

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

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Paper 0991/11  
Reading and Writing (Core) 11

## Key messages

- In **Exercise 1**, it is essential to read the questions carefully in order to identify the key elements. Answers should be brief to avoid including additional incorrect information which could affect the mark awarded.
- In **Exercise 2**, candidates are advised to read the questions carefully and note the key requirements of each question in order to select corresponding details in the text. It is essential that answers are written clearly, and if an answer needs to be changed, it is crossed out and written alongside.
- In **Exercise 3**, candidates should select brief answers which correspond to the heading in each question. The number of bullet points indicate the number of responses required, and only one answer should be written on each line.
- In **Exercise 4**, candidates should carefully consider whether the information they include is relevant to the summary topic. Long introductions and irrelevant details should be avoided. They should also ensure that they do not exceed the 90-word limit, as correct Content points which are included after the limit cannot be credited.
- To achieve marks in the top band in **Exercise 5**, responses should demonstrate a sense of awareness of the target audience by using an informal register, and develop all three prompts at an appropriate length.
- In **Exercise 6**, responses are required to demonstrate a different register of writing from **Exercise 5**, to suit a different audience. To achieve marks in the top band, candidates should develop their ideas at appropriate length, and include a good range of topic-related vocabulary and some more complex structures.

## General comments

Overall, the majority of candidates were correctly entered for the Core tier paper.

## Comments on specific questions

### Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well attempted. Precise answers are required, and candidates should focus on the key requirements of each question to locate the relevant section of the text when responding.

#### Question 1

This question was generally well answered. Occasional incorrect responses were '*ice sculpture*' or '*create a hotel from ice*'.

#### Question 2

This question was well answered. The incorrect answer '*thick blanket*' referred to visitors sleeping in the exhibition hall, rather than in the Icehotel, as the question required, and could not be credited.

#### Question 3

This question proved slightly more challenging. While several responses successfully provided the two details required for two marks, the incorrect answers '*hiking and canoeing*' could not be credited as these referred to activities taking place in the summer.

#### Question 4

This question was more challenging. A frequent incorrect response omitted '*in winter*' suggesting that candidates had not fully understood that the Icehotel was built only for the winter.

#### Question 5

This question was generally well answered. Some candidates gave the incorrect answer '*icy exhibition hall*' which referred to a later year, '1992', rather than '*the first ice sculpture workshop in 1989*' as the question required.

#### Question 6

The key detail '*1992*' was recognised by the majority of candidates. Some candidates were distracted by the idea of the first ice sculpture workshop which was in '*1989*', suggesting that the key element of the question, sleeping '*in the ice*' had not been recognised.

#### Question 7

This question proved challenging. Some candidates gave the incomplete response '*sweep snow*' which did not give the full reason for making sure that solid ice developed, as the question required. Other responses referred to what happens after the ice has become hard, '*huge blocks of ice are cut out and kept in cold storage*' and could not be credited.

#### Question 8

This question also proved challenging. Precise reading of the question was required in order to identify the key information '*When is the ice collected...*'. Some candidates gave the answer '*winter*' which describes the time when the river freezes, and others gave '*in November*', the month when construction starts. Such incorrect responses could not be credited.

#### Exercise 2

#### Question 9

In this exercise, candidates need to recognise the key words and ideas in each question and look for details in a text that correspond with those ideas. As the texts may include opinions and attitudes, or information which is implied, rather than explicitly stated, candidates should look for synonyms or rephrasing of the ideas in the questions.

Overall, the performance in this exercise was mixed. Some candidates showed that they had a good level of understanding of the task and text. The whole range of marks was awarded, with many candidates achieving half the available marks. Candidates appeared to find **Question (a)**, **Question (d)** and **Question (e)** the most accessible. The most challenging questions proved to be **Question (b)**, **Question (c)**, **Question (f)** and **Question (h)**.

In **Question (b)**, the key focus of the question was on '*a welcoming atmosphere*' and '*people of all levels*', with the correct answer being found in Text B, '*a mixed group of beginners and more experienced*' and '*we were all made to feel completely at ease*'. Some candidates appeared to have been distracted by the details in Text A and Text C. However, those texts did not fully support the ideas in the question.

In **Question (c)**, the central idea in the question was that each class was '*unpredictable*'. The correct answer was found in Text D, '*I never know what exercises to expect*'. Text A was a common incorrect response, possibly linking '*not really what I'd expected*' to '*unpredictable*' in the question.

In **Question (f)**, the key idea in the question was '*advice for getting maximum benefit*'. The correct response was found in Text C, '*to make the most of it*' and '*you might consider...*'. Responses featured answers from each of the texts.

In **Question (h)**, the central idea in the question was that there was an *'initial struggle to keep up with the exercises'*. Text C provided the detail *'I found the pace of movements too fast to begin with'*, which fully supported this idea. Other texts referred to the exercises being a *'good workout'* and the music being *'upbeat'*, however this information did not correspond to the requirement of the question.

### Exercise 3

Candidates responded well to this exercise and many provided four to six correct note-form answers. Some candidates were able to show enough understanding of the text and select relevant details to score the full seven marks available. Greater success in selecting correct details was achieved in **Question 11** than in **Question 10**. Notes could not be credited when key details were omitted or repeated, or notes were placed under the wrong heading.

### Question 10

In this question, three points from a total of five were required. All five points were used, with *'tons of clothing buried as waste'* and *'plastic ends up in the oceans'* the most frequently selected. Incomplete notes tended to be the result of omission of key details. For example, *'1.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere'* and *'production of clothes pollute the soil'* were frequently written on their own, and these did not convey the key idea that it happened *'every year'* and it was the *'chemicals'* which polluted the soil. Without these key ideas, such notes could not be credited.

### Question 11

This question appeared to be more accessible and many candidates achieved four of the available five marks. Introductory verbs were correctly used to correspond with the heading requirement and there was little repetition of note ideas. Sometimes the note was not fully expressed, as in *'use recycled materials'*, which on its own did not relate to the heading. The key detail *'to make your own clothes'* was essential for the mark to be awarded.

### Exercise 4

Candidates are advised to read the requirements of the topic of the summary to ensure that the central focus is correct. They should carefully consider whether the information they include is relevant to the purpose of the summary.

In this series, candidates were required to summarise the good things about geocaching and all the available points on the mark scheme were used. The majority of candidates achieved four or five Content points within the 90-word limit. Many candidates were noticeably confident in their attempts to paraphrase, using synonyms for key vocabulary, for example *'free time'* for *'spare time'*, and *'new locations'* for *'new places'*. Other successful examples included *'make better'* for *'improve'*, and *'an effective method'* for *'a fun way'*. Additionally, some responses showed good summary technique by restructuring the grammar of sentences, for example *'Wherever I do it, I always feel satisfied'*, *'it helps you figure out things around you'* and *'our technological ability is improved'*. This presentation of sentences from the text in a different grammatical way resulted in higher marks for language. Unfortunately, some ambitious attempts at paraphrasing resulted in changing the content point to such a degree that the original meaning was lost.

Some responses relied to a great extent on repeating the language in the text for the content points with additional connecting words or phrases such as *'firstly/in addition/not only...but also/finally'*. This reliance placed the mark for Language in the middle band. To achieve higher marks for Language, candidates should attempt to express the ideas in their own words as far as possible.

Less successful summaries included too much non-essential information, in this series a description of what geocaching is, how the writer found out about it and their school experience. This frequently led to responses being too long, and correct Content points which were written after the word limit could not be credited.

### Exercise 5

The majority of candidates dealt with the topic successfully and many responses were accurate and suitably informal. Many responses showed a good sense of purpose and ideas were developed clearly and appropriately. Generally, a good sense of the target audience was achieved, and some responses were very conversational and natural. For example, *'I'm counting on you'*, *'I can not wait to perform'*, and *'I could not believe my own eyes when I was accepted'*. Some responses tended to feature linking words and phrases

more appropriate for formal writing, for example *'Firstly I was walking home...'*, *'despite this, I managed to get accepted for the festival'*, and *'On the other hand, you might want to come with friends'*, which resulted in an inconsistent register and affected the mark awarded.

Most responses addressed all three prompts and provided satisfactory or effective development of each one. For the first prompt, ideas ranged from the writer scrolling through Instagram or other social media; noticing a poster on a tree or in the school corridor or being told by a friend or teacher about the festival. Of all the prompts, this one was the most often omitted or unclearly expressed. Most responses named the place where the festival would take place – from major cities in other countries where the festival could be combined with a holiday or a visit to friends, to neighbouring towns which were convenient to get to. Less successful responses simply re-stated the language provided.

The second prompt required candidates to describe activities that they would carry out at the festival, and the majority of ideas were centred around playing an instrument such as *'piano'* *'drums'* or *'guitar'*, either solo or as part of a band. Other responses were effective in describing how the writer had written a particular song which they would perform, or a dance that they had learned. Further responses detailed activities which were not related to performing, for example *'I'll be in charge of promoting the festival and giving out tickets'*, or *'I'm part of the team setting up the lights'*. Less successful responses featured a festival which had already taken place, although this was often unclear due to the inconsistency of tenses. Candidates are reminded of the need to read each prompt carefully and to write relevantly.

