



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Specimen Paper Answers – Paper 1

Cambridge O Level English Language 1123

For examination from 2024



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Introduction

These specimen answers have been produced by Cambridge International ahead of the examination in 2024 to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge O Level English Language. We have selected questions from Specimen Paper 1, Questions 1, 2, 3(a) and 3(b).

The marks given are for guidance only and are accompanied by a brief commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answers. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could be obtained. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates for each question.

The specimen materials are available to download from the [School Support Hub](#)

2024 Specimen Paper 01

2024 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 01

2024 Specimen Insert 01

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

Details of the assessment

The syllabus for Cambridge O Level English Language 1123 is available at www.cambridgeinternational.org

Paper 1 – Reading

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

Candidates answer **all** the questions in two compulsory sections. Candidates write their answers in the space provided on the question paper.

The texts are printed in the question paper insert.

Dictionaries must **not** be used.

Section A Comprehension and Use of Language (25 marks)

Question 1 Comprehension task

Candidates respond to a series of sub-questions based on Text A, a narrative text. These are short answers testing understanding of both explicit and implicit meanings.

Text A is approximately 900 words long and is from either the twentieth or the twenty-first century.

This question tests the following reading assessment objectives (16 marks):

- R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitude.

Question 2 Use of Language task

Candidates respond to a series of sub-questions based on Text A. These are short answers worth a total of nine marks relating to the author's use of language and the effect this has.

This question tests the following reading assessment objective (9 marks):

- R4 demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects and influence readers.

Section B Summary and Short response (25 marks)

Question 3a Summary task

Candidates answer a summary task in response to Text B. Candidates write a summary as continuous writing of no more than 150 words.

Text B is approximately 550–600 words long.

This question tests the following reading assessment objectives (10 marks):

- R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- R5 select and use information for specific purposes.

This question also tests the following writing assessment objectives (10 marks):

- W2 organise and structure ideas and opinions for deliberate effect
- W3 use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures appropriate to context.

Question 3b Short response task

Candidates give a short response to show understanding of implicit meanings and attitude in response to Text B.

This question tests the following reading assessment objective (5 marks):

- R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes.

Text A

Read **Text A** and answer **Question 1** and **Question 2** on the question paper.

Text A: Nameless

Mo and Marwood have finally found Nameless. They had been looking for this large redwood tree that no one had ever attempted to climb before. Redwood trees can live for more than 2000 years and are the world's tallest living trees.

Mo and Marwood stood at the base of Nameless, peering upwards into its crown. The structure of any redwood tree is the opposite of most trees, whose branches get smaller towards the top. Nameless, this ancient giant of the forest, grew increasingly complicated and more massive higher off the ground.

The tree was about 100 metres tall with a diameter of about 3 metres near its base. The trunk was an enormous cylinder of soft crumbly bark. Far above the ground, a few small wispy branches popped out of the trunk, but there were no branches on its lower reaches. Higher up still, a tangle of limbs emerged and wandered out of sight, buried in clouds of foliage. Mo and Marwood couldn't see its top. 5

Marwood recalled that in ideal conditions, a redwood can grow from a seed into a tree that's an astonishing 16 metres tall in just its first 20 years of life, increasing in height by nearly a metre annually. After that, it grows faster still. Adding mass at an accelerating rate, it can exceed 75 cm in diameter at chest height in fewer than 60 years. The growth of redwoods generally slows down after the first 100 years, though by the age of eight hundred, they may have reached a height as tall as a 30-storey building. Redwoods are shade-tolerant. They can survive in dark places at the bottom of a forest, in the deep shade of their elders, where few other trees would survive. A small redwood living in deep shade hardly grows at all, but doesn't die; it goes into a kind of suspended animation. If it is hit by light, it once again grows with relentless speed. Nameless had clearly basked in light – it was huge. 10 15

'You aren't going to try to climb it, are you?' asked Marwood incredulously. 20

No answer.

Mo looked again at the lowest branch of a smaller tree standing next to Nameless. Without warning, he leapt, grabbed and swung himself up onto the branch in one fluid movement and began climbing upwards.

'I really don't think that's very smart,' Marwood warned from below. 25

Ten minutes later, Mo arrived at the top of the smaller tree. The tree had narrowed to a pole thinner than his wrist, and began swaying under his weight. Having got as high as he could go, Mo looked across at Nameless and spotted a spray of slender branches on the curving wall of its monstrous trunk. A little branch stuck out, directly in front of him. Mo wanted to grab that branch. He edged closer to it, and the smaller tree began to bend under his weight. 30

There was a gap between the branch of the smaller tree and Nameless. From the ground, Mo hadn't noticed that gap, expecting that the little tree's branches touched the big tree's branches, providing a bridge to walk across. Mo studied the situation. If he could just reach out far enough, he might be able to grab that little branch on Nameless.

Trying not to think about how high up he was, Mo focused his mind on the problem. The gap was really not very large, he thought. He would have to let go of the small redwood and make a leap up into the big tree, and grasp a branch with his hands, like a circus performer catching the bar of a swinging trapeze. He had to jump high, or his body wouldn't clear the branches of the smaller tree and he'd get tangled and would fall. 35

If I was standing on the ground and I had to make this jump, I could do it, he thought. So why not up here? He tried to force his hand to just let go of the tree. Just let go. 40

'I can't watch,' Marwood shouted furiously from below and closed his eyes. He dreaded hearing a scream followed by a meaty thud.

