

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. It is worth remembering that the same point would not be rewarded twice.

The directed writing exercises produced some fluent and skilful writing. Candidates often engaged very successfully with the stylistic features of the Steve Jobs speech, for example, and showed evident enjoyment of the opportunity to mock the excesses of social media.

Not all candidates fully understood that the instruction to “Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original” is not an invitation to copy directly from the text. 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 speech made by Steve Jobs, during a graduate ceremony, and to explain how style and language were used to engage the audience. 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.

There was general recognition of the formality of the opening sentences and this was often contrasted with the more colloquial and relaxed style of the remainder. There was also some good understanding of the effect of the three truncated sentences in engaging audience attention, and of the sense of expectation created by reference to “connecting the dots”; nevertheless, a surprising number ignored this connecting theme altogether.

Stronger answers also understood how the interweaving of anecdote and personal history gave the audience a sense of engagement with the speaker. The rhetorical question “So why did I drop out?”, which introduces the succession of anecdotes, was another feature which was well understood.

The irony of a drop out addressing a graduation ceremony was commonly remarked on and observant responses noted and enjoyed the wrong-footing of the audience when Jobs says, “I loved it”, after detailing the hardships of dropping out.

There was some loss of focus upon style and language, often resulting from speculation about Mr Jobs’ background; the circumstances of his adoption aroused particular interest. There was a similar tendency to dwell overlong on the design of the Macintosh computer and the mildly comic criticism of Windows. Candidates who approached the passage in a formulaic fashion almost always found it difficult to develop a full response.

- (B)** Candidates were asked to write the opening of a speech, based closely upon the style and language of the original.

This was a task which was clearly relished by many candidates and there were some outstandingly successful responses. Unfortunately, it was also the directed writing response which suffered most from material being lifted directly from the original. Candidates must remember that to replicate the style and language of the original does not mean directly lifting or closely paraphrasing specific elements of the text. Effective responses picked up the rhetorical techniques of the passage and exploited them fully. There was some particularly successful use of compressed sentences and minor sentences and an obvious engagement with the use of anecdote. There was also some clever adaptation of the wrong-footing techniques: “It started when your principal contacted me. She wanted me to give you a motivational or preparation speech – I decided against either of those”.

A significant number of candidates wrote as if they were addressing an audience at a university rather than a school, while others continued speaking in the voice of Steve Jobs. This underlines the importance of reading the wording of the question very carefully and of making no assumptions regarding the nature of the task.

Almost all of the stronger responses found a central theme which echoed “connecting the dots” and a style which mixed some formality of approach with colloquial expression.

Weaker responses tended to closely replicate the structure of the original and in some cases, did little more than paraphrase elements of the text.

Question 2

- (A) Candidates were invited to comment on the style and language used by Njoki Chege in a newspaper opinion column entitled “Only lazy parents raise on Facebook”.

This was an unusual passage, opinionated and forthright, designed to initiate a reaction and in the case of a number of candidates, succeeding. In some cases, candidates clearly felt insulted by the views of the writer and responded to what they felt was an intemperate rant by responding in kind. This resulted in some superficial responses which remarked on the “rude and disrespectful” nature of the passage and the “condescending tone” employed by the writer but said very little about style and language employed. More balanced views of the text recognised the “light heartedly sarcastic” tone of the piece as well as the essentially serious point that was being made: “The inflammatory title, calling parents lazy will separate those who agree and those who firmly disagree with her tongue in cheek humour”.

Failure to recognise the tongue-in-cheek quality of some of the writing was often the indicator of a response which was engaged, but lacking in focus upon language effects. Only a relative minority of candidates concerned themselves with the structure of the passage and its use of short paragraphs, building in mock confrontation to the dismissive final paragraph. There was a better recognition of the writer’s use of short, punchy sentences and of minor sentences. The most commonly recognised example was the concluding word of the passage which closes the argument: “Period”. There was also relatively little comment upon the different points used in the opening declarations of the passage and the effect of the hashtag examples of parental tweets. Almost all examples commented upon the repeated use of rhetorical questions but did not always point out the increasingly exasperated tone of the repetition.

Stronger responses mentioned the writer’s adoption of the personal pronoun “we”, which involved the reader in the mounting injunctions to the offending parents.

Most responses mentioned the use of sarcasm in the passage but this was rarely developed and examples such as “Your daughter...looks cute in her uniform. Big deal!” were largely omitted.

There were some elements in the passage which were genuinely ambiguous in tone, such as the reference to how “becoming a father or a mother is the easiest thing in the world”. In many cases, candidates assumed that this was another shot aimed at parents, but it might easily have been, as so much else, tongue in cheek.

The tone of the passage was resolutely anti-sentimental and its language was sometimes scathing, but the task for the candidates was not to refute the writer’s opinions, but to show how they were developed and expressed. The strongest responses understood this and recognised the variety of rhetorical techniques that were employed.

- (B) Candidates were asked to compose the opening of an article, based closely on the style and features of the original, expressing an opinion on the use of social media or other forms of communication technology.

The overwhelming majority of candidates will have been entirely at home with the use of social media and there was a sense of easy engagement in many of the responses to the task. Ironically, many of those who criticised the harsh tone of the original clearly relished the opportunity of mocking the behaviour of their peers, and there was a great deal of acid invention in their selection of statuses.

There were some excellent responses, capturing the style of the original and confidently adding their own elements of humour and sarcasm.

The better responses had a strong sense of audience and often adopted a confident adult persona: “Do you want brainless children? Well, that’s what you will get if you offer them technology on a golden platter”.

The most common theme was the failure of teenagers to live proper lives in favour of the technological version: “You seem to think that the amount of likes your selfie gets measures your self-worth”.

There were several particularly effective uses of scornful rhetorical exclamation, including “Another boyfriend snap – oh please!”

The most inventive and sometimes disconcerting aspect of the responses was often the inclusion of the mock statuses: “I look cute today; anyone wishing to buy me food?” or “I hate the colour red, it reminds me of blood. I wonder what my blood type is?”

There were a few principled refusals to criticise the use of social media, but these rarely had the strength and conviction of the original: “I like the mobile phone, it’s an escape for us to slip into safety, it makes us happy, let us live in peace.”

For the majority of candidates, their strong response to the original resulted in some effective and spirited writing.

Question 3

- (A) Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language used to portray Cotter, a teenaged boy attempting to get into a baseball game for free.

This passage proved less popular as a second choice than **Question 2** and a number of candidates struggled with the somewhat idiosyncratic third person narration. Some responses produced a character sketch of Cotter but without making strong links to the writer’s use of language and style. In these cases, there was a loss of focus and a tendency to resort to narrative.

There was general understanding of the battle between Cotter and the stadium cop and stronger answers picked out the contrast between “the slouchy funk” of Cotter and the “municipal bulk” of the policeman. Perceptive candidates went further and commented on the “lightness” of Cotter’s movement as opposed to the “impedimenta which seem to weigh down his adversary”. Several candidates guessed that this was a contest which had been played out many times before: “by waving goodbye it seems as if these two played at cat and mouse before”.

Effective answers recognised and commented upon on the progression of the character and the “developed and continued sense of ease” which surrounds the character. There was also recognition of the lack of dialogue and the use of the third person narration.

The language of the passage was often described as colloquial, but relatively little comment was made on the use of the elaborate constructions that pepper the passage: “He comes down lightly and goes easy gaiting...and he knows absolutely – knows it all the way, deep as knowing goes...that he is uncatchable”.

“Uncatchable” and “invulnerable” were common descriptions of Cotter and there was admiration for his “unrelenting personality and determination”. There was a clear identification with the character as an underdog but relatively little attention to the way in which the style of the writing encouraged this.

There was a better appreciation of the use of the colloquial language of baseball to demonstrate the boy’s agility and of the detailed scene-setting of the stadium.

Stronger answers almost always followed the character’s transformation from gangly adolescent to something approaching the self-assured business man “flying in from Kansas City”, which is used as an accompanying image of Cotter’s smooth control of the situation.

- (B) Candidates were asked to write part of a report on the events of the passage and to do so in the character of the policeman who attempted to arrest Cotter. They were asked to base their answers closely on the material of the original.

Although there was no obligation for the candidate to adopt any aspect of the passage’s style, some of the slangy inventiveness of original often found its way into the response. This was a task which was clearly relished by some of the candidates and there was a great deal of comic

identification with the frustration of the policeman: “I was shamed by his taunting eyes and condescending hand gestures” and “These teenagers have so much adrenaline in them, how could I possibly have kept up”?

Key events in the text were sometimes amusingly incorporated in the report, but there were also inventive developments of both main characters. Some of the most effective reports developed a sense of rivalry between the two, with the policeman being compelled to allow Cotter reluctant admiration: “This kid was so quick, he looked like some kind of professional stuntman”.

There was also a sense of genuine sympathy and identification with the problem faced by the stadium cops: “As long as the police are no longer respected and feared by boys like that, these problems will continue to persist!”

There were some problems with maintaining tense continuity and some otherwise engaged and imaginative responses suffered from uneven expression. Other candidates struggled to find a sufficiently formal note for a police report and a few failed to respect the report form altogether. Weaker responses tended to report the events of the passage without significant adaptation, and this was an opportunity lost.

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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 authorial voices of the texts, most notably between the chatty and wide-eyed guide to Orlando's bakeries and the much darker account of the streets of Nairobi.

The rubric was generally well followed, though some candidates exceeded the word boundary of directed writing exercises, particularly in responses to 1B.

There was some strong and detailed writing in the commentary responses, notably for **Question 2**, 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.

Not all candidates paid enough attention to the importance of structure within a passage. An example of this was a fairly common failure to comment on the use of paragraphing in **Question 3**, where it was particularly effective.

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 Pilot’s Wife” being particularly pleasing.

There is still a significant problem with elements of the original text being transferred directly to the response, which is plainly not what is meant by basing answers “closely on the style and language of the original”. The list structure of the first question tended to encourage writing in excess of the word boundary, but generally the rubric was well observed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (A)** Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of an online review of the best bakeries in Orlando, Florida.

Most candidates acknowledged to some degree the effects of headings and subheadings throughout the passage. The sectional nature of the passage tended to result in each bakery being considered separately and this sometimes prevented a convincing overview of the text. This approach also resulted in a tendency for responses to concentrate upon the introduction and the first couple of bakeries at the expense of some interesting material later in the passage. Weaker responses confined themselves to listing the bakeries and their specialities and found little of significance to say about the language employed in the review.

Most candidates picked up on the writer’s use of colloquial terms and rhetorical questions, sometimes linking the latter to the breathless quality of some of the writing: “Use of rhetorical question, followed by an exclamation mark (where do they go to get it? All over!) conveys the writer’s enthusiasm”.

There was also recognition of the quasi-religious nature of some of the language used in the introduction, and the better answers understood this well: “The word sinful introduces the religious language that is to follow, such as preached and sermon” and “Divine elements and heavenly qualities seem to make the food transcend human experience”.

There was also understanding of the significance of the “bridge building” quality of food in the first section, though this was not always explained with sufficient precision.

Strong answers recognised and accurately described the effects of the review’s language choices: “The phrase, ‘Oh the crusty, crusty goodness’ appears to be an example of apostrophe, where the writer can’t contain his delight” and “ ‘Nestled’ insinuates that the bakery is a warm and comforting place”.