For the third prompt, candidates were asked to invite their friend to come and watch the performance, and there were many effective ideas which went beyond a simple invitation, *'I have a special seat there with your name on it'*; *'You must come, I need you there with me'*; *'there will be lots of snacks there'*; *'you'll be able to meet all my music friends too'*. A number of invitations asked the friend to join in the performance, which did not precisely fulfil the requirements, and were less effective.

In terms of language, at times there was too much focus on fixed phrases to introduce and end the email, and this tended to be at the expense of the key required content. Candidates are reminded that the prompts should form the majority of the writing and that only a short introduction and ending are required. The whole range of language marks was awarded. More able candidates attempted greater complexity in their use of sentence construction and included a range of topic-related vocabulary, *'We're going to have a rehearsal tomorrow so that they can teach me their amazing choreography'*, *'It's my dream to become a singer and this is my chance to make people recognise my talent.'* Other responses needed to attempt more complex structures and include a wider range of vocabulary to have access to marks in the top band for Language. Accuracy in the use of tenses continues to be an area for practice.

## Exercise 6

For a mark in the higher band, ideas should be developed, and the style and register should differ from that in **Exercise 5** and be appropriate for the task type. Many successful responses argued strongly on one side, often going beyond the comments provided, and including reasons, explanations and examples to support their ideas. Less successful were the responses which relied solely on the comments provided, with no further development.

All four written comments were used, with the majority in favour of having more parks. A common health benefit was seen for people being in the fresh air, *'parks have undeniable positive effects both on people and on the environment'*, *'not only do parks improve your mental health but also your physical health too.'* Parks were seen as places where adults can do yoga classes or go jogging, and where children can play games, or where people can meet socially for a chat, with the common agreement that *'parks reduce anxiety and stress.'* Most responses also featured the environmental aspect, and there were many well informed comments on pollution, CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gases, *'Another point worth noting is that trees will help reduce the concentration of carbon dioxide emitted. As a result they will aid in the fight against global warming.'* Marks could not be credited in the top band for Content for responses which relied entirely on the environmental argument. A further popular idea was the way that parks can improve the appearance of a city or town – people looking out of their windows could see colourful areas with trees and flowers, and this would make them feel better, *'there's nothing as lovely as seeing birds flying and singing'*.

On the other side, ideas concerning the need for more hospitals, schools and houses were important, *'it provides job opportunities, and the benefits would come sooner than those afforded by green areas.'* Furthermore, many responses detailed the disadvantages of having more parks, as they attract *'unpleasant insects, noise and litter'*. The economic benefits of creating more buildings were also seen as important. Many candidates used the idea of helping homeless people as central to their focus, and this appeared on

both sides of the argument – some felt that it was essential to build more houses for them, but others felt that it was preferable for homeless people to sleep in parks than on the street. Similarly, the comment which suggested that it was hard work to look after a park was seen from both angles: some responses detailed the cost of creating more parks and keeping them clean, while others turned the comment into a positive by suggesting that this was a good job opportunity.

In terms of language, more successful responses attempted greater complexity of grammatical structures, *'there are those who think that parks and green spaces serve no purpose'*, and *'it's environmentally friendly and an amazing location for entertainment, making every bit of work put into taking care of it worthwhile.'* There were also many successful attempts at a range of vocabulary suited to the topic, for example *'eco-friendly'*, *'living organisms'*, *'photosynthesis'*, and *'attracting butterflies, ladybirds, humming birds, and squirrels'*.

An area for improvement would be that of register: many responses did not differentiate between the more neutral or formal style required in this exercise and the informal style of **Exercise 5**. Many colloquial phrases such as *'way more important'* and *'can hang out in the park'* which are suitable for an informal email are not appropriate for this article and the target reader. Additionally, the use of appropriate linking devices continues to be an area for practice: candidates are reminded of the need to use different connecting phrases in **Exercise 6** from **Exercise 5**.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT IN SPEAKING)

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Paper 0991/21  
Reading and Writing (Extended) 21

## Key messages

In **Exercise 1**, the need to read questions carefully must be emphasised to recognise the key elements in each question. Many candidates found some of the questions challenging. Responses which also include distracting information should be avoided, as this could affect the answer.

In **Exercise 2**, candidates must read precisely to identify key details. These could include the writers' opinion and attitude, or information that is not explicitly stated but only implied. Overall, the exercise was generally well attempted, with very few omissions.

In **Exercise 3**, candidates should focus on writing brief answers and make sure that their answers correspond to the right question. Each response should be written on a separate line and the number of bullet points indicates the number of responses required for that question. In this series, some responses included additional details on extra lines, which could not be credited.

In **Exercise 4**, it is essential that responses stay within the word limit of 120 words, as otherwise correct Content points included after the limit cannot be credited. Many responses were too long, which affected the mark.

In **Exercise 5**, responses were generally successful in showing awareness of the target audience by using an informal register. Awareness of the purpose of writing was less successful, as many candidates did not interpret the rubric correctly, which affected the mark. Candidates should read the rubric carefully and refer to the task while writing, so that they do not lose sight of the purpose of their writing.

In **Exercise 6**, many responses correctly differentiated the register of writing from **Exercise 5**, by using a more neutral or formal style and register, appropriate to the target audience. Candidates were successful to a degree in developing their ideas at appropriate length.

## General comments

Overall, most candidates were correctly entered at this level.

The paper offered a range of tasks within the six exercises, requiring the candidates to demonstrate a variety of practical skills of reading and writing. There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in individual questions and across the paper.

Candidates should use the three blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially for **Exercises 5** and **6**, but they need to indicate clearly to the Examiners where extra work has been added. Candidates should be advised that throughout the paper the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required, and they should not consistently exceed this.

Time management was good and there were very few candidates who failed to complete all the exercises in the paper.

## Comments on specific questions

### Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well attempted by candidates with individual questions providing differentiation. It was a suitable introduction to the reading comprehension tasks.

#### Question 1

This was very well attempted by all candidates.

#### Question 2

This was well answered. On occasion, candidates omitted the key word *'thermal'*.

#### Question 3

This was a two-mark question. Most candidates successfully conveyed both details, although on occasion either *'ice'* or *'class'* was omitted.

#### Question 4

This question proved to be more challenging and a good discriminator. Many candidates omitted the key detail *'in winter'* in the answer. They did not consider the detail in the first part of paragraph 4, where the popular tourist activities in the summer months were described. The contrast in the seasons was a key part of the answer.

#### Question 5

This was generally well attempted. Some candidates answered incorrectly with the distractor *'exhibition hall'* whilst others could not be credited for writing *'hats'* or *'hunts'* for *'huts'*.

#### Question 6

This was generally well answered, although several candidates selected the distractor *'1989'*.

#### Question 7

This question proved to be more challenging, and many candidates were careless with the precise reading of the question with the key phrase *'solid ice develops'*. As a result, many answered *'huge blocks of ice are cut out and kept in cold storage'*. Some candidates omitted the key detail *'off the river'*, which made the answer too imprecise.

#### Question 8

This question was a good discriminator. Candidates needed to read the text carefully to differentiate between the different stages of the building of the Icehotel. Many wrote *'in winter'* or *'November'*, whereas the question specifically required the time of collection of the ice, which was *'spring'*.

#### Question 9

This question was generally well answered, and many candidates were awarded the maximum four marks here. The most able candidates recognised that correct answers required the inclusion of key expressions such as *'before they check in'* (point 2), and *'in bed'* (point 4). Answers which did not include those details were too imprecise and could not be credited. Some candidates overlooked the key word *'advice'* in the question and wrote *'hot breakfast'* and *'thick blanket'*.

Centres are reminded that this final question in **Exercise 1** is more challenging. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article in its entirety, as key information may appear at any point in the text.

## Exercise 2

### Question 10

Centres and candidates have adapted well to this matching task. Many candidates were awarded 8 marks or more here. There were many occasions where candidates changed their mind as they compared the wording of the text with that of individual questions. This demonstrates the kind of thought process required for this task when comparing the different texts.

The middle section of this task, namely **Questions (c) to (h)**, were well answered. Overall, two questions proved to be more difficult for candidates. Firstly, in **(a)**, the letter B was often selected rather than the correct E, presumably because candidates matched the word '*challenge*' in both the question and the text without looking more deeply into the instructor's use of heavier weights in the Body Pump class. Secondly, in **(j)**, the letter B was often selected, rather than C. Here, several candidates failed to connect the key words '*initial struggle*' in the question with the expression '*I found the pace of the movements too fast to begin with*' in text C. This was much closer in meaning than the wording '*I felt a little foolish dancing at first*' in text B, which did not convey the idea of a struggle.

It is important to note that once an answer has been decided upon, the candidate should write the letter clearly on the designated line. If the first answer is changed, it should be crossed out and a new response provided rather than overwriting the original.

## Exercise 3

This exercise was very successfully attempted by most candidates. Many were able to show enough understanding of the text to score well here. There were fewer candidates who wrote full sentences, and most answers were brief and in note form. The bullet points and the length of the lines are always a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers in this exercise. On occasion, candidates misspelt '*clothes*' as '*cloths*' and could not be credited.