In the top of the tree Mo let go, and jumped.

He felt gravity go to zero. The world stopped. Mo watched the branch of the large redwood approach in slow motion and saw his fingers extend towards it. There was a jerk and he found himself hanging from the branch by both hands, bouncing with his feet kicking the air. Swinging hand-over-hand, he got himself over to the trunk and climbed the next three precarious metres onto a stronger branch. 45

He had arrived somewhere in the lower tiers of Nameless, just below the crown of the huge tree. The branches here were bigger and closer together. There was foliage everywhere – above, below, and on all sides – layer upon layer of leaves, like tents within tents. The tree hadn't looked so big from the ground. Climbing upwards slowly and steadily through the labyrinth, Mo lost sight of the ground. It felt as if he was passing through a membrane and entering another world. His senses were overwhelmed by an impression of life all around. Flaky, grey-green, and brownish plants, in all manner of shapes, hung from branches – drippy, frizzy, stringy, and hairy. He began picking pieces off, tucking them into his pocket. As he neared the upper surface of the redwood canopy, the lacework of branches glowed with varied shades of green and he broke out into the sunlight. 50 55

An hour after he'd jumped into it, Mo arrived at the top of Nameless. 'It's do-able.' he shouted down. 60

Question 1

Specimen answer (1)

(a) In what way is the structure of redwood trees ‘the opposite of most trees’ (line 2)?

Branches get bigger towards the top.

Mark for 1(a) = 1 out of 1

(b) Using your own words, explain what the text means by ‘ancient giant of the forest’ (line 3).

It's one of the oldest and tallest trees in the forest. It's a huge tree that has been there for hundreds or thousands of years.

Mark for 1(b) = 2 out of 2

(c) Give **two** features of the enormous trunk of Nameless that would make it difficult to begin to climb this particular tree (lines 5–9).

- *There were no branches on its lower reaches.*
 - *soft and crumbly*
-

Mark for 1(c) = 1 out of 2

(d) Give **two** details that show the ‘relentless speed’ (line 18) with which a redwood tree can grow, according to the text.

- *can grow from a seed into a tree that's 16m tall in 20 years*
 - *diameter can exceed 75 cm at chest height in less than 60 years*
-

Mark for 1(d) = 2 out of 2

(e) Explain what Mo is thinking when he ‘looked again at the lowest branch of a smaller tree standing next to Nameless’ (line 22).

He is wondering about that tree.

Mark for 1(e) = 0 out of 1

(f) (i) How does Mo feel about trying to climb Nameless (lines 22–34)? (ii) Give **two** details from the text to support your answer.

He is excited about the idea.

He just leaps onto the smaller tree and he only takes ten minutes to climb the smaller tree.

Mark for 1(f) = 3 out of 3

(g) (i) During his climb, Mo discovered a problem which he had not seen when he was on the ground. What was the problem?

From the ground he hadn't noticed the gap between the branch of the smaller tree and Nameless.

(ii) What did Mo decide to do to solve the problem?

jumped from the one tree to the other

Mark for 1(g) = 2 out of 2

(h) Explain **using your own words** Marwood's different feelings about Mo climbing Nameless. Give **three** details from anywhere in the text to support your answer.

At first Marwood can't believe Mo is going to do it. In line 20 he says 'You aren't going to climb it are you? He is angry and worried Mo's going to get hurt when he shouts he can't watch and 'I really don't think that's very smart'.

Mark for 1(h) = 3 out of 3

Total mark awarded = 14 out of 16

Examiner comment

- **(a)** The response correctly interprets the information in the text in own words – since ‘most trees have branches that get smaller towards the top’. The opposite is true of Nameless. Use of own words is not a requirement of this question, so ‘branches do not get smaller towards the top’ would also have been fine for the mark.
- **(b)** The response shows precise understanding of the meaning of both words describing the tree (ancient and giant) in the second part of this answer: ‘there for hundreds or thousands of years’ correctly explains the meaning of ‘ancient’; ‘huge’ correctly explains the meaning of ‘giant’. The comparatives, ‘one of the oldest and tallest trees’ lack the precision of the ideas ‘very old’ and ‘very tall’ in the mark scheme.
- **(c)** Whilst the first answer is correct, the second makes no mention of the bark of the tree. The soft, crumbly bark is a feature of the enormous trunk that would make climbing it particularly difficult.
- **(d)** The answer offers two creditworthy details from the text to support the claim that redwood trees can grow with ‘relentless speed’.
- **(e)** The response does not evidence clear understanding that the smaller tree is being considered as a potential access route to Nameless.
- **(f)** A relevant feeling is suggested (excitement) and two distinct details from the text have been offered in support. ‘He just leaps’ communicates the idea of leaping without any hesitation which is covered in bullet one of the mark scheme listed details, and the speed of Mo’s first ten minutes of climbing is an idea covered in bullet two of the mark scheme listed details.
- **(g)** Both parts (i) and (ii) offer clear evidence of understanding.
- **(h)** This is a secure, full answer, offering clear evidence that different feelings have been recognised and understood. The explanation is written in own words and feelings of disbelief, anger and worry are identified. Three relevant details from the text have been suggested in support. Although the supporting detail for ‘anger’ would have been more convincing with the addition of ‘furiously’, the response is secure enough for full marks.

