endangered and extinct which has led to a massive decrease in biodiversity. While zoos<sup>12</sup> may have benefits for the animals, it is wrong to dismiss their drawbacks. Preserving the natural habitat of animals and leaving them here, in their natural homes is best for both the animals and the environment. It will not only increase biodiversity and the lifespans<sup>13</sup> of animals but will also make the world a more safer place for animals to flourish. I hope my debate was persuasive. Thank you<sup>14</sup> for listening.<sup>15</sup>

**11** The level of formality and tone required of the classroom debate context is consistently appropriate in this response with phrases such as ‘According to my perception’ (with its implied acknowledgement that there is an alternative view which can be considered).

**12** The candidate uses a range of vocabulary precisely and effectively, such as ‘biodiversity’. Spelling of this vocabulary is also highly accurate. The candidate also uses a range of punctuation marks accurately throughout the response, including full stops, commas, brackets and a semi-colon.

**13** The candidate develops their evaluation in the final paragraph suggesting that the consequence of banning zoos and leaving animals in their natural environments will increase biodiversity and lifespans.

**14** The level of formality and tone required of the classroom debate context is consistently appropriate and leaves the audience at the end with the hope that they found the speech persuasive. The candidate then thanks them for listening.

**15** Throughout the response, the candidate identifies five ideas from Text A, predominantly using their own words to express these. From Text B, the candidate selects four ideas. A wide range of ideas across Texts A and B has therefore been considered.

Reading = 9 out of 10  
Writing = 14 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
23 out of 25**



## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Reading

- The response could have included greater development of the ideas selected. For example, suggestions around what specifically could have been learnt about different animals, e.g. 'an opportunity to see different animals and learn about their diet, characteristics and habits', or by providing an example of how a visit to the zoo appeals to all ages, e.g. 'Zoos are the best means of an enjoyable family outing with no age threshold; on our family's recent visit to the zoo, both my 80-year-old grandfather and my five-year-old sister were equally delighted at being able to see so many non-native animals up close'.
- The response could have included exemplification of the reduction in animals' lifespans with an additional sentence such as, 'Studies have shown that animals living in the wild live, on average, five years longer than those in captivity'. If slightly fewer ideas had been selected but these had each been developed and evaluated, this would have improved the response.

### Writing

- Vocabulary choices were precise and effective and helped to convey an appropriate tone, however the selection of 'lousy' was a little less formal and an alternative that was more appropriate to the required register could have been selected.
- Overall, the quality of the writing in this response was highly accurate; however, if a wider range of punctuation marks had been used, this would have elevated the mark for Writing. For example, question and exclamation marks could have been included and a colon used correctly.
- The indicative word count was exceeded. Being more succinct would have produced a more successful response.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Good Morning, everyone  
 Hope you all are doing fine. My name is  
 [REDACTED]. You all might be wondering that why  
 I am standing here today. So let me tell you  
 I am here to deliver a speech about zoos  
 which are fun for family but Jail for animals.

Most of you will agree that trip to zoos are  
 very enjoyable right?. And can view different  
 type of animals in one place. Also since it is  
 not cost effective people prefer to go to zoos.

The amazing part is that it is a experiance  
 for both childrens and adults even old people  
 so nobody feels bored; Moreover, It can be a  
 best educational trip as it conveys the message  
 about the extinction of species ~~err~~ which  
 indicates them that the animals which are less  
 in numbers are not ~~the ones~~ to be hunted; Also;

It can be very helpful for Gen Z knowing the  
 enviornmental cause and to help it getting resolved  
 Just like Snow leopard: "Do you all know that  
 due to climatic change the number of snow leopard  
 present in world has fallen by rapid rate"

It is because of the pollution caused by the  
 people like deforestation, burning of wood and using  
 non biodegradable things due to which carbon is  
 released leading to greenhouse gas emission and  
 climatic change.

1 The tone and register is mostly appropriate for the audience and purpose in this response. The candidate adopts a mixed level of formality suitable for a speech to their peers. The tone at the outset is friendly with 'Hope you all are doing fine'.

2 The candidate uses emotive language to signal evaluation with the suggestion that zoos are 'fun for family but jail for animals'.

3 The use of the rhetorical question, 'Most of you will agree that trip to zoos are very enjoyable, right?' implies validity of the idea that zoos are a fun outing adding a shade of evaluation.

4 The candidate develops the idea of 'childrens', 'adults' and 'old people' as those of 'all ages' for whom the zoo is a fun day out.

5 Following this, the candidate develops the idea of raising awareness with the example that zoos educate visitors on which animals are most endangered and as such, 'are not to be hunted'. The example of the snow leopard with the details of what factors contribute to its endangerment develops this idea further.

6 As the candidate's argument develops, the tone becomes more serious and impassioned with the use of more emotive language, e.g. 'rapid rate' and later in the response 'harmful impact'.

**Example Candidate Response – middle, continued**

**Examiner comments**

<b>7</b>	Dear fellows, Now just think that Zoos are best recreational trip but what about the animals <del>prisoned</del> being prisoned for no reason have they committed any crime? No they are
	just kept in prison to make people happy. Is it fair for keeping animals in cage for no reason?
<b>8</b>	Definitely its not. They are kept in zoos which <del>are not</del> <del>are</del> not spacious and they are not habitual of this because compared to a forest they don't have much space in cage. which lead to death of animals or change in behaviour. <b>9</b>
	Moreover, to entertain people they bring the wild animals too which are not to be kept in cage as they are adapted towards there habitat and changing their place can lead to harmful impact on their health. <b>10</b>

**7** The candidate maintains a consistent and mostly appropriate tone and register in the response using the phrase 'Dear fellows'.

**8** The use of the rhetorical questions 'what about the animals being prisoned for no reason have they committed any crime?' and 'Is it fair for keeping animals in cage for no reason?' with the emphatic follow-up short sentence 'Definitely its not.' establishes an evaluative tone.

**9** Mention of the fact that 'compared to a forest' the animals 'don't have much space in cage' provides a nod to development of the idea that animals' behaviour is changed as a result of the lack of space in the zoo.

**10** The candidate uses a complex sentence, 'Moreover, to entertain people they bring the wild animals too which are not to be kept in cage as they are adapted towards their habitat and changing their place can lead to harmful impact on their health'.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

	In my view, Zoos should be banned as it is not the way they should be treated and government should take action in setting them free. <span style="float: right;">11</span>
	<del>Some times</del> I won't <del>be</del> kept you all standing for any longer let's just move towards the end. Sometime <del>zoos</del>
12	Animals in zoo are not prioritized and the main motive for the owner is it get profit for themselves and does not complete basic needs of animal.
	So now it is your choice to visit zoo or help for animal freedom. <del>Thank</del> I really appreciate <span style="float: right;">13</span>
	your patience and time. Thank you! <span style="float: right;">14</span>
	<span style="float: right;">15</span>

11 The candidate uses a compound sentence, 'In my view, zoos should be banned as it is not the way they should be treated and government should take action in setting them free', while also offering an alternative idea.

12 The use of 'So now' towards the end suggests a shift in the speech, signalling that the candidate draws a conclusion and gives the audience a directive. The phrase 'your choice' places responsibility on the audience, finishing the speech with an impactful tone which prompts the audience to take action.

13 The candidate concludes using a simple sentence for impact, 'I really appreciate your patience and time'.

14 The effective use of a range of vocabulary is a strength in this response. Examples throughout, such as 'wondering', 'deliver', 'Moreover', 'conveys', 'indicates', 'resolved', 'pollution', 'deforestation', 'recreational', 'committed', 'habitat', and 'motive' are all credit worthy. Spelling of this vocabulary is also accurate. The candidate uses full stops, question marks and an exclamation mark accurately throughout.

15 The candidate identifies four ideas from Text A, predominantly using their own words to express these. From Text B, the candidate selects four ideas. A wide range of ideas across Texts A and B has therefore been considered.

