

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11
Passages

Key messages

Learners need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources – such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspapers articles, blogs, advertisements – so that they can assess not only the conventions and language associated with different formats and genres but also comment on the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases; they should be able to comment on how a particular extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops in terms of subject, mood and tone. Learners should be able to explore the contrasts and differences between the sections of a given extract; they need to move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as personification, alliteration and punctuation so that the effects of such features are considered in relation to their context and the extract as a whole. Learners who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone, are those who tend to achieve best results. They also need to be able to adapt their own writing style to incorporate diverse directed tasks – for example, letters, articles, diaries – and demonstrate secure familiarity with their conventions and style. A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation, and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

The three passages selected for this paper each offered a wide range of features and provided, in different ways, suitable opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of each writer's style and language. The rubric was generally well followed, though some candidates exceeded the stipulated word boundary in directed writing responses.

Commentary writing was sometimes hampered by an apparent need for candidates to repeat the introductory wording of the question. This was often accompanied by speculation about the nature of the intended audience and sometimes resulted in a lengthy and generally redundant opening paragraph.

Better responses were often characterised by the greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in examining and defining style and language. Conversely, weaker responses often described style, mood, and vocabulary as having 'positive connotations' or 'negative connotations', with little further elaboration or definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'getting the reader's attention' or 'stopping the reader from being bored'. Plainly, the wider the critical vocabulary of the candidates, the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of language and style.

Candidates would also be well advised to avoid dependence on too formulaic an approach to the passages. The categorisation of elements of the passage as representative of 'ethos' or 'logos' or 'pathos', for example, needs to be precisely developed by reference to exact effects of language.

Candidates should be reminded to be selective in their use of quotations from the passage, rather than using extensive excerpts to demonstrate relatively minor points. Most worthwhile language points can be supported by the use of single words or phrases and excessive quotation generally diffuses the point being made.

Many responses would have benefited from more precision and economy. Wordiness and irrelevance was often the result of failing to establish a clear overview of the passage. Prominent features of the passages were often addressed as they were encountered, in a line by line approach, rather than addressing the passage as a cohesive whole. Another consequence of the line by line approach was the repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration, without elaboration.

The directed writing tasks produced some fluent and skilful writing. Candidates often engaged very successfully and poignantly with the material of the piece on the war-ravaged city of Stalingrad.

Not all candidates fully understood the instruction to 'Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original'. Some responses lifted phrases and key vocabulary directly from the passages and, in the case of the weakest answers, the content as well.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were invited to comment upon a piece of nonfiction in which the writer records his observations during a visit to the war-ravaged city of Stalingrad in 1949, and to explain how style and language were used in the passage. This passage proved to be both accessible and engaging to the majority of candidates and most responses made some pertinent comments relating to style and language.

Candidates noted that this was an observation of war-torn Stalingrad and that there was a clear link to the ruins and devastation, with an understanding of the filth that comes with this. The contrast between the two girls was generally well handled and many candidates commented on the symbolic qualities that the author invested them with.

The power and shock of people, particularly women, carrying on their lives while living in holes, and the contrasts between those who presented clean appearances, with the young, filthy girl, enabled most candidates to make some relevant comments on tone and imagery. The link was generally made between the 'the woman' with the 'half a loaf of bread' and 'the girl ... an animal'. Most responses referred to the food and listed the leftovers. The discriminating comments about lifestyle and survival were also frequently commented upon, so that, on balance, most candidates engaged to some extent.

Strong responses considered the contradictions of the passage, for example the observer's detachment versus the personal fascination and compassion, and the 'terrifying exception' versus 'the heroic travesty on modern living.' These stronger responses also commented on the extended animal imagery comprehensively and a few extended this link to the destruction of the city. There were some insightful comments in these stronger responses about the women representing hope for humanity. Stronger candidates also recognised the sweep of the whole passage and were able to see the language features as contributing to its power.

Weaker responses noted the imagery but did not always develop points, discuss the language used in detail, or offer examples from the text to support their comments. Many of these weaker responses made the point about the weeds linking to the people but failed to support their comments to cement their hypothesis. In these weaker responses, there was some attention to the tone and viewpoint of the author, but this often became overdone and changes of tone were mistakenly attributed. One of the most prevalent mistakes was to conflate the subject matter with tone and diction, for example 'there is some dilapidated diction' and 'adopts an animalistic tone'.

Not many responses remarked on the poignant last paragraph.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write an account of what life was like for ordinary citizens in Stalingrad, based closely on the material of the original passage.

This was a task which was clearly relished by many candidates and there were some outstandingly successful responses. Unfortunately, the focus of many candidates tended to be solely on the gift of the bread rather than what daily life was like for an ordinary citizen of Stalingrad and this limited their responses. A few wrote as if they were the journalist or offered a newspaper article as a response; however, the majority of candidates found some sense of purpose and engagement without drifting into writing an imaginative extension of the text.

Weaker responses tended to closely replicate the material of the original and in some cases, did little more than paraphrase elements of the text. Many candidates managed to use and maintain the present tense; where they did not, this often led to a variety of other errors. These weaker responses tended to add detail that was not in the original text, or not suggested by it.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were invited to comment on the style and language used in an extract from a nonfiction book about modern-day farming.

This question was the more popular of the two alternative options.

Most candidates commented on the initial imagery of nature and joy which was then contrasted with the 'smoke belching' from insidious industrialisation. Imagery was confidently discussed, particularly the 'tentacles' and the description of the 'windowless sheds' for the animals. Some candidates were aware of the persuasive elements and the building contrast between natural and factory farming and how this was achieved.

Stronger responses referred to the romantic stereotype 'white clapboard farmhouse and the harmonious Carson in tune with nature 'picking fruit from apple orchards'. Such higher band responses saw the link between Carson and 'mother nature'. They discussed bias from the author and the industry, plus the imagery of industry encroaching and devouring farm animals. These responses noted the use of simple present to describe a straightforward existence, that the first-person dialogue verified the information and commented on the sustained bias of the passage, 'spraying with chemicals'. Stronger responses also noted the irony of progress in agriculture juxtaposed with dire effects and discussed the mindless and misguided enthusiasm for destructive change while also recognising the anti-climax of the lack of help where it might be given, with the animal charities concentrating on cats and dogs.

Contrast and personification were generally understood, and the author's purpose was commented on, but weaker responses showed little understanding of the structure and intention of the passage. In these weaker responses, the 'long tentacles' of the global food industry were often commented on, but rarely clearly defined; many made general assertions about 'negative connotations'. These lower band responses engaged in lots of feature spotting; for example, many referred to 'belching chimneys' and while some thought this was a positive image, very few took the time to explain its impact. Here, candidates often listed the phrases that portrayed the idealistic imagery of spring but struggled to explain how this was created. They often struggled to explain 'Silent Spring' and would commonly refer to different people within the text in a very general way. The writer's techniques tended to be dealt with piecemeal, without much sense of the whole.

Some candidates did not show that they understood that the passage mentions two farmers and that the writer is a third persona. Some also focused only on Carson and did not mention Roberts at all; their responses seemed to convey that Carson was the dairy farmer. Some also did not understand that the passage starts in the USA and then moves to England, or why the reference to other cities, countries and continents is significant.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write a blog about a personal experience of being a farmer in the twenty-first century. They were asked to base their answers closely on the material of the original passage.

Although most candidates wrote a convincing account about their personal experience of being a farmer in the twenty-first century, using the text to support, some did not make it explicit that they were writing a blog. They were more than willing to make passionate defences of both points of view. There were some scornfully dismissive reactions to theme of the passage: some were struggling traditionalists holding out against cruel modern farming methods while others used modern industrial methods, many with a bad conscience; both views generated some fluent writing.

More successful responses adopted a critical attitude to the hardships of farming prior to the twenty-first century. The most successful responses also created a sense of audience for their blog, directly addressing the reader to create a sense of engagement whilst employing a semi-formal register. One attempted to rework the final phrase of text in their blog: 'The odds are not exactly even.'

Weaker responses failed to base their answers on the material of the extract, while others spent virtually their whole answer imitating the opening lines of the passage, without addressing the experiences of the twenty-first century farmer. Some wrote a story about farming with very little relevance to the task. These weaker responses adopted a generic style with little recognition of the

required form; they wrote very generally about the countryside, and whilst it was not an error, this often produced an uncertain purpose. Language in the weaker responses tended to be quite formal, whereas there was room for some skilled informality.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a passage from a nonfiction book about the science of predicting future events and in particular, the reliability of weather forecasting.

This passage proved less popular as an optional choice than **Question 2**.

Many responses commented on the progression of the storm and the difficulty in plotting the progression. Very few mentioned the superlatives or the effect the writer wanted to achieve by using them. Candidates often explored the way the writer presented the speed of change and building of strength for the hurricane. Some also commented on the delay in naming the hurricane and then the jump to New Orleans. Some candidates found it difficult to explain the effect of the matter of fact reporting. They did however pick up on the change of tone regarding New Orleans and its residents. They often summarised the author's final point about forecasting and human error. Most discussed how the National Hurricane Center added authenticity to the text. Some wrote about the lack of motivation from the residents of New Orleans, neglecting to discuss language but focusing on the reliability of weather forecasting.

Stronger responses tended to consider this passage as a defence of scientific weather forecasting, noting the scientific precision with which the text begins, and how it adopts the lexical field and jargon of satellites and meteorology. They followed this by highlighting the balanced geographical evidence to back up the warning disaster together with the balance of science and prediction against general assertions about New Orleans and the sustained reference to Government specialist centres, such as the National Hurricane Center. Furthermore, these responses cited the statistical evidence of destruction of landscape and loss of life to support their analysis. They commented on military and warfare imagery used to intensify destruction, for example 'direct strike' and 'threatens to strike'. These stronger responses were able to plot the slow crescendo from early uncertainties to the disaster at the end, and to define the ways in which the writer proclaims the success of science versus human error. Some challenged this whole thesis, often commenting on the characterisation of New Orleans and its people, while the best tended to consider the sometimes dry and ironic tone of the writer. Marginalisation was only discussed in the very best responses.

Middle band and weaker responses failed to show that they understood the implication of 'the reliability' of weather forecasting as stated in the introduction. Hence these responses focused on the human reaction to the storm; some even saw the passage as a melodrama. On balance, these responses appeared to have more difficulty with analysis, although many spotted the contrasts in style of the technical appraisal of weather forecasting, with the more foreboding arrival of Katrina and the consequent devastation.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write a letter to a newspaper describing their own experience of waiting in anticipation of a storm. They were required to base their response on the style of the original passage.

This task elicited some effective but sometimes quite straightforward responses. The conventions of formal letter writing, and the context of the letter were sometimes not fully grasped; some further described simply leaving once the weather warnings were given so did not adequately address the purpose either.

There were some strong responses that demonstrated a comprehensively imagined scenario of preparing for a storm; there was a lot of detail about batteries, empty supermarkets and general battering down. Very few responses drifted into the temptation of describing the storm and there was some well-handled bathos, as the bad weather petered out or never appeared at all.

The best responses focused on the feelings of people affected by a weather event rather than actions, reflecting on personal experiences and writing with some authority.

Weaker responses were often characterised by a very limited sense of audience; these adopted a generic, all-purpose subjective style. Many of the weaker responses focused on the content rather

than the style of the original. These were often adequate or clear but sometimes again summarised the original narrative, gave experiences of Katrina or did not convincingly explore waiting for a storm.

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Key messages

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General comments

The passages selected for this paper each offered a wide range of features and provided, in different ways, suitable opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of each writer's style and language. There were striking contrasts between the texts: the stylistic quality of the Maldives passage crammed with alliteration, assonance and personification reinforced by statistical detail; the extensive development of narrative through direct speech of the scientific essay; and Uncle Joe's outing, which was a lovely reflective piece that gave candidates the opportunity to engage with lots of devices, mood shifts and reflective moments.

The rubric was generally well followed, though some candidates exceeded the word boundary of directed writing exercises, particularly in responses to **Question 3 (b)**.

There was some strong and detailed writing in the commentary responses, notably for **Question 1**, where the compelling content and range of features led to some very effective writing.

As always, the stronger responses tended to use a wider stock of critical vocabulary to describe the effects of specific language examples. Definitions of style and tone were sometimes confined to 'formal' or 'informal', with 'conversational' as a popular addition. A lack of precision in defining the overall tone of a passage sometimes led to similar imprecision in defining the specific effects of language examples.

Some responses suffered from the lack of a clear overview of the passage, and these were often considered in a line by line approach which led to the consideration of a few features rather than the whole effect of a text.

