

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

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Paper 0522/01  
Reading Passages (Core)

## Key messages

- Candidates should check their work carefully to avoid unnecessary errors - for example, missing words/comma splicing.
- In **(g)** Candidates should remember that **(ii)** requires a comment on the writer's use of language in the whole phrase – simply repeating the same definition as that given for **(i)** is insufficient as an answer.
- For **Question 2**, it is important to take note of the given genre and to use a format and register appropriate for it.
- Candidates should ensure they refer to all 3 bullet points in **Question 2**, and attempt to develop ideas, both factual and inferential from the passage. The key message here is to go beyond the text for the third bullet point.
- Candidates should take note of the number of marks available for each question – if there are 3 marks then they should try to find 3 discrete points for their answers.

## General comments

Candidates need to read the rubric for the paper very carefully and be aware that it is not possible to 'explain fully' by simply lifting sentences from the passage.

Responses to the sub-questions in **Question 1** revealed that the main points in the article had been clearly understood and many candidates responded well to the more straightforward questions.

Whilst most candidates answered **Question 2** adequately, many appeared not to appreciate the importance of giving a credible account of what happened *after* the writer arrived inside the house which restricted them to a Reading mark in Band 2 at the most for this question. In some cases, the undeveloped response to the third part of the task came about because the candidate did not recognise the insert as being a mystery story, and therefore left the reader to guess what happened next, inadvertently leading to lower marks. In general, the level of written English in **2b** was mostly good.

As far as the use of time was concerned, most candidates attempted all questions. Some, however, appeared to run out of time, as evinced by overly long **Question 2s** which led to incomplete or omitted responses to **3a**, **3b** or both.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a)** Give two reasons why the narrator found it difficult to get to the house (paragraph one, 'My path to the...').

Most candidates gained at least one mark on this question and many gained two. Some gave only one of the 4 available responses, but complete misunderstanding of what was required was rare. A small number merely copied the opening sentence 'My path to the house was by no means an easy one' without saying why, and therefore gained no marks, but such responses were quite rare.

- (b) Using your own words, explain what the writer means by 'this odd and picturesque building made me pause' (line 6).

Many candidates were able to establish the strangeness of the house in their own words, although quite a number merely repeated the word 'odd'. Fewer candidates managed to understand the contrasting reference to 'picturesque', with some either ignoring it or thinking it meant 'ugly'. Some attempted to explain 'picturesque' as being 'like a picture' or 'as in a painting or photograph' which were not sufficient as explanations of the word's meaning. Similarly, attempting to explain the oddness of the house by saying simply that it was 'different' did not go far enough, as the house can be different for many different reasons. A large number of candidates neglected to focus on the whole phrase and did not attempt an explanation of the phrase 'made me pause' for which the second mark was awarded. Many of those who did attempt to explain this phrase often interpreted it with reference to the writer's feelings as in 'surprise' or 'shock', but these of course do not relate to the building's oddness and beauty which give rise to his physical reaction. The least successful responses came from those who merely lifted the words 'odd' and 'pause' when responding and therefore did not gain any marks. Some candidates also showed a tendency to over-explain, owing perhaps to feeling the need to explain the situation, rather than simply say what the words mean.

- (c) Why did the narrator decide not to go back to the road (paragraph two, 'The quiet and apparent...')?

The answer to this is that the narrator is tempted back to the house owing to its promise of comfort. Many candidates identified this point, but a significant number focused their responses on the narrator's feeling 'foolish' with a vague reference to the house's 'interior' without referring explicitly to its cosy /inviting/comfortable promise and simply said that he thought "it would be foolish to deny himself".

- (d) Re-read paragraph three, 'But half-way...hurriedly leaving'. What was unusual about the way the man left the house?

This was answered successfully by most candidates although some thought that the question required a less obvious answer than 'didn't close the door' despite the fact there was only one mark available. The most frequent incorrect answers referred to the man placing his watch back in his pocket as an unusual action, or identified his looking back at the house he was leaving as being unusual.

- (e) Re-read paragraph four, 'As we met...to the man'. Explain as fully as you can, what caused the narrator to feel 'puzzled' about the behaviour of the man.

The majority of candidates gained two marks out of the three available for this question. Only a small number made the mistake of relating the question of the narrator's puzzlement to that of the 'man' and again relatively few misunderstood the paragraph by asserting that the man was puzzled and not the narrator. Most candidates were able to identify the 'raising of the hat', showing respect and not being surprised by meeting a stranger in such a remote place, although the 'not saying a word' point was often overlooked. Some misread the phrase "showed little surprise" interpreting it instead as "showed a little surprise".

- (f) Explain as fully as you can, what the narrator says about his attempt to speak further with the man (paragraph eight, 'A peculiar greeting...').

There were two aspects to this question. The first was that the two men were some distance apart and the second that because of this they were unable to hear what was said 'clearly'. Many candidates were able to understand the first point but only a minority successfully made clear their understanding of the second, and simply stated that the two men couldn't 'hear' what was said, which of course was not true. Each knew that the other was speaking, it's just they could not make out with certainty what was being said. Those candidates who were able to identify this lack of clarity, however expressed, were awarded the mark for the second point. Candidates who merely lifted the sentence 'his voice returned to me ... his answer reached me' were awarded one mark only, because such direct lifting does not constitute an explanation.

- (g)(i)** Re-read paragraphs one, two and ten ('My path to the...so invitingly.' and 'The house...more inviting.'). Explain, using your own words, what the writer means by the words underlined in three of the following phrases:

A small number of candidates failed to follow the question instructions accurately and chose a different combination of phrases to respond to in **(g)(i)** and **(g)(ii)**.

As stated in the 'Key Messages' section of this report, this question requires candidates to explain the underlined word in **(g)(i)** and to explain the whole phrase in **(g)(ii)**. The repeating of answers to **(g)(i)** – whether right or wrong – in **(g)(ii)** with little or no development is not sufficient to gain further marks. A further concern is that in response to **(g)(ii)** candidates often failed to attempt their analysis in the terms of the question, which, on this paper, focused on the house and the narrator. Again, those candidates who did address the question often merely focused on one of these aspects. Finally, it is worth noting that for **(g)(i)** some candidates did not attempt to explain the identified word but attempted another word from the phrase instead. This was particularly so with phrase 4 where the focus was sometimes on 'intruder' rather than on 'disuse'. Candidates who attempted to relate the word/phrase to the passage context were more likely to gain marks on these two questions.

- 1 'I found doors and windows open to the pervading mist' (lines 3–4)

'Pervading' caused a problem for many candidates with very few identifying the mist as spreading everywhere in the room. The most frequent answer was 'thick' or 'menacing' or 'ghostly' but the widespread/everywhere aspect was mainly missed.

- 2 'this silent room, with its sinister atmosphere' (lines 7–8)

This word was probably understood more clearly than those from the other three phrases. The sense of 'evil' implied by 'sinister' or its 'creepy/scary' connotation were common correct answers.

- 3 'I now scrutinised more carefully' (line 36)

This word caused problems for many candidates who attempted to explain it. Many felt that scrutiny implied judgement or criticism as opposed to studying something more closely. Many candidates merely responded with 'looked' or 'observed' without any qualifier to indicate the intensity implied, and a significant minority merely added the two words 'more closely' to their answer which is a direct lift from the phrase itself and, therefore, could not be rewarded.

- 4 'it had about it an air of disuse which made me feel like an intruder' (line 39)

'An air of disuse' led many candidates to think it was the actual air itself which was 'disused' rather than the building. Many responses believed that 'disuse' meant 'no use' or 'never used' as opposed to 'no longer used'. A few candidates correctly identified the implied neglect or abandonment suggested by the word.

- (ii)** Explain how the writer conveys the nature of the house and the narrator's feelings about it through the use of language in each of the phrases you have chosen in **Question 1(g)(i)**. You should refer to the whole phrase in your answer and not just the word underlined.

In their responses to this question it was clear that some candidates were making an attempt to engage with the writer's use of words; for example, one response suggested that the first phrase linked 'open' with 'pervading', producing a picture of the house wide open to invasion by the mist which spreads everywhere and is unwelcome / threatening. In general, however, very few achieved more than 2 or 3 marks in total. These marks were generally gained for identifying a sense of spookiness, a feeling of disquiet or curiosity on the part of the narrator, or the narrator's sense that he somehow shouldn't be there. Many of the less successful responses resulted from what would appear to be a failure to focus on the specific rubric requirement to comment on the whole phrase quoted, and not just the word that was defined in answer to **(g)(ii)**. The outcome of this was a large number of repeated or slightly modified attempts to provide another synonym for the single word underlined, without attempting to explain what effect the author was trying to achieve in the phrase as a whole.

## Question 2

Imagine that you are the narrator of the story. You enter the house and after waiting a few minutes, other people begin to arrive. It is now the afternoon of the following day...

Write a letter to your older brother or sister describing your impressions of the house and your experiences since you discovered it.

In your letter you should:

- describe how you first discovered the house
- describe your thoughts and feelings when you met the man leaving the house
- explain what you discovered after you entered the house.

All candidates were able to respond in some detail to this question, generally showed an at least satisfactory understanding of the extract and were able to develop a convincing voice on the part of the narrator. However, there were examples of uninspired copying from the passage, and a few candidates failed to demonstrate understanding of the conventions of writing a letter to a family member. Many could have produced a more convincing letter by remembering to include an appropriate valediction as a conclusion to the task. A large number of overall satisfactory responses ended their accounts as soon as the narrator entered the house (no matter how much “suspense” had been built up) and effectively omitted to address the third bullet, which meant that they could not be awarded a mark for Reading higher than one in Band 2.

On the other hand, some letters launched straight into the discovery of ‘the house’ with no explanation of how the writer had stumbled across it and a presumption that the brother or sister would know what they were talking about. A very small number of candidates wrote letters based on Passage A, thus earning marks only for 2W. Most candidates, however, made a positive attempt at writing an appropriate letter with the majority achieving a Band 3 mark at least for their efforts with 2R and 2W. The most successful responses made very good use of the passage, using it as a springboard for their own imaginations to deal with all manner of ghastly and ghoulish goings-on in the shady haunts of the house’s inner depths which, nevertheless, were convincingly developed from details implied in the original.

Less successful responses revealed a generally secure understanding of the passage but tended to be over-reliant on its content and language, to the point where their own creativity was left relatively undeveloped apart from a passing comment on what was discovered when they entered the house, usually relating to the details provided in the final paragraph. The least successful responses produced only a very bald narrative with a few references to the strangeness and confusion rather than tracking the more subtle changes in reaction, especially to the house and the man. As noted above, most letters were generally well done and engaged with the text in a suitable manner.