Reading = 7 out of 10

Writing = 9 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
16 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Reading

- The response would have benefited from greater development of some of the ideas selected. For example, through elaboration on what specifically there was to entertain each of the mentioned age groups at the zoo, and development of a wider range of the ideas selected. In this case, changes in behaviour seen in captive animals could have been exemplified and the effect of prioritising profit on the animals could have been elaborated on.
- The response would have benefited from more specific evaluation of the ideas selected. The use of evaluative phrases would have helped with this; for example, 'We can't deny that a visit to the zoo is an experience for both children and adults and even old people' or 'It is certainly true that it can be a valuable educational trip' or 'We can't ignore the fact that they are kept in cages which are not spacious which can lead to a change in behaviour'.

### Writing

- The response could have combined linked ideas from the two texts, rather than dealing with each text separately, developing and evaluating these pairs of ideas to build their argument.
- There was an attempt at complex sentences; for example, 'Moreover, It can be a best educational trip as it conveys the message about the extinction of species...' although punctuation could have been more precise and phrasing clearer.
- Accurate spelling of straightforward vocabulary was evident throughout the response, although there were slips; for example, 'experiance', 'biogable' and 'appieciate'. The candidate would have benefited from careful proofreading to avoid errors such as these. Taking care with handwriting to ensure that letters such as 'J' were not always capitalised would have also helped improve the response.
- While there was correct use of full stops, question marks and an exclamation mark in this response, accuracy in the use of commas was inconsistent. Additionally, while there was an attempt to use a wider range of punctuation (with the inclusion of the colon and semi-colon), the candidate needed to ensure that these were used accurately.
- Proofreading to check for grammatical issues, such as incorrect verb forms ('has fallen' instead of 'as fallen'), subject-verb agreement ('snow leopard' which should be 'snow leopards'), and awkward phrasing would have improved this response.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

A 'Good morning, everyone'

In my view zoos not should be banned because a trip for a zoo is better than everything and a great chance to see those animal which not be see in forests. Trip to zoo is best for family picnic. Trip or visit to zoo is for all ages. it is great value for money, because the whole day we spent their. More Schools. trips go to zoo, because the staff of zoo give knowledge about all animals which are in zoo and our school study also linked with animal characteristics. Zoo give awareness to people about environment pollution, this environment pollution have danger side effect on some species and animal. This help people to stop those activity and which have a negative impact on different animal and species. In zoo there are garbage bag in which people through their waste item and there are banner in zoo which indicate to the visitor if you do not through your waste in garbage bag and through out the have negative impact on animals and birds which are living there. In forests there are danger for animals from hunters and some time they <sup>do not</sup> eat food but Zoo help to protect animal from hunter and they give food to animal 2 to 3 time in day.

1 The candidate develops the idea that zoos raise awareness of environmental problems using the example of pollution which has dangerous side effects for animals.

2 The candidate develops this point further with the example of how some zoos provide garbage bags and encourage visitors to put their waste in these bags to prevent harm to animals. While this is creditable for development, there is some confusion as to whether it is concerned with the protection of endangered species or keeping the zoo environment clean for the animals who live there.

3 The candidate uses a range of simple vocabulary throughout the response, with examples such as 'pollution', 'indicate' and 'features'.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

And can also scientists to study wild animal behaviour, but it is impossible in forest to check the behaviour of wild animal because in forest animal live in team form. Zoo work to share knowledge about animal features and their care and tell how to maintain animal.

So why you are not visit zoo? At least in a month you have to go 3 time to Zoo.

4 The candidate begins to develop the idea that scientists can study animals more easily in the zoo than in the wild, using the example that in the wild these animals 'live in team form'. Again, this is not entirely clear but is an attempt at development which gains some credit.

5 The candidate correctly uses full stops throughout the response to mark the end of sentences and also a question mark.

6 The candidate selects a wide range of points from Text A, phrasing these in their own words.

Reading = 5 out of 10

Writing = 5 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
10 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Reading

- This was a response which selected a wide range of ideas from Text A, but did not select any ideas from Text B. This focus on a single text limited the response to a mark in Level 3. Although the range of ideas selected was wide from Text A, the question specifically instructed candidates to ‘evaluate the ideas and opinion in both texts’ and base their response on what they have ‘read in both texts’. To be considered as meeting the range of ideas required for Level 4 and Level 5, ideas from both Text A and Text B needed to be selected.
- There was some creditable development of the ideas selected; for example, pollution as an environmental problem about which awareness was raised. There was also the opportunity to credit further development of this point with the mention of encouraging visitors to put their waste in the garbage bags placed around the zoo. However, the link between this and the idea in the original text was not totally clear. Similarly, the development of the idea that it is easier for scientists to study animals in the zoo because in the wild this is problematised by their living ‘in team form’ was creditable as development but was also not fully clear. More clear and detailed examples or explanations would have helped improve the quality of the development in this response, while the introduction of some evaluation, offering judgement of some of the ideas selected, suggesting prioritisation of one idea over another, or dismissal of an idea, would also have improved the response.
- Some awareness of purpose and audience was shown at the end of the response with the use of the rhetorical question which directly addressed the audience, but the rest of the response showed little awareness of audience beyond the given ‘Good morning, everyone’ at the start.

### Writing

- There was some attempt to organise ideas as the response moved through the points as presented in Text A – from the benefits of zoos for families to their educational value, and then to environmental awareness. However, the structure was somewhat disjointed, with the ideas not always flowing logically from one to the next. The use of transitional vocabulary such as, ‘In addition’, ‘Furthermore’ and ‘Moreover’ would have improved flow.
- The response would have benefited from clearer paragraphing. Starting with an introductory statement, followed by distinct paragraphs for each main point, and concluding with a strong closing statement would have improved the structure.
- Simple sentences were used correctly, but sentence structures were often repetitive. The response would have benefited from the inclusion of a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences. The tone was generally appropriate for a persuasive piece, but the phrases ‘why you are not visit zoo?’ and ‘At least in a month you have to go 3 time to zoo’ were perhaps a little too conversational and almost demanding.
- Although simple spelling and grammar was generally accurate, the response had several spelling and grammatical errors. Careful proofreading would have helped avoid these errors. Additionally, commonly confused words like ‘through’ and ‘throw’ and subject-verb agreement issues impeded performance.



## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

### Reading

- Many candidates did not use their own words when they selected ideas from the given texts. When writing the ideas in their own words, candidates should have considered not only their vocabulary choice, substituting vocabulary taken from the text with synonyms where appropriate, but also the structure and syntax of what they wrote and which elements of the original text were necessary. For example, the following sentence from Text A, 'Zoos help to protect animals and can also give scientists the ability to study animal behaviour in a way that would be impossible in the wild.' could have been written as 'The capacity to observe animal behaviour in a manner that would be unfeasible in their natural habitat can also be provided to researchers by zoos.' In this example, the essential idea has been selected (that scientists can study animal behaviour more easily in a zoo), with the passive construction used in place of the active one from the original sentence.
- Some candidates did not follow the instruction to base their speech on what they had read in *both* texts. Considering the ideas in just one text limited the mark they were able to achieve for Reading. In addition, candidates needed to ensure that they had selected a suitable range of ideas from the two texts. To achieve marks in the higher levels, a range (Level 4) or a wide range (Level 5) of ideas from the texts needed to be considered.
- Candidates needed to ensure that whatever they produced was firmly rooted in the ideas of the two texts, rather than focusing too heavily on their own ideas on the given topic.
- Evaluation of the ideas selected was required to achieve a mark at Level 4 or above. Candidates needed to ensure that they included this alongside development. For example, candidates could have added an example or information additional to an idea already in the text, and then offered a judgement on the quality or validity of that idea. Using the PDE (Point Development Evaluation) structure would have helped candidates to provide all the required elements. For example, the idea of the zoo being a fun family outing for all ages could be developed and evaluated as follows: 'A visit to the zoo appeals to both children and adults, as they can explore exhibits, attend interactive shows, and enjoy outdoor activities together. However, the ethical concerns regarding animal welfare in captivity may dampen the experience for some'.
- Where possible, candidates are encouraged to link points from the two texts and use one to help evaluate the other. An example of this, using the ideas of gaining scientific knowledge (from Text A) and behavioural changes in animals (from Text B), would be as follows: 'Zoos allow researchers to observe animal behaviour without the unpredictable variables present in their natural habitat, such as predation and weather. This setting allows for detailed, long-term research on social interactions, reproduction, and development. However, behaviours in captivity may differ from those in natural habitats due to stress and confinement, raising concerns about the validity of findings'.

