

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 0522/01
Reading Passage (Core)

Key Messages

- Candidates are advised to take careful note of the marks allocated to each question as these are a clear indication of the number of distinct points that they will be expected to make in their answers.
- In **Question 1 (g)** and similar questions in future papers it is important to note that each component part of the question requires two separate words in the quotation to be explained (1 mark for each explanation).
- In **Question 1 (h)** and similar questions in future papers, it is important for candidates to understand that they are required to explain the effects achieved by the writer's choice of language and not simply to explain the meaning of the words used as this skill is tested elsewhere in the paper.
- **Question 2** is a Directed Writing task; candidates are expected to ensure that their response is firmly grounded in the stimulus passage and that appropriate details from the passage are included in their answers. Elaboration and development of inferences contained in the passage are necessary for answers reaching the top bands.
- Examiners regularly comment favourably on the linguistic competence of candidates answering **Question 2**. Many would improve their mark for Written Expression if they ensure that full stops are used consistently to separate sentences.

The above points will be considered in greater detail in the following sections of this report.

General comments

Most candidates responded well to this paper, and found the reading passage to be both accessible and of interest. There were some very good responses to both reading and writing tasks and, overall, most candidates showed a sound understanding of the content of the passage on which the questions were based. The most successful clearly appreciated and understood its more demanding aspects. There was very little evidence that candidates were under pressure to complete the paper in the time allowed and nearly all wrote responses of at least adequate length to the Writing task (**Question 2**). Presentation and handwriting were generally of a good standard and the vast majority of responses gave clear evidence that candidates were taking the examination very seriously and were trying their best to do well.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates answered this question correctly and clearly understood why the writer claimed that he was a dentist when talking to Rashid. There were, in fact, three details which could have been mentioned to secure the two marks available: the writer was *tired of people repeatedly asking him personal questions* and consequently *made up some fictional details*. Less successful responses tended to result from less than careful reading of this opening section and stated that he really was a dentist and wanted to treat Rashid's toothache. A small number of candidates appeared to think that the writer and Rashid were one and the same person which resulted in answers which were somewhat confused.

- (b) This straightforward question was also answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates who identified that the carriage was so comfortable because it was heavily built and, therefore, stable.
- (c) Many candidates achieved both marks that were available for this question by correctly identifying two of the reasons why the writer was disappointed that his trip would be so short. The relevant details were that the train was comfortable; the writer had everything he needed in his compartment; he had the choice whether to be alone or to seek company. The less successful responses illustrated the importance of the need to read questions carefully. Some candidates claimed that he was disappointed 'because the trip was so short' which simply repeated the wording of the question, while others appeared to think that the writer was disappointed with the journey itself, usually giving as the reason that the writer had no-one to talk to which showed some serious misunderstanding.
- (d) Again, a pleasing number of candidates achieved both available marks for this question by correctly selecting the relevant details that travelling on ships requires passengers to be sociable, whereas nothing is required of the train passenger. This ability to select the precise details required by the question is evidence of good comprehension skills and shows that the question had been clearly understood. Less successful responses came from candidates who either gave the first of the points, relating to passengers on ships, but did not mention the corresponding detail about train passengers or from those who, despite identifying the correct area of the passage, obscured their responses by writing about travelling by aeroplane or car without focusing clearly on the specific requirements of the question.
- (e) In order to score all three marks available for this question it was important for candidates both to extract the relevant points from the appropriate section of the passage and also to express them in their own words in order to relate them to the particular focus of the question. Most candidates stated correctly that what the writer found attractive about travelling in a sleeping car was that doing so allowed him complete privacy. Many candidates also understood that another reason for the attractiveness of travelling in this way was to do with the views from the window of the compartment. What discriminated the most successful responses to this question was the ability to explain clearly that one of the pleasures provided by the view from the window was that it was continuously changing as the train moved through different scenery whereas a further pleasure was that the effect of the view from the window was to enhance the life of the person within the sleeper who was looking at it. Although this was a challenging question, there were some candidates who successfully gained all three marks for it.
- (f) Most candidates successfully identified one of the two phrases ('getting greener as they rose' and 'pistachio-green') which were used to emphasise the colour of the parrots. Reasons for not scoring the mark were usually either because the candidate chose only one word ('green') or opted to write the whole of the sentence containing the correct phrase without indicating which were the appropriate words.
- (g) As mentioned in the 'Key Messages' section at the beginning of this report, it is important that candidates give explanations for two expressions in each sub-section of this question in order to gain both marks available for it. Consequently, for (i) it was necessary to show an understanding of both the words 'nagging' and 'evasive'. Many candidates gave a clear explanation of the former but fewer successfully explained 'evasive', although those who stated that it showed that the writer wanted to avoid the questions were rewarded. Sub-section (ii) proved to be more challenging as candidates did not focus sufficiently clearly on the requirements of the question and apparently did not realise that it was necessary to explain both 'vehicle' and 'allows residence'. Only a small number successfully stated that the writer felt that he was in 'a conveyance/train in which he could live as if at home'. Similarly, (iii) proved a challenging question; a pleasing number understood that 'edited' had the sense of something that had been revised or cut but fewer successfully explained that a 'travelogue' was a film or television programme related to travel.

- (h) This question referred candidates to a specific section of the passage and asked them to choose three short *phrases* and explain how each created a picture of village life. It is important for candidates to understand that this question (and similar questions in future papers) is intended to assess their appreciation of the way writers use language in order to create effects in the reader's mind. Candidates are rewarded with one mark for selecting an appropriate phrase (it should be noted that description of the parrots, for example, was not appropriate as it was not describing *village* life) and a further mark for convincingly explaining *how* the writer's choice of words furthers this description. A key skill in answering this type of question is to be able to select three phrases which do not all invite the same explanation – thus a candidate who chose 'sorting fruit', 'folding clothes' and 'mending a roof' would score three marks (one for each phrase chosen) but would be likely to score only one explanation mark as it would be difficult to say anything other than 'this phrase shows how busy people are in their everyday village activities' for each one. However, if the three choices were, for example, 'grass huts and cardboard shelters', 'everyone was in motion' and 'preparing rice fields for planting' then finding three discrete explanations would be considerably easier. For example, the first of these phrases could be explained by focusing on the insight given into the living conditions in the village; the second could be explained by reference to the communal working activities and the third could mention the subsistence farming lifestyle of the inhabitants. Many candidates scored all three marks for choosing appropriate phrases; only a small number achieved more than one further mark for their explanations.
- (i) Seven marks were available for this summary question; candidates were required to refer to the whole passage and state what the writer enjoyed about his journey on the Khyber Mail train. The question produced a very wide range of scores. The most successful responses came from those who were able to adopt a clear overview of the passage and select the key points of the writer's experience; less successful responses discriminated less effectively between what was directly relevant to the answer and what was simply elaboration of a point already made. For example, it was fully correct to state that the writer enjoyed the fact that he had everything he needed on the train; it was not necessary, however, to continue by detailing all of the facilities of his compartment that contributed to this. Those preparing to take this examination in future years are advised to concentrate on developing their reading and selection skills in order to achieve to their full potential on this question. There were, in fact, eleven points that might have been made as follow:
- (1) The comfortable carriage/slept well/well upholstered seat
 - (2) The comparative emptiness of the train
 - (3) He had everything he needed/all the features (the list of items from the passage)
 - (4) He could be alone/talk to other people if he wanted
 - (5) The feeling of being at home (in residence)
 - (6) The chance to have dinner on the train
 - (7) The fact that the journey would be prolonged as the train would be late
 - (8) The breakfast/omelette with tea and toast
 - (9) The chance to read a book
 - (10) The ever-changing landscape
 - (11) Seeing the (village) life/views of the countryside

Centres should note that the final three questions described above carry 19 of the 30 marks available for the Reading section of this paper and are advised to ensure that their candidates practise carefully the skills required to answer them effectively.

Question 2

As mentioned in the Key Messages section of this report, **Question 2** on this paper is a Directed Writing task and requires candidates not just to demonstrate their linguistic competence but also their understanding of the reading passage and, in particular, of the inferential points contained in it. As has been the case in previous sessions, candidates, in general, produced written work of a good standard in their responses to this question. Most adopted an appropriate tone for writing to an older relative and took into account the requirement to make suggestions as to why the recipient of the letter would enjoy visiting Pakistan. The letter format was generally well adhered to, although in some cases the valediction was in an inappropriately formal register ('yours faithfully') and not in keeping with the tone of the rest of the letter.