In general, most candidates showed the ability to convey their ideas in writing with reasonable clarity although many responses were marred by avoidable errors of expression and punctuation. The most common failings were comma splicing and apostrophe errors, but generally letters were written in a register that befitted a sibling audience. Relatively few candidates achieved a mark lower than Band 3 for this task. A small number of candidates disadvantaged themselves by producing handwriting which was almost impossible to decipher.

## Question 3

Read carefully Passage B, Hadrian's Villa, in the Reading Booklet Insert and then answer **Question 3(a)** and **(b)** on this Question Paper.

### Question 3(a)

What do you learn about the structure and main features of Hadrian's Villa and grounds and the reasons why it was built, according to Passage B?

Write your answers using short notes. Write one point per line.

You do not need to use your own words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer.

Candidates generally scored quite well on this summary question, although the most common error arose from their not clearly identifying what were the main features and structure of the Villa and its grounds, by including irrelevant details such as the car park, picnics, signposted buildings, and the historical fact about the attack by the barbarian hordes, none of which was credited. The most common repetition points were references to libraries, bathhouses and so on as separate points and similarly the Grove of Academe and Canopus references.

Some candidates included more than one point on a line in spite of the rubric and a few continued to add points after the 10 in the grid had been completed. It is important that candidates read the rubric carefully so that they do not lose marks because of positioning of valid points.

A few candidates thought that 'Pluto' had lectured his students there and others that Hadrian had built a Marmite Theatre. As this task assesses reading skills, these slips of the pen were credited as correct points. Overall, most responses gained at least 5 or more points with the most successful focusing on the precise detail of the appropriate points in note form as opposed to merely copying overlong sentences from the passage – those who attempted this approach frequently lost marks as they tended to include more than one point per line (as mentioned above).

### Question 3(b)

Information about the structure and main features of Hadrian's villa and grounds and the reasons why it was built:

Now use your notes to write a summary of what Passage B tells you about the structure and main features of Hadrian's Villa and grounds and the reasons why it was built.

You must use continuous writing not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should include all 10 of your points in **Question 3 (a)** and must be 100 to 150 words.

It is important for candidates to keep in mind that the instructions for this question require them to attempt to turn their own points into a summary. Those who go back to the Passage and attempt to summarise from that give themselves a much harder task when attempting to use their own words. In general, candidates did not find it easy to re-word and reorganise and many produced generalised responses about the delights of visiting the villa and its grounds, rather than simply writing a summary focused on the wording of the question, ('the structure and main features of Hadrian's villa and grounds and the reasons why it was built').

This was the question which was most often not attempted, presumably because of time constraints.

In conclusion, most candidates performed at least satisfactorily on this paper and their answers showed that they had a mainly secure understanding of the reading passages and that they were capable of expressing themselves with some accuracy and competence when producing a piece of written English. Nearly all engaged well with the Reading Passages and made positive attempts to respond conscientiously to the different tasks. Future candidates are advised to ensure that they read carefully the wording of the sub-questions in **Question 1** and attempt to respond precisely to their requirements to ensure that they can achieve the highest marks of which they are capable.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

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Paper 0522/02  
Reading Passages (Extended)

## Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- read the passages very closely to avoid misreading detail
- read each question carefully, paying attention to the specific guidance offered
- gave equal attention to all sections of each question – for example, making sure that responses to **Question 1** addressed all three bullet points
- used their own words in **Questions 1** and **3(b)**, and did not lift whole phrases or sentences from the passages
- selected only relevant material for each question
- planned the structure and sequence of each answer, making each point once only in a response
- adopted a suitable voice and register for the task, different for each question
- checked their responses carefully to correct errors of spelling and grammar affecting meaning
- used a range of appropriate, precise vocabulary.

## General comments

The vast majority of candidates seemed familiar with the format of the paper and the demands of each question. There were still some responses that depended too heavily on the wording of the passage in **Questions 1** and **3(b)** and centres are reminded that candidates are expected to adapt and modify the material in the passage for higher band marks, and that copying or closely paraphrasing the passage limits responses considerably.

Candidates appeared to find both passages equally accessible and were able to finish the paper within the time allowed. Most candidates had been entered for the appropriate tier, though some clearly would have benefited from being entered for the core tier.

Good responses to **Question 1** displayed a sound understanding of the ideas in Passage A by including a range of relevant ideas that were often developed effectively and supported by helpful detail. Less good responses tended not to pick up on implicit ideas from the passage for example, that Maria Rose Head had written the winning entry, or that her pain in the neck was not due to the pillows. There was some misreading of the passage, especially the white water rafting accident: some candidates did not appear to have read to the end of the passage, missing the hospitalisation of Mr Head and therefore offering a confused or irrelevant response to the third bullet point. There were also a few minor misreads mistaking the animal sanctuary for the ancient ruins on the hilltop, and referring to Mr Head 'scoffing' his food rather than his mocking reaction to Al's plans. The vast majority of candidates read the question carefully and wrote the letter as Maria Head, although a few responses were rather confused and wrote as Al, mostly copying from the passage. Careful reading of the passage is essential to ensure that the finer details are teased out and used to support ideas firmly and securely. Copying was sometimes evident in **Question 1**, especially in response to the first and second bullet points: there is a significant difference between using textual detail in support of points and lifting whole sections of the text or key phrases. The description of 'legendary landscapes', 'ancient civilisations' and the conversation about the bees were most often lifted from the passage. There were also responses that included long quotations from Mr Head on the market, rather than picking out key words to enhance Maria's letter by communicating her frustration and embarrassment. Candidates must change the language of the passages in response to **Question 1** and **Question 3b** in order to achieve a higher Reading and Writing mark.

For **Question 2**, candidates needed to select appropriate choices of words and phrases from each of the two paragraphs and make specific and detailed comments about these choices. To gain marks in the higher bands candidates need to write detailed explanations of the effects of their choices, demonstrating sound understanding of the writer's purpose. Weaker responses tried to explain the selected language in the same words as the language choice – 'entranced' means that Al was put into a trance', or 'laced with sunlight' means that the sun is laced around the orange trees', for example. Pleasingly, very few candidates in this session used a grid or a table to answer this question.

In **Question 3** many candidates managed to achieve over half the marks available by finding a reasonable number of points. Candidates do not have to use their own words in **Question 3(a)** though might choose to do so where it helps to clarify points. In **Questions 3(a)** short notes, identifying each separate idea precisely, are required, rather than whole sentences or imprecise selections from the passage. The majority of candidates used their own words in **Question 3(b)**, and attempted to summarise the ideas, however, candidates must be aware that the meaning must not change so that the summary is factually inaccurate. Candidates are not expected to change key words and terms in **3(b)**, but should not lift whole phrase and sentences from the passage. Inclusion of material outside the passages is also not rewarded and is distracting. There were few examples of excessively long responses in this session. Most lengthy responses were due to inclusion of unnecessary material, indiscriminate copying of the passages, or repetition.

On this Reading paper 20 per cent of the available marks are for Writing, split evenly between **Questions 1 and 3**. It is important that candidates consider the quality of their writing and avoid using lifted material from the passages. Most responses were written in an appropriate register, but some Writing marks were affected by awkward expression or limited style, over-reliance on the language of the passages, or structural weakness and incoherence.

Candidates should aim to plan their responses; effective planning ensures that there is no repetition between sections of a question, that they are all given equal attention and coverage, and that there is a coherent and logical structure to the response.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section A**

**You are Maria from Passage A. The day after the rafting trip you write a letter to a friend back home. Write the letter.**

**In your letter you should comment on:**

- **your impressions of the hotel and its staff**
- **your thoughts and feelings about your husband's attitude and behaviour on the holiday**
- **your plans for the remaining days of your holiday.**

**Base your letter on what you have read in Passage A, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullet points.**

**Begin your letter, 'Dear friend, This place is everything I imagined...'**

Stronger responses to this question selected and reviewed the events in the passage and modified the ideas to create a suitable style for a personal letter to a friend, and a highly convincing voice for Maria, an intelligent and observant character. They were able to sustain the use of supporting detail throughout the response, firmly tethering any development to details in the passage. The first bullet allowed them to retrieve relevant material from throughout the passage to describe the helpful staff and excellent service, as well as the hotel's setting and accommodation. The second bullet allowed candidates to develop ideas from the passage by writing about Mr Head's behaviour and attitude from the perspective of his rather weary and embarrassed wife. The key development in this bullet point was the ability to express Maria's private thoughts and feelings while retaining her rather gentle and dignified character. The third bullet point required candidates to pick out clues from the passage that may indicate how Maria would choose to spend time alone at the Honey Hotel. Many candidates referred to the places that she may visit – the ruins, the animal

sanctuary, the market. They also developed ideas about enjoying the freshly cooked meals, writing on the terrace or learning more about the bees. A feature of better responses was even attention paid to the three bullet points with clear modification of the ideas, but the responses always remaining firmly tethered to the passage.

The best responses realised that Maria wrote the winning entry, not Mr Head, and that Al took some time to realise this; that Maria's 'pain in the neck' was her husband, an excuse not to endure his antics while water rafting, not the result of an injury. They interpreted his actions as inability to appreciate other cultures, arrogance, aggression, recklessness, and worked out that he would be hospitalised, despite only bruises, for the rest of the stay. Middle-range responses made reasonable use of the passage, with some attempt at own words, but tended to stick closely to the events and ideas in the passage, and to present them in the same order as in the passage, often using some of the same words. A noticeable feature of such responses was far more attention paid to the second bullet where Mr Head's obnoxious behaviour in the market was closely paraphrased as well as his rude behaviour at dinner that night. This often led to a rather limited response to the first bullet with these responses struggling to go beyond Al meeting them at the airport and giving them the best suite for the first bullet, as they focused on the beginning of the passage rather than looking throughout for clues about the staff, service and accommodation. A significant number of candidates did not address the third bullet point at all, ending on the white water rafting trip and failing to acknowledge Mr Head's accident or admission to hospital. Some candidates did not read closely enough and indicated that Maria would move to be near the hospital, returning to the hotel on Friday, or that Mr Head would return to the hotel to join her for the rest of the holiday. Many candidates wrote in a convincing style for a personal letter, but others wrote a rather plain narrative retelling the events of the meeting without developing Maria's thoughts and feelings. Such responses lacked a sense of purpose and a convincing voice.

The least successful answers were often thin, simple or short. They offered a very general view of the situation but few ideas and details in response to the bullet points. Some did not move beyond the first bullet point. Another weakness was making up additional material which was untethered to the passage. For example, however ready Mr Head was to complain, there is no mention of his complaining about the room (it was the best suite), the décor, the portage, or the food. Many candidates assumed the presence of a pool or beach, but there is no reference to a pool, or beach in the text, and Maria devotes time to writing in her notebook, not drawing in a sketch pad.