Specimen answer (2)

(a) In what way is the structure of redwood trees ‘the opposite of most trees’ (line 2)?

The structure of redwood trees is the opposite of most trees because the structure of redwood trees ‘grew increasingly complicated and more massive higher off the ground’.

Mark for 1(a) = 1 out of 1

(b) Using your own words, explain what the text means by ‘ancient giant of the forest’ (line 3).

Nameless is a huge ancient tree.

Mark for 1(b) = 1 out of 2

(c) Give **two** features of the enormous trunk of Nameless that would make it difficult to begin to climb this particular tree (lines 5–9).

- *The trunk was enormous*
- *The trunk was of soft crumbly bark*

Mark for 1(c) = 1 out of 2

(d) Give **two** details that show the ‘relentless speed’ (line 18) with which a redwood tree can grow, according to the text.

- *grows 16m in first 20 years*
- *adding mass at an accelerating rate*

Mark for 1(d) = 1 out of 2

(e) Explain what Mo is thinking when he ‘looked again at the lowest branch of a smaller tree standing next to Nameless’ (line 22).

She can climb that one to help get up Nameless.

Mark for 1(e) = 1 out of 1

(f) (i) How does Mo feel about trying to climb Nameless (lines 22–34)? (ii) Give **two** details from the text to support your answer.

He is positive.

He gets as high as he could.

Mark for 1(f) = 1 out of 3

(g) (i) During his climb, Mo discovered a problem which he had not seen when he was on the ground.

What was the problem?

Little tree's branches did not touch the big tree's branches so he could^{not} walk across.

(ii) What did Mo decide to do to solve the problem?

*To solve the problem Mo decides to let go and of the small redwood tree and make a leap up into the big tree and grasp a branch with his hands like a circus performer catching the bar of a swing trapeze**

**gii cont...the bar of a swinging trapeze*

Mark for 1(g) = 2 out of 2

(h) Explain **using your own words** Marwood's different feelings about Mo climbing Nameless.

Give **three** details from anywhere in the text to support your answer.

He is very surprised and then angry because he thinks he will get hurt he thinks Mo is being stupid and just showing off.

Mark for 1(h) = 2 out of 3

Total mark awarded = 10 out of 16

Examiner comment

- (a)** The response demonstrates evidence of reading on to the end of the paragraph and selection of an appropriate explanation to show understanding. Just the quotation itself ('more massive higher off the ground') would have been sufficient to score the mark. To gain the mark with 'grew increasingly complicated', a reference to branches would be required. The spelling errors can be tolerated since the question does not assess writing skills and the errors do not impede communication of understanding.
- (b)** The word 'giant' has been explained by 'enormous' in this response, though 'ancient' has simply been repeated rather than explained.
- (c)** The second bullet of the answer correctly identifies the soft, crumbly bark as a feature of this particular tree's trunk. The first bullet simply repeats information that is in the question.
- (d)** There is just one detail from the text offered here in support of the speed of growth – growing 16m in the first 20 years.
- (e)** The idea that this smaller tree presents a way to gain access to Nameless has been understood here. The slip with the pronoun 'she' does not dilute evidence that the key idea has been understood and so can be ignored.
- (f)** A relevant feeling – 'positive' – is suggested but the detail offered is not clearly used to support that idea.
- (g)(i)** This is a long explanation lifted from the text but does offer clear evidence that the problem has been understood, evidenced by the later addition of the word 'not'.
- (g)(ii)** The second part of the answer is creditworthy though also very long. – The answer has been continued outside of the designated response area. Since the decision was simply to jump from the one tree to the other, this could have been explained far more concisely.
- (h)** The response offers evidence in own words of some understanding in relation to the different feelings (surprised, angry, worried Mo will get hurt and thinks Mo is being stupid) but does not offer details / textual reference in support.

Specimen answer (3)

(a) In what way is the structure of redwood trees ‘the opposite of most trees’ (line 2)?

world’s tallest living trees

Mark for 1(a) = 0 out of 1

(b) Using your own words, explain what the text means by ‘ancient giant of the forest’ (line 3).

really tall, massif, very old

Mark for 1(b) = 2 out of 2

(c) Give **two** features of the enormous trunk of Nameless that would make it difficult to begin to climb this particular tree (lines 5–9).

- *100m tall*
 - *branches get smaller towards the top*
-

Mark for 1(c) = 0 out of 2

(d) Give **two** details that show the ‘relentless speed’ (line 18) with which a redwood tree can grow, according to the text.

- *it is hit by light*
 - *it grows from a seed to 16 cm tall*
-

Mark for 1(d) = 0 out of 2

(e) Explain what Mo is thinking when he ‘looked again at the lowest branch of a smaller tree standing next to Nameless’ (line 22).

I really don’t think that’s very smart

Mark for 1(e) = 0 out of 1

(f) (i) How does Mo feel about trying to climb Nameless (lines 22–34)? (ii) Give **two** details from the text to support your answer.

confident

It’s do-able

Mark for 1(f) = 1 out of 3

(g) (i) During his climb, Mo discovered a problem which he had not seen when he was on the ground.

What was the problem?

He was up high.

(ii) What did Mo decide to do to solve the problem?

His body wouldn't clear the branches and get tangled.

Mark for 1(g) = 0 out of 2

(h) Explain **using your own words** Marwood's different feelings about Mo climbing Nameless.