Most candidates wrote with understanding of the writer's feelings about his train journey and repeated salient points such as the comfort of the compartment and the vivid pictures of the lives of the country's inhabitants as seen through the train window. The most successful responses elaborated perceptively on details from the passage, in particular commenting on the difference between the lives of those observed by the writer and his own circumstances. Such responses also picked up convincingly on the comments about the inquisitiveness of the people the writer met but linked this with comments about their friendliness and willingness to help. They also wrote lyrically about the beauties of the natural world as observed during the train journey.

Less successful responses tended either to be over-reliant on the words of the original passage and repeated rather than elaborated and developed on them, or misunderstood the purpose of the question and wrote in imaginative detail about things such as Lahore night clubs and hotels that were not mentioned by the writer. Although such responses could not be highly rewarded in the Content mark, many of them did, however, score well for Written Expression.

In general, Written Expression was at least satisfactory and, in many cases, very good. As well as adopting an appropriate tone (as mentioned above) many candidates wrote stylishly, with carefully chosen vocabulary and secure control of sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. A substantial minority of responses achieved marks in the top band for Written Expression. Many of those which did not, nevertheless, showed positive merits of vocabulary and structure but limited their achievement by making errors in punctuation (especially in the use of the full stop to separate sentences) and the spelling of straightforward vocabulary. Those taking the examination in future years are advised to concentrate on ensuring that the basics of English expression are secure, as all the evidence suggests that candidates for this paper have the ability to score highly on this section.

In conclusion, this proved to be a successful paper which allowed candidates to produce work of a satisfactory to good quality and Centres are to be congratulated on the performance of their candidates.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 0522/02
Reading Passages (Extended)

Key messages

This paper was mainly assessed for reading (40 marks), although there were 10 marks available for writing; 5 marks in **Question 1** and 5 marks in **Question 3**. The requirements for doing well were to:

- give equal attention to all sections of the question
- explain points briefly, but in sufficient detail to show their significance in the context
- use your own words where appropriate; do not copy whole phrases from the original
- be careful to give only information that is focused on the question
- only make a point once
- give thought to the structure and sequence of the material in the response
- adopt a suitable voice and register for the task
- pay attention to length.

Key messages about how candidates can improve their performance for each of the three types of questions will be considered in greater detail below.

General comments

This paper was similar in difficulty to last year's paper and produced a similar standard of response to all three questions, which covered a wide range. Candidates appeared to find both passages equally accessible. Candidates wishing to score high marks should work hard to build up a wide, appropriate vocabulary, both to express themselves and to understand the words used in the reading passages. It is important that candidates shape the material to fit the purpose of the questions. There did not seem to be any common misunderstandings of the passages, but many candidates found it difficult to develop and assimilate the material for **Question 1**.

For **Question 1** and **Question 2**, to achieve marks in the top band, responses should modify both the language and structure of the passage, as called for by the nature of the questions.

In **Question 3** most candidates managed to earn a mark in double figures by finding a reasonable number of points, but many responses contained examples of lifting rather than the use of own words, and there was an increase in the number of candidates who copied whole phrases and sentences from the passages. It is important that they use their own words to demonstrate that they understand the wording of the original. They should remember that it is easy to locate and copy material, but more difficult to select and adapt it to the question and to the genre in which they are writing.

While quality is more important than quantity on this paper, there needs to be enough of a response to meet the top band descriptors. There were responses which were brief, and much shorter than the specified length. One side of writing is not enough to fulfil the requirements of a three-part question (for example, **Question 1**). It is essential that the skills of selection and modification are demonstrated in all three questions. In addition, there needs to be a strong focus on the actual wording of the questions. The importance of planning cannot therefore be overemphasised; checking is also advisable, as marks can be lost through slips of the pen which suggest basic misunderstanding, e.g. getting the characters' names the wrong way round. On the other hand, candidates need to ensure that the planning has not been overdone, as this can result in a rushed response which does not include the full amount of content as in the original plan. Examiners do not mark the plans but the responses.

While there was no evidence that candidates were unable to finish their answers in the time given, those who allowed enough time to prepare their answers to the third question were at an advantage. The second half of a response to a question was often noticeably shorter than the first, and contained more copying from the

passage. Candidates could be advised to read passage B after answering the two questions on passage A; there was evidence in **Question 1** of use of material from the wrong passage, which could not be credited. It was also again confirmed that candidates who did the questions in a different order from that of the question paper did not gain any advantage.

Most candidates answered their questions in appropriate English. There were no marks given for accuracy in this paper, although some candidates' work was affected by unclear or limited style. Most candidates wrote in a dark coloured pen in legible handwriting.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1: Imagine that you are James. Write an entry in your journal, intended to be read by members of your family when you get home. In your journal entry you should explain how you feel in this environment; comment on your relationship with Redmond; express your thoughts about the next few days of this adventure.

(20 marks)

Some candidates wrote excellent journal entries. It was clear that they understood the need to give James a convincing attitude, one of grudging tolerance and even admiration for the scenery and his companion, and a suitable and plausible voice for a reader and poet. The most successful responses were able to include subtlety, sarcasm and humour, reflecting the tone of the passage and revealing an understanding of the relationship. Better responses were able to explore the idea of James considering Redmond to be 'absurd', rather than just including the word in their answer. The fact that James had to be persuaded to join Redmond was crucial to an understanding of the situation and the nature of the friendship. It is worth noting that information given in the introduction to passages should be read, and utilised where relevant.

Less confident responses needed to focus on the content of the task and adaptation of the material. In such cases the first section contained either long descriptions of the surroundings, often copied from the passage and written in a narrative style, or said very little about James' feelings. Some were interspersed with comments about being amazed or bored or threatened, but these needed to be integrated with detail or supported by relevant references, and were not therefore convincing. There was generally a lot of mechanical use of the passage, putting the reading mark into band 3. Some first sections required cohesion or organisation of details and thoughts. Most made reference to James being a reader or writer of poetry, but these points should have been developed later. Many of these responses would have benefitted from reflecting on James' annoyance. They often mentioned simple enthusiasm and so made the trip seem to be one of unalloyed pleasure. More sophisticated responses allowed his feelings and tone to change during the course of the entry, so that by the end he was either looking forward to or dreading what was to come. Nearly all candidates were able to at least hint at characterisation and convey some sense of the relationship between the two very different types of men.

Weak answers needed to make greater reference to James' feelings as they simply re-told the stages of the journey and re-iterated the descriptions of the landscape without making anything of them. They needed to maintain focus on the question – instead they drifted away from the passage, in response to bulleted points two and three, into speculations on the history of the men's relationship, and on what they might do during the next few days. In weak responses the voice needed to be convincing, rather than have James using unlikely colloquial language, such as 'having a blast', 'guy' and 'brilliant'. Another feature of weaker responses was the requirement to provide a convincing ending to the entry; this tended to take the form of addressing members of James' family, as if believing that the response was in the form of a letter. There was also a tendency to adopt a narrative style, as if re-telling the journey in its entirety to a listener.

In the judgement on quality of writing, use of voice is an important aspect. Many candidates attempted to use an appropriate voice, though there was opportunity for more candidates to capture the personality of James. Many showed him to be enthusiastic, but few showed him to be irritated or grudgingly admiring. Most responses were organised effectively, but sometimes responses to the first bullet point would have been better not included in the last section to aid clarity. There were some candidates who wrote as Redmond rather than James, or thought that James was the one steering the canoe. Weaker responses needed to have made something of James being persuaded to come along, or of the ambivalent attitude he had towards Redmond – one of irritation at being interrupted and threatened with crocodiles, mixed with admiration for Redmond's knowledge and skills, including his management of the canoe in difficult waters. Though it clearly stated in the task 'You are James', some candidates became Redmond instead, or moved between the two viewpoints, and talked about James sitting doing nothing but reading poems in the canoe.

Other candidates changed the context, adding other members of the party and referring to a flotilla of canoes.

