ENGLISH LANGUAGE

> **Paper 9093/12**
> **Passages**

Key messages

- Candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources – such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspaper articles, blogs, advertisements – so that they can assess not only the conventions and language associated with different formats and genres, but also comment on the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases.

- Candidates need to be able to adapt their own writing style to incorporate diverse directed tasks – for example voice overs, articles, memoirs – and demonstrate secure familiarity with their conventions and style.

- Candidates should be able to comment on how a particular extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops in terms of subject, mood and tone.

- Candidates should be able to explore the contrasts and differences between the sections of a given extract.

- Stronger responses will move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as personification, alliteration and punctuation, to consider the effects of such features in relation to their context and the extract as a whole.

- Candidates who tend to achieve best results are those who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone.

- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

The rubric was generally well understood; it should be emphasised to candidates that the first question in the Paper is compulsory and must not be omitted. There were some overlong directed writing responses, and candidates should remember that they are being marked for task focus as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. A few passage analysis responses were inhibited where candidates lacked the necessary language skills, but there were some strikingly perceptive and well-written responses to **(a)** questions.

Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise identification of effects; phrases such as 'the writer is trying to persuade the readers' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful passage analysis.

There was a pleasing sense of purpose in the directed writing tasks, though candidates should be careful not to let enthusiastic engagement lead to overlong responses. Candidates need to be reminded that the word limit can help with time allocation and this also gives time to consider quality.

A particular area of improvement was the presentation of the opening paragraphs of the commentaries, most of which made valid language points quickly and efficiently without feeling it necessary to summarise the whole passage. Some candidates still offered concluding paragraphs of the commentary which included a repetition of the question or a summary of the events of the passage. Time spent on such conclusions – as well as on lengthy consideration of the target audience – would have been better spent considering key language features.

There was much more attention to the effects of punctuation, with an especial interest in the colon and semi-colon. There was almost total recognition of the presence of ellipsis, a symptom of the much more assured

use of language terms. At times this led to candidates becoming intent on feature spotting and there were some very large claims made for effects of anaphora. Specific language features were generally well understood, but candidates must ensure that the features they identify are genuinely present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Most candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage.

There was a noticeable improvement in both spelling and punctuation in passage analyses; this now needs to be sustained in the directed writing. Maintaining a consistent tense presented some significant problems, particularly in the case of conditional constructions; this was particularly evident in the directed writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of an extract from a short story in which the narrator describes going to an appointment at a lawyer's office in South Africa.

There was often sustained and perceptive attention to structure, direction, imagery and a range of language features. Weaker responses resorted to a narrative approach or identified language features with little analysis of specific language effects.

The overwhelming majority of the responses picked up on the abrupt opening of the passage and there were relatively few summaries of content or meandering evasions of the text. The second paragraph was also well understood and the hyperbolic metaphor of fire and water was generally commented on. 'Gnawed' was often misinterpreted as personification. The central point that the author never reveals the nature of the problem was almost always commented on.

There was a lot of obvious pleasure taken in finding a good range of language features to be identified and, in the case of stronger responses, clearly related to their effects. Ellipsis, anaphora and hyperbole were recognised and understood; a feature that was not generally recognised was stream of consciousness. The fragment of dialogue was intelligently commented on and related to the author's preoccupation with his case; this was often justified as breaking the monotony of the passage, which inhibited more astute analysis. Less successful responses needed to develop their exploration of language features they identified more fully. These weaker responses tended to relate the contents of the passage, generally at great length.

The punctuation of the description of the waiting room was sometimes examined at length and with excellent understanding of effects. The metaphor of the blind man was far more problematic but generally taken as a symbol of a character eroded by boredom and repetition. There was some confusion over the cat, with some candidates reading it as a real cat. Stronger responses developed the idea of the pair as gatekeepers to Mr B.

The final paragraph drew a variety of responses, many mentioning the sense of relief it conveyed as well as the fact that the reader was none the wiser. Stronger responses commented on the suggestion of the heroic character of Mr B. and his 'undaunted eyes'.

Many middle band candidates adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the 1st/2nd/3rd paragraph…'. Such an approach does not facilitate 'relation of part to the whole', which is a feature of the higher bands of the mark scheme; it would help candidates' achievement to make some comments relating to the whole tone and language style of the piece.

Candidates need to strike a balance between quoting at great length and merely referring to a range of lines. Quotation from the passage should always be precise and as concise as possible.

(b) Candidates were asked to imagine that they were one of the lawyer's other clients and that they had witnessed the events in the extract. They were required to write a diary entry reflecting on those events.

Most candidates observed the diary writing form and its conventions. Candidates tended to be rather cautious about developing the character of the client or putting a fresh perspective on the events in the waiting room. Consequently, there was sometimes a rather flat recital of the nervousness of the protagonist and the revelation of the blind man without suggesting anything

further. These weaker responses tended to re-write much of the original passage and borrow heavily from it, including in particular the boy/man, the blind man dropping the envelope and the high building.

The stronger responses managed to suggest the character of a client and also hint interestingly at their reasons for being in the waiting room. Stronger responses had a clearly different narrator and some had a lively or convincing tale (often of woe) to relate, observing the narrator of the original passage in a convincing way.