### Writing

- Some candidates did not show awareness of the required format throughout their response. Candidates needed to adopt a suitable tone and register for the given audience and purpose.
- Some candidates used incorrect tenses and agreement.
- Candidates needed to craft their responses to show more a varied use of punctuation (including colons, semi-colons, brackets, question marks and exclamation marks) as well as taking care to use full stops and commas correctly.

### General

- There continued to be a tendency for candidates to produce responses which far exceeded the indicative word count; this must be discouraged as it frequently led to less focused (and therefore less successful) pieces. Rather than using their time to produce over-long responses, candidates should instead be encouraged to focus on crafting a response which shows control and accuracy. Selecting three or four ideas from each text, ensuring that each of these was developed and evaluated, resulted in higher marks than selecting ten ideas with limited development and / or evaluation.

## Question 2

### Example Candidate Response – low

### Examiner comments

#### Section B

#### Descriptive writing

The cultural is m going to <sup>tell you</sup> about is cultural event of muslims. It came after Ramadan. Eidul-fitar. As the last ten days of the holy month of the ramadan left the people crowd went to the shopping malls for shopping. every one was very excited for the event. As the days were passing out the crowd in the shopping malls was rapidly increasing. The crowd increase as much that there was no space to put the step. Some people are finding perfumes and fragrances to gift to their relatives. Girls were applying mehndi on their hands. Boys get the hair cuts. One night before the event which is called Chand raat people started the preparation for tomorrow event.

Those people who didn't get the shoes and ~~clothes~~ clothes according to their size they were rushing toward shopping malls and markets to change them. Finally the day came. People wake up early in the morning. Men and boys were getting ready for the the Eid prayer and after getting ready they went to the place where the prayer has to be offered. After the prayer they came home and meet their ~~parents~~ <sup>parents</sup> members and relatives. children get money from their elders which is called Eidi. Many people went to the picnic spots, parks to enjoy and entertainment. Some programmes and concerts are also organized in some areas during the event. women make different types dishes. people went to their relative houses to meet them as a gesture of happiness.

1 The candidate begins by locating *Eid-Al-Fitr* in the year, showing awareness of the intended reader who may not be familiar with the event.

2 The candidate attempts to convey the busyness in the build-up to the *Eid-Al-Fitr*, showing that thought is given to the structure of the response by beginning with the excitement of shopping before the event.

3 The candidate attempts to move from a description of the scene (the busyness of the shopping mall) to focus on people within the scene, although this is generalised and focus is not sustained on any one individual or group.

4 The short sentence signals the shift from preparations to the event itself, showing an attempt to use sentence structures for effect.

5 The candidate usually uses capital letters correctly at the beginning of sentences, as in the example of 'People wake up early in the morning'.

6 The candidate punctuates the end of sentences accurately with full stops throughout the response.

7 The candidate uses a simple and familiar vocabulary with words, such as 'excited', 'fragrances', 'prayer', 'entertainment', 'organized' (on which the American spelling is acceptable) and 'gesture' which are all rewardable at this level.

Content and structure = 4 out of 10  
Style and accuracy = 4 out of 15

Total mark awarded =  
8 out of 25

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Content and structure

- While the structure of the response was occasionally clear, it lacked coherence. The ideas were presented in a disjointed manner, with sudden transitions between sentences and thoughts making it difficult for the reader to follow the description smoothly. For example, the switch from discussing shopping to mentioning Chand Raat was abrupt and could have been better linked.
- Although the response mentioned various activities and emotions, it did not delve deeply into any of them. The descriptions were brief and lacked elaboration, making it hard for the reader to fully grasp the significance or emotional impact of the experiences being described. For instance, the candidate mentioned that 'childs get money from their elders which is called *Eidi*,' but does not explain the cultural importance of this tradition.
- To improve their response, the candidate needed to introduce the use of descriptive features, such as use of the senses, figurative language techniques and sound devices.

### Style and accuracy

- The vocabulary used was generally simple and familiar, with words like 'shopping', 'excited', 'prayer', and 'fragrances'. However, while most of the simple vocabulary was used correctly, there were a few spelling errors and instances where words were misused or misspelled, for example, 'repiedly', 'famile' and 'picknic'. These examples, along with words like 'appling' (for 'applying') and 'childs' (for 'children') show that more careful proofreading could have improved the quality of the response.
- The response demonstrated an attempt to use spelling, punctuation, and grammar accurately, though there were some errors. Basic punctuation, such as full stops and capital letters, are used correctly in most cases. Examples such as, 'People wake up early in the morning' and 'After the prayer they came home and meet their famile members and relatives' showed an understanding of simple grammar and sentence construction. However, the response frequently omitted necessary punctuation, such as commas, leading to run-on sentences, e.g. 'one night before the event which is called chand raat people start the preparation for tomorrow event'. Additionally, some sentences lacked correct capitalisation at the beginning. Verb tense consistency was also not always secure, for example, 'As the days were passing out the crowd in the shopping malls was repiedly increasing'.

## Question 3

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

Section B: Composition	
Descriptive Writing	
Describe the scene at a local park or public garden both early in the morning and in the afternoon.	
Early in the Morning:	
The sun was still barely conspicuous in the distant horizon. Its rising rays gilded the magnificent park. Antiquated trees <del>appeared</del> with its gnarly branches appeared quite skeletal against the <del>stiff</del> gloomy and velvety sky. <sup>1</sup> Myriads of minute ants scurried and scuttled across the damp earth, <sup>2</sup> the redolent petrichor quite palpable. A deafening silence prevailed as the city was still sleeping peacefully. <sup>3</sup> The morning <del>wind</del> breeze darted down the dreary deserted paths, hissing angrily. <sup>4</sup>	

**1** The candidate immediately uses a descriptive feature to establish the atmosphere of the early morning scene as quiet and almost eerie with the sky being 'gloomy and velvety' against which stand the 'skeletal' trees.

**2** Alliteration contributes towards the range of descriptive features with the 'myriad of minute ants'. There is also a shift in focus from an overview to very specific detail as the candidate introduces a sense of dynamism with the further use of alliteration as the ants 'scurried' and 'scuttled'.

**3** The personification in the image of the city 'sleeping peacefully' furthers the candidate's range of descriptive features.

**4** The candidate uses onomatopoeia as the wind is described as 'hissing angrily', adding again to the range of descriptive features employed.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Drops of moisture accumulated on the ~~pesto~~ coloured leaves, the added load destroying its once straight posture. Effervescent birds commence to gather on the trees, their mellifluous chirping sounding quite euphonious. Due to the absence of the staccato of car horns, the lively conversations of the birds reverberated throughout the interior of the park. Mesmerizing! Slowly, the smell of freshly mowed grass commenced to tantalize the nostrils as the ~~(first)~~ groundsman exuberantly began his work. Being the ~~(only human)~~ first worker to arrive, a sense of punctuality was clearly visible in his eyes. The crimson painted mahogany benches remained in solitude, eagerly waiting to hear a

5 The candidate uses auditory imagery to good effect as the 'lively conversations of the birds reverberated through the park'.

6 The candidate gives an example of olfactory imagery adding to the range of descriptive features used with the mention of the 'smell of freshly mowed grass'.