### Question 11 The negative impacts of fashion on the environment

Many candidates were awarded at least 3 marks for this question, and they selected from the full range of possible correct answers. Points 4 and 5 were particularly well attempted and most candidates were awarded a mark for each. In point 1, on occasion, candidates repeated the options '*people throw clothes away*' and '*15 per cent recycled*' as separate answers and could only be credited with one mark. In point 3, some candidates did not include the key idea of '*chemicals*' and wrote '*the production of clothes pollute the soil*' which was an incomplete statement. Many candidates found point 2 the most challenging and omitted the key fact '*every year*', which made the answer too imprecise. The difficulty arose here because the two important details were slightly separated in the text, and very few candidates made the connection.

### Question 12 What Sophia suggests people do to reduce the negative impacts of fashion on the environment

This question was very well attempted, and many candidates were awarded the maximum 5 marks. The wording of the heading required candidates to use a suitable verb, such as '*use*', '*wear*' or '*buy*' for each answer and most supplied one. There were options on the mark scheme for most of the five points and candidates used these fully in their answers. In point 2, some candidates repeated both options on separate lines and could only be credited with one mark. There were also some answers in point 5 which were too brief, '*use recycled materials*', without the key detail of '*to make clothes*'.

## Exercise 4

The summary proved to be a good discriminating exercise and there was a full range of marks awarded. All the content points proved accessible, and most candidates were able to identify at least five relevant details successfully. The task was to write a summary about the challenges of living on Tristan da Cunha, the most remote island in the world. The most successful candidates were able to convey precise, relevant detail and wrote with a good sense of order, selecting carefully from the text. There was effective use of appropriate linking words and cohesive devices such as '*moreover*', '*furthermore*', '*in addition*' and '*not only but also*', which helped to give a natural flow to the summary. Candidates who used '*firstly*', '*secondly*', '*thirdly*' and so on conveyed the idea of sequencing, but this was not a varied or effective use of cohesive devices and resulted in a stilted tone.



A significant number of candidates completed the summary outside the prescribed 120-word limit. This occurred generally when candidates wasted words on irrelevant introductions, such as *'In this summary I will tell you all about life on Tristan da Cunha in the passage'*. Some were careless with their reading of the precise requirements of the question, namely the challenges of living on the island, and wrote about the benefits or about life in general. For example, there was extensive but irrelevant lifting from paragraph 2, which described the island's village and the sources of income of the inhabitants. Similarly, from the final paragraph, there were references to the lucky children growing up in one of the friendliest communities in the world. Consequently, some summaries were overlong and key details were often only addressed after the 120-word limit and could not be credited.

Regarding Content, points 2, 3 and 9 on the mark scheme were well expressed and points 6 and 7 were often successfully combined. The two options on point 1 were often repeated, however, and candidates were less precise with points 4, 5 and 8 where key details *'available to farm'*, *'months'* and *'specialist'* were often omitted respectively.

Many candidates were seen to be attempting to use their own words and expressions. Centres are reminded that higher marks for Language are available to those candidates who attempt to paraphrase by using synonyms. More successful candidates were able to change *'remote'* to *'isolated'*, *'internet connection slow'* to *'internet connection sluggish'*, and *'delays getting hold of supplies'* to *'provisions arrive later than expected'*. A particularly good example which combined the use of a cohesive device and original wording was the following sentence, which was credited with two Content points: *'Not only is the speed of the internet service poor but also the electricity supply is not stable'*. Stronger answers contained a mixture of vocabulary from the text and the candidate's own words, together with a sound level of grammatical accuracy.

### Exercise 5 General comments

There are three bullet prompts in **Exercise 5** and, arguably, each one deserves a paragraph to give the whole piece appropriate balance. The most successful candidates used paragraphs to good purpose, and they provided an effective division between the different ideas that they needed to convey.

Candidates must address and develop all three bullet prompts to achieve higher marks for Content in the writing criteria. In addition, they should convey a good sense of purpose and engage the reader's interest. Examiners seek to reward those candidates who can demonstrate a more vibrant style and provide some innovative detail.

It Many candidates made a good attempt to supply a suitably brief introduction and concluding statement, in an informal register. There were few prolonged greetings and conclusions, and those candidates who included formulaic expressions generally ensured that they were relevant to the recipient of the email and the requirements of the task.

Candidates should attempt to use more complex vocabulary and structures to achieve higher marks for Language. It is important that the writing is accurate, particularly in the use of verb tenses. The whole response should be well organised, with paragraphs and full stops used appropriately to separate ideas.

### Exercise 5 An email to a friend about performing in a music festival in another town

Many answers were interesting to read, with good development and most candidates related well to the task, adopting an appropriate, informal tone for the email. The strongest responses conveyed the feelings of a young person very excited about demonstrating their musical talents in front of an audience. For the first bullet point, Examiners sought to credit candidates who could write a plausible explanation of how they found out about the festival. There was some interesting and varied detail including television adverts, posts on social media as well as more imaginative descriptions about being contacted unexpectedly by famous festival organisers. Less successful responses produced explanations that were predictable, such as *'I heard it from a friend'* or *'I saw a poster in town'* which lacked imagination. Several candidates also spent a disproportionate amount of time on this explanation, which often meant that the other two bullet points were covered inadequately.

For the second bullet point, Examiners sought to credit candidates who were able to give an enthusiastic description of what they were going to do in the festival. The most successful candidates gave the impression that they had real knowledge of this scenario and were able to add imaginative detail. For example, there were candidates who described how they had played piano for many years, and that it was now time to show off their skills with songs that they had composed themselves. In addition, they were excited about playing to a large group of people and thrilled that their performance would be streamed on

You Tube. Less successful answers tended to mention that they would be playing in a band, usually as a lead singer, guitarist, or drummer without further development. Several answers included general detail about activity at the festival, such as eating, drinking, and watching others perform, which, on its own, did not fulfil the requirements of the task.

For the final bullet point, Examiners sought to credit candidates who could convey a sense of enthusiasm when inviting a friend to come and see them perform. The most successful responses provided just as much detail here as for the other two bullet points, emphasising how much it would mean to them if their friend were in the audience. They included details about offering a lift to the performance, giving out backstage passes and VIP tickets as well as offering the opportunity to meet celebrities and collect autographs. Less successful answers contained only brief detail, often just one sentence of invitation. Many candidates ended the email on a personal note by suggesting that they meet up after the performance to enjoy some time together.

Regarding Language, most candidates were able to write in a suitably informal register to their friend. Expressions such as *'I had the time of my life'*, *'Words can not explain how excited I am'* and *'You know what a show-off I am...'* made the email more personal. It was noted that several candidates used tenses inconsistently, mixing the present and the past.

Most candidates used paragraphs to good effect to divide their ideas, and basic punctuation was generally sound. Less able candidates substituted commas for full stops throughout the whole answer, thus producing long rambling sentences. Capital letters at the beginning of sentences were also sometimes overlooked, and there were responses with no paragraphing at all, displaying a lack of organisation and structure. By contrast, some candidates wrote very short sentences throughout, with no clauses or connectives. Examiners always seek to credit sentences and phrases which display a variety of structures and lengths, as well as accuracy.

### **Exercise 6 General comments**

There are two prompts – one for and one against the statement in the title – to help candidates with basic ideas. However, there needs to be evidence that candidates can develop their views beyond these prompts and persuade the reader of their convictions to access the higher bands for Content.

Word limits were well-observed, and most candidates were able to complete the exercise. There were very few candidates who had clearly left themselves short of time.

All content should be related to the precise demands of the question, and not included because work on similar topics has been previously covered in school classes. In this exercise, some candidates wrote about environmental issues in general and did not refer specifically to parks and green spaces in towns and cities as required by the rubric.

A clear, organised sequence of views and arguments is very important. Some candidates launch into the piece without any proper planning, which often results in repetition of both language and content with no coherent plan. The most successful candidates made notes on the blank pages at the end of the question paper before starting their article. The planning was often quite simple, but it was enough to make a noticeable difference to the quality of the writing. It also had the added benefit of reducing the number of crossings out, which tend to interrupt the flow of the writing.

Candidates should attempt to use more complex vocabulary and structures to achieve higher marks for Language, and it is important that the writing should be in a formal register with persuasive language. Where arguments for and against the topic are expressed, there should be paragraphs and full stops to separate ideas.

### **Exercise 6 An article about whether towns and cities should have more parks and green spaces**

Most candidates were able to adopt a formal tone and register for the final discursive exercise. Examiners sought to credit answers which addressed the key wording in the rubric about whether towns and cities should have more parks and green spaces. The strongest candidates refrained from offering a purely environmental article and focused firmly on the benefits of green spaces to ordinary people and everyday life. More able candidates were able to present both the benefits and the drawbacks of the issue and introduced ideas well beyond the suggestions of the prompts. Those stressing the advantages of establishing more parks and green spaces emphasised the importance of increased socialising, community spirit, relaxation, appreciation of nature and other aesthetic reasons. For example, *'Furthermore, going to a*

*park is a fundamental part of our childhood; kids should not be deprived of such a chance, aiding the development of vital social skills which in turn leads to a strong community*'.

