

Example Candidate Responses

Paper 1

Cambridge O Level

English Language 1123

For examination from 2018

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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge O Level English 1123, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the subject's curriculum and assessment objectives.

In this booklet candidate responses have been chosen from June 2018 scripts to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with a clear explanation of where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by examiner comments on how the answer could have been improved. In this way, it is possible for you to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and what they could do to improve their answers. There is also a list of common mistakes candidates made in their answers for each question.

This document provides illustrative examples of candidate work with examiner commentary. These help teachers to assess the standard required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme. Therefore, in some circumstances, such as where exact answers are required, there will not be much comment.

The questions and mark schemes used here are available to download from the School Support Hub.

These files are:

June 2018 Question Paper 12
June 2018 Paper 12 Mark Scheme

Past exam resources and other teacher support materials are available on the School Support Hub:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- and low-level response for each question. The candidate answers are set in a table. In the left-hand column are the candidate answers, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – Task 1, high		Examiner comments
Question	Part	
①	I	Task 1
		To: Mrs. G.A. Perera, Principal
		From: Mevan Edirisinghe, class 10 A
		Date: 3 rd of May 2018
		Time: 9:35 am
		Reg: Easter break time for students
		As Royal College is increasing in popularity, more the student numbers also are this month.

Answers are by real candidates in exam conditions. These show you the types of answers for each level. Discuss and analyse the answers with your learners in the classroom to improve their skills.

Examiner comments are alongside the answers. These explain where and why marks were awarded. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams so you can help your learners to refine their exam technique.

1 For Task Fulfilment, the candidate adds more information than is required by the question to ensure that the format looks authentic. In particular, a topic heading is supplied.

2 The candidate can use vocabulary which is precise enough to communicate the message.

How the candidate could have improved their answer

The candidate was able to identify keywords in the text and utilised them as part of the answers. This candidate interpreted explicit and implicit information, including the writer's attitude. The candidate also demonstrated understanding of how to write using appropriate language and structure to effectively answer the questions.

This section explains how the candidate could have improved each answer. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams and helps your learners to refine their exam technique.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

The question asked why the author uses these particular phrases to convey his meaning. Many candidates only gave the definition or explained the phrases without giving the reasons why the author used these particular phrases. Therefore, the responses gained only one mark.

Often candidates were not awarded marks because they misread or misinterpreted the questions.

Lists the common mistakes candidates made in answering each question. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes and give them the best chance of achieving the available marks.

Task 1

Example Candidate Response – high

Examiner comments

Question	Part	
①	I	Task 1
		To: Mrs. S.A. Perera, Principal From: Mevan Ediriampala, class 10 A Date: 3 rd of May 2018 Time: 9:35 am Reg: Easier break time for students
		As Royal College is increasing in popularity, more the student numbers also are also increasing. As a result of this many places in the school such as the canteen are overcrowded. Most student regret breaktime as it is extremely chaotic to by a meal from the canteen. I myself have had many unfortunate incidents at the canteen when the canteen becomes crowded with hungry children the canteen becomes a battle field. Each one fighting for their meal. As a result many students have been injured.
		To solve this problem some teachers and students both recommend opening building a few more canteens around the school as spreading the students among many canteens will ease the congestion. The others students recommend expanding the current canteen so that the students have space to eat. The senior school teachers recom suggested to reduce the intake of students in the school. The prefects council suggested having to have separate break times for each grade, so that less is there with be an exence on the school is minimal.
		By following one of these methods the students of Royal College will benefit.

① For Task Fulfilment, the candidate adds more information than is required by the question to ensure that the format looks authentic. In particular, a topic heading is supplied.

② The candidate can use vocabulary which is precise enough to convey shades of meaning.

③ For Task Fulfilment, the candidate includes personal as well as general experience, as required by the question.

④ The candidate uses images to convey the situation.

⑤ For bullet point 1 of Task Fulfilment, the candidate has indicated realistic difficulties.

⑥ The spelling is nearly always accurate, even when the word is a difficult one. Later examples include the word 'beneficial'.

⑦ 'minimal' is another example of the candidate using good vocabulary.