Another aspect of the extract which was variably understood was the gradual discrediting of the notion of diet and dieting: “ ‘Count them, diets will tell you’ uses personification of the diets to sound like a villain whispering in your ear”. There was also some good understanding of the overall style of the review and its very chummy and upbeat quality: “Direct address to the reader aids involvement and the use of apostrophe laden words such as ‘don’t’ and ‘let’s’ make you feel you are being spoken to rather than at”.

- (B)** Candidates were invited to write the opening of a review of a favourite eating place of their own, basing their style closely on the original.

There were many enthusiastic and often passionate responses to this exercise, sometimes leading to reviews well in excess of the stipulated word boundary.

Most candidates took their cue from the passage and made the review an encomium rather than attempting any sort of balance. This did lead to some overly excited writing which did not pay enough attention to replicating style and language. There was obvious relish in listing local and

regional delicacies, though this was sometimes so large a feature that there was room for little else. There was a general recognition of the importance of the rhetorical question in the passage and it was widely and effectively used: “Where are the good old fast food items of yore? I’ll tell you. Down at the Lo Cal branch of restaurants”, or “Does that mean you’ll always have something new to try? Of course it does!”

There was some excellent replication of the cheerful but often quite imperative direct address of the original: “The Chinese food industry has been taken over by fast food companies. Let me tell you that P.F. Changs is here to reclaim top class, classy Chinese”.

There were some amusing echoes of the mock seriousness of the introductory warnings about the danger of “carbs”: “These are troubling times: you can’t even chomp on a greasy, old fashioned burger without casting a glance at the picture-perfect couple opposite”.

There were weaker responses which did little more than create menu lists, but the general response to this exercise was spirited and engaged.

Question 2

- (A) Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a passage taken from “The Pilot’s Wife” by Anita Shreve, with particular reference to the ways in which tension is created. This was the more popular choice of the two additional texts and offered the candidates a gripping read and a range of language features to consider. The majority of responses to this question demonstrated engagement and some understanding of effects and there were some sustained and perceptive examinations of the text.

There was general recognition of the “foreshadowing” devices used in the opening paragraph and the “atmosphere of suspense and mystery” was often dissected with excellent and fluent understanding: “The description of the house having ‘lost its warmth’ is an omen as to the house having lost its owner”.

Most responses recognised the significance of the “knocking” and “barking” in the first sentence as being portents of disaster, as was the use of the word “wrongness” in suggesting that all was not well.

In various degrees of detail, there was informed comment on the use of incomplete sentences and the flood of tangled concerns that ran through the woman’s mind. The structure and paragraphing of the extract was rarely remarked upon, only the concluding sentences and their cliffhanger effect being given much attention. Similarly, there was little interest in the effect of the use of the past continuous tense or the register of the narrative. However, individual components in the creation of suspense were consistently well described: “The coolness of the house and the strangeness of the hour (3.24) suggest that her walking will not end happily” or “The theme of darkness and malevolence runs throughout the text”.

Particular attention was paid to the disappearance of the woman’s dream, as if it had deliberately deserted or even entrapped her: “Moreover, the dream is personified as ‘skittering’, portraying something like a spider scuttling away”.

It was also noticeable that the ending of this text received almost as much attention as the opening paragraph. This was at least partly due to the very ambivalent final lines but also to the intriguing strangeness of the man who is knocking at the door. There was a variety of opinions concerning the nature of the visitor but most agreed that it was not the arrival of good news: “The physical description of the man ‘with shoulders hunched etc’ foreshadows a ‘bearer of bad news’ and the ‘pale’ and ‘hooded eyelids’ suggest that this is possibly the Grim Reaper himself”.

Not all the candidates managed to consider a full range of language features and effects, but there was a generally engaged and purposeful response.

- (B) Candidates were asked to write a continuation of the extract from “The Pilot’s Wife”, basing their answer closely on the style of the original passage.

Though there were highly improbable developments in some responses, there were also excellent continuations which offered both continuity and resolution to the original. In these instances, the

tension of the original was sustained and the cliffhanger ending given a satisfactory resolution. Less successful responses tended to offer excessive dialogue between the two characters and developments that were unconvincing. Most candidates continued the use of internal conversation and maintained the action in the past tense, although tenses sometimes shifted, especially as the story developed. In some extreme cases, responses started out in the past tense with a third person narrative but gradually adapted themselves to the present tense written in the first person.

There was a roughly even division between those who attempted to give a clear resolution to the passage and those who continued to spin out the uncertainty: “He sat across from her, his hands folded lightly in his lap, his eyes scrutinising the room, his foot shaking uneasily. Then he started telling her the news”.

There were highly successful direct continuations of the original often achieving an excellent sense of the style of the original:

“Mrs Lyons?, he asked.

And then she knew.

The ice from the tiles beneath crept up her feet...some words filtered through the haze which surrounded her,

“Accident...hospital...sorry”.

There were also some genuinely chilling conclusions which added a sinister suggestion to the uncertainty of the original: “Where are the kids, he asked, voice a monotone, as if he had left his soul at the door step”.

Sometimes the concentration upon securing a dramatic resolution resulted in a loss of focus upon style and language but this exercise produced some strong and imaginative writing.

Question 3

(A) Candidates were asked to comment upon the style and language of an extract from “One day I Will Write About This Place”, the autobiography of Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina.

This was a somewhat less popular passage than **Question 2**, yet it offered candidates the opportunity to discuss a wide and interesting range of language features.

There is a definite sense of ambivalence about the writer’s attitude to his home city but this was rarely considered, most candidates viewing the writer’s attitude as wholly critical: “The use of words such as ‘drab and dirty’...paint the picture of Nairobi as an unpleasant, dismal and deprived place”. In fact, the writer suggests a degree of admiration for a city in which resilience is a necessary quality for survival: “He realises that in spite of the grime, the city is full of life...there is admiration for those who treat the city as a game or challenge”.

Perceptive responses recognised that the passage is not only a portrait of a city but also a consideration of the author’s sense of identity reflecting in his uncertain attitude towards Nairobi. This is reflected in the ambiguous and undeveloped statement: “It is good to be home”. Most candidates assumed that this was sarcasm, but it is far from certain that this is the case and may well reflect the author’s ambivalent attitude to the city.

There was very little informed consideration of the writer’s use of the present tense and the intended sense of the reader being a partner in his exploration of the city.

There was similarly little attention to the structure of the passage and particularly the impact of the short paragraphs and the declaration that “This is Nairobi”.

Most candidates found language features to comment upon, notably the personification of the “matatus” and the very modest instance of onomatopoeia. In general, however, there could have been more attention to how the writer created the sense of the city’s atmosphere. The striking contrast between the colourful battle of the “undocumented sprawl” and the sense of an alienated population depicted in the closing paragraphs was generally not commented upon. More surprisingly, the concluding image of the street kid, with feet “bare and bleeding”, “a bottle of glue in his mouth”, was also often ignored.

As it was, although there were some excellent responses, too many assumed a wholly negative view of the city and picked out the more obvious features to give this view support.

- (B)** Candidates were invited to write an extract from an autobiography of their own, also imagining that they have returned home after being away for some years.

There were strong and sometimes heartfelt responses to this exercise; the idea of being a stranger in your own land was often effectively exploited. Stronger responses mixed descriptions of place with well-defined personal reactions to change or sometimes improvement. Less successful answers failed to demonstrate full understanding of the text and did not always address the element of homecoming.

As is sometimes the case, the candidates who had written with reasonable accuracy in the commentary were far more uncertain in the directed writing. Punctuation was sometimes careless, spelling wayward and the use of tenses erratic. Candidates do need to be aware of the importance of maintaining accuracy of expression in the directed writing.

There was some evocative and interesting writing, with cityscapes created with imaginative detail: "The smell of donkey poop, diesel and fresh samosas".

Most responses developed the sense of loss and change; several declared this immediately and then developed the theme: "Who'd have imagined India had changed so much?" and "I looked out of the window...everywhere the trees I had last seen were cut down to make housing societies".

Almost invariably, change was presented as an alteration for the worse, but a few responses reversed the trend and noted an improvement in the altered landscape: "The fountains dancing as if the city was full of wonders, maybe now the city will live".

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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 plainly 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 clearly too generalised to be of any value.

The importance of reading the question very carefully was underlined by two sections of this paper. In **Question 1(A)**, the wording of the question informed the candidates that Walter Mitty was a man who "lives more in his imagination than in reality". A few candidates clearly did not register this fully and there was some misunderstanding of the passage which careful reading would have prevented. There was also some misreading of **Question 2(B)**, for which candidates were asked to provide guidelines for schools in dealing with disabled candidates; "guidelines" was often loosely interpreted.

There were some imaginative and accomplished responses in the directed writing for all three passages. The exercises for both the first and third passages produced perceptive writing but there was an encouraging sense of engagement throughout the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (A) Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of the passage and the ways in which the eponymous hero, Walter Mitty, was presented.

The wording of the question clearly informed candidates that “Walter Mitty, a middle-aged man, lives more in his imagination than in reality”. Despite this information, a small number of candidates assumed that he was a victim of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or were completely at a loss to explain his apparent changes of location, character, and status. Clearly it had to be understood that Mitty’s appearances as a naval commander and an eminent surgeon were simply figments of his imagination, otherwise the passage would make little sense and significant language features would be missed or misinterpreted. In the case of opening paragraph, there was very variable understanding of the figure of the Commander and the details of his appearance: “The sentence lets the reader know that the Commander has witnessed many tragic events because he talks about ‘one cold grey eye’”.

Candidates who fully understood that the crew of the hydroplane were the contents of a daydream made some excellent points: “The difference in speeds (Hydroplane and car) reveals Mitty’s yearning for something more in life”.

The same was true of understanding other aspects of the passage, such as the presentation of Mrs Mitty. Only if she was understood as the representative of unrewarding reality would her remarks about overshoes and Dr Renshaw make sense: “The role of Walter Mitty’s wife is to catapult him back to reality whether he likes it or not”.

Perceptive responses understood this and many pointed out the contrast of the “grossly unfamiliar Mrs Mitty with the “pretty nurse” of the second daydream: “The most intriguing aspect of the passage is the abrupt juxtaposition of reality and fantasy”.

Most candidates recognised certain language features and there was general understanding of the use of onomatopoeia in the case of “ta pocketa-pocketa”, though more could have been made of its contribution to the text’s comic aspect. In fact, the comedy of the extract was little commented on other than some notice of Mitty’s little acts of defiance when being ordered around by his wife.

- (B) Candidates were asked to write a continuation of the story, without necessarily bringing it to a conclusion but basing the answer closely on the style and language of the original.

There was a wide range of engagement and understanding in the responses to this exercise. Unsurprisingly, the most successful answers came from those who had fully understood the passage. A few responses were wholly inappropriate, failing to develop the passage and clearly misunderstanding that the final scene was another of Mitty’s daydreams. However, there were some excellent and genuinely funny developments that saw the possibilities of the scene and exploited them. Some candidates indulged Mitty to the extent of continuing the fantasy scene and improving it:

“Glad to see I’m not too late”, Mitty said, as he took his place, sandwiched between The Crown Prince of England and Regent of Spain”. “Not at all” Roosevelt crooned, “in fact, now you are here, the fun can get started”.

There were also some very effective and deft minglings of the “reality” of the passage and Mitty’s escape from it:

“Walter, your wife is worried about you” said Dr Renshaw. Mitty chuckled, “Lieutenant Berg, I am not a married man”. He got up and walked towards the door: “As yet!” A howl of laughter followed him as he stepped outside”.