The Writing mark reflected the clarity, fluency and coherence of the response and how well it used language to capture Maria's voice. The better written responses adopted a tone where Maria was able to confide in a friend while describing Mr Head's antics in amusing terms as well as indicating her frustration and embarrassment. Many expressed feelings of relief about his stay in hospital, while acknowledging that he had brought his misfortune on himself. These responses used language appropriate for a personal letter to a friend. Less successful responses were rather narrative, or disorganised, or were too angry and ranting to communicate convincingly as Maria.

#### **Advice to candidates on Question 1:**

- ensure that you adopt the correct voice by reading the question carefully
- think carefully about audience and purpose
- answer all parts of the question, covering each of the three bullet points in reasonable detail
- answer in your **own words** and adapt material from the passage to make it an appropriate response written in the **required style**
- plan your answer to ensure that the material is sequenced logically and to avoid repetition
- select the most appropriate ideas from the passage and develop them
- use relevant details from the passage to demonstrate close reading.

#### **Question 2**

**Re-read the descriptions of:**

- (a) the winning entry in paragraph 4, beginning 'He agreed...'  
(b) Al and Mr Head's visits to the market in paragraph 6, beginning 'On the second morning...'

**Select four powerful words or phrases from each paragraph. Your choices should include imagery. Explain how each word or phrase selected is used effectively in the context.**



It was expected that the response would take the form of continuous prose to allow candidates to explore their choices fully. Marks were given for the relevance of the words and phrases chosen to answer the question, and for the quality of their explanations. Responses that explored the effects that the use of particular words had on the reader could score up to the highest mark of ten. The majority of candidates found this question the most demanding of the three, as it requires a wide vocabulary, close reading, and an ability to relate to subtleties of language beyond explicit meaning. It was noticeable in this session that very few candidates approached **Question 2** using a grid or table format. This benefited candidates greatly, as when using a grid often the same material is duplicated in two of the three columns. Care should be taken to select a word or phrase, not a whole sentence, but to be very careful to explore its usage within the correct context.

The most successful responses to **Question 2** showed precise focus at word level and were engaged and assured in their handling of their appropriate choices. They selected carefully, including images, put the choices in context, and answered both parts of the question equally well. The best responses identified the unifying features, such as the 'bewitching' idea that could then be traced through the use of 'entranced', 'conjuring' and 'charming mirage'. They gave meanings then explored the build-up of associations. This then helped with the interpretation of 'romantic' as an idealised view of a place holding mystery, the chance to go back in time, escapism into the past. There were some excellent responses to 'beehive', not just in terms of swarming with people, buzzing with activity, but also the ideas of an organised community all working productively together. The best responses traced 'rainbow of produce' through from a range of colours in the food to concepts of healthy food that is exotic, emphasising its vibrancy and variety. Many saw that the unflattering comments on the market reflected more about Mr Head than the quality of the market, to convert basic explanations of the meanings of 'stragglers' and 'tatty trinkets' to a significant reflection of a sneering, dismissive tone. Less successful responses tried to reconcile this as a different angle on the market and too often 'tatty' and 'stragglers' were explained as messy, dirty and unhygienic'. Some weaker responses still depended on the key words being repeated in their explanation; the most frequent examples being 'laced', 'ancient civilisations', and 'staged scenes'. There were some candidates who selected whole sentences, or selected phrases that are not in themselves, 'powerful', for example 'complaining loudly or 'unimpressed'. Less successful responses sometimes adopted a 'technique spotting' approach identifying literary techniques, such as the metaphor 'beehive' or alliteration in 'white-washed walls'. This approach often led to rather generic comments about the effects of the techniques rather than the words themselves which limited the response. Occasionally candidates offered an extremely sparse number of choices or simply lifted the whole paragraph and offered a general comment.

### Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- focus on the question carefully to ensure that all your choices are relevant
- re-read the whole paragraph before making selections; choose the best and not those which happen to come first
- choose a range of words and phrases that seem powerful. Do not write out whole sentences, but also do not offer only one word if it is part of a descriptive phrase
- do not write out the beginning and end of a long quotation with the key words missing from the middle
- remember to put quotation marks around your choices. This makes it easier for the Examiner to identify them and makes it easier for you to focus on the exact wording
- treat each of your choices separately and do not present them as a list or give a general comment which applies to all of them
- avoid general comments such as 'this creates a strong visual image', or 'this draws the reader in and makes them want to read on'. Such comments will not earn any marks at all
- if you are not sure about effects, try to at least give a meaning, in context, for each of your choices
- remember you do not get any marks for identifying techniques unless you focus on the meaning and effects of the words you have chosen
- to explain effects, think of how the reader's understanding is enhanced by the use of language when reading the word or phrase, because of its connotations and associations.
- include images from each paragraph, and try to explain them.

### Question 3

#### (a) Notes

**According to Passage B, what is the importance of honeybees to humans and what does the writer of the letter believe to be threatening bees' well-being?**

**Write your answer using short notes. Write one point per line.**

**You do not need to use your own words.**

**Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer.**

**(b) Summary**

**Now use your notes from Question 3(a) to write a summary of the importance of honeybees to humans and what is threatening bees' well-being, according to Passage B.**

**You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.**

Pleasingly, almost all candidates had understood the need to identify just 15 points in 3(a) and that points added after the 15 would not be credited unless replacing a crossed out answer earlier on. Selecting and identifying points meant that candidates had to read and plan their answers carefully both to avoid repetition and to organise their ideas sensibly. There was more than one way in which points could be logically grouped and these options were reflected in the mark scheme. Most candidates were able to identify at least seven points from the passage. Better, more focused, answers typically scored two thirds or more of the available content marks.

**Question 3(b)** responses that did well had used their points from **3(a)** carefully – organising them purposefully into a concise, fluent prose response rather than relying on repeating points in the order or language of the passage. There was some suggestion that answers at the top end had revisited points in **3(a)** during the planning stages of **3(b)** in order to edit and refine points in this part of the question – leading to clearer more distinct points in **3(a)** and an efficient and well-focused response in **3(b)**.

To answer this question successfully, candidates needed to first identify 15 points that were relevant to the question, listing them clearly – one per numbered line, in note form. Candidates are reminded that they are only credited with a maximum of one mark per line. Candidates are not required to use their own words in this part of the question, although copying out chunks of the passage is not recommended and can deny the mark. Answers, though in note form, needed to be sufficiently clear and focused to identify the point in hand.

The question had two strands: the importance of honeybees to humans, and what threatens their well-being, and the best responses organised their points to acknowledge the different strands. Candidates needed to ensure that their notes were phrased appropriately to focus on the question, for example, 'a loss of healthy food' in itself did not indicate how honeybees are useful to humans and needed 'without bees' or 'if bees were extinct' to make the point clearly. Also, if candidates chose to use an example to make a point, they needed to ensure that the example was accurate so 'over 30 per cent of crops rely on bee pollination' would earn a mark, whereas '30 per cent of crops...' would not. There are no marks to be scored for Writing in **3(a)**, however, checking responses for accuracy in spelling and grammar is clearly essential if candidates are to avoid the potential danger of negating points through careless slips. Candidates should pay particular attention, for example, to correct any slips that might change meaning; for example, some candidates wrote 'pollution' instead of 'pollination'. Many also incorrectly claimed that GM crops and Mobile phone radiation threatened bees through careless reading of the passage.

The majority of candidates demonstrated an awareness of the appropriate style for a summary, with very few examples of wholesale copying, although occasionally some added in further speculation and detail, resulting in less concise answers. The most successful responses used the notes from **3(a)**, re-ordering and regrouping the relevant information with a clear focus on the question. The best answers had considered carefully both the content and organisation of their answer, writing in fluent sentences, within the prescribed length and using their own words as far as possible. They avoided writing introductory statements and making comments, and concentrated on giving a factual objective summary. In a number of answers, the inclusion of irrelevant and/or repeated material diminished the focus and depressed the Writing mark.

Many candidates made more points in **3(b)** where continuous writing enabled them to establish causal links to make points more clearly, and it was gratifying to see how many did reorganise material into different categories of threat, hence avoiding repetition and wordiness. There were valiant attempts to use own words, 'pharmaceutical products' for medicine, 'voluntary' for unpaid. Conversely, few tried a synonym beyond 'cloud' for 'fog bees' brains'. There are still some candidates who don't appreciate that the summary has no specific audience, no desire to persuade, and the inclusion of details from the passage such as 'nasty buzzy things', 'peanut butter and jam sandwiches', and 'the main suspect in this murder mystery' were inappropriate. Remarkably few responses to **3(b)** were seriously overlong, but many lost marks by adopting a too generalised approach, 'diseases' not having the distinction between fungal infections and viruses, alternatives to bees 'would cost more' lacking the element of expensive/inefficiency. Not all saw the difference between bees overworking, moving from orchard to orchard, and being forcibly taken, hive and all.

Advice to candidates on **Question 3**:

- read the question carefully and underline the key words
- re-read the passage after reading the question, in order to identify precisely the content points required
- list relevant points clearly in as few words as possible
- read through your list of points in **3(a)** checking each is distinct and accurate and that there are no repetitions or very similar points
- plan the structure of your response in **3(b)** – for example organising and sequencing content logically
- write informatively and never comment on the content of the passage.
- be careful to give only information from the passage that answers the question
- you can choose to use your own words in **3(a)** and must use your own written expression in **3(b)** although you do not need to change key words
- do not add further numbered points in **3(a)** past the 15 required as they will not be marked
- pay attention to the guidance for length in **3(b)**.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

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Paper 0522/03  
Directed Writing and Composition

## Key messages

This paper was mainly assessed for writing, although there were ten marks available for reading in **Question 1**.

In order to achieve high marks, candidates were required to:

- use an appropriate form and style, adapted for the intended audience and genre
- structure ideas logically and organise their writing effectively
- produce detailed and evocative descriptions and engaging, credible narratives
- construct sentences accurately and vary sentence types to create effects
- select appropriate and wide-ranging vocabulary with precision.

## General comments

Most scripts showed a good grasp of what was expected in both the Directed writing and Composition. Responses were substantial and purposeful, on the whole, with relatively few brief or undeveloped answers. There was evidence in many scripts of a clear awareness of how marks were awarded in the different questions and writing genres and most followed the rubric.