Candidates should be reminded to be selective in their use of quotations from the passage, rather than using extensive excerpts to demonstrate relatively minor points. Most worthwhile points can be adequately supported by a sentence or two at most, and many will need only a phrase or a word. Despite this, some responses included substantial extracts of the texts, often seeming like a substitute for analysis rather than supporting evidence.

Other responses simply needed to be fuller and to offer a wider range of relevant points. All selected passages will offer a substantial range of language features to comment upon. A response of a few

paragraphs, highlighting the use of rhetorical questions and occasional examples of alliteration will always fall short of a fully engaged response.

There was some confident and sometimes perceptive directed writing, the responses to 'the Maldives' being particularly pleasing.

There is still a significant problem with elements of the original text being copied directly to the response, which is plainly not what is meant by basing answers 'closely on the style and language of the original'.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of an extract from a travelogue about a writer's first visit to the Maldives.

This passage offered a range of accessible language features and most candidates began their responses with confident consideration of the author's treatment of the sea, the panoply of vivid colours and the metaphor of the 'lumbering creature'. Many responses discussed the sensuous abundance of the passage, noting the colours, the mesmerising evocation of extremes in scale, and the dominance of water. Some noticed the artful juxtaposition of this figurative feast with the geographical detail in the later paragraphs. They were able to comment on the changes in style, although the change in tense was rarely noted. The second part of the passage was less confidently handled. There was some misunderstanding of the 'beetle-shaped islands' which quite often featured as personification; likewise, the difference between the use of metaphor and personification was generally not well understood.

Although some candidates managed to find linguistic techniques for the focus of their analysis – such as the use of colour, information and comparisons – some merely gave a narrative overview of the passage.

Stronger responses commented on the personification of the cargo ships and their suggestion of human vulnerability in the 'enormity of blue'. Such responses displayed some awareness of the concerns with size, shapes and colour. They were able to comment on the compelling mix of lyrical writing and factual material, which made for a balanced blend of entertaining and informing. Some of these stronger responses discussed the light imagery and the 'mercurial swirl' suggesting power, intensity and volatility; they also referred to the 'flawless rim of white sand' suggesting the purity of nature.

Weaker responses used vague expressions, such as 'a lot of imagery is used'. Such responses also often showed a lack of understanding of the difference between formal and informal register; this was also often conflated with tone. There were quite a number of general comments about the writer's purpose, with many referring to the passage as simply a 'sales pitch'. This stance impacted upon the purpose of their writing in 1 (b). These responses would often pick out the facts about the Maldives and Darwin but did not explain their effect. Features tended to be dealt with in isolation and not considered as part of a whole.

- (b) Candidates were asked to imagine that they were the writer of the passage who had landed on one of the islands. They were invited to continue the travelogue basing their writing closely on the style and features of the original.

There was some very ambitious writing in response to this task which was mostly effective, and some responses were extremely convincing. Many candidates tried to establish style by use of alliteration, hyperbole and repetition; this sometimes worked very well but did lead to some congested, adjectivally-dense passages. Stronger responses showed a keen sense of the informative element of the genre of travel writing.

Many candidates did not read the rubric carefully enough. As such, there were various descriptions about the plane journey, rather than of having landed on one of the islands. Several candidates wrote about landing on other islands around the world rather than the Maldives; there were even references to soaring cliffs and mountains. Some candidates did not fully grasp the changes of style and tense for the writing – even though the former may have been commented upon in 1 (a).

Some found difficulty establishing a clear sense of context, and the weakest responses were sometimes very confused. Much of the focus in such cases was on the pretty scenery, and some candidates relied heavily on lifted material.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of an extract taken from a collection of scientific essays in which the writer describes a discovery made during an archaeological dig.

This was the less popular of the two optional questions.

Many responses referred to the fact that the extract begins during action and candidates noted the use of dialogue and tension and could say something purposeful about both. Most commented on the use of direct speech as enlivening the writing, and the real sense of excitement building as the significance of the discovery was revealed. Many noticed the way the drama of the situation and the lexis of anatomy reinforces the specialism of the group, though this point was not always fully developed.

The strongest responses also commented on Gray's progression from sceptical to wildly excited, and there was some consideration of the use of foreshadowing, alliteration – 'howling and hugging', 'sweaty and smelly' – excitement and rhetorical questions which reinforced the sense of amazement and disbelief. While most responses noted the use of dialogue, only the stronger discussed the colloquial register and the verbs used to reflect noise and disbelief ('shouted') and the wolf-like 'voice into a howl'. Some responses in the higher bands referred to the absurdity of the situation – the unlikely scenario of a human 'in bits' which sounded 'like a broken gadget or toy', reinforced by the possible absurdity of the findings ('two left legs'). They also discussed imagery, such as 'heat-shimmering gravel' and 'blistering Land Rover', and the impact of repetition including the use of italics ('Something *big*') to emphasise the enormity of the discovery and that a potentially gruesome find could transform into a scientifically significant archaeological discovery. These stronger responses showed awareness that the drama is developed through the concluding paragraphs to envelop the whole expedition.

It was clear that some had not read the preamble in the question sufficiently carefully, so did not fully understand the context of the passage. The use of jargon and direct speech to show enthusiasm seemed to confuse some of the candidates – although it did provide a lot of material. There seemed to be some confusion in the sequence of the narrative, and weaker responses which adopted a narrative approach found this very difficult to maintain.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write a section of an insert for a visitor brochure for the museum in which the fossils were later exhibited. They were required to base their writing on the material of the original extract.

Not all candidates managed to address the purpose securely. Some tried to attract visitors to the museum, rather than understanding that they were already there; hence, the purpose was not addressed and therefore the tone was often wholly inappropriate.

Some stronger responses adopted a confident tone intended to enliven the brochure: 'an adventure of vigorous investigation through dirt and gravel, and ferocious heat'. Most of these stronger responses used the detail of the original, such as the fact that the 'hominid was unearthed by Mr Gray at the bottom of a gully' and an awareness of the museum exhibition: 'The exhibit can be found in the *Ancient Fossils* section of the museum on the second floor'. Responses in the higher bands were mindful that they had been directed to write only a section of the insert.

Responses were not always effective because some candidates did not have a sufficient grasp of the style required for a museum's visitor brochure. Several candidates wrote in first person and merely repeated the events of the discovery. Weaker responses referred to generalised exhibits rather than the specifics in the discovery.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on an extract from an anthology of travel writing, specifically on the ways in which the writer uses language and style to present his thoughts and feelings.

This question was the more popular of the two optional choices.

The focus of the question, the 'thoughts and feelings' of the writer, was a helpful steer in narrowing the focus of responses. Candidates generally commented on the nostalgic tone through the writer's use of 'pang' and suggested the writer's regret for the loss of a carefree existence. There was a tendency to focus on the opening paragraphs and to comment on the pervasive sense of pathos and nostalgia without finding much else to say.

The identification of the writer with Mitchey was suggested by several candidates, given that he is the only sibling named. The implications of 'fat' in respect of the moon was not fully understood and was constantly referred to as personification though most responses articulated something purposeful about the use of sensory imagery. Most candidates could say something purposeful about the simile 'like a prayer' but very few went on to link this with the writer's metaphorical 'journey out of Eden' and the focus upon time in the text. There was confused understanding of stream of consciousness, this often being referred to as the writer's style.

Strong responses commented upon the various contrasts in the piece, the writer's role as observer, and the use of past continuous and then simple past tenses. These stronger responses also noted the role of Mitchey in involving the reader and building the sense of nostalgia that is so powerfully evoked in the last paragraph. The higher band responses commented on the lyrical intensity of the Pacific paradise; they were able to discuss the detail of the 'needles of phosphorescence' and the exotic island smells enhanced by the verb 'flowed', which one candidate noted 'intensified the heady atmosphere'. Some of these stronger responses noted that the 'sense of loneliness and isolation in first paragraph serves to make the place even more beautiful'. They detailed the contrasts of quiet and calm in the children's song with the activity of the fish bursting with life and the dozing shark, a temporarily harmless yet imminent danger. The majority of candidates who offered thorough analysis were able to explore the childhood/adult retreat from Eden and how adulthood is inevitable.

Many weaker responses adopted a narrative overview to engage with the passage and the narrative voice was not well understood; many also included supposition in their analysis such as 'the writer could be feeling a sense of fear...'. Some had not read the subtitle or the full question – that the passage was taken from an anthology of travel writing and that Uncle Joe was joining a group of children. This led to some confusion in responses.

The weakest responses were marked by perplexity and guesswork about some of the contents, especially concerning the islander and the identity of the narrator.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write a section of a letter to Mitchey in which, years later, the uncle recalls the boat trip in the passage and shares his memories of it. They were required to base their writing closely on the material of the original passage.

There were some imaginative and perceptive responses to the task, building on the context of the passage and finding extra dimensions to the characters of Uncle Joe and Mitchey, although some responses exaggerated somewhat the slight sentimentality of the writer's portrayal of the boy.

Weaker candidates ignored the instruction to write a section of a letter and wrote a complete letter form, thus reducing the possibilities of imaginative invention. There was some confusion between the actual narrator and Uncle Joe, so the letters were sometimes written about Uncle Joe, not by him. Many of these weaker responses used too much extraneous material rather than following the direction of the task. Such weaker responses simply recounted the events of the passage having first prefaced them with 'do you remember?', although the fact the letter was set 'years later' was missed by some.

The most effective responses attempted to 'flesh out' the sense of sympathy Uncle Joe may have had for Mitchey being relentlessly teased – but then rewarded with suggestions of his concern for the children in his care; his sense of nostalgia for the trip and being followed everywhere by the children; and his critique of being observed.

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Passages

Key messages

Learners need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources – such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspapers articles, blogs, advertisements – so that they can assess not only the conventions and language associated with different formats and genres but also comment on the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases; they should be able to comment on how a particular extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops in term of subject, mood and tone. Learners should be able to explore the contrasts and differences between the sections of a given extract; they need to move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as personification, alliteration and punctuation so that the effects of such features are considered in relation to their context and the extract as a whole. Learners who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone, are those who tend to achieve best results. They also need to be able to adapt their own writing style to incorporate diverse directed tasks – for example, letters, articles, diaries – and demonstrate secure familiarity with their conventions and style. A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

The three passages selected for the paper each offered a wide and diverse range of language features and provided suitable opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the style and language employed.

The rubric was well obeyed and there were relatively few candidates who significantly exceeded the directed writing word boundary.

There is a continuing need for greater range and clarity in the presentation of the commentaries. Meaningful examination of a passage's language and style needs as wide a lexicon as possible, and the bare definition of language as having "negative/positive connotations" is insufficient. Similarly, the description of a writer's style as formal/informal will generally demand amplification to be of any real value.

Some responses would have benefited from much sharper and more precise explanations of the effects of language features. In some cases, these were given no further definition than "getting the reader's attention" or "keeping the reader interested", which is too generalised to be of any value.

There were some imaginative and accomplished responses in the directed writing for all three passages. The exercises for both the first and second passages produced perceptive writing but there was an encouraging sense of engagement throughout the paper. The emphasis on dialogue, both for the analysis and the directed writing in **Question 1**, highlighted the need to cover the literary representation of speech in a text.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of an extract from a biography which focused on a day in the life of an Iraqi family in the 1950s.

This was a generally well answered question on a passage which the candidates seemed to enjoy; the combination of snakes, children and a mother guaranteed interest; many managed to move beyond the limitations of a narrative approach.

Most responses commented on the interplay between the boys, Nabeel's growing irritation with Jabbar and the dialogue that helps to create their view of the world. More successful responses discussed the tension that is built and the danger the boys are in while the snake slithers closer to them. Most made mention of the sense of location; some also remarked on the euphemism of the reclaimed 'liberated' railway sleepers and the aluminium from empty cooking-oil cans which highlighted the poverty and simplicity of the home, suggesting a slum or ghetto environment. These more successful responses noted that this illustrates how much the family need the luck that the snake can bring.

There was also some perceptive discussion of the details of the text including some 'snake-like' aspects of the mother and the uncertainty of the ending. The use of colourful imagery and childhood perspectives was noted, as was the use of direct speech to capture the latter.

More successful responses commented on the immediacy and drama in the opening, and the childhood language. These responses explored the use of third person as the omniscient narrator which then moves to the boys' perspective, and the use of dialogue which moves the narrative, particularly through the question and answer with the mother but also adds to the energy. A few of the higher band responses commented on the unexpected direction of the dialogue, the surprise that the boys see the snake, and their antithetical feelings: 'horror with excitement, almost a sense of honour'. Responses sometimes contrasted the boys' reactions with that of their mother.

