

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

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Paper 0522/01

Reading Passage (Core)

## Key Messages

- In responding to all questions, it is advisable to consider carefully the specific implications of key words within the question or within the phrase under analysis.
- The revised format of **Question 1(g)**, the six mark language question assessing an understanding of vocabulary used in the passage, **clearly identifies the words that are to be explained**, by printing them in italics. It is important that responses **focus only on these words**, and explanations should comprise either acceptable synonyms or a more developed paraphrase. Responses that attempt to define a word by using a different grammatical form of the same word will not be credited.
- Centres are advised to encourage candidates to be aware of the distinction between the purpose of questions such as 1(g), as explained above, and questions such as 1(h), the six mark language question **assessing an understanding of the effects of language choices made by the writer of the passage**. The revised format of the latter question clearly identifies the phrases for comment. Responses should focus primarily on **explaining how the language used helps to convey the writer's experience** (in this case, his feelings while being in the middle of a volcanic eruption). This question does not require a paraphrase or definition of the vocabulary used and any explanation of the meaning of the words should be subsidiary to the main purpose of the question.
- **Question 2 test both Reading and Writing objectives and thus the content if a response must be closely grounded in the stimulus passage.**

## General Comments

The reading passage for the paper seems to have been well received and proved to be an appropriate stimulus for both the writing and reading questions, as well as an effective discriminator of understanding for a core paper of this nature. There was very little indication that responses suffered from timing problems and most produced answers of adequate length for all questions. There was very little evidence of serious misunderstanding of either the passage or the questions and the paper proved successful in terms of discrimination in that it required careful reading. However, evidence from a large number of responses would seem to suggest that even those with an apparently secure understanding of the reading passage showed inexperience in slow, careful reading of both question paper and questions, with the result that answers did not focus on the precise details of what was being tested.

Question 2, the Directed Writing task, in general, was answered at least satisfactorily, with a pleasing number of responses making a confident attempt to write in a tone appropriate to the required genre (a leaflet for tourists to Hawaii), although in doing so some responses lost sight of the requirement to base their content on details taken from the passage and referred to what may have been personal experience gained from a holiday to the islands by the writers. However, it was felt that there was no evidence that those who might have had actual knowledge of the Hawaiian islands were in any way advantaged over those who had never visited them.

Although there were reports that some handwriting was very difficult to read, overall presentation and handwriting were generally of a good standard and nearly all responses gave clear evidence that the examination was being taken seriously and all were trying their very best to do well.

## **Comments on Specific Questions**

### **Question 1**

- (a) Many responses scored at least one mark on this 2 mark question by clearly identifying that the number of people in the population has remained the same as when Hawaii was first 'discovered' by Captain Cook (responses that referred to the explorer as 'Captain Hook' were not penalised). Many responses, however, did not gain the second mark for this question as they merely stated that there are '10000 native Hawaiians' thereby omitting the concept of 'fewer' or a 'small number'. A common misunderstanding of this question came in responses that referred to the *culture* of the islands rather than to the *population*. As mentioned in the 'Key Messages' section of this report, careful reading of the questions, especially those to which the answers are straightforward, is essential for those wishing to reach the highest grade.
- (b) Many responses to this 2 mark question showed some appreciation of the difference between the literal and figurative meanings of the two phrases but failed to explain it clearly. Often, answers were simply a paraphrase of the question on both counts or did not quantify the degree of 'amazement' experienced by the writer in the metaphorical sense of the phrase. Words such as 'surprised' and 'shocked' did not adequately portray the writer's feeling of wonder and did not gain the mark. The literal interpretations were often paraphrases or too brief, such as 'the power of the volcano' and did not offer any explanation as such. One very good answer was: 'Physically moved by the power of the volcano' and 'metaphorically blew my mind'.
- (c) (i) A large number of responses gained the 1 mark available for this question and successfully identified the writer's disappointment at seeing what looked to be like a desert or 'dessert' (which was not penalised) but some, despite showing some evidence of understanding, did not gain the mark as the reference to 'desert' was not made.
- (ii) There were fewer correct responses to this 1 mark question than there were to (ci) with quite a number identifying the 'eruption' but not mentioning its immediacy or what it was erupting into; namely the sea - either of these points was necessary to gain the mark. References to Mark Twain were often made without further clarification and comments such as, 'because he was going to see something that Twain did not see' were insufficiently detailed to be credited.
- (d) Again, this 1 mark question was successfully answered overall with the most common response focussing on the towns being 'engulfed'. Some responses simply repeated the question with the tautological 'towns being hard to find because they are buried' and many mistakenly claimed that the towns had been engulfed by 'tidal waves'; neither of these points could be awarded a mark. Correct references to surveyors not being able to get their bearings were common and correct although those responses that misread the word as 'survivors' were not rewarded as this was taken as an indication of misunderstanding.
- (e) Many responses did not clearly distinguish between this 2 mark question which focused on the far from reassuring content of the *leaflet* and 1(f) which also carried 2 marks but which was concerned with the hazards of the *walk* taken by the writer. Others answered this correctly and then repeated their answers in question (f) while other responses answered one correctly for each question with a wrong answer taken from details relating to the other question. A small number of responses successfully identified the generic 'negative' content of the leaflet or recognised the 'ironic' nature of 'reassuring'. There were, in fact, three points that could have been mentioned:
- the surface may collapse at any time (responses that gave the word 'unstable' and the fact that the 'lava could collapse at any time' were awarded only one mark as these are not discrete points)
  - the dangers of inhaling the clouds of hydrochloric acid
  - the irony in the word 'reassuring' and the negative content of the leaflet (a clear explanation of this point would have gained both available marks).
- (f) The introductory comments to 1(e) apply equally to responses to this question. In addition, responses that referred to a wall of lava stopping the writer parking could not be rewarded. Again, there were three points that could have been mentioned:
- no path/jagged/rough slabs of rock
  - the surface can rip skin to shreds/risk of falling over
  - risk of being scalded by hot steam.

- (g)(i) A relatively small number of responses gained the two marks available for this question and only a slightly larger number achieved one mark. The concept of ‘uniqueness’ was not clearly tied down as being one of a kind and presented instead as difference in various degrees. Similarly ‘tradition’ was not explained in terms of length of time and sameness. Frequently, responses focused on explaining culture rather than ‘traditional’.
- (ii) Responses to this question were generally more successful, especially with explaining ‘submarine’ as being under water. Those who referred to actual submarines were not rewarded and neither were those that explained the word as *underground*. The word ‘successive’ caused more difficulty and was sometimes misread as ‘successful’ although there was general recognition of the number and constancy of the eruptions.
- (iii) The slow movement of the rocks mixing into the water was often recognised although this was sometimes explained through reference to the viscosity of the liquid and its ‘thickness’. The word ‘slimy’ sometimes appeared; presumably from a literal interpretation of the word ‘sluggish’ and this was credited if the second part of the association was clear.
- (h) Many responses did not clearly explain *how* each of the selected phrases helped the reader to understand what the writer’s experience was like. Many merely paraphrased the phrase in question or repeated it, changing one or two words, or rearranged the syntax. Frequently, the ‘explanation’ offered was done for all three phrases without reference to the context. The phrases most appropriately commented upon comprised the sudden thud and knees buckling and the ‘slow-motion nightmare’. Explanations of these in terms of shock, fear and even horror would have gained one mark per phrase for showing straightforward understanding and answers that clearly identified and commented on the use of such words as ‘nightmare’, ‘slow-motion’, ‘thud’, and ‘buckle’ would have gained a further mark. The ‘fiery pool’ phrase was occasionally explained in terms of its potential menace and gentle popping but usually as ‘very hot’ and the bright orange/black moonscape phrase was only explained in terms of its startling contrast by the most successful responses. A significant number of responses misunderstood the ‘black moonscape’ to be the sky and not the ground.

Only a small number of responses did not use the given phrases and selected others randomly from the text or, indeed, split one given phrase into three smaller parts. Others attempted to describe the feelings of the writer at this point in the passage, but only a small number successfully confronted the requirement to ‘explain how the phrase helps you to understand the experience’. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, Centres are advised to focus on this aspect of the paper when preparing candidates for this examination.

- (i) The most successful responses to this question showed a secure understanding of the requirements of the 7 mark summary question with scores of 5 or more being quite common from those who focused closely on the need to identify points related to volcanoes and their effects on the Hawaiian islands. Less successful answers tended to focus less clearly on the stated topic and to include irrelevant details about the islands’ population and culture or to focus too narrowly on the engulfed towns and related consequences to the exclusion of other relevant details. Another feature of such responses was that they contained much unnecessary repetition, for example by identifying details about creating new land and rising from the sea and so on and then repeating them, especially in relation to the black sand beach etc. The least successful responses tended randomly to copy sections of the passage without evidence of attempting to isolate individual points. There were eleven points (stated below) from the passage which could have been identified up to a total mark for the question of 7:

- 1 Volcanoes are powerful/have primeval power.
- 2 Islands are formed by eruptions of submarine volcanoes/thrust 6,100 metres up from the ocean floor.
- 3 Volcanoes die and sink back into the sea.
- 4 Some are 4,000 metres high.
- 5 Eruptions lead to a continually changing landscape/ can create (new land e.g. jet black strip of sand).
- 6 The craters can resemble lakes of fire/a desert.
- 7 Volcanoes are active/alive/erupt (into the sea).
- 8 They can destroy.
- 9 They can engulf/bury whole towns/no towns left on the southern coast.