There was some effective use of dialogue and even in responses that were not wholly successful, there were snappy exchanges between Mitty and his creations, most often with his domineering wife. The character and dominance of Mrs Mitty were cleverly used in several answers.

Another feature which was eagerly seized on was the use of onomatopoeia, “ta pocketa-pocketa” being replaced by the “worp, worp, worp” of a heart machine and the “high pitched beeeeeep of a medical alarm”: “Turn that off, I’m trying to concentrate’ said Mitty. ‘Sir, I believe it’s yours’ replied the pretty nurse. Seeing it was his wife calling, he snapped out of his euphoria”.

There was a very variable degree of success in these responses, but there was some very engaged and engaging work.

Question 2

- (A) Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of a speech by Stella Young and the ways in which it conveyed her attitudes towards disabilities.

This was the more popular of the two additional passages and it produced some engaged and purposeful responses. There was general understanding of the more clearly evident language features but surprisingly little comment, or sometimes realisation, that this was a speech to a live audience. There was little reference to occasional reports of laughter among the audience or suggestions as to how speaking to a live audience might affect style and language.

Most candidates commented in general terms on the “informal and chatty” nature of the speech and the use of anecdote to engage the audience was also considered. There was also general understanding of the speaker’s engagement with the audience by adoption of the personal pronoun “we” and the use of rhetorical questions.

There was some informed comment on the tone of the speech which was sometimes felt to be “sarcastic and frustrated” but which was probably better defined as “humorous but at the same time assertive and emphatic”. Relatively few candidates picked up on the sometimes challenging nature of the speech and the way in which Stella Young confronts and seeks to overturn the liberal expectations of the audience: “You are probably expecting me to inspire you. Right? (Laughter) Yeah”.

There was some acknowledgement of the speaker’s capacity for taking an unexpected direction: “The reader often gets tripped up by Stella’s choice of words”, but more generally, the tone of the speech was regarded as quite unexceptional: “She presents herself, in a non-demanding or ‘you’re wrong, I’m right way’. This helps the reader understand themselves.”

Perceptive responses commented on the development of the argument and of the decisive final, truncated sentence.

There was a tendency in less focused responses to comment on, or sympathetically align with, 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) For this exercise, the candidates were asked to write (as Stella Young) the opening of a document giving guidelines as to how a school should support disabled candidates. In doing so, they were asked to base their response closely on the language and material of the passage.

There were excellent, considered and wholly convincing responses to this exercise; others found it difficult to adapt to the requirement of giving guidelines rather than continuing to plead the case for disabled candidates. In some cases, this led to wholly engaged but not always relevant responses. Very weak answers depended far too heavily upon making direct borrowings from the original.

There were some balanced and well-developed answers which understood the argument of the original and the irony of being considered normal as an achievement in itself: “The needs of a disabled candidate are neither any more or less than that of an able bodied one”. Or “If you see them as different, they will see themselves as different too”.

Some of the stronger responses found exactly the same matter-of-fact register as the speech and made some un sentimental recommendations: “Don’t reward anybody for being disabled.”

In some cases, candidates found it difficult to replicate the wholly no-nonsense register of the original and these sometimes adopted a note of special pleading which was contrary to the argument of the speech.

Question 3

- (A) Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a website article that encourages the learning of a second language.

This was the less popular of the two additional passages, somewhat surprisingly, as it offered a range of interesting language features in an enjoyably light-hearted presentation. There was a generally good understanding of the purpose and style of the piece with some well-developed and perceptive appreciation of the writing.

Some candidates remarked on the structure of the passage, but this was uncommon, even though there is a clear progression towards the fledgling “agent” being sent out on their mission. Several responses mentioned that the text was divided “into three chunks” but this was not often developed fully.

There was general understanding and obvious enjoyment of the mock language of espionage and spy novels: “The letter-like structure and secret agent style allows for a more personal and creative method of persuasion”; “Comparing the understanding of a joke to espionage sets a humorous and relaxed tone”.

Most candidates commented on the use of words such as “infiltrate, mission, operation” to heighten the comic conceit of the article being a secret message. There was also some excellent understanding of the extended metaphor of a second language as a mysterious and transformative acquisition: “The extended metaphor in paragraph three...it’s a disguise, in a way, a cloak. This extended metaphor (with a built-in simile) stresses the mystery of learning a second language”.

There was also general appreciation of the use of the personal anecdote to involve the reader and of the capacity of the article to both amuse and persuade. There might have been more consideration of the mock dismissal of the reader to his/her mission, though several candidates mentioned the urgency implied by the phrase “the hour is growing late”.

Though there were relatively few fully developed examinations of the text, there was a good general understanding of purpose and of the principal language features.

- (B) Candidates were asked to write the opening of an article encouraging someone to take up a particular hobby or activity and to do so basing their answer closely on the style and language of the original.

There was a generally very engaged and sometimes accomplished and amusing response to this exercise. There was an obvious engagement with the task that led to some clever echoing of the original, and even, in some cases, an improvement:

“So – you’ve found my guide. I commend your cunning and bravery. It is because you possess these skills that I am confident enough to tell you the secret of where the greatest journeys unfold”.
(Reading)

“Someone, someday, will ask if anyone plays the piano, and you, Agent Major, will be the one who can! You’ll be the one to trigger roaring applause with just a few chords and staccatos. Don’t know what these are? Don’t worry, you’re about to find out”.

Not all responses managed to hit the right pastiche thriller note but there was a general sense of purpose in most answers. Some candidates missed the point of emphasising the difficulty (and value) of the proposed hobby and undersold the activity: “Anyone can play music. It doesn’t matter what the instrument is”.

Most, however, understood the task well and presented creditable versions of the style and language of the original.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21
Writing

Key messages

When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the proscribed instructions and focus within each question. For example, in **Question 1** the key instruction is to “write a story” and the key focus is “suspense and anticipation”. In **Question 4** the key instruction is to “write an article for your school magazine” and the key areas of focus are “the benefits that technology has given us” and “the difficulties that many people would face if they had to live without it”. To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Within the time limits of the exam, candidates should be prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about, and writing out, a short plan to ensure the sound and effective structure of an answer. For **Section B** responses, a paragraph plan is advised.

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 that does not flow easily in long, rambling sentences. Often weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long complex sentences.

In preparing for **Section A**: Imaginative writing, candidates should develop skills in sustaining narratives in the tense they start out with, and safeguard against confusion of tense forms. Candidates should differentiate between ‘showing’ versus ‘telling’, to improve descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make the reader feel as if they are in the world created in their narrative, and seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work.

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 and newspaper correspondence.

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 easily the most popular, followed by **Question 2**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Some who did write descriptive pieces loaded sentences and phrases with excessive and inappropriate adjectives. 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 suspense and anticipation in **Question 1**; explore the ironies of the different perspectives of participants of the school trip in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of sounds, light and movement 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 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

Jo looked through the window and saw the island in the distance

Candidates were asked to write a story beginning with the given sentence, *Jo looked through the window and saw the island in the distance*. They were asked to create a sense of suspense and anticipation.

Stronger candidates provided a seamless transition from the narrative opening supplied into subsequent paragraphs. They introduced a sense of suspense and anticipation, both in the language used, and in the sequencing of events in their narratives. Stronger responses included Jo interacting with a variety of other believable characters and documented the desire of explorers, scientists and adventurers to uncover the truth about suspicious activities on the island. Often the stronger answers incorporated a motivation involving escape from sinister forces, whether natural (storms most frequently), animal predators or human captors, thus increasing the ‘suspense’.

Weaker candidates often moved from the opening to a second paragraph which bore little or no link to “Jo (looking) through the window”. One common approach was teenagers taking their parents’ boats out to sea without permission and getting into some kind of difficulty, such as stormy weather or a shark attack. Pirate adventures were also a regular, if seldom accurate and believable, background.

A fair number of responses were not complete stories with too many ending on what the candidate felt was an acceptable ‘cliffhanger’; to the reader, meanwhile, it felt like a poor, unsatisfactory conclusion. In many stories, the third person narrative form became a first-person voice (as Jo), later returning to third person, thereby compromising structure and cohesion.

Question 2

Contrasting pieces about a school trip

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, about a school trip: the first from the perspective of a candidate and the second from the perspective of a teacher.

Some of the stronger candidates wrote very effectively about an excited teacher and a bored candidate on an educational site visit, or an excited candidate on an adventure holiday with the more restrained and world-weary reaction of the teacher with responsibilities for the candidates’ safety. Events sometimes converged and diverged to produce an entertaining read. In other responses, the difference in perspective was inverted or subverted in some way. The destination of the trip was less important in distinguishing the stronger candidates than the clear distinction between the contrasting voices and moods of the two perspectives.

Weaker candidates often concentrated exclusively on the bus journey to the destination without mentioning any details of the place itself; this did not provide any opportunity to describe ‘place’ other than perhaps the noisy inside of the bus. Sometimes the events of the day were described by each person in a very similar, listed way without much differentiation.

Question 3

Lights, Camera, Action

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *Lights, Camera, Action*, focusing on the sounds, light and movements in a TV studio just before a news broadcast is about to start.

The context of “just before a news broadcast” helped to focus candidates on a tight structure of the countdown to airtime. Stronger candidates concentrated on the immediacy of the situation, with staff members scurrying around, usually getting in each other’s way, and often providing exciting and/or humorous description. Personalities were sometimes described by their actions, rather than being involved as ‘characters’ in storylines. The behaviour of sound technicians, cameramen, directors and anchors were delineated with irony and subtle humour.

Weaker candidates often provided a mainly, or totally, narrative response or tended to list activities and attach language effects to them in a repetitive and uninteresting way. The 'countdown' structure, which was used to good effect when not too repetitive, became in the hands of some candidates an excuse to rouse some pseudo-excitement at the expense of genuine imagination or engagement.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4

Technology – could you live without it?

Candidates were asked to write an article for their school magazine called *Technology – could you live without it?* focusing on the benefits that technology has given us and the difficulties that many people would face if they had to live without it. The question required candidates to balance enthusiasm for technology with a necessarily cautious approach when describing a possible world without these benefits.

Stronger candidates looked at a range of technological advances and reached well-reasoned conclusions about how we would be adversely affected by their absence. The use of clear subheadings was an effective technique for giving more shape and control to their article. They not only engaged with their intended audience of school magazine readers but also balanced the euphoria of a totally-connected world with the 'awful' prospect of a lifestyle without cellphones. Often, they provided examples of previous generations' perfectly adequate lives, and the more subtle answers compared these descriptions of the 'olden days' with how a modern generation might cope with the same, or similar, lack of technology. They thus provided a rich vein of irony and possible wit and humour – sometimes using the naive friend attached to their phone as the butt of their sarcasm. Other effective answers took a more serious tone and attempted to describe the wider effects relating to health, crime, climate change and transport chaos.

Weaker candidates did not structure their answers successfully, and responses were merely an overview of technology through the ages or fell into the 'benefits vs. downsides' argument, often not mentioning a life without technology at all. Technology was generally confined to smartphones and the internet and discussion centred around the advantages/disadvantages of young people's attachment, rather than speculating about the difficulties we might experience in coping without technology in general.

Question 5

Response to plans to build flats in the centre of town

Candidates were asked to write two letters, of 300–450 words each, in response to an article in their local newspaper about plans to build flats on a piece of land in the centre of town. They were asked to write one letter supporting the plans and one opposing them.