The need for careful reading of the question was highlighted by the significant number of responses which demonstrated a lack of awareness that candidates were required to write from another client's perspective, and also that they needed to reflect on the events in the passage rather than introducing completely new material.

A problem for many was the correct manipulation of tenses. Those answers starting in the present tense almost invariably slipped to the past tense, and thus became uneven in expression.

Question 2

(a)   Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of an extract from a book written by Philip Hoare that blends memoir and travel writing. In the text, the writer contemplates some of the sights and sounds of the natural world.

Not all responses showed full understanding of the opening sentences, and the sense of accumulation in the dawn chorus often needed further development. Most responses noted the more evident language features: alliteration in the first paragraph mirroring the blackbird's song, sibilance giving a soft, lyrical feeling throughout, and the use of onomatopoeia in the humpback whales' comparison. Stronger responses included comment on the incongruity of the beautiful yet common blackbird being found in a suburban garden. They referred to Rothenberg's 'philosopher and musician' validation of the science behind the birdsong. Some identified specific examples of vocabulary related to the blackbird's allure and commented on its effect. Some more successful responses mentioned the blackbird's apparent contradictions: 'ridiculous and sublime' and beauty and 'serious intent'. Perceptive candidates made astute exploration of 'teen's mallspeak'.

Very few responses explored the shift from the focus on blackbirds to the beautiful 'grey wet day', or connect this paragraph with the arrival of the swallow. A number continued as if the blackbird was still being discussed. The more successful responses showed an awareness of the shift from a predominant exploration of sound to one of landscape and movement. The final paragraphs – and in particular the unusual image of the submerged swallows hibernating in the water – often needed more full discussion, and a few responses recorded the underwater submersion as fact. Some perceptive responses explored the mysterious aspects of the swallows, often linking them to a godly, heavenly presence.

Stronger responses showed a discriminating and sensitive awareness and took an overarching view of the beauty of birds, their surroundings and response to seasons, and their interactions with humans. Weaker responses tended to repeat the wording of the quotations which had been selected or explained the language feature(s) they had identified rather than exploring its effect.

Candidates should be advised to make a very careful reading of a passage to be able to show full appreciation of it in their analysis. Responses in general would have been improved with more attention to the structure by which the two different birds are introduced and then discussed with quite a discursive effect. Weaker responses recorded the most immediate language features, and would have needed to explore their effects in order to achieve marks in the higher bands.

(b)   Candidates were asked to produce a section of guide for novice birdwatchers about the behaviour of blackbirds. They were required to base their writing closely on the material of the original text.

Weaker responses to this task tended to suffer from unfamiliarity with the genre – a guide – and demonstrated difficulty in sustaining the correct instructional tone. Weaker responses often replicated the lyrical approach of the passage and therefore there was often an absence of a clear sense of purpose. As a result, there was a tendency to string together quite disconnected elements of the passage, sometimes without altering the wording.

More successful responses adopted an authoritative tone, imparted information, and sometimes used markers as a way for the reader to navigate the content, clearly signalling form and purpose.

The need for careful reading of the question was underlined again by the significant number of responses which failed to recognise the requirement to write a 'section' of a guide for novices. There was also a tendency to amalgamate aspects of the blackbird and the swallow, particularly the reference to swallows 'zigzagging' and the associated myths.

Question 3

(a)   Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of a review of a virtual reality gaming headset, the Oculus Rift.

Responses to this passage were often assured and there was evident recognition of style, form and purpose.

The navigational features – such as headings, subheadings and the table – were generally acknowledged. Stronger responses took an overview and discussed the effect of their use on the whole passage, together with the acknowledgement of the use of brackets and inverted commas and their effects. Weaker responses described these as graphological features and rhetorical devices, without precisely explaining effects.

The studied informality of the tone 'coolest, most bleeding-edge technologies' and the use of the personal 'I' which slips into the inclusive 'we' direct address were well understood.

Confident responses explored the structure of the text – to which some appropriately referred as 'zooming' – which takes the reader from an ostensibly objective review to the experience of the game itself (mirroring, in effect, gaming reality), back to a review and conclusion. Many candidates showed enjoyment when exploring the 'How the Oculus Rift works' section of the passage. Some commented on the repetition of 'Imagine', how this helps the reader to immerse themselves in the virtual gaming experience and the impact of the short imperative sentences. Stronger responses noted the contrast of horror ('tightening stomach', 'sense of dread', 'fall to demise') and the attraction of the game as it gradually unfolds and intensifies ('you're petrified' set against 'feel alive'). The strongest commented on the attraction of being in a 'different time, different place [...] without ever leaving your home' and the short sentences which intensify the action.

Many responses noted the use of a specific lexical field ('HTC Vive', 'PlayStation VR', 'HDMI port', 'USB 2.0 port', 'download', 'troubleshoot') which gives the passage some credibility. Although technical details were obviously understood, they were often inaccurately dismissed as jargon, and in some cases the details themselves were contradicted within the body of responses.

(b)   Candidates were asked to imagine they were the writer of the original text and write a review of another new product for the same website.

Most responses showed an informed sense of purpose supported by a reasonable attempt to use appropriate language, and there was some fluent and confident writing which exactly caught the tone of the original. There was a lot of evidence of time spent on the use of boxes and bold lettering and sometimes candidates left themselves too little time for the rest of the answer. Candidates should bear in mind that their responses are marked on written content and not on visual aspects of presentation such as these. This was the piece of directed writing which most often fell below the lower word boundary, with some responses below a hundred words.