Give **three** details from anywhere in the text to support your answer.

He is really angry and he's dreaded hearing a scream.

Mark for 1(h) = 1 out of 3

Total mark awarded = 4 out of 16

Examiner comment

(a) The 'world's tallest living trees' does not relate to the reference in the question from line 2. The response copies the phrase from the introduction to the text.

(b) The use of a non-English word 'massif' can be ignored since the answer does not rely on it. There is enough explanation in the response to show understanding of both 'giant' and 'ancient' as they are used in this text.

(c) Neither of these details relate to the difficulty in beginning to climb this particular tree.

(d) Neither answer is correct – the second is closer but has no sense of speed and also uses the wrong measurement indicating the idea has not been fully understood.

(e) There is evidence of misreading in this incorrect response. In the text it is Marwood, not Mo, who says 'I don't think that's very smart.'

(f) The feeling 'confident' is relevant and can be credited; however, 'It's do-able' does not support that. It is a quotation from the very end of the text and does not relate to Mo's feelings as he is trying to climb the section highlighted in the question (lines 22–34).

(g)(i) The height of the tree is not a creditworthy answer since that was evident from the ground.

(g)(ii) The response lifts from the text identifying dangers Mo envisages when he is climbing rather than focusing on a solution. There is no evidence in the response to parts (i) or (ii) that the question has been read carefully and/or understood.

(h) The suggestion that Marwood is really angry is appropriate though the detail offered from the text does not support this suggestion of anger. The explanation overall is partial, showing some awareness of how Marwood feels.

Common errors and general guidance for candidates

The responses mostly provide focused answers to part questions. Reading back through responses to ensure they are complete helps candidates to target full marks.

Whilst copying out the question can help some candidates to focus, in examination conditions it may add unnecessary time pressure and invite copying errors. Errors that affect meaning and/or add incorrect additional information may dilute evidence of understanding.

To make efficient use of their time, candidates should focus on offering just the answer to each question, paying attention to the key words in the question and using the marks and space provided as a guide. Taking time to read back their answers is easier when explanations are not overlong. If it is necessary to cross out an answer and/or continue the response on an additional page of the answer booklet, then correct labelling is essential.

To evidence close reading skills, candidates need to be careful to follow precisely the guidance offered and refer to the correct section of text. Careful reference to key words and the line numbers in questions would have helped this response to target higher marks.

For further information about common mistakes made by candidates, please refer to the examiner reports which are published after the first exam series in 2024 on the [School Support Hub](#)

Question 2

Specimen answer (1)

(a) Read this extract from the text:

'He felt gravity go to zero. The world stopped. Mo watched the branch of the large redwood approach in slow motion and saw his fingers extend towards it.' (lines 45–46)

What does the writer want to suggest to us about the situation at this point in the story?

It's a critical moment in the story as the reader doesn't know if Mo will reach the branch or not.

Mark for 2(a) = 1 out of 1

(b) Explain why the writer uses the word 'stronger' rather than 'strong' in the expression

'a stronger branch' (line 49).

It is still not strong only stronger than the other one so could break.

Mark for 2(b) = 1 out of 1

(c) What **two** impressions does the writer want to convey to the reader in the sentence:

'There was foliage everywhere – above, below, and on all sides – layer upon layer of leaves, like tents within tents.' (lines 51–52)?

The leaves completely surround him and there's no way out, it is completely green.

Mark for 2(c) = 1 out of 2

(d) Read this sentence from the text:

'Climbing upwards slowly and steadily through the labyrinth, Mo lost sight of the ground.'
(lines 53–54)

What effect does the writer suggest about the tree by using the word 'labyrinth' to describe it?

It is confusing, its like a maze up there so Mo doesn't know which way to go.

Mark for 2(d) = 2 out of 2

- (e)** Identify **one example** from the text below of how the writer uses language effectively to convey Mo's feelings after Mo has lost sight of the ground:

'It felt as if he was passing through a membrane and entering another world. His senses were overwhelmed by an impression of life all around. Flaky, grey-green, and brownish plants, in all manner of shapes, hung from branches – drippy, frizzy, stringy, and hairy. He began picking pieces off, tucking them into his pocket. As he neared the upper surface of the redwood canopy, the lacework of branches glowed with varied shades of green and he broke out into the sunlight.' (lines 54–59)

Explain the impression the writer creates in the example you have identified.

Lacework of branches glowed.

This gives the impression of delicate fragile twigs and branches at the top letting the

bright sunlight through the gaps, the branches make beautiful patterns.

Mark for 2(e) = 3 out of 3

Total mark awarded = 8 out of 9

Examiner comment

- 2(a)** The response makes two observations which individually are creditworthy, and it clearly recognises that this is a 'critical moment' in the story. That anything could happen is evident in the second half of the response: 'the reader doesn't know' if Mo will be successful.
- 2(b)** The response evidences understanding of the implications of the branch being described as stronger rather than strong. The explanation covers the same idea as bullet three of the mark scheme.
- 2(c)** This answer shows understanding of being totally surrounded by greenery/leaves (bullet one of the mark scheme) but 'no way out' needs more careful explanation to evidence understanding of the description of 'layer upon layer' or the image of 'tents within tents'.
- 2(d)** There is clear understanding of both the meaning and implication of the word 'labyrinth' as it is used in this context. Note that 'It is confusing' on its own would have scored just one mark. 'Confusing' appears in two separate bullets of the mark scheme for this question to allow for the different ways it may be combined with other ideas from this text. Here, two marks are scored for the idea of a confusing maze (bullet two of the mark scheme) and not knowing where to go (bullet four of the mark scheme).
- 2(e)** The example offered overlaps two-mark scheme choices – just one is required; however, the focus in the explanation is clearly on the delicacy and beauty of the lacework of branches, offering a full explanation of that choice.