Most of the marks for this question were given for showing understanding of the passage and for using ideas within the framework of the response. It was not possible to use all the details from the passage in the space available, but good responses managed to include all the main ones, to do with appearance and behaviour of the environment and of the characters. In good answers, references to what has already happened and has been said were the basis of expectations and views about the future. Points for the three bullets were effectively interwoven in the best responses, although it was logical to leave the third bullet to the end.

In less good answers, they needed to avoid copying whole phrases and sentences from the passage; sometimes several lines were lifted with virtually no changes in the wording. The more the content of the passage was adapted to the genre and focus of the question, the more likely it was that the mark for reading would be high. The task stated that the response should consist of 'an entry', but some candidates took that to mean a series of entries as for a personal diary, which led to some fragmentation of ideas and a lack of development of them. Weaker candidates needed to improve the structure and sequence for their response: for example a response may move without transition from horror to delight, boredom to amazement, fear to relaxation, in response to bullet one; and from annoyance to admiration in response to bullet two; and in response to bullet three they wrote a continuation of a reflection on what has already happened instead of a prediction of the future.

In response to bullet two, responses often made general comments about Redmond being a fine fellow, or said that the men hardly spoke and did not have a lot in common, but required an explanation. Some of the material required modification; Redmond's warnings and James' ritual of going through the rapids were the areas of the passage most prone to lifting. Better responses referred to Redmond's knowledge, skill and enthusiasm, giving examples. They also commented that he was very kind for giving warning of the rapids, or scoffed at his comments about crocodiles. Good candidates made something of the implied difference in character of the two men, one an outdoors and one an indoors type, making it clear how this would affect their perceptions and enjoyment of the experience they were sharing. Effective answers to this bullet often managed to include references to their likely different attitudes to poetry, as well as to rapids and crocodiles. This section required an interpretation of the relationship as demonstrated in the passage. Hypothetical comments about how long they had known each other and to manufactured histories, e.g. that they were friends at university or recently reunited long-lost brothers, could not be credited. The inference is that James was persuaded by Redmond to agree to the trip with the promise of receiving inspiration for his poetry. Although a significant minority of candidates picked up on the word 'absurd' and used it, very few explained what it meant and why James thought it an appropriate description for Redmond.

The response to bullet three was the least well developed, and needed to be addressed in some cases. For a mark in band 1 or band 2 to be awarded, all three sections should be tackled, and in some detail. Better responses commented on being inspired to write poetry, the likelihood of meeting more wild animals, and the need to have a rest. The majority of responses referred to more of the same: getting wet and being bored. Few mentioned the hiding of the petrol can, the return downstream, that the upper level of the river will be much rougher, that they might meet crocodiles, or that James is going to run out of reading material. Some responses referred to an attempt to get on better with each other and the possible development of the relationship. No credit could be given for responses which talked about setting up camp, collecting specimens and meeting the natives as the ideas were not initiated from a reading of the passage.

Key messages

Key ways candidates can improve their performance on this type of answer:

- Answer all parts of the question.
- Answer in your own words and adapt material from the passage to the type of answer you are writing.
- Be aware of the main issues and themes in the passage and use plenty of detail to support your ideas.
- If you are writing as a character from the passage, try to create a personality and a voice which shows your understanding of what you have read.

Question 2: Re-read the descriptions of (a) the trees and the undergrowth in paragraph 2, and (b) the monitor lizard and the Brahminy kite in paragraph 4. Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.

(10 marks)

In order to gain marks in the top band, it is important that there is a focus at word level, and to carefully consider the choice of words chosen to fit the specifics of the question. There was evidence of candidates across the mark range sometimes picking wrong choices, for example, those which referred to the river rather than to the vegetation in paragraph 2. Generally the second half of the question was answered better than the first, and nearly all responses said something about the image of the lizard's 'dinosauric eyes', though this was often limited to saying that they were 'scary' rather than exploring the connotations of dinosaurs in the context of a 'primeval forest'. Many candidates did not understand the meaning of 'parasitic', assuming it to refer to animal rather than vegetable matter.

The first level of approach was to identify words that had an extra layer of meaning, and the second level was to be able to explain why the writer used them. An example from paragraph 2 was the phrase 'as thick as legs'. Weaker responses quoted it or said vaguely that it meant the creepers were large, often repeating the word 'thick'. Repeating language of the passage can gain no credit as understanding is not thereby demonstrated. Better responses realised that the image evoked not only the huge and unnatural size of the plants but that there was something dynamic and competitive about the vegetation in the jungle, which 'gripped' and 'sprouted', 'tangled' and 'twined'. The primary effect of the paragraph is one of 'chaos', from which one of dominance and threat can be inferred, and one which could cause a feeling of imprisonment or suffocation in an observer in a tiny canoe in the middle of it.

It was a noticeable feature of the responses to this question that they were often longer than **Question 1** responses, which should not be the case given the relative weighting of marks. On the other hand, less than a full page of writing is unlikely to produce a range of choices, with their explanatory meanings and effects, for each half of the question. There seemed to be fewer choices offered this time. The mark scheme refers to 'a number of words and phrases ... in both parts' and that these need to include images for the higher bands. Just one or two choices from each paragraph are not therefore sufficient; the response would be considered to be 'thin' and therefore given a mark in band 5. Some candidates seemed to have deliberately limited themselves to only three choices for each section, though there are more than twice as many possible appropriate choices from each paragraph. It is useful when responses offer a summary overview of the combined effect of the language of the paragraph, but this is not a substitute for analysis at word level. This question does not require or reward a response in the form of a commentary, which simply goes through the paragraph making general comments on everything in it without selection or detailed interpretation of individual words.

For **section (a)**, a few responses provided individual words and short phrases and treated them separately. Meanings were usually attempted, but there were few specific explanations of effects. There were overviews that showed an understanding of the abundance of trees and the overall visual or psychological effect of this, but often they needed to be supported by specific words or phrases, or even linked to the examples previously given. That the trees are 60-metres high is a factual description and not in itself a worthy choice of evocative use of vocabulary. Few responses explained 'fanned' or 'gripped' or 'tangled' in the context of the passage. It is not likely that the creepers being 'as thick as legs' is an example of exaggeration, though many claimed that it was. Many answers needed to move away from containing lists of choices or long quotations followed by general comments.

Section (b) responses often referred to the theme of watching – even mentioning the name of the type of lizard in support of this – but it would have been beneficial if their selections sustained the idea. Some candidates needed to select specific words or phrases; and some needed to make a comment and give an example so that the response could be rewarded for selection.

There was evidence of candidates using a grid format for their response to this question. This is not recommended as it tends to reduce the choices to single words rather than the whole of the phrase, and the effects column often simply repeats the information in the meanings column, rather than taking it the necessary step further. Additionally, the response reads like a list rather than continuous, developed prose.

As always, good answers took opportunities to explore words and phrases while less good answers provided literal meanings. For example, good candidates looked at the word 'soared' in paragraph 4, defined it as flying quickly upwards, and then linked it to the ideas of not only power, pride and majesty, but to the enjoyment of a freedom of space denied to the humans below. They also identified the word 'crowded' in paragraph 2 as indicating not only the large number of trees and their closeness to each other, but as

suggesting a rather overwhelming proximity to the water's edge and to the men in the canoe, as if the trees were moving towards them. This could be connected through overview to the idea of the closing in of the river, although the latter was not accepted as a relevant choice since it referred to the river rather than to the vegetation.

The following answer includes eight selected quotations for each section, and these would be more than sufficient for the award of the top mark, provided that the quality of the explanation was high and consistent enough. These sample answers are given so that candidates can understand what constitutes an appropriate response to the question.

(a) the trees and the undergrowth in paragraph 2

The writer conveys the idea of chaotic jungle growth, with everything tangled together and in a state of movement. It is not a place which respects order or which leaves any room for humans. The size and strength of everything is intimidating. 'Crowded' is an image of random and concerted movement, evoking a picture of a mob of people, and the idea of lack of control reinforces the reference to 'chaos'. The 'uniform glare' of the sun contrasts with the colour range of 'every kind of green' and suggests that the vivid vegetation cannot be diminished even by the forbidding sun. The weeds and fungi which 'sprouted' and the way the ferns 'fanned out' are movement verbs indicative of the spontaneity and richness of plant life in the forest, and the opportunistic way in which it takes over all available space. There is something rather sinister about the 'parasitic growths' and the creepers 'as thick as legs' which, like the way in which the creepers 'gripped' and 'tangled', suggests a wrestling for position and for the resources of water and light between the different plants, a battle for the survival of the fittest.