The stronger responses combined a good understanding of stylistic features with some sense of conviction when outlining the features of the new product, as appropriate for a technology website. There was a wide range of products offered for review, including headsets, mobile phones, desktop video games, vision enhancement gadgets and a washing machine. Less purposeful responses tended to list the product's features without going further than making cursory nods to the style of the original.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/22
Writing

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Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Candidates need to allocate a set amount of time to: identifying factors for writing; planning to write; writing; checking and correcting.

- Candidates should carefully interpret and deconstruct the question. Candidates should pay careful attention to the key instructions in the questions they choose: for example, in **Question 1** the key instruction is to 'write a story', creating a sense of 'suspense and drama'.

- As part of the planning stage, candidates should carefully consider the *purpose* of the piece, the prescribed *form* and *audience*, the most appropriate *voice* or persona to adopt, the *mood* and *tone* that they should try to create in their writing and the most suitable *structure* to employ. Key aspects of the most successful and effective writing are:
  - *Section A* – a convincing and credible narrator / persona;
  - *Section B* – a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure, together with an authentic sense of voice.

- To perform well in this exam, candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation. Simple and compound sentences in which expression flows clearly are preferable to long sentences in which expression does not flow.

- Candidates must also be aware of the need for correct spelling and paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech.

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

- In preparing for *Section A*: Imaginative writing, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve descriptive and narrative skills respectively.

- When preparing for *Section B*: Writing for an audience, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles, both print and online. Candidates should be familiar with the tone, register and format of magazine articles, newspaper correspondence, speeches and voiceover scripts.

General comments

Technical accuracy tended to be more secure in *Section B* than in *Section A*, where tense errors and confusions often impacted coherence. *Section B* responses were also often structured more effectively than *Section A* responses.

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

For *Section A*, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere. For example, the reader was able to feel a sense of suspense and drama in the story in **Question 1**; appreciate the contrasting atmosphere of the two pieces in **Question 2**; or visualise the sound, movement and colour in **Question 3**. Imaginative writing would generally be improved by a higher degree of structural control (including ensuring that paragraphs are employed) and the use of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of responses were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**. Candidates should be

encouraged to utilise one main tense in their stories. Candidates whose responses fall in the lower bands of the Mark Scheme should be encouraged to practise writing in either first or third person for narratives so that they are less likely to drift from one to the other. Those who have difficulty with tense selection might be well advised to write in the present tense where possible, as this seemed to lead to fewer errors.

The more successful **Section B** responses kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Aspects of weaker responses to be improved were the use of conventions of different forms, establishing a mature, credible voice, and developing a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – Story

Write a story which begins with the following sentence: *I reached the top of the hill and turned to look back one final time*. In your writing, create a sense of suspense and drama.

While most candidates wrote complete stories, as stipulated in the question, some responses were only story openings.

Stronger candidates were successful in creating suspense and drama and incorporated the opening sentence successfully, through the use of intense moments developed through descriptive details. Many stronger candidates moved on from the opening sentence into a flashback to relate the narrative which led the writer to flee or move on to a new life. Some came up with imaginative destinations to which the main protagonist was heading, for example a hazardous journey in the Himalayas towards a remote Buddhist monastery. Stronger candidates focused clearly on establishing a setting and the reasons for being on top of a hill. Some created fantasy pieces, with strange lands and tribesmen in search of lost cities or citizens fending off potential threats, such as monsters. Successful opening paragraphs engaged and intrigued the reader as the story unfolded. For example, one candidate created intrigue with a simple sentence, '*I embarked on a journey to discover the truth about the valley beneath,*' and then continued, '*The town below me, chaotic and lively mere hours ago, lay smouldering in ruins.*' Other successful approaches included characters leaving devastated, war-torn settlements and women escaping arranged marriages.

Weaker responses often had complicated storylines with many characters, causing the plot to drift away from the opening line quoted in the instructions. Many such responses would have benefitted from more of a sense of an ending or resolution, building suspense to one climax rather than moving from one minor climax to another. Other candidates attempted to use advanced vocabulary, with the writing becoming confused and unclear as a result, for example, '*their pain hidden under unriddled layers of building calcituous and bodicious excitement.*'

Question 2 – Contrasting descriptive pieces

Write two contrasting descriptive pieces (300–450 words each): the first about an athlete just before taking part in an important race; the second about the same athlete teacher just after finishing the race. In your writing, create a sense of atmosphere and place.

Most candidates focused successfully on description, with only a few narrative responses.

Stronger responses focused on the atmosphere in the stadium, with clearly contrasted details. Most stronger candidates also wrote about the athlete's feelings. Some candidates were probably writing from personal experience; they wrote convincingly about the athlete's feelings, in the first person, creating some suspense just before the race, such as in this example: '*I stood calm and composed, my exercises complete, my confidence serene. I would show them what a true victor looked like.*' The same candidate provided a meaningful contrast in mood/atmosphere in the second piece: '*I lagged behind, slow as a snail, ending the race in last place. The world would remember me as a failure, as someone they should never have supported.*' Not all strong responses were written in the first person, such as in this example: '*She sat on the single bench, hands clasped in anticipation, knee bobbing with nervousness, and mind whirring.*' The second piece of writing provided a contrast: '*Beaming, she raised her fist in victory, watching the people in the crowd raise theirs in response*.'