⑧ For bullet point 2 of Task Fulfilment, the candidate gives several appropriate suggestions.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

Question	Part
	<p>greatly, ⁹ as the canteen will be a much more relaxing place to eat. and a less hazardous By managing these crowds the students who g receive injuries in the canteen will reduce greatly and the ¹⁰ most importantly the school will be able to cope with the increasing number of students. As having large crowds in the canteen is a health hazard for students reducing such large amounts of students in the canteen will be beneficial for students. ¹¹</p> <p>¹² I hope you take ^{notice of} all these suggestions to so that the ^{break time} canteen becomes a easier for everyone. ¹³</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(M. Edirisinghe)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(265 words)</p> <p>¹⁴</p>

⁹ The candidate uses some variation in sentence structures to create some natural fluency.

¹⁰ Sentence separation is accurate and the punctuation generally helpful.

¹¹ For Task Fulfilment, the candidate has addressed bullet point 3.

¹² The paragraphs show some evidence of planning, usually according to the separate bullet points.

¹³ For Task Fulfilment, the candidate at the end includes an appropriate signature to enhance the format.

¹⁴ Overall, the writing is increasingly accurate with some slips caused by ambition.

Task Fulfilment: 13 out of 15

Language: 12 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =
25 out of 30**

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- As far as Task Fulfilment was concerned, there was good understanding of purpose, situation and audience, as well as an entirely appropriate format. The tone was also appropriate. Although the candidate did well with difficulties and suggestions for bullet points 1 and 2, the third bullet point was addressed rather than fully answered. The point said enough about the benefit for the students but it needed more information regarding exactly how the school had benefited. As it was, it relied on saying that the school 'will be able to cope' and earlier it said there would be less expense but a little more detail here would have helped.
- In Language, although the script improved and maintained a natural fluency, the opening paragraph had slips of agreement ('Most student'), spelling ('by' for 'buy') and the use of a non-sentence. The candidate could have checked these before moving on to Section 2.
- Also, as far as Language was concerned, the candidate needed to vary the vocabulary a little more, particularly in the opening paragraph. There was too much reliance on the repetition of vocabulary and expression, notably 'canteen' and 'as a result'.
- There was an attempt to vary structures but even more variety of sentence lengths and types would have helped. The same was true of the punctuation which, although adequate, lacked sophistication. The correct use of, for example, question marks and semi-colons would have helped.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

Question Part

Question	Part	Response
1	1	<p>My school is very popular and the number of student is increasing each year. This means that it is more difficult to buy snacks at break time. My school Principal wants me to write a report for find a way to make break time easier for everyone.</p> <p>To the Principals</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14 May 2018</p> <p>To the Principal:</p> <p>The school is very popular and the number of student is increasing each year. This means that it is more difficult to buy snacks at break time so I find some way to makes break time easier for everyone.</p> <p>But first before we find a way to settle, we must find the problem like some of the difficulties we and other students have at break time. The number of student is increasing mean the student take a long time to buy snack at break time. The student also dont have enough time to eat snack and take break. Some student also dont have place to sit because the students are too many.</p> <p>So the ^{first} suggestions of me about how the school can make break time easier are longer the break time to make sure the student can buy snacks. This also ^{plan} also can make the student have enough time to take break and eat snack. We also can increase the place for the students to sit for because the number of students are too many.</p> <p>The students and the school will benefit example like the student can take a break time easier. The student can relax and cant be too nervous at the break time.</p>

1 For Task Fulfilment, the basics of the format (date, audience and signature at the end) are provided.

2 The purpose of the writing is understood and the start of the second paragraph makes the situation clear.

3 Simple, accurate punctuation such as the use of the full stop helps with sentence separation.

4 The candidate addresses bullet point 1 by providing three basic difficulties, all of which are related to the situation set out in the question.

5 Spelling of a basic vocabulary is usually accurate and the later words 'nervous' and 'hopefully' are more sophisticated words which have the correct spelling.

6 The suggestions given to address bullet point 2 are sensibly related to the difficulties in paragraph 2 and so they answer the problems the school has.

7 The overall meaning of the writing is never in doubt with some simple accurate structures.

Examiner comments

- 8 The candidate makes clear how the students will benefit and gives more than one benefit.
- 9 Paragraphing is made clear and appropriate by the candidate.