Most responses showed an understanding of the topic in **Question 1** and made sensible use of the reading passage in their responses. Responses clearly engaged with the question and the reading material; they were able to identify the various reasons why Mr Schmit and his family moved to the countryside in the first place and comment on the subsequent reasons why he and his family chose to return to the city. Most responses in the middle mark range tended to reproduce the points made in it. Weaker answers drifted away from the material or listed some points simply.

In the Composition, better responses showed a clear understanding of the features of descriptive or narrative writing and in both genres there was developed and structured writing. Some weaker descriptive writing tended to slide into narrative or in some cases was entirely narrative in character; these responses would have benefited from a clearer grasp of the features of good descriptive style, such as a focus on detail, and a more limited time span.

The best responses in both questions were characterised by the careful selection of precise vocabulary and sentence structures to create specific effects. The reader was often intrigued in the early stages of compositions and the writing was consciously shaped in both genres in order to engage and sustain the reader's interest. In weaker responses, an appropriate register and effective style was more difficult to achieve. In **Question 1**, for example, the required formal tone was sometimes. In this question and in the compositions, there was insufficient attention paid to basic punctuation in weaker answers. Capital letters were sometimes used rather indiscriminately, appearing frequently where not required but not used for proper nouns, in speech or at the beginnings of sentences. Semi-colons were much in evidence but only rarely used accurately.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1: Directed Writing**

Imagine you are a listener who has moved from the city to the countryside and found it beneficial. Write a letter to Mr Schmit, in response to the views given in the radio programme. In your letter you should:

- evaluate Mr Schmit's reasons for moving his family to the countryside
- explain why you think the move did not work.

Base your letter on what you have read in transcript, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the two bullets points.

Begin your letter, 'Dear Mr Schmit...'

Write about 250 to 350 words.  
(25 marks)

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

Most responses adhered to the letter writing structure, using a clear introduction, and were able to bring their letters to a logical conclusion. They showed understanding of the basic requirements of a letter in response to a radio programme, and in better responses the radio interviewee's comments were scrutinised and evaluated purposefully. They also wrote fluently and used vocabulary to good effect. Less good answers, however, simply listed Mr Schmit's reasons for moving to the countryside in the first place and the drawbacks to country life which he did not account for; by doing so, they did not adopt the critical stance which is required for marks in the higher bands. Weaker responses focused on only a few points and often produced a response about the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside versus the city in general, rather than covering the range of points made in the article.

### **The marks for reading**

Good responses followed the bullet points but also adopted the evaluative stance required for marks above Band 3. Better responses identified and explored the subtleties of the passage, for example the fact that it takes time for established communities to accept newcomers and the need for compromise, which the family didn't show. They were able to appreciate that Mr. Schmit was unwilling to live on less income, his older children were addicted to gadgets, they were inflexible and absorbed by consumerism together with the attractions and materialism of city life. Varying degrees of criticism were levelled at Mr Schmit for his lack of preparedness and his naïve and unrealistic view of both a shift of location at this stage in the family's life and what the countryside had to offer. Perceptive responses compared the benefits and disadvantages for one age group with another and how this might affect any overall decision for the family. The best responses assimilated the details of the passage confidently throughout into a whole new piece: the family had moved just a year ago; Mr Schmit was seemingly desperate to leave, the difference in the younger and teenage children's views of what the countryside had to offer; the notion of community; long journeys and narrow roads; school life; salary and career.

Furthermore, the best responses were able to see some of the contradictions in what Mr Schmit said about the people in the countryside. If they are a 'real community' and 'much friendlier', then the Schmits needed to look at themselves to find the explanation for the move not being a success. Strong responses argued that the countryside has plenty to offer and, if choosing to move there, you shouldn't expect the conveniences of the city. These responses were able to pick out some of the underlying attitudes that caused Mr Schmit and his family to be unhappy, revealed by the language Mr Schmit used; such as calling the salaries 'paltry'; his children were rude, 'weren't afraid' i.e. they were arrogant and superior; villagers 'had never known any other life' i.e. the Schmits were patronising; 'tedious and oppressive' – the children were spoilt and indulged.

This kind of evaluative approach to the material in the passage was required for marks in Band 2 and above. A mark of 7 was given where there were glimpses of evaluation of some of the points but a more consistently critical stance was required for higher marks. Where responses reproduced the points made in the passage, Examiners could not award marks above Band 3.

Mid-range responses and above, in varying degrees of detail, often praised Mr Schmit for his selflessness in thinking about the environment and putting his family first. Others said that he was selfish, not asking the family before moving. He was naïve or negligent in not researching properly, or he was a hypocrite for buying a car. Equally some expressed sympathy for the children, while others said they were over indulged and should have tried harder to integrate with the local community. Many pointed out that if you start criticising things as soon as you arrive, you can expect a hostile reaction. It was common to comment that Schmit should have forced his children to try harder and that both he and they gave up far too quickly.

Responses in this middle range tended to list specific reasons, such as the clean air or the peace and tranquillity as reasons for the move, and his children's grumbling about facilities or his long commute to work as reasons why the move did not work. Where there was some commentary on these issues, these remarks were not really evaluative and sometimes offered solutions rather than probing the passage itself. For example, responses at this level often criticised Mr Schmit for not consulting his children before they moved, an assumption which could not be derived from the passage. Many also suggested that he should have moved to a village closer to the city, and although this was a sensible solution it did not show the kind of grasp of inference and implicit meaning required for marks in the higher band. While correctly addressing the task, some responses disagreed with what Schmit had to say and challenged him over facts by saying that there are lots of facilities in the country, or that well paid jobs are to be found if you look hard for them. A stronger and more convincing line of argument was taken by candidates who acknowledged these shortcomings but said that moving to the countryside is a matter of balancing the pros and cons. Examiners could award a mark of 6 where there was straightforward but wide-ranging coverage of the points in the passage but responses with more limited selection could be given 5 marks.

Weaker responses failed to acknowledge that the Schmits were no longer residing in the countryside. This also led to tense errors in their writing. A fairly common weakness was that candidates agreed with Mr Schmit relocating back to the city after a brief spell in the countryside; thus, their responses didn't challenge his decision, but wrote quite strongly in support of it, stressing the limitations of life in the country, rather than bringing out the advantages. Some weaker responses made impractical suggestions which showed a limited understanding of the passage such as that Mr Schmit should have walked to work.

### **The marks for writing**

15 marks were available for style and audience, the structure of the answer and technical accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

### **Style and audience**

Most, across the mark range, wrote an introductory paragraph making clear the purpose of their letter.

Successful responses adopted an appropriate tone of voice in their response and structured their answers according to the requirements of a letter. Some, however, did not end the letter appropriately, or even at all. Some responses adopted a plain voice with unambitious vocabulary whereas others appeared rude and rather aggressive towards Mr Schmit for his lack of foresight and naivety.

Most candidates addressed Mr Schmit in their responses and continued to do so throughout. Higher band responses displayed an excellent balance between addressing Mr Schmit and showing their true opinions about his somewhat hasty and ill informed decisions, whilst keeping an appropriate and respectful tone of voice. This was achieved through the use of sophisticated vocabulary and the embedding of clauses which directly addressed Mr Schmit. Weaker responses slipped into discussing Mr Schmit in the letter or became confused with who they were actually addressing; some wrote as Mr Schmit himself.

### **Structure**

Some accomplished responses, awarded high marks for writing, handled the material confidently and presented their arguments as to why the move did not work, cogently. The issues addressed were combined into a response which was clearly derived from the ideas in the passage but was not dependent on its structure and sequence. Some stronger responses did not base their structure around the bullet points. At the highest level, an overview of the issues involved was given rather than a list of reasons for moving from the city and then returning to it. Some fluent responses with effective sentences did not give full attention to sequencing, so ideas within and between paragraphs were not linked as smoothly as they could have been. Moreover, there was some tendency, even among stronger responses, to neglect the use of paragraphs. Many middle band responses used discursive markers which provided effective structure. Some responses were structured according to the bullet points, occasionally devoting one long paragraph to each. Weaker

responses lacked a clear introduction and conclusion to the letter and ideas were presented in a jumbled way, often without paragraphs. Responses given marks below Band 3 were characterised by brief or no introductions and a simple list of some of the interviewee's points in sequence.

### Accuracy

Accomplished writing which was accurate and controlled was given a writing mark in Band 1. These responses were not only authoritative in style and convincing in their arguments but fluent and virtually free of error. Responses given 7, 8 or 9 were usually purposeful and clear, though not as ambitious and wide ranging in vocabulary and style as those given higher marks. Responses given marks in Band 4 sometimes showed some clarity in conveying meaning but there was a wide range of quite basic punctuation errors which precluded Examiners from awarding Band 3 marks and in addition, there was sometimes a simplicity of language and style. Sentence separation errors also appeared at this level and the frequency of errors became self-penalising, as did insecure grammar and awkward phrasing.

There was some overuse of informality, for example 'like' instead of 'as if', or 'such as' and also 'that' or 'which' instead of 'who'. The joining of separate words, for example 'aswell', 'infront', 'atall' and particularly 'alot' was prevalent.

Advice to candidates:

- try to develop ideas from the passage concisely, using inferences that are suggested in it, but without drifting beyond it
- be aware of the genre you are using for your answer. Think carefully about the right style for a letter or an article
- use paragraphs to structure responses
- check your writing for basic punctuation errors that will inevitably reduce your mark.

### Section 2: Composition

**Write about 350 to 450 words on one of the following questions.**

**Up to 13 marks are available for the content and structure of your answer, and up to 12 marks for the style and accuracy of your writing.**

#### Descriptive Writing

**2 Imagine you discover a box filled with objects you collected as a small child. Describe some of the objects and your thoughts and feelings as you look at them.**

**(25 marks)**

**OR**

**3 Imagine you are waiting in a café for a friend who is very late. Describe your surroundings and your thoughts and feelings as you wait.**

**(25 marks)**

The second question was the most popular of the two options.

The first question provided a great variety of responses across the range. The best responses not only demonstrated linguistic and stylistic skills but used a variety of devices to create atmosphere. Complex atmospheres relating to thoughts and feelings experienced were developed.

This question was often handled with considerable sensitivity and the responses felt real. Good responses were able to evoke mood and atmosphere, often accompanied by a sense of lost innocence. Responses at this level often used the outside of the box, focussing on a detailed description of dust covering it, then progressing to the items in the box as a starting point to describe experiences they had had in the past or the people that they associated with various items. Some more successful responses blended the different elements of the box with feelings and details of the contents as well as descriptions of the actual box and its

placement which was often buried in a dark closet or tucked away in an attic. There were some successful extended metaphors involving Pandora's Box, and 'the container of my childhood'.

Some middle band answers described the objects effectively without much exploration of the memories they inspired, or vice versa.