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Weaker responses were often overpowered by focus on the thoughts and feelings of the athlete, or detailed description of the athlete's preparations for the race, needing to give more attention to creating a sense of atmosphere and place. Such focus tended to cause the response to become repetitive. Some candidates over-used adjectives or attempted to write in complex sentences when they would have written more clearly in simple or compound sentence.

Question 3 – Descriptive writing

Write a descriptive piece called *Arrival,* about a large cruise ship coming into a port. In your writing, focus on sound, movement and colour to help your reader imagine the scene.

Quite often description was structured within a narrative framework and sometimes this was effective, as long as the focus of the writing remained descriptive.

In stronger responses, this question elicited some powerful imaginative writing. They were able to keep to the descriptive stance throughout the piece, and sound, movement and colour were described with subtlety and precision. Candidates who wrote stronger responses usually wrote as observers of the ship coming into a port, noting surroundings, capturing the excitement in the crowd and paying careful attention to details. Choices of vocabulary were effective and realistic, for example: '*Waves crashed against the port as workers on the ground prepared to latch the chains to the hooks on the ship.*'

Some stronger descriptions of the arrival of a cruise ship seemed to draw on real-life experience. One very strong candidate described the ship approaching land with very relieved passengers who had had to spend time in quarantine at sea: '*Through the course of nearly two weeks of unanswered anxiety and despair, the infinitude of the gently undulating sheet of sunlit blue encircling us had become a symbol of imprisonment.*'

While the better responses focused throughout on the port and the cruise ship, some weaker ones got absorbed in narrative, starting from a character or narrator leaving home and eventually arriving at the port to witness the ship's arrival. Many went through the prompts in a pedestrian manner, first writing about sound, then movement and finally colours. Such an approach often resulted in the use of numerous clichés, such as '*cotton-candy clouds*' and '*the crowd of people looked like ants.*' These responses often listed adjectives extensively, producing dry catalogues of colours and sounds. There was evidence that a number of candidates had attempted to enhance the descriptive quality of their writing by using fragmented sentences; the resulting lack of appropriate sentence demarcation detracted from the effects which the vocabulary selection was intended to create. Other candidates over-used the continuous present tense, resulting in non-standard sentence construction, which was often unclear.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Article for school magazine

In class, you have been discussing recycling. Write an article for your school magazine, describing the benefits of recycling and ways to encourage young people to recycle more.

Many responses to this question showed clear engagement with the topic, along with a good level of knowledge about it.

Stronger candidates used rhetorical language effectively to engage the audience, linking the topic directly to their lives. One candidate began by using a rhetorical question: '*Oh no! Another article about recycling; why should we care? YOLO!*' Many candidates used headings, sub-headings and topic sentences effectively to assist them in structuring their article. One strong candidate used the following heading for the article: '*Recycling: Turning the Tide on Trash*' and followed this up with effective sub-headings such as: '*Needle in a Garbage Dump*' and '*Circle of Life*'.

Stronger candidates gave a developed range of points. The benefits of recycling were frequently cited as: conservation; reducing pollution; saving money; helping people in need / charitable organisations; having a creative way to spend free time. Quite often, candidates gave suggestions for ways to recycle rather than suggesting '*ways to encourage young people to recycle more*', highlighting the need for candidates to pay careful attention to the question and maintain clear focus on it in their writing. The strongest responses suggested a range of ways to get young people recycling more, including financial rewards and stipends; preferential consideration by university admissions boards for applicants able to prove their commitment to recycling; becoming an influencer on social media platforms; receiving vouchers from clothing stores in

exchange for old, unwanted clothes; and receiving free video games for a week in exchange for recycling old games.

Another effective feature was the purposeful use of discourse markers to consolidate structure, for example, *'Another way we can easily contribute is…'*, *'Furthermore…'* and, *'Paper and glass are not the only materials we use that can be recycled…'*. There were also some effective and convincing concluding messages, in some cases succinctly expressed, with impassioned pleas: *'Human beings and the environment around them used to have a symbiotic relationship before we turned into parasites. The globe is a ticking time bomb – and it's in your hands now.'*

Weaker responses often included unsubstantiated, vague claims. Candidates needed to remember to keep their form and register appropriate to their audience of schoolmates. Others needed to maintain focus, as they drifted into digressions on climate change and science with tenuous links to the issue of recycling. Some wrote quite simplistically about elements of recycling that they had been taught about at a young age, tending to become repetitive.

Question 5 – Contrasting reviews

A new television series about travel has just ended. Write two contrasting reviews (300–450 words each), which will be published on a website called *TV Today*. One of the reviews is positive about the series, and the other is critical of it.