- 10 They cause tidal waves.  
11 The volcanic landscape is beautiful.

## Question 2

### Reading

The most successful responses showed a clear understanding of the requirements of the task, were written in a register that was fully appropriate to a leaflet for tourists and focused not only on the excitements of viewing and exploring volcanoes but also identified other details from the passage (such as the beaches and beautiful landscape) that would appeal to tourists with less adventurous tastes. Such responses achieved a balance of organising and developing passage-based material in their own words in a suitably persuasive tone. Less successful responses tended to lift quite extensively from the passage and, as a result, included a good deal of unnecessary material. The least successful strayed away significantly from the passage, often fuelled by their own holiday experiences in resorts significantly different from the Hawaiian islands; these responses were often both interesting and entertaining but revealed only a limited understanding of purpose. It was noted that some responses that over-emphasised the fear factor relating to the volcanoes may well have discouraged tourists from visiting the area!

### Writing

Only a very small number of responses contained error to the extent that their meaning could not be understood and, as has been the case in previous series, the overall standard of writing was of a pleasing standard for Core tier responses. Some responses were accurately expressed but extremely brief which meant that they denied themselves the opportunity of being placed in the top bands, whereas others were unnecessarily lengthy which led to errors of expression becoming intrusive. This could have been avoided with more careful initial planning. The most successful responses showed clear evidence of planning and checking work for errors, and there were some very good attempts at achieving an appropriate register and tone. Misspellings of straightforward vocabulary (for example ‘intressting’, ‘truley’, ‘definetly’, ‘extordinary’), insecure sentence punctuation and misuse or omission of the apostrophe were the most frequent errors made in the less successful responses. There were also problems with the noun ‘Hawaii’ with uncertainty over whether it was an ‘island’ or ‘islands’ and therefore whether to use an article before it as in ‘the Hawaii’, or just ‘Hawaiian islands’.

The most successful responses were well planned and organised through constructive use of paragraphs. Less successful ones tended to have a good opening paragraph but then introduce further material in a somewhat random fashion with the result that the response was out of balance, with too much information on the islands and limited focus on persuasion.

In conclusion, most responses scored within bands 2 or 3 as they were able to identify and, at least, discuss details from the passage and to acknowledge some attractions. Only a small number scored in band 4 and below. This was often because the answer was below an acceptable length.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

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Paper 0522/02

Reading Passages (Extended)

## Key messages

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

- give equal attention to all sections of each question
- plan each question response; cross out material which is not intended to form part of the final answer
- explain points concisely, but in sufficient detail to convey clear meaning
- use your own words; do not lift whole phrases or sentences from the passages
- select only the material that is appropriate for the response to the question
- only make a point once in a response
- give thought to the structure and sequence of the material in the response
- adopt a suitable voice and register for the task, different for each question
- pay attention to length
- practice note-making, sequencing and concise expression.

## General comments

The candidature for this syllabus has continued to increase, particularly for the 0522 variant. Many Centres did not prepare candidates appropriately, despite support provided in the Examiner's report for November 2012, and many candidates were not familiar with the requirements of the questions and form of the responses. Centres need to make sure that candidates realise the need to convey both explicit and implicit reading comprehension for higher band marks, that copying from the passages is to be avoided, and that responses should be in continuous prose.

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. There did not seem to be many common misunderstandings of the content of the passages, other than the context of Passage A and the times and places mentioned in the passage. The belief that Calumet Camp was a venue for an outdoor pursuits holiday caused misunderstanding and a loss of focus on the task. Copying was often evident in **Question 1**, especially **Section (a)**; there is a significant difference between using textual detail in support of points and lifting quantities of material from the text. The former is evidence of understanding, whereas the latter gives the opposite impression. Candidates must change the language of the passages in response to **Question 1** and **Question 3** in order to achieve a higher Reading and Writing mark.

For **Question 2**, in order to achieve higher marks, candidates must make appropriate choices in **Section (a)** and need to make specific and detailed comments about these choices. Candidates wishing to score high marks should have a wide, appropriate vocabulary in order both to express themselves and to understand the nuances of the use of language in the passages. Weaker responses tried to explain the selected language in the same words as the choice. Candidates should not use a grid or table format to respond to this question, as it limits their ability to explore the choices they have selected.

In **Question 3** many candidates managed to earn a mark in double figures by finding a reasonable number of points, but many responses contained repeated ideas. There were many repetitions of the firewood point in **Section (a)** and of the frostbite point in **Section (b)**. While a change into own words is desirable when expressing an idea, the meaning must not change so that the summary is factually inaccurate. This happened frequently when describing the weather in Passage B and the hazards in Passage A. Ideas not included in the passages should not be included in the summary of the passages; mountain avalanches and

wild animals were often found in **Section (b)**. Candidates should avoid writing overly long responses, beyond a page of normal handwriting, as this limits their Writing mark. Many candidates gave their response either partially or entirely in note form as bullet points and thereby incurred a reduction of the Writing mark, as well as of the Reading mark if those notes were not in their own words.

On this Reading paper 20% of the available marks are for Writing. Candidates therefore need to consider the quality of their writing and avoid using a high degree of lifted material from the passages. Most responses were written in an appropriate register. There were no marks given for accuracy in this paper, although some Writing marks were affected by unclear or limited style, over-reliance on the language of the passages, or structural weakness and incoherence. Candidates should ensure that they pay attention to the length guidelines for their response to this question.

It is essential that the skills of selection and modification are demonstrated in all three questions on this paper. In addition, there needs to be a strong focus on the actual wording of the questions. 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, that there is a recognisable structure to the response. It also helps to ensure that the response includes the three assessment objectives: the use of ideas to demonstrate explicit understanding; the use of detail to show close reading; the development of ideas to prove implicit understanding. Checking is also advisable, as marks can be lost through slips of the pen which suggest basic misunderstanding, confusing Calumet Camp and Cherry Creek in **Question 1** for instance, or 'bitter' and 'bitten' in **Question 2**.

### Question 1

You are Tom Vincent advising recent newcomers to Calumet Camp. Write the words of your talk to the newcomers. In your talk you should: tell the newcomers about your recent hazardous walk; explain the skills and knowledge needed to survive in the environment; share what you learned about yourself from this experience.

(20 marks)

Stronger responses to this question selected and condensed the events in the passage and modified the ideas to create a convincing characterisation for someone who had been through a humbling and near-fatal experience, and who had been chastened by it. They were able to sustain the use of supporting detail throughout the response. The carefully selective use of material for the second bullet ensured that the advice could apply generically to other travellers in a similar situation. Stronger responses did not repeat the same points again in the third bullet, but dealt with the latter by presenting both the positive and negative things he had learned about himself, and by giving it a personal focus in response to the wording of the question. They were able to contextualise Calumet Camp and the reason for giving the talk, and to convey a sense of danger and urgency, using own words to produce a dramatic and considered talk.

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. An attempt to address bullets two and three was evident. Opportunities were missed for the development of ideas and the drawing of conclusions. For example, medium quality responses advised that generally travellers should be well equipped, or repeated the idea of not travelling alone. Points for the third bullet were restricted to commenting that that he had learned to take advice and to persevere.

Weaker responses copied out parts of the passage without recognition of the need to select, develop and modify the content, structure and language of the original. They generally took the form of giving an unselective narrative retelling in the first section, despite the fact that the question asks only about the hazards of the walk. Some careless reading was evident in the misuse of facts, with claims that the walk was 15 kilometres long and that Tom returned to camp rather than continued to Cherry Creek. In the other two sections weaker responses lifted phrases from the passage without modifying them to the question or the viewpoint. Such responses were unable to demonstrate any significant understanding of the passage. Many believed that Calumet Camp was a holiday destination, and that he had been in an avalanche; some believed that there were creatures in the lake, that a creek was a kind of noise, and that he had been on his way to attend a party. Weak answers were often thin, simple or short. Some invented their own material, referring to wild animals or avalanches or the need for a mobile phone. A surprising number of candidates had not read the task introduction and had not noted that the events were recent. Where the entire response consisted of unmodified material from the passage, the highest mark available was the top of band 5; where two sections consisted entirely of reproduced chunks from the passage, a top mark of 5 was awarded.

The Writing mark reflected the clarity, fluency and coherence of the response and how well it used vivid language to capture the sense of the hazardous nature of the walk and the role played by Tom Vincent in wanting to pass on his experience. The better written responses had a lively and engaging voice, a convincing style, and a mixture of informative and reflective content.

Here are some ways in which this type of response could be improved:

- Answer all parts of the question, giving equal attention to each of the three sections
- Answer in your own words and adapt material from the passage to the form and viewpoint of the response
- Use all the main ideas in the passage and use detail to support them
- Develop and extend some of the ideas relevantly
- Create a suitable voice, tone and style for the persona in the response.