The most successful responses considered the sense of urgency and danger, and the contrast between the deadly nature of the snake and the innocence of the children. Some consideration was given to the contrast between the brothers' characters and ages. Some of these more successful responses discussed the sense of superstition associated with Iraqi culture, a belief in a talisman and the fact that the snake is seen as 'good fortune' set against the fear of the snake biting.

There was some discussion of alliteration and imagery ('big, beautiful'), and how this adds to the feeling of excitement already created by children 'hopping up and down' with their 'eagerness', 'squeals' and 'chorus'. Stronger responses discussed the snake's movement threading through the passage aided by sibilance, also noting the repetition of 'slithering' and 'slithers', which is quite menacing.

Weaker responses were able to explain the effect of childhood innocence and the contrast of the mother, but they lacked detail and did not really engage with the setting or poverty, concentrating more on the two boys and the significance of the snake. There was a tendency in these less focused responses to comment on the contents of the passage rather than maintaining concentration on the effects of style and language. Candidates should always bear in mind that no matter how engaged they are in the contents of a passage, the purpose of the response is to examine the effects of the style and language employed.

- (b)** Candidates were asked to continue the account. They were required to base their writing closely on the style and features of the original.

The continuation of the narrative produced some effective writing. The situation and the strongly defined characters enabled candidates to produce pleasing responses; at times the writing was very accomplished and most of the responses were 'purposeful'.

There was, for the most part, recognition of the present tense and use of dialogue in the original and this was continued in the writing. There was generally effective continuation of tension regarding the snake. Many candidates managed to capture the style of the children's speaking and interaction.

Stronger responses also gave consideration to the tension between the brothers and Nabeel's attitude towards his brother, considering him a baby. These responses also picked up on the sibilance of the original and extended that in the continuation. Such responses were able to convey that much of the situation hangs in the balance, including the weight of popular superstition. Almost all responses showed a happy resolution.

Some weaker candidates struggled to use accurate conventions for speech and this hindered their responses. In these weaker responses, sometimes the names of the children were confused with

their mother. Another common mistake was to write in the past tense whereas the passage is clearly written in the present; many weaker these responses shifted between the tenses.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style from a French writer's memoir about the part of her childhood she spent with her grandparents in Egypt. Of the two optional questions, this was the more popular choice.

There was recognition of the personal nature of this first-person narrative. Comments were given as to how negative feelings were established through 'froze' and 'stared rudely'. Consideration was also given to tone shift to suggest the division between parent and child and the inner conflict of the narrative voice. Many responses referred to contrasts, for example between the mundane elements of eating food, the mother's much longer-for return, the child's initial failure to recognise the mother, and how the daughter's slow walk towards her parent contrasts with the frenzy of the mother's undiplomatic dialogue.

The best responses understood the cyclical structure of the passage's beginning and ending with the narrator's dreams about her absent mother, and the collapse of the idyllic image of the mother. These noted the apparent neutrality of the opening sentence which implies criticism and the fact that personal background is summarised in the first paragraph with the narrative becoming more detailed and specific for the event of the mother's return. Many considered the short sentence in the final paragraph, which underlined the awkwardness of the occasion.

Stronger responses also picked up the offensive nature of the mother's remarks: the suggestion of rapacity in the word 'lunged'; the insensitivity of the mother's 'you've put on so much weight!' and the 'cringing' of the grandmother in response to the deeply hurtful comments to the daughter; moving from language detail to the larger concerns.

Some stronger responses discussed the use of reported speech to give an overarching sweep of the mother's story. This was contrasted with the use of dialogue; the question and answer pattern about the girl carried on between the mother and grandmother; its disjointed nature showing a lack of harmony between them; and the ellipsis used in the mother's speech '... and you're so dark', indicating a rather insensitive character, compounded by the use of clichés such as 'best friend ... you'll see'. A lovely point was made by one candidate about the mother's use of ellipses in her speech with the candidate suggesting that all she says is really an afterthought – much like how her own daughter is an afterthought – and that her fragmented speech suggested her 'scattered' personality.

The focus in weaker responses tended to be on the narrative rather than the language, with many simply commenting on the rudeness of the mother and the disappointment of the narrator. These responses would often identify the distant relationship of parent and child but did not always acknowledge the romanticised view that the daughter held; equally, they did not always explore the negative, cruel treatment by the mother or the contrast of the grandmother's approach.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write the grandmother's diary account of the day that her granddaughter was taken away. They were required to base their writing closely on the material in the original extract.

Most candidates appreciated the grandmother's feelings about her daughter and the loss of her granddaughter, capturing the fraught and emotional situation. The writing was often quite evocative and sympathetic to the grandmother's character. The majority wrote in first person narrative and only a few candidates lifted material directly from the passage.

The most effective writing recognised the personal nature of the diary form, which provided a confiding voice for the grandmother's feelings. These responses conveyed the grandmother's apprehension in encountering her daughter after some years and how the meeting would go between everyone. Some covered how grandmother had anticipated and tried to ease the tension and her heartbreak at the witnessing of the inharmonious mother/daughter meeting. Stronger responses gave a sense of how critical the grandmother was of her daughter's lack of discretion and unkind comments, and how the child had clung to the grandmother in a way that she did not cling to her own mother. Most ended with the sadness of a grandmother who had been acting more as a mother and is suddenly bereft of this role.

Weaker responses repeated the events of the passage, adopting an insufficiently convincing tone. The opportunity to develop the situation or the characters of mother and child was not often taken in these responses. Many of the weaker responses failed to recognise the conventions of diary writing, often with an uneven sense of style and limitations in written accuracy.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style from a review of a nonfiction book about Dadaab in East Africa.

This question was a less popular choice among candidates, but those who did choose to answer on this text generally understood its content well and produced relatively well developed responses. Some consideration was usually given to how sympathy was constructed in the text and how discomfort and fear were demonstrated through the imagery of hell.

Most responses commented on the statistical detail used to begin the text. There was some informed discussion of the 'depressed' tone and use of figures and information but little about the framing of the passage or the escalating darkness of the description.

Stronger responses discussed the power of the second paragraph, detailing the refugee families' struggle through the parched desert, with its climactic phrase: 'found they had exchanged one hell for another', a depressing metaphor indicating that the camp is no better than the life they have left or the dangers of their journey to it.

Some noted how the verbs of movement and torment reflect the horror of the refugees' journey to the camp. These stronger responses noted the extensive listing detailing 'too little of everything' used to emphasise the lack of facilities and the excesses of hardship: 'insects, disease, overflowing waste'. The best commented that the passage also finishes with a list, 'indefinite limbo of poverty and fear, unwanted and largely forgotten', one candidate pointing out 'parallel dual phrases add finality with the image of the hell of limbo'.

Many commented on the coinage word 'butitis', and the terse follow up: 'Those stuck in Dadaab are truly stuck.'

A few responses made reference to the specific people named in the penultimate paragraph to make them seem more real to readers, but, as one candidate pointed out, it is 'oddly ironic' that these individuals appear to have helped Rawlence's book to become 'remarkable' yet they have not been aided at all themselves.

Weaker responses were able to identify that the situation was a tragic existence but were not able to explain how and why the people of Dadaab's location was particularly tragic and devastating. Some responses merely outlined the hardships which the immigrants faced, or identified and listed features of language use, making very generic comments: 'the author's use of long sentences to discuss pressing matters and give people a reality check creates a serious tone'.

- (b) Candidates were asked to write an email to advise a friend, who is intending to do voluntary work helping refugees, of the need for help in Dadaab. They were required to base their writing closely on the material in the original passage.

Candidates recognised the need to advise in this task, but many were hampered by an uneven sense of style. Less effective responses, while advising of the need to help those in the camp, seemed to set out all the reasons why not to go. Some responses were straightforward in their encouragement and recommendation.

Some candidates focused carefully on the context and purpose, effectively making the response appear like an email, and writing in a convincing and fluent way.

Some candidates were unable to adopt a convincing tone or write appropriately for style and purpose. The writing in weaker responses was rather derivative but some attempt was made to deal with the subject matter.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Within this allocation of time, candidates are further advised to devote a set amount of time to identifying factors for writing, planning to write, writing, checking, and correcting.

When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and should carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. They should look at the key instructions in the questions they choose. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write a descriptive piece' and the key areas of focus are 'light', 'colour' and 'the scale of the building'. In **Question 6** the key instruction is to 'write the voiceover script' for a TV report and to 'create a sense of atmosphere and enjoyment'. To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Planning is key to a successful composition; candidates should plan for the prescribed form, purpose, audience, voice, mood and tone of the piece. Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to well-crafted and well-shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and blandly generic content. They should give careful consideration to the particular effects they need to create, the most appropriate persona to adopt, the content to include, and the structure to employ.

Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression in long, rambling sentences that do not flow as easily. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long complex sentences. They must also be aware of the need for effective paragraphing in their responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion or inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work. The key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator, persona or voice.

When preparing for **Section B: Writing for an audience**, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles, both print and online, as background preparation. Candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts. The key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure, together with an authentic sense of voice.

General comments

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

In **Section A, Question 1** was the most popular, followed by **Question 2**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Although it is quite acceptable to use a narrative framework for a descriptive piece of writing, the focus must be on description. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere; for example, when the reader was able to relate to the sense of mystery and apprehension in **Question 1**; explore the contrasting viewpoints provided by both age and perspective in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of the light and the colour and scale of the building in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes a complete response was devoid of paragraphs) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**.

In **Section B, Question 5** was the most popular, followed by **Question 4**. Fewer candidates attempted **Question 6**. The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – On The Run

Candidates were asked to write the opening of a story called *On The Run*, about a person who has had to change their identity and move to a new location. They were asked to create a sense of mystery and apprehension.

This was the most popular question among the six available. Most candidates were able to write about both the new location and a change in identity. A variety of personae were invented in all sorts of situations, though many involved running from a crime.

Stronger candidates managed to generate tension and mystery by skilfully creating characters that were in danger. These candidates also kept the reader guessing by gradually revealing the mystery of the story. The stories included outcasts and ordinary people who were scarred by life's adverse events. For example, one of the characters was described as having '*her face hardened by a life full of mistakes*'. The settings were equally well described; for instance, one of the characters trying to escape was depicted as being locked in a '*camera infested corridor*'. Well-integrated backstories were a feature of some better responses. Some really effective writing centred on multiple personalities, in one case involving a schizophrenic syndrome. Another imaginative and engaging response changed point of view from first person to third as the individual began to lose touch with their former name and personality, creating a thoughtful dilemma for the reader.

Weaker candidates struggled to find a reason why a character needed to change their identity. The plot often described an abusive relationship, murder or someone running away from the police. This kind of plot often included a car chase or escaping to another country on a plane. Very often the characters were met by their perpetrators at the end which left the writing on a cliff-hanger. Weaker candidates often employed plots that were too elaborate, with too many characters involved, leading to a lack of narrative control. Stories of dysfunctional families that needed to be avoided were also common, but rarely given a contextual background. There were plenty of rough hair cutting jobs in railway station 'restrooms' in order to change identity, but this was usually a crude plot contrivance. Too often the candidates used a 'telling' and not a 'showing' technique, which did not allow for the sense of mystery and apprehension to be created.

Question 2 – Contrasting pieces about space

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, about space. Candidates were asked to write the first piece about an astronaut in space, looking down on Earth and the second about a young child on Earth, looking up at the moon. They were asked to focus on the feelings of each person and to create a sense of wonder.

This was also a reasonably popular question and most candidates were able to provide a contrast between the voices of the grown-up astronaut and the moonstruck child.

Stronger candidates often used third person narration, thus allowing them to assume the position of the observer of the protagonists, as well as of the scene. These candidates typically used a highly descriptive and sophisticated vocabulary to present the beauty of Earth, as well as the minute details of the spaceship or shuttle. The same quality was mirrored in the description of the child looking at the moon. Some of the stronger responses generated two different points of view from the same 'character' in that the child grew up to be that astronaut; in some cases, and very effectively, the story of the child was incorporated into the astronaut's musings.

Weaker candidates nearly always used first person narration, which often included the astronaut's internal monologue, in which he or she reminisced about the people whom he or she had left on Earth; for example, *'I wonder what they are doing now? Do they miss me?'* Feelings were sometimes reduced to very basic descriptions of teary eyes, while the young child, on the other hand, wondered whether the moon was made of cheese and whether aliens lived hidden in the moon's craters. Weaker answers tended to describe clichéd *'marble of green, blue and fluffy white clouds'* scenarios, from the astronaut's point of view, and very grown-up sounding children who discussed vague philosophies about the moon's place in the heavens.

