



**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 2

**Cambridge International AS & A Level  
English Language 9093**

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 International AS & A 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 for each question.

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

The mark scheme is available on the [School Support Hub](#)

**9093 June 2024 Question Paper 21**

**9093 June 2024 Mark Scheme 21**

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- and 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>1a)</p> <p>1 The sky shudders, a dull grey. It groans, the crashing of its thunder billowing through the</p> <p>2 tense air. Slanted and askew, the rain pounds at the windows desperately, the melancholic atmosphere of the storm commanding its pawns of water at the clear panes. 3</p> <p>A knocking comes from the door echoing through the hallway.</p> <p>My eyes flicker open. My head rolls steadily across the cold pillow. My arms remain dormant, blood stagnant in each hand.</p>	<p>1 The candidate effectively uses personification to create drama right from the beginning.</p> <p>2 The candidate utilises pathetic fallacy to create some suspense right from the first paragraph.</p> <p>3 The candidate uses some sophisticated imagery to show how powerful the storm is.</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

- (a) The candidate could have checked more carefully to ensure that the response was free from errors.
- (b) The candidate could have commented on one or two more choices relating to the form and structure of the story opening.

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

## Common mistakes and guidance

- (a)
- Many candidates' story openings contained very frequent errors of punctuation and grammar.
  - Many candidates mixed the tenses they used in their story openings. They often jumped between the present tense and simple past tense and used the present tense instead of the simple past tense in the story opening.
  - Many candidates did not structure their story openings

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
<p>1a)</p> <p>1 The sky shudders, a dull grey. It groans, the crashing of its thunder billowing through the</p> <p>2 tense air. Slanted and askew, the rain pounds at the windows desperately, the melancholic atmosphere of the storm commanding its pawns of water at the clear pan</p> <p>3</p> <p>A knocking comes from the door echoing through the hallway.</p> <p>My eyes flicker open. My head rolls steadily across the cold pillow. My arms remain</p> <p>4 dormant, blood stagnant in each hand.</p> <p>Staring at the newly patterned windows, courtesy of the weather’s artistry, I fall out of bed,</p> <p>5 reluctantly obeying the doors call. Its foreboding echoes emanates through the cracks and</p> <p>6 crevasses in the apartment, the damp and dingy darkness that swallows the room taunting me like a devious devil.</p> <p>7 I drag a blanket across my frigid, frightened figure, draping myself in what little warmth could be salvaged from this moment. The faint sounds of water dripping distantly bellow and screech in my ears, as the storm seeps gradually through the decrepit ceiling. I make my way across the floorboards cautiously. Journeying my way across the invisible clutter strewn across the room, I feel my pulse rising in my throat.</p> <p>Passing through the doorway, I emerge facing the door. Clinging to the space between the</p> <p>8 post flap and slot is a bright orange paper, swinging from left to right like the bell of a clocktower. Its bright demeanour hangs, demented, in front of the glossy monolithic piece of timber and nails guarding the entrance.</p>	<p>1 The candidate effectively uses personification to create drama right from the beginning.</p> <p>2 The candidate utilises pathetic fallacy to create some suspense right from the first paragraph.</p> <p>3 The candidate uses some sophisticated imagery to show how powerful the storm is.</p> <p>4 The candidate makes effective use of the rule of three to introduce the story’s protagonist.</p> <p>5 The candidate makes a few minor errors in the response, such as the missing apostrophe in ‘door’s’ and the agreement errors in ‘emanate’.</p> <p>6 The candidate uses sophisticated lexis throughout the story opening.</p> <p>7 The candidate makes effective use of alliteration to introduce the protagonist’s fear.</p> <p>8 There is effective use of a simile to introduce the message.</p>

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

9 My feet glide uncontrollably towards this beacon. Its hypnotising. Its presence calling to me.

9 The candidate misses apostrophe in 'its'.

Calling welcomingly. Transfixed I edge nearer to the door and the envelope until I am

breathing on it. Its neon shade of tangerine orange loses its grasp on the door, slowly

10 There is a suggestion of something unusual about the piece of paper, which adds drama.

10 floating to the floor. I reach down, still staring at it. Despite the overwhelming darkness it shines and glimmers.

I pick the paper up. Its texture scrunched and creased, a message is scrawled in printed writing, barely large enough to see in this light.

“Look outside this door” it says.

Mindlessly, I obey. My hand finds the door handle, slowly twisting it open with an uneasy carelessness. I slowly let in the outside.

Yet another neon orange paper neatly placed on my doorstep, alone in the corridor.

Written in messy and rushed handwriting, it exclaims:

“We know it all”. 11

11 The ending of the story is dramatic and engaging, making the reader want to know what happens next.

Mark for (a) = 13 out of 15

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

1b)

12 I start this text by establishing a more emotionally dull and negative tone. Through pathetic fallacy “The sky shudders, a dull grey” in combination with the personification of the sky, as its “shudders” and “groans”, I can attach more intense emotions to this weather and atmosphere, beyond the usual sad connotations of such stormy weather. Moreover, images such as “storm commanding its pawns of water” help the reader visualise the ferocity of this weather, as likening it to more militaristic images give a more intense character to it.

13 However, through the rest of the passage, I build a more mysterious and tense atmosphere through the descriptions of the apartment and the sense of the unknown. After the initial setting of the weather to establish a negative atmosphere, the ambiguous one-line paragraph “A knocking comes from the door” creates a sense of unease that is carried throughout the passage. I start to focus on “the damp and dingy darkness”, as it keeps the rest of the setting, in this case the apartment, all shrouded (figuratively and literally) in mystery. Furthermore, this ambiguity is maintained throughout the passage, especially through the character of the orange note. As the passage ends with the cryptic message “We know it all”, as well as most of the passage building up to the reveal of these two cryptic notes, the tension that is built up only heightens the further sense of drama created by the notes ambiguous messages.

14 Moreover, I chose to focus on the perspective of the narrator, and so through a present tense first person POV, I can highlight their perception of the situation. Through this perspective I use techniques such as similes to alludes to the sense of foreboding our narrator has. Phrases such as “taunting me like a devious devil” display the narrator’s aggravation and potentially fear towards the orange piece of paper, whilst the image of a “devious devil” with its demonic imagery presenting this piece of paper as evil through the narrator’s eyes. Moreover, this perspective allows me to use these emotions from the narrator to build a sense of tension and anticipation not only through how the narrator characterises the notes, but also himself, as the narrator describes himself as “frightened” and approaching the note “cautiously”. Finally, the narrator’s interactions with the notes creates a sense of fear within the reader towards the notes. With its controlling nature towards the narrator, as they find the image of this note “hypnotising”, the note is shown to be the more powerful character in this situation, strengthening the sense of unease in the situation. “My feet glide uncontrollably towards this beacon” and other such phrases compound the notes dominance as a character, strengthening the sense of mystery and fear.

12 In the opening paragraph, the candidate clearly explains the tone of the story, with detailed explanations of the language choices made to describe the weather.

13 There is sophisticated analysis of the imagery.

14 The candidate makes a clear comment on the use of the short paragraph and the intended impact on the audience.

15 There is a detailed explanation of the reasoning behind the choice to use a first-person point of view in the story opening.

16 There is sophisticated analysis of the language choices and of the intended impact on the audience.

17 There is sophisticated analysis of the way in which the candidate has characterised the note in the story opening, clearly showing how it has affected the protagonist.