Specimen answer (2)

(a) Read this extract from the text:

‘He felt gravity go to zero. The world stopped. Mo watched the branch of the large redwood approach in slow motion and saw his fingers extend towards it.’ (lines 45–46)

What does the writer want to suggest to us about the situation at this point in the story?

Its like in an action movie when it goes slow because its dramatic.

Mark for 2(a) = 1 out of 1

(b) Explain why the writer uses the word ‘stronger’ rather than ‘strong’ in the expression ‘a stronger branch’ (line 49).

It shows it is very strong.

Mark for 2(b) = 0 out of 1

(c) What **two** impressions does the writer want to convey to the reader in the sentence:

‘There was foliage everywhere – above, below, and on all sides – layer upon layer of leaves, like tents within tents.’ (lines 51–52)?

There were leaves all around him.

Mark for 2(c) = 1 out of 2

(d) Read this sentence from the text:

‘Climbing upwards slowly and steadily through the labyrinth, Mo lost sight of the ground.’
(lines 53–54)

What effect does the writer suggest about the tree by using the word ‘labyrinth’ to describe it?

Its like a maze and easily to get lost it could be dangerous.

Mark for 2(d) = 2 out of 2

- (e)** Identify **one example** from the text below of how the writer uses language effectively to convey Mo's feelings after Mo has lost sight of the ground:

'It felt as if he was passing through a membrane and entering another world. His senses were overwhelmed by an impression of life all around. Flaky, grey-green, and brownish plants, in all manner of shapes, hung from branches – drippy, frizzy, stringy, and hairy. He began picking pieces off, tucking them into his pocket. As he neared the upper surface of the redwood canopy, the lacework of branches glowed with varied shades of green and he broke out into the sunlight.' (lines 54–59)

Explain the impression the writer creates in the example you have identified.

The writer uses lots of adjectives (flaky, gray-green, drippy, frizzy, hairy).

The writer makes it seem like you are really there I can imagine what its like to be there with all the hariy disgusting plants drippings on you.

Mark for 2(e) = 1 out of 3

Total mark awarded = 5 out of 9

Examiner comment

- 2(a)** The response compares the situation to 'an action move when it goes slow'. The essential addition of 'because its dramatic' shows full understanding for a mark.
- 2(b)** There is insufficient evidence of understanding to credit in this response. There is no attempt to explain how or why the word is being used by this writer in this text.
- 2(c)** Only one idea has been offered: 'there were leaves all around him' is bullet one of the mark scheme. The question asked for two impressions. The opportunity to target both of the available marks has been missed in this response.
- 2(d)** The response offers a clear explanation of the effect in context. Three of the mark scheme bullets are referred to: 'like a maze' is bullet two; 'eas[y] to get lost' is bullet four; and 'dangerous' is bullet three. Two effects would be sufficient for maximum marks.
- 2(e)** The 'example' offered needs to be more focused, though the listed adjectives do include relevant choices and the attempt at an explanation does just about bring into focus 'hairy' and 'dripp[y]' which are used as part of a list in the text. However, the explanation is too generic to be creditworthy. 'The writer makes it seem like you are really there' is a general comment at best that could be potentially relevant to almost any descriptive piece. Without explanation of exactly how the writer is using language, there is insufficient evidence of understanding. The suggestion that these plants are disgusting is not in line with Mo's feelings since he picks pieces of them off and puts them into his pockets.

Specimen answer (3)

(a) Read this extract from the text:

‘He felt gravity go to zero. The world stopped. Mo watched the branch of the large redwood approach in slow motion and saw his fingers extend towards it.’ (lines 45–46)

What does the writer want to suggest to us about the situation at this point in the story?

He’s in space or something.

Mark for 2(a) = 0 out of 1

(b) Explain why the writer uses the word ‘stronger’ rather than ‘strong’ in the expression

‘a stronger branch’ (line 49).

He could still fall.

Mark for 2(b) = 1 out of 1

(c) What two impressions does the writer want to convey to the reader in the sentence:

‘There was foliage everywhere – above, below, and on all sides – layer upon layer of leaves, like tents within tents.’ (lines 51–52)?

Like being in a tent.

Mark for 2(c) = 0 out of 2

(d) Read this sentence from the text:

‘Climbing upwards slowly and steadily through the labyrinth, Mo lost sight of the ground.’
(lines 53–54)

What effect does the writer suggest about the tree by using the word ‘labyrinth’ to describe it?

A labyrinth is like a game where you have to find your way out of the monster’s lair.

Mark for 2(d) = 1 out of 2

- (e)** Identify **one example** from the text below of how the writer uses language effectively to convey Mo's feelings after Mo has lost sight of the ground:

'It felt as if he was passing through a membrane and entering another world. His senses were overwhelmed by an impression of life all around. Flaky, grey-green, and brownish plants, in all manner of shapes, hung from branches – drippy, frizzy, stringy, and hairy. He began picking pieces off, tucking them into his pocket. As he neared the upper surface of the redwood canopy, the lacework of branches glowed with varied shades of green and he broke out into the sunlight.' (lines 54–59)

Explain the impression the writer creates in the example you have identified.