Question 3 – The Skyscraper

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece about a skyscraper, focusing on the light, and the colour and scale of the building.

Sometimes this question was treated as if it required a narrative response, though not as often as in some previous cases. Sometimes candidates began with a narrative first page, often involving a visit by the narrator's family or friends to the building, but then worked this into a more descriptive continuation. Most candidates were able to picture the scale, light and colour effects required by the question.

With stronger candidates, this question elicited some powerful imaginative writing. They were able to keep to the descriptive stance throughout the piece and to create an image of the building as an impressive structure. The colour and the light were described with subtlety and precision. The candidates used imagery, powerful adjectives and senses to create a vivid and believable scene. Some candidates described the skyscraper at different times – during the day and during the night, or during different seasons – observing the changes that had taken place and this approach encouraged different views, light formations and so on. Some of the more interesting answers involved a tour of the inside of the building as well as gazing at the outside's immensity.

Weaker candidates used the title merely as a stimulus for a narrative story, with little description or detail. These stories included many characters and some kind of plot but failed to achieve effects. Many candidates tried to convey the scale of the building through rather clichéd statements, such as, *'pedestrians walking along the sidewalk seem like ants compared to the skyscraper.'* Descriptions were often limited to a view of a skyscraper that *'touched the clouds'* or was *'infinitely big'*. Weaker candidates tended to use all their descriptive ideas at the beginning, leaving the remaining part of the response almost entirely narrative in character.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Review of a music festival

Candidates were asked to write a review of a music festival, to be published in their school magazine

The candidates referred to a number of festivals such as Coachella, SunFest and Rolling Loud, and many candidates included the names of the artists and the titles of their songs in their responses. This was often in the form of a simple description of the performances, food and ticket prices. However, most of the candidates did write in a style which would have been appropriate for a school magazine.

Stronger candidates concentrated on specifics and were able to write in a lively, engaging and original way, clearly having planned the task carefully. They sometimes used subtitles that signposted the reader to diverse aspects of the festival such as food, setting, weather, music, prices, facilities, merchandise and the overall experience. Some of the reviews were quite critical of the music's quality. For instance, one candidate wrote, *'We had been promised a scintillating display of auditory elegance; instead, we heard an attempt at noise'*. Stronger candidates kept the form of review throughout the piece and offered a well-informed opinion based on the evidence they presented.

Weaker candidates were often vague in their responses, sometimes failing to mention the name or nature of the festival at all. They tended to answer the task in the form of a recount, retelling what happened to them from the moment they entered the grounds of the festival. Vagueness and generalisations epitomised these answers, which were not very helpful to their readers or appropriate to the form: often any evaluation was reduced to a final statement such as, *'Overall, I thoroughly recommend this festival.'*

Question 5 – Speeches about choosing a job

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting speeches, of 300–450 words each, about homework. They were asked to write one speech for someone who recognises the benefits of homework and one speech for someone who feels that students should not have to do more schoolwork at home.

This was the most popular question in **Section B**. Candidates usually argued that homework was beneficial for the students' future careers, improving their grades and developing their self-discipline. On the other side of the debate, they argued that schoolwork contributed to the deterioration of students' mental health, their loss of precious time with family and friends, or that it was simply unnecessary, as the students already had more than enough work at school.

Stronger candidates assumed an authoritative stance and maintained the appropriate form. They used a range of rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions, statistics, different sentence structures, direct address and powerful vocabulary. The best responses were formal in tone and convincing, challenging others' opinions in an incisive, yet polite, manner.

Weaker candidates wrote their speeches in the form of essays, which resulted in the loss of immediacy that the speeches required. They also repeated ideas and even whole sentences in both parts of the task, the only difference being the stance, either for or against homework. Many weaker candidates also failed to use paragraphs which affected the organisation of ideas and arguments. In some cases, the candidates did not have sufficient vocabulary to express some of the more complex ideas. For example, one candidate wanted to express the idea that you will always be rewarded for your efforts when she or he said that if you *'put inputs, outputs will surely come.'* Many candidates used the sayings *'practice makes perfect'* and *'all work and no play make Jack a dull boy'* to make their points.

Question 6 – Voiceover for a TV report on a local event

Candidates were asked to write the voiceover for a TV report on a popular local event. They were asked to write a script covering part of the event itself, and some brief discussion of it afterwards, creating a sense of atmosphere and enjoyment.

Stronger candidates tended to skilfully combine an appropriately minimal description of each of the TV shots with the voiceover that accompanied it. They presented interplay between a visual impression of the imagined footage – partly implied and partly defined – and the verbal component of the voiceover text. In addition, stronger candidates observed the two-part structure of the question and separated the voiceover from the discussion; the comments appeared in the second part of the response.

Weaker candidates often wrote their responses in the form of an article or a conversation between two reporters commenting on the event, but this meant that there was little or no representation or implication of what was happening on screen. Furthermore, if there was any discussion, it was quite superficial and concentrated on more general observations, for example, *'It is amazing'*, and *'People are having a great time.'*

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22
Writing

Key messages

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When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. They should look at the key instructions in the questions they choose. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write a descriptive piece' and the key areas of focus are 'mood and atmosphere'. In **Question 6** the key instruction is to 'write the voiceover script' for a TV news report. To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Planning is key to a successful composition; candidates should plan for the prescribed form, purpose, audience, voice, mood and tone of the piece. Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to well-crafted and well-shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and blandly generic content. They should give careful consideration to the particular effects they need to create, the most appropriate persona to adopt, the content to include, and the structure to employ.

Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression in long, rambling sentences that do not flow as easily. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long complex sentences. They must also be aware of the need for effective paragraphing in their responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion or inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work. The key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator, persona or voice.

When preparing for **Section B: Writing for an audience**, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles, both print and online, as background preparation. Candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts. The key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure, together with an authentic sense of voice.

General comments

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

In **Section A, Question 1** was the most popular, followed by **Question 2**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Although it is quite acceptable to use a narrative framework for a descriptive piece of writing, the focus must be on description. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or

atmosphere. For example, the reader was able to relate to the sense of drama and anticipation in **Question 1**; explore the contrasting viewpoints provided by both age and perspective in **Question 2**; or appreciate the sense of mood and atmosphere in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes a complete response was devoid of paragraphs) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**.

In **Section B**, **Question 4** was the most popular, followed by **Question 5**. Fewer candidates attempted **Question 6**. The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – As the sun started to rise

Candidates were asked to write a story which begins with the following sentence: *As the sun started to rise, I knew exactly what I had to do*. They were asked to create a sense of drama and anticipation.

This was the most popular choice from **Section A**. A lot of candidates did not write a complete story but ended their stories with a cliff-hanger, leaving the reader to contemplate a possible conclusion to the story.

Stronger candidates focused on the opening line and came back to it throughout their writing, while using language effects to create drama and anticipation. The central character was often convincing and easy to believe in and the number of characters in the story was limited, making the narrative easier to follow. Equally, the setting and time frame were kept simple and believable. Whether minor or major, the drama in such responses tended to be realistic, with a sense of anticipation increasing towards the story's climax. The central events of such stories varied, from ending a relationship to starting a new life in a different country.

Weaker candidates often made no further mention of the idea in the opening line once they had started with it and the rest of the story therefore lacked a clear link to the question. A sense of drama and anticipation was not always evident. Weaker candidates also employed plots that were too elaborate, with too many characters involved, leading to a lack of narrative control. They sometimes failed to create characters at all or move beyond a first-person narrative of present tense events, some of which unconvincingly incorporated horror genre conventions and clichés. Sometimes there was too much emphasis on the backstory and stories too often ended in very unlikely cliff-hangers.

Question 2 – Contrasting diary entries

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting diary entries, of 300–450 words each, about a young teacher's first day of work. Candidates were asked to write the first piece as the teacher and the second as a student in her class. They were asked to create a sense of the writers' differing attitudes and perspectives.

Often there was a very stereotypical view of the roles of teacher and pupil which meant there were many very safe and similar answers.

Stronger candidates used the contrasting part of the question to their advantage. They were able to create different voices and perspectives successfully by carefully selecting details which were convincing. The strongest responses often employed an effective parallel structure to present the teacher and student personas in direct contact (or confrontation) during the lesson in question, quite often both self-conscious and anxious about being 'new'. They kept a tight focus on the writing being about that first day and did not bring in confusing backstories.

Often weaker candidates did not offer much sense of contrast in the diary entries. They sometimes went into lengthy backstories or rambled off into matters not related to the school day, such as shopping and cooking in the evening. Some weaker candidates got bogged down in the details of what the new teacher was wearing or described an elaborate journey to school which then did not leave much time for more meaningful contrasts.

Question 3 – The Queue

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *The Queue*, creating a sense of mood and atmosphere.

Generally, the question generated some good quality descriptive responses, with some quite imaginative choices of queue, such as at a border control, a passport office or for an event.

Stronger candidates maintained focus on description rather than wandering off into narrative. Many used airports or bus stations for the location of the queue, with vivid sensory descriptions employed to create atmosphere and mood. Some of the stronger responses incorporated detailed observational ‘portraits’ of other, similarly unwilling people in the queue, essentially utilising a vignette approach which tended to work quite successfully. Some of the more unusual reasons for queuing seen in candidate responses included obtaining medical supplies, or aid after a disaster.

Weaker candidates laboriously described what they could see in a list-like structure without any development or sense of mood and atmosphere. Some allowed their answer to become a narrative, forgetting that the question asked for description, or lost focus on the queue and its mood and atmosphere. Some candidates devised an unrealistic, sometimes futuristic, setting that was not always convincing.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – In Good Shape

Candidates were asked to write an article for their school magazine called *In Good Shape*. They were asked to suggest the best ways for young people in their area to keep fit and healthy without having to spend much money.

This was a very popular question and candidates were generally able to write in an appropriate style for a school magazine.

Stronger candidates kept both parts of the question in mind: keeping fit and saving money. There were some very engaging and entertaining answers that were very relevant to the specified audience and gave some specific examples to develop their response; these included improved diet, low impact cardiovascular exercise, using public outdoor amenities, exercising with a friend for mutual support, or participating regularly in a sport. Stronger candidates used subheadings appropriately and effectively to break down the information into more digestible sections. They also used anecdotes effectively, to show how they had achieved fitness without spending much money.

Weaker candidates produced articles that were often too general and did not address the audience clearly enough. Often only one half of the question was addressed with the cost sometimes being ignored. Although they correctly identified what you can do to stay healthy, they tended to simply write out that information in an unstructured way. Weaker candidates tried to address the audience by using slang but in the context of a school magazine this did not always work. There were many comments of the ‘*Go Bobcats!*’ variety, presumably in an attempt to address the school audience, but often this did not work fully as it was not supported by providing other references to the reader. Some candidates utilised an anecdote of being unfit or overweight, but did not always link it very well to the question.

Question 5 – Speeches about starting and finishing times for the school day

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting speeches for a debate, of 300–450 words each, about whether the school day should start and finish later. They were asked to write one speech agreeing with the idea and one speech opposing it.

Candidates seemed to find the debate format helpful in providing a structure for their responses. However, the difficulty some candidates faced was in offering a range of plausible points for both sides of the topic and thereby establishing contrasting voices.

Stronger candidates knew the rules and conventions of debate and made the context of their speeches clear. They included a wide range of arguments with good examples and clearly delineated their points following salutation to the audience. They created contrasting voices, and mature arguments were given on both sides. Devices such as rhetorical questions and emotive language were successfully employed and candidates included convincing statistics and anecdotal evidence in support. There were some passionate answers and it was obviously a topic to which candidates could relate.

Weaker candidates wrote their speeches in the form of two unlinked essays, which resulted in the loss of immediacy that the speeches required. They did not have many points to make, often becoming repetitive and failing to maintain clearly opposing positions. Many weaker candidates also neglected to use paragraphs, which affected the organisation of ideas and arguments. Such responses were often uneven, usually with more development of proposition than opposition.

Question 6 – Voiceover for a TV report

Candidates were asked to write the voiceover for a TV report about the successful launch of a space shuttle. They were asked to cover part of the actual event and some discussion of it afterwards, creating a sense of admiration and excitement.