These benefits were often balanced with details relating to the opposite viewpoint, such as the cost of building and maintaining these green spaces, the greater priority for housing, hospitals and schools and the difficulty of controlling animals in open spaces. Credit was given to those candidates who provided an appropriate conclusion, often with an original thought rather than a repetition or contradiction of previous ideas.

Less successful answers were a verbatim report of the school discussion, rather than an expression of point of view and opinion. This led to responses such as *'One candidate said....While another candidate said...'*. Others relied heavily on the two prompts with no real independent input or development.

There were a small number of candidates who interpreted the idea of 'parks' as 'car parks' and wrote about the lack of spaces for cars and other traffic problems. Similarly, there was occasional misreading of the rubric and candidates wrote about whether towns OR cities were best suited to have parks and green spaces,

Regarding Language, the most successful responses contained some variety of style by, for example, the use of rhetorical questions. Paragraphs and linking words were generally used to good effect and provided a balance when conveying both sides of the argument. For example, cohesive words and expressions such as *'on the contrary'*, *'on the other side of the coin'*, *'in the final analysis'* and *'ultimately'* significantly helped the flow when there was a change of direction in the article.

Less successful answers displayed no attempt to break the content into more reader-friendly sections and were comprised of a single lengthy paragraph. The agreement of subject and verb, particularly singular and plural, was not always in evidence - very often caused by confusion over the use of *'park/parks'* and *'green space/green spaces'*. A number of candidates used the expression *'parks and green spaces'* throughout, making the writing very repetitive; more able candidates used a suitable pronoun to avoid this.

Overall, many candidates responded with a structured argument, both for and against, and were able to produce articles that were persuasive. A good balance to the writing was established by providing an introductory comment on the topic and a concluding opinion, both of which helped to give a sense of cohesion to many responses.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT IN SPEAKING)

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Paper 0991/22  
Reading and Writing (Extended) 22

## Key messages

In **Exercise 1**, the need to read questions carefully must be emphasised to recognise the key elements in each question. Many candidates found some of the questions challenging. Responses which also include distracting information should be avoided, as this could affect the answer.

In **Exercise 2**, candidates must read precisely to identify key details. These could include the writers' opinion and attitude, or information that is not explicitly stated but only implied. Overall, the exercise was generally well attempted, with very few omissions.

In **Exercise 3**, candidates should focus on writing brief answers and make sure that their answers correspond to the right question. Each response should be written on a separate line and the number of bullet points indicates the number of responses required for that question. In this series, some responses included additional details on extra lines, which could not be credited.

In **Exercise 4**, it is essential that responses stay within the word limit of 90 words, as otherwise correct Content points included after the limit cannot be credited. Many responses were too long, which affected the mark.

In **Exercise 5**, in this series, responses were generally successful in showing awareness of the target audience by using an informal register. Awareness of the purpose of writing was less successful, as many candidates did not interpret the rubric correctly, which affected the mark. Candidates should read the rubric carefully and refer to the task while writing, so that they do not lose sight of the purpose of their writing.

In **Exercise 6**, many responses correctly differentiated the register of writing from **Exercise 5**, by using a more neutral or formal style and register, appropriate to the target audience. Candidates were successful to a degree in developing their ideas at appropriate length.

## General comments

Most candidates were entered correctly for the extended paper. They should attempt a response for each question, considering the entire paper and dividing the time available according to the difficulty and total points for each exercise, so that time is allocated appropriately.

Candidates should carefully read and recognise the requirements of individual questions, ensuring responses are precise and that questions are interpreted accurately.

### **Exercise 1: Job profile – Zookeeper**

Precise answers are required for this comprehension exercise. Candidates should ensure they focus on the requirements of the question and locate the relevant section of the text when responding. They should read carefully around what they recognise as the correct response to check there is no further information that negates or changes this.

#### **Question 1**

This question was very well answered. The most common incorrect response was 'Feed and check the animals'.

### Question 2

This question was well answered with a significant number of candidates giving two correct details. Some candidates gave the response ‘the best job in the world’, not connecting this with ‘I can not argue with the first point’, which comes a little later in the text and confirms that this is true. Another incorrect response was ‘a hugely rewarding career’.

### Question 3

Many candidates answered this question incorrectly, giving the response ‘Giving talks to visitors’. This is something Karin loves but not the main highlight. The correct response is contained in the following sentence when she says, ‘But above all...it’s that no two days are ever the same’.

### Question 4

Many candidates provided two correct responses to this question. A few candidates wrote ‘check their health’ or ‘help keep animals in good shape mentally’, which suggests these candidates did not fully understand the requirements of the question.

### Question 5

This question was well answered. There were candidates who just wrote ‘long hair’, omitting the key detail ‘on its head’. Another common incorrect response was ‘huge personality for its small size’, but the reason for its name comes in the next sentence in the text.

### Question 6

This question was very well answered. A few candidates gave the figure for the number of endangered species, 27 000, rather than the one for the number of cotton top tamarins, 2000.

### Question 7

This question was quite well answered. A number of candidates gave other subject disciplines mentioned, not focusing on the phrase ‘although in her case it was *genetics*’.

### Question 8

This question was generally well answered, and some candidates were able to provide four correct details. Some gave responses which were not personal characteristics, e.g. how a person can become a zookeeper, such as work experience or getting qualifications in biology or zoology.

### Exercise 2: Dear Pedro

This task consisted of a magazine article about a man who owns the largest private collection of letters in the world. In this exercise, candidates should recognise the key words in the question and ensure that the text they select fully supports their choice of answer. They should look for synonyms and rephrasing of the ideas. There were candidates who provided ten correct responses. Most candidates gained at least five of the ten marks available in this exercise. Generally, candidates found questions b, e, f and h the most challenging.

- (a) This question was very well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly. They needed to find a reason why someone was unwilling to reply to Pedro, which was clearly stated in B, ‘The author received so many requests like this that he had decided to decline them all...’. A few candidates gave A possibly because the text states ‘Not all of them are addressed to him’. Candidates should be reminded to consider the whole text before choosing their answer.
- (b) This question proved a little more challenging for some candidates. B and C were the most chosen incorrect responses. They may have linked the idea of ‘an object that first inspired him...’ to ‘asking for their autographs’ in option B when A was correct.
- (c) This question was well answered with D. It was asking about a time when Pedro realised he had bought a bargain, which was in D, ‘Even then he understood that this letter was worth much more...’. C was the most common incorrect response. Candidates may have incorrectly chosen this because of ‘He regularly goes to sales and has an eye for a good deal’.

- (d) This question was very well answered with B. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly. A few selected C, possibly as it says ‘Pedro received dozens of letters’, but it does not say these letters were unexpected.
- (e) This question proved a little challenging for some candidates. C was correct, with D being the most common incorrect choice. Candidates needed to find the paragraph that talks about an exception to a series of successes, so C is the correct answer. In text D, it says, ‘there are still several people whose letters he has not managed to purchase’ and candidates might have misunderstood/misinterpreted this sentence.
- (f) This question was quite well answered. C was the most common incorrect response. The correct answer was B, as it says, ‘Pedro forgot about the letters and was moving on to other hobbies...’. In text C, it says ‘...and he is focusing more on a broader project about western culture’, which may have been misinterpreted by some candidates.
- (g) This question was well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly with A. In text A it says, ‘...which are so heavy that they have to be kept on the ground floor of his home in Rio’, giving the location and the reason for this. Some candidates selected B or D. ‘He was surprised to find a parcel with his name on it waiting for him in the hallway’ in B, and ‘Some of his collection featured into a solo exhibition at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York’ in D may have been misinterpreted.
- (h) This question was quite well answered with D. C was the most common incorrect choice. In the text it says, ‘That message changed my life’. This sentence might have been misinterpreted by these candidates.
- (i) This question proved challenging for some candidates who selected D, which, unlike the correct response C, does not explain how his collection has changed his life.
- (j) This question was well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly with A. Some incorrectly selected D or C. In text D it says that the letters from the painter Edouard Manet are relatively rare, so they may have misinterpreted ‘rare’ as a synonym for ‘old-fashioned’.

### Exercise 3: Jez Richmond – furniture designer

Candidates responded very well to this note-taking exercise, with many candidates gaining the full nine marks available. Notes could not be credited when they omitted key information or were under the wrong heading. When notes were placed in the wrong section, this indicated that some candidates had not fully understood the requirements of the heading. It is important that notes focus clearly on key ideas that relate to the heading and communicate this as succinctly and accurately as possible, without omitting essential information.

#### *The best ways to come up with ideas:*

This section was very well attempted and there were candidates who correctly provided the five notes required from the possible six options. A few candidates gave responses that were not connected with coming up with ideas in the text such as ‘good advice’ or ‘work part time in a furniture shop’. Others gave responses that should have been placed under the second heading as these were about running a business. These included ‘motivation’, and ‘consider how much people will pay’.

#### *What Jez has learnt about running a business:*

This section was very well attempted, and a significant number of candidates provided the required four correct notes out of a possible five. A few candidates omitted key details from the note. For example, some wrote ‘how much people will pay’, which did not respond to the heading as Jez had learnt to *consider* what people would pay. ‘Make mistakes’ and ‘look through notebook’ were responses given by some candidates that should have been under the first heading. In the context of the text, these were not aspects of running a business.