## Question 2

**Re-read the descriptions of (a) the intense cold in paragraph 3; and (b) the lighting of the fire in paragraph 5. Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.**

**(10 marks)**

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 validity of the words and phrases chosen to answer the question, and for the quality of their explanations. Three marks were available for a range of appropriate choices in each section. Responses that also gave the meanings of the words were awarded up to a further three marks, depending on how specific and contextual the meanings were. Responses that also 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.

Candidates should avoid the use of a grid or table format in their response as often the same material is duplicated in two of the three columns. This approach also often forced responses to be expressed very briefly or in note form.

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. They were able, for example, to explain the excitement and hope evoked by the sudden spurt of light when the 'bark burst into bright flame'. A link was made between the appearance of the landscape and what was happening to Tom's face, suggesting that the frost was claiming him and turning him into a creature of ice.

The following response includes all of the selected quotations in the mark scheme; fewer choices than this would be sufficient for the award of the top mark, provided that the quality of the explanation was high and consistent. This model answer is given as an indication of what constitutes an appropriate type of response to the question.

### **(a) the intense cold in paragraph 3**

Tom's 'numbing fingers' are a sign that he is losing body heat and control of his limbs, and they signify the beginning of his battle with the cold as the frost sets to work on his exposed flesh with a 'bitter swiftness'. This composite phrase of two ideas suggests both the extreme speed with which the enemy attacks and the intensity of the pain being inflicted. The 'frost had bitten' like a wild animal latching on to its prey with its teeth. The lips 'crusted.... with ice crystals' have lost their natural, smooth, warm, pinkness to a sinister, sharp whiteness. The impression that the sub-zero temperature is winning is confirmed by the description of his chin as a 'miniature glacier', which makes it seem as though a serious and permanent ice formation has taken him over and is blending him in with the frozen landscape. When 'sensation abandoned his face' the battle seems lost, as even Tom's own blood is forsaking him, leaving him to his lonely fate. When his face 'burned with the returning blood', it is a painful but welcome reversal; red and heat have defeated white and cold, and this image prefigures the lighting of the fire and the restoration of feeling to his body.

(b) **the lighting of the fire in paragraph 5**

The use of the word ‘kindle’ could be seen as not only an introduction to the delicate building of a fire but a pun on the idea of the kinship Tom has with it. The ‘nest of fire’ is a circle of woven twigs providing an image of safety, warmth and birth. When the ‘bark burst into bright flame’ the explosive succession of monosyllabic ‘b’ sounds conveys the delight at the appearance of the sudden and welcome appearance of light and heat in the deadly wasteland. Tom ‘fed it with the smallest twigs’ as a bird builds a nest and feeds its young; his ‘cherishing it with the utmost care’ continues the idea of protecting something precious; he is desperate for the fire to become his missing companion, and his ‘gently nurturing it’ is the action of a parent rearing vulnerable offspring. After much patient handling the fire, although still a ‘very young one’, has taken hold and will now grow. It is not only the fire which is ‘alive’, but also Tom’s hope of survival.

Less successful responses attempted effects by making generalised comments about the way Tom treated the fire as a child in **Section (b)**; these perceptions were not directly related to the meanings of the words selected, and they were sometimes repeated after every choice. Responses often went straight to a weak effect without first establishing the precise meaning of the choice; e.g. they commented that ‘burned’ meant painful without explaining what the word means and how it is paradoxical in the context. There was some awkwardness in claiming the fire to be both a bird in its nest and a baby human created as a companion for Tom. These less successful responses often took the form of a commentary on the entire paragraph for each half of the question, containing some relevant choices and some brief explanation of them. There was a dependence on the general idea of personification in both sections. In this range of scripts, seven or eight relevant choices were offered, with mixed quality comments on them.

Here are some ways in which this type of answer could be improved:

- re-read the whole paragraph before making selections; choose the best and not those which happen to come first. Remember that you are not being asked to write about the whole paragraph but only about the language which relates to the particular question.
- choose a range of words and phrases that seem powerful. Do not write out whole sentences, but also do not give 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 ‘the writer makes you feel that you are really there’ or ‘this is a very descriptive phrase’. Such comments will not earn any marks at all.
- if you are not sure about effects, try to at least give a meaning, in context, for each of your choices. That can earn half marks for the question.
- to explain effects, think of what the reader sees and feels when reading the word or phrase, because of the connotations and associations of the language. Often there is more than one possible related effect.
- include images from each paragraph, and try to explain them (but you do not need to know or give their technical names); think about sounds as well as visual effects.

**Question 3**

**Summarise (a), the hardships of the living conditions, as described in Passage B; and (b) the dangers of walking in Alaska, as described in Passage A.**

**(Total: 20)**

To answer this question successfully, responses needed to identify fifteen points that were relevant to the question and to present them succinctly and in their own words. This is an exercise in informative writing, which should be clear and to the point, and in a different form from the passages. There were twenty-three possible answers in the mark scheme, which gave candidates a generous leeway. Most responses showed awareness of the appropriate style for a summary. Section (a) invariably contained more points than Section (b), which tended to revert to the story of Tom’s journey rather than answer the question. Point 8 in Section (a) and half of the points in Section (b) were rarely made. There was occasional confusion between the two passages, with lack of clothing and lack of water appearing in the second section.

The question paper instructs candidates to use full sentences in continuous prose of not more than a page, so the notes were not credited. Responses should therefore not be written in note form. The response to **Section (b)** tended to be repetitive, making many different references to what was only one point, the intensity of the cold. Consideration needs to be given to the amount of material included in a summary, as

well as to the language in which it is expressed. Higher marks for writing are awarded to responses consisting of own words, and varied and fluent sentence structures, containing just enough information about the points to convey each one clearly.

The most successful responses selected and re-ordered the relevant information from the passages, with a clear focus on the actual questions, and wrote them in fluent sentences, within the prescribed length and using own words as far as possible. They avoided writing introductory statements and making comments, and concentrated on giving a factual objective summary, more or less equally balanced over the two sections. While it was acceptable to give the points in the order in which they appeared in the passage, more able candidates changed the sequence so that related points could be grouped together. For example, in Passage A the effects of frostbite on hands and feet follow logically from mention of the deep frost; and in Passage B the different types of unpleasant weather can be sensibly grouped together.

The following model answer makes the paraphrased points simply and clearly. It includes all 23 points, but if handwritten would easily fit onto one page.

### **Section (a)**

*The cold at high altitude in winter was accompanied by strong winds, penetrating mists and frequent rainfall. The rain made the mountain-side slippery and the steep slopes even more hazardous to climb. The sharp rocks wrecked the soldiers' boots. The men could not keep warm because of the shortage of firewood and the lack of clothing and blankets. All their possessions, including their rifles, became covered with mud and they felt dirty all the time. There was insufficient water for washing, and the water they did have looked unpleasantly cloudy and unpalatable to drink. Having to sleep in their clothes was an additional discomfort, as was having to share the trenches with rodents.*

### **Section (b)**

*The long distances and lonely landscapes of Alaska make walking risky as help is unlikely to be available. The extremely low temperatures make it dangerous to stop moving, and this is exacerbated by getting wet when falling through an icy surface into a hidden pool. Numb hands do not perform necessary tasks well, and frostbitten feet make it difficult to walk to safety and could mean having to spend the night unprotected in the wilderness. The most serious danger is not being able to make a fire to provide necessary heat, as there are many possible difficulties.*

Less successful responses were more confused and did not adopt the correct focus for this question, instead presenting the first part of the summary as a first person re-telling of the passage, with firewood mentioned three times and references to how the soldiers passed their time. There was frequent copying of the phrases 'the cold was unspeakable', 'shrieking winds', and 'rats and mice abounded', though these were easy to paraphrase and thereby demonstrate understanding. The introduction to Passage B was often used as an introduction to summary Section (a), wasting space as summaries require no introduction. Many of the points in Section (a) were loosely expressed to the extent that they were not accurate, for example in saying that the drinking water was unclean rather than unclear. The less successful Section (b) responses mentioned many times in different ways that it was cold in Alaska, and offered solutions for keeping warm rather than mentioning the other dangers. They also talked about Tom Vincent and his particular journey rather than widening the response to apply to anyone walking in Alaska, as was required by the question. A few compared the conditions in the trenches with those in Alaska. The inclusion of irrelevant or repeated material diminished the focus and depressed the Writing mark.

Here are some ways in which summaries could be improved:

- re-read the passage after reading each part of the question, in order to find the precise information to answer it
- only select points which answer the specific question
- do not write a narrative, or in the first person, or in any other inappropriate form
- make points briefly, but in sufficient detail to make it clear what they mean
- do not copy whole phrases from the passages
- write no more than one side of average handwriting
- write in an informative style and never comment on or add to the content of the passage
- be careful to include only the information that answers the question
- make each point only once
- do not generalise the content of the passage.

# 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
- create thoughtful and well-structured arguments, 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 the 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, although rather more frequently than in previous years too many questions were attempted which inevitably had an impact on the quality of the writing.