Few candidates chose this question. The second part of the question was overlooked by some candidates and the sense of admiration and excitement was missing from some of the responses. The tendency in such responses was to focus solely on the voiceover and a word for word description of what happened.

Stronger candidates had a good grasp of what a voiceover should sound like. They demonstrated a range of suitable reporting conventions via the voiceover script, with the reporter in the foreground with launchpad visible at a safe distance, and an expert, such as a previous astronaut, conveniently located off camera in a remote location via video link until required for the post-launch discussion. The idea of a script was embraced with a good balance of describing what could be seen on screen and what was being said by one or more presenters. Clear discourse markers were used to show when coverage or comment was handed over to another presenter or expert.

Weaker candidates showed little discernible understanding of the format and purpose of a voiceover script and appropriate form and content was not always clear; for example, one candidate wrote a descriptive piece on travelling into space.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23
Writing

Key messages

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When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. They should look at the key instructions in the questions they choose. For example, in **Question 3** the key instruction is to 'write a descriptive piece' and the key areas of focus are 'sound, movement and colour'. In **Question 6** the key instruction is to 'write the voiceover script' for a video. To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Planning is key to a successful composition; candidates should plan for the prescribed form, purpose, audience, voice, mood and tone of the piece. Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to well-crafted and well-shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and blandly generic content. They should give careful consideration to the particular effects they need to create, the most appropriate persona to adopt, the content to include, and the structure to employ.

Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression in long, rambling sentences that do not flow as easily. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long complex sentences. They must also be aware of the need for effective paragraphing in their responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion or inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work. The key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator, persona or voice.

When preparing for **Section B: Writing for an audience**, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles, both print and online, as background preparation. Candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts. The key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure, together with an authentic sense of voice.

General comments

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

In **Section A, Question 3** was the most popular, followed by **Question 1**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Although it is quite acceptable to use a narrative framework for a descriptive piece of writing, the focus must be on description. For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or

atmosphere; for example, when the reader was able to relate to the sense of suspense and drama in **Question 1**; explore the contrasting viewpoints provided by both age and perspective in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of colours, sounds and movements in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes a complete response was devoid of paragraphs) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**.

In **Section B**, **Question 5** was the most popular, followed by **Question 4**. The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – Lost and Found

Candidates were asked to write the end of a story called *Lost and Found*. They were asked to create a sense of suspense and drama.

This was the second most popular response from Section A and in general candidates responded well, showing enthusiasm and imagination.

Stronger candidates were aware that they had been asked to write the ending of a story. They were able to begin at an appropriate moment in the plot and continue the narrative in a clear, focused manner, creating a sense of suspense and drama both in the language used and in the sequencing of events in their narratives. The more successful stories identified the object that had been lost and created a narrative, rather than relying on descriptions of the emotions the protagonist felt upon finding whatever it was they had lost. They used a range of devices, including convincing dialogue, and they were also able to use a blend of narrative and descriptive writing, and focused on a style of 'showing' rather than 'telling'. Some of these stronger, more focused responses had evidence of adopting a specific genre, such as crime fiction or thriller. A few candidates adopted the genre of fantasy and their narratives included elements of magic and mythology.

Weaker candidates had some difficulties in writing an ending that was clear, without having to explain previous parts of the plot leading up to this point; some resorted to flashbacks to clarify the narrative, which sometimes compromised the structure of the piece. Although some of these candidates had plausible ideas such as recovering a secret diary, their expression typically lacked variety and they were generally less able to maintain the reader's interest.

Very weak candidates' responses did little more than focus on the losing and finding of an object, such as a child's blanket or a puppy, and the responses were almost a list of facts. Some of the weaker responses had evidence of writing an entire narrative rather than just the ending. One key technical problem tended to affect this question: continuity of tense forms. Candidates often used a mix of tense forms, fluctuating back and forth unpredictably in mid-sentence.

Question 2 – Contrasting diary entries

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting diary entries, of 300–450 words each, about a girl who is going to stay with a family in another country as part of a school trip. Candidates were asked to write the first piece as the girl and the second as the girl's mother. They were asked to create a sense of the writers' outlook and mood.

Responses to this task usually involved an excited daughter and a sad parent. The main difficulties that candidates had were maintaining form and providing a contrast in voice. In many cases, the mother's perspective was stronger in terms of feelings than the girl's.

Stronger candidates offered more interesting angles, such as one who adopted the persona of a mother who was relieved her daughter was leaving; this approach enabled the candidate to explore more complex ideas. One candidate focused on conveying the youthful excitement of the girl in contrast to the nostalgic

sentimentality of the mother. The candidate used carefully chosen vocabulary and expression to reflect the ages and experiences of the two characters, which provided a strong sense of contrasting voices.

Weaker candidates tended to give a rather flat narration of the day, while the purpose of the writing – creating outlook and mood – was often secondary to the candidate's attempt to find the furthest-flung corner of the world for their character to be staying. This limited such responses, with the mother left wondering what her child might eat, for example, rather than describing her emotional response to her child's departure. Often there was not much contrast between the two halves: the daughter was excited, the mother was worried, but these were expressed without sufficiently varied vocabulary to make an impact. Some of the diary entries involved travel narratives, rather than focusing on outlook or mood.

Question 3 – A busy train station

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece about a busy train station, focusing on sound, movement and colour to help the reader imagine the scene.

This descriptive question was the most popular question in **Section A**. While there were a number of interesting perspectives offered, most candidates followed a single person through the train station, seeing what he or she saw. This tactic had one potential pitfall as, though it was potentially a successful approach, the response could slip into a piece that was more narrative than descriptive.

Stronger candidates had more unusual perspectives; for example, a homeless man watching the rush of activity as a train arrived or left, and the lull in activity between those events. There was some effective descriptive writing personifying trains and dehumanising travellers. One response described the scene using an extended metaphor, comparing the station to a stage. The strongest were typically those which focused on creating imagery through a variety of appropriate devices, such as the metaphor for a train unloading as '*the grey sea flowed onwards*'.

Weaker candidates tended to give rather lifeless descriptions of the train station, in some cases merely producing a list of events such as trains arriving and leaving, without much descriptive detail. Often, such responses lapsed totally into narrative, rather than descriptive, writing.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Letter about shops staying open 24 hours a day

Candidates were asked to write a letter in response to an article in a magazine about whether more shops should be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They were asked to respond to the article and to give their views.

Some responses were well-argued and even argued from both points of view to strengthen their case. However, there was also some repetition of points, presumably to increase the word count.

Stronger responses showed a definite awareness of form and style by using appropriate language and structural features, such as rhetorical questions. Such responses contained appropriate greetings, farewells and other relevant conventions, showing that candidates were fully aware of the purpose and audience. To aid development of their arguments, stronger responses made references to imaginary details from the imaginary article. Stronger responses tended to argue against the opening of more shops 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, defending the rights of employees and outlining the difficulties faced by shift workers. One original response was written from the point of view of a single mother working at Walmart and contained convincing arguments with an original and personal touch.

Weaker responses showed little awareness of form and purpose and were often written in the style of a magazine article. Arguments tended to be simplistic, underdeveloped and short in length. Weaker candidates seemed unable to assume the role of their constructed correspondents to engage fully with the task. The question was sometimes misunderstood and candidates produced a review of the mentioned article rather than presenting their views on the issues involved. Expressions such as '*The article was offensive*' occurred, often without development. On occasion, diary entries appeared instead of letters.

Question 5 – Speeches about choosing a job

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting speeches, of 300–450 words each, about the considerations involved when choosing a job. They were asked to write one speech suggesting that people should choose a job on the basis of a salary and one speech suggesting that job satisfaction is the most important consideration.

This was the most popular choice in **Section B**; the majority of candidates achieved an appropriate sense of voice and directed their discourse at an appropriate audience. Candidates seemed to find the debate format helpful in providing a structure for their responses. However, the difficulty some candidates faced was in establishing contrasting voices. Content invariably demonstrated contrasts but it was often difficult to tell the speakers apart.

Stronger candidates successfully created contrasting voices and mature arguments were given from both sides. Devices such as rhetorical questions and emotive language were successfully employed and candidates explored the ideas of being able to provide opportunities for their future offspring, such as paying university fees and securing a comfortable retirement. Some responses defended the idea of choosing a job based on job satisfaction by referring to entrepreneurs, including the success stories of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg. The best responses showed an ability to use a full range of rhetorical devices in order to communicate with their school audience.

Weaker candidates wrote their speeches in the form of essays, which resulted in the loss of immediacy that the speeches required. Occasionally, there was some acknowledgement that the speakers were involved in a debate and adopted a spoken register, but often they were written as purely argumentative essays. The weakest responses merely listed undeveloped points. Arguments were not convincing and the speeches that argued for choosing a job based on salary focused on having enough money to buy ‘things’ and having a luxurious lifestyle. Some candidates simply ran out of ideas.

Question 6 – Voiceover for video on health and safety issues at school

Candidates were asked to write the voiceover for a video on health and safety issues at school, to be posted on the school website.

Stronger candidates demonstrated a full understanding of the task and of the features of a voiceover. One example used a clear structure with a constant focus on actions, pauses, deictic reference and direct address, which made for a successful piece. Direct address to teachers, with instructions, was given, for example, ‘*Teachers will need to close all blinds, make sure all students are accounted for*’ and to students, ‘*Students you need to...*’ concluding with ‘*That’s it!*’ There was also evidence of clear signposting such as, ‘*Our next topic ...*’

Weaker candidates experienced difficulties in creating a voice and maintaining an appropriate balance of deixis. Some of the health and safety issues outlined were relevant, such as the importance of staying on campus and the security protocol in case of an emergency. However, one response strayed into less relevant material by writing at some length about the dangers of taking drugs and drug-related deaths in the area.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1(a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1(b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly 'gleaning hints' from the information provided in the questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. Only a few candidates produced short passages of extremely superficial commentary.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session an online newspaper article about classical music entitled 'The Triumph of Classicism. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was an email message conveying advice. Careful consideration of the target audience (the question specified 'the owners of a new music venue near to where you live') was required in advising them 'whether or not classical music concerts would be popular'. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)** where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the email message conveying advice produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the online newspaper article. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register, format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of the language found in both texts. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the article and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for a comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both centres and candidates that **Question 1(a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1(b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed comparative responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates chiefly responded enthusiastically to this directed writing task, demonstrating sound familiarity with the purpose and conventions of an email message conveying advice. Most candidates ensured their email messages contained conventional features for organising prefatory information, usually on separate lines: the date plus the designations 'To:', 'From:', and 'Subject:' (or 'Re:'). Email messages mainly consisted of a few short to medium length paragraphs that usually specified whether or not classical concerts would be popular, presented the reasoning for the advice offered based on the reworking of details selected from the article, and expressed the sentiment that the advice may be useful to the venue owners and wishing them good luck with their venture. Email messages usually also featured a brief valediction (often simply a name, sometimes a designation such as 'music-loving citizen' or similar).

In weak responses many candidates provided advice based on individual preferences, most often maintaining that classical music is outdated, is rarely aired on popular radio stations, and is therefore unprofitable, often with little consideration of the positive perspective and the abundance of evidence to the contrary presented in the article. A number of candidates recycled specific phrases ('ancient genre', 'death of the classical', 'classical music now thrives') and quoted what musicians had told the article's author without much shaping of the material in support of their advice. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to clearly explain why or why not classical music concerts would be popular in their own locations.

In strong responses candidates consistently presented an objective perspective, with supporting arguments clearly corresponding to details carefully selected from the article. Purposeful use of a subject line (e.g. 'Classical music for a long neglected audience') and a personalised salutation ('Dear Mr and Mrs Smith' was more effective in this context than 'To Whom It May Concern' or 'Dear Owners') indicated that candidates understood the recipients would chiefly appreciate advice that they could deliberate on before reaching a crucial business decision. They also adopted a suitable persona such as a music journalist, a musician, an owner or manager of a similar venue, or a local dignitary with a sophisticated musical appreciation, to instil a degree of gravitas into their advising message. Candidates arguing against classical music concerts noted that details presented in the article may well exist within a specific, non-transferrable context (India) and therefore it would be sensible to assume, short of conducting comprehensive marketing surveys, that classical music concerts may not be successful in their own local area (usually represented as one in which young people enamoured of modern music genres constitute the largest audience for concerts). Careful selection of details from the article supported strategies offered to the owners concerning the programming of classical music concerts, such as advertising them on a regular basis to a broad demographic (often in recognition of references in the article to a recent audience consisting of people ranging in age from 'eight to 80' and how the progressive band Agam appeals to both 'appreciative elders and swinging youngsters') or less frequently to a sizeable, local young audience that ought to appreciate the 'rock-star appeal' of a classical music performer who styles himself as 'a hard-core classicist'. Whatever the nature of the advice offered, the best responses demonstrated that candidates appreciated the article's perspective that classical music is popular

and vibrant despite the ephemeral nature of modern, instant trends exemplified by Twitter, and possesses an ability to attract new audiences (likely in recognition of a quotation appearing in the penultimate sentence of the article: 'Actually, classical is more progressive because rock and pop remain with their templated sound').