7 The candidate's response moves from the description of the setting to focus on a person within the setting, giving another example of a descriptive feature.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

8 spectrum of tales ranging from juicy gossip to tragic romance. The water accumulated on the ~~cobblestone~~ cobblestone path reflected the world above, ~~preparing for another~~ ~~sumptuous~~

In the afternoon:

The duchenne smile of the sun was clearly conspicuous, its golden ~~x~~ fingers covering the entirety of the park. Moseying clouds ~~slow~~ moved lazily in the azure sky. The park was now filled to the top 9 its every crevice

10 brimming with renewed vigour. While exhausted ~~the~~ workers <sup>traipsed</sup> ~~maked~~ slowly towards the welcoming benches, lively adolescents ran es ecstatically down the meandering ~~too~~ paths. Families sat peacefully on the emerald green carpet, ~~remi~~ emotionally reminiscing about the good old days. Busy employees with their crisp tucked in shirts ran helplessly to catch business meetings, lack of punctuality <sup>being</sup> the only stain on their white shirts uniform. 11

12 Long gone was the pleasant smell of ~~fresh~~ <sup>grass</sup>. Instead, a blend of the metallic tang of perspiration and acrid smell of saliva got more intense with every passing second. The birds on the ~~(bite)~~ branches contracted their limbs and set off into the ~~horizon~~ <sup>horizon</sup> ~~(aetlucid-blue)~~ sky, their resplendent colours juxtaposed against the pellucid-blue sky. It appeared as if a fatigued artist violently dabbed various colours onto his canvas in order to meet the nearing deadline. The moist earth 13 had now ~~harded~~ hardened due to being exposed

8 The candidate's use of personification is highly effective, as the bench is described as remaining 'in solitude, eagerly waiting to hear a spectrum of tales'.

9 The candidate establishes contrast, beyond that given in the question, as the park moves from being empty to being 'filled to the top'.

10 The candidate refers to the image of the benches again as 'exhausted workers traipse towards them' showing a careful organisation of the response.

11 The candidate shows evidence of thoughtful organisation using the contrast between the park keeper who was mentioned earlier as having 'a sense of punctuality was clearly visible in his eyes' and the busy employees whose 'lack of punctuality' is 'the only stain on their white uniform'.

12 The candidate gives further evidence of thoughtful structuring, by referring back to the previous image of the 'freshly mowed grass' and establishing a contrast with the 'metallic tang of perspiration' now dominant in the air.

13 The simile describing the sky as a 'fatigued artist' who 'violently dabbed various colours onto his canvas in order to meet the nearing deadline' adds to the candidate's use of descriptive features.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

to the ~~swelling sun~~ sweltering sun. Moreover, the raucous laughter of children echoed throughout the park; the cacophonous screech sounding quite exasperating to many. Some decided to hear a few dulcet tones through their air pods while some delicately read aloud the inspiring lines from his favourite book. The intricate carvings on the bodies of trees attracted the attention of many, each having a story of its own. While many rays of the sun were reflected back by the lush green cover of the trees, some were able to breach the strong defence and paint a unique pattern on the floor. From embracing couples to seasoned veterans quietly spending their last few days, there was one thing in common: everyone ~~were~~ ~~is~~ every person was in awe of the mystic beauty of this splendid park.

14 The candidate uses auditory imagery to good effect with a description of the 'raucous laughter of children' which 'echoed throughout the park' furthering the range of descriptive features.

15 The return to the image of the rays of the sun, initially seen at the start of the response, creates a cyclical structure which is effective in conveying the ever-repeating nature of these sorts of days in the park.

16 The candidate concludes the response effectively with a sense of reflection, bringing the piece back to the sense of calm established at the start and showing clarity of structure.

17 Throughout this response, the candidate uses a wide range of well-constructed sentences accurately, including simple, compound, and complex structures.

18 The candidate uses a precise, extensive, and effective range of vocabulary. The spelling is highly accurate, with only occasional slips. Punctuation is highly accurate, aside from the incorrect use of a semi-colon.

Content and structure = 10 out of 10  
Style and accuracy = 14 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
24 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

## Style and accuracy

- The use of punctuation was highly accurate, with the correct use of full stops, commas, a colon and an exclamation mark. However, correctly hyphenating compound adjectives, 'pesto-coloured' and capitalising the proper noun 'AirPods' would have improved this response, as would the inclusion of apostrophes (for both omission and possession), brackets, a question mark and using a semi-colon accurately.
- The candidate needed to be consistent with all verbs to ensure tense agreement; for example, in the case of 'commence' this should be 'commenced'. The candidate also needed to ensure greater accuracy in subject-verb agreement, as in the case of 'Antiquated trees with its gnarly branches' which should be 'Antiquated trees with their gnarly branches' to maintain subject-verb agreement between 'trees' and 'their'.
- Overall, this was an ambitious response which firmly demonstrated the qualities required for Level 5; however, the response exceeded the indicative word count by 50 words. The candidate should have stayed within the 350–450 words specified and spent time checking their work for the sort of slips outlined.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Section B: Composition

Descriptive writing

Stepping onto the bustling garden of Eldrige street, the cold air breezes welcoming with full zeal and zest. Sky glided with white clouds like tufty pillows. Grasshoppers dancing on the leaves, silver from the edges with fat and heavy water droplets. Birds chirping and singing their morning songs.

The malachite-green garden seemed to be the most serene place. The aroma from the cafe at the corner of the garden proffs that the breakfast should be very tasty. The road in-front of the garden filled with vehicles, as everyone is ready to start their new bright day.

1 The candidate begins their response with this first example of a wide range of figurative language techniques. The personification in this first paragraph helps to create an inviting atmosphere, establishing the garden as a pleasant place.

2 The candidate uses another figurative language technique with a simile likening the clouds to 'tufty pillows' emphasising the positive atmosphere and furthering the range of descriptive features.

3 The auditory imagery of the birds 'chirping and singing their morning songs' helps to set the mood of the piece and evokes positive emotions, again adding to the range of descriptive features.

4 The candidate uses a short, simple sentence to effectively convey a peaceful atmosphere with 'The malachite-green garden seemed to be the most serene place'.

5 The candidate establishes the 'serene' atmosphere of the garden creating a sense of the calmness and tranquillity of the early morning. Later in the response, this contrasts with the activity and more chaotic nature of the garden later in the day.

6 Olfactory imagery furthers the range of descriptive features, helping to evoke the comfort and warmth of a cosy morning in the garden.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

The honking of horns etched the ears. A long que of cars tells that the day should be going to very busy for everyone. Childrens rushing towards their schools with jubilant faces. The beep sound of school bells on the left side of the garden makes noise in the cozy atmosphere.

Sky changing the color into pink-orange hues under the bright sheen. The rays of sunlight reflecting through the trees standing proudly in the garden. The benches near the trees were empty. The garden seems to be a bouquet of vibrant flowers.

7 The onomatopoeic 'honking' of car horns contrasts with the earlier serenity of the garden as the world comes to life and the peace of the space is interrupted.

8 The candidate shifts from describing the setting to focusing on people within the setting, again contributing to the range of descriptive features.

9 The verb 'rushing' introduces a sense of dynamism into the scene, again contrasting with the laziness of the garden as it was described early in the morning

10 The candidate uses the changing colour of the sky as a structural device to signal the shift in atmosphere as the day progresses and the garden comes to life.

11 The personification of the trees (another example of a descriptive feature) implies a sense of protection, making the garden seem like a safe place even among the busyness.

12 The candidate's use of a short sentence emphasises the emptiness of the benches and is an example of a structural choice made for deliberate effect.

13 The metaphorical comparison of the garden to a 'bouquet of vibrant flowers' captures the colour and scent of the garden at this point in the day and is a further example of a descriptive feature.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

As the time wore-on<sup>14</sup>, the sun brightly shines, casting a warm golden glow and covering the entire horizon as the most precious pearl. People<sup>15</sup> were making their ways towards the garden, as the first sun of the winters blushed with full glow.

Childrens moving towards the swings at one side of the garden. Happiness can be seen from the faces of the childs as they were on the seventh cloud. The giraff slide seems to be the most interesting swing as all the childrens waiting patiently to slide.<sup>16</sup> Some kids were jumping on the fluffy jumper expressing their joy.

People grining from ear to ear, and waiting for their turn standing in the que for their hot cup of brewed coffee. Some of the people holding one cup and thinking for another for their loved ones. Benches were now filled with people chattering and laughing.<sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup>

People welcomed the winters with full confidence and euphoric feelings. It look like the happiness is showered upon the garden. Everyone feeling free of their tensions. Boyss seemed to crumble around every person. Adequate runs around the cacaphony of the garden.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The candidate signals a shift in time with the phrase 'As the time wore on' further indicating that the response has a clear structure.