Some lower Band responses added a sense of danger, often causing them to drift into a narrative approach. Lower Band responses tended to list old toys and other items in a routine and perfunctory way which didn't allow for detail, creativity or development. Lower Band responses often had a fairly long narrative build up to the finding of the box which limited the description of the contents. A common issue for some mid and lower Band responses was that in an attempt to convey immediacy these began by employing the present tense but then switched to the past.

In the main, candidates seem to be at ease with structure as they progressed through 'extracting the items from their box' methodically.

The second question also produced responses across the range of marks and encouraged close observation of detail. Baristas, the smell of strong coffee and the smell of bread and/or croissants were all popularly described. Many succeeded in building an atmosphere of tension around waiting. Some higher Band responses linked this to a pathetic fallacy of bad weather.

Responses were often well crafted and evocative descriptions of the writer's surroundings, creating a powerful atmosphere. Some successful responses concentrated on the interior of the café and there was an attempt to capture the mood realistically and observantly. Other strong responses integrated the 'thoughts and feelings' aspect of the task with description of the surroundings, including details of specific people or groups of people in the scene. Responses which focused solely on physical details, such as the décor of the café or the smells and taste of the food, were not as effective and lacked range. This was also the case for those answers which focused solely on the thoughts and feeling of the narrator, as descriptions of anger and frustration, for example, could become rather repetitive and lacked variety.

Some middle and lower band responses often described the café as a dreadful place to be, exaggeratedly emphasising the culinary nightmare of the experience, made worse by the grotesque people who worked in, and the misfits who patronised the establishment. This did not feel realistic and spoil the overall effect.

Lower Band responses sometimes included descriptions of insignificant objects, for example, wrist watches, shoes and hairstyles, which didn't add to the effect. Occasionally, in an effort to achieve effect, responses included a sudden shift: the weather changed dramatically; the door opened with a 'high pitched thud' which disturbed cohesion. These weaker responses tended to focus purely on the frustration of waiting and clocked each passing minute.

Some responses included formulaic use of detail from each of the five senses which led to the details and images being presented in a disjointed way. This approach can weaken the structure and overall picture formed in even the strongest of responses.

Marks for Style and Accuracy were often lower than those for Content and Structure. Better responses chose precise and varied vocabulary and controlled complex sentences with secure punctuation within and between sentences. In weaker responses, tenses were used insecurely, and incomplete or poorly separated sentences adversely affected candidates' marks. Although there were fewer examples than previously of strings of incomplete, verbless sentences, this was often because there was more narrative than descriptive content in the weaker responses.

Some responses wrote descriptively through narrated events and, as a result, could access the higher marks, whereas weaker responses used narrative alone.

Advice to candidates:

- avoid narrative and remember to provide descriptive detail
- try to avoid clichéd scenarios and consider a more individual and original selection of content
- 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.



OR

### Narrative Writing

**4 Write a story entitled, 'The New Beginning.'**

(25 marks)

OR

**5 'This was too exciting a temptation to resist.' Write a story in which these words appear.**

(25 marks)

The first question was the most popular of the two options.

There was quite a range of subjects in response to **Question 4**. Responses took both a literal or metaphorical approach, the latter producing some of the most engaging responses.

Moving house or starting a new school were popular themes. Another popular theme was the idea of making a fresh start after a life of crime or immorality, escaping from some kind of abusive relationship or some form of personal growth or new awakening which ensured a new beginning. Some successful pieces gave moving narratives about escaping poverty and hardship via education.

Higher band responses often introduced a more dramatic scenario which represented a turning point for the narrator, allowing them to create suspense and a sense of climax to a greater extent. In contrast, one of the most successful responses was a complex and sophisticated character study – a rumination on the nature of freedom of both the body and the mind.

Middle band responses tended to take a rather autobiographical approach, beginning with the childhood of the narrator and describing events in their life in a chronological fashion, up until the point where their life had reached a turning point. These were effective on some occasions through attention to character and setting. Others relied on over-use of dialogue which was less successful. Weaker responses which focused on a straightforward story were often able to control this approach effectively. Such responses often tended to record a long sequence of biographical details about what had gone wrong in the life of the main character, leading to rather a poor structure.

Some lower band responses used Section A as inspiration, choosing to focus on the idea of moving and therefore having a new beginning. These responses were often straightforward or clichéd and relied heavily on action instead of the development of character or setting.

**Question 5** produced a wide range of often adventurously written responses. Most chose to focus their plots on some form of crime or being tempted into committing something serious or dangerous, for example a major robbery or a murder.

The most successful responses used subtle twists and turns in the narrative which produced complex and sophisticated writing. Higher band responses explored the idea of giving in to temptation, and the potential effects of this; for example, the temptation to disobey parental rules and subsequent consequences; another successful response took a science fiction approach in which the central character acquired an object which allowed its owner to move seamlessly between the future and present, until the temptation had 'festered and grown into an overwhelming monster' leaving the writer trapped in limbo between the living and the dead. These more successful responses showed planning and strategically inserted the question phrase seamlessly as a pivotal point in the story.

Middle Band responses often focussed on simple events, for example being tempted to steal a cookie or a challenge given by friends – ranging from bungee jumping, visiting a forbidden place or completing some misdemeanour at school; these were event driven with only brief development and often had a predictable ending that 'it was all a dream'.

Lower band responses tended to focus on totally unrealistic events such as being tempted to live on Mars or to steal unrealistic items. These lower band responses used the question phrase randomly within the narrative, often producing less cohesive plots as a result. Often, weaker responses involved complicated 'temptations' and lapsed into plots which were too unwieldy to convey events convincingly.

High marks for Style and Accuracy were given for responses where the writing was lively and varied in vocabulary and where different sentence structures were controlled and used to create particular effects. Errors in sentence control and separation, as well as lapses in tenses, if persistent, limited even competently told stories to Band 4, as did frequent errors in basic punctuation. Speech was over-used only in weaker responses but there were many scripts where the punctuation of direct speech was insecure, even when the story itself was quite well-structured. Again, basic punctuation errors with capital letters, the spelling of simple words and misused homophones appeared in otherwise competent writing and were sometimes so frequent as to affect the mark for Style and Accuracy.

Advice to candidates:

- remember that stories need more than events to interest the reader
- plan the ending before you begin so that you can shape your story appropriately
- characters' thoughts and feelings help to engage your reader
- originality is important. Try to think of unusual approaches to your topic, but keep the details credible
- check your writing for errors, especially missing full stops.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

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Paper 0522/04  
Coursework Portfolio

## Key messages

In this component, candidates should aim to:

- reflect in their writing their personal ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world about them
- choose assignments that challenge them to write at the highest standard of which they are capable
- write independently of undue guidance from published materials or from teachers
- demonstrate variety of style, use of language and genre in the three assignments
- write in fluent and varied sentences separated by full stops and clarified by the appropriate use of commas and other punctuation
- revise, edit and correct first drafts in their own handwriting
- proof read their work carefully, as marks are deducted for typing errors.

## General comments

This year's entry for the coursework component was the largest in its history and over a hundred Moderators assessed the samples.

There were many examples of Centres who fully understood the educational opportunities afforded by coursework. This was reflected in their choice of interesting and challenging assignments, the general advice given to candidates at the end of each draft and on the final versions, and the encouragement of original thought by the candidates.

Most Centres put a great deal of effort into their folder work. Some however, showed little imagination in the assignments that they set and were often content to use tasks and texts that they had found in textbooks or had used in previous sessions. This safety first factor affected interest in the content of the work and the enthusiasm of candidates to express and develop their own ideas.

Many points made and explained in detail in previous editions of this report had either not been read or incorporated into the planning and administration of the coursework.

One of these concerned advice given about the reading test in Assignment 3 where there was an increase by Centres awarding Band 1 marks to candidates who had showed little evidence of reading for detail, writing an overview of the writer's attitude or developing a sound set of evaluations. There was an increase in the number of candidates who used the text as a stimulus and addressed the topic instead of analysing the text. Centres who understood the nature of the exercise did well.

There was a tendency for Centres to ignore a considerable amount of error particularly of sentence separation. Candidates often wrote in short sentences and wrongly divided their sentences with commas. Many candidates over-used semi colons.

Centres often did not record changes made to the marks at internal moderation and in some cases there was no evidence that internal moderation had taken place. These changes should be made on the CASF(WMS) form where there should be clear evidence that every set has been sufficiently sub-sampled. Some moderators reported problems with a lack of consistency in the marking. This may have been caused by a lack of internal moderation or inaccurate weighting of the four main objectives of content, structure, style and accuracy.

In many cases teachers indicated specific errors in drafts and corrected some or all of them. This is strictly not allowed but teachers should give general advice at the bottom of the draft. They should not write in the margins or in the body of the text. In some cases two or more teachers from a Centre were involved in this practice and sometimes the mark given to the candidate was increased with little effort on the part of the candidate. Where this was judged a malpractice, scripts were sent to the Regulations Team in Cambridge to decide any further action.

### **Good Practice**

- Candidates were given flexibility in choosing topics and titles that interested them and were of sufficient challenge with regard to their ability.
- They were encouraged to write in their own register and to express their own opinions and not to repeat standard opinions found elsewhere, for example on the internet.
- For Assignment 3 they were encouraged to make their own choice of ideas and opinions from the text and to evaluate the writer's use of them, for example evaluating inconsistencies and bias. They were also encouraged to give an overview of the article as a whole including the writer's attitude.
- As a result of general advice given on the draft, they indicated changes using a different coloured ink, editing, revising and correcting in order to improve the work.

### **Bad Practice**

- Candidates were given little choice and often a whole set would be given the same task to complete, so that the exercise became more like an examination than coursework.
- Some assignments appeared to be 'off the peg', probably from text books and often previously used by the Centre.
- The content of some assignments was often very similar indicating undue help from a textbook or ideas given out in class.
- Drafts were often plain, having no general advice or guidance.

### **Task setting**

Several points have already been made about task setting. The best practice was to set tasks that coincided with candidates' imagination and their interests.

Tasks set for Assignment 1 were generally more varied than in previous years, but there were still some that, because of their nature, did not score so highly as a well-argued issue of concern.

For Assignment 2, Centres should take care that candidates write narratives that are credible and within their imaginative experience. They should also make sure that narratives give an indication of maturity, given the age of the candidate.

For Assignment 3, the text(s) chosen must have a sufficient number of ideas and opinions that candidates can evaluate and comment on to some purpose. Some Centres gave considerable choice, even down to every candidate having a different text, and all of them were appropriate. Other Centres gave out one text only which had few ideas and opinions of any depth or value, and thus gave their candidates little chance of scoring high reading marks.