Most candidates who attempted this question wrote two strongly contrasting pieces and were able to demonstrate a clear sense of voice. In many responses, the general trend in content was a straight trade-off between enriching the community's economic base and preserving a beloved green space in a predominantly urban environment.

Stronger candidates were able to integrate some wider issues, such as town versus country, wildlife conservation and homelessness into their letters, along with a positive or negative response to the specific plans. Many personae claimed an allegiance to the local area, either through family connections, or historical associations – leading to engaging emotional or intellectual objections (or support). Contrasting voices were most effective when tone, as well as argument, was given close consideration by candidates.

Weaker candidates often simply listed reasons for or against the project and tended to be rather repetitive in order to meet the minimum word requirement. Others overstated their case, verging on the rant or the sycophantic.

Question 6

Speech to thank volunteers at a festival

Candidates were asked to write a speech from a festival director, to thank the large groups of volunteers who helped to organise the festival. They were asked to create a sense of gratitude and the importance of the volunteers to the success of the festival.

Stronger candidates had visualised the imagined event in some detail and created a suitable sense of voice. They offered some background to the festival's origins or perhaps included some personal reasons for holding the festival, such as touching backstories, often convincing anecdotal ones, to account for a personal sense of gratitude. A few speakers indulged in medal ceremonies or other gimmicks, to encourage further volunteering possibilities in the future.

Weaker candidates' responses often showed little sense of the purpose of the festival and became repetitive or list-like, with copious expressions of gratitude. One common weakness was a complete absence of any detail about the festival, apart from the names of the stands the volunteers manned, which seemed to be generic and thus overly generalised. Sometimes the amounts of money raised were tediously listed, and those amounts tended to be unrealistically large for a local festival. In some of these cases, the speaker seemed intent on giving it all away again, in massive handouts of money or in one case, cars, to each of the volunteers.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22
Writing

Key messages

When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the proscribed instructions and focus within each question. For example, in **Question 1** the key instruction is to “write the ending of a story” and the key focus is “drama and atmosphere”. In **Question 5** the key instruction is to “write two contrasting letters” to your head teacher. The key areas of focus in the two letters are the contrasting voices of “a student who gained from the experience” and of “a student who did not consider it to be a good use of school time”. To ensure that candidates do understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

Within the time limits of the exam, candidates should be prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about, and writing out, a short plan to ensure the sound and effective structure of an answer. For **Section B** responses, a paragraph plan is advised.

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 that does not flow easily in long, rambling sentences. Often weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long complex sentences.

In preparing for **Section A**: Imaginative writing, candidates should develop skills in sustaining narratives in the tense they start out with, and safeguard against confusion of tense forms. Candidates should differentiate between ‘showing’ versus ‘telling’, to improve descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make the reader feel as if they are in the world created in their narrative, and seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work.

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 and newspaper correspondence.

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 easily the most popular, followed by **Questions 2** and **3**. There was sometimes a tendency to write stories in **Question 3**, when descriptive writing was required. Some who did write descriptive pieces loaded sentences and phrases with excessive and inappropriate adjectives. 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 atmosphere in **Question 1**; explore the ironies of the different perspectives of the tourist and local person in **Question 2**; or appreciate the descriptions of colours, sounds and movement 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**. 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

The Finishing Line

Candidates were asked to write the ending of a story called *The Finishing Line*. They were asked to create a sense of drama and atmosphere.

Many candidates coped well with this question, which offered a chance to write the ‘ending’ of a story, sometimes considered to be the more challenging option, when the ‘backstory’ has to become integrated with the current action. Usually the ‘race’ was interpreted as a physical contest of some sort (track event, marathon or triathlon) but occasionally of the automotive/motocross variety. Some responses, striving for originality, interpreted concepts of “a race” and “the finishing line” as stories about life struggles; while these were variably convincing, on other occasions both strands were skilfully intertwined.

Stronger candidates tended to focus on the protagonist’s struggle against believable competitors while being encouraged by a recognisable ‘coach’ figure and/or atmospheric crowd conditions. A number of candidates were successful in creating a sense of drama, especially as races entered the final stages. Some good responses used a countdown structure to build tension. Sometimes a metaphorical approach was successfully offered, when the central figure battled against the odds in their struggle to succeed in business or relationships.

Weaker candidates often focused on pre-race preparations, with the actual race being dealt with briefly right at the end of the response, or had a single focus on a running race with the drama built up exclusively by a scarcely believable surge of energy near the tape. A great many responses ended with the main character just crossing/falling across the finish line, and there were lots of runners who stopped to help their rivals.

Question 2

Contrasting pieces about a famous building

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, about a famous building or monument: the first from the perspective of a tourist and the second from the perspective of a local person.

‘Atmosphere and place’ was a challenging direction for many candidates. Historical sites that the candidates were themselves familiar with tended to be the focus of their characters’ deliberations, but convincing creation of a sense of ‘place’ was quite rare.

Some of the stronger candidates drew on personal experiences so writing was vivid in many cases with a lot of sensory language used. Some wrote very effectively about an excited, often naïve, tourist and a cynical local person, with stronger candidates presenting clearly distinct voices and moods through the two perspectives. Some stronger answers provided the additional frisson of a possible meeting of the two people. Locals were sometimes portrayed as taxi-drivers or tour guides in the better answers.

Weaker candidates found it difficult to create a sense of atmosphere and place, with a significant number concentrating on the different/contrasting moods of the two speakers, with minimal creation of the intended atmosphere. In such scenarios, typically, the tourist was described in naive, first-person terms and the local people were often stuck in traffic jams. Some perspectives lacked any clear contrast between the pieces, both going on to praise the beauty and historical value of the chosen monument.

Question 3

Campsite

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece about a campsite during an expedition, focusing on the colours, sounds and movements at the campsite.

This was a question designed to accentuate the descriptive rather than narrative, although some candidates wrote a purely narrative response, with a number of explorers climbing Mount Everest in an afternoon.

Stronger candidates used the campsite as a central space with the 'expedition' aspect as a framing device. Some responses drew on the excited chatter of campers who had a chance to tell tales of previous expeditions or on the description of the light camp fires threw into the darkness. Other strong candidates focused on the transition from daytime to night, with some vivid descriptions of the natural environment. The question catered well for candidates who were convincing in their descriptions of both a natural setting and the human activities involved in camping.

Weaker candidates concentrated on listing the preparatory narrative aspects, in this case of walking or climbing to the campsite, without much descriptive detail. Often, such responses lapsed into narrative, rather than descriptive, writing.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4

Shopping centre review

Candidates were asked to write a review of a recently opened shopping centre to be published in their local newspaper.

This question was generally answered quite effectively, although few candidates totally grasped the particular language and structure needed for a review, whether positive or critical. Many answers lacked development and felt too list-like. Most reviews focused on good points; a few offered slightly more balance by including negative comments too.

Stronger candidates structured their reviews clearly, with some effectively deploying subheadings. They gave clear recommendations or criticisms, and some of the writers posed as the naive reporter discovering the ironic counterpoints of shopping, design and accessibility issues. The rare critical reviews were the more dramatic and usually the more insightful.

Weaker candidates did little more than list and describe the shops and facilities floor by floor and, compounding this mistake, finished their 'review' by a listing of every food item in the food court. Other weaker candidates' work more resembled advertising copy than reviews. They often omitted to express a view, suggesting a lack of understanding about the nature of review writing.

Question 5

Letters to head teacher about work experience

Candidates were asked to write two letters, of 300–450 words each, to provide feedback to their head teacher. They were asked to write one letter from a candidate who gained from the experience and one from a candidate who did not consider it a good use of school time.

Candidates mostly achieved the necessary contrast of positive and negative experiences. Most who answered this question did so with reasonable success, citing sensible, detailed reasons for enjoying or not enjoying their work experience. The majority answered in an appropriate tone, and candidates were generally successful at striking the right balance between respect and criticism.

Stronger candidates were able to show the skills of writing a letter, adopting a suitable tone (formal yet clearly informative and opinionated) and conveying a sense of contrast to the other persona. They also described in some specific detail the tasks that provided the benefits (or otherwise) of their week's secondment.

Weaker candidates fell into the pitfalls of inappropriate tone (for example being overly familiar with the head teacher, especially in the negative letter) or omitting any specific details of their assigned workplace (some wrote generalised opinions about work experience per se).

Question 6

Voiceover for TV documentary about childhood games

Candidates were asked to write a voiceover for a TV documentary about popular childhood games and how they have changed. They were asked to create a sense of interest and enthusiasm.

Some candidates struggled with the 'voiceover' format, often simply writing an essay without indicating the visual element to which the voiceover must necessarily, and through various means, refer. Conversely, where directions or descriptions of the TV 'shots' are to be included, they should be in service of, rather than in place of, the voiceover itself.

Stronger candidates did just what the question asked: wrote a voiceover with obvious visual elements described and linked to the words, and included a variety of scenes showing a range of games from past times to the present day.

Weaker candidates failed to use a convincing voice, and wrote vague and/or generalised accounts of games (usually video games), sometimes not even describing any games from the past. The typical example was a listing of the reasons why video gaming was popular, written in essay format with little indication of a specific audience.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23
Writing

Key messages

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General comments

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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

All Change

Candidates were asked to write the opening of a story called *All Change*. They were asked to create a sense of adventure and anticipation.

Most responses were successful in achieving a believable opening to a story and the general impression was that candidates could successfully cater for 'adventure' but less so 'anticipation' (although 'apprehension' was sometimes conveyed quite well).

Stronger candidates provided an engaging opening to the story, leaving the reader wanting to find out what happened next by concluding with a suitable cliffhanger, or another interesting end point. They introduced a sense of adventure and anticipation, both in the language used, and in the sequencing of events in their narratives. The strongest responses came from candidates who were able to include an appropriate amount of detail on character and setting, while still ending with a believable reason for the 'change'.

Weaker candidates often failed to make it clear what change was going to take place in the story, with characters' intentions or motives not explained. They often provided minimal detail about the characters or the setting and often utilised a lot of dialogue, which was poorly punctuated. In many stories, the third person narrative form became a first-person voice, later returning to third person, thereby compromising structure and cohesion.

Question 2

Contrasting pieces about university

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces, of 300–450 words each, about a new student on the first day of university and the second about the same student a year later. They were asked to create a sense of outlook and mood.

Responses to this question were usually convincing in the creation of both 'outlook' (usually via the first-year student's perspective) and 'mood' (usually of the jaded variety from the student's perspective one year on).

Stronger candidates described very effectively the changes in the student's outlook and mood. They usually depicted fairly drastic changes, with the student often becoming more conscientious, or acknowledging the error of their formerly naive ways. Some candidates wrote about very similar events in both pieces, but focused on the vastly different thoughts of the student.

Weaker candidates managed to find something to say about the first day, but found it harder to show the change a year later. These candidates often produced repetitive work, merely outlining the events of a particular day, or they were unable to write the stipulated amount and produced short responses. Some weaker candidates did not realise they had to write about the same persona in both parts and some responses lacked any clear contrast. There were many candidates who omitted paragraphing altogether, a common feature of two-part answers for this paper: this weakness, by definition, restricted candidates' ability to organise narrative and descriptive changes, including the obvious one of new speeches.

Question 3

The Desert

Candidates were asked to write a descriptive piece called *The Desert*, focusing on colours, sounds and movements to create a sense of atmosphere.