Mark for (b) = 9 out of 10

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



### How the candidate could improve their answer

- **(a)** The candidate could have checked more carefully to ensure that the response was free from errors.
- **(b)** The candidate could have commented on one or two more choices relating to the form and structure of the story opening.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

The Message  
 message constitutes } → secret revealed  
 → hidden meanings  
 → background wisdom  
 amplifying the drama  
 mysterious & ambiguous words  
 → create dramatic tone  
 → using simile & metaphors  
 → rhetorical device  
 revealing inner thoughts

1 (a)

The Message

After a long day in the office, I finally arrive home. Eager to spend the rest of my night watching my favourite shows, I quickly grab my belongings from my car and head to my doorstep. As I ruffle through my bag, searching for my keys, I notice a piece of paper nestled between my flower pots.

1

I reach for it and slowly unfold it, revealing the ~~hidest~~ neatest hand-writing I've ever seen. One would think it was printed out if it wasn't for the smudges of ink on the three corners of the paper. Only the top left remaining unscathed.

2

3

In the distance, ~~an~~ faint sound of leaves falling breaks the silence. And I begin to read.

4

My heart skips a beat as I notice my name being addressed. 'I've been biding my time. After years of watching

5

1 The candidate uses the wrong word here.

2 The candidate wrongly uses a full stop instead of a comma.

3 The candidate effectively uses some less common vocabulary.

4 The candidate effectively uses a short sentence.

5 The candidate uses incorrect spelling for 'addressed'.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

you ~~and~~ calculating your every move, I believe it's time we finally meet.'

I'm frozen in place. ~~I~~ I try to make sense of the words in front of me. Is this some kind of prank? This can't be related to last fall... or maybe it is. I try to regulate my breathing and continue to read.

'There's no use in hiding, I'm <sup>working</sup> ~~in~~ in every shadow. This is all part of your fate. Your deepest and darkest secrets will soon strike back.'

What kind of twisted mind would write this? I grab my phone to dial for help, but I can't shake off the feeling of doom. An unseen threat has now tainted my ~~like~~ space, and there's no chance I can enter my house. I get back in my car and hit the road, aiming to get ~~as far away as~~ as far as I can from ~~the~~ this cursed town.

6 The candidate effectively uses a rhetorical question.

7 The contents of the message create a dramatic situation.

8 There is a missing apostrophe in 'can't'.

9 The candidate effectively creates tension by describing the protagonist's thoughts.

10 The candidate effectively creates suspense with a cliff-hanger ending.

Mark for (a) = 10 out of 15

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

1 (b) I aimed to create a mysterious atmosphere by conveying a suspenseful tone. By revealing my inner thoughts about the event of 'last fall', the readers become more engaged as they are unaware of what I'm referring to. Urging them to read further and discover the hidden meanings. I also create ~~the~~ mystery in the narrative by describing how only one corner of the paper was 'un-scathed' by ink, making the readers wonder what it could mean. It also makes the reader cling onto the information, as it could be beneficial in ~~a~~ understanding other parts of the story.

11

11 The candidate makes some clear comments on the structure of the story opening and how these stylistic choices relate to the audience.

12

The story is written in a chronological order. Beginning with my arrival at the house and finding ~~the~~ paper. There is a shift in tone in the beginning. As I'm excited at first and 'eager' to rest, to then ~~feeling~~ having a sense of fear as the contents of the paper are revealed.

12 There is a clear comment on the shift in tone, although this could have been more detailed.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

~~the paragraphs jumps~~

Each of the following paragraphs are constituted of the ~~the~~ papers message and my thoughts. Giving the reader a deeper sense of involvement as they get an insight about what I'm thinking.

I end the ~~story~~ with opening of my story with leaving the house. By calling the town 'cursed', it's revealed that there's another layer to the narrative, making the readers wonder what the town's story is. This creates a feeling of suspense and drama which makes the reader more engaged.

13

13 The candidate makes a clear comment on the choice of the word 'cursed' and the impact this might have on the audience.

The syntax of the text varies. I used shorter sentences at times to create more tension in the story, such as 'I'm frozen in place'. This shows the reader how fear is instilled in me, making the story more dramatic. Dramatic language is used to give more meaning to the story and have the readers more engaged, such as when the sound

14

14 The candidate makes a clear comment on the use of a short sentence and the intended impact on the audience.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

15

of leaves broke 'the silence'. And how 'my heart skipped a beat'. The story grows more suspenseful with these phrases as the reader tries to make sense of what's happening. With the superlatives 'deepest' and 'darkest' mentioned in the message, about my secrets, the story grows more ominous, making the reader question my own past life.

~~By~~  
Upon reflection, I believe I successfully conveyed a sense of drama and suspense. By showing how the narrative contains hidden meanings and by creating a mysterious atmosphere, the readers develop an urge to continue reading ~~to~~ discover all my ~~the~~ 'secrets'.

15

The candidate uses some technical language, with the examples 'deepest' and 'darkest' and explains how these are used to create a particular effect on the reader.

Mark for (b) = 7 out of 10

Total mark awarded =  
17 out of 25

## How the candidate could improve their answer

(a)

- The candidate could have focused on providing more suspense and drama in the story opening.
- The candidate could have included more lexis that is less common, although ensuring that any less common words are used correctly and appropriately.
- The candidate could have used more compound and complex sentences.

(b)

- The candidate could have consistently used a 'Point, Evidence, Explanation' format to analyse the form, structure and language of their story.
- The candidate could have provided clear examples of 'descriptive language' and explained why specific words are selected.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

Planning:

Story:

At 1A's WORKS UP: gets ready

1B: goes out the door, note written in small letters about the loss of SPEAKER'S partner.

IC: drama

185  
everyday  
185  
185  
145  
+ 39 p  
+ 8 a

185  
+ 80  
379

First Person: in with speaker  
descriptive language = vivid  
cyclical narrative

intra (you know)

the second hand market set of thrift stores is more sustainable than online shopping and prevents clothes from going in the landfill.

"Man and Rep" shops often have the same or similar stock, and ~~are~~ need sales to create jobs, and continue existing. Supporting local business supports a community instead of a corporation.

The more small businesses that are closed the more harm it will be to pricing because one corporation could create a monopoly of online retail in order to control the market and gain more \$ for the 1%

81.4  
100

171  
+ 100  
271  
+ 101  
372  
+ 186  
558

618 words  
✓

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

1 I Woke UP with no more warning from my alarm clock. I  
 2 Patted the snooze button gently. "Something is different today" I  
 thought to myself as I slipped out from under the covers  
 and onto the cold floor. I trudged to the bathroom to get  
 myself presentable for the day, brushing my teeth, combing my hair,  
 putting on deodorant, it's all just one part of a routine  
 that makes the day go a little faster. Those little routines  
 are the only thing that keep my days moving year after year.  
 I put my work clothes on for the day, preparing myself  
 3 mentally for what's going to come at work. I very much enjoy  
 the routine of the job, just not the work I have to do  
 4 every day. No matter to me however, "I'll just have my  
 5 coffee and get my day start." My thought was interrupted by  
 screaming bangs ~~on~~ on my front door. "Perhaps some  
 6 assailant knocking on my door for a game, or to sell me something."  
 A calm invaded my mind once the knocking ceased. I began to  
 think that nobody would be up at 8:00 AM playing ding-dong-  
 7 ditch, or attempting to sell vacuums. The hair on my neck was  
 standing on end, as I had no idea what the horrible banging  
 8 sound on "my" front doors was. After making myself believe that  
 no miscreant was still behind my front door, I decided it  
 would be an opportune time to lock every lock, in the house  
 and move along to my employment. After going through and turning  
 each ~~door~~ deadbolt twice to the locked position to ensure a  
 good seal, I was ready to start my walk to work. I slowly  
 9 walked up to my door. I gripped the handle tightly, and began  
 turning the knob. Small beads of sweat ran down my neck and  
 temples, knowing there may be someone, or some thing\* on the other  
 side of the small panel of oak. It was taking me a long time  
 10 to slide the doorknob into place, I was petrified of the fear of  
 the unknown. I finally rammed the door open, with all of my  
 strength I ran through the door onto my porch. The only thing  
 to await me was my tulips and other potted plants, that was, until I looked