Most responses showed an understanding of the topic in **Question 1** and made sensible use of the reading passage in their letters. Better answers questioned the writer's arguments about the Olympic Games, developing their own views and opinions based on the passage, while most 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 compositions, better responses showed a clear understanding of the features of argumentative, descriptive or narrative writing and in all three 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 and 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 all three 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 recipient of the letter was sometimes forgotten or the format of a letter was accurately reproduced at the beginning but not the end. The style was occasionally rather insulting or too informal. 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. The lower case 'i' for the personal pronoun was surprisingly commonly used and there were some instances of colloquialisms such as 'gonna' and 'wanna' in writing which was otherwise formal in register. Semi-colons were much in evidence but only quite rarely used accurately.

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

**Question 1:** Read carefully the article by Ravenna Reach about the Olympic Games in the Reading Booklet Insert. Then answer **Section 1, Question 1** on this Question Paper. Write a letter to Ravenna Reach, expressing your views on what you have read. You may agree or disagree with the writer's arguments.

**In your letter you should:**

- identify and evaluate the writer's views
- use your own ideas to support your comments on the writer's views

**(25 marks)**

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

Most answers showed an understanding of the purpose of a letter in response to a magazine article and in better responses the writer's arguments were scrutinised and commented on purposefully. At this level, some contradictions in the writer's views were discussed, such as her appreciation of the global interest in the Olympics alongside her irritation at the media hype surrounding it. Other thoughtful responses referred to the potential for conflict, rather than 'world peace', inherent in the intensity of competition. Many, however, simply listed and agreed with the writer's views on the different points and did not adopt the critical stance which is required for marks in the higher bands. Weaker responses focused on only a few points, often the cost of the Games, and did not cover the range of points made in the article.

#### **The marks for reading**

Good responses followed the bullet points but adopted the evaluative stance required for marks above Band 3. For example, the cost of the ceremonies and facilities was discussed with reference to the huge numbers of athletes and visitors in need of accommodation and to the possible economic benefits derived by host nations. The extravagance and excess implied by the writer was sometimes countered by her own assertion that the Games were 'a spectacle' and 'awe-inspiring', with good responses pointing out an inherent contradiction in her views here. The history of the Games, included in the passage, was sometimes not referred to but good responses did make use of it, suggesting that a long tradition of sporting competition should not be under-valued and that the happiness and harmony between nations, however short-lived, was a benefit to the world in general. An equally valid and thoughtful approach was adopted by some in suggesting that this harmonious atmosphere was illusory and that the intense competition between nations was unsavoury and unhelpful. The inclusion of the Paralympic Games was commonly mentioned although better responses tended to go further than a simple agreement that it was 'a good thing', with some questioning whether Paralympians really did have parity with their able-bodied counterparts. This kind of evaluative approach to the material in the passage was required for marks in Band 2 and above. 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, often with straightforward agreement, Examiners could not award marks above Band 3. Although some responses covered the points made in the article systematically, agreeing with some and disagreeing with others, there was at this level less scrutiny of the ideas in it and limited comment on them. A more superficial grasp of the facts and figures in the passage, rather than the underlying issues, was evident in this range. In these responses, candidates agreed or disagreed that the Games were too costly and extravagant at a time of recession and included some detail about the fireworks or the sportswear before moving on to the next issue. This simple agreement or disagreement did not, however, always amount to the evaluation described above in relation to better responses. A mark of 5 or 6 could be awarded, depending on the breadth of coverage in the answer and the extent to which candidates used their own language and expression rather than the writer's. In other cases, there was a little evaluation of one or two points – usually some discussion of the idea that the costs could be offset by the economic benefits brought to host countries – but other ideas in the passage were not referred to at all. Here, despite some evidence of depth in the response, the range of points covered was too narrow for a mark in Band 2. Responses at this level could have been improved by a wider coverage of the points made by the writer as well as a deeper grasp of the issues being weighed up in the article.

One unproductive approach in responses at this level and below was the inclusion of invented experts or invented statistics. Fictitious bodies with unlikely sounding names were quoted as evidence of the athletes' satisfaction with the facilities; Londoners' opinions of the Games or in some cases invented young or old

people were lobbied for their views on the costs of the Games or the cuts to their services. These features suggested an insecure grasp of the task in Question 1. In a few responses, another inappropriate approach was adopted in which the style of the writer's article was commented on rather than its content. Her 'emotive language' and 'short sentences for effect' or exclamation marks were indicated with little reference to the arguments made. Other less successful approaches included a tendency to drift away from the passage into details which were not in the article and were not really suggested by it either. For example, some responses gave details about the displacement of people whose homes were demolished to make way for the London Games and others suggested elaborate schemes in which sponsors could be made to compensate old people in host countries. Ideas and details which could be inferred from the passage were rewarded by Examiners, but in some less successful responses candidates' own views were detached from the source material and sometimes a little naïve. For example, some believed that the Games paid the host country or that athletes paid for their own accommodation and there was some muddle concerning whether 30 million pounds was spent on the British team, the opening ceremony or the fireworks. A better understanding of the requirements of the task, as well as how marks are awarded, was needed in these cases.

### 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

The majority of responses were appropriately set out in letter form and used the appropriately formal register and style that would be expected in a letter to the press. Most, across the mark range, wrote an introductory paragraph making clear the purpose of the letter, though better responses showed more awareness of their audience in the way their openings were phrased. For example, some signalled their attitudes to the article early on by suggesting that 'sacrifices have to be made to achieve the spectacle you describe' and some mentioned explicitly that there were contradictions in her stance. Many candidates in the middle range were extremely complimentary toward the writer in their introductions and conclusions and although the tone of these paragraphs was appropriate, perhaps the evaluation of the article was rather limited by this over-enthusiastic style. In weaker responses, introductions were more perfunctory and some did not refer to the article itself. More often at this range, the format and intended audience were forgotten, so that the letter was not finished formally or reference was made to 'the writer' rather than a direct address made.

#### Structure

Some accomplished responses, awarded high marks for writing, handled the material confidently and presented their own arguments cogently. At the highest level, an overview of the issues involved emerged rather than, or as well as, a discussion of the discrete points made by Ravenna Reach. A sense that there was a balance of factors to be weighed was conveyed by these successful responses which were often subtly argued but yet clearly structured. Responses given 8 or 9 for writing tended to reflect the sequence of points made in the article in a response which was adequately structured, often with some concluding comments outlining the candidate's own view.

Responses given marks below Band 3 were characterised by some confusion about the writer's point of view so that simple agreement with the writer led to apparent contradiction from one paragraph to another. Some, for example, expressed outrage at the cost of the London Games but moved without comment to praising the spectacular opening ceremony or the Olympic facilities.

#### 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 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. As mentioned above, a striking number of Band 4 responses contained many errors in the use of capital letters and 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.

### Ways in which this type of answer could be improved

- Use the details in the passage but think about the attitude of the writer to the topic as a whole also.
- Try to develop ideas from the passage, 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 an article or a letter, for example.
- Check your writing for basic punctuation errors that will inevitably reduce your mark.

### Section 2: Composition

#### Question 2: Argumentative/Discursive writing

(a) ‘There’s no such thing in this world as an easy job.’ Give your views. (25)

OR

(b) Explain some of the admirable and less admirable qualities of your age group. (25)

Better responses here made use of a wide range of different ideas in a focused and relevant discussion of the topic. Average responses contained some good ideas which were relevant and gave opinions about the topic which were valid. The discussion was not as developed or was less well-structured and points were not sequenced as helpfully for the reader. In the first question, candidates sometimes ran out of material or tended to return to ideas or repeat them, whereas weaker responses to the second question showed some misunderstanding of the question.

In the first question, there was almost universal agreement across the mark range that an ‘easy job’ did not exist although there was a wide disparity in the quality of arguments deployed to support this view. In better responses, where very high marks were sometimes gained, ideas were grouped and sequenced in paragraphs and linked together to help the reader navigate through the overall argument. Some thoughtful discussions included ideas about the importance of an individual’s skills and aptitude for a particular job or the difficulty in qualifying for a ‘good’ job which may, nevertheless, be very stressful. Different interpretations of ‘easy’ were explored with some subtlety in these responses and there was much evidence of a balanced and considered approach to the topic.

Middle range responses tended to be rather less consistently developed and focused more on examples of different jobs and what might make them easy or difficult. Although there was perhaps a less probing and exploratory approach, the discussions were largely relevant and ideas were valid and sensible. Where examples of jobs familiar to the writer were selected, such as the careers of their parents or relatives, the response was often well-grounded in common sense.

Weaker responses were more reliant on listing with less discussion of the attributes needed for the jobs selected. Occasionally, the writer began with the assertion that some jobs were easy (particularly examination invigilators!) but often concluded that they were not. Footballers were often mentioned as seeming to have easy jobs which were perhaps more difficult in reality and some labouring or dirty jobs were cited as much more difficult than desk jobs. While these were often valid opinions, responses at this level were assertive rather than carefully argued.