(b) the monitor lizard and the Brahminy kite in paragraph 4

There is a recurring sense of movement and of being watched in this paragraph; both creatures seem to be checking out James and Redmond to see if they are threatening. The lizard 'reared up' in order to get a better look and also to make it look taller and more imposing. Its 'dinosauric eyes' remind us that lizards are reptiles similar in appearance to their much larger extinct relatives, who haunted the forests in prehistoric times and were a cause of fear to other creatures. The fact that it then 'scuttled' away is almost comic in its bathos, as this verb of quick movement is normally associated with small animals and even insects. The 'rush of air' caused by the flight of the kite stresses its nearness to the men, since they are able to hear and feel it, and this idea, coupled with the fact that it 'circled overhead', makes clear that it has them under surveillance, and even that it is treating them as potential prey. It's 'mewing' and high-pitched 'shrill' call would not sound welcoming. There is something dismissive and superior about the way it powerfully and effortlessly 'soared away', with a purposefulness which echoes that of the scuttling of the lizard. The ability of the sun to make its flecked-brown belly appear 'white' is another reference to the power of the tropical sun mentioned in paragraph two, and this time it is able to change the colour of that which its rays fall upon, as if it has a bleaching effect.

Key messages

Key ways candidates can improve their performance on this type of answer:

- Your first task is to choose some words and phrases that seem special to you. Do not write out whole sentences but use single words or phrases of two or three words. Do not write out the beginning and end of a long quotation with the key words missing from the middle.
- Treat each of your choices separately and do not either present them as a list or give a general comment which applies to all of them.
- If you are not sure about explaining effects, try to at least give a meaning for each of your choices. That can give you half marks for the question.
- When you explain effects, think of what the reader imagines when reading the word or phrase. It may suggest more than one thing.
- Learn to recognise images and explain them (but you do not need to know or to give their technical names). Say what they literally mean, in this context, and then explain why they have been used in the passage.
- Avoid general comments such as 'the writer makes you feel that you are really there' or 'this is a very descriptive phrase'. Such comments will not earn any marks at all.

Question 3: Summarise (a) the problems that animals have in living in the Amazon rainforest and the ways in which they adapt themselves, according to Passage B; and (b) the description of the river in Passage A.

(20 marks)

To answer this question successfully candidates needed to identify 15 points that were relevant to the question and to present them succinctly in their own words. They are reminded that this is an exercise in informative writing, which should be clear and to the point. There were 23 possible answers in the mark scheme, which gave candidates a generous leeway. This was the highest-scoring question for many of the candidates. Most candidates were aware of the appropriate form, style and tone for a summary.

Good answers were the result of a methodical reading of both of the passages. There was evidence that some candidates had made notes, although sometimes these contained items that were so similar to each other that the points could not score twice. For example, Passage A mentions various obstructions to be found in the river, but there was only one mark for this item. Good summaries avoided repetition, for instance of the fact that the river was not straight. While it was perfectly in order to give the points in the order in which they appeared in the passage, good candidates changed the sequence so that related points could be grouped together. For example, in Passage B the flooded forest floor goes logically with the need of birds to perch high up to avoid it.

Responses generally found it easy to provide relevant material from both passages and picked up a reasonable number of marks in both sections, although points 7, 15 and 23 in the mark scheme were rarely offered. Weaker responses were list-like and needed to attempt to use their own words. Candidates needed to avoid long explanations. For example, in Passage B the final paragraph contains only one point within the long description, and all that needed to be said was that monkeys have developed a tail which enables them to swing through trees. There was also a long section in Passage A about the river going uphill which could be simply summarised, using own words to show understanding, that it was powerful. The least good answers were those that simply copied parts of this explanation out, and close paraphrases were slightly better.

Such detailed explanations tended to not only reduce the amount of space available for dealing with other points, but also to make the summary as a whole longer than the permitted length of one side. There were frequent examples of overlong summaries, and therefore of low writing marks for this question. Candidates need to be advised about the reduction of writing marks for excessive length, and that if the response is 'excessively long' (i.e. more than a page and a half of average handwriting), they are likely to score 0 marks for writing. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the material included and to the language in which it is expressed: concision, clarity, focus, fluency and own words are descriptors for the higher writing bands.

One of the weaknesses of the answers this session was the amount of copying from the original passages. From Passage B the information about the pacas and the frogs was often copied word for word, and therefore no understanding was demonstrated; there was also much copying of 'fifth limb' and 'aquatic marsupial', examples of wording that needed to be changed. On the other hand, in Passage A 'rapids', 'whirlpools', 'camouflage' and 'mates', technical terms which have no close synonym, need not have been paraphrased. There were some colloquial interpretations of 'mates', whereby responses explained that the animals were not able to recognise their friends. **Section (b)** asked about the river only, yet many responses included varying amounts of comment on the vegetation on the banks, especially at the beginning. Other extraneous points were sometimes made in **section (b)**, for example that there were lesser fish-eagles flying over the river. This reduced the likelihood of scoring full marks not only for the reading but also for the writing, as the focus was thereby lost. It was also important to distinguish between the different stages of the river, as the characteristics changed as the journey progressed upstream. **Section (a)** was generally better done than **section (b)**; this half of the question was less likely to be either generalised, listed or copied.

Weaker responses were commentaries and narratives, and needed to change at least the persona and tense of the passages, but also their style. Better responses avoided including introductory statements and making comments, and concentrated on giving an informative summary. They also followed the instruction to write about one side in total. Some candidates with very small handwriting clearly wrote at too great a length, even though their answers fitted onto a page. Average handwriting is assumed to be an average of eight or nine words to a line; small handwriting and word-processing can fit as many as 15 words onto a line, and this must obviously be taken into account.

Higher marks for writing are awarded where the sentences are fluent and varied, and enough information is given about the points to convey each one clearly. Those candidates who wrote summaries concisely and without long explanations or repetition, and in their own words, scored the whole five marks for aspects of

writing. Better responses were specific about what exactly the problems were in Passage A, making it clear that camouflage in this context was a negative and not a positive factor, and that the reason why large animals are at a disadvantage is that they cannot move easily, not that they cannot hide. For point 6 to be awarded it was necessary to be precise that it was humans and not other animals which preyed on the pacas. Checking after writing is crucial, as sometimes responses said the opposite of what they intended, for instance by writing about small animals when they meant large ones.

When reading the following specimen answer, candidates should note that the points are explained simply and as clearly as possible. They are also transformed into the writer's own words, and the answer, if handwritten, would fit onto a side of paper with space to spare.

Section (a), Passage B

Large animals cannot move easily through the forest, and for survival they also need access to a water source. Camouflage reduces the ability of animals to recognise their mate, and they have to avoid moving during the day as they may be killed by hunters. At night the animals can communicate by making signalling noises. Because the forest floor is flooded, beetles use their claws to hold on to leaves in trees, and birds have also learned to perch on branches using their long claws. Opossums have developed webbed feet, while frogs lay their eggs in flowers as the river water is too swift-moving. Monkeys are able to swing through the trees by gripping branches with their sensitive tails.

Section (b), Passage A

The twisting river seems to close in behind them as they travel upstream. It is fast-moving with a strong current seemingly capable of driving a boat uphill. It is joined by smaller rivers, and contains rocky obstacles of various kinds, as well as whirlpools. Beyond these the water is clear, reflecting the overhanging vegetation. Rapids occur more often as they progress upstream, and the waves become stronger. It is possible that the river contains crocodiles.