- 1 The candidate's opening is weak, with 'Something is different ...' not being explained and later being contradicted by the listing of his usual morning routine.
- 2 The candidate fails to put a comma between the direct speech and the rest of the sentence.
- 3 The candidate fails to use an apostrophe in 'what's' and has used the wrong tense.
- 4 The candidate uses a phrase which does not make complete sense but writes it as a complete sentence.
- 5 The candidate fails to paragraph the response, and this affects the structure of the story.
- 6 The candidate creates some drama relating to the loud banging on the door.
- 7 The candidate makes a spelling error in the word 'vacuums'.
- 8 The candidate writes the penultimate word on the line unclearly.
- 9 The candidate uses tenses inconsistently in the story, mostly writing in the past tense but sometimes in the present tense.
- 10 The candidate wrongly uses commas instead of full stops to separate sentences.



**Example Candidate Response – low, continued**

**Examiner comments**

1	A	towards my feet. A small piece of paper, scribbled on it with
	11	what boxes like in and out, that my reads "ren". I now understood
	12	the purpose of the abrupt knocking when I looked skyward and
	13	saw the <del>small creature</del> large creature involving hams. "Run" I thought, as I began sprinting"
1	b	In the text, a first person narrative is used to more closely
	14	relate the reader to speaker, which will add suspense to
	15	the story due to being told the events of the narrative directly
	16	The descriptive language used creates a more vivid mental picture for the reader and adds to dramatic tension as the story leads to its climax. <del>The speaker is</del> In the text, it is implied that
	16	he goes through a very cyclical routine every day. This makes the opening lines comforting, not routine, compared to the suspense and drama that comes later on.

11 The candidate uses tenses inconsistently writing in the past tense but sometimes in the present tense.

12 The candidate attempts a cliff-hanger ending to the story opening and this helps to create a little suspense.

13 The candidate incorrectly uses inverted commas at the end of the story opening.

Mark for (a) = 4 out of 15

14 The candidate makes a very general comment on the impact of using a first-person narrative.

15 The candidate provides no examples or analysis of the use of descriptive language.

16 The candidate makes an implied, but very weak, reference to structure.

Mark for (b) = 1 out of 10

**Total mark awarded = 5 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

### (a)

- The candidate could have been more consistent in their use of one tense in their answer, in this case, the simple past tense.
- The candidate could have written more accurately, with fewer errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The candidate could have structured their story in clear paragraphs.

### (b)

- The candidate could have consistently used a 'Point, Evidence, Explanation' format to analyse the form, structure and language of their story.
- The candidate could have provided clear examples of 'descriptive language' and explained why specific words are selected.

## Common mistakes and guidance

### (a)

- Many candidates' story openings contained very frequent errors of punctuation and grammar.
- Many candidates mixed the tenses they used in their story openings. They often jumped between the present tense and simple past tense and used the present tense instead of the simple past tense in the story opening.
- Many candidates did not structure their story openings in clear paragraphs.
- Some candidates did not write a story opening which created drama and suspense. Quite often, the only drama in the story openings was the finding of the message.
- Some candidates wrote more than 400 words, which often meant that the story opening was less carefully crafted.
- Some candidates only wrote 150 to 250 words. While this fulfilled the requirement of being under 400 words, such candidates only developed their ideas in a limited manner.

### (b)

- Some candidates focused heavily on the content of the story opening. They only provided minimal analysis in such cases (often only indirectly) when they outlined the structure of the piece.
- Some candidates did not comment on the specific language choices the writer made.
- Some candidates inaccurately used specific terminology or did not use it at all.
- Many candidates focused on a simple identification of the features but with little or no analysis of their effect or the ways in which they related to the audience and shaped meaning.
- Some candidates did not explore the effects of particular features of the writing in detail and did not comment on the form or structure of the text.

## Question 2

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

1

My ears ring. <sup>truck</sup> An engine rurs into life in front of me, spluttering and coughing, an old gentleman, his gears clunking loudly. His paint

2

is peeling, but <sup>out of</sup> his back - as it rises into a slope - an earthquake shakes the ground beneath my truck. An old lamp, a brightly col-

3

oured sofa, a bed frame. No end of mighty thumps fall, but the truck groans and creaks even as the load lessens. A consistent beep warns passers-by of impending danger as more unwanted antiques cascade down, a waterfall of crushing, snapping, and rumbling as they land, one after another. The pile climbs higher, its variety growing fast, the clutter rising even as my eyes widen to take in the assortment.

4

Like an opened bag of candy, I count the shades and tones, even though they're muddled with wear. Faded browns say their goodbyes to the world. A bright pop of pink, too spritely for here, towers on the peak - a stark contrast with the <sup>dark</sup> clouded sky that forms a backdrop. Clouds of ~~smoke~~ <sup>smog</sup> fill the sky, adding to the washed out landscape before my eyes. My ~~eyes~~ <sup>vision is</sup> drawn then to a swaying figure in the distance. A long rusted arm swings over a face, reaching, and appears again on this side dropping a blur of colours over onto a growing pile.

5

The objects fall, haphazardly, into a sea of metal. The repetitive swing of the magnet is followed by the musical clashing of car and small metal car parts. My own <sup>truck</sup> ~~car~~ now <sup>creaks</sup> ~~creaks~~ forwards, its breaker demanding relief through protesting squeals as I slowly <sup>come</sup> ~~come~~ to a stop. My truck bed tipped slowly, and I ~~feel~~ <sup>feel</sup> the deep vibrations of the products of my clearout crash to the floor. I hear my glass-doored double wardrobe smash and chatter into someone else as a vicious armchair lobes itself onto top of it. I hear a splintering crack as my lampstand bends unnaturally and breaks under the pressure.

1 The candidate begins the description effectively, using the image of an old man to describe the sound of the engine.

2 The candidate effectively continues the personification of the engine.

3 The candidate uses some sophisticated expression.

4 The candidate uses an effective simile to describe the colours.

5 The candidate uses some less common lexis.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

6 In my rearview mirror I can see the blurred movements of all my preloved belongings flooding out of my truck. ~~Items~~ Items tumble ~~down~~ clumsily, drunkenly, over each other, fighting. Like pebbles washed in on a beach they roll and turn, over and over, some breaking, in the rush. Finally, my truck is empty. My eyes catch on movement to my right as I command my truck bed to ~~lie~~ lie flat. A man sits, ~~is~~ smoking his cigar, in the window of the check ~~in~~ window. Upon a cash entry, his left arm moves slowly to print a ticket, and his slow drawl gives instructions to the driver around his cigar. His eyelids are droopy, and his movements slow. He surveys his chair to place money into the cash register behind him.