The alternative question was a popular choice. A common misunderstanding here was the term ‘admirable’ which was very frequently understood more as ‘advantageous’ and answers became rather skewed towards the outlining features of teenage years which were pleasant and those which were disagreeable in some way. While Examiners did not penalise specifically for this misreading, ideas were not always as clear and objective as they might have been. Better responses tended to tackle the question with more understanding and there were some thorough discussions on teenagers’ adaptability to modern technology, their loyalty to friends and their general zest for life. In discussing less admirable qualities responses were often explicitly focused on puncturing stereotypical views of young people, which was a perfectly acceptable approach. Tabloid representations of gangs of youths in hoodies, drinking and behaving badly in public were commonly referred to as exaggerated, although in many excellent responses candidates did admit to moodiness, laziness and other vices attributed to their age and immaturity.

In average responses, a misreading of the question was often unhelpful in that the range of ideas and opinions tended to become a long complaint rather than a balanced discussion. At this level, there was some useful focus on what was appealing about being a teenager, such as more freedom, friendships, lack

of responsibility, but its less appealing qualities were often much more developed and sometimes became a rather long list of ways in which adults heap stress and difficulty on teenagers' shoulders and then judge them harshly or misunderstand them. There were pitfalls in this approach as responses became unbalanced or sometimes seemed a little immature.

Weaker responses were typically brief and under-developed. Again, the question was often misunderstood and ideas were rather vaguely expressed, such as 'people my age like to be out and about having fun' or 'teachers and parents treat us like children but we're not'. Although ideas were usually valid, responses were hampered by repetition or weaknesses in structure.

The style and accuracy of responses to these questions varied across the mark range. Better responses showed much precision and control of language and sentence structures and the subtlety of ideas was sometimes matched by an engaging flexibility of expression.

Middle range scripts, given marks in Band 3 or just below, were usually plain in style but conveyed straightforward ideas clearly. Otherwise competent responses sometimes slipped into Band 4 because the writing contained frequent errors including more serious ones such as weak sentence separation and other basic punctuation mistakes. When these were combined with simple and limited vocabulary, the mark was often lower. The style and register was also insecure at this level also, with some lapses into colloquialism and imprecise grammar, such as 'I better' 'I got to' and 'I seen' or 'I done.'

### **Ways in which the writing of arguments and discussions can be improved**

- Make sure you understand what the question is asking for.
- Justify your opinions with apt examples – avoid simple assertions.
- Check for basic errors such as 'comma-splicing' and misuse of capital letters.
- Use clear and precise English and eliminate expressions which are too informal or conversational in style.

### **Question 3: Descriptive writing**

- (a) **Describe a noisy group of people passing by, and your thoughts and feelings about them at the time.** (25)

**OR**

- (b) **Describe a place that is very old and has a powerful atmosphere.** (25)

Responses to the first question usually involved a rather intimidating group of people, often teenagers, encountered in the street although there were other approaches. One cheerfully evocative description focused on a group of little children who disturbed the narrator as she lay sunbathing by a pool. The thoughts and feelings of the narrator were very effectively described and the scenario provided for some change and variety as her grumpiness gave way to delight in the children's happy and excited play. There were some powerful descriptions of the fear and humiliation felt by the narrator as an intimidating group of potential muggers or bullies approached them, although quite a few had an unexpected twist at the end which involved some act of kindness from one of the group. In one nicely self-deprecating response, the terrified narrator was pursued by a noisy group of badly dressed youths, only to be handed an item he had dropped further back on his walk. Better responses focused on both description of the group and their impact on the narrator and the short time span implied in the question helped to focus the response on the descriptive potential of the scene.

Average responses tended to give a lengthier preamble to the main description. Sometimes half a page was devoted to how the narrator came to be in the place where the noisy group approached. Despite this rather unnecessary introduction, responses at this level were often quite detailed, with some focus on the dress and demeanour of the individuals in the group. The hierarchy within the group was quite skilfully deduced in some cases from the behaviour and appearance of different characters.

In weaker responses, there was more of a tendency to lapse into narrative than has been evident in the past or the description was limited to a few details with simple statements about the feelings of the narrator. In some cases, there was limited awareness of the features of descriptive writing and simple narratives were based on the scenario in the question.

The second option also produced responses across the range of marks. The best were again focused clearly on evoking the particular atmosphere of an old building, though some excellent responses described

a specific room in a house or a place in the outdoors. Some very engaging pieces drew detail and effect from a personal connection with places such as a now dead grandparent's house or garden or an empty and derelict School. Defunct fairgrounds featured surprisingly often and in better responses the feelings of previous happy family outings were effectively evoked. One masterful response set in a roman ruin hauntingly recreated the sounds and sights witnessed centuries earlier in the building.

In the middle range, some responses were also based on actual historical places such as Stone Henge and Machu Picchu but at this level the description was sometimes lacking in atmosphere and relied on physical details, and perhaps assertions of the place's 'powerful atmosphere' rather than the recreation of it. In Band 3 and Band 4 there was also a preponderance of ancient houses in the middle of forests or hitherto unexplored haunted houses at the end of a familiar street. Again, there were some over-long explanations of how the narrator arrived at the building and there were also many rather clichéd details such as cobwebs and creaking doors.

In weaker responses the same stereotypical scenes were selected although here there was more of a tendency to lapse into narrative or the piece as a whole showed limited descriptive focus and detail.

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 insecurely used, 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.

#### **Ways in which the writing of descriptions can be improved**

- Avoid too much narrative preamble 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.

#### **Question 4: Narrative writing**

(a) **Write a story based on an unusual and exciting secret.** (25)

OR

(b) **Write a story which begins with someone hearing an eerie and unidentifiable noise.** (25)

The first question was considerably less popular than the second although there were some engaging and well-constructed narratives here. Most effective responses sequenced their stories so that the 'unusual and exciting secret' was not unveiled until the end although there was some careful signalling in the best responses. Special powers bestowed upon or realised by the main character or the narrator were fairly common across the mark range, handled quite deftly in some excellent Band 1 responses and rather more prosaically further down.

The second option was the most popular of the composition questions, selected by candidates across the ability range and approached in a wide variety of ways. In general, stories based in the real world rather than fantasy tended to be more successful although at the top of the mark range there were some effective stories based on disappearances into other dimensions or other worlds. Some moving stories recounted the searing pain of the loss of loved ones, sometimes only revealed gradually and retold in flashback. Lost sweethearts who were there one minute and gone the next, to pastures new or other lovers, also featured strongly. Other narratives were built around losing a younger sibling in a crowded place and here, as ever, the climax of the story needed some careful pre-planning to avoid a disappointing denouement in which they were simply found again or returned. Kidnapping stories sometimes suffered from the same weaknesses.

Inevitably, responses in the middle mark range and below focused more on events and although these were clearly sequenced, less attention was paid to preparing and interesting the reader by creating believable characters and settings. Fantasy plots, such as characters disappearing from rooms into other worlds, usually followed by the narrator, were less well handled and there were some stories which became series of unlikely events which did not sustain the reader's interest.

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 speech punctuation 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.

#### **Ways in which the writing of narratives can be improved**

- Remember that the reader must believe in the characters and setting for a story to work.
- Plan the ending before you begin so that the climax does not disappoint.
- Characters' thoughts and feelings help to engage your reader.
- Ambitious, varied vocabulary can improve the mark, but basic punctuation errors can limit its effectiveness.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

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Paper 0522/04  
Coursework Portfolio

## **Key messages**

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

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

## **General comments**

There was a great increase in candidate entries for this component, particularly for Syllabus 0522. Many Centres successfully took the coursework option for the first time.

The moderating of this component was often a very pleasurable experience, and Centres are thanked for the hard work they undertook to provide the finished work. Coursework is a commitment and it is extremely valuable if it is viewed educationally, with the aim of making all its participants into better writers.

While the choice of tasks, much of the writing and the assessment by Centres were competent, many opportunities to gain higher marks were lost. The most successful Centres demonstrated the following:

### **Successful Practice:**

- There was an understanding that coursework provided an opportunity for candidates to learn to be better writers over a period of time, by expressing their own ideas and experiences of the world about them.
- After initial guidance by teachers as to the nature of tasks, candidates were left to write as individuals and to think with originality for themselves.
- Teachers monitored their efforts, checking for authenticity and offering general suggestions on early drafts, but remembering that their advice should not constitute corrections.
- Candidates were encouraged to proof-read their work, looking particularly for errors of punctuation. Common errors for correction were sentence separation, the use of commas, correct use (if any) of colons and semi colons, and the sequences of tenses.

### **Less Successful Practice:**

- Centres treated coursework as a way to get good marks, rather than as a course of educational value.
- Tasks were not always well chosen. For example, some tasks did not stretch the best candidates sufficiently, and there were some folders that contained work that had been submitted as controlled conditions for other Examining Boards and was not appropriate for this component.
- There was evidence that some teachers had taught candidates what to put into their responses which sometimes contained identical ideas and even in the same order. This was particularly true of Assignment 3.
- Checks on authenticity had not always been carried out, and drafts frequently had no indication of advice as to revising, editing and (in general) correcting. However, some drafts had been corrected in detail by teachers. This is not allowed.

- Some very badly punctuated work was submitted, and the final versions often lacked any annotation of errors by teachers.