Key messages

Key ways candidates can improve their performance on this type of answer:

- Give equal attention and focus to both sections of the response.
- Explain points briefly, but in sufficient detail to show what they mean in the context.
- Do not copy whole phrases from the original.
- Write no more than one side of average handwriting.
- Write informatively and never comment on the content of the passage
- Be careful to give only information that is focused on the question.
- Make a point only once.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 0522/03

Directed Writing and Composition

Key messages

This paper was mainly assessed for writing (40 marks), although there were ten marks available for reading in **Question 1**. The requirements for doing well were to:

- write with a specific audience in mind and to adapt content and style to that audience
- structure each answer overall and to sequence sentences in well-formed individual paragraphs
- create credible and effective arguments and to write descriptions and stories that were realistic, original and engaging in their content
- write in a variety of well-formed sentence types, including complex sentences
- use a wide range of effective and appropriate vocabulary.

General comments

Many of the scripts were well written in an assured and fluent style. Ideas and arguments were presented in paragraphs that were well sequenced and of an appropriate length. There was consistent evidence of varied sentence structures and a wide range of vocabulary. The best responses made minor and infrequent errors.

At a lower level, there were many examples of inadequate punctuation. In particular, sentences, which were often short, were punctuated by commas instead of full stops, and commas were not used correctly within complex sentences. A few responses rarely included any full stops at all. In general, candidates who did not punctuate correctly lost marks for style and accuracy.

Some candidates were allowed to word process their responses. It was noted that in some cases the number of errors was greater than it would have been in a handwritten script. This was due to typing errors and the lack of proof reading.

Question 1 was generally done well. All candidates made an attempt to read the passage and to use some of the material, and the best candidates read accurately and were able to deal with some of the seemingly contradictory statements. The bad practice of copying from the passage was far less prevalent than in previous sessions and there were more examples of using and evaluating the information rather than reproducing it.

The content of some of the compositions was very good or even outstanding. The best of the arguments were carefully thought out and often original, while descriptions gave the reader the impression that they were of real places and events. The same was true of the narratives.

At a lower level, candidates needed to be sure that they had enough varied arguments to write their responses to **Question 2**. They also needed to write realistic descriptions and to be careful not to use so much descriptive vocabulary that the effect was one of overloading and the clarity was lost. Stories needed to consist of realistic events and to include enough description of characters and settings to create an engaging picture in the reader's mind.

Most candidates took the advice given about the length of their answers. Some answers to **Question 1** were quite long; there was much that could be argued and evaluated in this task. In rare cases, candidates spent too much time on the question and the quality of their composition suffered as a result. Only the very best candidates were able to sustain the quality of their compositions over an excessive length. This arose in some narratives where there were too many events to handle. Generally, the quality of the story telling and the use of language faltered at the end.

Many of the scripts were presented in easily readable handwriting, but some, even from high quality candidates, required improvement in clarity.

Section 1: Directed Writing

Question 1: Imagine that your aunt and uncle are considering educating your cousin, a spoilt only child, at home and have asked for your opinions. Write a letter to them in which you should explain the advantages of being home schooled, the reasons why home-schooling may not be advisable and why you would or would not recommend home-schooling for your cousin. Base your letter on the fact file and the magazine article. Be careful to use your own words.

(25 marks)

25 marks were available for this question, of which 15 were for the quality of the writing and 10 for the understanding and use of the content in the passage.

It was important to answer the question and to enter into the spirit of the task. The whole point was that the cousin was an only child and was spoilt. Candidates who devoted their letters to the specific needs of the child and angled their evaluation of the content of the passage scored high marks. The words 'Base your letter' were also important. They meant that the content was to be used to form the arguments used in the response, not that it should be copied or closely paraphrased.

The marks for reading

Candidates were expected to use a sufficient amount of the reading material to develop arguments and to evaluate whether home schooling would be suitable in the specific case of the cousin. Those who reproduced all of the material left little time and space for explanations and evaluations, although they sometimes did well to place the arguments in a logical order. For example, they considered all the arguments about academic performance and universities in one section, the learning conditions and philosophy in another, and the social implications in a third. If presented in the candidate's own words, a mark of 7 could be given.

The best answers were those that fully integrated the ideas from the passage into an answer to the task. In these letters, the cousin became the central theme of the letter. Candidates considered whether the social needs of an only child would be met outside School and whether the cousin would be prepared to accept the parents' new role, particularly if he or she was wrested away from video games and persuaded to do work in the home environment. The cousin's higher education needs were also considered.

These answers also dealt with the apparently contradictory statements about universities that did or did not accept home schooled applicants and Schools that might or might not allow them to take examinations or to join in activities on their premises. Many candidates did not appreciate that these were not clear issues, and it was common to claim that the cousin would have no trouble in finding an Examination Centre.

Most answers gave evidence of evaluation, if not a great deal. A satisfactory answer dealt with the slightly more difficult second part of the task adequately and made some reference to the final section. The recommendation was the most searching part of the question and was often only briefly mentioned. Some answers just repeated points made earlier in the letter. This was the opportunity for candidates to match the content of the passage to the fact that the cousin was an only child and spoilt. If this were done, a mark of 6 or 7 could be made into 8. Often, no reference was made to the specific nature of the cousin, and 'spoilt' was often interpreted as 'troublesome'. This was an error of reading and of understanding the question.

The least good answers were those that made little reference to the passage, copied sections out or used ideas that were not in the passage at all. There were also examples of misreading. The worst of the copying came from the fact file. This was used by less good readers because it was readily available and the easiest part of the text. Some candidates drifted from the text and started to write their own ideas about the shortcomings of Schools and the general misbehaviour of the cousin.

The marks for writing

Good answers were structured. Many candidates wrote a good introduction, explaining the context and sometimes establishing a persona. For example, they could decide to be the person in the text who was home schooled and who went to Oxford University. Similarly there was a suitable ending. The various points followed on from each other and were convincingly grouped. Letters that presented points in a random order were given fewer marks.

Most candidates wrote in an appropriate voice, bearing in mind that they were addressing an aunt and uncle. This was most apparent in the introduction, at the end and when writing about the cousin. Some candidates wrote in an unduly formal register, and a few used a colloquial style that was unsuitable considering the serious nature of the exercise.

Good answers were written in a clear, fluent style. These candidates used a variety of sentence lengths and types, and their language was precise enough to express shades of meaning and recommendations that were sometimes sophisticated. A satisfactory writing style, attracting average marks, used simpler language less capable of expressing precise thought, but nevertheless competent, without undue error or awkward style. Some candidates needed to improve the quality of their writing. They made frequent errors, some of which were serious, and used limited language, sometimes that of the passage. Their work was punctuated by errors of grammar and unclear phraseology.

The most common errors were those of punctuation. There were frequent errors of sentence separation and the same candidates were unlikely to use commas to indicate internal divisions of longer sentences. There were also frequent errors of apostrophes and a lack of capital letters for proper nouns. Some candidates wrote sentences without finite verbs, or provided subordinate clauses without main clauses. A more common occurrence was to write very long, shapeless sentences with repeated conjunctions, such as 'which'.

Overall, the standard of spelling was good but some candidates needed to improve their spelling. There was a common confusion between 'their' and 'there'.

Many candidates used 'also' to start sentences, some repeatedly so. The same candidates used 'and' inappropriately to begin sentences. There was a common confusion between the use of 'amount' and 'number' and also of 'less' and 'fewer'.

Ways in which candidates can make sure this type of answer is improved

- Make sure that you select ideas and opinions from the reading material and evaluate them in relation to the context of the task.
- Especially look for arguments that are inconsistent and be aware of the difference between fact and opinion.
- Always use your own words. Never copy whole phrases and sentences from the passage.
- Be aware of the genre you are using for your answer. Think carefully of how you present a letter or an article, for example.
- Write with a voice. Think of who your reader is and express your point of view firmly.
- As always, end sentences with full stops, put commas in the right places and remember apostrophes.

Section 2: Composition

Question 2: Argumentative/discursive writing

Candidates are reminded that half of the marks are given for the content of the writing and the way in which it is structured. The criteria vary according to which of the three genres is chosen. The other half of the marks are given for style and accuracy.

(a) Should we allow ourselves to depend on machines and electronic gadgets? (25)

(b) 'Think globally, act locally.' Do you believe this is the right approach to solving the world's environmental problems? (25)

There were some cases where all or most candidates in a Centre chose the argumentative/discursive option regardless of whether they were good at writing in this style. While the standard of answering **Question 2** continued to improve, it was important that candidates were confident that they had the ideas and the technique necessary to tackle this type of question.