<sup>15</sup> The candidate uses a complex sentence to personify the sun, adding to the range of descriptive features and locating the description within a particular time of year.

<sup>16</sup> The response moves again from description of the setting to focus on the children who are now happily playing in the garden. This shift is another example of a descriptive feature and helps create balance in the structure of the response.

<sup>17</sup> The candidate organises their response thoughtfully, recalling the earlier olfactory imagery with the people waiting 'for the cup of hot brewed coffee'.

<sup>18</sup> The return to the description of the benches which are now 'filled with people chattering and laughing' creates a contrast with the empty benches seen earlier, again demonstrating thoughtful structuring of the response and the use of contrast, a descriptive feature.

<sup>19</sup> The candidate uses a range of appropriate vocabulary throughout the response, including examples such as 'bustling', 'malachite-green', 'aroma', 'jubilant', 'reflecting', 'bouquet', 'vibrant', 'precious', 'patiently', 'expressing', 'euphoric' and 'showered'.

Content and structure = 8 out of 10  
Style and accuracy = 7 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
15 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Content and structure

- Although the range of descriptive features used was a strength of this response, it could also be seen as a weakness when overused or applied inconsistently. The piece's effectiveness was slightly diminished by the overuse of these features which, at times, overwhelm the reader. Greater control in the use of these descriptive features, ensuring development of one image before moving to the next would have improved this response.
- Some of the candidate's phrases, such as 'full of zeal and zest', 'the most serene place' and 'the most precious pearl' are somewhat clichéd. The candidate needed to ensure a greater originality of phrases.
- Some descriptions (in this case, sensory detail), such as 'adequate runs around the cacaphony of the garden,' were unclear and did not effectively convey meaning. To improve, the candidate needed to ensure that accuracy was not sacrificed when striving to include descriptive features.

### Style and accuracy

- The candidate made some successful attempts at complex sentences such as, 'As the time wore on, the sun brightly shines, casting a warm golden glow and covering the entire horizon as the most precious pearl'. This example successfully incorporates descriptive imagery while maintaining clarity. However, other attempts at more complex sentence structures were less successful. For example, 'Sky changing the colour into pink-orange hues under the bright sheen' lacked a clear subject and verb, making it grammatically incomplete. Some incomplete sentences functioned as fragments rather than complete thoughts. For example, 'Grasshoppers dancing on the leaves, silver from the edges with fat and heavy water droplets' could be corrected to 'Grasshoppers were dancing on the leaves, which were silvered at the edges by fat and heavy water droplets'.
- The vocabulary used was appropriate and contributed to the overall descriptive quality of the piece. Words like 'malachite-green', 'vibrant', and 'blushed', added colour and depth to the descriptions. However, there was some repetition, particularly with the words 'children' (or 'childs,' which is incorrect) and 'garden' (which was taken from the question). This repetition made the description feel monotonous at times. Varying vocabulary choice and sentence structure could have helped this candidate to improve the level of their response.
- While there was some accuracy in straightforward grammar, the presence of errors in subject verb agreement, e.g. 'Childrens rushing towards their schools with jubilant faces' and verb tense consistency, e.g. when the passage shifted between the past tense with 'Sky gilded with white clouds' to the present tense with 'The sun shines brightly' detracted from the overall quality of the piece. Spelling of straightforward vocabulary was accurate in this response, however errors crept in with more complex choices such as 'cacaphony', 'que' and 'proofs'. These mistakes, along with occasional awkward phrasing and incorrect word choices, such as 'etched' (which needed to be replaced with an alternative choice such as 'pierced'), would have conveyed a sharper, more intense effect, better matching the impact of loud horns on the ears.
- Straightforward punctuation was used appropriately to separate ideas and enhance readability. For example, commas and full stops were used correctly to break up sentences and clarify meaning. However, there were some issues with punctuation and capitalisation, for example, 'The honking of horns etched the ears, A long que of cars tells that the day should be going to be very busy for everyone.' where there is an erroneous comma and the 'A' which should be lowercase. In addition, some phrases were redundant, and sentences could be simplified for clarity. For example, in the sentence, 'Happiness can be seen from the faces of the childs as they were on the seventh cloud' the phrase 'seventh cloud' could have been replaced with a less clichéd expression. More careful proofreading, as well as crafting the response to ensure opportunity was provided to extend the range of punctuation marks used, would have improved this response.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

### Descriptive writing

#### Content and structure

- When selecting the descriptive writing question, candidates needed to ensure careful consideration of the structure of their response. When describing a location, it would have been helpful for candidates to think of this as though through the lens of a camera, with an opening paragraph to provide a long shot or overview of the scene, establishing tone, mood, and atmosphere, before moving to a series of paragraphs 'zooming in' on specific details or people. The final paragraph may then return to a detail from the opening paragraph, to suggest a change of mood or atmosphere or consider emotional impact. When describing a person, locating them within a scene and focusing not only on physical appearance, but mannerisms and behaviour, and using 'showing' to indicate their feelings could have been a more effective approach.
- Some responses were not well-balanced. If the question has two aspects, such as the questions here, fairly equal coverage of these two aspects would have produced a more successful response rather than focusing heavily on one aspect and covering the second only briefly. Establishing contrast (beyond that specified by the question) would also have helped candidates to create balance in their responses. When responding to a single aspect question, balance can be achieved by ensuring that the focus is not just on overview but also on individual characters or specific details; thinking about who as well as what is in a scene and moving from overview to specific detail.
- Candidates needed to ensure that their response was carefully organised. When describing scenes as in the two questions on this paper, this organisation could have been based on spatial or time chronological, while when describing a person, this could have been approached by focusing initially on their physical appearance, before describing their mannerisms, behaviour, feelings or interaction with their environment.
- When choosing one of the descriptive writing questions, it was important that candidates avoided slipping into narrative. They should remember that descriptive writing should convey a sense of the place, experience or person specified, while narrative writing focuses on a series of events which combine to create a complete story. Using the present tense and third person voice can help candidates remain focused on description. If using first person voice, it would be helpful for candidates to think of this voice as the observer, rather than the narrator.
- Using a wide range of figurative language techniques (moving beyond similes to metaphor, personification, pathetic fallacy etc.), sound devices (such as onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance) and the five senses would have helped candidates to produce a more successful descriptive response which would have allowed the reader to clearly visualise what was being described.

#### Style and accuracy

- When considering the vocabulary to use in their response, candidates needed to ensure that this was both precise and effective. Adjectives chosen to convey precise meaning and active verbs should be used to help create a clear sense of what was being described.
- Consistency of tense as well as the correct use of articles was essential for candidates to secure marks in the higher levels.
- Candidates needed to ensure they used a wide range of well-constructed sentences accurately, manipulating these for specific effect. For example, using short, simple sentences to reinforce a sense of something being absent, 'Silence fell on the sleeping park.' or using longer complex sentences to emphasise the chaos of a scene, 'As children scream with delight while chasing each other through the grass, frantic parents struggle to keep track of them, all while a dog barks excitedly, straining at its lead keen to join the children's game'.
- Candidates needed to demonstrate an accurate use of a wide range of punctuation, including colons, semi-colons, and brackets, in addition to full stops, commas (for various purposes), question and exclamation marks.

#### General

- Candidates must remember that how they write is as important as what they write for both questions. As such, they should take time to craft their response to ensure it shows the range of skills required, rather than using their time to write pieces which far exceed the indicative word count as these responses frequently show less control and focus than is required for success.

## Question 4

### Example Candidate Response – low

### Examiner comments

B

Last Sunday i was sleeping i heard the voice of Phone bell ringing when i saw ~~why~~ ~~from~~ ~~to~~ my friend Calling me which name is ahmed and he is my old friend when i took up the call they told a plan to me. Plan is about my friend Ali birthday, we are going to Celebrate their birthday and arrange a very nice gift which they do not expect from us. First of all we booked a 5 star hotel for Celebrating their birthday ~~and~~ this hotel was only booked for birthday party. when we free from booking process we go to apple store and buy iphone for him in black colour and his dream was to buy iphone in black colour and the phone we buy for him was the latest phone after the payment of Phone we go to gift shop and Pack their gift. We Call some other friends to Celebrate party after Completing this work we Call to our friend Ali whose birthday was today and tell them the address of hotel and tell them that we are do dinner outside but they do not know we arrange a birthday party. The party starting timing was 6:30 pm but the get late and Come at 7:30 pm we close his eyes and slowly

1 The candidate begins with an attempt to use a figurative language device, personifying the ring of the phone.

2 The candidate provides a narrative which has a clear beginning, middle and end with the scenario established through the phone call outlining the plan to purchase a surprise gift for a friend.