Language: 7 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =
17 out of 30**

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- Although the candidate made the purpose, audience and situation clear, a lot of the question was lifted to form the answer. This gave an artificial correctness to the text, paragraph 1 especially. The whole of the text relied very heavily on the vocabulary and expression of the question and the candidate could have used their own words more convincingly. Using the words of the question to this extent made it difficult for the candidate to convey any sense of their own opinion.
- The format of the piece was generally good. However, the candidate could have made it even better by avoiding the use of 'Thank you' at the end which made the ending seem like a letter.
- The candidate addressed all the bullet points but in bullet point 3 the candidate omitted any specific mention of the school benefit. The expression 'easier for everyone' did not make up for the lack of specific reference to the school.
- Although the overall meaning was never in doubt, the candidate could have given more attention to the use of verbs and tenses which were often incorrect. This meant that it was difficult to find correct sentences and certainly there was a lack of 'patches' of accuracy.
- The candidate could have used a far more varied vocabulary. The words 'student(s)', 'break', 'snack', 'increase/increasing' and 'easy/easier' occurred very frequently indeed and dominated the text.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

Question	Part	
1.	1	<p>From: Jane.</p> <p>To: School Principle.</p> <p>To the Principal, this report will show the difficulties students have at break time and how to solve these problems. I did a small research on school many students have their opinion.</p> <p>Problems:</p> <p>First of all, half more than half of students said that during break time there are many noise. Students who want to have a rest can't sleep because of noisy. Thus, they feel will feel uncomfortable and sleepy on the afternoon. They also reflect some of noisy made by teachers at break time.</p> <p>Secondly, some of students said said that there are some club activities hold at break time. Also some group work also need use break time. Almost 70% of student ^{except study} use break time to do work because the school ^{school} time, students only have break time to do their extra work. Therefore, they have no time to break.</p> <p>The last ones few of students hope extend ^{school} extended the break time. Many boys use break to play do sports in the playground and other exercise ^{after class} exercise. After they finished their exercise, they have not enough time to take a shower so they.</p> <p>Suggestion:</p> <p>At break time, school may supply some ^{quiet} empty classroom to students who want study or have have a rest. The place of these can be chosen ^{from} top floor of the building. Students may feel less tired tired after</p>

1 The use of the candidate's own words in the opening paragraph, rather than lifting from the question, shows understanding of purpose, audience and situation.

2 The work is paragraphed logically.

3 The use of sub-headings for the main paragraphs discussing difficulties and suggestions, together with the use of bullet points within these paragraphs, gives the text some idea of being a report. Furthermore, there are several points made for each of these two paragraphs. It is important when using bullet points that the sentences should be full ones as here and not written as notes.

4 The candidate uses statistics which is a useful way of suggesting research for a report. This helps the Task Fulfilment but should not be overused.

5 As far as the Language of the text is concerned, the overall meaning is never in doubt.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

Question Part

		breaking.
	6	<p>• School should control the club activities. For For example, school can require the teacher give extra work to club members at weekend or club time. not break time.</p> <p>• School can control the open time of playground at during break time. The playground should be for at at an hour before the end of break. Giving one ^{boys} hour to boys to take a shower and have some food. This achieve will be healthy for students.</p>
	7	<p>In conclusion, these suggestion will provide better the environment to students. A good rest will improve the efficiency of students in school. At the Braking time is also good for the health of student. For school the rules of will be more completely. The scores of the students may also improve in the long terms. Therefore, make break time easier for everyone while also benefit for everyone.</p> <p>Reported by 3/5/2018</p>
	8	

6 This short sentence shows that the candidate can write the occasional accurate sentence.

7 Some attention is given to the benefit to the students.

8 At the beginning and the end, the text type is generally appropriate.

Task Fulfilment: 8 out of 15

Language: 6 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =
14 out of 30**