The more popular choice was option **(a)**. Candidates either argued for a life made easy and entertaining by machines and gadgets or considered both sides of the argument. It is important that candidates fully understand the question. Some wrote about a series of machines and gadgets with a little commentary on each instead of arguing about the dangers of dependency. Some only brought in the issue at the end. The best arguments were those that considered whether it was dangerous to be dependent on machines right from the beginning.

Very few candidates scored low marks for content and structure since they had enough to write on the topic.

As usual, the least good answers were the ones where there was no shape to the argument. These generally consisted of a number of examples that could have been presented in almost any order.

Option **(b)** was done well by some candidates who put forward a good argument for both elements of the quotation. Many responses had plenty of content but needed to be clear about the concept and there needed to be a structure to the arguments. There were examples of answers that often switched from global to local considerations and this lack of structure even led to some contradiction about whether individual efforts were ever effective. There was little appreciation of what 'local' might involve, for example setting up environmental schemes in a village or town. Most of this writing was about sorting rubbish. There was nevertheless, plenty of knowledge shown about global issues, though less about how they might be met.

Ways in which candidates can make sure this type of answer is improved

- Make sure you have a variety of ideas at your disposal.
- Build them into a linked structure.
- Develop each idea at sufficient length and sequence your sentences.
- Try to avoid writing abstractly and use specific examples to engage your reader's attention.
- Use clear and precise English.

Question 3: Descriptive writing

(a) Describe the most disappointing gift you have received and your reactions at the time. (25)

(b) You are in a place which you feel may be haunted. Describe the place, and your feelings and reactions. (25)

Option **(b)** was the more popular choice. The challenge was to ensure the response was realistic and subtle. Many were descriptions of the same sort of house, complete with an old oak door with a rusty handle, a baronial hall full of cobwebs, a set of portraits of no one in particular, and so on. There was so much descriptive detail, sometimes persistently decorated with two adjectives per noun, that the reader's mind became overloaded. Thus candidates had not fully achieved the aim of creating a convincing overall picture.

Another challenge with this option was to focus on description rather than allowing the response to become a narrative. Descriptions that covered a short time span with minor events were good, but some candidates invented various types of ghosts and vampires and allowed events to overcome the descriptive element. The aim of this exercise was to provide a picture, create an atmosphere and to explore the sorts of feelings that someone in this situation might have.

The best descriptions did this well. While it was possible to create atmosphere from a description of an old style haunted house, much better descriptions came from a deserted corridor in one's own School, a garden or a disused fairground. A little imagination in selecting a suitable place that was not the obvious choice provided unusual and original details that were more likely to engage a reader's attention.

Option **(a)** was sometimes done well. There was some good creation of atmosphere concerning the identification of the present among other packets and boxes, and the gradual unwrapping, accompanied by imaginings of what it might be. Strangely, the item itself, except where it was an item of clothing, was not always described at length. Some candidates needed to improve the balance between the thoughts and feelings and the visual description, and so missed the opportunity to demonstrate the range of their vocabulary. Others needed to include description to ensure a lively piece of writing. Some of the choices of

what the present would be were not realistic. Would a loving grandmother ever give such a horrible and thoughtless present to a favourite relative?

Ways in which candidates can make sure this type of answer is improved

- Allow for a little movement and a short time span. Do not write a static description.
- However, do not confuse a description with a story.
- Try to make your description as real as possible. You should be able to see and hear what you write.
- It is good practice to write in the present tense, but do not change tense once you have started your writing.
- Write sentences with proper verbs. There are no special sentence structures for a description.
- Be especially careful to use full stops at the ends of sentences.

Question 4: Narrative writing

(a) 'The figure in the long, black cloak.' Use this as the title for a narrative. (25)

(b) Write a story that takes place in extreme weather conditions. (25)

Option (a) was the most popular and there were some highly original stories. In one, the figure in the long, black coat was the neighbour who came to dinner and behaved most strangely, embarrassing the family with his peculiar view on politics until the narrator, the son of the family, could hold his tongue no longer. It was a simple story but it had a strong climax and was gripping throughout. Another excellent story was created when the figure, who had followed some trick or treaters throughout the evening, turned out to be one of their 'friends'. He successfully tricked them out of all their sweets.

Candidates who made the figure some sort of violent criminal wrote less convincing stories. They frequently needed to control their sentences, and rarely handled the amount of blood and the firing of guns well. Such stories lacked originality and credibility. One does not have to be violent to write a good story.

Option (b) was also done quite well, though the best were those where the extreme weather conditions were the central feature of the story. Not all were 'extreme'. The possibility of the weather becoming worse and worse throughout the story provided an easy structure.

Ways in which candidates can make sure this type of answer is improved

- Remember that stories do not consist of events alone.
- Include realistic details, description and the thoughts and feelings of characters in the narrative.
- Write a story with a short time span.
- You can improve a story by using devices such as time lapses, flashbacks and two narrators.
- Make sure you use a wide range of appropriate language.
- Originality is important. Try to think of unusual approaches to your topic.
- If you write more than you expected, make sure you do not get careless at the end of the narrative.

The marks for style and accuracy for all questions

The strengths and weaknesses of style and accuracy were similar to those of **Question 1**.

In **Question 2**, owing to the importance of being able to follow complex arguments, expression needed to be clear. While a good range of vocabulary was essential, candidates needed to be careful not to use words that might confuse the reader. One of the commonest areas for improvement was to ensure that expression was clear, particularly when attempting to explain a difficult idea.

In **Question 3** the best candidates used a wide range of vocabulary effectively. There were noticeable difficulties with maintaining tense. In the descriptions, the present tense was particularly suitable, but changing to the past tense was awkward and often led to a narrative. There were also still some candidates who wrote sentences without verbs because they thought that they were appropriate to a description. Many candidates used the word 'engulfed', often without thinking what it meant. There were other examples of the use of vocabulary that was either wrong or inappropriate to a particular usage.

In **Question 4** there were many examples of short sentences, all beginning with the same pronoun and all wrongly separated by commas. Some candidates were so concerned with the relating of events that they forgot to use interesting and engaging language. Particular care was needed to describe climaxes to stories fully and effectively.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 0522/04
Coursework Portfolio

Key messages

In order to aim for high marks in this component, candidates should:

- reflect in their writing their personal ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world about them
- demonstrate variety of style, use of language and genre in the three assignments
- choose assignments that challenge them to write at the highest standard of which they are capable
- write in fluent and varied sentences separated by full stops
- proof read their work carefully, as marks may be deducted for typing errors
- carefully choose the text for Assignment 3 and ensure that they engage with the ideas in the text.

General comments

The aim of this coursework component is to enable candidates to become better writers by practising composition in varied genres. It followed that the most successful candidates explored their personal views and experiences of the world as they knew it, and wrote in their own developing style and range of language. It was not beneficial to copy styles such as those of literary criticism or travel brochures, which were not personal to them. It was good to see that many candidates revealed their own personalities and values through their writing.

Thus the quality of the work continued to improve, and Centres were thoughtful in their choice of assignments. The topics chosen for Assignment 1 were much more varied than in previous sessions. Candidates showed more evidence of personal thought and expression and relied less on wording and facts derived from the internet and other sources. There were fewer research essays, which in a First Language English folder can create some challenges for assessment.

The choice of suitable articles for Assignment 3 is an area for improvement. This is addressed below in more detail.

The quality of word processing was high and the work was nearly always well laid out. There were cases where proof reading required more attention. It should not be assumed that the spell check would solve all matters of spelling, for example where 'to' could be confused with 'too'. Teachers often rightly prompted candidates to proof read their work on the drafts, but this prompt was not always followed.

Much of the work was accurate and well expressed. Since the conditions for coursework were very different from those of the Examination, candidates were expected to correct their own work. The commonest errors were those of punctuation, particularly of using commas to separate sentences instead of full stops. Frequently, commas were not correctly used to indicate divisions in complex sentences and there was much confusion over the use of apostrophes. Some candidates confused the use of colons and semi-colons and there were examples of over-using the semi-colon. In Assignment 2, care needs to be taken with the clarity of present and past tenses.