3 The inclusion of specific details, beginning here with the booking of the hotel, help to build a sense of anticipation of the event.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

Slowly <sup>4</sup> go to our table, table is very beautifully decorated with flowers and ribbio and our background theme is black and silver which are looking amazing and Coincident is that our friend also wearing black pent Court when we reached to our table we said him to open eyes when he opened his eyes he was shocked and in our love started crying it is very emotional <sup>5</sup> Sene i do not able to describe them it's time to Cut the Cake and eat food, their food taste was amazing and their serving style is also amazing after finishing the food we are going to give his gift which they do not exepcted when we take out the phone the do not realize its phone because it was packed when he start to open the packing he Saw iphone box when they open the box he Saw a phone which was his dream he was <sup>6</sup> emotional and hage with us and start crying, after the said <sup>7</sup> i do not expected that you give <sup>8</sup> a very nice gift to me.

<sup>4</sup> The candidate's repetition of 'slowly' delays the moment of revealing the gift and again helps to build a sense of anticipation and tension.

<sup>5</sup> The focus on the reaction of the character is an attempt at using 'showing' and creates a moment of emotional impact.

<sup>6</sup> The candidate uses 'showing' here to convey the happiness experienced by the character on receipt of the gift.

<sup>7</sup> The narrative is brought to an appropriate conclusion which refers back to the question and completes the scenario established at the outset.

<sup>8</sup> At times, as here, the candidate punctuates the end of sentences correctly with a full stop. The candidate's range of vocabulary is mostly simple and, at times, repetitive, however some choices move beyond this, such as 'celebrate', 'process', 'latest', 'completing', 'beautifully decorated', 'reached', 'emotional', 'amazing' and 'realize' (where the American spelling is acceptable).

Content and structure = 5 out of 10  
Style and accuracy = 3 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
8 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Content and structure

- While the candidate used some narrative features, there needed to be more evidence of vivid sensory details. A wider range of figurative language could have been used to create a more immersive and engaging response. For example, rather than stating that the ‘table is very beautifully decorated with flowers and ribbio’, the candidate could have used a simile and sensory detail to create a clearer image for the reader such as, ‘The table was an incredible display, covered in beautiful, fragrant flowers that cascaded like a waterfall of colour, accompanied by silky ribbons that fluttered gently with the breeze’.
- The response could have been improved with an increased focus on developing characterisation through the employment of ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. For example, when focusing on Ali’s reaction to the surprise, rather than using ‘telling’ (‘when he opened his eyes he was shocked’), using a combination of ‘showing’ and direct speech would have helped to show Ali’s character more clearly. For example, ‘As he slowly opened his eyes, his breath caught in his throat, and his wide-eyed gaze darted from the table to our faces. “I can’t believe you’ve done all this for me!” he said, a broad smile lighting up his face and tears forming in his eyes’.
- Paragraphing would have helped to make the candidate’s organisation of the response clearer and improved the effectiveness.

### Style and accuracy

- The narrative response linked together ideas and events in a straightforward manner and attempted to use simple sentence structures to convey the basic sequence of actions and thoughts. For example, sentences like ‘Last Sunday I was sleeping I heard the voice of phone bell ringing’ and ‘First of all we booked a 5 star hotel for celebrating their birthday’ kept the structure simple; however, these sentences needed full stops at the end to improve clarity.
- There was some accuracy in the use of spelling, but there were also noticeable errors. While words like ‘friend’, ‘beautifully’ and ‘emotional’ were spelt correctly, there were also several mistakes in words such as ‘plen’, ‘ribbio’, ‘sene’, ‘exepcted’ and ‘hage’. The candidate would have benefited from taking the time to carefully proofread their work to identify these sorts of slips.
- Some word choices were incorrect or awkward, such as ‘which name is Ahmad’ and ‘we go to Apple store and buy iPhone for him in black colour.’ These errors indicated a need for more careful vocabulary selection and possibly a broader range of vocabulary choices. While the vocabulary was simple and mostly accurate, with some choices moving beyond this, the repetitive use of basic words like ‘friend’, ‘birthday’, and ‘gift’ (taken from the question) without variation or more descriptive language limited this response.
- Punctuation was present but inconsistent; many sentences lacked full stops or commas, leading to run-on sentences and sentences punctuated with commas where full stops were required. The candidate needed to ensure that sentence separation was accurately marked with full stops to improve the clarity of the response.
- The use of capital letters for names and when using the personal pronoun ‘I’ would have helped to improve the level of this response.
- Ensuring the inclusion of the definite article when required would have improved this response. For example, ‘after payment of phone we go to gift shop’ which should read, ‘After *the* payment of *the* phone, we went to *the* gift shop.’ This was typical of an error frequently seen throughout the response.

## Question 5

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

The sun shined profusely as blades of light hit the rickety chair. The birds chirped while one sat at the windowsill drinking water from a pot of clay placed there. While the atmosphere radiated peace and calm, I rummaged chaotically throughout the box barely holding on for its life. 'I need to finish packing today', I thought as I threw the books from the box into a gargantuan suitcase. My old age had made me even more idle than I was in high school.

Clap. A photograph fell from a book I was going to place in the suitcase.

When I saw the photograph, memories came rushing back. It was a polaroid with "Class of 2007" ~~written in~~ carved intricately with a pink marker at its upper white edge. I was reminded of the best day of my life at high school; the day of the seniors' talent show. Me and my best friends got ready to the best of our abilities. We all wore the classic bootcut jeans with pink t-shirts and adorned cute jewellery.

The talent show was held in the auditorium. We opened the door and excitedly stepped

1 The response begins with a narrative feature, a metaphor, which hints at the protagonist's advanced age and fragility which is later contrasted to the vitality of their memories.

2 The verb-adverb combination aids characterisation, another example of a narrative feature.

3 The use of the onomatopoeic word 'Clap' breaks the calm, signalling the beginning of something that will unsettle the atmosphere established at the outset. The sudden shift draws the reader's attention, creating a minor disruption that foreshadows a greater tension to come.

4 The act of seeing the polaroid triggers a metaphorical 'flood' of vivid memories about the 'best day' of the protagonist's life. The metaphor aids characterisation by portraying the protagonist as someone who places great value on memories, shown by their emotional response to the photograph followed by the subsequent detailed recollection of a pivotal event from high school, and furthering the range of narrative features employed.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

inside. Our faces lit up as soon as we entered the auditorium. The ceiling was full of colourful balloons. The walls were flooded with pictures of the seniors, fairy lights <sup>carved</sup> ~~carving~~ their way through the pictures seamlessly. The air was thick with excitement and filled with the hustle and bustle of students talking and gossiping. The stage was marvelously set up with a poster <sup>at the top</sup> with the words 'Class of 2007' beautifully written on it. The decor team had done an exceptional job. The fully dressed up students filled the chairs as little pieces of a puzzle. ~~The students fully dressed up students filled the chairs as little pieces.~~ And the show began. 5 6

My face marvelled at every performance as I cheered for my classmates showcasing their best talents. In the middle of the talent show, while everyone was enjoying to their fullest, the lights went out! The whole auditorium whispered in confusion as the host team seemed to be doing nothing about it. "Booo!" ~~cried out~~ bellowed one of my classmates. 7

5 Sensory detail, focusing on the sights and sounds of the auditorium, alongside the use of pathetic fallacy, 'the air was thick with excitement' establishes the setting, again using a range of narrative features.

6 The manipulation of structure at sentence and paragraph level for deliberate effect, with the use of the single, short-sentence paragraph 'And the show began', establishes a sense of excitement, helping to drive the narrative forward.