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- As far as the Task Fulfilment was concerned, the first two bullet points were answered reasonably well. However, even though there were several points made in each paragraph, there was no mention of what the question required – an answer to the problem of buying snacks in the canteen at break time. All the difficulties and suggestions given were unrelated to this central problem. Therefore, each of the first two bullet points was only partially addressed.
- The same was true of bullet point 3. There was little mention of the benefit to the school. The scores of the students improving was just as much a benefit for them as the school. To say that for the school 'the rules will be more completely' was unclear. Again, there was no reference to the buying of snacks at break time. As with bullet points 1 and 2, the information was not specific enough and the candidate needed to concentrate more on the issue of buying food in a crowded canteen.
- With the Language the overall meaning of the text was never in doubt. However, there was only the occasional accurate sentence and the candidate was not able to achieve any 'patches' of clear, accurate writing. There were many errors in spelling (the two different spellings of Principal at the start of the text), tense and verb ('share' instead of 'shared'), agreement ('...almost 70% of student...') – all such errors needed correction.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- Some candidates did not see that there were two parts to one of the bullet points and so they answered only one half of that bullet point. If the bullet point is in two parts it will have '**and**' written in bold letters to show that two pieces of information are required to address the point fully.
- Another common error was to get the format wrong, either by not writing a report or by mixing together the report and letter formats so that it was unclear; quite often candidates would start with a proper report format and then end it with an inappropriate letter valediction such as 'Regards'.
- Many candidates tended to lift part of the question as their opening paragraph when they were uncertain about how to begin. This sometimes had the added disadvantage that, instead of explaining the difficulties faced, they said only that there were difficulties.
- Some candidates relied too much on supplying long lists of difficulties or suggestions for bullet points 2 and 3 rather than explaining a little more. Because 'difficulties' and 'suggestions' were plural, they had to supply more than one but a few of each with proper detail proved to be much more effective than listing as many as possible.
- Occasionally, candidates make the mistake of introducing too much narrative into the Section 1 answers. Telling long stories about scuffles in the school canteen was done when time would have been better spent on other difficulties. There is a fine line to be drawn between providing detail and providing too much detail in narrative form.
- There was sometimes an issue to do with tone. The vast majority of candidates were admirably polite in addressing the Principal but there were a few examples where candidates were a little forceful in saying something like 'Make sure these suggestions are implemented'.
- In language, the greatest problems in Section 1 were usually to do with tenses and agreement. Some candidates found it difficult to use the correct tense when distinguishing between a general difficulty and a specific event – for example, they would use the present tense to describe the difficulty ('the canteen is always crowded') and would continue with the same tense when referring to an event in the past ('Yesterday, I am in the canteen...') so that the sequence of events was uneven. A similar problem occurred when candidates referred to future benefits and were unsure as to whether to use 'would' or 'will'.

Task 2

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

Question	Part
2	<p>On a hot and bright sunny day, I decided to take my brother to two different places that we would like to go. The two places that we are going are the museum and the library. The first place that my brother and I visit is the museum.</p> <p>Upon arriving at the museum, we could see many different displays. My brother saw a skeleton of a dinosaur which happens to be a triceratops. He saw the description and noticed that this dinosaur is a herbivore. I saw a painting of Mona Lisa while I was looking at the arts gallery. I saw the name of the painter on the description who happens to be Leonardo Da Vinci.</p> <p>After that, we came across a display of a fossil. We saw the fossil which resembles a flower. There were other fossils for people to see, so we continued to look at them. About 3:00pm, we had finished looking at the displays in the museum and made our way to the library. A cool breeze suddenly blew at us and it felt great.</p> <p>After arriving at the library,</p> <p>After arriving at the library, we took a book to read and find a place to sit. Upon reading, we heard someone shouting in the library. My brother and I turned around and saw a small boy shouting. We had to cover our eyes to prevent hearing it. His Parents managed to quiet him down as he is disturbing other people. My brother and I finally felt relieved after the disaster is over. Moreover, we also heard someone playing some music close by. We saw a teenage boy playing with his MP3 player. The music was a little too loud and one of the</p>

- 1 Early use of adjectives by the candidate shows that the essay will be descriptive.
- 2 As far as content is concerned, the candidate clearly intends to describe two different locations as required by the question.
- 3 The candidate can write in accurate sentences with enough variety of sentence structure to include subordinate clauses.
- 4 The candidate's use of some scientific vocabulary adds to the impression that overall the vocabulary is mainly correct and sometimes conveys shades of meaning.
- 5 There is a 'patch of clear, accurate language' which extends into the opening of the following paragraph.
- 6 The clear use of frequent and appropriate paragraphs, based mainly on the passage of time, is a feature of this text.
- 7 The accurate sentence separation, made clear by the correct use of full stops, helps the fluency of the essay.
- 8 The candidate continues to use some useful vocabulary as in the use of 'relieved' and the spelling throughout the essay is accurate.
- 9 The candidate manages another small 'patch' of accuracy here which continues just on to the next page.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

Question Part

managers told him to keep the volume down. The teenage boy understood that other people are concentrating reading the books. So, he ~~lowered~~ lowered the volume from his MP3 player.