7 His high class office is pale blue. It is likely the newest and most well kept item in the surrounding mile. ~~When~~ When everything else is old, stuffy, worn, peeling, faded or broken, his office is a stark comparison. The base of it, however, ~~has~~ belongs. Rubbish piles up to just below the window-sill, although the doorways ~~is~~ is clear. Even now, the current tipper disrupts the stack, and an unwanted dresser lands sideways against ~~the~~ the man's window. A tanned arm reaches out slowly, and the dresser clumps on the floor below the window, now lying flat on the floor, drawers open and filled with the contents of a car boot sale.

8 An ear shattering crash fills the air as ~~the~~ <sup>another</sup> magnet drops an entire car onto a pile of ~~scrap~~ <sup>scrap</sup> metal. Heads turn to see what the noise stemmed from as the shell of the car bounces, lifeless, deformed. It has a few flakes of crusty yellow paint left on the sides, the engine and entire bonnet is blackened and burnt. The metal on the sides of the car is melted into such a form you can imagine the pattern of the burning flames as they licked around the car. No glass or interior is left on the car, it is a bent, rusted frame, crushed by the strong hand of fire, deconstructed.

It has lost all life, and its colours have faded. As with every other object here, no-one needs it anymore, it has no purpose. All it can do is make one last sound as it joins other broken items.

9 CRUNCH.

6 There is some sophisticated expression, with some complex structures and some effective imagery.

7 The candidate effectively slows the pace of the description with a few sentences describing the truck driver.

8 The candidate turns the focus back to the rubbish on the tip by describing a car which is on the rubbish tip.

9 The candidate uses onomatopoeia in an effective, single word paragraph to conclude the descriptive piece.

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

## How the candidate could improve their answer

The candidate could have included more lexis that was less common, although ensuring that any less common words were used correctly and appropriately.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

2 The rubbish tip, also known as a landfill, is- at first glance- just a massive pile of trash. However, this "pile of trash" is so much more.

Every single day, huge, clunky trucks ~~with~~ trucks, that come in a rainbow of colors, slug in and out of this establishment every day. They chug along, making a ~~at~~ very loud whirring engine sound as they make their journeys. The rubbish tip is full of noises. The clanking of the trucks dumping trash ~~the~~ <sup>and</sup> ruffling noise of the varieties of trash that come out of them. When the trash is delivered to the landfill, it is dumped out somewhere on the premises. Watching this process surely is a sight as the waterfall of trash piles into its new home. When you are there, you

- 1 The candidate unnecessarily repeats the phrase 'every day'.
- 2 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'journeys'.
- 3 There is a focus on describing sounds, as required by the question.
- 4 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'premises'.
- 5 The candidate uses some imagery.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

6 can hear the faint chatter of the employees as they converse about anything they can possibly think of. However, if you were up close, <sup>not</sup> their chatter wouldn't be as faint because in reality they are yelling ~~is~~ each other. If they talked in a normal tone, they wouldn't be able to hear each other as they are sprawled out across the huge ~~dark~~ brown mountains of trash. The employees are easy to spot against their dark ~~background~~ background, as their neon yellow uniforms contrast the color of the "mountains" fairly well.

6 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'converse'.

7 The rubbish tip is surely a sight to see. Although the majority of the garbage mounds are ~~dark~~ brown due to the sediment, you can still observe specks of color from things that have not deteriorated yet. From the ground, it is difficult to make out what they might be, but up close, some of it could be quite interesting. Many things you will find on the "mountains", <sup>if</sup> you get the opportunity to go up there, are simply insignificant pieces of trash. However, you might come across the toys of a once ~~8~~ eight year old girl, who ~~grew out~~ is now 15 and has bigger things to worry about. The girl ~~might~~ girl's parents might <sup>have</sup> kept the toys, but they were played with

7 There is a focus on describing colours, as required by the question.

8 The candidate uses some complex sentences.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

so hard that they were in too poor <sup>72</sup> of a condition to keep or donate. They appear to have ~~one~~ <sup>once</sup> been made for a great childhood regardless. Now, their ~~color~~ <sup>once</sup> bright colors are just specks of color on a big brown trash mountain. This is just an example of the ~~memories~~ <sup>72</sup> trash garbage you might find on a landfill. Although landfills are full of garbage, they are also full <sup>72</sup> of things memories. You can find many objects in the rubbish tip - some worth nothing, and some <sup>are</sup> worth priceless.

9 As much of an ~~of~~ unpleasant sight the landfill is, ~~it is just~~ the scent it emits is just as ~~bad~~ <sup>un</sup>enjoyable. Imagine <sup>72</sup> the smell of a regular garbage can, possibly in a neighborhood or at a local park. Now, imagine that multiplied <sup>72</sup> by every trashcan in the area. It is not ~~so~~ <sup>un</sup>bearable, as the body gets used to it. However the initial smell is like being hit by a train while ~~unexpected~~ standing on train tracks. <sup>72</sup> 10 Not unexpected, but probably worse <sup>72</sup> than you imagined. <sup>72</sup> It is a combination of smells. ~~#~~ It is a combination of old food, animal waste, dirt, and so much more. Some of the smells in the mix might be more pleasant, for example, if someone threw out perfume or a candle. However, when

11 they are all mixed together, it creates a smell that is ~~undescribable~~. When

12 it is windy in the area it moves the smell around, allowing visitors to smell all of the scents of the rubbish tip.

13 The landfill can be very stimulating for all five of the human senses, although it is most likely <sup>72</sup> recommended not to touch anything. It is full of color and sounds. It is full of value as well. Although the landfill may not seem exciting to most, it is a bustling place full of life. <sup>72</sup>

9 The paragraph organises the descriptive piece quite clearly in paragraphs.

10 The candidate uses some simple sentences.

11 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'undescribable'.

12 The candidate omits a comma after the word 'area'.

13 The candidate uses simple sentences.

Total mark awarded =  
12 out of 25

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have included more lexis that was less common, although ensuring that any less common words were used correctly and appropriately.
- The candidate could have used more compound and complex sentences.
- The candidate could have used a wider range of language techniques, for example, similes, personification and pathetic fallacy.



## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

	The Rubbish Tip a different perspective
1	It was like walking toward the most morbid, dull yet terrifying mountain of rubbish you've ever seen, smelt or experienced before.
2	It was in the middle of the culdesac built out of rolling food, mold growing, tin cans rusting and more scavengers living in the heap than I could count.
3	The rubbish tip was unusually beautiful in colour forming different schemes of golden orange, brown and yellow like the beauty of the natural colours of the autumn leaves yet the disturbing colours of a dark and disturbing ally with rats running around filled with green mold and brown rot and black and grey dirt with the not to mention light pinks and reds of the meat on the leftover bones of unfinished food that scavengers were picking off.
	You can hear the screeching of rats fighting over some sort of food and the crows and ravens quacking away as they circle in the air around the rubbish tip almost like a target is on the ground and they are aiming for it. You can hear the growling of stray dogs fighting and defending what they have already claimed and are planning to carry away, you hear the violent hissing of stray cats to fighting over the rats and some canned tuna too.
4	You see the rubbish moving like it is alive and breathing, however it is the animals and scavengers digging in and looking through deciding what gets claimed and by who. If you look close enough you can see the disgusting white, little, fat worms.