This was a question designed to accentuate the descriptive rather than narrative, though some candidates wrote a purely narrative response, with a number of characters getting lost in the desert.

Many stronger candidates focused on the transition from daytime to night to provide them with an effective

structure and wrote some vivid descriptions of the natural environment and different kinds of life in the desert. Some successfully used the desert as a metaphor for a state of mind.

Weaker candidates concentrated on listing events, such as travelling to and arriving in the desert, without much descriptive detail. Often, such responses lapsed into totally narrative, rather than descriptive, writing.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4

Importance of qualifications and work experience

Candidates were asked to write an article for their school magazine on whether it is more important to gain qualifications or some experience of work in order to get a good job in the future.

This question gave candidates the opportunity to raise serious issues of lifestyle and employment choices, though many responses became merely pep-talks about moral choices without much specific detail of education/work situations. Candidates who included anecdotes in their articles often managed to engage the audience with some success.

Stronger candidates clearly addressed the audience that might be interested in reading this information in a school magazine, as opposed to other publications. They included a range of realistic anecdotal experience and reached well-reasoned conclusions about the relative merits of qualifications and work experience. Several of the best responses, after clearly presenting the pros and cons of both, advised taking a balanced approach. Others presented very strong views, with a strong sense of voice, about how one of the two was considerably more important.

Weaker candidates did not structure their answers successfully, and responses were merely an unconvincing and uninteresting overview of the pros and cons of gaining qualifications and work experience.

Question 5

Reviews of social networking website

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting reviews, of 300–450 words each, of a new social networking website. They were asked to write one review praising the new website and one criticising it.

This question was generally answered quite effectively, although relatively few candidates totally grasped the particular language and structure needed for these reviews, whether positive or critical. Many answers lacked development and felt too list-like.

Stronger candidates structured their reviews clearly, with some effectively deploying subheadings. They had a strong grasp of social networking and gave clear recommendations and criticisms, sometimes with real insight.

Weaker candidates did little more than list the functions of the website and merely contrasted the same features in a simple way, expressing enthusiasm or a lack of enthusiasm for the sites; for example, 'I found this function easy to use'; 'I found this function really difficult to use'. Some candidates did not seem to have a real understanding of the topic and tended just to deal with computer applications in general.

Question 6

Speech about the highs and lows of a career in business

Candidates were asked to write a speech for a business leader to give to candidates at their school who are interested in setting up their own businesses in the future. They were asked to create a sense of enthusiasm and motivation.

Many candidates found the voice of the question difficult to assume. The content often tended to drift into lengthy life histories rather than focus on the audience's stated interest in setting up a business.

Stronger candidates, however, did manage to create a suitably convincing sense of voice. In the speech, they focused on both the highs and lows of the business leader's career, often with relevant and convincing

anecdotes, including backstories. The best candidates managed to avoid the “I was a penniless urchin until I turned my life around” cliché, while managing to walk the fine line between a rousing pep-talk of the typical motivational speaker and the understanding such a person must have of their audience’s aspirations. They often provided sensible advice as part of the speech, sometimes emphasizing early failures and the need for resilience and hard work.

Weaker candidates’ responses often showed little sense of the purpose of the speech or the audience and merely recounted the life history of the business leader, sometimes without any hint of enthusiasm or motivation.

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 Part (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 Part (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. It is good to note that very few candidates produced short passages of 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 a transcription of a conversation that took place at a zoo. 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 a set of written instructions produced by a manager at the zoo explaining how to wash parrots. Careful consideration of the target audience (new employees) and the requirement to clearly convey a concise procedure for washing parrots is 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 written instructions produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of a transcription between an experienced animal handler (Salma) and a new zoo employee (Ben). 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: 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 session – 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 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)

The directed writing candidates produced usually featured solid engagement with the form and style of a set of written instructions providing guidance on how to wash parrots. Reworking chiefly consisted of selecting and using pieces of information conveyed by Salma to Ben in the transcription. Most candidates showed secure understanding of the conventions of a set of written instructions by often providing a succinct title (often centred and either underlined or set in block capitals) and directly beneath it presenting the steps in washing a parrot in chronologically ordered numbered or bullet-pointed sentences, incorporating appropriate imperatives in each step (e.g. 'hold the nozzle over the parrot's head', 'wait for the water to soak in', 'give the parrot a second dose'). Secure appreciation of the workplace context was usually registered through a brief conclusion in which employees were instructed to contact either the manager or Salma if they needed assistance and an indication that a member of the zoo's management team had produced the document.

Selection of only the most relevant and pertinent information that would be required to successfully wash the parrots was required. Many candidates included the unnecessary explanatory information provided by Salma, such as the fact the parrots are macaws and come from Central and South America. The incorporation of such material was especially detrimental when it appeared among the steps in washing parrots, and thereby interrupted the flow of the instructions. The explanation that the parrots' natural habitat is the rainforest, where according to Salma 'it rains an awful lot', was occasionally successfully utilised in a brief introduction that contextualised the washing instructions; the advice that the parrots should be washed on a nearly daily basis could usefully either precede or follow the instructions.

In less successful instructions candidates often included unnecessary information relating to entering the parrot enclosure, washing hands, putting on gloves, the temperature of the water, the use of soap, handling the parrots, conversing with them and drying them off. Salma was often identified as the author of the instructions, whereas the task's instructions specified it should be 'Salma and Ben's manager'.

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 at all 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 transcription of a conversation that took place at a zoo and the written instructions providing guidance on how to wash parrots produced for **1(a)**. Only a few candidates did not apply a suitable methodology to analyse the transcription. Overall it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription of a transactional conversation such as one involving the training of a new employee at a place of work.

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 choice exercised by the speakers in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in the email message 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 transcription and the washing instructions.

Some candidates exerted a lot of effort to merely list the elements of spontaneous speech they found in the transcription with little attention paid to their own washing instructions. Some candidates reiterated at length what they know about politeness strategies with little supporting examination of pertinent aspects of the texts to be compared.

The majority of candidates demonstrated at least adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the conventions of a conversation between two speakers (especially turn-taking in adjacency pairs with cooperative speech overlaps and the paralinguistic feature [*laughs*]). They could usually reflect on how Salma, as the trainer, held the conversational floor and that her frequent pauses resulted from the need to impart information to Ben in an accurate, sequential manner whilst simultaneously demonstrating how to wash a parrot; Ben's affirmative use of back-channels ('right', 'yes', 'it almost looks like hes dancing') clearly indicate that he understands both the washing procedure and related information about parrots imparted by Salma ('especially on the feathers on the wings'). Candidates usually recognised that a written set of instructions would be drafted, edited and polished by the manager before being printed and issued to staff members (and perhaps posted in the parrot enclosure for ease of reference). There was usually some recognition that the manager was in a position of authority and would be seeking to appear professionally competent. The selection and examination of examples of the manager's phrasing to convey instructions as concisely as possible was frequently found to be in contrast with how Salma was trying to make Ben, as a new employee, feel comfortable through her use of colloquial expressions ('so do you want to have a go', 'yeah totally', 'these guys').

In strong 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 examination of the texts. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and evaluated the effects produced. It was usually recognised that the conversation was highly cooperative with Ben asking a number of questions to solicit further information ('and are they sort of waterproof feathers under there', 'so will they start grooming themselves', 'is that a sign of enjoyment'). They examined how Salma's use of stressed syllables for emphasis ('*dust*', '*grime*') and avian jargon ('guard feathers', 'the contour the outer feathers') was directly related to her instructional role, one clearly acknowledged and accepted by Ben ('you're the expert here'). Candidates could additionally compare these and other aspects of the transcription (especially use of the plural pronoun and Salma's choice of adjectives to describe the parrots' feathers) with those they employed in their washing instructions, usually comparatively analysing the use of imperatives in the instructions in light of Salma's more softly hedged forms ('if we can', 'just gently spray'). Some candidates noted that the washing instructions would serve to remind employees how to wash the parrots after they had likely gone through the same sort of hands-on training that Ben was receiving in the transcription and so inclusion of the additional information provided by Salma was simply not required.

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 sure grasp of the purpose, audience and context of Text A, the opening section of an advertisement brochure for a new model of the Fiat Panda, and of Text B, a review of the same car appearing in a newspaper. Candidates could usually establish how the audience for Text A was narrower than Text B's (reasoning that prospective car buyers would be a sub-section of the adult population who read newspapers and how the brochure would need to be obtained from a dealership, whereas the review could be more readily accessed even though it likely appeared in a separate section of the newspaper devoted to automotive matters and not consulted by all readers). They could identify that the exaggerated positive tone of Text A is directly related to the promotional purpose of enticing readers to contemplate buying the car (or at least taking a test drive) in contrast to the more neutral tone signalling the advisory purpose of Text B (written by an automotive journalist who has driven the car and has found it wanting in some regards). The use of superlatives ('the best'), hyperbole ('an infinite capacity') and asyndetic listing of positive adjectives in Text A ('functional, solid, intelligent') was usually contrasted with the clusters of automotive jargon present in Text B ('five-gear speedbox' '3,000 rpm', 'torsion-beam rear suspension') with which it is assumed the reader is familiar. The use of personification was noted in both Texts if not analysed successfully. Some candidates merely listed examples of both high and low frequency lexis from both Texts (although some confusion was demonstrated when, for instance, 'inimitable' was deemed to be a high frequency word). Candidates often commented on the cliché 'the new kid on the block' from Text A in relation to Text B's prosaic observation that 'the new Panda doesn't look a great deal different from the old model'. There was usually some attention paid to a range of sentence structures and the number and length of paragraphs in both Texts.

In strong 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 the writers' use of language features. Candidates more readily accepted that Text B was a critical (but not biased) piece of writing, weighing up the positive and negative features of the car – it is the journalist's professional obligation to provide a factually accurate review – and noting the frequent use of the conjunction 'but' (three times in the first two paragraphs alone) to balance such observations. Some candidates also observed that Text B occasionally has a light-hearted tone ('murder the fuel economy or fizz your toenails off', 'feels like a runaway hovercraft') and thus also entertains its readers. Candidates analysed and then compared some of the positive points made in Text B ('indicator stalks are thick and feel as if from an altogether bigger and more expensive car', 'accelerate without continually changing down') with those made in Text A ('spacious storage pocket', 'high-resistance materials'), concluding that both Texts appealed to readers who cared equally about styling and functionality and performance.

In the strongest responses some candidates often considered the possibility that Text A appealed particularly to women through the frequent use of personification relating to the car's appearance ('good looks', 'simply adorable', 'smiley', 'great Italian design') and its ethos ('free-spirited', 'think outside the box everyday') and of emotive lexis ('beautiful', 'turns love at first sight into true, everlasting love'), whereas Text B perhaps mainly represented a 'male' perspective (the exterior of the Panda being described in a tricolon as 'jaunty, tall and charming' whilst it is observed the interior has 'major controls [that] have a weight and gravitas' but 'scant room for big feet in the pedal box'). The conclusions of both Texts were frequently compared to reflect on their essential differences: Text A's single sentence final paragraph amounts to a final sales pitch incorporating second person address and yet more personification ('Whatever you want to do with it, the Panda will amaze you with its ingenuity') whereas Text B's employs a question and answer format ('Should you buy one? Tricky') and then presents the main arguments for and against the product ('Fiat's track record', 'there's nothing particularly new here') before presenting a qualified endorsement ('It's probably worth it').