7 With the introduction of the blackout, the candidate establishes tension, showing careful organisation of the narrative for deliberate effect.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Creak . Creak. <sup>8</sup>

A single spot light suddenly illuminated the stage. ~~Suddenly, the~~ Someone started singing. I recognized the voice immediately. <sup>9</sup>

"It can't be", I muttered as my friends gasped. <sup>10</sup>

The lights turned on providing us a more clear view. The entire auditorium screamed as they realized who it was. It was my favourite rock band! All of the students were euphoric as they screamed the song that had topped the charts that year. "I cannot believe it", I screamed as tears <sup>12</sup>

filled my eyes. You do not get to see your favourite rock band at your school every day. After the amazing performance, we took pictures with the rock band and learnt that ~~they~~ our school was hosting a reality show that filmed ~~off~~ bands carrying out various activities and decided to surprise us. The next day, we were given the polaroids ~~of~~ with the class and the band. I excitedly took the polaroid and wrote 'Class of 2007' on it with a bright pink marker. <sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The candidate uses a further example of a narrative feature as repetition of the onomatopoeic word 'Creak' signals the entrance of the band onto the stage under the cover of darkness.

<sup>9</sup> The candidate uses short sentences to aid characterisation, another narrative feature, as they convey the protagonist's gradual recognition of what is happening.

<sup>10</sup> Using direct speech further aids characterisation, with the use of the verb 'muttered' emphasising the protagonist's sense of incredulity.

<sup>11</sup> The candidate establishes tension which is then released as the lights reveal who is singing. Again, this build up and release of tension shows careful control of structure and organisation of the narrative for deliberate effect.

<sup>12</sup> The candidate aids characterisation by the use of direct speech, with the addition of the verb 'screamed' and the use of 'showing' in the phrase 'tears filled my eyes' indicating how emotionally overwhelmed the protagonist is at this moment.

<sup>13</sup> The reference to the 'bright pink marker' creates a cyclical narrative by referring back to an image established at the outset, showing a thoughtful control of the response.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

The corners of my lips curled into a smile as I remembered the golden days of my life. This trip ~~back~~<sup>down</sup> to the memory was certainly needed and it gave me energy to pack for my flight to Europe to see my lovely children. Sometimes, all you need is a ~~small~~ little memory from your ~~young~~ days to days of youth to feel better.

14 The mention of their 'lovely children' implies that the protagonist has a strong familial bond, further deepening characterisation by establishing a dimension of care and affection through indicating that their role as a parent is central to their identity.

15 Throughout this response, the candidate accurately uses a wide range of well-constructed sentences, including simple, compound and complex structures. A precise, extensive and effective range of vocabulary is also evident.

16 The spelling in this piece is highly accurate. The spelling of 'marvelously' is acceptable as American spellings are permissible on this paper. Punctuation in this response is generally accurate, aside from slips in the use of the semi-colon and the placement of commas outside the closing speech mark when writing direct speech.

Content and structure = 9 out of 10  
Style and accuracy = 13 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
22 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Content and structure

- To improve, the candidate needed to employ 'showing' rather than 'telling' with actions and sensory details to convey the protagonist's emotions rather than direct statements.
- The candidate could have extended the tension in the moment of the blackout, rather than immediately revealing the arrival of the rock band. This moment was key to the emotional climax of the narrative and the use of sensory details and short sentences to convey the protagonist's confusion and excitement would have increased its effectiveness.
- The candidate's control of the timeframe could have been improved as the response reached its conclusion. The transition from the protagonist's memory of the talent show back to the present was somewhat abrupt. This could have been improved by connecting the emotions of the memory with her current situation.

### Style and accuracy

- Consistency was needed in the punctuation of direct speech, with punctuation moved inside the closing speech mark, for example, in the case of "It can't be", I muttered as my friends gasped.' and "I cannot believe it", I screamed as tears filled my eyes.' A wider range of punctuation marks, to include apostrophes, brackets, ellipsis, question marks etc. is also advised.
- Correcting the plural form of 'seniors talent show' to 'seniors' talent show' to indicate possession, in addition to including examples of apostrophes for both omission and possession throughout the response would have helped improve this response.
- Avoiding combining exclamation marks with full stops, as in the case of 'It was my favourite rock band!.' would have helped to improve this response.
- This response exceeded the indicative word count and, had the candidate written less, they would have had time to check their response for errors, particularly in punctuation, and as such achieved a higher mark.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

It was a bright sunny day when my father came and told us to get ready as we are moving to a new house. It <sup>was</sup> ~~pleasant~~ ~~to~~ be very exciting for me and my brother as moving to a new house means new school, new neighbourhood and new friends. However it was very ~~hard~~ <sup>2</sup> overwhelming for my mother. As she was responsible for packing all the household. It is quite weird when my mother is doing some kind of work and is tired she becomes very angry and in that time period if someone disturbs her then you are in big trouble. It is like fire coming out of the volcano. So me and my brother tried not to make it hard for her and started packing our own things. It was totally a ~~disast~~ disaster in house since <sup>4</sup> we got only two days for packing so everyone was running in the house in hurry.

1 The candidate begins by establishing the scenario of the family moving to a new house.

2 The candidate's repetition of the word 'new' emphasises the complete change that is taking place in the lives of the family and is an example of using a structural technique for effect at sentence level.

3 The candidate uses a figurative language technique with the simile 'like fire coming out of a volcano' effectively aiding characterisation of the mother by implying that she has an explosive temper.

4 The metaphorical reference to the house as a 'disaster' implies the chaos as the family are packing and furthers the use of narrative features.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

"It is shifting day" shouted ~~my~~ <sup>to</sup> my brother early in the morning. His excitement was on top. <sup>5</sup>  
 Honestly, I was ~~excited~~ excited too but at the same time nervous because since I was borned I lived in this house and moving to another was quite emotional for everyone in our family but due to retirement of my father's job we had to move. <sup>6</sup>  
 Till the evening we put all of our stuff in the car and leave. It was a good 1 hour drive filled with excitement and ~~nervousness~~ nervousness because me and my brother was seeing the house for the first time. As my father parked the car we jumped out and ran ~~insider~~ <sup>8</sup> towards the house. "We opened the door and excitedly stepped inside" <sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup>

**5** The use of dialogue, another example of a narrative feature, adds a sense of realism and immediacy to the scene described as well as helping to convey the brother's excitement for the move.

**6** The hyperbolic sentence 'His excitement was on top' further emphasises the brother's enthusiasm for the move and is another use of narrative features, in this case to aid characterisation.

**7** The candidate shows a contrast between the unbridled enthusiasm of the brother and the mixed emotions of the narrator helping to establish them as different characters.

**8** The explanation of the narrator's apprehension outlines the reason for the move providing further context for the unfolding narrative.

**9** The characters' actions are an example of the candidate using 'showing' (a narrative feature) to imply their excitement upon arrival at their new home.

**10** The sentence fits logically into the narrative at this moment, showing that the candidate has carefully planned its inclusion.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

My brother was not believing on his eyes as it was a huge house with a lot of fun places like swimming pool. We all were filled with joy but little did we know that our excitement will be coming to an end. It was night and we were all tired by setting ~~all~~ the things on their place so we went to sleep. ~~The car~~ My brother and I were sharing the room. Suddenly at night my brother woke me up by screaming so loudly. I jumped out of the bed and looked at him. He was ~~so~~ petrified and said "pointing towards the door" "Someone is standing there" I replied in fear "No David ~~the~~ nobody is there. He said again that someone is there and he is coming toward me and then he started to scream again by hearing David's voice my mother and father ran towards our bedroom and try to calm David that it is only his imagination. The night passed by and we all gathered for breakfast in the morning ~~and~~ while my mother was cooking in the kitchen. She heard some ~~strange~~ noise giggles from my bedroom so she thought that I was laughing. When she entered there was no one ~~she~~ then she came towards the dining hall ~~at~~ and saw me sitting with my father waiting for breakfast. So she ~~was~~ got really scared and told this to my father. We thought it is a new place so that is why it is feeling different but at night I also ~~witness~~ witnessed what David saw. So I informed to my parent and from where we knew something is wrong with this house. Many paranormal activities happened with my family so we asked the neighbours from where we got to know that there is something wrong with this house as our neighbours

11 The use of the phrase 'little did we know that our excitement will be coming to an end' introduces a darker tone, foreshadowing the supernatural events to come. This is an example of the candidate making a structural choice for deliberate effect.