1 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'mountain' and 'experienced'.

2 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'built'. There are other spelling errors throughout the descriptive piece of writing.

3 The candidate writes the whole paragraph as one sentence, showing a lack of control in their writing.

4 The candidate omits the ending of the adverb 'closely'.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

we call maggots feeding on and leaching of of the leftover meat and damp, moist food, as well as tiny little specs of moving dust like objects, but looking closer we can see them: as the ants carrying away tiny bits of crumbs to their nests.

The sight of inanimate objects moving like cans and bags are enough to make you roll out your eyes, to just realise its a mouse, rat or cat licking out what is left, hearing the rustling of plastic bags and falling and rolling of tin cans and packages as well as the drop of a plastic water bottle light and hollow and loud and harsh, the animals fighting among each other is unsettling and strange.

This big rubbish tip, built up like a mountain, with rough and sharp objects acting as its edges, slippery and steep on some places like snow and steep slopes and with a pointy tip like a mountain on the top.

However instead of beautiful and majestic its heartbreking and horrfifying.

The smell of rotten eggs, old meat and mold combined together in conjunction to the maggots animal droppings plastic dustbin bags and a garbage truck all together, the smell of wet dogs, racoons and bird dropping too they all at once hit you as you approach it too.

This big mountain of rubbish, compiled of all sorts of thrown away things, day to week old food droppers and rotten foods things that live in this mountain too thing like rats and racoons to small things like

maggots and ants and insects like bees and flies

5 The candidate writes the whole paragraph as one sentence, showing a lack of control in their writing.

6 The opening four lines of this paragraph form an incomplete sentence.

7 The candidate uses the wrong preposition.

8 There is a missing apostrophe in 'it's'.

9 The opening three lines of this paragraph form an incomplete sentence.

10 The candidate again writes the whole paragraph as one sentence, showing a lack of control in their writing.

11 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'flies'.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

to bigger things like stray dogs and cats contribute to this mountain of rubbish with a tip at the top with a horrific smell that will make anyone's jaw drop and plug their nose.

The mountain that is the colours of a sad dying rainbow of rust brown and orange mild grey and black, old rotting meat pink, red and bleek colours of the scavengers mostly white rats black ~~and~~ grey birds and cats some brown dogs and some orange cats. The mountain moves as what is within it does like it's coming to life or falling apart. ?

So disgusting and of horrifying odor if you look in a different perspective it is a beauty of life and the organisms and environment that what some see as dying and gone can be the start of something new and wonderful.

Like the autumn leaves falling as seasons change their colours remain beautiful depending on your way of looking at it.

(720)

12 The opening five lines of this paragraph form an incomplete sentence.

13 There is a missing apostrophe in 'it's'.

14 This five-line paragraph contains several errors and lacks any punctuation.

Total mark awarded =  
8 out of 25

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have written more accurately, with fewer errors in spelling and grammar.
- The candidate could have ensured that basic sentence punctuation was used correctly, with a full stop to mark the end of each sentence.
- The candidate could have checked more carefully to ensure that the response was free from errors.

## Common mistakes and guidance

- Candidates should understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam.
- Candidates should ensure that they separate sentences with full stops rather than commas.
- Candidates should generally avoid writing in sentence fragments.
- Candidates should proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense,
- Candidates should be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech.

## Question 3

## Example Candidate Response – high

## Examiner comments

1 Hey everyone!

2 I know it's been FOREVER since my last update (cussse you, flu season!) but I am back now and I have NEWS!

Like I mentioned last time, my family just moved to England. It's amazing over here, seriously, but there's been a lot to get used to. One of the biggest changes is the schooling system.

3 Now, I know I've got longtime followers from across - England included! - but my Canadian followers know our system's a very different. For one thing, there's an extra year of high school over here (save it!), and the final exams - GCSEs and A-levels - are way more important. I'm starting the first year of my A-levels next week, and I'm super lucky to have been accepted into the amazing Upton Academy!

~~It was a really~~ I just got back from my introduction day, and I'm here to tell you all about it. So buckle up!

I'll start with the actual school building, because oh. My. Wow. It's this incredible 18th century church that's been added on to and converted into a school, ~~and there's an amazing stained~~ and there's an amazing stained glass window in the assembly hall. I took pictures - obviously! - and you can see them all in my gallery. But if you think the church is amazing, you should see the school grounds! The school's right in the middle of town, but you'd never know it. They've grown huge hedges and trees up all around the school, on the outside edges of the soccer - or rather, football - field. They've got massive gardens, and other gardening activities along with, amazingly, ~~and~~ bee-keeping! I'm not much of one for bees up close, but I took some pictures of the adorably-painted beehives, too.

6 They've even got a SWIMMING POOL! My longtime followers will have guessed - correctly! - that I'm already signed up for after-school ~~swim club~~ swim club. Seriously, the amount of activities and clubs they offer is crazy! There's crochet, gardening, reading, Dungeons and Dragons, cooking, needlepoint - and so many more. But at that point I'd stopped listening to the guide because I'd noticed... the LIBRARY! When I say there were a lot of books, take what you pictured and triple it!

- 1 The candidate writes in an informal, chatty tone which is appropriate for a personal blog.
- 2 The candidate inserts an aside to their readers, showing full awareness of both the form and audience.
- 3 The candidate provides some relevant background information.
- 4 The candidate addresses the blog form and audience by providing appropriate details about the school.
- 5 The candidate uses an incorrect spelling of 'site'.
- 6 The candidate makes effective use of capitalisation for emphasis.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

- 7 This was the beauty and the best library – in real life! I just entirely froze in amazement, and to be honest, I'm still amazed. Of course, a lot of those books are non-fiction, for studying, but even then it was amazing! And the fiction section was breath-taking. They have every classic, ~~beautifully~~ beautifully bound and lovingly watched over by the librarian who has the absolute BEST job ever. I especially loved the Hans Christian Andersen tales, because look at it! The illustrations, the lettering – just incredible.
- 8 As for the actual classes, they offer all sorts, ~~and I ended up going with English literature – vice studying Hamlet! – ~~and~~ Art History, English Language, and Psychology (because my mum insisted I take a science lol). I'm looking forward to it, and I'm extra happy because these are all courses I actually want to take. As my Canadian fellowers know, there's a lot less choice in our high school curriculum. I was honestly not looking forward to high school in Canada before I knew we were moving, but now I think it might actually be kind of fun! As much fun as high school can be, at least, haha!~~
- 9 The introduction day itself went very well. The guidance counsellor brought me and another new student on the tour, and we got to sit in on a couple classes. We each had a student buddy from our year (that's another thing, they're called "years", not "grades") who helped us through the class and sat with us at lunch, which was nice. I've already exchanged contact info with a whole group of students, so hopefully I'll be well on the way to making some new friends here in England. That's always the toughest part about moving, I know from ~~past~~ <sup>past</sup> comments that a lot of you can relate. But this new school is very welcoming, and the teachers I met seem to genuinely like their jobs – and are good at their jobs!
- 10 I got my uniform ~~bits~~ fitted tomorrow, and it should be ready in time for ~~my~~ Monday. And, thanks ever so much to fashion, the uniforms actually look good! I'll add a postcard to the gallery once I've got the uniforms, but for now I'll just say they're <sup>much</sup> better than I was dreading. I've never had to wear a uniform to school before, but it seems to be pretty universal here. At the very least, I won't have any fashion crises before school now. So, yeah! High hopes, things are looking up.
- 11 As I said, I'll be updating my gallery again soon, and I'll have another update ~~posted~~ <sup>next</sup> Saturday to tell you all about my first week of school. I hope you all have ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> wonderful rest of your week and weekend. As always, comments and follows are very much appreciated!
- 12 Thank you for reading, and ~~I'll be back with more samplings soon!~~ I'll be back with more samplings

7 The candidate uses an appropriate allusion to a well-known film.

8 The candidate uses alliteration effectively.

9 The candidate uses topic sentences to open several of the paragraphs. Paragraphing is clear and appropriate throughout the review.