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 Part (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 Part (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. It is good to note that few candidates produced short passages of 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 a newspaper article about self-driving cars. 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 online comment giving a reader's thoughts about self-driving cars. Careful consideration of the target audience (the article's author, the newspaper's editor and other readers) and the requirement to clearly convey ideas and opinions is 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 a reader's online comment about self-driving cars produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the newspaper article about self-driving cars. 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: 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 session – 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 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)

The directed writing candidates produced usually featured solid engagement with the form and style of an online comment. A username and some form of signing off were often included in recognition of some of the conventions of an online comment. Many candidates directly addressed the article's author or the editor of the newspaper; most candidates indirectly addressed the anonymous members of the newspaper's online comments section community. Most candidates engaged in some way with one or two of the major points raised in the article: the unsettling experience of being a passenger in a self-driving car for the first time; the legalities surrounding the need for a 'nominated driver' to be present when a self-driving car is in operation; the public's current scepticism of the widespread introduction of self-driving cars; and the cybersecurity of self-driving cars and the threat posed to them by hackers. Registers used ranged from very polite and formal, through mixed, to very informal.

Many candidates responded to the article and its author from their own perspective. A significant number, however, adopted a suitable persona to promote a particular point of view: proud early adopters of self-driving cars who breezily dismissed much of the writer's concerns as those of a technophobe; busy businesspeople who would relish the extra time afforded by not manually operating a car in rush hour traffic; concerned parents worried about the safety of their children should their driverless car be hacked and commandeered by kidnappers; women and adolescents who wondered if self-driving cars would provide greater personal security than that currently provided by traditional taxis; passengers with mobility issues who would relish their newfound freedom of movement; and IT and AI experts who usually argued that security measures can always be enhanced to thwart hackers and that eventually the self-driving car will be far less prone to accidents than inevitably fallible humans.

In weak responses candidates usually strayed from the article's subject matter (usually discussing how the money governments would need to spend in creating the infrastructure for self-driving cars on a large scale would be better spent on schemes alleviating existing problems like poverty and inadequate utilities), mainly paraphrased some of the article's main points and then either simply indicated their agreement or disagreement with each, or ranted against the writer's position without offering a viable perspective of their own. Lack of clarity in expression often prevented candidates from making persuasive counterarguments or reasoned concurring points. Such responses often more closely resembled the form of a letter to the editor than an online comment.

In strong responses candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the article, framed their responses to purposefully engage with ideas presented by the writer and used a clear and concise style of writing suitable to a brief online comment. Care was taken to make a significant contribution to the subject of self-driving cars and to ensure other readers could easily understand their perspective on the subject in light of the writer's.

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 newspaper article about self-driving cars and the online comment 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 choice exercised by the speakers in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in the online comment 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 online comment.

Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the writer's perspective on the self-driving car 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 identified in the newspaper article and their online comments, especially the use of a variety of sentence types, formal punctuation and a paragraph structure that facilitates a clear line of argument.

The majority of candidates demonstrated at least adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the conventions of a newspaper article and their online comments. They could briefly examine and compare the level of formality exhibited by the texts and appreciate both the informative and persuasive intent of the article. The writer of the article was found to be highly accommodating of the reader through his frequent use of the second person (both singular and plural forms) and references to societal groupings that can be interpreted to include both him and most readers ('the buying public as a whole', 'the majority of people'). Reference was often made to the article's opening paragraph, containing an anecdote in which the writer relates his own recent first experience of being a passenger in a self-driving car and the amiable, self-deprecating phrase 'your humble correspondent' to demonstrate the writer's intention to engage the reader's interest and sympathy. Candidates usually demonstrated how the writer used a little jargon to suggest his command of the subject matter ('autonomous driving systems', 'prototypes') that was leavened with the use of informal lexis ('boffins') and clichés ('this isn't to be advised at home', 'cast-iron guarantee', 'pinch of salt'). There was usually some direct comparison of these features with those employed in the candidates' online comments. Many candidates employed rhetorical questions to frame their perspectives on particular aspects of the topic and usually judged the article's audience to be larger than the online comment's.

In strong 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. Comparison of content was usually dealt with briefly at the beginning of responses. Candidates often compared the structure of both texts, highlighting the article's many discourse markers ('Last week', 'That isn't the only issue though', 'After all', 'Which leads me on') and the informal casting of sentences beginning with conjunctions. The sardonic single-word sentence 'Lovely' to commence the second paragraph and the softening of an imperative at the beginning of the final paragraph – 'So, get ready for the era of the self-driving car' – were cited as evidence that the writer was consistently soliciting the reader's agreement with his views. The writer's use of direct quotation (provided by an expert in the field, Dr Arne Bartels, 'an automated driving project leader') – commencing 'We will have to work hard to keep up with the hackers' – was usually judged to be a disingenuous tactic on the part of the writer designed to convince the reader that his own scepticism about the security of self-driving cars was the most reasonable position to be adopted.

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 typically 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 sure grasp of the literary nature of Text A, an extract from a biography of the author Roald Dahl written by Donald Sturrock, and the many conventions of spoken language exhibited by Text B, a transcription of an extract from a radio broadcast made some years after Dahl's death. Candidates could usually establish how the audience for Text A would be smaller than that of Text B although Dahl's fans might make up a significant majority of each one, particularly Text A's. There was usually a secure focus on the different ways the hut in which Dahl produced much of his writing was represented in each Text. Candidates showed they were aware of the strong human-interest element evident

in both Texts but were particularly drawn to two features of Text B: the direct speech belonging to Dahl and facilitated by the recording of his voice that is played during the broadcast, and his granddaughter Sophie's perspective of the author from when she was a child, especially her thoughts about Dahl and his now 'poor little hut'.

In the more modest responses candidates mostly focused on the conventions of spoken language they could identify in Text B, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Dahl (his voiced pause 'er' and perseverating use of the conjunction 'and' to extend his account of how the hut was a special place in which to write) and Sophie (her raised voice in imitation of Dahl's invitation to 'COME IN', the repetition 'you can smell (.) you can smell the decay' and the repair 'was you were allowed'). They occasionally identified that the presenter had scripted his opening utterances (illustrated by his use of frequent pauses to separate the many parts of his description of the hut for the benefit of a listening radio audience that cannot see what he can and endeavouring to digest the information he is presenting) and slips into repetition when he asks his first question of Sophie ('and and sophie'). In relation to Text A there was usually some brief consideration of Sturrock's frequent use of vivid adjectives to convey the age and poor condition of the hut ('worn', 'battered', 'ramshackle') alongside figurative language devices that were usually correctly identified (especially the metaphoric triad 'a carpet of dust, pencil sharpening and cigarette ash') if not analysed for the specific effects created. Many candidates simply determined Sturrock was thereby endeavouring to create for his readers a mental image of Dahl's hut.

Stronger responses were frequently marked by recognition that many of the details in both Texts invoke the reader's imagination much like Dahl's captivating literary creations do and are tinged with a sense of reminiscence for a beloved children's writer. Some candidates identified the metaphoric sense of the word 'womb' features prominently in both Texts to account for how Dahl perceived his writing hut: it was the place where he could best nurture his imagination so that his literary endeavours reached fruition. (In Text B Dahl also refers to the hut as 'my little nest' to similar effect, stressing the key word.) There was some exploration of the many adjectives in Text A creating a sense of wonder and awe ('magical', 'irresistible', 'gleaming') and Sturrock's use of the metaphor 'an enormous child' to describe Dahl as he showed him 'his treasures' (writing accoutrements) and the valued keepsakes stored in his 'cabinet of curiosities'. The overlaps in Text B were usually taken as signs of the presenter and Sophie's eagerness to discuss Dahl in a cooperative and sympathetic manner.

The strongest candidates were also able to enter into a deeper analysis of the nostalgic effect created by Sturrock and Sophie describing what they can see in a place that meant so much to Dahl when he was alive. It can be interpreted that Sturrock might be deliberately paying homage to Dahl's childlike imagination when he compares a 'battered anglepoise lamp ... crouched over the chair' to 'a praying mantis'. In contrast the hut is chiefly described in prosaic terms by the presenter in Text B – 'the hut is exactly as roald dahl left it when he died (.) theres the faded winged back chair he sat in (.) the wooden writing board he balanced on his lap'. Although Sophie initially concurs that the hut is 'quite clearly decaying', she insists it is a site evocative of profound reminiscence: 'its sort of like coming into a very ancient tomb in a way theres something still quite sacred about it'. A very few candidates explored Sophie's understandably sentimental view of the hut in relation to the matter of fact manner she is introduced by the presenter as 'the patron of the roald dahl museum and story centre'.

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 Part (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 Part (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. It is good to note that few candidates produced short passages of 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 a newspaper article about self-driving cars. 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 online comment giving a reader's thoughts about self-driving cars. Careful consideration of the target audience (the article's author, the newspaper's editor and other readers) and the requirement to clearly convey ideas and opinions is 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 a reader's online comment about self-driving cars produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the newspaper article about self-driving cars. 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: 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 session – 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 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)

The directed writing candidates produced usually featured solid engagement with the form and style of an online comment. A username and some form of signing off were often included in recognition of some of the conventions of an online comment. Many candidates directly addressed the article's author or the editor of the newspaper; most candidates indirectly addressed the anonymous members of the newspaper's online comments section community. Most candidates engaged in some way with one or two of the major points raised in the article: the unsettling experience of being a passenger in a self-driving car for the first time; the legalities surrounding the need for a 'nominated driver' to be present when a self-driving car is in operation; the public's current scepticism of the widespread introduction of self-driving cars; and the cybersecurity of self-driving cars and the threat posed to them by hackers. Registers used ranged from very polite and formal, through mixed, to very informal.

Many candidates responded to the article and its author from their own perspective. A significant number, however, adopted a suitable persona to promote a particular point of view: proud early adopters of self-driving cars who breezily dismissed much of the writer's concerns as those of a technophobe; busy businesspeople who would relish the extra time afforded by not manually operating a car in rush hour traffic; concerned parents worried about the safety of their children should their driverless car be hacked and commandeered by kidnappers; women and adolescents who wondered if self-driving cars would provide greater personal security than that currently provided by traditional taxis; passengers with mobility issues who would relish their newfound freedom of movement; and IT and AI experts who usually argued that security measures can always be enhanced to thwart hackers and that eventually the self-driving car will be far less prone to accidents than inevitably fallible humans.

In weak responses candidates usually strayed from the article's subject matter (usually discussing how the money governments would need to spend in creating the infrastructure for self-driving cars on a large scale would be better spent on schemes alleviating existing problems like poverty and inadequate utilities), mainly paraphrased some of the article's main points and then either simply indicated their agreement or disagreement with each, or ranted against the writer's position without offering a viable perspective of their own. Lack of clarity in expression often prevented candidates from making persuasive counterarguments or reasoned concurring points. Such responses often more closely resembled the form of a letter to the editor than an online comment.

In strong responses candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the article, framed their responses to purposefully engage with ideas presented by the writer and used a clear and concise style of writing suitable to a brief online comment. Care was taken to make a significant contribution to the subject of self-driving cars and to ensure other readers could easily understand their perspective on the subject in light of the writer's.

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 newspaper article about self-driving cars and the online comment 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 choice exercised by the speakers in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in the online comment 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 online comment.

Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the writer's perspective on the self-driving car 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 identified in the newspaper article and their online comments, especially the use of a variety of sentence types, formal punctuation and a paragraph structure that facilitates a clear line of argument.