Stronger responses demonstrated a confident first-person voice and a good understanding of the form of a review. Some clearly focused on unique aspects of their imagined show, criticising it for considered reasons, for example: *'The audience receive a breath of fresh air when the crew changes location, but the true beauty, the culture, the pulse of each city is lost in the whirlwind of poor editing and mixing.'* Stronger responses often reviewed a variety of aspects of the programme, such as the personalities of the host, the range of cinematography techniques and the usefulness of the programme's website. Another feature of some of the better responses was when candidates took contrasting perspectives on a key aspect of the show. For example, in one response, the anchor was described as having a *'lively and enthusiastic'* presenting style in the first review, which was then contrasted in the second by describing the presenter as *'loud and obnoxious'*. One candidate made effective use of an extended metaphor, comparing the show to a *'crème brulée dessert'*, the rich custard base being the real substance of the show – the locations, experiences, directorial decisions – which was then topped off with the '*sweet*' presenting style and personality of the anchor.

While stronger pieces analysed a range of factors about the series, such as their opinions about the presenters, cinematography, choice of destinations, originality of content and sound quality, candidates who produced weaker responses missed such opportunities; they tended to list the places featured in each programme and needed to provide more information about the successful or unsuccessful factors of each one. Weaker responses were often vague, and frequently neglected to mention the name of the programme they were reviewing. They tended to answer the task in the form of a recount or report of a particular episode, rather than reviewing it. Tense issues arose where candidates were underconfident in writing from the perspective that the show had just ended.

Question 6 – Voiceover script

Write the voiceover script for a television news report about the increasing popularity of online shopping. In your writing, focus on the reasons for this increasing popularity, and the problems it is causing.

Stronger responses demonstrated a good grasp of what a voiceover should sound like, focussing closely on certain aspects of online shopping and avoiding the potential trap of being too general in their approach. They presented a detailed visual illustration of the footage, which was then well supported by the verbal component of the voiceover text. Stronger responses showed an appropriate sense of TV audience: one opened with, *'It's hard to find a single industry that hasn't been revamped or adapted to these new circumstances of our society,'* later writing, *'The actual process remains largely the same: we still have to physically transport, store and deliver items.'* A rather poignant, but simple ending was: *'Streets that used to be bustling are now almost empty.'* Another candidate summed up with, *'Everything you need is just a "confirm delivery" button away.'*

There was evidence that some candidates were not fully confident in using the format of a voiceover, which often led to responses not being fully appropriate to the task. Appropriate form and content were not always

clear; for example, some candidates wrote articles about online shopping or transcripts of TV news/discussion programmes, without any evidence that this was a voiceover script.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/32
Text Analysis
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Key messages

- Candidates should prepare for this component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply in their directed writing and language analyses.

- For **Question 1 Part (a)** the instructions and accompanying text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their directed writing text. Candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set.

- Candidates should ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their directed writing.

- For **Question 1 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text to their own, selecting the aspects of language from both texts that demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

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

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A very small proportion of the responses to **Question 1(b)** and **Question 2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly gleaning hints from the information provided in the questions' instructions rather than carefully analysing the texts themselves. It is good to note that most candidates produced passages of an appropriate length, in which commentary moved beyond the superficial.

Question 1(a) is a directed writing task. Candidates need to follow its instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying stimulus text. In this session the stimulus text was a transcription of a conversation between two television news presenters, an on-site reporter and a chief chocolate taster at a chocolate factory. Reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the question's instructions; in this session it was a leaflet to explain the role of a chocolate taster. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120-150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the leaflet produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the stimulus text. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose, register, form, choices of lexis and the ability to support their evaluation of language with close textual reference. Key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses were recognition of aspects of conversational style and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the transcription, and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking.

In **Question 2**, sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for: comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities

and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach this session, including those who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   The directed writing pieces usually featured solid engagement with the form and style of a leaflet to explain the role of a chocolate taster. In the majority of cases candidates clearly exhibited they had selected details contained in the transcription that would inform visitors to the chocolate factory about what a chocolate taster does and the conditions in which they work. Most of the candidates' reworking consisted of succinctly explaining the process of chocolate tasting, delineated in steps (occasionally presented as a series of bullet points), drawn from the exchange between Caroline and Ben at the chocolate factory. The few weaker responses mostly resembled job advertisements in which reworking was confined to selecting information from the transcription that suggests how easy and attractive the job is ('all the chocolate you can eat') with selection process, remuneration and contact details provided.

Most responses featured standard conventions of a leaflet: a simple, informative title; short sentences and paragraphs to organise information; and a conclusion that invites the reader to reflect on the information imparted (often featuring an invitation to apply for the chocolate taster vacancy, or a more general sentiment regarding the desirability of such a job). The majority of candidates created explanatory leaflets in which the reader was accommodated in a friendly, often light-hearted, manner similar to the tone of the transcription; Ben's puns 'sweet job' and 'a piece of cake' were often utilised or inspired ones of the candidates' own creation ('It requires more than a sweet tooth to succeed as a chocolate taster', 'The Taste Test' appearing as a sub-title in one leaflet). There was also purposeful employment of subject-specific lexis ('cultured taste buds', 'cleansing of the palette') that clearly indicated appreciation of the nuances of chocolate tasting conveyed in the transcription.