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

Question 1

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the online newspaper article about classical music and the email message conveying advice produced for 1(a).

Some candidates did not adopt an integrated approach and sought to deal with each text separately. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choices made by the article's author and then examined the carefully chosen vocabulary used in their email messages in a comparative fashion. By so doing such responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis of 50:50 or 60:40 on the article and the email message.

Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the article and likely to primarily summarise the content of both texts rather than endeavouring to comparatively analyse their style and language. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of written texts they could identify in the article and their email message, especially the use of a variety of sentence types and punctuation marks, with brief and infrequent comparison of the texts' levels of formality.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of a range of some of the conventions of the article and the email message. Candidates usually focused on the article's bold title, the opening summary of the writer's main points and how its sentence and paragraph structure facilitated its dual informative and persuasive purpose. They could also examine and compare the texts' respective audiences (broad for the online newspaper article, very limited for the email message) and the level of formality exhibited by both (most candidates employed a modified formal register in their email messages). In terms of the article's language candidates chiefly made reference to the occasional use of plural first person ('When we asked'; 'we can confidently say') along with direct address of the reader using the second person halfway through the article ('If you had ... you should'); the frequent use of positive adjectives ('instant', 'provocative', 'thrilling', 'appreciative', 'swinging') and adverbs ('gracefully', 'robustly', 'recently') in connection with classical music and its practitioners and audience; the direct quotations in which informed sources advocated the vibrancy of classical music; and a few aspects of figurative language, especially the personification implicit to the phrase 'the hall seemed to struggle for breath' to exaggerate the conditions within a sold-out venue and the clichéd metaphor 'eating out of its hand' (which is prefixed by the adverb 'literally') to suggest the fawning adoration of the audience for the 'progressive' band Agam. Reference was often made to examples of musical jargon, 'tabla' and 'flautist', in recognition of the writer's desire to appear as knowledgeable as the musicians quoted in the article, and also to the imperative-fronted phrase 'dust off your clapometer and prove them wrong', an image that implies the enduring popularity of classical music that disparages 'the doomsday prophets' who insist on 'the death of the classical'.

In the strongest responses candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. They clearly appreciated the more transactional and perfunctory nature of their email messages in comparison to the exuberance of the article. They appreciated the use of low frequency adjectives ('rapt', 'eclectic', 'pluralist') in the service of a sophisticated representation of classical music and its proponents alongside further examples of the article's constant personification of classical music ('strides gracefully yet robustly into the New Year'; 'it has drawn liberally from varied reservoirs'), a semantic field of popular culture (the onomatopoeia-fronted phrase 'buzz of selfie-obsessed fans

and autograph-hunters') and a perhaps superfluous pun formed by the combination of the metaphoric phrase 'thick brew of notes' with the name of the group producing such a sound – Filter Coffee – that is symptomatic of an entertaining style the writer employs to appeal to a broad audience. A few candidates concluded that one musician had effectively personified his tabla: 'it has enough space to hold rhythm ideas that can last another century'. Reference was also occasionally made to the fixed expression 'nook and cranny' – used to emphasise how seating capacity was stretched to accommodate an exceedingly large audience for a classical music concert – and the clichéd, mixed metaphor 'cement their place in audience hearts' employed in the final sentence to confidently predict the solid future relationship between classical musicians and their fans.

Question 2

As was the case for 1(b), candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. Some candidates often dealt too much with the content of both Texts and listing techniques they could identify. In such responses there was exhibited some recognition of the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a secure grasp of the conventions of written language in Text A, an online diary account written by Alastair Humphreys, a participant in the Marathon des Sables, and of spoken language in Text B, a transcription of part of a radio show in which the presenter, Anne Diamond, is interviewing Greg Whyte, another participant in the Marathon des Sables (an annual footrace which takes place over several days in the Sahara desert). Candidates could usually establish how the audience for both Texts is potentially large although a few candidates apparently did not take account of the fact the diary was available 'online' and consequently interpreted Text A as a wholly personal one not intended to be read by anyone else, thus unfortunately distorting their discussion of its audience, purpose and context. Some candidates did not fully appreciate Anne's role as the interviewer in Text B with limited examination of spoken features and the context of the interview as a consequence. Some candidates attempted to apply genderlect theory to Anne's 'passive' role during the interview reflected by her 'modest' back channelling and how Greg 'talks over her', proving he is trying to be 'dominant'.

In comparing the Texts most candidates focused on the chronological structure of Alastair's diary account consisting of a sequence of subtitled daily entries as opposed to the series of adjacency pairs found in the post-race interview. It was usually noted how Alastair uses numerous negative adjectives ('harder', 'weak', 'vague') while Greg uses positive ones sparingly ('sweeping', 'beautiful'), indicative of their different attitudes towards the MdS and the terrain they traversed. Many candidates were able to compare the use of declarative short sentences – 'Drink more. Eat salt. Eat food.' – and utterances – 'you have to navigate', 'you have to carry everything' – to convey the fundamental aspects of their experiences of the endurance event. Many candidates successfully discussed the way the tone changes in both Texts as an initial emphasis on the gruelling aspects of their experiences becomes triumphant and inspirational once the MdS is completed (Alastair's 'I felt absolutely glorious' and Greg's 'what i remember is the great moments and that's probably why we keep going back and doing these things').

In recognition of Text A's written mode candidates understood that the paragraphs and sentences within Alastair's diary account generally grew in length and complexity. The short, almost staccato, sentences and clauses of the Day 2 entry corresponded well to Alastair's initial breathless physical exertions whilst the longer, more fluent sentences of the Day 4 entry helped convey his growing confidence as he eventually acclimatised to the desert environment during the concluding phase of the race. Candidates noted Alastair made use of anaphoric structure in describing a female goatherd he encountered on Day 2 – 'She was barefoot', 'She was tough', 'She was smiling' – that is immediately juxtaposed with the simple antithetical statement 'I was not' to succinctly summarise his acute awareness of his nearly futile struggle to adjust to the desert environment. There was usually some consideration of Alastair's use of the past continuous tense with some variation, for instance the use of the present tense to make more accessible for his readers the comparison of the 'Sahara Shuffle' style of running he and some of the other participants adopted to how 'footballers trot up and down the sideline of the pitch before they come on as substitutes' (Day 3 entry) and to relate the relentless manner he traversed different types of desert terrain on Day 4: 'Up and over the jebel. Through the sand dunes. Across a gravel plain'. Alastair also usefully glosses his use of North Africa lexis for his readers' benefit: 'large jebel (mountain)'. It should be noted that a number of candidates misidentified 'Sunset and I was racing well' as an example of personification.

Many candidates could also focus on the conventions of spoken language they identified in Text B, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Greg: the occasional use of the voiced pause 'er'; perseveration through the repeated use of the conjunction 'and' to extend his account of dust storms and their consequences; hesitation ('lying in bed with this (.) this sheet'); and stressing to emphasise the more perilous natural conditions he contended with: 'incredibly strong winds', 'massive dust storms', 'the force of the wind', 'the pitch black'. There was some focus on Greg's use of second person plural address in consideration of Anne and the radio show's audience and persistent repetition of the nouns 'dust', 'sand' and 'markers' to remind his listeners of the main natural obstacles he encountered and by what means participants stayed on course in low visibility conditions. It was noted how many of Anne's initial contributions were monosyllabic utterances ('oh no', 'oh') in response to Greg's lengthy descriptions of the conditions he endured, with some candidates interpreting them as the subtle efforts of an experienced interviewer to encourage Greg to hold the conversational floor. In a similar way Anne's overlaps were found to be chiefly supportive ('um', 'can't see anything', 'yeah (.) isn't that amazing'). It was generally recognised that both speakers' utterances are relatively fluent overall. Some candidates remarked on the transcription's abrupt beginning ('its not just the racing itself because you camp') that indicates the interview is in an *in medias res* form and it may be simply Anne's first question that has been omitted from the extract.

In the strongest responses candidates tended to focus confidently on the effects produced that relate directly to the Texts' shared context of the MdS race. It was appreciated that Alastair composed his diary daily, when events were fresh in his mind, and so his can be more readily accepted as a credible account, whereas Greg's account is related to Anne after the completion of the race with the consequence he focuses selectively on the more memorable and positive aspects of the race – as he himself appears to admit: 'naturally a week or three days on from finishing ive kind of forgotten (1) the real misery'. Candidates accordingly examined how Alastair creates impressionistic, visual descriptions of the challenging terrain he encountered – 'a never-ending shimmering gravel plain that pulsed heat all the way to the end of the day' – for an audience consisting either of family and friends who knew in advance about his participation in the MdS or later found his diary entries through an online search for information about the endurance event, whereas Greg relies more on measurements, both relating to distance ('forty two kilometres') and temperature ('mid forty degrees centigrade ... during the day (1) at night it was down to about five six degrees centigrade') that may be independently verified. Alastair's use of strong verbs to describe his physical exertions – 'huffing and labouring', 'slathered in suncream', 'shuffled' – are not only in stark contrast to his description of the female goatherd he encountered – 'She was barefoot, relaxed and entirely comfortable with her environment' – but also Greg's more generalised, matter-of-fact relation of his experience in the second person: 'its just an awning over the top of you at night', 'having to cook your own food' and 'when you put one foot in front of the other youre a foot closer to the finish'. Some candidates also appreciated that Alastair constantly sought to motivate himself to persist with his physical exertions, sometimes in the form of an internal, mantra-like monologue featuring fronted imperatives: 'Keep up with the blokes ahead', 'Pace yourself, take it steady' whereas Anne's penultimate question during her interview with Greg – 'when things are so appalling (.) what keeps you going' – successfully solicited a reflective, motivational response in the form of an easily appreciated simile: 'its much like childbirth you think I can get through this' (one some candidates felt was disingenuous and disrespectful of a male to use). Some candidates also interpreted Greg's 'beautiful heat' and the repetition of 'soft sand' as indicative of a wistful meditation on challenging conditions he relished contending with whereas Alastair's constant use of fixed expressions connoting his determination ('gritted my teeth', 'deal with it') to maintain his pace ('push hard', 'leg it') suggests he was too focused on the circumstances of the race itself to appreciate the grandeur of the setting. A few candidates summarised their comparisons of the Texts by noting that spiritual fulfilment was achieved through extreme hardship and that this appears to be the attraction for both runners.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1(a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1(b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly 'gleaning hints' from the information provided in the questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. Only a few candidates produced short passages of extremely superficial commentary.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow its instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a transcription of a televised studio discussion among a panel of four women talking about whether parents should be best friends with their children. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the question's instructions; in this session it was an advice column for a parenting magazine. Careful consideration of the target audience (parents) and the requirement to provide advice about how friendly their relationship should be with their child was required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)** where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the advice column piece produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of a transcription of the discussion among a panel of four women. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register, format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of the language found in both texts. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the transcription and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for a comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach this series – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both centres and candidates that **Question 1(a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1(b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed comparative responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

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In weaker responses candidates tended to provide advice based on individual preferences or points of view with little evident discernment of the variety of views expressed by the women taking part in the discussion. A number of candidates quoted or paraphrased what most or all of the women state in the transcription and recycled specific phrases ('its very important to have a very close relationship', 'I really want my children to know they can rely on me', 'im going to be someone who is going to lay down a few rules') without much shaping of the material to a consistent line of advice. Lack of clarity in expression often hampered candidates' attempts to clearly explain how friendly a parent should be with their child.