Similie it felt as if he was passing through a membrane and entering another world.

He felt like he was just passing through and going to another world . he was impressed by the life-life all around. He picked pieces of.

Mark for 2(e) = 1 out of 3

Total mark awarded = 3 out of 9

Examiner comment

- 2(a)** The reference to zero gravity has been taken out of context and has not been interpreted in relation to the situation at this point in the story.
- 2(b)** There is just enough evidence of understanding to credit here – the suggestion that use of 'stronger' means that Mo is still not safe, which is suggested in bullet one of the mark scheme, has been understood.
- 2(c)** The image has not been interpreted or explained in this answer to show any understanding of the impression it might create.
- 2(d)** This explanation of the word 'labyrinth' touches on some relevant ideas in relation to the effect it creates in the description of the tree's canopy. There is one clear idea to credit – that of it being similar to the challenge of a quest – which is bullet 3 in the mark scheme.
- 2(e)** A whole sentence has been offered as an example rather than separating out the individual images. Copying out as whole sentence from a text in this way may dilute evidence of understanding in a selection. Arguably though in this case the two aspects could be treated as one image, so for this particular choice benefit of the doubt would be given and this would be accepted as one example. The explanation, however, does little more than copy out from the text with minimal changes and suggests some possible misreading. This answer would score no more than 1 mark.

Common errors and general guidance for candidates

Careful and precise explanation of meanings of individual words in context would have been helpful in this response in order to explain images and target full marks.

Not paying attention to the guidance offered in questions – for example by offering more than one example in 2(e) and offering just one ‘impression’ in 2(c) where two were invited – is likely to limit the evidence of understanding in an answer. Generic comments that fill the answer space without adding evidence of understanding in relation to a particular choice in the text should be avoided.

Repeating the language of the text, rather than explaining why the writer has used specific words, does not offer evidence of understanding. Where a candidate is unsure of the effect and/or the intended impression, beginning with an explanation of precise meaning in context can help to target higher marks.

For further information about common mistakes made by candidates, please refer to the examiner reports which are published after the first exam series in 2024 on the [School Support Hub](#)

Text B

Read Text B and answer Question 3 on the question paper.

Text B: A night among the trees

The writer of this review has just returned from a visit to the Treehotel, in northern Sweden.

Recently, I watched a documentary film called 'The Tree Lover' – all about the link between trees and people. In the film, director Jonas Augustsén says: 'Imagine relaxing here on summer evenings ...'. He's sitting in a treehouse he's spent months building, looking out over a wide forest lit by the setting sun.

And guess what? It turns out you don't have to just imagine it. Since the Treehotel in northern Sweden opened last month, you too can live out your childhood dream and holiday in a treehouse, surveying the landscape. I simply had to try it out! 5

The well-hidden Treehotel is the creation of guesthouse owners, Britta and Kent Lindvall, who were inspired by Augustsén's film to create this back-to-nature retreat where guests can switch off and breathe more deeply. 10

An area of forest behind their guesthouse had been sold for logging. Instead of waiting for the inevitable to happen in a country where forestry is such an important industry, they persuaded the forest's new owner to sell it to them. With help from various architect friends, they planned the innovative designs of the Treehotel, determined to demonstrate that the natural forest environment had value beyond supplying timber. 15

On arrival, I was greeted by Britta, who explained, 'Guests usually leave their luggage here and just take a small overnight bag to the treehouses. We want them to get the feeling that they're leaving one world behind and entering another.'

Britta led me along a narrow path through a glade of birch trees, explaining as we walked why the couple want to share their passion for this beautiful forest environment with guests. We arrived at the Mirrorcube. The most striking of the treehouses, it's a glass box perched high in the forest. Like an architectural magic trick, it almost disappears into the foliage, so sharply are the surrounding trees reflected in it. 20

Inside, the Mirrorcube, like the hotel's other treehouses, facilities are fairly basic, not stretching much beyond an environmentally-friendly toilet – meals and showers are taken at the guesthouse, over 10 minutes' walk away. Still, underfloor heating will keep it cosy through winter. Reflective cladding means no one can see in but you can see out – you have an almost 360-degree view of the surrounding trees. There's even a window in the ceiling to look up into the sky. 25

When I woke the next morning, it was a shock to find a bird seeming to be peering back at me through the glass. It was tempting to spend the day in my own little nest but I wanted to explore. 30

I went to take a peek at the Cabin, a sleek, organically-shaped space pod touched down in the treetops about 50 metres from the Mirrorcube. Also sleeping two, this one has a huge viewing platform – in summer you can actually sleep out under the open sky (safe from mosquitoes as they don't fly 10 metres up in the air). Just behind it is the four-person Bird's Nest, and the Blue Cone, scheduled for completion next month. A fifth and final treehouse in the collection, the UFO, opens at the end of October. 35

Later, over breakfast, Kent talked enthusiastically about village walking tours where guests can stop for coffee, cake and conversation with a local family.