The majority of candidates demonstrated at least adequate knowledge and understanding of at least some of the conventions of a newspaper article and their online comments. They could briefly examine and compare the level of formality exhibited by the texts and appreciate both the informative and persuasive intent of the article. The writer of the article was found to be highly accommodating of the reader through his frequent use of the second person (both singular and plural forms) and references to societal groupings that can be interpreted to include both him and most readers ('the buying public as a whole', 'the majority of people'). Reference was often made to the article's opening paragraph, containing an anecdote in which the writer relates his own recent first experience of being a passenger in a self-driving car and the amiable, self-deprecating phrase 'your humble correspondent' to demonstrate the writer's intention to engage the reader's interest and sympathy. Candidates usually demonstrated how the writer used a little jargon to suggest his command of the subject matter ('autonomous driving systems', 'prototypes') that was leavened with the use of informal lexis ('boffins') and clichés ('this isn't to be advised at home', 'cast-iron guarantee', 'pinch of salt'). There was usually some direct comparison of these features with those employed in the candidates' online comments. Many candidates employed rhetorical questions to frame their perspectives on particular aspects of the topic and usually judged the article's audience to be larger than the online comment's.

In strong 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. Comparison of content was usually dealt with briefly at the beginning of responses. Candidates often compared the structure of both texts, highlighting the article's many discourse markers ('Last week', 'That isn't the only issue though', 'After all', 'Which leads me on') and the informal casting of sentences beginning with conjunctions. The sardonic single-word sentence 'Lovely' to commence the second paragraph and the softening of an imperative at the beginning of the final paragraph – 'So, get ready for the era of the self-driving car' – were cited as evidence that the writer was consistently soliciting the reader's agreement with his views. The writer's use of direct quotation (provided by an expert in the field, Dr Arne Bartels, 'an automated driving project leader') – commencing 'We will have to work hard to keep up with the hackers' – was usually judged to be a disingenuous tactic on the part of the writer designed to convince the reader that his own scepticism about the security of self-driving cars was the most reasonable position to be adopted.

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 typically 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 sure grasp of the literary nature of Text A, an extract from a biography of the author Roald Dahl written by Donald Sturrock, and the many conventions of spoken language exhibited by Text B, a transcription of an extract from a radio broadcast made some years after Dahl's death. Candidates could usually establish how the audience for Text A would be smaller than that of Text B although Dahl's fans might make up a significant majority of each one, particularly Text A's. There was usually a secure focus on the different ways the hut in which Dahl produced much of his writing was represented in each Text. Candidates showed they were aware of the strong human-interest element evident

in both Texts but were particularly drawn to two features of Text B: the direct speech belonging to Dahl and facilitated by the recording of his voice that is played during the broadcast, and his granddaughter Sophie's perspective of the author from when she was a child, especially her thoughts about Dahl and his now 'poor little hut'.

In the more modest responses candidates mostly focused on the conventions of spoken language they could identify in Text B, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Dahl (his voiced pause 'er' and perseverating use of the conjunction 'and' to extend his account of how the hut was a special place in which to write) and Sophie (her raised voice in imitation of Dahl's invitation to 'COME IN', the repetition 'you can smell (.) you can smell the decay' and the repair 'was you were allowed'). They occasionally identified that the presenter had scripted his opening utterances (illustrated by his use of frequent pauses to separate the many parts of his description of the hut for the benefit of a listening radio audience that cannot see what he can and endeavouring to digest the information he is presenting) and slips into repetition when he asks his first question of Sophie ('and and sophie'). In relation to Text A there was usually some brief consideration of Sturrock's frequent use of vivid adjectives to convey the age and poor condition of the hut ('worn', 'battered', 'ramshackle') alongside figurative language devices that were usually correctly identified (especially the metaphoric triad 'a carpet of dust, pencil sharpening and cigarette ash') if not analysed for the specific effects created. Many candidates simply determined Sturrock was thereby endeavouring to create for his readers a mental image of Dahl's hut.

Stronger responses were frequently marked by recognition that many of the details in both Texts invoke the reader's imagination much like Dahl's captivating literary creations do and are tinged with a sense of reminiscence for a beloved children's writer. Some candidates identified the metaphoric sense of the word 'womb' features prominently in both Texts to account for how Dahl perceived his writing hut: it was the place where he could best nurture his imagination so that his literary endeavours reached fruition. (In Text B Dahl also refers to the hut as 'my little nest' to similar effect, stressing the key word.) There was some exploration of the many adjectives in Text A creating a sense of wonder and awe ('magical', 'irresistible', 'gleaming') and Sturrock's use of the metaphor 'an enormous child' to describe Dahl as he showed him 'his treasures' (writing accoutrements) and the valued keepsakes stored in his 'cabinet of curiosities'. The overlaps in Text B were usually taken as signs of the presenter and Sophie's eagerness to discuss Dahl in a cooperative and sympathetic manner.

The strongest candidates were also able to enter into a deeper analysis of the nostalgic effect created by Sturrock and Sophie describing what they can see in a place that meant so much to Dahl when he was alive. It can be interpreted that Sturrock might be deliberately paying homage to Dahl's childlike imagination when he compares a 'battered anglepoise lamp ... crouched over the chair' to 'a praying mantis'. In contrast the hut is chiefly described in prosaic terms by the presenter in Text B – 'the hut is exactly as roald dahl left it when he died (.) theres the faded winged back chair he sat in (.) the wooden writing board he balanced on his lap'. Although Sophie initially concurs that the hut is 'quite clearly decaying', she insists it is a site evocative of profound reminiscence: 'its sort of like coming into a very ancient tomb in a way theres something still quite sacred about it'. A very few candidates explored Sophie's understandably sentimental view of the hut in relation to the matter of fact manner she is introduced by the presenter as 'the patron of the roald dahl museum and story centre'.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41
Language Topics

Key messages

The paper is designed to examine knowledge and understanding of three key areas related to the English language. Marks are awarded positively through the bands. In **Questions 1** and **3**, candidates are expected to provide a linguistic analysis of transcriptions provided. In **Question 2**, candidates are expected to undertake an analytical exploration of the linguistic issue presented in the passage.

In the lower bands, the candidate's control of English may be partial or there may be a simple or generalised response to the passage provided. In the middle bands, there will be a developing analysis including a detailed and informed exploration of language, structure, purpose and context (**Questions 1** and **3**) or a detailed and informed exploration of the linguistic issue and its wider ramifications (**Question 2**).

Responses will move towards the higher bands where the analysis is developed by applying appropriate theoretical examples to an argument and by carefully selecting quotes from the context provided. In the higher bands, the response will be full, comparative, balanced and articulate.

General comments

The questions presented the candidates with interesting contexts with which to engage. In all three topic areas, knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading was demonstrated. In this series, there was less evidence that candidates lacked familiarity with the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription than there had been in previous series. Stronger and more confident responses ensured that theoretical examples were appropriate to any points made, rather than taking the deficit view that characterised weaker responses. It is important that any theoretical example should be explored and analysed fully in the context of evidence from the text; otherwise the essay remains undeveloped with a brief or generalised theoretical comment which may not always be appropriate in the context provided.

In **Questions 1** and **3**, some candidates chose to recast or simply describe the content of the transcriptions, resulting in a tendency to assertion. Similarly, in **Question 2**, some candidates merely paraphrased the context provided and did not fully explore the linguistic issue, nor its wider ramifications.

Stronger responses were from those candidates able to use a full range of linguistic terminology with confidence. Weaker responses used basic descriptors for language features, therefore not providing a linguistic analysis. As in previous series, the terms elision and ellipsis often demonstrated confusion, as did the concept of deixis, although more confident candidates were able to evidence these appropriately.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Stronger and more confident candidates demonstrated understanding of the fact that a televised conversation is different contextually from a television interview and made a full exploration of language features specific to that context. Weaker candidates had not read the question fully and assumed the transcription to be from a standard interview.

Most candidates, however, described the cooperative nature of the conversation with at least some attempt to develop analysis of the linguistic features. Most candidates acknowledged that Winfrey and Rowling were accommodating each other, and often quoted Giles. Very few, however, made a full exploration of the way in

which Winfrey attempts to take a literary approach to accommodate Rowling in ‘and the green is greener...’ at line 38.

Most candidates applied genderlect theories. A deficit model was not the most successful approach, nor was a response which relied solely on a discussion of genderlect and no other aspect of the transcription. The work of Lakoff, Tannen and Coates was the most frequently cited, with politeness principles in female speech mainly being described. Candidates were eager to apply Grice’s maxims: in weaker responses they were not explained and were mentioned only briefly.

Stronger and more confident candidates observed and analysed Winfrey’s humour, particularly at line 5 as she parallels Rowling’s initials with the contemporary colloquialism ‘just kidding’. Weaker candidates spotted features such as overlap, pause and upward intonation with only a generalised or basic comment.

Question 2

The passage offered a framework within which weaker candidates could provide a balanced response. Some weaker candidates, however, only recast the bullet points of the passage. Responses such as these are unlikely to provide the developed exploration of the wider ramifications of the linguistic issues required by the higher bands of the mark scheme. Similarly, those responses which rely on an extended description of the history of the English language when attempting to explore language change run the risk of incorporating irrelevant material.

Stronger and more confident candidates were able to combine knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading with theoretical principles, and to apply these to the points made in the stimulus material. Responses gaining marks in the higher bands typically took issue with the advantages or disadvantages of the dominance of English as outlined in the passage using their own knowledge and experience.

Theoretical examples used continue to be from Kachru, Crystal and Diamond, although stronger responses discussed Widdowson’s spread and distribution model (which was highlighted in a past paper). Candidates should be aware of the pitfalls of merely quoting theories and then not applying them to the points they are attempting to make in their work.

Question 3

The question comprised two transcripts for candidates to use as springboards to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of child language acquisition. Stronger candidates confidently identified the stage which the children had reached, although weaker candidates remain confused about the differences between holophrastic, telegraphic and post-telegraphic speech.

In weaker responses, non-grammatical utterances and dysfluency features were spotted but not explored in the context of child language acquisition. Stronger candidates identified and explored the linguistic competence of the complex structures and fixed expression seen in the transcription. These candidates provided articulate discussions on the way that language was used in social interaction, particularly in the second transcription.

Theories applied were in line with those from the Syllabus, namely from Skinner, Bruner and Chomsky. As in **Question 1**, a deficit model was not necessarily helpful. Weaker candidates, when attempting to discuss Piaget, often misread the children’s developmental stage. However, stronger candidates explored the possibility of the children approaching an incremental stage and provided appropriate evidence for their argument. Those candidates who chose to use genderlect theories in this question, and possibly Grice’s cooperative principles, instead of the theories mentioned above were not responding to the rigours of the question.

Some candidates appeared to be distracted by the anatomy and physiology errors the children were making, thus their responses did not take a linguistic stance.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42
Language Topics

Key messages

The paper is designed to examine knowledge and understanding of three key areas related to the English language. Marks are awarded positively through the bands. In **Questions 1** and **3**, candidates are expected to provide a linguistic analysis of transcriptions provided. In **Question 2**, candidates are expected to undertake an analytical exploration of the linguistic issue presented in the passage.

In the lower bands, the candidate's control of English may be partial or there may be a simple or generalised response to the passage provided. In the middle bands, there will be a developing analysis including a detailed and informed exploration of language, structure, purpose and context (**Questions 1** and **3**) or a detailed and informed exploration of the linguistic issue and its wider ramifications (**Question 2**).