Detailed advice concerning coursework and its educational aims and objectives is available in the Syllabus, in all published reports to Centres and in the Coursework Training Manual.

### Task setting

The choices of the assignments were generally appropriate. The best Centres gave a certain amount of choice or freedom once the parameters of each task had been set. This was most common in Assignment 2 where, for example, the description of a place might be set, then allowing freedom of choice concerning the nature and detail. Some Centres offered a choice for Assignment 1 between writing in normal prose, the words of a speech or a letter to a specific person. They then gave a list of possible topics, or left the candidates to choose their own. Where a single topic was set, or a very limited choice, there was often similarity of content, or some candidates were faced with a topic with which they found it difficult to engage.

Assignment 3 was a different sort of exercise, and it was perfectly feasible to set the same article across the Centre's entry, though it was common to provide a choice of three. Here it was important that the different articles should present the same degree of opportunity to identify ideas and opinions and that they should be similar in difficulty. Some candidates were disadvantaged by their choice of article. There was still some misunderstanding of what was required by this assignment.

The mark of a good folder was that all three assignments showed the same qualities of writing but that there should be variety of genre and style. This consistency could be taken into consideration when awarding the final mark.

The following lists of tasks were from one Centre that gave a good deal of freedom in the choice of topics:

Candidate 1: The Bass guitar; my visit to Egypt: my response to an article attacking *Facebook*.  
Candidate 2: Designer clothes; the opening of a gothic novel; my response to an attack on sport.  
Candidate 3: Gambling; *The Window*; my response to the Prince Harry Las Vegas scandal.

### Assessment of coursework

#### Writing

The assessment of the folders was generally good. The most common reason for leniency in the marking was that the responses had too many punctuation and grammar mistakes. This was especially true where there were sentence separation errors. Writing that consisted of simple language and sentence structures was sometimes over-marked. Where the assessment was severe, it was generally because of the quality of the language, or the consistency of the work over the three assignments.

Because of the special circumstances under which coursework takes place, allowing time for drafting and redrafting and with access to spell checks, it was expected that accuracy would be complete at the top of the range. Accordingly, Moderators kept a record of punctuation and grammatical errors as they read the work. Sentence separation was the main area that required further attention, affecting the quality of the sentence structures, since commas rather than connectives were used to join sentences. A common omission in word-processed work was that of the comma to denote a division within a complex sentence. A third error was that of the apostrophe, often omitted or wrongly used. Fourthly, semi colons were sometimes used in the middle of sentences where there should have been a comma. There was overuse of the semi colon in some responses, and there was confusion between colons and semi colons. Finally, a very common error was the lack of control of tenses, particularly in Assignment 2. Good work was often made less successful by moving from present to past tense several times within a description or narrative.

Apart from the lack of error, there were two features of the very best work. One was an assured use of a wide range of vocabulary, where the choice of the word always defined precise meaning and where appropriate, engaged and entertained the reader. The range was immediately apparent and would be different in say, informative, expressive and argumentative writing. The other feature was the use of fluent, well-constructed sentences that used connectives to show the relationship of one idea or argument to another.

Less good responses used relatively simple vocabulary and the sentence structures were repetitive and did not create any effect for the reader. The least good responses consisted of a limited vocabulary, with sentences that were often single clauses or very simply joined together.

### Assessment of reading

The marking of reading was generally accurate, with most of the marks awarded between 5 and 9, broadly equivalent to those awarded in Paper 3, **Question 1**. Where there was leniency, it was because the task had not addressed the mark scheme properly or because the choice of article needed to be more appropriate for the award of the highest marks. Occasionally, although a response engaged with ideas and opinions in the article, the quality of the counter-arguments or development was too simple for a mark of 6 and above and was more appropriate at 5.

### Use of the Reading Mark Scheme

The Band descriptions for reading were found in the syllabus *Appendix*. This required that the award of 9 and 10 marks was for 'analysing and evaluating several ideas and details from the article and developing lines of thought'. 'Analyse' suggested a detailed interpretation of what the writer says, and 'evaluate' suggested the identification of inconsistencies and bias. In Band 2 the demand was clearly not so great, and in Band 3 most of the response was taken up with summary with simple views. There was a considerable scale of difficulty between Band 3 and Band 1 that suggested that many marks should have been between 6 and 7. Responses at Band 1 often gave an overview of the article as a whole and assimilated their individual comments into a well-structured answer. There was sometimes a tendency to give 9 or 10 marks to responses that did not do this.

Overall, the assessment of the reading and writing together was realistic. Where candidates were not strong performers, many Centres gave few folders a mark in the top mark band and concentrated candidates in Bands 2 and 3, often bunching them at the borderline. It was here that there was some inconsistency and leniency. There was also a reluctance to mark in Band 4, with the result that there was some crowding at the bottom of Band 3.

### Administration by Centres

The work of the Moderators was not merely to scrutinise the quality of the work but also to make a number of clerical checks on the marks submitted by Centres.

The first document that was needed was the **Coursework Assessment Summary Form**, or CASF. This was required for all candidates and not just those in the moderation sample. The Moderator noted all the changes that had been made at Internal Moderation and also used the document to check the range of marks awarded for reading. The document also gave some guidance as to the marking of different teachers in the Centre.

The Moderator then checked the marks on the CASF against those on the copy of the **MS1** (or electronic equivalent). Where there was a discrepancy, this was recorded on a Coursework Amendment Form that was then sent to the Centre. A check was also carried out against the marks on the folders in the sample. There were frequent discrepancies that were discovered during these checks.

Copies of all articles used for Assignment 3 were required by the Moderator who had to read them before addressing the work. There were several cases where these were not supplied.

An early draft of **one** piece of work was also required. This was usually included and in some cases there was a draft for all three pieces of work. The Moderator needed the draft to make two separate checks, although this did not normally affect the marking of the folder.

Finally the regulations stipulated that each folder in the sample should be securely fixed and that it should not be in plastic folders, which made the handling job that the Moderator had to undertake more complicated. It was not always safe to use paperclips, and a few folders were not fixed together at all. The most convenient method was by stapling.

## Annotation

Many Centres were meticulous in their recording of errors on the final versions of the assignments and it was clear that the marks awarded reflected this. These annotations and the comments at the ends of assignments gave the Moderator confidence in the work of the Centres.

Good practice was to comment on content and structure, and style and accuracy, and to balance strengths and weaknesses for the benefit of each candidate's progress as a writer.

In some cases, there were few or no indications that errors had been taken into consideration in awarding the marks, or had even been noted and accepted as errors. Some work bore no marks or comments at all.

## Drafts

The best of the drafts included teachers' comments and perhaps candidates' comments as a dialogue. This constituted excellent practice. Many drafts were used to give guidance in order to improve work. A common suggestion by teachers was to lengthen an undeveloped response. Some sections of a story were perhaps too long or a climax was not sufficiently sustained. It was appropriate that a teacher should draw attention to such matters and leave it to the candidate to improve a piece of work. This constituted revising. An indication that a piece of work could be improved by changing the wording was an example of editing.

Most drafts however, were restricted to comments about corrections. Teachers were allowed to make general comments such as 'Please read through and add full stops between sentences', or 'check that you have used the present tense throughout this description'. They were definitely not allowed to make specific corrections on drafts, which could then be copied by candidates. It was expected that the responsibility for the correction of drafts lay with the candidates themselves.

## Authenticity

Centres will be only too aware that coursework is always vulnerable because candidates may copy material from a source that is not their own. In order to counteract this, it is important to plan the work so that it is monitored and the possibility of copying from elsewhere is diminished. The easiest way to do this is to set tasks that reflect the candidates' personal experiences and thoughts and to create the first draft in class. This can be checked. The next stage, presumably the second draft, can be done at home and can then be checked against the first draft. The final draft can be done in class, (or the second and third stages can be reversed). In any case, monitoring should ensure that teachers feel confident that the work is original.

## Assignment 1

In response to this assignment, the best writing always reflected the personal views of the writers. The more conviction with which the work was written, the more effective it was. It was, of course, perfectly appropriate to write in the first person, and this made a good deal of difference to the tone.

The practice of making this assignment an academic essay has become less significant. There were still some essays about abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment and most of these were very similar in nature and lacked any personal conviction or enthusiasm.

While some of the writing was impersonal, some of it had either a definite audience or an assumed one. It was useful to write in the form of a letter, an article or a speech, provided that the same genre was not used for Assignment 3.

Many Centres borrowed a task from another Examining Board and wrote pieces under the umbrella title of *'Do not get me started...'* Some of the results were very good and the writing was entertaining. Conversely, it was often easy to fall into the trap of writing a 'rant'. The danger was that there was an ineffective structure and that the language became limited in its informality. In the attempt to make points, the arguments were frequently not expressed firmly enough.

Another general title that needed a good deal of care was '*A Day in the Life of...*'. One Centre took an interesting set of professions, such as a forensic biologist, a lawyer and a nuclear submarine officer, did the necessary research and finally stepped into these persons' shoes. The result was excellent and the task successfully stretched the ablest writers. However, the original published articles for this genre are not always well written and contain a good deal of unimportant detail, such as what the person has for breakfast. As a result, some of these articles were weak in content.