Unsurprisingly, given their deeply rooted commitment to the forest, the Lindvalls built the Treehotel sustainably – the Mirrorcube is even fitted with an infrared film, visible to birds only, that stops them flying into it – and activities such as noisy snowmobile safaris are definitely out! So, will I be visiting again? Absolutely. 40

Question 3(a)

(a) Summarise what would appeal most to guests about a stay at the Treehotel, according to Text B.

You must **use continuous writing** (not note form).

Use your own words as far as possible.

Avoid copying long sections of the text.

Your summary should be no more than 150 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer and up to 10 marks for the quality of your writing.

Specimen answer (1)

The main appeal of the Treehotel is that it takes guests back to nature – taking them to another world where they can fulfil childhood fantasies of forests and treehouses.

Guests can select one of the five unique and innovatively designed treehouses located in the heart of the forest where they can relax in privacy and switch off from their busy lives.

Furthermore, these treehouses can accommodate guests all year round since underfloor heating provides warmth in winter.

Moreover, guests will appreciate the reflective cladding, together with the ceiling window, allowing for an uninterrupted 360-degree view of forest and sky. These views can also be enjoyed from the treehouses viewing platforms.

Finally, environmentally-conscious guests concerned about sustainability will be attracted not only by the fact that the Treehotel is built on land which was going to be used for logging, but also by the environmentally-friendly toilets.

Mark for Reading = 10 out of 10 (Level 5)

Mark for Writing = 10 out of 10 (Level 5)

Total mark awarded = 20 out of 20

Examiner comment

Reading

The response skilfully selects and reorganises a wide range of relevant ideas from the text demonstrating a very good understanding of the passage and the purpose of the summary. The summary includes almost all of the content points which are relevant to the task.

Writing

The response is clear and well-organised throughout. It follows the guidance to write no more than 150 words and has been clearly planned, reorganising and combining points to achieve fluent expression. Selective use of adverbs, such as 'Moreover' and 'Finally', helps the reader move through the relevant content.

The summary is predominantly in own words; where individual words or phrases are lifted, such as '360-degree view', and 'environmentally-friendly toilet[s]', these are fluently embedded within original structures. Vocabulary choices are wide-ranging and clarify meaning, such as 'five *unique*... treehouses'.

The response uses a wide variety of complex and original sentence structures accurately, including the use of participles ('allowing for an uninterrupted...view'); relative pronouns ('where they can relax'); and conjunctions ('since underfloor heating'), which all contribute to fluency and concision.

Although this response goes beyond what is needed for full marks, full coverage of all relevant ideas could have been targeted with more concise examples of aspects of the accommodation which allow for extensive views. Time remaining could then be spent considering the appeal of the activities the Treehotel provides.

Specimen answer (2)

There are several things which would appeal to guests staying at the Treehotel. Firstly it's a place where guests can switch off, relax and get back to nature, they stay in the middle of a forest surrounded by trees and guests can take a small overnight bag to the treehouse.

Furthermore the treehouse in the forest are planned by architects and they are very well-hidden and private. They are all different, the Mirrorcube is the most striking and you could also choose the Cabin, Blue Cone or Bird's Nest. As well as a treehouse called the UFO is opening in October.

Another appeal is guests can sleep outside on the viewing platform as they will not be bitten by mosquitoes because they can't fly 10 metres up in the air. Facilities are basic but there is a toilet. Also guests can walk 10 minutes away for a shower and meals.

Mark for Reading = 5 out of 10 (Level 3)

Mark for Writing = 6 out of 10 (Level 3)

Total mark awarded = 11 out of 20

Examiner comment

Reading

A range of relevant ideas have been understood and selected from the text. References to both 'guests' and 'appeal' within the summary show understanding of the task.

There is some unnecessary repetition about the forest location.

There is some excess material including the reference to 'overnight bag', the list of the individual treehouse names and the mention of 'basic' facilities.

Writing

The response is generally expressed clearly and the guidance to write no more than 150 words has been followed.

There is some evidence of organisation starting with the overall 'appeal' of the Treehotel, and also in the middle paragraph which contains points which focus on details about the accommodation. Adverbs such as 'Firstly' and 'Furthermore' aid clarity. However, accurate use of adverbial conjunctions is inconsistent.

There is a relative pronoun in the second sentence ('where guests can switch off'). There is also use of the conjunctions 'because' and 'as'. Elsewhere, the structures are generally straightforward, with sentences more often simple or compound. There is a reliance on 'also' and 'and' to link content.

The summary mainly uses own words and structures, but on some occasions, there is over-reliance on phrases from the text.

Specimen answer (3)

In Text B the writer has just returned from a visit to the treehotel in northern Sweden, furthermore owners Britta and Kent Lindvall were inspired to create this back to nature retreat in an area of forest where guests can switch and breathe more deeply and holiday in a treehouse. Various architect friends planned the designs of the treehotel.

Guests can't take luggage and this gives the feeling there leaving one world behind and the couple share their passion for the beautiful nature, in addition the Mirrorcube a glass box is one of the treehouses and it almost disappears into the forest. There is also Cabin and Blue Cone treehouses.

Not only the treehouse facilities are fairly basic they are environmentally and cosy in winter. No one can see inside but you can see outside. In the ceiling there is a window and the treehouse also has big platform with no mosquitos because they can't fly 10 metres. Also guests can go on a walk for a snack and snowmobiles safaris are definitely out.