In stronger responses candidates consistently presented an appropriate perspective on the issue with supporting arguments clearly corresponding to details carefully selected from the transcription. Purposeful use of a title ('Be close to your child but not their best friend') and an apt salutation (in this context the generic, even clichéd, 'Dear Concerned Parent' is more effective than 'Dear Ms Smith') indicated that candidates understood the parent seeking advice would appreciate a frank opinion to weigh up as they reached their own decision. Candidates took care to also address the magazine's readership through use of the first person plural, often in the interrogative form – 'Haven't we all been in the situation where ... ?' – in addition to the second person singular to directly address the parent seeking advice (usually at the beginning and end of the column). Careful selection of details from the transcription supported advising strategies that recognised the friendliness between parent and child is a two-way dynamic that can shift according to circumstances and over time. The importance of not alienating the child was a common theme. Whatever the nature of the advice offered the best responses demonstrated an appreciation of the ambiguity, ambivalence and even the uncertainty of the views expressed in the transcription and sensed the fine line between being friendly with a child and exercising parental responsibilities; perceived both the main and secondary audience as being likely young and first-time parents and tailored the advice accordingly; adopted and maintained a convincing 'agony aunt' persona

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- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the transcription of a televised studio discussion among a panel of four women talking about whether parents should be best friends with their children and the advice column produced for **1(a)**. A number of candidates did not apply a suitable methodology to analyse the transcription although, overall, it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription featuring a number of speakers discussing a common topic.

Some candidates did not adopt an integrated approach and sought to deal with each text separately. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

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In weak responses candidates tended to list the elements of spontaneous speech they identified in the transcription with little attention paid to examination of their own advice column. Some candidates reiterated at length what they know about Grice's maxims with little supporting and comparative examination of pertinent aspects of the transcription. There was some focus on distinctions in purpose (informative and entertainment as opposed to advising), audience (broad in both cases although more so for the televised discussion than the printed magazine containing the advice column) and register (semi-formal and usually formal) with some identification of high and low frequency lexis in the transcription (especially 'things' and 'stuff', plus 'authoritarian', 'independence', 'petrified' and 'stifles' respectively). Little comparative analysis was attempted, however.

The majority of candidates demonstrated an adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the non-fluency features to be found in the transcription, including pauses (a few noted Jools' use of a pause to reformulate: 'I don't want them (1) I think a best friend kind of supports...'); the use of stress ('very', 'it is', 'i am', 'tell me anything') and volume ('YES') for emphasis; fillers ('you know'); and overlaps (some candidates argued that Krishni's 'do you' is possibly accusatory rather than simply interrogative). The conversation was usually deemed to be mainly cooperative (perhaps in collective recognition of the television studio context) with a structure dependent on regular turn-taking and some question-and-response adjacency pairs (Cath: 'and you think that's good' / Meeral: 'Yes because...'). They could usually reflect on how Jools held the conversational floor with the frequency and length of her contributions in the first half of the discussion and how Meeral dominated the second half as she advocated at length that parents ought not to be their child's best friend. Many noted the use of vague language ('anything like that', 'those kind of things', 'stuff like that') and repetitions ('i don't want') were indicators of semi-spontaneous speech, arguing the women would likely have had advance knowledge of the topic to be discussed; in comparison, they appreciated how an advice column could be drafted, edited and polished prior to publication. The dynamic nature of the discussion gave candidates ample opportunities for comparison with their advice column on the basis of both language and style.

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wake up each day and think oh what a tragedy I didnt get on with her (1) I wake up and think YES (.) that relationship made me the woman I am today...') and the use of clichéd metaphors and fixed expressions ('she'll be kicked out', 'lay down a few rules', 'stand up for myself', 'all of a sudden'). It was usually recognised that the TV studio setting influenced the participants' attempts to maintain politeness whilst discussing a contentious topic, particularly how Jools and Meeral rely on personal anecdotes to illustrate their views for the benefit of both the other participants and the secondary audience, while Krishni and Cath make contributions that guide the discussion ('do you want to be their best friend though', 'and you think thats good'), including a topic shift ('do you think theres an argument to say that we're getting too close to our children'), and an attempt to use humour to maintain a civil, light tone ('well if shes in the cinema shes not going to be talking to anyone').

Question 2

As was the case for 1(b), candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created.

In the weakest responses candidates often dealt too much with the content of Texts A and B and listing techniques they could identify. In such responses there was exhibited some recognition of the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms – including how both Texts are in written rather than spoken form – and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a sure grasp of the purpose, audience and context of Text A, an extract from the opening of an article from the lifestyle section of a newspaper in which the writer recounts his experience of hiking in the Alps and of Text B, an extract from an advertisement from the website for the Marathon des Sables (MdS), an annual footrace which takes place over several days in the Sahara desert (the Texts sharing the topic of adventurous pursuits). Candidates usually established how the audience for Text B is likely narrower than Text A's (although the advertisement is on a website it would likely be found by enthusiasts specifically searching for information about the MdS or perhaps endurance events more generally). They also focused on the use of first-person point of view in Text A to convey its narrative and give authenticity to the ideas presented by its author in comparison to Text B's second-person perspective ('you are given a place in a tent', 'your lungs feel parched') along with imperatives fronting sentences ('Imagine', 'Join', 'Enter') to persuade potential future participants of the MdS to register for the next edition of the race. It was usually appreciated that both Texts consist of a rich mixture of simple, compound and complex sentences and use of low frequency lexis especially in relation to aspects of the natural environment ('desolate' and 'metamorphic' in Text A, 'formidable' and 'inhospitable' in Text B) and the activities described ('excursion' in Text A, 'multi-stage adventure' and 'ULTRAMARATHON' in Text B). The use of adjectives was frequently compared, especially those describing the Alpine environment in Text A ('black', 'triangular', 'blasted', 'haphazard', 'colossal') and the Sahara desert in Text B ('scorching', 'ruined', 'baking'). Also frequently examined was how the use of figurative language including personification ('scowling ... cliff'), simile ('like a walrus') and metaphor ('a quiff of wind-whipped snow') and the repeated use of questions to show internal monologue ('Weren't they?') and reported speech ('Gloves? I said') contributed to the creation of an entertaining narrative in Text A, together with how B's use of fronted sentences to commence its first two paragraphs ('Known simply as the MdS', 'Started in 1986 by Patrick Bauer') convey general information about the event while figurative language is used later in the advertisement to emphasise the physical challenges of terrain and heat participants will contend with – 'plough your feet through sand', 'part of your brain is screaming at you to stop' (often identified as an example of personification) – in order to finish the MdS, confidently heralded as 'an incredible accomplishment'. There was also consideration of fixed expressions – 'taking things in her stride' and 'what we were letting ourselves in for' in Text A, and 'drop out' and 'new slant on life' in Text B – to help readers appreciate different people's reactions, both physical and psychological, to less salubrious aspects of the natural world.

In the strongest responses candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language more efficiently and accurately, selecting an element to compare and contrast in each paragraph and demonstrating a consistent appreciation for language features. It was usually noted that both Texts exhibit a modified formal register with candidates usually contrasting the informality of some of Text A's vocabulary ('cheapo', 'malarkey', 'truffled up') to convey self-deprecating humour, in comparison to the formality of the declaratives used to convey facts about the MdS ('amateur and elite runners', 'truly international event', 'the equivalent of five and a half marathons in five or six days') in Text B. Text B's consistent use of present continuous tense to achieve immediacy was noted in comparison with Text A's *in medias res*, past tense opening ('There it

was in the distance') to create suspense, frequent use of discourse markers to signal progression through the narrative ('A few months ago', 'The next morning') and the inconclusive, final sentence: 'We kept going'. There was some corresponding examination of the hypophora used in transition to the final section of the narrative: 'Was that it, then? Was our excursion complete? It was not'. The gently ironic humour of Text A, created through the contrast of the author's preconceived notion of an Alpine idyll with the reality of hiking through 'impossibly high' terrain devoid of 'any birds, let alone butterflies' in a 'tweed jacket', was occasionally examined. Some candidates also focused on how the negative connotations of 'scowling' and 'black' to describe a cliff in the first sentence of Text A create a sense of foreboding to contrast with the next paragraph's tricolon description of the environment the writer anticipated visiting that incorporates appeals to three of the reader's senses: olfactory ('upland pastures with evergreen scents'), tactile ('lovely streams to splash in') and auditory ('the clonk of cowbells'). It was noted how the vividness of two of these phrases is amplified through alliteration, a technique used less frequently in Text B in relation to the environment ('scorching Moroccan sun') although mainly employed in association with conditions of the race ('rules require you to be self-sufficient') and accomplishments the participants may expect to accrue: 'life-long friendships are fostered', 'runners have raised funds to help hundreds of families'. Candidates also discovered the writers of both Texts resort to exaggeration to emphasise the extreme conditions of natural environments, most notably through Text A's climatic extended metaphor – 'a desolate and blasted moonscape ... as though eternally dynamited by some malign cosmic force' – and Text B's much less elaborate 'You can't feel the sweat dripping down your face because it's evaporating in the baking heat'. A few candidates summarised their comparisons of the Texts by noting that an adventurous pursuit may be either unexpectedly encountered and gradually accepted with good-natured humour (Text A) or actively sought with sheer arduousness its chief attraction (Text B).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1(a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1(b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly 'gleaning hints' from the information provided in the questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. Only a few candidates produced short passages of extremely superficial commentary.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow its instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a transcription of a televised studio discussion among a panel of four women talking about whether parents should be best friends with their children. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the question's instructions; in this session it was an advice column for a parenting magazine. Careful consideration of the target audience (parents) and the requirement to provide advice about how friendly their relationship should be with their child was required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

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Most candidates demonstrated a sure grasp of the purpose, audience and context of Text A, an extract from the opening of an article from the lifestyle section of a newspaper in which the writer recounts his experience of hiking in the Alps and of Text B, an extract from an advertisement from the website for the Marathon des Sables (MdS), an annual footrace which takes place over several days in the Sahara desert (the Texts sharing the topic of adventurous pursuits). Candidates usually established how the audience for Text B is likely narrower than Text A's (although the advertisement is on a website it would likely be found by enthusiasts specifically searching for information about the MdS or perhaps endurance events more generally). They also focused on the use of first-person point of view in Text A to convey its narrative and give authenticity to the ideas presented by its author in comparison to Text B's second-person perspective ('you are given a place in a tent', 'your lungs feel parched') along with imperatives fronting sentences ('Imagine', 'Join', 'Enter') to persuade potential future participants of the MdS to register for the next edition of the race. It was usually appreciated that both Texts consist of a rich mixture of simple, compound and complex sentences and use of low frequency lexis especially in relation to aspects of the natural environment ('desolate' and 'metamorphic' in Text A, 'formidable' and 'inhospitable' in Text B) and the activities described ('excursion' in Text A, 'multi-stage adventure' and 'ULTRAMARATHON' in Text B). The use of adjectives was frequently compared, especially those describing the Alpine environment in Text A ('black', 'triangular', 'blasted', 'haphazard', 'colossal') and the Sahara desert in Text B ('scorching', 'ruined', 'baking'). Also frequently examined was how the use of figurative language including personification ('scowling ... cliff'), simile ('like a walrus') and metaphor ('a quiff of wind-whipped snow') and the repeated use of questions to show internal monologue ('Weren't they?') and reported speech ('Gloves? I said') contributed to the creation of an entertaining narrative in Text A, together with how B's use of fronted sentences to commence its first two paragraphs ('Known simply as the MdS', 'Started in 1986 by Patrick Bauer') convey general information about the event while figurative language is used later in the advertisement to emphasise the physical challenges of terrain and heat participants will contend with – 'plough your feet through sand', 'part of your brain is screaming at you to stop' (often identified as an example of personification) – in order to finish the MdS, confidently heralded as 'an incredible accomplishment'. There was also consideration of fixed expressions – 'taking things in her stride' and 'what we were letting ourselves in for' in Text A, and 'drop out' and 'new slant on life' in Text B – to help readers appreciate different people's reactions, both physical and psychological, to less salubrious aspects of the natural world.