### **Assessment of coursework**

#### **Writing**

Candidates assessed in Band 1 are expected to demonstrate almost perfect accuracy. Coursework offers excellent opportunities for candidates to draft and to check their work for errors. They have time to proof read their responses and are allowed to use electronic devices to help them with spelling and to identify stylistic shortcomings.

Some Centres were extremely strict about accuracy. This was largely because they had spent time and care teaching it and expected candidates to put their teaching into action.

Other Centres did not seem to notice the incidence of error. Sometimes there was a comment at the end of a piece of work to the effect that there were few errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, when a more careful analysis showed that they were common throughout the work-

The commonest error was that of sentence separation.

Some candidates ran into problems over the use of present and past tense in Assignment 2, making repeated changes throughout the writing.

The frequent use of dashes (often appearing as hyphens in typed scripts) is not recommended. Full stops and commas are often more useful and the use of brackets should be considered. Exclamation marks were used injudiciously and question marks were put at the end of statements, particularly those beginning with the word 'surely'.

Teachers were asked to annotate errors in final submitted pieces, and often this was done sporadically but not exhaustively so that Moderators had little idea how marks had been awarded. Many scripts had no annotation of errors at all, which in some cases led Moderators to believe that accuracy had been disregarded.

The assessment of style was generally more secure. Candidates adopted a variety of registers and most of these were consistent and appropriate (although there were examples of bad language that should not have occurred). Most candidates gave evidence of a range of vocabulary in their second piece. Assessors did not always distinguish between candidates who used the right word to express a variety of details and ideas and those who tried to be too clever and used words that made meanings less clear or which were not quite the right usage. There were a number of examples of inappropriate imagery, usually from the world of animals, not applicable to the detail that was described. Sentence structure varied greatly from candidate to candidate.

On the whole, content was correctly assessed and most candidates scoring high marks attempted more difficult tasks. Exceptions to this included tourist guides, some leaflets, film reviews, some versions of 'Don't get me started', biographies of pop stars, and 'A life in the day...' These examples of safe tasks, which tended to produce standard responses, did not always test candidates above Band 3 and the bottom of Band 2.

Structure was generally good and was correctly assessed. Exceptions to this were in Assignment 1 if there was no pattern in the order of paragraphs and if the sequence within paragraphs was insecure. In Assignment 2 the order was nearly always good with some attempt to entertain by various devices, for example twists near and at the end of a story, or the use of two narrators, and the usual flashbacks and time lapses. Some stories were however, no more than collections of events with unconvincing endings. This was also true of some descriptions which were collections of images with little shape. However, most descriptions had some sense of changing time or perception. The most difficult Assignment 2 tasks to structure were monologues which were prone to repetition of moods and ideas. In Assignment 3, not all responses were structured and while a selection of ideas and opinions was made from the text, there was not always a sense of order or progression.

### **Assessment of reading**

Marks for reading were for candidates who could give an overview of the whole text and the writer's attitude, giving evidence of a grasp of the text as a whole, and who could select relevant ideas and opinions and make significant and quality evaluations and comments about them. The best candidates tied in their individual selections to the overview which could be at the beginning of the response or could form the basis of the whole assignment.

Centres that had thought this out carefully scored high marks, but many responses were over marked because:

- candidates addressed the topic and not the text (so there was little evidence of reading)
- they made little reference to complete ideas and opinions
- they summarised the text
- the quality of their responses was not sufficient, with little development or even logicity, sometimes straying from the selected idea to write about something else
- the text had no depth and few ideas and opinions with which to engage.

Where centres over-marked they often neglected to consider that this assignment was a test of reading which required understanding of both explicit meaning and of underlying attitudes.

## Administration by Centres

### Summary of the contents of the folder

- 1 The folders required from each centre by CIE
- 2 In addition, the top and bottom folder in the Centre's mark range
- 3 The CASFs(WMS) for all the candidates in the Centre
- 4 The Moderator's copy of the MS1 or electronically submitted mark list.
- 5 An early draft (see below) of one of the assignments
- 6 A copy of the article used for Assignment 3, preferably with the candidate's annotations.

The folders required by CIE were correctly sent to Cambridge, as set out in 1 and 2. Some Centres still presented them in plastic bags, which were time consuming and awkward to handle. There were a few examples of work that was not securely fixed together, and this gave rise to a possibility of the loss of an important piece of paper. Most Centres kindly put the folders in descending order of merit.

3 and 4 were included, but not all Centres submitted a complete CASF for the whole entry. This was needed to check the addition of marks and to ensure that they had been correctly transferred to the mark sheet. Moderators discovered a large number of errors. Where marks had been changed at internal moderation, these changes were normally made clearly on the folders, but this was not always the case.

5 and 6 were normally included, although there were some rare occasions where a text was missing. Moderators had to read the texts before they could fairly judge the quality of the candidate's response.

### Annotation

A comment has already been made about the lack of annotation of error on the final versions of assignments. Otherwise there was plenty of useful comment at the ends of pieces of work and in the margins, although some of the comments were for very ephemeral features that were not always typical of the whole work. There was a tendency to over praise work rather than to point out weaknesses, and this sometimes resulted in over marking.

### Drafts

The function of the draft is to give the candidate an opportunity to improve work through editing (eg words and phrases), revising (eg sections) and correcting. Ways in which this can be done are included in the general advice to be written at the end of the draft.

There were Centres where candidates were encouraged to do their own re-drafting. Centres are reminded that must not indicate errors by highlighting, circling or commenting in the margin. Coursework must be a candidate's own, unaided work.

### Internal moderation

It was sometimes difficult to find evidence that this had taken place formally. Some form of internal moderation is essential in all Centres with more than one set of candidates. The best way is to choose two teachers who cross moderate their own sets and who then apply their agreed standards by sub sampling the other sets. Where a pattern of leniency or severity is found, the set teacher is invited to submit a new set of marks, or the whole or part of that set can be scaled. All changes should appear in the right hand column of the CASF form. This was rarely done, which meant that the Moderator was unable to carry out an important check. Some Centres clearly carried out internal moderation and annotated the folders with new marks, although this was sometimes confined to agreement. There were examples of inconsistent marking (as indicated above).

### Authenticity

As usual there were examples of copying from websites and Moderators reported these and sent evidence to the Regulations team at Cambridge. Centres are reminded that, knowing their candidates, it is easy to be suspicious about an assignment that is clearly out of keeping with the normal standard of a candidate's work. Where a plagiarised response is found, it should be removed from the folder and either replaced by original work or the final mark should be adjusted for a missing piece.

## Assignment 1

There were many examples of well-argued, persuasive writing. The work was often original and there was evidence of personal conviction in presenting a topic. At its best, the register was well adapted to a supposed audience and not too formal, so that the intensity of the writing was communicated well. Again, at its best, this writing was orderly and the sequence of each part of the argument was secure, so that the reader had no problems in following the work.

There were also examples of writing that was competent but less effective because the topics were too well worn. The cases for and against the death penalty were so similar that one suspected that they emanated from a published source. Some were far too similar to the arguments in the over used Flamehorse article. There were similarities in the cases for euthanasia and abortion and it was only rarely that one of these topics caused a candidate to write with any freshness or originality. Many candidates wrote about the dangers of social media with little enthusiasm, and defences of video games had little life in them.

Despite warnings in previous reports, 'Don't get me started...' and 'Room 101' still made frequent appearances. Some candidates wrote well when they chose a topic that they could argue effectively and which challenged them appropriately. Others chose unchallenging topics for which little credit could be claimed. For 'Room 101', candidates were much better when they chose only one topic. Where there were more, no skills of overall structure were apparent. Some of the topics chosen by less strong candidates were the same as those seen in other scripts from other Centres, and it seemed that they were copied from a primary source.

Most film reviews were disappointing. They contained copious compliments to actors, producers and musicians that were often very similar within a Centre. Part of the writing was taken up with an account of the story line, which was not challenging. There was then a section about the acting which was often superficial and something about the special effects and the music. Many of these reviews gave the impression of going through a plan copied from elsewhere and occasionally the writing style did not appear very original.

These, and other types of topic listed previously in this report, were best avoided except by weaker candidates. In some Centres, every candidate appeared to have been given the possibility of choosing a personal topic, and this was generally most satisfactory. The following list illustrates originality in choosing one's own topic for Assignment 1. On such occasions, candidates were left to their own devices in order to plan and complete the work.

*Florence Nightingale – misogynist*  
*The real meaning of Christmas*  
*Is sugar the new cocaine?*  
*Gender and football*  
*I am Indian*  
*Being a fan matters*  
*Funerals – a dying industry*  
*The challenge of being fatherless*  
*Extreme haircuts*  
*A generation more plastic than their Barbie dolls*  
*Robot invasion*  
*Free libraries*  
*Selfish selfies*

## Assignment 2

Much of the narrative writing was original and very engaging to the reader. One Centre worked round the central idea of 'The bus stop' and clearly needed no help from a teacher to build their stories round a selection of sometimes sad characters who were at the bus stop for different reasons and at crucial moments in their lives.

All the best stories were first and foremost credible. This meant avoiding unreal events and situations but it also meant using the type of language that communicated things and people as they really were. The inclusion of striking dialogue with a function in the plot was also important. Stories also had to reflect the maturity of a sixteen year old. Although there were rare examples of a successful zombie story, most were trains of incredible events. There were a number of accounts of air crashes. It was not credible that the writer of a story should die in the last line and where there was a sole survivor, there was often more incredulity.

A number of Moderators pointed out that some topics were outside the imaginative world of the candidates. This was true of some of the accounts of 9/11, although there were occasional good twists to the story. It was also true of the First World War stories and the very derivative Omaha Landing topic that was best avoided.

Also best avoided were narratives based on video games because they were lists of mostly violent events.

Some of the best writing was from a candidate's own experience and there were also some good and many competent descriptions. Writing that reflected positive features of life, particularly where there was a little humour or irony was better than writing about endless misery. It was also much better to write with a specific title in mind.

Here again are some titles that worked:

*Noises*

*The Catch (a story about a cat)*

*Fashion show*

*School assembly*

*The end of the road*

*Song of the grave digger*

*A family meal*

*A Zanzibar market*

*24 minutes to disaster (an original countdown narrative)*

*Climbing a construction crane*

*A funeral and a wedding*

*Prospero's prologue (a clever take on 'The Tempest')*

*Famous for the day*

### **Assignment 3**

There were some original choices of texts for Assignment 3, but there were also some bad ones that disadvantaged candidates.

Multiple texts and texts longer than two sides of A4 paper caused candidates to make use of only a section of the reading and not grasping the text as a whole. Some very clever candidates could do this, but they were a rarity.