#### **Exercise 4: Banana farming-becoming more environmentally friendly**

In **Exercise 4**, candidates are required to provide eight discrete, relevant content points. They should aim to express the content of the summary as far as possible in their own words, not exceeding the 120-word limit. Candidates should be encouraged to read the requirements of the summary carefully to ensure the focus is correct. They must also understand the importance of counting the number of words they write. This will ensure they do not lose marks for both Content and Language by exceeding the word limit.

On this task, a significant number of candidates lost both content and language marks because their summary was over 120 words. They should carefully consider whether or not the information included is relevant to the summary topic, and realise there is no need to make the same point twice or to expand upon it unnecessarily.

Candidates were required to write a summary about how one banana farm in Costa Rica is becoming environmentally friendly. A significant number of candidates included at least five of the eleven points available, with some providing the required eight or more. A small number of candidates referred throughout their summary to conventional banana farms only, so no content marks could be awarded. Some candidates referred to a more general way of banana farming in Costa Rica and correct content points were credited. Some candidates only included one or two correct points with mainly irrelevant content, lifting directly from the text, which also affected the language mark significantly.

Regarding content, some candidates lost marks for attempting to make points but expressing them imprecisely or with key information omitted. For example, several candidates wrote ‘the farm does not need to use chemicals to destroy the grasses or flowers’, which could only be credited with one content mark since it was not clearly indicated that the grasses and flowers were not removed. Some points were incomplete as in ‘preventing the soil’. The idea of preventing the soil being washed away had to be communicated. A few candidates incorrectly spelt stem as ‘steam’, writing ‘covering the ground with pieces of steam’, so the point could not be credited. Some candidates gave the example of how plastic was used for a second purpose but did not make it clear that the plastic was being re-used, writing ‘plastic is put around the boxes of bananas’. Neither the original use nor the idea of recycling was mentioned, so that idea could not be credited.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range with most candidates gaining three to six marks. To achieve seven or eight marks (top band) for language, candidates must attempt to use their own words and organize the content points. There were candidates who successfully re-phrased the content ideas, referring, for example, to soil erosion for soil being washed away, or avoiding the use of chemical for not needing chemicals, and to plastic and water being recycled. They also used appropriate and effective cohesive devices and their summaries were clearly organised. Several candidates copied the wording of the content points directly from the text and attempted to link these copied points in various ways. The extent to which they effectively used their own words impacted on the language mark.

It is important that content points remain clear when re-expressed, as marks cannot be awarded if the meaning changes. Practice with verb, noun, and adjective synonyms, along with practice in forming alternative grammatical structures, is beneficial for enabling candidates to access the higher bands.

#### **Exercise 5**

In this exercise, candidates complete an email task based on fulfilling the requirements specified in three bullet points. It is also important that candidates relate the email to the context set in the exercise, in this case to a friend about a trip to the countryside with a nature club. The extent to which the bullet points are addressed and developed within the context will determine the band achieved for content. If any bullet point is not addressed, this has a significant effect on the content mark. For a mark in the higher bands, candidates should demonstrate a good or excellent sense of purpose, whilst developing and effectively communicating the content. Examiners seek to reward candidates who write using an appropriate and consistent register. The mark for language will depend on the accuracy, range and organisation of the language used.

*Email to a friend about a trip to the countryside with a nature club*

#### Content

In general, candidates responded to this task successfully. Some fulfilled the task skilfully and effectively and developed the email to include a range of information and ideas. There were candidates whose emails were less than 150 words, so there was not sufficient development for higher band content marks. Most

candidates addressed all three bullet points, but these were sometimes lacking in detail. Candidates were expected to write an email to a friend telling them about a trip to the countryside with a nature club. They were asked to describe the place where they went, explain what they learnt, and invite their friend to join them next time. Candidates generally used an informal register, though this was not always consistent. For example, phrases such as ‘I would like to *inform* you’ or ‘In conclusion’ are quite formal and may not be appropriate in this kind of email. Candidates interpreted the countryside as mountains, forests, lakes, beaches, farms, and sometimes a smaller, more rural town. Some described the sounds and smells as well as what they could see. Learning often took the form of putting up a tent or lighting a fire, the importance of protecting the environment or the importance of teamwork. The least developed bullet point tended to be the invitation to the friend.

Effective emails connected the content of the email to the recipient, with references to shared experiences or the target reader’s interests, writing for example, ‘From the emails you’ve sent me in the past, I’ve figured you enjoy travelling to various natural locations.’ Such emails were cohesive in how the three bullet points were integrated and began with natural openings that contain interest in some aspect of the recipient’s life, family, or a reference to a shared recent experience, leading into the body of the email. The ending should provide appropriate concluding comments, such as expressing a desire to see or hear from the recipient or conveying good wishes to other members of their family or friends.

### Language

Most candidates wrote using a wide range of well-organised language. There were a few who used mainly simple structures which were more limited in range and accuracy. Some candidates were able to construct accurate sentences of different lengths, which included more complex structures and a range of appropriately used, less common vocabulary. Most emails included paragraphing, which when used appropriately, aided effective organisation of the task.

Language deserving of the higher bands should be very natural, easy for the reader to follow and grammatically correct. There should be an evident range of appropriate vocabulary. An example of such language is, ‘We pulled up in our minivan and everything looked so surreal. The green hills and towering pine trees are so different to the city we live in’. In this example, complex language is used accurately and effectively. There were candidates who attempted more complex language but could not produce this accurately in terms of tenses, punctuation or spelling as in ‘I really wish take one of the pigs. After that we had a camping in the lack.’ Some emails included mainly very short sentences (subject + verb + object), which were accurate, but did not demonstrate a sufficient range of language for the higher bands. There were a few candidates who often used commas instead of full-stops. Candidates should try to ensure language used is accurate, appropriate and demonstrates a range of structures and vocabulary, along with correct punctuation and spelling. Paragraphs should be included to guide the reader.

### **Exercise 6**

In this exercise candidates may be required to write an article, a review, or a report for a particular target audience. It is important that they read the task carefully and consider the two prompts, which are given to help form ideas on the subject. For a mark in one of the higher bands, candidates might include other points and ideas relevant to the task, along with developing the views in the prompts if they choose to, expressing these in their own words. The style and register should be appropriate for the type of task.

#### *Report on a music talent competition*

### Content

Candidates were expected to write a report about a school music talent competition for their teacher. They were provided with two prompts which supplied ideas for candidates who might need them, although they do not have to use these. There was one prompt stating that the prizes were great and another saying that too many candidates chose to sing songs.

Most candidates fulfilled the task with a generally clear sense of purpose and audience, referring to the ideas in the prompts and introducing some of their own. Candidates tended to give a more formal account of the competition. Some focused on applying the style and register of a report, making its aim and target reader clear, writing, for example ‘This report includes what was successful in the competition and how such a competition can be improved in the upcoming years.’ Some candidates included sub-headings, which made the subject matter and organisation clear. A few adopted more of a narrative style or focused on the



advantages and disadvantages of holding a school talent competition. The account was sometimes aimed more at their peers. In such responses, the style and register were only reasonably or generally appropriate.

The most effective responses provided a wider range of information and opinions concerning the competition, not limited to the prompts. Candidates referred to the venue, lighting and sound systems, refreshments, organisation, behaviour of candidates, the quality of performances as well as the prizes and performers choosing to sing. They also mentioned the value of such an event.

Most candidates included both what was successful about the competition and how it could be improved. Sometimes the improvement(s) were inferred by the candidate mentioning what went wrong or negative aspects of the competition. Where one aspect was omitted, the task was not fulfilled, which affected the mark for content.

### Language

The full range of marks was awarded for language, with most candidates attempting some more complex structures and some less common vocabulary. There were candidates who demonstrated a wide range of complex structures with only occasional non-impeding errors, enabling them to achieve the precision required for marks in the top band. Their writing included accurate, varied sentence structures, accurate punctuation, and paragraphing, along with ambitious vocabulary. This quality of language is exemplified in 'Many candidates were looking for an outlet to express their musical talents and the event gave them the perfect platform to do so.' Some candidates attempted more complex language, which included errors as in 'To improve candidates' activation, the competition can also add small games during the break of competition.' In general, most candidates used language with a level of accuracy that included non-impeding errors when attempting more complex structures. To access top band marks, candidates should include a wide range of accurate language that is well organised and sequenced.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT IN SPEAKING)

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Paper 0991/31  
Listening (Core) 31

## Key messages

- Candidates need to be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. Where handwriting cannot be read, no marks can be awarded.
- Candidates should be reminded of the importance of using the correct singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing a response, the intended meaning of the word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. bored/board).
- Candidates should be encouraged to read and listen to the rubric for each part of the paper carefully to ensure they meet the exact requirements of each particular exercise.
- In **Exercise 1**, candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for by identifying the question words, e.g. how, where, when, and the key words in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful. In cases where candidates decide to supply additional information, in addition to the expected key answer, and the extra information is incorrect, such attempts cannot be credited. For this reason, candidates should be encouraged to provide concise answers.
- In the gap-fill **Exercise 2** candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name, etc.) before listening. Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercise 2**, candidates should also be reminded not to include words, or ideas, which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In the multiple matching items, **Exercise 3**, and the multiple-choice items, **Exercise 4**, candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. If there is any uncertainty about which option is intended as the candidate's definitive choice, such attempts may not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it cannot be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4**, if two boxes are ticked rather than one then no marks can be given.