In the strongest responses candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language more efficiently and accurately, selecting an element to compare and contrast in each paragraph and demonstrating a consistent appreciation for language features. It was usually noted that both Texts exhibit a modified formal register with candidates usually contrasting the informality of some of Text A's vocabulary ('cheapo', 'malarkey', 'truffled up') to convey self-deprecating humour, in comparison to the formality of the declaratives used to convey facts about the MdS ('amateur and elite runners', 'truly international event', 'the equivalent of five and a half marathons in five or six days') in Text B. Text B's consistent use of present continuous tense to achieve immediacy was noted in comparison with Text A's *in medias res*, past tense opening ('There it

was in the distance') to create suspense, frequent use of discourse markers to signal progression through the narrative ('A few months ago', 'The next morning') and the inconclusive, final sentence: 'We kept going'. There was some corresponding examination of the hypophora used in transition to the final section of the narrative: 'Was that it, then? Was our excursion complete? It was not'. The gently ironic humour of Text A, created through the contrast of the author's preconceived notion of an Alpine idyll with the reality of hiking through 'impossibly high' terrain devoid of 'any birds, let alone butterflies' in a 'tweed jacket', was occasionally examined. Some candidates also focused on how the negative connotations of 'scowling' and 'black' to describe a cliff in the first sentence of Text A create a sense of foreboding to contrast with the next paragraph's tricolon description of the environment the writer anticipated visiting that incorporates appeals to three of the reader's senses: olfactory ('upland pastures with evergreen scents'), tactile ('lovely streams to splash in') and auditory ('the clonk of cowbells'). It was noted how the vividness of two of these phrases is amplified through alliteration, a technique used less frequently in Text B in relation to the environment ('scorching Moroccan sun') although mainly employed in association with conditions of the race ('rules require you to be self-sufficient') and accomplishments the participants may expect to accrue: 'life-long friendships are fostered', 'runners have raised funds to help hundreds of families'. Candidates also discovered the writers of both Texts resort to exaggeration to emphasise the extreme conditions of natural environments, most notably through Text A's climatic extended metaphor – 'a desolate and blasted moonscape ... as though eternally dynamited by some malign cosmic force' – and Text B's much less elaborate 'You can't feel the sweat dripping down your face because it's evaporating in the baking heat'. A few candidates summarised their comparisons of the Texts by noting that an adventurous pursuit may be either unexpectedly encountered and gradually accepted with good-natured humour (Text A) or actively sought with sheer arduousness its chief attraction (Text B).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41
Language Topics

Key messages

Paper 41 offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in their choice of two of three key areas of English language study. Candidates are expected to write fluently within an organised structure in response to the material presented in the questions. Responses should be sustained and should incorporate carefully selected references from the texts provided, and make appropriate reference to theories which illustrate the points made.

Questions 1 and 3 require a thorough understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription in order to analyse the nuances of group talk (**Question 1**) or child language acquisition (**Question 3**). Candidates are expected to take a linguistic stance, using a full and accurate range of technical terminology to describe the ways in which interlocutors are using language in the transcriptions.

The demands of **Question 2** are different: candidates are required to produce a discursive essay in response to the passage provided which incorporates evidence of the candidate's wider reading on the subject of English as a global language. Arguments around the source material should be the main focus of the response, with theoretical examples interwoven, ensuring a cohesive structure to the overall essay.

General comments

In order to move towards the higher bands, candidates must produce sustained work. In **Questions 1 and 3** it is inadvisable to use the transcription key as a source of clues to aid the spotting of features in the transcriptions, such as overlap, pause, intonation and raised volume. Merely identifying these features does not constitute analysis, which is what was required in these questions.

In **Question 2**, candidates must maintain focus on the context provided by both the question and the passage, using it as a springboard for ideas pertaining to the overall topic. Candidates should ensure that a demonstration of their knowledge of the history of English, or an overview of a particular theory, is only applied when directly relevant to the question and passage; otherwise, they run the risk of losing focus. Quotations from the text should be brief and appropriate: candidates who either copied long sections of the text or tended to paraphrase the passage without supplying their own ideas were consequently unable to move towards the higher bands.

In all questions, strong and confident candidates were able to provide detailed examples from the material presented. These candidates typically complemented both argument and counterargument with theoretical examples drawn from extensive exploratory wider reading. Stronger candidates wrote with confident control, using a wide range of technical terminology with accuracy. Ideas were clearly stated and supported with evidence.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to recognise the features of spontaneous speech presented in the transcription, such as overlap, false start, micropause, voiced pause and backchannel. Some candidates misinterpreted the gender of the interlocutors and some misread the age of the women who were 'in their twenties' and described them as teenagers.

The conversation was overwhelmingly supportive and showed many features of female genderlect. With that very much to the fore, most candidates made reference to Lakoff's deficit model, making examples of tag questions and frequent empty adjectives and intensification. Confident candidates developed ideas about the pragmatics of the standard English used by the women and how it was peppered with the contemporary use of 'like' and 'yeah' to decrease the level of formality.

Coates was used most appropriately as the interlocutors comprised a small group without a clear hierarchical structure, in which language was used to create and maintain equality. The girls interpreted one another's speech clearly, overlapping cooperatively and demonstrating a unison chime.

Tannen's difference theory was frequently applied although this was not wholly appropriate as all interlocutors were female, thus there was no gender difference to illustrate. Candidates should ensure that the theories they apply are completely focused on the language presented to avoid spending time on less relevant discussion.

Question 2

The engaging passage provided for this question gave rise to some articulate and sustained responses with a wide range of extended reading being demonstrated, including the complexities of the Sapir-Whorf model.

Although weaker responses merely paraphrased the context provided, stronger candidates explored the way in which colonised countries other than India retained and use English today; the notion of code-switching; and the growth and limitations of pidgin, creole and hybrid forms. Often, there were real examples from candidates' own countries to provide local authenticity to responses.

The Kachru model was widely discussed. Candidates should bear in mind the discursive nature of this question and that there is no requirement to provide a diagram of the model. More confident responses discussed the ways in which Kachru's model may change due to hybridisation across the world, often using Widdowson's notion of spread and distribution to develop their ideas.

Parallels were drawn by confident candidates between the linguistic 'hodge podge' of the Indian culture and the way in which the internet is changing the use of English globally. There were a number of articulate and developed responses which discussed how the functionality of the internet may be maintained despite a lack of standardisation and an increasing use of semiotic systems to create mutual intelligibility across the globe.

Overall, the context was used well as a starting point for candidates to develop ideas relating to the changing use of English as a global language, with evidence of a varied amount of wider reading being applied to responses.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to correctly place Riya as transitioning from the holophrastic to the telegraphic stage of language acquisition and to describe her journey through the Piagetian sensorimotor and preoperational stages of cognitive development. Her understanding of object permanence was widely discussed and strong candidates acknowledged that at times her speech went beyond telegraphic utterance (for example in line 23).

Halliday's instrumental, representational and regulatory functions were evident in the transcription and confident candidates selected examples to illustrate these. Weaker candidates made simple and generalised reference to Skinner, or used the father's utterance at line 26 to illustrate reinforcement, whereas in this transcription there were opportunities to develop responses with the application of a number of different theorists including Chomsky, Bruner and Vygotsky. Weaker responses attempted to analyse the socioeconomic status of the child which resulted in some irrelevant discussion.

Exploration of the father's role as caretaker was generally developed well as he attempted to elicit longer responses from Riya, managing topics and ensuring smooth turn-taking. However, candidates need to be more discriminating in their descriptions of questioning techniques and ensure accurate technical terminology to describe types of questions.

Strong candidates used technical terminology accurately to describe phonological features such as the phonemic content of Riya's utterances in lines six to ten (voiced plosive /b/ as opposed to the father's voiced fricative /v/), contrasting those with her full articulation of the consonant cluster in line 19. In this part of the transcription, strong candidates also recognised that Riya was able to use 'cubber' as a verb as well as

understand it as a noun, whereas her father's misinterpretation used the word as a noun only, the example being used to demonstrate the level of Riya's linguistic confidence and competence.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42
Language Topics

Key messages

Paper 42 offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in their choice of two of three key areas of English language study. Candidates are expected to write fluently within an organised structure in response to the material presented in the questions. Responses should be sustained and should incorporate carefully selected references from the texts provided, and make appropriate reference to theories which illustrate the points made.

Questions 1 and 3 require a thorough understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription in order to analyse the nuances of group talk (**Question 1**) or child language acquisition (**Question 3**). Candidates are expected to take a linguistic stance, using a full and accurate range of technical terminology to describe the ways in which interlocutors are using language in the transcriptions.

The demands of **Question 2** are different: candidates are required to produce a discursive essay in response to the passage provided which incorporates evidence of the candidate's wider reading on the subject of English as a global language. Arguments around the source material should be the main focus of the response, with theoretical examples interwoven, ensuring a cohesive structure to the overall essay.

General comments

In order to move towards the higher bands, candidates must produce sustained work. In **Questions 1 and 3** it is inadvisable to use the transcription key as a source of clues to aid the spotting of features in the transcriptions, such as overlap, pause, intonation and raised volume. Merely identifying these features does not constitute analysis, which is what was required in these questions.

In **Question 2**, candidates must maintain focus on the context provided by both the question and the passage, using it as a springboard for ideas pertaining to the overall topic. Candidates should ensure that a demonstration of their knowledge of the history of English, or an overview of a particular theory, is only applied when directly relevant to the question and passage; otherwise, they run the risk of losing focus. Quotations from the text should be brief and appropriate: candidates who either copied long sections of the text or tended to paraphrase the passage without supplying their own ideas were consequently unable to move towards the higher bands.

In all questions, strong and confident candidates were able to provide detailed examples from the material presented. These candidates typically complemented both argument and counterargument with theoretical examples drawn from extensive exploratory wider reading. Stronger candidates wrote with confident control, using a wide range of technical terminology with accuracy. Ideas were clearly stated and supported with evidence.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates recognised the many features of spontaneous talk in the transcription such as hedging, backchannel, false start and cooperative overlap. Strong candidates avoided mere feature spotting by exploring the relative status of the two interlocutors, which despite its seeming asymmetry achieved balance because power was not asserted through the language. The politeness running through the transcription was observed, with many candidates supporting their ideas using Giles and CAT, Lakoff, Goffman or Brown and Levinson.

Despite the instructions at the top of the transcription, some candidates misread the gender of the salesman which gave rise to some irrelevant discussions about the effects and qualities of female genderlect, using Lakoff as support. Where Cameron was applied to the language of the two male interlocutors, confident candidates discussed how the language presented could be said to illustrate her model of male discourse, without making irrelevant reference to female talk.

The transcription offered many ways to explore the customer's uncertainty, for example through his duplication of vague pre-modifiers, in contrast to the assured, polite and non-technical accommodation and support given by the salesman. Overall, strong and sustained responses analysed the way in which each of the interlocutors positioned themselves and each other through their language by maintaining the lexical field and their own agenda through politeness and strategies of support.

Question 2

The passage provided had a specific focus on language and science and enabled candidates to use Scott L Montgomery's responses to interview questions to provide their ideas on the most important issues raised relating to the changing use of English as a global language. Many candidates used the four points Montgomery made in his first reply as an essay plan, expanding on each of the points. Weaker candidates discussed only these four points, whereas stronger candidates continued to comment on what Montgomery responded to in his final paragraph, exploring how native English-speaking scientists may be limited or disadvantaged.

Some candidates chose to relate ideas from the passage to personal experience in their own countries which provided an extra dynamic to their responses. Confident candidates applied a number of linguistic theories to their points, including those by Hagege, Setter, McKenzie, Butt and Ryan evidencing a wide range of research. Other appropriate discussion used the concept of 'Coca-Colonisation' and Nerriere's Globish to illustrate ideas.

Overall, responses to this question were well-developed, although there was a tendency in weaker candidates to provide the examiner with a paraphrase of Montgomery's words, particularly those in the second paragraph. From lines 13 to 19 there was an opportunity for candidates to write about the resourcefulness of language and its potential power to address contemporary global scientific issues, which in stronger responses was developed articulately and in a balanced way.

Question 3

Most candidates correctly identified Zach's stage of language acquisition and provided examples of his post-telegraphic speech, discussing his continuing linguistic development through the Piagetian preoperational and concrete operational stages of cognitive development. Such examples included the successful use of consonant cluster, some use of complex structure and fulfilment of adjacency pairs.

Despite the preliminary instructions at the top of the transcription, some weaker candidates misread the gender of the child and attempted to apply irrelevant genderlect and socioeconomic theories. It is important in this question to maintain focus on the language presented in the transcription and the ways in which it is being used.

Most candidates discussed the ways in which the mother was providing support through her child-directed speech, for example the way in which she split her utterance by pause in line 17 and the way in which she used reinforcement of tense at line 28. Sustained and confident responses made reference to how the mother scaffolded Zach through the Vygotskian zone of proximal development and the varied ways in which she presented as the more knowledgeable other.

Strong candidates used a range of technical terminology with accuracy to describe Zach's virtuous error at line 29, observing how his grammar became more muddled as the ideation became more complex. Weaker candidates merely reported that Zach's grammar was 'wrong' due to his age.

Many candidates were able to apply a range of theories to the language presented in the transcription, although there was some evidence of providing long descriptions of theories without appropriate examples from the text. Discriminating analyses selected the most appropriate theories to develop points raised from this engaging transcription.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43
Language Topics

Key messages

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