The best candidates used a variety of well-constructed sentences, including complex sentences that contributed to fluency. They wrote in an assured style and used a wide range of vocabulary. Candidates in Band 3 for writing wrote competently but used shorter, simple sentences and a more limited range of language. Candidates below Band 3 for writing showed some uncertainty of style, writing awkwardly in places and making grammatical errors.

In Assignment 3, reading marks of 9 and 10 were appropriate for candidates who evaluated, developed and explained ideas and opinions in the reading material. This was frequently done well, and for a number of candidates, Assignment 3 was their most successful. Some candidates commented generally on the reading

material and tended to summarise and to repeat ideas. An appropriate mark for these candidates was 5 or 6. A few candidates found the reading material too difficult and used it as a stimulus for their own writing. While the writing could be assessed, the evidence of reading was very low and was rarely worth more than 3 marks.

It was evident that this component had been completed as a real opportunity to learn the craft of writing. Centres and their candidates are to be congratulated for their good work.

Administration by Centres

The most important administrative form is the candidate Assessment Summary Form (CASF). This tells the Moderator the marks given for reading and writing and whether these marks have been changed during internal moderation. The Moderator can tell if one particular set has been subject to change more than the others, and this can then be checked. In addition there is the Individual Candidate Record Card that is attached to each folder, and this tells the Moderator what is in the folder and gives the teacher's general comment on the quality of the work. Finally there is the mark sheet (MS1 hard copy or electronic copy) that is sent to Cambridge with a copy to the Moderator.

It is **essential** that the final internally moderated mark on the CASF is the same as that which appears on the mark sheet and on the folder. Moderators carried out a check and on several occasions discovered that the marks did not tally. As a result, a Coursework Amendment Form had to be sent to the Centre.

Most Centres were careful to fix the work for each candidate securely with a staple or a paper clip. It was not necessary to send each folder in any kind of wallet.

Assessment by Centres

Internal moderation generally ensured that the folders were in a reliable rank order. This moderation was carefully carried out and Centres are thanked for their efforts. It was not always clear whether all the folders in each set had been accounted for. If one teacher appears to be generous or severe, either, all the folders should be checked or it may be possible to scale the marks of the whole set. If a sample is taken and alterations to the marking are made, some judgement must be made on the other folders in that set. Because there were marks for both reading and writing, it was likely that some adjustments to the marking would be made.

In writing, some of the work was under marked when it was error free and written in a fluent style with a good range of vocabulary. There were cases of severity in assessing the content of the writing particularly in Assignment 1. In reading, candidates in some Centres consistently evaluated ideas and opinions at some length, and the marking was extended slightly too far into the lower mark bands.

In writing, the commonest reasons for lowering the marks was that stylistic and technical error had not been taken into consideration. Band 1 and top Band 2 candidates are not expected to make errors in coursework. In some folders there was no evidence that errors had been noticed during assessment. In reading, the commonest reason for lowering the marks was that ideas and opinions from the reading material had not been sufficiently evaluated or developed.

Annotation

Some of the final drafts were carefully marked with marginal comments, a comment at the end, an indication of errors and good use of language. This was essential since the Moderator needed to know why the marks had been awarded. Where there was no indication of errors on the script, particularly of errors of punctuation, the assessment was sometimes in doubt.

Drafts

It was generally understood that first drafts must not be corrected in detail. Moderators should see that first drafts bore some alterations in pen by the candidate and that comments by the teacher should be only suggestions for revising, editing and correction. For example, a comment that the candidates should go through the work and insert full stops at the end of sentences was in order, but a mark indicating that a full stop was missing at a particular point constitutes correction. Many drafts bore no comments at all, while others were different from the final version but considered advice from the teacher's draft comments. The latter case represented good practice.

Comments on individual assignments

Assignment 1

Most of the work consisted of informative or expository writing. There were examples of guides to places, film reviews, restaurant reviews and media work. In general, leaflets were not advisable for candidates aiming for high marks since they rarely gave opportunities to expand ideas or to use a whole range of language. Where guides to places were set, there was a tendency to assume the same standard style used in real life examples. Candidates who wrote about *My Town* from a personal point of view generally produced better outcomes. Similarly a personal response to watching a film was better than one that assumed a journalistic style, and the same was true of the restaurant guides.

Centres that set *A Day in the Life of...* needed to ensure that candidates were challenged sufficiently to access the high mark bands, and specifically that high quality writing could be elicited. The original newspaper versions of this exercise are often written in quite an ordinary style and the content may consist of some trivial details. Some attempts at this genre worked well because the candidate tried to bring out the precise nature of the challenging work that the subject's career involved.

The vast majority of the rest of the writing was on particular topics and largely avoided the familiar arguments concerning euthanasia, abortion, capital punishment and smoking. This was good to see, because it suggested that candidates had chosen topics that they could think out for themselves rather than to reproduce the traditional arguments from the internet or from other sources.

The following list gives some indication of how candidates decided to follow their own thoughts:

Ghosts and things that go bump in the night
Food in the School cafeteria
Should teachers be role models?
Teaching the tango in School
An account of a horse rehabilitation Centre
The Christchurch earthquake
Subway construction in Córdoba
Dolls as stereotypes
Football and technology
Against intimate relationships in School

One Centre set a personal research project on the history of each candidate's family, most of which were immigrants at some time in the past. The results were fascinating to read and had obviously given enjoyment and pride to the candidates.

Another Centre set a series of topics called *Do not get me started...*. This was good because it clearly elicited a strongly personal response. However, care should be taken that the writing does not turn into too much of a rant without real argument. It nevertheless was a brave attempt to get away from the traditional essay form.

Many Centres took the advice to turn the topic into the words of a speech, and this was nearly always done well. Some candidates need to be reminded that it was to be spoken format rather than a formal response, and thus that they can be creative rhetorically.

Assignment 2

There were no problems concerning this assignment. Candidates took the opportunity to demonstrate their range of expressive language and made sure that the style was different to that of Assignment 1.

The choice was between fiction, descriptions of places and people, autobiographical fragments and writing from personal experience. These were all equally good options, although some candidates wrote very moving and personal accounts, which seemed in the spirit of coursework.

Teaching what makes a good narrative before letting any experimentation take place proved to be good practice. Stories were well developed and were rarely series of events. There was plenty of description and a good deal of tension. Much attention was paid to the climax of the story and there were some effective endings. A number of these narratives were mystery or ghost stories, and here the challenge was to make them sound real and to avoid stereotypes.

Some of the narratives were unnecessarily violent and there remained a number of war stories from the past. It is sometimes good to think of the possibilities of portraying life as happy, wholesome and perhaps amusing.

Some promising titles were *Catnapping*, *The story of a lighthouse keeper*, *Whisper in the bedroom*, and *I can not understand humans* (told by a tortoise).

Most of the descriptions were well written and were generally of places or people known to the writer, and therefore realistic and not overloaded with descriptive language and detail. There were titles such as *The stadium*, *The fish and chip shop*, *An untidy place*, *Storm*, *The circus* and *A person you are close to*.

Writing from experience took many forms, including the analysis of quite brief moments in candidates' lives, but most titles were in themselves unadventurous, such as *A day with Grandfather*, *A day I will never forget* and *My new School*. The interest and the quality of these stories lay in the personal detail.

Assignment 3

Since this assignment was first set, it has become clear what advice is useful to Centres. Previous reports have given detailed advice on the choice of texts and the ways in which candidates should respond to them. The advice about the text choice can be summarised as follows:

- Choose an article that contains ideas and opinions that can be argued, evaluated and developed. For example the article may use inconsistent arguments or confuse fact and opinion.
- Choose one article of no more than two sides. If you choose too much reading material it is difficult for candidates to select the best ideas to explore, and the result is that their responses are often too general and not specific.
- Avoid factual material, including newspaper reports, as these have no arguments with which to engage.
- Avoid whole novels and poems unless they contain very obvious ideas and opinions.

There were examples of articles without enough argument for effective engagement or where the topic was so worthy that it was impossible to disagree. The response was therefore little more than a summary and the reading mark could not be more than average.

Some effective choices of article were:

University: why bother?

Wearing fur

How much money do I need to be happy?