10 The candidate provides a conclusion to their review, summing up their thoughts and opinions.

11 The candidate concludes their response in the same informal, chatty tone which is used consistently throughout the response.

12 The concluding sentence once again effectively addresses the reader.

Total mark awarded =  
21 out of 25

## How the candidate could improve their answer

The candidate could have included more lexis that was less common, although ensuring that any less common words were used correctly and appropriately.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

Plan: ~~CAFOREST~~  
~~- Review (origins)~~  
~~- schools (audience) youngers~~  
~~- Blog~~

1 My Day Spent at Chester High School

~~Good morning! Three days ago on April 28th, I spent the afternoon at Chester high school - also known as CHS. I thought I would share~~

This is a place not on Earth. Chester high school - or CHS - is known to

3 be the most prestigious schools in 2

Europe and I was able to step

4 through the gates of heaven. With

three water fountains placed around

the grounds, ~~4~~ four different

science buildings, multiple sports

facilities, how could I possibly deny

the opportunity to experience a place

like this? I was lucky enough to

spend the day at CHS on April 28th

5 and I'm going to share the honest

truth - is it worth it or not?

My day started off with a tour of

the entire school. I could not feel my

legs after that! I was able to see

the horse ~~see~~ stables where

equestrian takes place, how all

1 The title shows focus on the task.

2 The candidate wrongly uses the plural form of the word 'school'.

3 The candidate uses some less common lexis.

4 The candidate uses a quite effective phrase to present their opinion.

5 The candidate uses rhetorical questions quite effectively.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

the students are able to build a connection with their horse. But wait! that's not the best part of it all. If you are somebody who doesn't know how to ride a horse but still love them you are able to help nurture and take care of the baby horses. I will definitely be doing that when I join next year. Who doesn't want to be able to help baby animals? I was most excited about the maths department! It did not disappoint. I met some of the smartest, successful and helpful maths teachers. ~~There~~ I was told that over 48% of the maths department were previous students of Ivy League universities. Can you believe that?

When lunch rolled around, I was hungrier than ~~any~~ I have ever been. I was able to eat freshly cooked pasta with a rich creamy mushroom sauce along with grilled chicken that ~~was~~ filled my nostrils with a warm and comforting ~~sea~~ scent. Is this a school or a five star restaurant? The dining hall itself was decorated with flags of nations, there were posters of upcoming events and there had been signs of achievements hung up all around the room - it felt

6 The candidate makes an agreement error with the verb 'love'.

7 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'nurture'.

8 The candidate omits the word 'most' before 'successful'.

9 The candidate does not use capital letters for the initial letters of 'Ivy League'.

10 The candidate makes an appropriate comment for a review, showing awareness of the form of the writing.

11 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'restaurant'.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

welcoming and inviting.

- 12 A complaint I had about CHS was the lack of girls sports. It included Although I am attending on a scholarship ~~at~~ dedicated to math, studies & show 78% of girls are now interested and willing to play in sports. As a school with such high class and high luxury I was disappointed to see no girls basketball or football teams! This is something that needs to be fixed! For the
- 13 boys sports however, there had been a basketball game that day and the adrenaline had been so high I could feel it through my entire body, electrifying my pulse! It had been no surprise that they
- 14 won and its things like this that I am ~~am~~ dying to experience more at next year when I can call my
- 15 self a student of CHS.

- 16 For the other students, I met so many friendly people as well as a few unkind people. I mean what can you expect in a school full of billionaires? It was when I had accidentally cut the food line when it had not been my turn when this tall, terrifying and ~~the~~ towering girl had yelled at me!

12 There is a missing apostrophe in the phrases 'girls' sports' and 'boys' sports'.

13 There is a missing apostrophe in boys.

14 There is a missing apostrophe in 'it's'.

15 The candidate makes an appropriate comment for a review, showing awareness of the form of the writing.

16 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'accidentally'.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

17	was not a fun experience and I have definitely learned my lesson for next year!
18	What I can say about this school is I can't wait to be
19	apart of their community. Even though I may not be apart of the villainaires club, I know I will
20	find true friends that I will cherish and appreciate for the rest of my life! The things that I will be able to experience will be completely life changing for me - and I will make sure to update you all here on my <del>very</del> blog!
	Written by [REDACTED]

17 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'definitely'.

18 The candidate provides a brief conclusion to their review.

19 The candidate wrongly writes the phrase 'a part of' as only two words.

20 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'appreciate'.

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

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have written more accurately, with fewer errors in spelling and grammar.
- The candidate could have further developed and given more detail on the ideas within each paragraph.
- The candidate could have provided a more detailed conclusion to their review.
- The candidate could have focused more on providing more effective comments and opinions on the introduction day at the school.

### Example Candidate Response – low

### Examiner comments

Today was the day I attended an introduction day at the school I am going to join next year!

1 Since I started writing my blogs, I always mentioned how my biggest wish is to go in

2 this school when I get older, four years later my wish is starting to become real. It was the first time I went inside the school and

3 saw how it really looks. All I can say is, IT WAS PERFECT! Just like I imagined it

4 to be. People working there were so nice as well as some students I met, they were showing us how the school looks and how everything works. Here's my review of the

5 introduction day so my dearest readers can see how it really is.

6 When we arrived, people from the school were greeting all the students and were giving them gift bags with books, clothes, pens and a few

7 more things (they all had school logo). When everyone arrived we entered the school and I gasped when I saw how beautiful it is. We went in one of the classrooms where we saw some students and teachers. They were

8 telling us about the school and were giving us all the informations we needed. I learned a lot about the school and I enjoyed it. After the speech, they showed us the school and the campus they had for students. I WAS AMAZED, it was just like I imagined and I was so happy because I was really

- 1 The candidate uses the wrong tense by omitting the word 'have' before 'always'.
- 2 The candidate uses a comma when a full stop is required to separate two sentences.
- 3 The candidate uses capital letters for effect.
- 4 The candidate writes an incomplete sentence.
- 5 The candidate provides a clear introductory sentence to the review.
- 6 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'arrived'.
- 7 The candidate omits the article before 'school logo'.
- 8 The candidate wrongly adds an 's' to the words 'giving' and 'information'.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

there. The ~~school~~ school was like a big house that has four floors so everything is perfectly organized. First year is on the ~~the~~ first floor, second year is on the second and it is like that until the fourth floor. Everything is clean and organized it doesn't ever feel like ~~sh~~ school. On the top of the school they have a big balcony with the MOST AMAZING VIEW of the whole city, and we were lucky it was a sunny day so we were able to see everything. Something I forgot to mention is that they have a big chilling room where you can stay when you don't have any classes, they have a study room where you can go study if you don't want to hear anyone, there is a gaming room that was my favorite at the end, and lastly a mini cinema where the school lets the students and teachers watch a movie and not have any classes once a month. There is also a school restaurant, but ~~if~~ it is not as cool as the other things I mentioned. The classrooms were different on each floor, ~~because~~ which was something I was not that amazed because it would look better if they made look the same. When I asked them why is each floor in different color, they said that they wanted for students to feel like they were ~~someere~~ somewhere new each year they get on the new floor, which is a good thing but not really something

9 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'first'.