In the strongest responses, candidates expanded on pieces of information contained in the transcription to exhibit a command of purpose and style. Leaflet titles indicated that the role of chocolate taster was understood to be a late stage in the production of confectionary (e.g. 'Stage 7: Quality Control and Product Development – Role of the Taster'). The declarative 'Imagine' started many opening sentences to invite the reader to assume the perspective of a taster. The role was often glorified ('we only employ tasters that are the best in their field') and powers of discernment praised ('differentiate between 70% and 75% cocoa content in a split second'). There was also reference to the importance of the opinions tasters recorded about the samples ('succinctly record the best qualities of flavor you have detected to guide our chefs in their quest for perfection').

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

(b)   Candidates fared better where they made sure to analyse style and language and directly compared features of the two texts available to them. The majority of candidates applied suitable methodology to analyse the transcription. Some candidates sought to deal with each text separately where it would have been beneficial to adopt an integrated approach. Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by the speakers in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in the explanatory leaflet in a comparative fashion. By so doing, such responses achieved an equal, or very nearly so, comparative emphasis on the transcription and the leaflet. Overall, it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription of a conversation conducted by professionals for consumption by a large, general audience.

In weaker responses, candidates exerted a lot of effort listing the elements of spontaneous speech they found in the transcription, and needed to balance their response by paying more attention to their own leaflets. Some candidates reiterated at length what they know about Grice's maxims with little supporting examination of pertinent aspects of the texts for comparison. There was some focus on distinctions in purpose (transactional and informative), audience (large and narrow) and register between the transcription of the conversation and the leaflet respectively, with some identification of high and low frequency lexis in each text. The question and answer format of the transcription's opening section was occasionally identified; responses would be enhanced by comparative analysis of this format with sentence and paragraph structure in their leaflets. Where textual references were made, candidates needed to draw conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties; approaches that neglect to do this tend to yield thin and perfunctory responses.

The majority of candidates demonstrated at least adequate knowledge and understanding of some of the conventions of mixed register conversation, especially the repeated use of first person singular and plural, regular turn taking, frequent supportive feedback or back channelling and the few cooperative overlaps that suggest a high degree of familiarity between the speakers concerned. Some candidates additionally observed that the incidence of micropauses used by Caroline indicate she is very familiar with the chocolate tasting process she explains (lines 14–20). Stressing for emphasis was found to be a notable feature of Ben's journalistic discourse ('con<u>fin</u>ed with chocolate (.) for (.) <u>sev</u>en and a <u>half</u> hours a <u>week</u>'). Candidates could usually reflect on how Ben controlled his conversation with Caroline whilst allowing her to occasionally hold the conversational floor to impart important information and pass judgement on Ben's attempt to act as a taster ('<u>sad</u>ly you've not quite made the grade'). Candidates recognised that their leaflets were carefully composed and edited written mode documents, intended for members of the public visiting the factory for educational and leisure purposes; this was evidenced by discussion of the use of layout conventions and adoption of field-specific lexis from the transcription to explain the chocolate taster's role ('tasting booth', 'hatch', 'control sample').

Candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure the strongest responses, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their examination of the texts. They identified pertinent elements of style, quoted concisely and evaluated effects produced. It was clearly appreciated that all four speakers are professionals who are respectful and accommodating of other participants. There was usually consideration of how Dan makes a live broadcast throw to Ben on location at the factory, a convention of TV news broadcasting predicated on mutual professional respect by identifying him through use of both his job title and full name ('our reporter ben moore'). In the same vein, candidates showed comprehensive understanding of features that entail media conventions, such as voiceover clips showing viewers specific locations within the factory ('films of the tasting booths'), directly addressing the viewing audience ('speaks to camera') and phrasing that signals the end of the reportage ('I suppose for times like these (.) theres always chocolate') that are edited together prior to broadcast. Ben's use of deixis ('try this first') and both first and second person pronouns was identified as relation of a personal experiential situation focused on accommodating the viewer. Caroline's use of plural subject and possessive pronouns ('we' and 'our') indicate professional pride in her occupation, whilst 'basically' and 'you know' are instances of hedging that suggest she did not rehearse her contribution to the conversation. In relation to their leaflets, candidates discussed their use of formal register, compound and complex sentence structures, and a blend of high and low frequency lexis in recognition of their audience (consisting of older children and adults who would seek detailed explanations and are capable of appreciating the industry's terminology).

Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates who responded to **Question 2** by analysing the features of Text A and Text B in a comparative fashion demonstrated the strongest appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created.

Most candidates demonstrated a secure grasp of the purpose, audience and context of each Text. Text A was a press release produced by an interior design company about a new library and community centre located in Crewe, England; Text B was an article from a magazine in which the writer reminisces about her school library. Candidates usually established that the audience for Text A is narrower than Text B's (by reasoning that Text A would be circulated to media organisations in and near Crewe, possibly across the UK, whilst B would be accessible to a global readership wherever magazines may be bought or borrowed). They