## General comments

- The vast majority of candidates followed the required word limit set out in the rubric of each exercise. However, there were still some candidates who gave their answers as long sentences, especially in **Exercise 1**.
- Most candidates seemed to be aware of the distracting information and did not include this in addition to the correct detail. However, there were still some instances where candidates provided the distracting detail in addition to the expected answer in **Exercises 1** and **2**. Such attempts could not be credited.

- Overall, most candidates dealt relatively well with listening for gist and speakers' opinions, but more practice of listening for correct specific detail is recommended. Listening to longer talks proved challenging to some candidates and learners would benefit from more practice to ensure they can follow, and navigate themselves through, longer texts (e.g. talks and presentations).

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Exercise 1**

Overall, this exercise was well answered. Most marks were lost where candidates selected the distracting detail instead of the correct answer.

#### **Question 1**

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct response 'three weeks'. Several candidates selected the distracting information.
- (b) There was a very mixed response here. A large number of candidates selected 'jewellery' or 'portrait' in error.

#### **Question 2**

- (a) This was very well attempted and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. Some candidates selected the distractor 'sister'.
- (b) There was a mixed level of success here. Incorrect responses included 'shoe shop', 'trainer shop' and 'game shop'.

#### **Question 3**

- (a) This question proved to be challenging. The vast majority of candidates gave the distractor 'cousin'. A few incorrect responses were seen, including 'frind' or 'frend'.
- (b) This question was fairly well attempted though a large number of candidates selected the distractor 'ending'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'story' and 'characteristics'.

#### **Question 4**

- (a) This question was extremely well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. However, some candidates wrote 'Thursday' or 'Thuday' neither of which were credited.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. However, responses such as 'serving tickets' could not be credited.

#### **Exercise 2**

#### **Question 5**

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. In some cases, inaccuracies with singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

- (a) This question was quite well attempted, but responses such as 15<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> could not be credited.
- (b) On the whole, this question was very well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing the singular 'goat' while others wrote 'sheep' and 'cows'.
- (c) There was a mixed level of success here. Many candidates wrote 'reader' while other incorrect responses were 'legal leader', 'chef' and 'farmer'.

- (d) This was fairly well attempted by the majority of candidates. 'Chess' was sometimes written as 'chest', 'cheese' or 'chase'. These attempts could not be credited as the meaning had been changed.
- (e) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates. However, some candidates wrote the singular 'penny university'. Quite a few candidates selected the distractor 'wisdom schools'.
- (f) This was extremely well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Some candidates went for the distractor 'milk' and some misspelt 'tea' and wrote 'tee'. Others wrote '1773'.
- (g) This was generally well attempted. Many candidates went for the distractor 'luggage'. Some of the responses that could not be credited were 'floors', 'seeds' and 'plants'.
- (h) There was a very mixed level of success here. The distractor, '170 billion', was selected as much as the expected response. Some responses that could not be credited were 'thirteen billion' and 'three billion'.

### Exercise 3

#### Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates need to ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

### Exercise 4

#### Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates failed to clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be absolutely no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

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Paper 0991/41  
Listening (Extended) 41

## Key messages

- Candidates need to be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. Where handwriting cannot be read, no marks can be awarded.
- Candidates should be reminded of the importance of using the right singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing a response, the intended meaning of the word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. bored/board).
- Candidates should be encouraged to read and listen to the rubric for each part of the paper carefully to ensure they meet the exact requirements of each particular exercise.
- In **Exercise 1**, candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for by highlighting the question words, e.g. how, where, when, and the key words in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful. In cases where candidates decide to supply additional information, in addition to the expected key answer, and the extra information is incorrect, such attempts cannot be credited. For this reason, candidates should be encouraged to provide concise answers.
- In the gap-fill **Exercise 2** and **Exercise 5**, candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name, etc.) before listening. Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercise 2** and **Exercise 5**, candidates should also be reminded not to include words, or ideas, which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In the multiple matching items, **Exercise 3**, and the multiple-choice items, **Exercise 4**, candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. If there is any uncertainty about which option is intended as the candidate's definitive choice, such attempts may not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it cannot be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4**, if two boxes are ticked rather than one then no marks can be given.

## General comments

- The vast majority of candidates now adhere to the required word limit set out in the rubric of each exercise. However, there are still some candidates who write their answers as long sentences, especially in **Exercise 1**.
- Most candidates seemed to be aware of the distracting information in the listening exercises and did not include these in addition to the correct detail.

- Overall, most candidates dealt with listening for gist and speakers' opinions relatively well, but more practice of listening for correct specific detail is recommended. Listening to longer talks proved challenging to some candidates and learners would benefit from more practice to ensure they can follow, and navigate themselves through, longer texts (e.g. talks and presentations).

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Exercise 1**

Overall this section was well answered.

#### **Question 1**

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct response 'three weeks'. Several candidates selected the distracting information.
- (b) There was a very mixed response here. A large number of candidates selected 'jewellery' or 'portrait' in error.

#### **Question 2**

- (a) This was very well attempted and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. Some candidates selected the distractor 'sister'.
- (b) There was a mixed level of success here. Incorrect responses included 'shoe shop', 'trainer shop' and 'game shop'.

#### **Question 3**

- (a) This question proved to be challenging. The vast majority of candidates gave the distractor 'cousin'. A few incorrect responses were seen, including 'frind' or 'frend'.
- (b) This question was fairly well attempted though a large number of candidates selected the distractor 'ending'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'story' and 'characteristics'.

#### **Question 4**

- (a) This question was extremely well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. However, some candidates wrote 'Tuesday' or 'Thuday' neither of which could not be credited.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. However, responses such as 'serving tickets' could not be credited.

#### **Exercise 2**

#### **Question 5**

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. In some cases, inaccuracies with singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

- (a) This question was quite well attempted but responses such as 15<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> could not be credited.
- (b) On the whole, this question was very well attempted. Some candidates lost the mark by writing the singular 'goat' while others wrote 'sheep' and 'cows'.
- (c) There was a mixed level of success here. Many candidates wrote 'reader' while other incorrect responses included 'legal leader', 'chef' and 'farmer'.

- (d) This was fairly well attempted by the majority of candidates. 'Chess' was sometimes written as 'chest', 'cheese' or 'chase'. These attempts could not be credited as the meaning had been changed.
- (e) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates. However, some candidates wrote the singular 'penny university'. Quite a few candidates selected the distractor 'wisdom schools'.
- (f) This was extremely well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Some candidates went for the distractor 'milk' and some misspelt 'tea' and wrote 'tee', which could not be credited. Others wrote '1773'.
- (g) This was generally well attempted. Many candidates went for the distractor 'luggage'. Some of the responses that could not be credited were 'floors', 'seeds' and 'plants'.
- (h) There was a very mixed level of success here. The distractor, '170 billion', was selected as much as the expected response. Some responses that could not be credited were 'thirteen billion' and 'three billion'.

### Exercise 3

#### Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates need to ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

### Exercise 4

#### Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates failed to clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be absolutely no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

### Exercise 5

#### Question 8

There was a mixed response to this question. Some responses provided were not always a grammatical fit and incorrect singular and plural nouns meant that some candidates could not be credited. There were a few questions that were not attempted by some candidates.

### Part A

- (a) This was quite well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Quite a few responses featured e 'Italy' were not credited.
- (b) This was generally well answered by most candidates. Unsuccessful responses included 'string'.
- (c) This was quite well attempted. Some of the incorrect responses included 'fule', 'light bulb' and 'engine'.
- (d) There was a mixed level of success here. Many candidates went for the distractor 'weight'. Some wrote 'limitation' and could not be credited.
- (e) This was well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Common wrong answers included 'modern cars', 'remote cars' and 'motor bikes'.

**Part B**

- (a) There was a mixed level of success here – responses were fairly evenly divided between the key ‘construction materials’ and the distractor ‘control systems’. Responses that could not be credited included ‘instruction materials’ and ‘structural materials’.
- (b) This was extremely well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Some candidates wrote the singular ‘pilot’, which could not be credited. Other incorrect responses were ‘pilates’ as the meaning was changed and ‘enough pilots’.
- (c) There was a mixed level of success here. Many responses featured the distractor ‘seats’. Other responses that could not be credited were ‘widows’ and ‘screens’.
- (d) There was a mixed level of success here.
- (e) This question was not well attempted. Responses that could not be credited included ‘poverty’ and ‘inequality’.



# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

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Paper 0991/51  
Speaking 51

## Key messages

- Tests were generally well conducted, and most examiners demonstrated an ability to get the best from the candidates.
- The timings for the different parts of the test were generally kept to, although **Part C** was often short, especially when candidates indicated that they were ready to start **Part D**. If a candidate signals readiness to begin before the preparation time is up, they should be reminded to use the time they have left.
- Examiners should read the Teacher's/Examiners Notes before conducting the tests to familiarise themselves with the topic cards and remind themselves of the correct procedure, even if they are familiar with the exam.
- Examiners should engage candidates in a two-way conversation from the outset. They should ask additional questions based on the prompts rather than at the end of the discussion
- Centres should be rigorous in carrying out internal moderation correctly, making sure they moderate across mark ranges and examiners, and showing for which assessment criteria marks have been altered.