10 The candidate omits a full stop.

11 The candidate uses capital letters for effect.

12 The candidate uses a comma when a full stop is required to separate two sentences.

13 There are very few paragraph breaks in the review.

14 There are words missing from this sentence.

15 The candidate has wrongly inserted the word 'for'.

16 The writing in this long sentence does not flow easily.

### Example Candidate Response – low, continued

### Examiner comments

I liked, so if I could change something that would probably be the only thing that I would change. ~~After showing us the school and campus where I didn't~~ After showing us the school, they showed us the campus that felt like home, you have the main lobby where you have a big kitchen, the reception, yoga room, gym and a few more fun things. The rooms had three sizes (small, medium, large) so you can choose what you prefer the most, and they all looked really nice. People working there were also ~~rea~~ nice and polite. After showing us everything they made us all lunch and I can say that the food was really good. We had some free time to meet with everyone and ~~expore~~ relax. That was the end of the introduction day.

Overall, I can say that I really had a lot of fun, met a lot of amazing people and that the introduction day was perfect and everything they prepared for us. 10/10, that's my mark for this experience and the school overall. Everything was just as I imagined it will be, and I am really excited to join this school next year. I hope I helped anyone who was thinking about this school and that you will join next or some other year. See you in the next blog and have fun!

17 The candidate uses a comma when a full stop is required to separate two sentences.

18 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'prefer'.

19 The expression is quite basic and vocabulary is quite common.

20 The candidate includes a conclusion to the review.

21 There is a clear focus on the form demanded by the question.

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

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have written more accurately, with fewer errors in spelling and grammar.
- The candidate could have ensured that basic sentence punctuation was used correctly, with a full stop to mark the end of a sentence.
- The candidate could have structured their review more clearly in paragraphs.
- The candidate could have written with more variety of sentence structure, using more compound and complex sentences, while maintaining accuracy.
- The candidate could have used a wider range of language, with some less common lexis.

## Common mistakes and guidance

- Candidates should understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam.
- Candidates should ensure that they separate sentences with full stops rather than commas.
- Candidates should generally avoid writing in sentence fragments.
- Candidates should proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense.
- Candidates should be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech.
- Candidates should ensure that they write at least the stipulated minimum of 600 words.

## Question 4

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>To: editor@weeklynews.co.uk <span style="float: right;">1</span></p> <p>Re: 'Shop Out, Not In' Article by Samatha Lewis, Issue 83.</p> <p>Dear Editor,</p> <p>I am writing to express my opinion on one of this paper's most recent articles. The rise of online shopping, and where it leaves physical shops, is an incredibly prevalent topic in <span style="float: right;">2</span></p> <p><span style="float: left;">3</span> today's society. And I must say that Lewis' article handles the discussion with a clear sense of understanding and expertise, accompanied by a strong and confident perspective.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">4</span> I do not wish to argue in this letter, but instead suggest some aspects of the article which could be expanded upon should the topic be covered again in this paper.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">5</span> Firstly, the inconvenience of in-person shopping, in comparison to online shopping, is hardly discussed. When mentioned, Lewis brushes the idea of people preferring online shopping off as mere laziness. Framing it as though people who frequently shop online simply cannot be bothered to go outside and invest in a physical shop. Politely, I find this argument rather insensitive, and that it makes a string of cruel assumptions about the lives of online consumers.</p> <p>Many people who prefer to shop online do it, not out of laziness, but out of convenience. To go to a physical shop, particularly if you live in a more rural area, takes money and time. More specifically, these are taken up by the cost of petrol or time spent driving. This is time and money that many people do not have between work, school, taking care of family, or taking care of oneself. Bearing that in mind, it is more understandable that people turn to online shopping; which swiftly avoids the hassle of a commute.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">7</span> Alongside this, for many people, heading out to a shop is not always easy. Plenty of shoppers have disabilities (either physical or mental), which may make existing in public spaces difficult, or may make travel additionally complicated. As such, these people may find online shopping less stressful and significantly more convenient. And even for people who do not have disabilities, getting out of the house can still be easier said than done. Families for example, particularly those with small children, can struggle with keeping everyone calm and in-line during a shopping run.</p>	<p><span style="float: left;">1</span> The candidate sets the email out in an authentic manner.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">2</span> The candidate provides a clear opening, stating the subject of the email concisely and clearly.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">3</span> The candidate follows this up with an overview of their opinion of the article, as stipulated in the question.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">4</span> The candidate writes in a polite, formal tone.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">5</span> The email is clearly paragraphed, and each paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">6</span> The candidate incorrectly uses a full stop instead of a comma.</p> <p><span style="float: left;">7</span> The candidate includes some complex structures.</p>



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

- 8 A second aspect I feel could have been expanded upon is the problem of pricing. As Lewis notes in the article, the emergence of fast fashion has led to falling prices within physical shops, but especially within online shopping. She writes of how this price disparity is part of the reason why people are turning away from in-person shops, and how prices in physical stores are now dropping to near unsustainable levels. However, I believe it would have benefitted Lewis' argument if the article touched on how these falling prices tend to correspond with a fall in clothing quality.
- 9

This observation would have tremendously assisted Lewis' point of view. By discussing how clothing in online shops is cheaper, often due to its poorer quality and drastically shorter lifespan, Lewis would have provided another convincing reason for the reader to attend in-person stores. With the higher prices in physical stores, then comes a promise of quality.

- 10
- 11 Thirdly, the discussion of our reliance on technology, and how it has even seeped into our shopping, is incredibly intriguing. However, alike these previous points, it is hardly explored, being briefly mentioned at the end of the article. I would have been exceedingly curious to hear Lewis' full thoughts on how technology has effected the way that we shop. Regardless, I do acknowledge that this conversation would have been difficult to weave into the already-extensive article. Yet, I do still wish to read Lewis' full view, perhaps in another article more specifically focused on that topic.

- 12 Overall, despite my previous criticisms, Lewis' article remains an exceedingly convincing work. I hope that, should this topic be covered by this newspaper again, that these arguments are delved into with more detail and care. 13

Kind Regards,

██████████

- 8 The candidate includes some less common lexis, such as 'emergence' and 'disparity'.
- 9 The candidate suggests ways in which the article could have been improved.
- 10 The candidate expresses some points in a quite sophisticated manner and includes some complex structures.
- 11 The candidate clearly signposts when they are going to make a new point.
- 12 The candidate uses the same polite, formal style consistently throughout the email.
- 13 The word 'that' is repeated unnecessarily.

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

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have incorporated a wider range of less common lexis.
- The candidate could have checked more carefully to ensure that the response was free from errors.



**Example Candidate Response – middle**

**Examiner comments**

1 Dear Editor-in-Chief,

2 I am writing this email to express my gratitude to  
 your for opening peoples eyes to the damage that 3  
 online shopping is causing to our economy.