Why you can not sack boring teachers

Bringing up Chinese children

Too young to be a criminal

There were also some controversial articles on topics such as Sterilisation, Video Games, Single sex Schools, House husbands and Capital Punishment. While these were not unusual, they offered new and sometimes refreshing slants on the topics.

Candidates responded to the reading material by, for example, writing a letter to the writer or another article for a publication. It was also possible to respond in the form of a conversation. Responses were to the ideas and opinions expressed in the text and these represented the personal thoughts and feelings of the candidate about the views that were expressed. It was easier to write effectively where the candidate did not agree with the writer. Those who did agree could score marks by developing the ideas or by putting a relevant personal slant on them. Candidates could also establish a priority based on their perception of the relative importance of the ideas in the text.

Some candidates responded to literary texts by making critical comments about the choice of language and technical devices as if the work was for an English Literature Examination. Where the text was a speech, a similar approach was used, concentrating on the use of rhetoric rather than exploring ideas. This was not relevant to the mark scheme for reading, which may be found in the syllabus under 6:Appendix, Table B.

For example, responses had to be matched with the wording for Band 1 if a mark of 9 or 10 was to be given. This states that 'candidates analyse and evaluate several ideas and details from the text(s), and develop lines of thought. Their own ideas are closely related to the original text(s) and show a good understanding of

the main arguments'. This does not refer to rewarding marks for identifying literary or media techniques. It is important that judgements are made for this task using this mark scheme.

Some Centres allowed candidates to make their own choice of text for this assignment. This created much extra work when it came to giving a reading mark, and it also caused a challenge of monitoring. It is important that the choice of text is carefully agreed by Centres with their candidates to ensure that in responding to the content, candidates can score high marks for reading. Some Centres chose a single text for all their candidates, and others provided one text per teaching set. Sometimes there was a choice of perhaps three texts available for candidates to choose from. Where one choice was set per teaching set, it was important that the teacher should not tell candidates what to write as the response was then not original and the thinking was neither personal nor refreshing.

This task often encouraged some excellent writing, particularly where the language was original and persuasive.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 0522/05

Speaking and Listening

Key messages

- Teachers should encourage candidates to make their Part 1 presentations more lively, by perhaps incorporating more creative presentational styles, but certainly by relying less on reciting factual information. A key action may be to ensure that candidates begin working on their tasks with the aim of stimulating the listener. It is important for candidates to research their topics fully to bring fresh, interesting content to their task.
- If candidates wish to talk about a hobby or interest, it is suggested that they find a creative way of doing this, with new information or through a different kind of delivery. The quality of Part 1 might be improved if candidates perhaps focused on the idea of an audience that they wish to inform, entertain or even intrigue.
- There is certainly scope for further creativity in Part 1 – e.g. taking up a voice or presenting a dramatic monologue. Where candidates speak about travel or sport, they could speak in the role of a tour guide, or indeed as if they are their favourite sports person.
- Moderators noted increased leniency in awarding Band 1 marks for Part 1. For Part 1, Centres are reminded that “lively delivery sustaining audience interest” is necessary, and that “a wide range of language devices” should be present in a Band 1. In other words, a rather straightforward, informative talk, which is perhaps secure and safe, is likely to satisfy the criteria for Band 3. For higher reward, the candidate needs to be attempting something more challenging, more creative, more ambitious perhaps. Band 2 will indicate partial success of this aim.
- Please restrict Part 1 to 4½ minutes – as specified in the syllabus.

General comments

Many candidates who successfully complete this component clearly prepare very well in advance, conduct appropriate research, and are very adept at making presentations.

Cambridge is very grateful to have received the majority of samples on Compact Disc (CD). Moderators welcome this as it makes the task of external moderation more efficient. Cambridge encourages Centres to send in samples on CDs. The use of modern, digital recording equipment is strongly recommended (as opposed to cassette recorders), as this tends to produce higher quality recordings, but also allows the easy transfer of an appropriately collated sample to be burned onto a single CD, using separate tracks.

Comments on individual aspects of the test

Part 1 - The Individual Task

The dominant task in Part 1 remains the informative presentation. Candidates select a topic and provide historical and/or contemporary information about it. A small number of these presentations remain purely factual, but many engage with an issue or controversy relating to the topic. For example, developments in media and technology were often related to issues of over-reliance on technology and social media. These discursive elements add interest to the individual tasks.

Where the chosen topic relates directly to the candidate's personal situation or their country/location, there is sometimes scope for more engaging content. For example, a focus on government policies toward diversity in one particular country allows for specific information about this to be presented.

Personal experiences and interests were another common focus – for example, recent trips abroad, reading, sport, music. These kinds of presentations varied in their degree of success, with less successful tasks simply describing likes, dislikes and experiences without further research or insight.

Candidates sometimes attempted to use techniques such as addressing the listener and rhetorical devices, but often these approaches were inconsistent or not fully maintained.

It was pleasing to see more candidates using visual aids and props to enhance their presentations – an effort clearly to liven up what might otherwise be rather dry talks.

Centres and candidates are of course free to focus on topics which lend themselves to standard presentations. However, Moderators encourage a combination of more specific topics and a greater range of presentational formats.

Some examples of productive topics from this session:

- Conspiracy theories
- Beauty and cosmetic surgery
- Adoption
- Racism and prejudice
- Forced marriage
- Paranormal phenomena
- Harry Potter series versus the Twilight series
- The rapper, Eminem and his impact on society
- The positive and negative development of social media

Part 2 - Discussions

In almost all cases, Examiners were very much part of the discussions, entering into the spirit of the occasion and the conversations were generally productive extensions of the Individual Tasks. It was clear in many cases that candidates had planned for further discussion.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 0522/06

Speaking and Listening (Coursework)

Key messages

- Please remember to send in the Individual Candidate Record Cards – these are the only means by which the Moderator is made aware of all of the tasks/activities which have been undertaken at the Centre. It is useful if details relating to each activity are provided – indeed, it is permissible for the candidates to fill out these sections.
- Centres only need to record the individual and paired activities for all their candidates. It is not necessary to record the group activity. We hope this enables easier management of the coursework and reduces the pressure on candidates and teachers alike.
- For the moderation process to be completed efficiently, Centres need only submit **recordings of the Task 2 (paired) activity**. Centres need not send in recordings of group activities or talks/speeches from individual candidates.
- It is not necessary to conduct the same activities within a Task for every candidate. For example, different pairs can engage in different pair-based activities.
- Please be careful that Task 3 is not too similar in approach and content to Task 2. For example, if Task 3 is a small group discussion, then try to make Task 2 a lively role play between two candidates.
- Please ensure that some of the activities which are conducted enable the higher level achievement criteria to be demonstrated. More capable candidates need to be challenged and to be given the opportunity to display Band 1 attainment. It is therefore recommended that differentiated activities are designed by teachers.

General comments

Centres are reminded that three specific tasks are required: an individual presentation, a paired activity and group work. A wide variety of activities are encouraged – from creative role playing of real life situations, to activities which are drawn from literary texts, and large-group debates based on areas of contemporary interest. Teachers and candidates are encouraged to be as creative as possible in the activities undertaken for each task, ensuring of course that speaking **and** listening skills are demonstrated and are able to be assessed using the given criteria.

Moderators report that most of the work presented for this session was appropriate and resulted in interesting speaking and listening activities which many of the candidates clearly enjoyed. Candidates and teachers worked together to design and implement a wide range of activities which illustrated the candidates' speaking and listening skills appropriately.

Centres who offered additional annotation (written on the Individual Candidate Record Cards), accompanying each task/activity undertaken by each candidate, helped to make the process of external moderation efficient. Many thanks for such full and explanatory notes relating to the work undertaken.

Cambridge encourages sample work to be sent in using CDs – indeed, it is preferable for all of the candidate recordings in the sample to be collated onto a single CD. The use of modern, digital recording equipment is strongly recommended. It was good to see the majority of Centres this session using CDs to capture and present their samples.

Comments on specific tasks

Moderators received samples with integration of literature into some of the activities – in many cases in an active and dramatic manner, with candidates role-playing characters from novels and plays.

There was evidence of candidates being involved in choosing their own activities; this was most apparent with Tasks 1 and 2, where individual and paired work was required. Candidate-centred tasks are often the most rewarding and usually provide the best means of potential achievement as the candidates are highly motivated.