Some Centres were still writing about the programme *Supersize me*, usually as a review. What the candidates wrote was repetitive and not very original, and it is suggested that this topic should be no longer used.

There were also some leaflets. The danger here was a lack of opportunity to demonstrate extended writing. However, some were more extended and original, and the most successful were leaflets to guide candidates who were new to the School.

Most of the words of speeches were good, properly structured and developed, and contained interesting arguments on topics of importance to the writers. These were rarely 'rants', but attempted to persuade the supposed audience, while also informing them.

The following list of examples shows the sort of variety that teachers encouraged for this assignment:

*Young people are indulged and pampered*  
*Urban myths*  
*The scary world of surgery*  
*Healthy eating at School*  
*Women and the armed forces in my country*  
*Should you have robots as teachers?*  
*Beauty pageants*  
*A letter addressing gun crime*  
*The Paralympic Games*  
*Media violence*

## Assignment 2

This was an opportunity for writers to show how they could use a range of descriptive and creative language. The important thing was that the content should sound realistic, so that wildly violent or ghostly stories were unsuitable. The language should be appropriate for conveying ideas and images with accuracy.

Many candidates wrote descriptions of places that were important to them or which had stayed in their memory. These were frequently very good and were judged on how well they conveyed the atmosphere and details of the place. There were many descriptions of visits to other countries, which were again successful because they showed ability to record experiences and images that were different from those at home.

Another main category was the autobiographical fragment. These topics were frequently moving and realistic because they had really happened and were important to the writer. They often involved visits to elderly relatives or experiences with friends, perhaps tackling some new and testing challenge. Some candidates showed an ability to build a relatively small moment in time into a convincing and well-developed piece of writing.

The stories were more effective if they were based on something that the writers could understand within their experience. They were also better if they followed the sort of structure one expects from a narrative. Climaxes needed to be sustained, and an unexpected ending was always welcome to the reader. Many Centres had taken the advice to study a short story or two before setting the genre as an assignment.

The following is a list of successful titles used in folders:

*My dramatic day*  
*Stay strong*  
*What shall I do?*  
*A bright beginning*  
*Red Moon*  
*Grandma's bedroom*  
*The sombre wood*  
*The girl who seemed ordinary*  
*The magic door*  
*Diary of a slave*

### Assignment 3

Many of the articles chosen for this assignment were appropriate. However there were some exceptions as follows:

- Newspaper stories that just recorded events and did not discuss them
- Internet articles written in short, unstructured paragraphs, with much repetition and little argument
- Multiple articles, usually in twos or threes, that gave candidates too much to deal with
- Overlong articles of more than two sides of A4
- Whole literary texts (for example *Romeo and Juliet*)
- Advertisements where there was virtually no reading material

Most articles were controversial, contained at least some identifiable arguments, ideas and opinions, and were about themes that candidates could easily relate to.

Tasks were generally in the form of a responsive article, a letter or a speech. It was important that candidates confined themselves to their views on the arguments, ideas and opinions. The practice of writing critically about the language or the layout of the text had no place in this assignment and did not relate to the mark scheme. Candidates who took this path in their responses were generally over-marked by one or two marks for reading.

The best responses showed an understanding of the text as a whole and their responses were properly structured. Weaker responses consisted of a series of paragraphs in no particular order, providing several disconnected ideas.

Once the article for this assignment had been successfully chosen, it was relatively easy for all response to be marked in the top three bands for reading. The writing was good, sometimes the best on the folder, because candidates had the article to provide them with a structure, and frequently the words came to them more naturally and fluently.

The following list will give some guidance as to the type of topic that is suitable for this assignment:

*An article attacking private Schools  
Reality TV  
The English do not eat horsemeat  
Animal fur  
Too young to be a criminal  
Boredom does not exist  
The dangers of technology  
Computers dehumanise children  
An attack on Twitter  
Eroded childhoods*

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

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Paper 0522/05

Speaking and Listening

## Key messages

- Thorough preparation for the examination is essential. Success in Part 1 is clearly linked to researching the chosen topic, planning for a confident and assured delivery, practising the delivery, but also preparing for a strong contribution in Part 2.  
Candidates should not rely too heavily on their scripts or prompt material, as awareness of audience and an attempt to engage the audience is a key skill being tested in Part 1. Reading entirely from a script is not permitted. Centres should discourage this at the planning stage and insist on candidates using a variety of prompt material instead. The syllabus suggests a postcard size prompt card, but other aids could be used, for example, brief PowerPoint slides, flip charts, or smart phone applications.
- Generally, candidates should try to make their Part 1 presentations more lively, by perhaps incorporating more creative presentational styles, but certainly by relying less on reciting factual information. There is scope for further creativity in Part 1 – e.g. taking up a ‘voice’ or presenting a dramatic monologue. This session saw several Centres presenting empathic work using literary texts and this often leads to better quality work.
- In Part 2, Moderators would like to hear stronger evidence that candidates are aware **of their role** in the discussion. The candidate’s role should not be that of a passive interviewee, but should be one which is more proactive and seeks to engage with the listener in a collaborative manner.
- It is permissible for teachers to work with their candidates (once the candidate has decided upon a topic), to help enhance the content and to advise upon the approach taken for the delivery. **Differentiation by task setting** is therefore encouraged for this component. A more capable candidate is likely to attempt a more ambitious presentation and to engage with more sophisticated content - and such a candidate should be encouraged to do this.
- Please restrict Part 1 to **4 minutes**, and Part 2 to between **6 and 7 minutes** - as specified in the syllabus. It is difficult to justify the awarding of high marks to Part 1s which are short (under 3 minutes) and it is counter-productive to allow Part 2 to run over 7 minutes.
- Please would all Centres **use digital recording equipment** to generate audio files which can then be transferred to a CD, DVD or a USB drive. Please use recognised audio file formats that can be played by common computer software (e.g. mp3, wav, wma). There is no need to use the blue ‘cassette inserts’ – a list of the candidates in the sample, their numbers, and the mark given to each, either on the CD cover (but not on the CD itself please) or on a separate sheet is fine. Please re-name the individual tracks on the CD to the candidate number and name (instead of track 1, track 2, etc.). Please, avoid using analogue recording and tapes/cassettes.

## Messages relating to assessment:

- 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 presentation 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.
- Candidates who present very short Part 1s or those which rely heavily on a script 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.
- Extremely short Part 1s (under one minute) are likely to satisfy only the Band 5 criteria: “Content is mostly undeveloped...and the audience is generally lost”.
- Examiners are reminded not to award marks for content per se - it is the *development* of the content which is being assessed; in both Parts 1 and 2 of the Test. For example, “What work experience did for 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.

### **General comments**

The more interesting and successful individual tasks were from candidates who spoke from notes rather than scripts and about a topic about which they felt passionately and which they had researched thoroughly. Some very successful tasks included some kind of visual presentation to the Examiner, such as sharing a Powerpoint slide or some photographs. Other interesting presentations were done in the form of a 'muse' or monologue – sometimes in the form of a conversation with an invisible character. The most successful standard presentations were given by candidates fired by a passion who also utilised a variety of devices to maintain their listener's 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 always good, particularly where the Centre had correctly understood and disseminated guidance given by CIE and the Examiners had been briefed thoroughly with regard to their vital role in ensuring that candidates are able to give their best.

Conversely, where Centres were ill-prepared for the test and Examiners were not fully aware of their role, the candidates were not as successful. In these Centres, the candidates' preparation of their topics was not always conducive to performing successful tasks, and they were clearly ill-prepared for the discussion part of the examination – and these factors were usually more significant than the choice of topic. Less successful tasks were usually read from scripts and this tended to detract from the overall effect - appearing to be rather lifeless and certainly monotonous. Less successful responses were invariably read from a script about a subject they had not researched sufficiently or about which they did not feel particularly strongly.

Centres are reminded that for Part 1, the candidates should be involved in the choice of topics. While Moderators understand that at large Centres, it is easier to manage the tests if common themes are followed, the same theme for all candidates is not recommended. It may well be that in larger Centres it makes sense for each classroom teacher to propose a range of themes so that candidates can work in groups and practise presenting their topics to each other. Peer assessment and formative feedback is certainly encouraged. However, such generic themes must allow for individual expression.

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 - i.e. it is not permissible for two people to be asking questions or discussing matters with the candidate. The test should not be repeated for the same candidate.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Part 1 - The Individual Task***

The dominant task in Part 1 remains the informative presentation. Candidates select a topic and provide historical and/or contemporary information about it. A small number of these presentations remain purely factual, but many engage with an issue or controversy relating to the topic. Where the chosen topic relates directly to the candidate's personal situation or their country or location, there is usually scope for more engaging content.

Personal experiences and interests are a common focus - for example, recent trips abroad, reading, sport, music. These kinds of presentations vary in their degree of success, with less successful tasks simply describing likes, dislikes and experiences without further exploration, depth or insight.

Candidates sometimes attempt to use techniques such as addressing the listener and using rhetorical devices, but care needs to be taken so that these approaches are effective and not just a gesture.