Mark for Reading = 2 out of 10 (Level 1)

Mark for Writing = 2 out of 10 (Level 1)

Total mark awarded = 4 out of 20

Examiner comment

Reading

The response demonstrates some understanding of the passage although there is limited understanding of the task resulting in indiscriminate selection of content.

The response touches on some potentially relevant ideas, though these are offered chronologically and show limited evidence of having been selected for a specific purpose or to illustrate a specific appeal. On several occasions, points are incomplete and not fully understood.

The opening sentence of the first paragraph suggests a lack of focus and understanding of the task.

In the second paragraph, comment on the owners' passion for the environment is excess material. The reference to the Mirrorcube, the Cabin and the Blue Cone is also excess because there is no understanding that the treehouses are different.

Writing

The response is overlong and the guidance to write no more than 150 words has not been followed. The response is not clearly focused on the task and lacks clarity in several places.

Organisation is limited since the response tracks through the text and ideas are selected and referred to chronologically and often indiscriminately. Where adverbial connectives are used, such as 'furthermore' or 'in addition', they are used indiscriminately and do not help communicating or shaping the content. The correlative conjunction, 'not only... but also', is not accurately used and so does not clarify meaning. Elsewhere, 'and' and 'also' are used to link content but not always successfully.

There is a reliance on words and phrases in the passage which are occasionally embedded within own structures. These tend to be simple or compound sentences. Spellings are not being assessed. However, there are errors with grammar, including subject-verb agreement and missing articles, and punctuation, where commas are used for full stops, which impede clarity in places.

Common errors and general guidance for candidates

Linking devices need to be used accurately to ensure clear meaning, and reliance on ‘and’ and ‘also’ should be avoided. Candidates should try to include a wider range of original complex structures, including relative pronouns, participles and conjunctions.

An opening which repeats the question is unnecessary.

Before selecting content points from the text, candidates need to ensure that they fully understand the purpose of the task. In this response there is no mention of the key word ‘appeal’ which suggests a lack of focus.

Only the details in the text relevant to the task should be selected.

Instead of working through the text chronologically, candidates should spend time selecting and reorganising points in a way which would effectively fulfil the task. This may involve identifying content which would serve as an effective opening, combining points for conciseness or regrouping points which share a specific focus. In other words, they need to plan their route through the task.

Relying less on lifted phrases and structures in the text would help candidates write more concisely.

Candidates should ensure that they follow the guidance to write no more than 150 words. Writing in excess of this results in lack of concision.

For further information about common mistakes made by candidates, please refer to the examiner reports which are published after the first exam series in 2024 on the [School Support Hub](#)

Question 3(b)

(b) Imagine you are Kent Lindvall, one of the owners of the hotel.

You are interviewed by a local news programme about the effect that hotels are having on the forest environment.

Give your answer to the interviewer's question, using information from the text.

Interviewer's question: Some local people think that your Treehotel might have a negative effect on our forest environment.

What is your opinion and why?

Specimen answer (1)

Negative? Definitely not. Without the Treehotel the trees would have all been cut down for logging so we're actually maintaining the forest ecosystem for future generations. We've made big efforts to protect the wildlife. Look at the film I use to prevent birds from flying into the Mirrorcube. Moreover, our treehouses are designed to blend into the forest as if there part of nature.

Mark awarded = 5 out of 5 (Level 3)

Examiner comment

The response offers a consistent and relevant perspective. Lindvall's opinion that the Treehotel has a positive effect on the environment is developed and supported with detail from the text.

His first reason is that he has saved the forest from logging since it would have been cut down. This is developed when he explains that the 'ecosystem' is being protected for future generations.

This idea of protecting the wildlife is clearly stated and supported with the evidence that he has ensured no damage to the wildlife by preventing birds flying into the Mirrorcube.

His positive perspective is maintained when he describes how carefully the treehouses were designed and he develops this point when he says they were built to blend into the forest and become part of nature.

Specimen answer (2)

The Treehotel dosen't have a negative effect, the forest was going to be sold for logging so I saved the trees from being cut down and also protected the wildlife. Our activties are not noisy and don't damage the forest so there are walking tours and guests enjoy nature. Archtects planned the treehouses and they have underfloor heating.

Mark awarded = 3 out of 5 (Level 2)

Examiner comment

The response offers a generally relevant perspective. There is some attempt to support or develop Lindvall's opinion that the Treehotel does not have a negative effect on the environment.

He says that the forest has been saved from logging and develops this when he says that the wildlife is also protected.

Lindvall's opinion that the activities are not environmentally damaging is supported by reference to activities being 'not noisy' and the 'walking tours' offered.

There is some loss of focus on the task in the final section of the response. Information from the text is given (architect planning and underfloor heating), but this content is not used to support his perspective.

Specimen answer (3)

Kent Lindvall thinks the Treehotel will not have a negative effect because it's a back to nature retreat. There are five treehouses bult in the forest to choose from. Activites like snowmobiles are out. Inside the treehouses faculties are basic and they can sleep under the open sky.

Mark awarded = 1 out of 5 (Level 1)

Examiner comment

The response shows some awareness of Lindvall's opinion ('will not have a negative effect'), but the textual details are indiscriminate rather than used to support his opinion.

Common errors and general guidance for candidates

Details from the text need to support or develop Lindvall's opinion.

For further information about common mistakes made by candidates, please refer to the examiner reports which are published after the first exam series in 2024 on the [School Support Hub](#)

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