## General comments

### **Part A**

This part was well conducted, with most examiners reading out the script in the Teacher's/Examiner's Notes. Some examiners paraphrased the script **Part A**, resulting in important information, such as *'you may keep the card until the end of the test'*, being lost.

### **Part B**

This section was generally well conducted. In most cases the examiner used the general discussion to put candidates at their ease, and in the best examples managed to identify a suitable topic for discussion in **Part D**. If possible, examiners should avoid discussing in detail a topic which could overlap with one of the topic cards.

### **Part C**

**Part C** was the part of the test where timings were least well observed, often resulting in too short a period being allowed for preparation, especially when candidates announced that they were ready to begin **Part D**. Some Examiners insisted on keeping to the recommended timing when this happened, but many did not. Cards often appear to have been chosen in advance, not based on the candidate's interests. Most examiners announced the topic cards and allowed candidates to keep them till the end of the test.

### **Part D**

Most examiners used the given prompts in order and developed the conversation based on ideas emerging from them, clearly listening and responding to what the candidates said. Some examiners only went through the prompts without trying to help candidates to develop the conversation naturally with additional questions..

Not all examiners asked additional open questions to develop the conversation. Some asked questions at the end which were not based on the prompts but were intended to fill the time. Examiners should aim to expand the discussion around the prompts and stretch more able candidates by a change of direction in the conversation. There were many tests that were shorter than five minutes, which might limit candidates' opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

### **Application of the marking criteria**

**Structure** – Most centres accurately marked candidates' performance in this area, though some were slightly too generous in the higher mark range and severe in the lower mark range.

**Vocabulary** – Marking was generally accurate, although some examiners were slightly severe in this area, particularly in the lower mark bands.

**Development and fluency** – Marking was generally accurate, with a tendency towards generosity in the higher mark range and severity in the lower mark range. Some misinterpretation might arise when the examiner assesses more the way the candidate sounds, and the speed of delivery rather than the content being developed. Candidates perform better when they can develop their ideas, show they can sustain a discussion or give reasons for their opinions.

### **Administration**

Recordings were sometimes of poor quality because of the positioning of the microphone (often because it had not been placed close enough to the candidate). This was possibly a consequence of trying to maintain social distancing protocols.

A number of centres had not identified a sufficiently quiet room to hold the tests in; background noise was often intrusive in such cases. Some centres did not select a sample and submitted recordings of all their candidates. Some samples were not representative of the full range of candidate performance.

### **Internal moderation**

Internal moderation must be carried out only if more than one examiner is used at a centre. When candidates' marks have been internally moderated, the change should be indicated on the summary form against each criterion.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Card A – Feeling excited**

This card was frequently chosen and gave candidates the opportunity to use synonyms, expressions of contrast, time phrases, modal verbs and simple narratives. Candidates were able to list events such as a cinema trip, concert, theme park, wedding, football match. More extended answers successfully used connectives, e.g. *'then'*, *'after that'* to describe the sequence of events once the scene was set, as well as intensifiers to describe feelings about the event, *'really amazing'*, *'pretty scary'*. Prompt 2 invited more thoughtful responses ranging from the concrete – sport, decorating homes, visiting friends to the more abstract, e.g. *'you can be happy alone'*. There were well chosen collocations: *'personal experience'*, *'simple gestures'*, *'kind words'*. In Prompt 3, many commented on the freedom and novelty associated with holidays, the break from daily routine and opportunity to experience different cultures, as well as enjoy sunny weather. Prompt 4 elicited appropriate vocabulary, *'optimistic'*, *'consequences'*, *'depressed'*, *'engaged'* and effective phrasing, *'adults tend to overthink, children do not think twice'*. Prompt 5 saw some measured responses using modals and qualifiers as a starting point, e.g. *'That may be the case on some occasions but is not necessarily true all the time'* before going on to expand ideas such as being busy does not necessarily mean being happy.

#### **Card B – Making arrangements**

This card was infrequently chosen. In Prompt 1, candidates talked about a holiday with friends, visiting family, staying over at a friend's house, walks with friends. Prompt 2 was confidently answered by many candidates who used past participles and complex constructions to describe arrangements changed through illness or cancellation, e.g. *'I was waiting for him and he did not turn up because...'* Modal, conditionals and relative clauses were used to explore Prompt 3, e.g. *'It could be that people can not agree on a venue'*, *'If*

*people do not have transport...*. Prompt 4 was well developed with confident use of vocabulary and some excellent phrasing to explore a variety of reasons such as stress, pressure, frustration, budget, over-spending, fear of failure. There was also good use of idiomatic expression to reassure, e.g. *'Two heads are better than one'*. Prompt 5 elicited discussion about various social media platforms and generational differences. Candidates showed familiarity with the language of technology and its impact, e.g. *'online classes'*, *'zoom meetings'*, *'creating a good image'*.

### Card C – Intelligent machines

This card was frequently chosen. It elicited a range of future tenses and subjunctives and sophisticated vocabulary (e.g. *'humanoid'*, *'malfunction'*, *'bots'*). Candidates were able to distinguish between machines that were domestic appliances such as washing machines and those that worked in more commercial settings. Some candidates touched on ideas of robots replacing human activity, e.g. *'robots do not get distracted'*. In Prompt 2, some relished the opportunity for *'an easier life'* and referred to a virtual assistant as a robot who obeys commands. Effective phrasings, such as *'perform many functions'* and *'economically viable'*, showed candidates thinking of possibilities. Others did not wish to rely on robots: *'I like to be productive'*, *'I enjoy physical activity'*, *'Robots in the home can cause us to be lazy and stop thinking for ourselves'*. In Prompt 3, many dismissed the idea of a robot friend as robots lack human connection, warmth and/or compassion. However, there was also consideration and speculative language: *'not for everyone but possibly for...'*, *'could be useful for people in certain circumstances such as disability'*. Responses to Prompt 4 often included conditionals, such as *'I would say so,'* before providing examples: *'especially for older people who live alone or in care homes'*, *'humans get tired, robots do not'*. There were also references to countries that already had advanced technology to use robots as carers. Prompt 5 covered the idea that robots are only as intelligent as the people who program them but also the idea that *'because humans are affected by emotions their decision making can be more flawed'*. Many gave the idea of robots beating humans at chess as indicative of superior robot intelligence in certain fields.

### Card D – Staying at home

This was a very popular topic. Although it was mainly related to present circumstances, stronger candidates used the adverb *'usually'* as a sentence starter and listed routines covering study, helping out at home and relaxations such as listening to music. In Prompt 2, candidates were able to draw directly from their experience of home schooling and online learning to consider both pros and cons. Vocabulary and phrases such as *'lack of distraction'*, *'concentrate better'*, *'not be disturbed'* were balanced against the idea of missing out on working together with other candidates. Strong personal views were expressed: *'I would prefer'*, and comparatives were used to provide reasons for preferences, e.g. *'more comfortable'*, *'more relaxing'*. Jobs were elicited in responses to Prompt 3. In Prompt 4, there was little disagreement with the statement, e.g. *'I've come to realise'*, *'from my experience'*, and *'you have to spend time with family'*. Others gave practical reasons, such as *'You do not have to spend money on accommodation'*. For Prompt 5, practical reasons for leaving home were given, e.g. *'study'*, *'marriage'*. Consideration was given to economic reasons why young people could not leave home at 18, even if they wanted to. There were also emphatic statements, such as *'Not every 18 year old is mature enough'*.

### Card E – Spending money

This card was frequently chosen. The introductory statement provided a good way in, encouraging descriptive adjectives and precise use of language, e.g. *'limited edition shoes'*, *'accessories'*, *'skincare essentials'*, *'spending on necessities'*. More informal language was used around food: *'grabbing myself a snack'*, *'getting something tasty'*. Confident explanations were offered for Prompt 2, e.g. *'it was a bargain'*, *'it was a birthday gift'*. Intensifiers were also used to show personal preferences: *'I really like, I absolutely love this brand'*. For Prompt 3, there was effective use of conditional structures, and vocabulary, such as *'donate'*, *'equipment'*, as well as collocations, such as *'people in need'*, *'abandoned children'*, *'lack of facilities for young people'*, were used to discuss how best to support communities. In Prompt 4, candidates listed the advantages and disadvantages of shopping online, and supported them with detailed explanations, e.g. *'comfort of your home'*, *'click of a mouse'*, *'get carried away'*, *'delivery can add to the cost'*, *'at the mercy of scammers'*. Prompt 5 saw a need for balance and caution: *'It's a great feeling to know you have money but most of my money goes on necessities.'* Idioms, such as *'you need to save for a rainy day'*, suggested many disagreed with the statement.