Besides, we smell someone smoking outside the library. My brother and I looked outside and saw an old man smoking with a cigarette. The smell was unpleasant and we had to cover our noses. When he finally stop smoking, we felt delighted. Furthermore, I smelled something fresh that is coming from outside. Then, ~~we~~ I saw a woman in a pink blouse spraying ~~some~~ some perfume on her face. The smell was really wonderful and not stinky.

At about 5:00pm, ~~we left the~~ my brother and I left the library and made our way home. We both had a great time visiting both the museum and the library. I hope that we would have another great time visiting other places.

10 There is more evidence here of the candidate's effort to describe.

11 Overall, the essay is adequate in length and the candidate gives a sense of unity here in the last paragraph by summarising the experience.

Total mark awarded =
18 out of 30

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- It was immediately obvious in the first paragraph that the candidate was unsure about which tense to use, given that this was a descriptive task, because the candidate was caught between describing places and recording events. The candidate initially decided on a narrative to carry the description and so chose the past tense ('I decided...'). However, as early as the second sentence the candidate changed to the present tense ('...we are going...'). Such uncertainty was maintained throughout the essay so that the sequence of events was always in doubt. The candidate needed to choose one tense and stay with it.
- When a tense was chosen, it was not always correct as in 'When he finally stop smoking...'.
stop should be stops
- The candidate needed to vary sentence lengths to make the writing sound more natural. There was too much reliance on fairly short, 'safe' sentence lengths which gave the text a repetitive feel. Even correct sentences, if they are all very similar, can limit the achievement. Added to this, the sentence types were very repetitive and the use of question sentences and exclamations would have helped to vary it.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- The most common mistake in descriptive essay type was the error made by this candidate, the mixing of tenses. This was usually caused because some candidates found it very difficult to sustain pure description in the present tense for this length of essay and so they resorted to adding narrative. Not only did this change the essay type and so limit the response but it was almost certain to introduce past tenses and the candidate became uncertain about whether to use past or present.
- Many candidates forget to use all of their senses when describing. Sights and sounds were the most popular elements described but only the better candidates remembered to introduce the ideas of taste and touch and smell. Also, when prompted by the question to consider the 'atmosphere' of a location, too many candidates made the mistake of thinking that this was merely the weather.

Task 3

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

Question Part

2	Task 3
	<p>I often hear people saying 'Your mother should go away from our house', or 'I cannot stay with your parents they use to complain ^{everything} which I do'. These situations come in modern societies but do you ever think what would you do without them?</p>
	<p>Recently, I met a huge family they had two kids and their parents as well and they seem so happy. They say it's not a big deal to spend money on their family. and At the same time, some people just get married and as they say they can not outstand to effort they their money on their family. They say 'where there is family, there is happiness'. well, I do agree with it.</p>
	<p>People say elderly people are such a pain but have you ever thought if they didn't become a pain would you be here in this standard place if they didn't show you the correct path would you be here today in this standard place? I don't think so... Elderly people are important in our family because when the world dumps you, they raise you up. Even though people think they become a pain as they are unimportant at last they are the ones who make you feel better.</p>
	<p>When it comes to modern society they are the there are so many comments about elderly people. Modern society often says 'Dude, my grandma keep on saying me the same thing I feel so annoyed at times'. This all what we hear in modern society.</p>

1 Using a quotation at the start of the essay is a useful way of beginning the argument.

2 This is a good use of a question sentence in an 'Argument essay' as it involves the reader and varies the sentence structure.