Some texts had very few ideas and opinions with which candidates could engage. Examples of this were 'I saw a killer die' which elicited very little creditable response and which was a questionable piece to set candidates in any case. A small section from 'Warhorse' was reflective narrative and again had little for candidates to work with. 'Educating Essex', a throwback to an ancient TV programme, had a few rather weak anecdotal events which hardly constituted ideas and which provoked almost the same responses from the candidates who attempted it. 'Educating Yorkshire', a more suitable article which started as a review but turned into a general, illogical attack on teenagers, proved too difficult for most candidates who could not appreciate the difference between the events of the programme which were reported and the use made of the review by the writer. Finally the tragic article about Tony Nicklinson had nothing to work with except the words of the sufferer himself: this made candidates write about the issue and introduce ideas such as the responsibilities of doctors and Biblical references which were not alluded to in the article.

It was a shame that teachers did not attempt to find more up to date articles. Many relied on writing by Katie Hopkins and Jeremy Clarkson and it was surprising that more use was not made of a large number of other controversial journalists writing on up to date topics. Here are a few successful text topics:

*Paternity leave*

*Single sex schools for boys*

*Homework*

*Choosing state education*

*The Syrian migrant crisis*

*Women and boxing*

*Ban the TT (An annual race for motor bikes on an offshore British island)*

*Charlie Hebdo*

*The Glastonbury Festival (an annual summer rock festival held in a field in the middle of the British countryside)*



### **Final comments**

Again the Moderators thank Centres for the efforts they made to complete what were often very worthwhile and readable folders. They would suggest however, that more thought might sometimes be put into the setting of assignments and particularly of allowing candidates opportunities to make their own choices about what they want to write about. Once the work has started it is important that they should be free of reference to resources that guide their writing, and teachers should not offer undue guidance in class.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

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Paper 0522/05  
Speaking and Listening

## Key messages

The main messages:

- **Timings.** Read carefully and thoroughly the instructions in the syllabus relating to how this component should be carried out. In the syllabus, the required timings of both parts of the test are clearly stipulated and if these are adhered to then the likelihood of an efficient examination is greatly increased.
- **Sending all recordings.** Please note that all centres are required to send the recordings for all of their candidates. Failure to submit all recordings may result in a delay in releasing candidates' results.

Other messages:

- Generally, candidates should try to make their **Part 1** presentations lively, by perhaps incorporating more creative presentational styles. There is scope for further creativity in **Part 1** for example, by taking up a 'voice' or presenting a dramatic monologue. Presenting empathic work using literary texts often leads to quality work. Teachers may like to explore these approaches in lessons.
- Differentiation by task-setting is encouraged for this component. A more capable student is likely to attempt a more ambitious presentation and to engage with more sophisticated content – and such a student should be encouraged to do this. Teachers are encouraged to work with individual students to help guide them towards topics which promote a full, 6 to 7 minute dialogue in **Part 2**, allowing for the incorporation of anecdotes, examples, views, opinions, etc.
- To avoid the pitfall of short or over-long discussions, practise carrying out sustained, on-task discussions of around 5 minutes on a regular basis in the classroom. This should explore the use of tangential discussion – i.e. contributions from both parties which change direction but which still relate to the main theme.
- Centres should avoid sending video files, as these can often cause issues with Moderators. Any video files which are sent are viewed without a picture, as this is an assessment of speaking and listening, thus negating any benefits of have a visual recording.

Messages relating to assessment:

## **Part 1**

- In **Part 1**, Moderators advise examiners to be sure that a candidate has met the criteria for Band 1 fully before awarding 9 or 10 marks. If an individual task is of the standard, factually-based, reportage style, even if well done, then a low Band 2 mark is likely to be the highest available, and a Band 3 mark perhaps more appropriate.
- More mundane and pedestrian talks should be placed in Band 3.
- Candidates who present very short **Part 1s** or those which rely heavily on notes are not likely to achieve higher than Band 4, where 'delivery is not secure, resulting in some loss of audience interest' is the most likely and appropriate descriptor.
- Very long **Part 1s** do not satisfy Band 1 requirements, as they lack the required control, structure and poignancy. An over-long **Part 1** is one that runs for beyond 5 minutes.
- Examiners are reminded not to award marks for content per se – it is the use of (i.e. the development of) the content which is being assessed. For example, 'What has inspired me...' could achieve a Band 1, or indeed a Band 5, depending on how the content has been planned, is introduced, is organised, and then presented and developed.

## Part 2

- Some discussions were too long; 7 minutes is the maximum time allowed. Over-long discussions are unnecessary and counter-productive. If a discussion carries on beyond 7 minutes there is a likelihood that the assessment criteria will become compromised as the discussions may stray off task and begin to lack cogency. There is no need to extend **Part 2** beyond the allotted time and it may indeed disadvantage candidates as marks may be reduced at external moderation.

### Internal moderation

- Centres using more than one examiner should conduct internal moderation – i.e. a systematic revision of a sample of candidates, covering a good spread of marks. This is often successful when completed as a team effort, and should achieve consistency among assessors and highlight any outlying marks for specific candidates which can be further investigated.

### General comments

#### Conduct of the examination and a suitable location

Please note that this is a formal examination and as such an appropriate examination room is required. Candidates should not be examined in the presence of other candidates. A quiet, secure room is crucial for the success of the examination. Some centres are reminded that the test should be conducted by a single examiner. While a second person may be present, the test itself must be conducted entirely by one examiner; it is not permissible for two people to ask questions or discuss matters with the candidate.

#### Materials required by the Moderator

As a reminder to centres, Cambridge requires three different items in the package sent to the Moderator: **1** all of the candidates' recordings on as few CDs/DVDs as possible (or preferably, on a single USB drive) and using separate re-named audio tracks for each candidate, **2** the summary forms for the entire entry, and **3** a copy of the Mark Sheet that has already been sent to Cambridge confirming the final marks. In addition, any letters relating to the work undertaken by the students or regarding issues experienced by the centre should also be placed in the package for the attention of the external Moderator.

- 1** Please create a single folder on the CD or USB and place all recordings in that folder. The use of sub-folders should be avoided. Please note that without the full set of recordings, Cambridge is unable to moderate the work from a centre and this may affect the timing of results issued to candidates while the full set of recordings is requested and supplied.
- 2** The summary form is the form that records the separate marks awarded to the two parts of the test, in addition to the total mark. The teacher/examiner who conducts the examination is responsible for filling out the summary form. The form is a working record of the examining undertaken, and should be signed and dated by the teacher/examiner responsible for the tests. It would be very useful if the candidate numbers can be recorded on the summary forms as they appear on the mark sheets.
- 3** The Moderator needs a copy of the mark sheet in order to verify the accuracy of the transcription of the marks from the summary forms.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### ***Part 1 – the Individual Task***

#### **Strong work in Part 1**

The more interesting and successful individual tasks were from candidates who spoke from brief notes and about a topic they felt passionately about and which they had researched thoroughly. Successful tasks often included some kind of visual presentation to the examiner, such as sharing a Powerpoint slide or some photographs. The most successful presentations were given by candidates fired by a passion who also utilised a variety of speaking devices to maintain the listeners' interest. In all the best examples there was a real sense of engagement with the topic. Where candidates chose well, prepared thoroughly and were fully committed to the task the results were usually good.

#### **Alternative approaches**

Those candidates who tried something different stood out as being more likely to meet the top band criteria – for instance, talks with humour, irony and emphasis suggesting an eloquence which showed greater awareness of a wider audience. These presentations were often highly engaging and memorable. Candidates who created their own literary pieces (e.g. in character, or empathic pieces) often performed well and more candidates are encouraged to create their own, original pieces.

#### **Use of third party sources**

Every candidate is encouraged to choose a topic of personal interest and to talk as freely as possible about this. Some candidates will perform better therefore by relying less on collating from third party sources and simply repeating this. However, candidates who refer to third party sources for inspiration and then create their own talks based on the material will achieve higher reward. In the worst cases, reliance on third party sources can lead to plagiarism. In the better cases, being stimulated by third party sources and quoting directly from them in a minimal and selective manner can lead to highly competent work.

#### **Some examples of productive Part 1 tasks from this session:**

- Experiences from travelling (there were many inspiring talks about personal experiences of moving to different countries)
- Feminism linked to education or other issues (e.g. there were powerful talks about Malala Yousafzai)
- Political topics (e.g. discussion on South Africa today and the lasting impact of apartheid)
- The unwelcome revival of eugenics
- My future life as a rugby coach (in character)
- Escaping from a war zone
- Leaving Syria as a refugee
- Nigerian weddings
- Paranormal activists
- Child marriage.

From this list, it can be seen that the crafting of the task is important. Some topics hinder candidates – e.g. my family, my pets, my football team, my favourite video game, etc. – unless these are woven into a controlled piece with a specific objective and/or rationale. ~~In short~~, very broad topics are not likely to be as successful as refined topics – e.g. instead of why I like the sport of rugby, the candidate who delivered a monologue as if he were a rugby coach showed finesse and very careful planning.

### ***Part 2 – the Discussion***

#### **Strong work in Part 2**

Moderators are happy that in many cases, examiners were very much part of the discussions, entering into the spirit of the occasion, and that in these cases the conversations were generally productive extensions of the individual tasks. Such candidates had clearly planned for further discussion and had predicted probable questions, or areas of interest that might be appropriate for further discussion. More effective examining 'raised the bar', encouraging stronger candidates to explore more sophisticated issues by asking challenging questions to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

### **Taking notes to prepare for discussion**

Effective discussions clearly arose when examiners took notes as the candidates completed their talks, and then based the discussions very closely on what the candidates had actually spoken about. This usually led to focused conversations, and changes in direction which arose naturally from the content covered in the individual task.

### **Staying on task**

In general, candidates and examiners stayed on task. However, there were some instances of examiners using the allotted time to involve candidates in discussions about other matters – for example, their future plans or other interests – when this was not part of the candidate’s talk. Such transgressions are likely to result in lower marks as the assessment criteria assume that content in **Part 2** relates directly to content in **Part 1**. The examiner should ensure that the discussion stays on-task for the duration of **Part 2**. At no point is it acceptable for an examiner to introduce other topics and themes or to stray into general conversation.

### **Open and closed questions, and effective questioning**

A good prompt will draw on previous discussion and will enable the candidate to respond with an argument, a defence, a point of view, an anecdote, an example, etc. More work in the classroom practising dialogic learning is likely to help here to create a culture of effective questioning, and this should be aligned to the principles of the assessment of integrated speaking and listening as delineated in the **Part 2** assessment criteria grid. Moderators accept that it is not an easy task to conduct an effective **Part 2** discussion for this examination. However, where an examiner has not conducted his or her part of the discussion effectively, the impact on the candidate is of great concern.