4 It would be unreasonable of myself to ignore the  
 benefits of online shopping as I occasionally do so  
 myself. I'll admit, it convenient when you don't  
 have time or you can purchase special items that  
 you would normally have to spend ~~ten~~ hours  
 5 searching for in markets. I knew a few elderly  
 people who say that online shopping has been  
 a lifesaver as they can't get around any more  
 as they used to. They can make the weekly shopping  
 without bothering their children or waiting for the  
 bus in freezing temperatures. All things considered it  
 is comprehensible why many of the issues with  
 buying online go unnoticed.

- 1 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'editor'.
- 2 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'you'.
- 3 There is a missing apostrophe in 'people's'.
- 4 The candidate omits the word 'is' after 'it'.
- 5 The candidate effectively draws on their own experience to make a point.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

6 Fortunately, people such as you and I can realise the bigger issue brewing here. Since the pandemic happened many shops have ~~already~~ already been forced to go into administration. It's truly heartbreaking to go into town and see a

7 plethora of 'FOR SALE' signs plastered in abandoned shops spaces. Buying online is only

8 aggravating this issue. Despite the fact that everyone knows going to the shops is much better.

Buying shoes and clothes online is a gamble because you don't get to try it on, perhaps this can be said for everything. ~~There's no~~ There is no such thing as certainty when buying online because the screws that you bought may be too small or the new shower curtains is poor quality. In addition, buying food is made a bigger challenge. There is always, without a doubt, something substituted with a brand you've would have never heard of. It's concerning how many people are comfortable with these issues given that there is such a simple solution and all it does is require movement. For most of the population this is not struggle.

9 Another thing I would have mentioned in your article is the social aspect of going to shops.

10 As the world becomes more technological human interaction is decreasing. Most people spend their day behind a screen eliminating any contact with others outside their home. I'm glad that we learned to adapt to

11 pandemic conditions but it's now time to get rid

6 The candidate organises the email clearly in paragraphs.

7 The candidate uses some less common lexis.

8 The candidate incorrectly uses a full stop instead of a comma.

9 The candidate introduces the paragraph with a clear topic sentence.

10 The candidate omits a comma after the word 'technological'.

11 There is a missing apostrophe in 'it's'.

**Example Candidate Response – middle, continued**

**Examiner comments**

Of old habits. Going to the shops is a simple task that should no longer be substituted for isolated and unsociable buying online.

In my opinion there is nothing better than going wandering into a Tesco's and seeing that the chocolate bar you had throughout your childhood has been restocked. Even perusing through a shoe shop and finding a pair of unbelievably comfortable slippers. The chaotic atmosphere of a market on a Sunday with cheap and locally sourced fresh fruit is attached to the British culture. It's simply unfair to think that all these things ~~will die out~~ memories will fade out to become parts of history that the future generation will never get to experience.

Going to the shops is an experience, a memory and an adventure in its own right. It is unthinkable that we should allow it to disappear right before our eyes. This is why I think that your article is so important in ~~opening~~ providing the realisation that we need to keep going to shops to prevent the ~~deteriori~~ deterioration of society as a whole. This is not what should be done. This is what has to be done.

Kind regards,

- 12 The candidate writes an incomplete sentence and uses incorrect spelling of 'perusal'.
- 13 The candidate writes a clear concluding paragraph.
- 14 The candidate concludes the email in an appropriate way, showing awareness of the form and audience.

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

**How the candidate could improve their answer**

- The candidate could have written more accurately, with fewer errors in spelling and grammar.
- The candidate could have further developed their points and could have given more detail on the ideas within each paragraph.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

TO: Morenewsforyou@mail.com

From: [REDACTED]

Dear Editor,

1 I was taking a walk down town when i noticed the shops were quite  
2 quite empty, which wasnt very typical as it was a saturday afternoon I  
3 asked my friend if she would like to come and ~~han~~ get matching clothes. She  
4 abruptly said "no, i will just buy online, its more easier". Which made me  
5 think maybe that's why its so empty. In my opinion, i thinks people should go  
6 in- person to the shops as ~~its~~ if they dont many shops will have to  
7 unfortunately close down. But lets i do know why someone would  
8 prefer to buy online, it is 10 times better as you buy from the comfort of  
9 your ~~own~~ own home. Which i believe many individuals just focus on that.  
10 If you go into the shops you can manually ~~look~~ look. But there is a downside  
11 of shopping online. lets suppose you like a top. In the computer or electronic  
12 device ~~of~~ you are using will not be able to show off the details of that  
13 top. Meanwhile if you go into the shops you ~~can manually~~ can  
14 manually see any piece of clothing you will be ~~comf~~ able to see all the  
15 details that piece of clothing holds. But dont be fooled as going into the  
16 shops also has a negative part. Most shops close down at a reasonable  
time and most people get out from work at 5:00-6:30 p.m the latest which  
is usually the closing time for many outlets. ~~But~~ Also not everybody has  
a mode of transportation to get to these shops as we could imagine these  
shops arent anything average so you do need quite an amount of money to  
even browse around. But most importantly think about these people working  
in these shops that could be there only job, and if their shops close  
down how will they maintain their household? how will they provide for  
their families? I also believe that for them it wasnt easy to build out  
these shops to make them look as nice as they do just imagine how  
much ~~se~~ effort, sweat, and money money, and dedication they put into  
their shops just for them to get closed down, it seems like it wont  
be fair, ~~just because of~~ I really do hope people that online shop learn  
to ~~go~~ just go in the shops and buy from there, as they know  
shopping online can come with ~~se~~ so many hassles for example if  
the top or pants you bought online dont fit. You will have to return it,  
and if you've ever bought something at online you clearly know returning  
process is nowhere easy. I ~~would~~ hope that these online shoppers are more  
considerate.

-Thankyou, [REDACTED]

- 1 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'quite'.
- 2 There is a missing apostrophe in 'wasn't'.
- 3 The punctuation of direct speech is incorrect.
- 4 The candidate incorrectly adds the word 'more' to the word 'easier'.
- 5 There are more missing apostrophes throughout the response.
- 6 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'unfortunately'.
- 7 Sentence punctuation is not secure.
- 8 The candidate uses the wrong preposition before the phrase 'the computer'.
- 9 There are no paragraph breaks in the response. This affects the structure of the email.
- 10 The candidate's writing does not flow easily.
- 11 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'their'.
- 12 There are sentence demarcation errors throughout the response.
- 13 The candidate's writing does not flow easily.
- 14 There are sentence demarcation errors.
- 15 The candidate uses incorrect spelling of 'shopper'.
- 16 The response is notably short of the 600-word minimum requirement, at just over 400 words.

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

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have written more accurately, with fewer errors in spelling and grammar.
- The candidate could have ensured that basic sentence punctuation was used correctly, with a full stop to mark the end of a sentence.
- The candidate could have structured their review clearly in paragraphs.
- The candidate could have written a minimum of 600 words.

## Common mistakes and guidance

- Candidates should understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam.
- Candidates should ensure that they separate sentences with full stops rather than commas.
- Candidates should generally avoid writing in sentence fragments.
- Candidates should proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency.
- Candidates should be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses.
- Candidates should ensure that they write at least the stipulated minimum of 600 words.

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
t: +44 1223 553554  
e: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

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