Responses will move towards the higher bands where the analysis is developed by applying appropriate theoretical examples to an argument and by carefully selecting quotes from the context provided. In the higher bands, the response will be full, comparative, balanced and articulate.

General comments

The questions presented the candidates with interesting contexts with which to engage. In all three topic areas, knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading was demonstrated. In this series, there was less evidence that candidates lacked familiarity with the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription than there had been in previous series. Stronger and more confident responses ensured that theoretical examples were appropriate to any points made, rather than taking the deficit view that characterised weaker responses. It is important that any theoretical example should be explored and analysed fully in the context of evidence from the text; otherwise the essay remains undeveloped with a brief or generalised theoretical comment which may not always be appropriate in the context provided.

In **Questions 1** and **3**, some candidates chose to recast or simply describe the content of the transcriptions, resulting in a tendency to assertion. Similarly, in **Question 2**, some candidates merely paraphrased the context provided and did not fully explore the linguistic issue, nor its wider ramifications.

Stronger responses were from those candidates able to use a full range of linguistic terminology with confidence. Weaker responses used basic descriptors for language features, therefore not providing a linguistic analysis. As in previous series, the terms elision and ellipsis often demonstrated confusion, as did the concept of deixis, although more confident candidates were able to evidence these appropriately.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates based their responses on genderlect studies, with the more confident candidates demonstrating their extended wider reading on the topic. The work of Lakoff, Tannen and Coates was applied to evidence from the text; where Zimmerman and West had been incorporated into the response by more confident candidates, Beattie was often used to provide a counterargument. Stronger candidates recognised that they should not base their analysis solely on genderlect and made a full linguistic exploration of the passage.

Weaker candidates made a brief mention of Grice's cooperative principles; they were not always accurately applied. Weaker candidates also attempted to identify potential clashes between the interlocutors whereas

overall the conversation was supportive. This latter aspect was explored by stronger candidates with the more confident analysing the use and meaning of the diminutive in lines 24 and 26 by the male interlocutors. Some candidates took Shauna's mention of 'an iphone' to be an indication of socioeconomic status; this was not necessarily helpful to the linguistic analysis.

Most responses commented on John's dominance and many showed good awareness of Rachel's co-operative strategies, but the roles of David and Shauna were generally not fully discussed, particularly David's, perhaps because his contributions did not straightforwardly reflect traditional gendered views of language use. Stronger responses explored how language revealed the dynamics of the interaction and appreciated the fluidity and co-operativeness of the exchanges.

Stronger responses demonstrated clear understanding of technical terminology and used it articulately and with ease. Weaker candidates supported their recognition of features such as overlap, pause and upward intonation with only a generalised or basic comment.

Question 2

Strong and confident candidates took account of the provenance of the article, from Forbes.com, 'an international business website' and discussed whether it might itself support the arguments presented in favour of Nerriere's Globish.

A lot of candidates recognised the similarity between the thinking behind the concept of Globish and that of Esperanto. Some of the conclusions drawn from that comparison were erroneous; the two concepts are very different. More confident candidates took the opportunity to challenge the thinking behind Globish rather than simply accepting it as reasonable idea, particularly the notion of international relations being conducted on the basis of a 1500 word vocabulary.

Some weaker candidates, however, only paraphrased the points made in the passage. Responses such as these are unlikely to provide the developed exploration of the wider ramifications of the linguistic issues required by the higher bands of the mark scheme. Similarly, those responses which rely on an extended description of the history of the English language when attempting to explore language change run the risk of incorporating irrelevant material.

The balance between appraising Globish and confronting the issues arising from English as a global language was not always appreciated. Some candidates only explored English as a global language; others only explored Globish.

Stronger and more confident candidates were able to combine knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading with theoretical principles and apply these to the points made in the stimulus material. Responses gaining marks in the higher bands took issue with the advantages or disadvantages of Globish as outlined in the passage using their own knowledge and experience.

Theoretical examples used continue to be from Kachru, Crystal and Diamond, although weaker candidates did not fully integrate theory with a rationalisation of the need for more or less globalisation of English or the application of Globish. Candidates should be aware of the pitfalls of merely quoting theories and then not applying them to the points they are attempting to make in their work.

Question 3

Stronger candidates confidently identified the developmental stage which Alice had reached, although weaker candidates remain confused about the differences between holophrastic and telegraphic speech, often using incorrect technical terminology.

The passage gave candidates ample opportunity to reflect upon the mother's role as well as that of the child, and yet a surprising number focused solely on the child and missed the chance to reflect upon the mother's caretaker role. This role was completed carefully and sympathetically and more confident candidates recognised the skills involved.

Strong candidates identified the way that Alice managed to develop and affirm her understanding of the words 'night time' and even understood her pride in knowledge as she turned to her brother. This was particularly evident because Alice chose to whisper, knowing that quiet was required at bedtime and during the night.

Stronger candidates demonstrated understanding of the importance of Halliday in this extract and applied the theory appropriately. Weaker candidates misapplied Piaget, identifying the developmental stage incorrectly. Most candidates referred to theories by Skinner and Chomsky, with confident candidates being able to apply Vygotsky, identifying scaffolding, IRF exchange and ZPD.

Weaker responses took a deficit approach in their discussion of James' 'yeah' and Alice's dysfluency features; when spotted such features were often only assigned a brief, generalised comment. Stronger candidates identified and explored Alice's linguistic competence in terms of polysyllabic utterance and object permanence.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43
Language Topics

Key messages

The paper is designed to examine knowledge and understanding of three key areas related to the English language. Marks are awarded positively through the bands. In **Questions 1** and **3**, candidates are expected to provide a linguistic analysis of transcriptions provided. In **Question 2**, candidates are expected to undertake an analytical exploration of the linguistic issue presented in the passage.

In the lower bands, the candidate's control of English may be partial or there may be a simple or generalised response to the passage provided. In the middle bands, there will be a developing analysis including a detailed and informed exploration of language, structure, purpose and context (**Questions 1** and **3**) or a detailed and informed exploration of the linguistic issue and its wider ramifications (**Question 2**).

Responses will move towards the higher bands where the analysis is developed by applying appropriate theoretical examples to an argument and by carefully selecting quotes from the context provided. In the higher bands, the response will be full, comparative, balanced and articulate.

General comments

The questions presented the candidates with interesting contexts with which to engage. In all three topic areas, knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading was demonstrated. In this series, there was less evidence that candidates lacked familiarity with the conventions of Conversation Analysis transcription than there had been in previous series. Stronger and more confident responses ensured that theoretical examples were appropriate to any points made, rather than taking the deficit view that characterised weaker responses. It is important that any theoretical example should be explored and analysed fully in the context of evidence from the text; otherwise the essay remains undeveloped with a brief or generalised theoretical comment which may not always be appropriate in the context provided.

In **Questions 1** and **3**, some candidates chose to recast or simply describe the content of the transcriptions, resulting in a tendency to assertion. Similarly, in **Question 2**, some candidates merely paraphrased the context provided and did not fully explore the linguistic issue, nor its wider ramifications.

Stronger responses were from those candidates able to use a full range of linguistic terminology with confidence. Weaker responses used basic descriptors for language features, therefore not providing a linguistic analysis. As in previous series, the terms elision and ellipsis often demonstrated confusion, as did the concept of deixis, although more confident candidates were able to evidence these appropriately.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates based their responses on genderlect studies, with the more confident candidates demonstrating their extended wider reading on the topic. The work of Lakoff, Tannen and Coates was applied to evidence from the text; where Zimmerman and West had been incorporated into the response by more confident candidates, Beattie was often used to provide a counterargument. Stronger candidates recognised that they should not base their analysis solely on genderlect and made a full linguistic exploration of the passage.

Weaker candidates made a brief mention of Grice's cooperative principles; they were not always accurately applied. Weaker candidates also attempted to identify potential clashes between the interlocutors whereas

overall the conversation was supportive. This latter aspect was explored by stronger candidates with the more confident analysing the use and meaning of the diminutive in lines 24 and 26 by the male interlocutors. Some candidates took Shauna's mention of 'an iphone' to be an indication of socioeconomic status; this was not necessarily helpful to the linguistic analysis.

Most responses commented on John's dominance and many showed good awareness of Rachel's co-operative strategies, but the roles of David and Shauna were generally not fully discussed, particularly David's, perhaps because his contributions did not straightforwardly reflect traditional gendered views of language use. Stronger responses explored how language revealed the dynamics of the interaction and appreciated the fluidity and co-operativeness of the exchanges.

Stronger responses demonstrated clear understanding of technical terminology and used it articulately and with ease. Weaker candidates supported their recognition of features such as overlap, pause and upward intonation with only a generalised or basic comment.

Question 2

Strong and confident candidates took account of the provenance of the article, from Forbes.com, 'an international business website' and discussed whether it might itself support the arguments presented in favour of Nerriere's Globish.

A lot of candidates recognised the similarity between the thinking behind the concept of Globish and that of Esperanto. Some of the conclusions drawn from that comparison were erroneous; the two concepts are very different. More confident candidates took the opportunity to challenge the thinking behind Globish rather than simply accepting it as reasonable idea, particularly the notion of international relations being conducted on the basis of a 1500 word vocabulary.

Some weaker candidates, however, only paraphrased the points made in the passage. Responses such as these are unlikely to provide the developed exploration of the wider ramifications of the linguistic issues required by the higher bands of the mark scheme. Similarly, those responses which rely on an extended description of the history of the English language when attempting to explore language change run the risk of incorporating irrelevant material.

The balance between appraising Globish and confronting the issues arising from English as a global language was not always appreciated. Some candidates only explored English as a global language; others only explored Globish.

Stronger and more confident candidates were able to combine knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading with theoretical principles and apply these to the points made in the stimulus material. Responses gaining marks in the higher bands took issue with the advantages or disadvantages of Globish as outlined in the passage using their own knowledge and experience.

Theoretical examples used continue to be from Kachru, Crystal and Diamond, although weaker candidates did not fully integrate theory with a rationalisation of the need for more or less globalisation of English or the application of Globish. Candidates should be aware of the pitfalls of merely quoting theories and then not applying them to the points they are attempting to make in their work.

Question 3

Stronger candidates confidently identified the developmental stage which Alice had reached, although weaker candidates remain confused about the differences between holophrastic and telegraphic speech, often using incorrect technical terminology.

The passage gave candidates ample opportunity to reflect upon the mother's role as well as that of the child, and yet a surprising number focused solely on the child and missed the chance to reflect upon the mother's caretaker role. This role was completed carefully and sympathetically and more confident candidates recognised the skills involved.

Strong candidates identified the way that Alice managed to develop and affirm her understanding of the words 'night time' and even understood her pride in knowledge as she turned to her brother. This was particularly evident because Alice chose to whisper, knowing that quiet was required at bedtime and during the night.

Stronger candidates demonstrated understanding of the importance of Halliday in this extract and applied the theory appropriately. Weaker candidates misapplied Piaget, identifying the developmental stage incorrectly. Most candidates referred to theories by Skinner and Chomsky, with confident candidates being able to apply Vygotsky, identifying scaffolding, IRF exchange and ZPD.

Weaker responses took a deficit approach in their discussion of James' 'yeah' and Alice's dysfluency features; when spotted such features were often only assigned a brief, generalised comment. Stronger candidates identified and explored Alice's linguistic competence in terms of polysyllabic utterance and object permanence.