### **Concluding comments**

There were many cases where Moderators reported refreshing and lively work, where it was clear that the students had enjoyed taking control of their own learning and had responded well to being allowed to be active in the skills of research, oral presentation and subsequent discussion.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

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Paper 0522/06  
Speaking and Listening (Coursework)

## Key messages

### Choosing the correct pathway

- Component 6 consists of three distinct tasks: **Task 1** is an individual presentation; **Task 2** is a paired activity; **Task 3** is a group activity.
- The three tasks are distinct and should be attempted at different stages in the course, preferably using different topics. It is not advisable for candidates to undertake **Task 1** and **Task 2** in one session in a hybrid form of the Component 5 test as this is against the spirit and ethos of Component 6 and can lead to stilted responses lacking scope and depth.
- The three separate tasks can be assessed at any time during the course. This flexibility allows a broader range of topics and skills to be assessed but requires centres to fully embrace the concept that the Speaking and Listening tasks are an integral part of the overall course.
- Centres should decide whether to choose Component 5 or Component 6 at the beginning of the planning stage. It is very difficult to change from one component to the other and is certainly not recommended as the components are distinct in their approaches to the Speaking and Listening section of the syllabus.
- Uncertainty and confusion as to which pathway to follow can lead to centres entering for the wrong component. This always causes problems for the centre and the moderator.

### Recommended support material

- Centres are urged to use both the current syllabus and 'Speaking and Listening Handbook' to ensure the requirements for the administration of the component are met in full. All the relevant information is contained within these documents.
- Official Cambridge training sessions are run throughout the year.
- Enhanced online support materials are available.

### What to send in the sample packet

- Please be aware that four different items must be included in the sample package sent to the Moderator: All the centre's recordings; all the Summary Forms; all the individual Candidate Record Cards and a copy of the mark sheets showing the total marks awarded for each candidate entered.

### Recordings

- Centres are required to record all the **Task 1** and **2** responses for the entire entered cohort. All these must be sent in the centre's sample for the purpose of moderation.

- We strongly encourage the use of digital recording equipment to generate audio files which can then be transferred to a CD, DVD or USB drive in a recognised common audio file format that can be played by standard computer software.
- Centres should avoid sending video files, as these can often cause issues with Moderators. Any video files which are sent are viewed without a picture, as this is an assessment of speaking and listening, thus negating any benefits of have a visual recording.
- Please check the quality of the recordings before despatching to Cambridge and ensure that the CD, DVD or USB is securely packaged to avoid damage in transit. A jiffy bag is recommended.
- Ideally the recordings should be arranged in the same order as on the mark sheets – i.e. in candidate number order.
- Centres are urged to transfer their cohorts' recordings onto a single CD or USB that contains one file for **Task 1** and another for **Task 2**. In turn, these should contain the candidates' recordings arranged in candidate number order. Sub-files for different teaching groups or for recordings made on different dates are unhelpful and time-consuming for the moderator.
- Each track should be labelled with the candidate's name and number. For **Task 2**, both candidates' names and numbers should be included in the title of the track.
- Each track should be introduced formally using the rubric prescribed in the current syllabus and centres should ensure that each candidate involved in the **Task 2** Paired Activity is clearly introduced at the beginning of the recording so it is absolutely clear to the moderator who is speaking first and who is the second participant.
- Wherever possible, recordings should be made in a quiet, undisturbed environment.

### Summary Forms

- Moderators require Summary Forms detailing a breakdown of the marks awarded for the whole cohort entered. Preferably these are completed in candidate number order.
- Please note the Component 6 Summary Form is different to the Component 5 version. The two are not interchangeable.
- Ideally the Summary Forms should be arranged in the same order as the mark sheets – i.e. in candidate number order.
- The accuracy of the Summary Forms should be checked thoroughly before submitting to Cambridge.

### Candidate Record Cards

- A requirement for this component is that an individual Candidate Record Card should be completed for each candidate.
- All the Record Cards should be included in the sample sent to Cambridge.
- The individual Record Cards should include specific information about the choices made for each task and not just generic statements.
- The moderator is required to make a judgement as to the suitability of the centre's approach to Component 6. Without the Record Cards this judgement cannot be made.

### A copy of the mark sheets

- A copy of the marks (the MS1) already sent to Cambridge should be included in the sample sent for moderation
- Centres should ensure that the copies can be read clearly.

### General comments

- Any candidate who is absent should be recorded as such on the relevant documentation and only those who attempted the activity but who failed to contribute should be given a mark of 0.
- If a mark has been changed as a result of internal moderation, please make it clear on the Summary Forms which of the four separate criteria marks have been modified.
- Cambridge provides specific forms for use with Component 6; namely the Individual Candidate Record and the Summary Form. These can now be found on and downloaded from the relevant page of the Cambridge website. It is permissible for centres to create their own versions of these forms but in doing so centres must ensure the required information is present and easy to disseminate.
- For Component 6, centres are encouraged to be creative in the choice of tasks as long as the assessment criteria are used as a guide to the skills being assessed.

### Comments on specific tasks

Well planned and prepared responses to tasks were generally more successful but, in particular, **Tasks 1** and **2** do not benefit from over-scripted and seemingly 'artificial' performances where spontaneity is missing. Candidates aspiring to the higher band criteria need to be able to react positively to changes in the direction of the discussion in **Task 2**.

In response to **Tasks 1** and **2**, it is very difficult to achieve the higher bands if the performances are heavily scripted.

#### **Task 1**

Responses generally took the form of an individual presentation. This component allows differentiation by task setting so the ability of the individual candidate needs to be taken into consideration when topics are chosen. This component allows the candidate and teacher to work together through rehearsal and development of the task to ensure the topic choice is suitable.

Some examples of productive **Task 1** activities include:

- 'My holiday in .....' that is developed beyond a narrative account.
- A personal experience that is relevant, thought-provoking and developed beyond narrative.
- Personal responses to relevant social issues such as cyber-bullying, gender equality and media bias.
- A review of a film, book, concert or sporting event where the candidate is thoroughly engaged and able to develop the presentation beyond a literal re-telling of the events.
- An engaged reflection on a hobby or sport in which the candidate is thoroughly engaged. (Generally sports other than football work best as they tend to be less generic and more specifically focussed.)  
Topics that seem to work particularly well are: Anime, skate-boarding, working with horses and rugby.

#### **Task 2**

There should be only two participants in **Task 2**. Where there is an extra candidate, a teacher or a pupil who has been assessed may make up the pair. It is unacceptable and an infringement of the rubric for this task to be performed by three candidates. In effect, any **Task 2** activity comprising of more than two candidates becomes a **Task 3** Group Activity. As three distinct tasks are expected in response to Component 6, this becomes non-compliance and will be treated accordingly.

For paired activities it is essential that the Moderator is able to distinguish between the candidates in the activity so that successful moderation can take place. The simplest way of achieving this is for the candidates to introduce themselves and their roles in the activity at the beginning of the recording.



Unlike Component 5, there is no specified time duration for Component 06 tasks but it is difficult to see how both candidates in the Paired-Task activity can meet higher level criteria such as 'responds fully', 'develops prompts' or 'employs a wide range of language devices' in a performance lasting less than two minutes. Given that both speaking and listening are assessed, it is important that the activities last long enough for candidates to clearly demonstrate their strengths in both mediums. Planned, rehearsed and developed performances will normally justify higher marks in the same way written examination practise encourages more successful outcomes.

The Pair-Based Activity is more successful when two candidates of similar ability work as a pair. With regard to role-plays, it should be borne in mind that this is an assessment of language skills rather than drama skills so the language requirements should always drive the assessment criteria.

Responses to **Task 2** that are teacher-led, either with a teacher interviewing a candidate or with two candidates being led by a teacher, are less successful than a developed discussion between two candidates. It is recommended that this approach is only considered where it is deemed the candidates are too weak to initiate the discussion without external assistance.

A popular **Task 2** vehicle is the 'interview' where one candidate acts as the interviewer and the other is the interviewee. This can work well but there is an inherent weakness in the activity if the interviewer does little more than ask a set of pre-prepared questions. This restricts the level of performance, particularly for the Listening element. One way to counteract this problem is for candidates to swap roles halfway through so each has the opportunity to demonstrate a wider range of relevant skills.

Some examples of productive **Task 2** activities include:

- Body image
- Playstation or X-Box?
- Topical social issues such as sexism in sport
- Feminism/Gender inequality
- Reality television versus real life
- Planning a school prom
- Analysis of set texts such as poems and novels
- Cyber-bullying
- Are zoos an evil necessity or just evil?
- Should teenagers take more notice of politics?
- Room 101 but only if well-prepared and where both candidates take it in turn to be the participant.

It is strongly advised that **Task 2** should not be scripted but a level of preparation and formality is required. Seemingly unprepared, chatty and informal discussions do not reflect well on the candidates' ability and often do not address the higher band criteria in the mark scheme.

### Task 3

**Task 3** may take various forms but it is most important that each candidate in the group is allowed sufficient scope within the activity to demonstrate their strengths without being dominated by others. A group made up of candidates of similar ability levels is often more successful. In more diverse groupings the weaker candidates are disadvantaged and do not have the opportunity to contribute to the best of their ability. The role of a group leader should be considered as a more successful outcome usually results from having one of the candidates directing the focus of the discussion.

*Some examples of productive **Task 3** activities include:*

- Characters from a literary text participating in a televised debate
- Performing an additional, self-devised scene from a play candidates have studied
- Any discussion of a topical issue with each candidate having their own viewpoint
- What to include in a time capsule/ school newspaper, etc.
- Championing a character from a film or book where each candidate chooses their favourite
- Balloon debates

## General conclusions

- It is gratifying to report that the general level of assessment by centres is in line with the expected standard.
- There are many centres where internal moderation has been successful.
- Successful centres continue to implement the component efficiently and imaginatively. Samples are generally well-prepared and aid the moderation process considerably.
- A huge 'thank you' is extended to all our successful centres.
- Component code errors continue to cause considerable disruption and are unnecessary.
- Where problems have arisen, centres have not followed the instructions regarding sampling and documentation. It is an expectation that centres provide the requisite documentation and that it is accurate.

All the documentation asked for in samples is used to check and cross-check as part of the rigour that underpins the moderation process. In the end this is of benefit to centres and their candidates. It is important to remember that every centre is moderated in every session and that this process is conducted rigorously to protect the reputation of the component and to maintain the standard so that centres may have continued confidence in the product they have chosen.