readily identified the positive tone of both Texts the promotional zeal inherent to Text A ('all-inclusive leisure facilities and a library') and the nostalgia of Text B ('I had a favourite place to sit […] the perfect spot and, in all my years, I have never found one to match it'). Candidates examined Text A's declarative sentences containing liberal use of adjectives (often compound) that create the impression that the new centre is attractive and exciting ('vibrant', 'fresh', 'colour-popping', 'raspberry red'); in contrast, they identified how the appeal of the library described in Text B lay in its venerable uniqueness ('a big, beaten-up oak table […] was solid and scored by the compass points of pupils past'). It was usually appreciated that both Texts consist of a rich mixture of compound and complex sentence types and that Text A contained shifts in tense (for instance, the comparison in the final paragraph between 'the old, single-use library' and the 'crossover of services and facilities' available in the new centre), whereas past tense is used throughout Text B until the penultimate sentence. Reference was often made to Text A's declarative title (its pun 'creates waves' in acknowledgement of the nearby pool and the success of the Centre's opening) in contrast to Text B's self-deprecating opening sentence. There was usually a focus on Text A's celebration of innovation ('co-creation workshops where brainstorming sparked new ideas') and Text B's reverence of tradition (the librarian's use of 'shhhhhhhhhh' to maintain silence and the writer's gently mocking self-aggrandisement statement, 'Rather grandly I imagined myself the patron saint of the unloved and forgotten tome').

In the weakest responses, candidates often focussed on the content of both Texts and listing the techniques they could identify. Such responses exhibited some recognition of the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts, as well as the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed. Observations often made were that Text A employs a formal register and advanced diction, while Text B makes use of metaphors and humanises the setting (perhaps a reference to the personification in the phrase 'the slips whispered').

In the strongest responses, candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language efficiently and accurately, selecting an aspect to compare and contrast in each paragraph and demonstrating a consistent appreciation for language features. It was usually observed that Text A is consistently promotional ('more than a destination, it's a lifestyle'). In contrast, the writer of Text B is no more self-interested than wanting to share the effect an old library had on her childhood, while the reader is invited to share her perspective through liberal use of second-person pronouns ('if you turned right', 'those who had gone before you') and in fifth paragraph, the use of a conjunction and a question mark ('And dessert?') followed by the use of a discourse marker ('Well, that really was…'), creating the impression the reader is being addressed during a speech. There was some astute comparative analysis of Text A's unusual use of nouns ('a shout of colour', 'an avenue of popular fiction') and design-inspired jargon ('upcycled' shelving with 'built-in lighting') in contrast with Text B's use of a simile – 'like a banquet' – that initiates an extended metaphor in which reading different books sequentially is compared to the courses of a meal ('a starter of Yeats', 'a main course of Sylvia Plath'). A few candidates noted that both Texts make use of the verb 'waves': in Text A to suggest the impact the new centre has on its community and in Text B to further describe the effect of the librarian's admonishment of noisy patrons. Ease of use and convenience are the central messages of Text A ('all in one place' in the opening sentence, 'in one place' in the final paragraph), whereas selfless dedication to an old though greatly valued institution is subtly advocated throughout Text B ('the ritual of walking up the hill', 'to the top of a long staircase […] at the very summit') until its conclusive flourish of the previously initiated extended metaphor: 'Libraries fed me and kept me hungry'.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/42
Language Topics
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Key messages

- Paper 42 presents questions concerning three language topics from which candidates need to select two, in order to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and use of the English language.

- Responses to the two selected questions should be written in a good standard of English and an appropriate register, in order for ideas and arguments to be presented clearly. Essays should be paragraphed logically so the overall response is a cohesive, balanced and fluent analytical essay (in the case of **Questions 1** and **3**) or discursive essay (in the case of **Question 2**).

- Candidates should take care to ensure that points raised in analysis are concisely and carefully evidenced with quotes from the contexts provided, referencing appropriate theories and theorists gained from their wider reading.

- For **Questions 1** and **3**, candidates should be aware of the transcription conventions of conversation analysis and use a range of technical terminology to describe linguistic features and the ways in which they are used by the interlocutors.

- For **Question 2**, candidates should not analyse the language which is presented in the stimulus material, but should analyse the ideas that it contains. They should construct detailed discussion, building in further, appropriate ideas gained from wider study.

- For all questions, candidates should write from a linguistic point of view. At times, there is a tendency to take a socioeconomic standpoint which can lead to the production of irrelevant material.

General comments

In stronger responses, analyses of either the transcripts (**Questions 1** or **3**) or the issues raised in the extracts (**Question 2**) were presented with care and attention. This year, most responses were paragraphed logically so that the structure of the essay formed a logical sequence of ideas. Weaker essays often contained errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, which affected the clarity of ideas.

Most candidates demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of a range of theories and theorists and referenced these appropriately. In general, the theorists referenced were those listed in the syllabus, with a few stronger candidates referencing more contemporary work. In weaker responses, there seemed to be a temptation to list names of theorists without applying the work to the context provided. This was particularly so in responses to **Question 2**. To move through the higher bands, candidates need to demonstrate the full extent of their understanding and why their referencing supports their ideas and selected quotes.

Technical terminology was generally known and used. In weaker responses, candidates tended to make generalised comments with some tendency to assertion. For a response to achieve the higher bands it is important to locate key elements from the contexts in the questions and provide a tight analysis, rooted in linguistic theory.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to identify a wide range of linguistic features such as false starts, repairs, voiced pauses, cooperative overlaps, backchannel, vague language, micropause, hedging and elements of prosody. Generally, this was done with a high degree of accuracy, though there was some confusion between paralinguistic features and prosodic features in some weaker responses. Having identified the features, it was then important to create analysis of how and why these were used by the interlocutors. In the absence of a full analysis, the response amounts to a list of features spotted by the candidate, which cannot move through the higher bands.