Centres and candidates are of course free to focus on topics which lend themselves to standard presentations. However, candidates should be encouraged to select topics with a narrower focus; along with a greater range of presentational styles.

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

- a D day veteran talks about his experiences during the war
- performing a monologue in the role of Medusa

- understanding stereotyping in Spanish culture
- being a fan of an Italian football team but living in a small Midlands town
- a sales pitch for an imaginary product or service
- a message to my future self
- parking tickets
- what makes a good street performer
- why it's important to understand the pros *and* cons of everything
- 'Come dine with me'; who I'd invite and why
- my most life-changing moment so far
- culture shock - on arriving in Britain.

### ***Part 2 - Discussions***

It was effective practice that, in many cases, Examiners were very much part of the discussions, entering into the spirit of the occasion, and that the conversations were generally productive extensions of the Individual Tasks. This is clearly a strength of this examination.

It was clear in many cases that candidates had planned for further discussion. The best way to do this is to imagine being the Examiner and to draw up a list of prompts or areas of interest that might be appropriate given the scope of the topic.

However, where this had not occurred, the discussions were lacking development. It is not the responsibility of the Examiner to work hard to sustain discussion - the candidate needs to plan for this and this element of Part 2 has indeed been built into the assessment criteria for both listening and speaking. It is, however, the responsibility of the Examiner to move the discussion along and to ensure that a 6 to 7 minute conversation occurs.

The most effective Examiners clearly took notes as the candidates completed their presentations, and then based the discussions very closely on what the candidates had actually spoken about. This usually led to conversations which arose naturally from the individual task. More work is needed, however, for candidates to take a greater part in developing the discussions. Some candidates, and some Examiners, seemed to be unaware that this is expected. In a number of Centres, there seemed to be an understanding that the candidate would deliver his or her talk and then wait to be formally questioned by the Examiner. This clearly led to a more stilted and less effective discussion. In the stronger Part 2 performances the candidates were encouraged to take control of the discussion and there was a genuine feeling that it was a two-way conversation, based on an equal footing between the candidate and the Examiner.

Examiners should therefore avoid adopting a very formal approach in Part 2. The aim is to be supportive of the candidate; to share an interest in his/her topic, and to share views, ideas and to work with the candidate to develop the conversation. It is important that the spontaneity of discussion is maintained - it is a conversation which is sought and not an interview.

In general however, both candidate and Examiner stayed on task, though there were a few instances of Examiners using the allotted time to involve candidates in discussions about other matters - for example, their future plans - 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 least successful discussions were those where the Examiner talked too much - sometimes jumping in too quickly and interrupting the candidate. Some Examiners should be careful not to answer their own questions. A few Examiners asked too many closed questions, which elicited weaker responses and which did not encourage development. Open questions are much more effective.

### **Concluding comments**

Centres who have responded well to what might be a new examination for them should be commended. It is appreciated that a different culture is required for what is a new assessment methodology and that this takes time to establish itself. There were many cases where Moderators reported refreshing and lively work, where it was clear that the candidates 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.

It is clear that some Centres need to offer further training to their Teachers/examiners to conduct the test according to the syllabus requirements. Where Centres do not comply with the rubrics, the effect is usually felt by the candidates, whose achievement and performance is clearly affected.

# FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (COUNT-IN ORAL)

Paper 0522/06  
Speaking and Listening (Coursework)

## Key messages

- Please take care with **administration**. Many errors were found in the addition of marks on the Summary Forms, the addition of marks on the Record Cards and in the transcription of marks to the Mark Sheets. Although Moderators do make checks, it is the responsibility of the Centre to ensure the accuracy of marks. It is important that large Centres in particular should appoint a checker to ensure that marks have been entered correctly on all documents.
- The **Candidate Record Card** is a crucial document for the Moderator. Please remember to send these in with the sample and other documents – only the Record Cards for the candidates in the sample are needed – not for the whole cohort. The Record Cards are the only evidence the Moderator has of the tasks undertaken by the Centre. It is helpful if full details relating to each activity are given. For example, descriptions such as ‘Role-play’ or ‘Presentation on a topic of choice’ are not, on their own, very useful. The Moderator needs to know the specific role-play scenario or the particular topic chosen by the candidate. It is permissible for candidates to fill out these sections themselves, but please check the accuracy and amount of detail given.
- It is important in **the paired activity** that the Moderator is able to distinguish between the two candidates taking part. If it is a girl/boy scenario then this is fine. In other cases, please ask the candidates to identify themselves by announcing their name and number and, in the case of role-play activities, the role that they are playing. Please also consider the suitability of the pairings. It is often unproductive to pair a weak candidate with one who is very able. It is intimidating for the weaker one and does not challenge the more able partner. Ideally candidates of similar abilities should be paired.
- Please remember that this component lends itself to **differentiation by task setting**. It is not necessary to conduct the same activities for every candidate. More able candidates should be guided to engage with more challenging topics and subject matter
- This is a **coursework** component and, as such, carries with it a great deal of flexibility. The three activities can be completed at times which are suitable for the Centre and its candidates. The tasks may be spread out over a two year course and will hopefully be integrated into regular teaching schemes. With this in mind, the number of candidates marked as absent for a particular task is surprising. Centres are encouraged to please try to re-arrange activities where possible, rather than awarding zero to absent candidates.
- Please always keep **the assessment criteria** in mind when task setting. In particular, please remember that Tasks 2 and 3 test listening as well as speaking. Moderators have noted that, in the paired activity, candidates tend to meet more of the higher level assessment criteria in a discursive or role play activity with another candidate. Where the activity does take place with a teacher (and sometimes this is unavoidable) please try to avoid a formal question and answer session.
- Although there is no formal requirement that activities should be of a **minimum length**, please again consider whether the assessment criteria can be adequately met if the activity is very short. Moderators noted some paired activities of just over one minute. It is difficult to see how both candidates can meet higher level criteria, such as ‘responds fully’, ‘develops prompts’ or ‘employs a wide range of language devices’ in that length of time.
- Please would all Centres **use digital recording equipment** to generate audio files, which can then be transferred to a CD, DVD or a USB drive. Please use recognised audio file formats that can be played by common computer software (e.g. mp3, wav, wma). It is also very helpful if a separate list of the candidates in the sample – to include name, number and mark - can be provided. It makes moderation very difficult if candidates are recorded on a continuous track, so please use a separate track for each candidate and, ideally, label each with the candidate’s name and number. Please, avoid using analogue recording and tapes/cassettes.

## **General comments**

Centres are reminded that three specific tasks are required: an individual task, a pair-based activity and a group activity. Again, the assessment criteria provide a guide to the skills being tested in each. Please try to facilitate a variety of platforms from which candidates can demonstrate their abilities. There is scope here for Centres to be as creative as they wish, as long as the assessment criteria are addressed. The integration of literature into the activities is encouraged.

## **Comments on specific tasks**

### **Task 1**

This generally took the form on an individual presentation and there was a wide range of topics. Some Centres allowed candidates a completely free rein here, while others opted for a broad framework within which candidates could express a personally held view (for example, the Room 101 scenario or providing an opening line such as ‘I could not believe what happened when...’). Moderators noted that a presentation based on strongly-held opinions usually brings out the best in candidates, many of whom used their persuasive skills to good effect.

*Some examples of productive Task 1 activities:*

- ‘My life outside School’
- I could never be a ....(job title)
- What I would do with a windfall
- You are doing a walk for charity - who would you support?
- The worst film I’ve ever seen
- A speech supporting a member of your class for Prime Minister.

### **Task 2**

The pair-based activity needs to have a clearly defined focus and works best where some preparation has been undertaken. Two candidates chatting generally about football rarely works well and often does not address the assessment criteria fully. But it can be a successful topic where candidates have a clear agenda – arguing persuasively for the merits of one footballer over another, or for a change in one of the rules perhaps. Even in a role-play scenario where spontaneity is important, candidates should be encouraged to spend some time thinking about their character.

*Some examples of productive Task 2 activities:*

- Bollywood vs. Hollywood discussion
- Role playing a hairstylist and a client who is not pleased with his/her new style
- Jeremy Kyle interviews George/Curley/Lennie from ‘of Mice and Men’
- Two ‘elderly women’ discuss the local teenagers
- A friend helps another to solve a problem
- Discussion on alternative endings to a novel or play.

### **Task 3**

Most Centres conduct this activity as a discussion group, but role-plays can also be successful here, for example a planning committee with characters for and against the ‘plan’, or an interview panel deciding on the best candidate. As long as the group work assessment criteria can be met, these are fine. It is always worth considering the dynamic of each group to ensure that all candidates have the chance to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills to good effect – one weak candidate in a group of much stronger ones is very likely to be too intimidated to perform well. The appointment of a group leader usually facilitates a more successful discussion.

*Some examples of productive Task 3 activities:*

- Debating the best role model for the School
- The trial of Lennie Small
- Balloon debate – who should have the last place on the first commercial space flight

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- Controversial issues – smoking ban, summer riots, increasing the speed limit and many more
- Role-play scenario – characters trapped in a lift
- Plan and perform an extra scene to a play.