12 The use of the long sentence is an attempt to emphasise the confusion and terror of the situation.

13 The repetition of the same event occurring to the different characters on consecutive nights builds tension and is an example of the candidate using another narrative feature.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

also heard strange noises from the house.  
 due to which with broken heart we decided 14  
 to change our house again and nobody was  
 happy about it. 15

16

**14** Although somewhat abrupt, perhaps because the candidate was running out of time having written such a lengthy response, the ending brings the narrative full circle with the family set to move again.

**15** The candidate uses a variety of sentence structures throughout the response. They use straightforward and appropriate vocabulary, with some examples moving beyond this such as 'overwhelming', 'disturbs', 'honestly', 'suddenly', 'petrified', 'imagination', 'gathered', 'witnessed' and 'paranormal'.

**16** The candidate uses a straightforward range of spelling with common words and some, which are often misspelt, such as 'quite' and 'weird', correctly spelt. They accurately punctuate the end of sentences with full stops, use commas to separate items in a list and after the transitional expression 'Honestly'. The candidate uses apostrophes accurately for possession. Direct speech is within speech marks, although the punctuation within the closing speech mark is omitted meaning the punctuation of direct speech is not wholly accurate.

Content and structure = 7 out of 10  
 Style and accuracy = 7 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
 14 out of 25**



## How the candidate could improve their answer

### Content and structure

- While the narrative was engaging, there were areas where more detail could have enhanced the story. For example, when describing the new house, instead of simply stating, 'it was a huge house with a lot of fun places like a swimming pool,' the candidate could have described the house's appearance, the feeling it inculcated, and the children's specific reactions in more vivid detail which would have heightened the contrast between the initial excitement and the later fear.
- Some of the events, such as the paranormal activities, would have benefited from more descriptive detail to build tension and atmosphere. While dialogue was used effectively to show interaction and begin to develop character, this could have been more integrated into the narrative to further enhance character development and pacing. Instead of just reporting what the characters said, the candidate could have described how they said it, their expressions, and the reactions of others.

### Style and accuracy

- The candidate generally demonstrated a solid grasp of simple sentence structure, with sentences that were clear and conveyed meaning effectively, for example, 'It was a bright sunny day when my father came and told us to get ready as we are moving to a new house'. In addition, more complex structures were attempted, sometimes with success. For example, the sentence 'Honestly, I was excited too but at the same time nervous because since I was born I lived in this house and moving to another was quite emotional for everyone in our family' was complex and effectively conveyed a mix of emotions, combining excitement and nervousness while reflecting on the emotional attachment to the old house. However, there was an awkwardness in phrasing and some minor grammatical errors which detracted from the accuracy of the more complex constructions and impeded flow for the reader. In addition, the sentence structures were often repetitive, with many sentences beginning with 'It was' or 'My brother.' Instead of starting sentences with the subject, the candidate could have varied the structure by beginning with an adjective, adverb, prepositional phrase, infinitive phrase, gerund phrase, participle phrase or adverb clause.
- The vocabulary used in the response was straightforward and appropriate and sometimes moved beyond this with examples such as 'overwhelming', 'disturbs', 'petrified', 'imagination', 'gathered', 'witnessed' and 'paranormal'. The candidate used descriptive language to express emotions and set the scene, such as 'It is like fire coming out of the volcano' to describe the mother's anger. Overall, while the vocabulary was suitable, it did not move beyond straightforward and was, in some cases, repetitive, with phrases like 'excited', 'nervous', and 'scared' used multiple times. The candidate needed to expand their vocabulary range to improve.
- The response used a straightforward range of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Common words and phrases were generally spelt correctly, however there were some slips, for example, 'alot', 'excitment', 'nerveousness', 'dinning' and 'moring'. More careful proofreading would have helped avoid these errors.
- A straightforward range of punctuation was used appropriately to structure sentences and the candidate attempted to move beyond this with the use of direct speech.
- Crafting the response to ensure opportunities to use a wider range of punctuation marks, for example, question marks, exclamation marks, brackets and semi-colons, would have helped improve this response.
- The candidate needed to pay attention to the consistency of tense, use of the correct verb forms, for example, 'born' instead of 'borned', and ensure subject-verb agreement throughout the narrative.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

### Narrative writing

#### Content and structure

- Candidates needed to consider carefully how they structured and organised their narrative, to ensure a clear beginning, middle, and end, with a cohesive plot that smoothly transitioned between these parts. Establishing conflict early in the narrative and creating tension would have helped to make candidates' narratives more engaging. It was important that candidates carefully considered the end of their narrative, resolving the conflict in a satisfying way by tying up loose ends, or leaving the story on an intentional, thoughtfully crafted cliffhanger rather than providing a hurried conclusion which was clearly not a definite or clearly signalled ending.
- To ensure responses were well-balanced, candidates needed to consider a careful balance between passages of descriptive scene setting, character development, and plot advancement, rather than focusing too heavily on just one of these. Pace was also important, especially so within the context of 350–450 words. Rather than writing extensive background detail (for example, describing at length a character's morning routine before introducing any action) candidates should consider transporting the reader into the heart of the action at the outset and shifting between description, dialogue and action to maintain a suitable pace of progression for their narrative.
- To write a carefully organised narrative, candidates needed to ensure a logical progression from the introduction to the climax and resolution. Developing characters and settings early in the response would have helped candidates to establish the story's context, while using transitions between scenes would have helped to maintain flow and clarity. Each section of the narrative should build on the previous one, leading towards the climax.
- In more successful responses, clear paragraphing made the writing more coherent and structured. It was important that candidates carefully planned both when to begin a new paragraph and what to write in terms of their transition from one to another. Using the acronym TiPToP (Time Place Topic Person) can help candidates to learn when to change from one paragraph to another, while using transitional expressions (such as 'Suddenly', 'In the meantime', 'Before long' etc.) can aid narrative flow between paragraphs.
- To aid characterisation, candidates should adopt the approach of 'showing' rather than 'telling'. Limiting the number of characters, but giving them distinct personalities, perhaps in contrast to one another, produced more successful narrative writing than having lots of under-developed characters.
- Dialogue is an important aspect of narrative writing and producing engaging dialogue would have helped candidates to develop characterisation and advance the plot. It was essential that, where dialogue was used, it was punctuated and formatted accurately, with a new line used each time the speaker changed, and the appropriate punctuation mark used within the closing speech mark. In addition, attention needed to be paid to varying structure, either placing what was said before how it was spoken or vice versa, and sometimes placing how the character was speaking within what they were saying. For example:  
'I can't wait to see what's behind the door,' whispered Punjab enthusiastically.  
Assan stuttered as he replied nervously, 'Are you sure we should open it?'  
'Don't be a wimp,' said Punjab, rolling his eyes. 'Whatever is in there, we are ready for it!'
- Ensuring that specific alternatives to the verb 'said' were employed, in conjunction with appropriate adverbs where necessary, would also help to raise the level of candidates' responses. In addition, 'showing' needed to be embedded into dialogue to further develop character. It should also be remembered, however, that a piece of dialogue does not always need the addition of how a character is speaking as this can then become monotonous.

#### Style and accuracy

- Where candidates included idioms in their narratives, these needed to be used appropriately and with care. It should be remembered that the use of idioms can lead to writing sounding less natural (and therefore less successful).
- Accuracy and range of punctuation was an element to which candidates needed to pay closer attention, particularly with regards to the use of apostrophes for both omission and possession, avoiding comma splicing and accurately punctuating direct speech.
- As with descriptive writing, taking care with the consistency of tense was essential to produce a successful response to the narrative writing questions.

#### General

- Candidates needed to avoid producing narrative writing which far exceeded the indicative word count as this tended to result in less tightly controlled, and therefore less successful, pieces overall.

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