Confident candidates created strong analyses to which relevant theories and theorists were applied. Many candidates who appropriately applied and exemplified theories did so without naming them, which limited the strength of their argument.

Cultural transmission was evident in the transcription with 'yeah' and the elided 'gonna' being indicators of Americanisms being used by the interlocutors. This was generally assigned to language and age, as was the frequent use of 'like' as a hedge, filler or quotative. The slang term 'quid' presented some difficulty from time to time, being mistakenly assumed to be a further American, rather than British, term. This was also the case with 'rubbish' which can be assumed to be an indicator of language and age rather than an American term.

Despite the topic of commerce, the conversation was interactional rather than transactional and the overlap was assessed to be cooperative, as in Beattie's view, by most candidates. Speaker dominance and status was analysed reasonably thoroughly by confident candidates, although was rarely discussed in terms of theoretical examples. However, weaker candidates merely stated that Amy must be the most dominant speaker as hers was the first utterance.

Genderlect theories were usually applied. Theorists referenced were Lackoff, Tannen, Cameron and Coates, with Coates' house talk possibly as the most appropriate. To explore language and gender (and gendered attitudes), Daniel's 'ebays rubbish though' was compared with Amy's 'dont trust ebay' by stronger candidates.

Many candidates described all varying question types as tag questions and should be aware of the specific role of a tag question: not all questions are tag questions. Moreover, the transcription had a definite field of subject specific lexis. Weaker candidates should be aware that there is a difference between subject specific lexis and jargon – in this case, 'ebay' and 'paypal' were items of the lexical field, and not jargon.

Question 2

Stronger and more confident candidates explored the nuances of the linguistic identity of the European Union as a body, creating discussion on the usefulness in an arena such as the EU of a modified, purpose-built version of a lingua franca. The use of Euro-English was not always understood in weaker essays; for higher reward, candidates needed to assess the purpose of the potential hybrid, and the extent to which it could be distributed.

Hybridisation occurs where linguistic balance is sought for a particular reason and effect: most candidates were able to cite Singlish and Hinglish, with confident candidates demonstrating understanding that a parallel could be drawn with the situation faced by the EU following Brexit.

Further parallels were drawn with Nerriere's construct of Globish and the reason for the emergence of Euro-English. Some candidates also referenced Esperanto. Candidates here needed to pay particular attention to providing sufficient detail to develop their response.

Many candidates explored the attitudes of prescriptivism and descriptivism; application of such theories tended not to move beyond a generalised discussion. References to theorists such as Crystal or Diamond often needed more detail.

Stronger discussions on language and culture referred to Hagege and a few confident candidates applied Phillipson's views on language death and those of Lewis and language and identity.

Kachru's circles were also described; the most confident candidates used the stimulus material to analyse how, with the advent of contemporary language change, the boundaries and sizes of the concentric circles may be undergoing change. With the incorporation of the American spelling system into Euro-English, as advised in the stimulus material, one view of the situation is that the US may become the new norm-provider of the inner circle. If that were to be the case, it is possible in the future that the British spelling system could become obsolete over time. Moreover, it was argued by some candidates that adoption of American English could be a way to increase the EU's trade with the US.

Overall, there was clear engagement with the stimulus material for this question. In general, responses needed more depth, particularly when applying theoretical examples to the issues they contained.

Question 3

Most candidates identified Teddy to be in the holophrastic stage of development, with confident candidates also saying that there was evidence of babbling and some almost telegraphic utterances, therefore there was some cross-over in his language between various stages. Similarly, stronger candidates commented on Teddy's emergence from the Piagetian sensorimotor and preoperational stages, whereas candidates who produced weaker responses relied on Teddy's age as being the indicator of his developing linguistic competence.

Caretaker language in the transcription, such as repetition and questioning technique, was clearly adopted by the mother: stronger candidates used Bruner's LASS theory to compare the (typically) motherese in Part A with the (again, typically) fatherese in Parts B and C.

Weaker responses were often written from a deficit standpoint, providing a list of linguistic features Teddy had not yet achieved. More confident candidates observed negation ('dunno') and syntactical construction ('where ca') and were able to apply Chomsky's LAD to their analyses.

Many candidates set up a phonological analysis; this fell down at times where candidates struggled to use technical terminology concerning phonemic use with accuracy. Such discussions included the substitution of voiced plosives / b / in 'abble' and / d / in 'dat', the deletion of nasal / n / in 'pie', the deletion of final phoneme in 'ca' and 'dow', and substitution of the consonant cluster in 'boon'. Physical substitution was also present in Teddy's method of pointing, using paralanguage instead of expressing himself verbally. In weaker responses, candidates spotted this feature without acknowledging the reasons for its use, nor the extent to which it was an indication of Teddy's emerging linguistic competence.

A number of Hallidayan functions were present in the transcription, with most candidates who applied the theory to their analyses including the heuristic function: '<u>da</u>ddy where'. They also used this example to explore the extent of Teddy's competence in using intonation to make himself understood. Stronger candidates referenced Vygotsky and the evidence from the transcription which demonstrated the ways in which the mother's scaffolding techniques enabled the zone of proximal development.

Overall, candidates answering **Question 3** need to make sure that their responses are fully developed in terms of use of technical terminology and application of theoretical examples.