### Card F – Enjoying art

Examiners frequently chose this card having first established a candidate's interest in the topic from the general discussion in **Part B**. For Prompt 1, most candidates were able to describe a picture in their house, often a childhood drawing, family photograph or poster. Stronger candidates used art-specific vocabulary such as *'modernism'*, *'portrait'*, *'neutral colours'*, *'abstract'*, *'brushstrokes'*, etc. For Prompt 2, most candidates were able to recall a visit to an exhibition and shared vivid memories of what they saw there, although a few had to ask for clarification of this term. Stronger candidates used past tense forms successfully. Prompts 3 and 4 enabled stronger candidates to use conditional structures: *'If you try for the first time, you will make a lot of mistakes'*; *'If all of the people were to enter for free, then how would the museum make money?'* Many gave justifications for potential reasons why anyone can be a successful artist, e.g. *'a hidden talent'*, *'you need to nurture your passion'*, *'with professional training you can pursue your dream'*. Responses to Prompt 5 tended to focus on the time and effort spent on the work of art by the artist as a justification for the high prices paid. Some candidates were able to refer to specific artists and/or works of art.

### Card G – Jewellery

This card was infrequently chosen. For the Prompt 1, candidates talked about using jewellery to boost confidence, as a form of self-expression, or to *'spice up an outfit'*. Many candidates also spoke of wearing jewellery as a family tradition. All candidates were able to name some items of jewellery, such as bracelets, while stronger candidates included vocabulary, such as *'anklets'*, *'bangles'* and *'statement pieces'*. For Prompt 2, most candidates spoke about clothing and make-up. Prompt 3 sparked some interesting conversations about customs and traditions: *'you see girls adorned with headpieces'*, *'covered from head to toe in diamonds'*. Some candidates offered detailed explanations of the importance of jewellery linked to special occasions. Prompts 4 and 5 enabled stronger candidates to use more abstract language to talk about the *'materialistic society'*.

### Card H – Improving fitness

This was one of the most frequently used cards in this set. For Prompts 1 and 2, many candidates spoke about daily routines and/or fitness regimes, describing going to the gym or working out at home. This card elicited a wide range of topic-related vocabulary, such as *'bench pressing'*, *'cardio-vascular'*, *'bulky'*, *'rate of metabolism'* and *'keto diet'*. Most candidates were able to develop Prompt 3 in some detail, often with reference to expectations due to the influence of social media: *'Social media has changed people's perceptions'*. Collocations included *'social anxiety'* and *'unrealistic picture'*. The importance of mental health, as well as physical fitness, was often mentioned in this context. Most elaborated on the benefits of exercise, for example in combating obesity. Some candidates found it challenging to come up with ideas for Prompt 5, although several talked about fitness apps. Stronger candidates used a range of different structures to talk about how technology could help people to stay active.

### Card I – Brothers and sisters

This card was generally chosen when candidates had made some explicit reference to family members in **Part B**. Prompt 1 enabled candidates to relate to their individual contexts, with a range of lexis to talk about relationships with family members, e.g. *'argue'*, *'relate to'*, *'siblings'*, *'get along'*, as well as examples of activities and hobbies they share. Candidates coming from big families dealt with Prompt 3 very confidently, highlighting the impact on both their siblings and parents, e.g. *'look after'*, *'ask for advice'*, *'be overlooked'*, *'have the tendency to'*. This prompt showed some confident use of modal verbs which were then expanded in Prompt 4, e.g. *'I would not be able'*, *'I might be able to'*. Prompt 5 elicited a range of responses, with some candidates pointing out that robots cannot feel emotions and others mentioning their usefulness around the house. It enabled candidates to use some functional language to express disagreement, such as *'it would not cross my mind'*, *'I do not see the point in'*, while referring to the lack of human emotions and bonding.

### Card J – Getting up early

Prompt 2 of this card allowed candidates to demonstrate their usage of past tenses and linking devices, such as *'when'*, *'then'*, *'as soon as'*, *'as a result'*, and often elicited engaging personal anecdotes: *'I did not hear the alarm clock and I missed the flight.'* Several candidates spoke about medical professions or emergency services in responses to Prompt 3: *'They might never know when someone needs medical attention, so they always have to be there'*. Many candidates agreed with the view expressed in Prompt 4: *'If I wake up later, I believe I'll be more attentive'*, although others saw the downside of a later finish to the school day. For Prompt 5, many candidates spoke about the benefits of sleep to mental health.

### Card K – Following fashion

This card was frequently chosen. Candidates were able to name items of clothing and accessories they got in Prompt 1, and many were able to use past simple and present perfect structures in Prompts 2 – 3. The card elicited some high-level vocabulary, with stronger candidates able to use subject-specific vocabulary, such as *'frizzy'* or *'a thrift shopper'*, as well as some good collocations, e.g. *'I got my hair in a ponytail'*; *'doing my hair into a bun'* and phrasal verbs, e.g. *'my mum picked it out for me'*. Prompt 2 allowed candidates to describe change by saying for example, *'I used to have long hair but now it's really short.'* In nearly all responses for Prompt 3, candidates talked about how their taste in music had changed over time and was very different from the music their parents liked. Some good reasons were given for buying expensive clothing in Prompt 4 (durability, better quality, and individuality), but a clear message too to encourage people to wear handmade or second-hand clothes. In Prompt 5, most candidates shared the opinion that it was important for all ages to feel good about what they wore but not necessarily the need to follow the latest fashion. Stronger candidates expressed an opinion that children did not need to be fashionable because they *'would not remember what they wore'*, and some said age did not matter, *'everyone can be fashionable'*.

### Card L – Land or sea

Candidates described a wide range of seaside activities: going to the beach, building sandcastles, playing soccer or volleyball, sailing, swimming and surfing as well as watching the sunset. Prompt 1 generated some interesting vocabulary, e.g. *'it's like a jetpack with water ... it expands with high pressure'*. Responses to Prompt 2 showed that being by the sea with great views and sunsets was more exciting than being inland, but that the seaside could get crowded with too many tourists and the possibility of stormy weather. Exploring and travelling on land was thought to be much easier and enabled the traveller to discover different cultures while to explore the sea required a boat and it was difficult because of the depth of the water and much less comfortable. Prompts 3 – 5 elicited conditionals, relative clauses and passives, e.g. *'animals that are being affected'*. Some candidates talked about seasickness, but others were attracted by tropical islands and unknown species of fish. Candidates were in agreement in Prompt 5 that protecting both the land and the sea were *'equally important'* and this should be done by reducing plastics and controlling pollution.

### Card M – Group activities

This card worked especially well where the examiner had ascertained in the warm-up that the candidate was part of a group e.g. a sporting team and understood team dynamics. Prompts 1 – 2 invited the use of relative clauses. In response to Prompts 2 – 3 many candidates used linking words when listing the advantages and disadvantages of group work and/or other group activities. Prompt 2 allowed candidates to explore the differences between group and independent learning, and many spoke about online learning this year, which allowed them to shift between past and present tenses. When discussing free time activities, candidates were definitely in favour of being in a group because it was more fun while on your own it would be lonely. Prompt 4 asked about using technology for group activities and phones were mentioned as useful tools for research and computers clearly had a role in setting up virtual meetings. For Prompt 5, there was a clear consensus in favour of a group needing a leader. The leader needed to make decisions, take control and help things run smoothly. Stronger candidates went on to discuss the qualities in a leader, suggesting that good leaders were born not made and needed to be trustworthy.

### Card N – Always busy

This card was rarely chosen. Candidates agreed that being busy was stressful and created too much pressure. Some admired their parents for being hardworking. Others talked about needing more time, having to reschedule work or being busier than normal. Some candidates thought that being busy could give you a sense of achievement and said that they *'liked always being on the move'*. Prompts 2 and 3 enabled candidates to use a range of complex sentences and conditionals, e.g. *'at least they've got something to do while their parents are working'*. In responses to Prompt 4, relative clauses were often used, e.g. *'you get overwhelmed by all the work you have to do'*. Stronger candidates used some good collocations, e.g. *'have a lot of stuff on their plate'* or *'get distracted by minor details'*. Parents were seen as good role models, setting high standards. The other side of having busy parents mentioned in many responses was not being able to spend enough time together, e.g. *'I do not get to see my father very often.'* However, some candidates noted the advantage: *'the house is always empty, so we can do what we want.'* Prompt 5 produced general comments on being busy, e.g. *'It's up to you to decide what happens and to make your life interesting!'*

### Card O – Working life

This card gave candidates the opportunity to talk about their future paths. Many candidates demonstrated strong skills in this area. Prompts 2 and 3 enabled candidates to use relative clauses and other complex sentences. Most candidates gave excellent responses to the differences of working alone (*'Your mistakes are yours.'* or within a group (*'People go off task in a team.'*). The third prompt regarding women being better at some jobs than men elicited strong responses, such as *'Women are not as angry as men'* and *'Women are more precise than men'*. There were also some who questioned why either gender should be any better than the other, e.g. *'people should try any job they want.'* In response to Prompt 4, all candidates agreed that work experience was important, as without it, *'you would make mistakes in a job.'* Both Prompts 3 and 4 allowed candidates to demonstrate their skills at using modal verbs. Prompt 5 also elicited some strong responses. Apart from *'exploiting workers'*, most noted that pay should *'depend on the job'* and it would not be fair to pay everyone the same.