3 The candidate is prepared to express opinions and makes good use of a quotation to express the point of view.

4 Once again, the use of a question sentence maintains the sense of an argument.

5 The candidate is capable of achieving 'patches' of relatively clear writing, as in the latter part of this paragraph and the beginning of the next.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

Question	Part
	<p>On the other hand, some grandchild really love their grandparents and they take good care of them. But everyone's biggest question is why do elderly important in modern society? Well, I got answers for that. Elderly people shows them the path to the young people as they have experienced, they do not want to see young people fall in trouble. Before jumping on to a trouble they pull you out of it. Elderly people give you advices before and after you do something.</p> <p>Sometimes, elderly people do not fit in to modern society but yeah they catch it out later. But they know well about life than modern society. It must be old school advices or methods but however, its worth it.</p> <p>Nowadays, society thinks its a huge pain to keep elders in their family. I often see grandparents sing or doing something on busy streets in order to fulfill their lives. But the inside story is deep. Some children sent away elderly people on street because they cannot handle them, but its that's what they get in return from their kids as well when they grow up. People say 'what you do to others will come in return so treat them good.'</p> <p>8 Generally, my point of view is elderly people are important in our families and modern society as so well, because, they have pass the journey of life and knows well what to do and should not be done.</p> <p>9 Moreover, if you say they are not important in family you will not be able to build up your life.</p>

6 Here, the candidate again demonstrates the ability to include a question sentence to involve the reader. This also adds variety to the sentence structure. By following two quite long sentences at the start of this page with the shorter sentence 'Well, I got answers....' the candidate further increases the range of sentence structures.

7 The candidate uses a range of vocabulary throughout which is adequate in conveying the intended meaning. 'Nowadays' is just one example of such a vocabulary and there are a number of others such as 'Generally' and 'Moreover'.

8 Logical paragraphing is a characteristic of this candidate's work in this essay. This gives unity and coherence to the text.

9 The spelling of a word like 'Moreover' and others like it suggests that the candidate is capable of the satisfactory spelling of more than a simple vocabulary.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

Question	Part
	They are the guidians who's there for your happiness as well as sadness and if you say that they are unimportant in family and modern Society you are wrong. I say you should love your elderly people and make them an important part of your family and modern Society.
10	
11	
12	

- 10 Another 'patch' of clear accurate writing.
- 11 The punctuation throughout has, in the main, been accurate and helpful, especially because quotations have been punctuated, question marks have been used and the sentence separation has been accurate.
- 12 As far as content is concerned, the essay is lengthy and well sustained. The candidate manages to convey a point of view convincingly. By suggesting both sides of the argument the essay suggests a balanced and thoughtful consideration of the topic.

**Total mark awarded =
16 out of 30**

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- The Content of the essay was satisfactory and so the main areas for improvement were in the Language.
- The main improvement that the candidate could have made was to ensure that the correct tense and verb form was used. This needed checking throughout the essay. Clear examples of the misuse of verbs and tenses were 'Some children sent away elderly people...' and 'they have pass the journey of life and knows well...'. These examples demonstrated how the sequence of the essay was uncertain as tenses and verbs were not consistent.
- The candidate had problems with agreement as in 'Elderly people shows the path...' and should have avoided these.
- There was sometimes a loss of the correct tone in this essay. An Argument essay often requires more formal language than the other two and here the candidate allowed the tone to slip by using vocabulary and expressions such as 'two kids' and 'when the world dumps you' and 'it's a huge pain'.
- The vocabulary, although it was adequate to convey meaning, lacked a little sophistication and the candidate needed to raise the level of the vocabulary with the inclusion of a few more difficult words.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- It is very important for a candidate attempting the Argument essay to be sure to have enough content or material to be able to write a satisfactory amount. Also, it is vital for the candidate to have the linguistic skills to carry out the task adequately. Argument writing is usually a very sophisticated activity and it should only be attempted by those who are able to carry it out. Often, this title was attempted by those candidates who had a very strong point of view but not enough evidence or personal experience to back up their point of view.
- Candidates sometimes forgot that in order to give their point of view on a subject it is useful to consider the opposite point of view as well. This gives candidates more to say and suggests they are more balanced and considered in their thoughts.

Task 5

Example Candidate Response – high

Examiner comments

Question Part

		Section 2
		Narrative
		Task 5
		Rough Draft
		- Chloe, John, Simon, Myself
		- Waiting with chloe for john and simon
		- Dark chilly night
		- John and Simon dressed up funny
		- Secret agents
		- Plot to kill german president
		- John and Simon sell us out
		- Two people come to capture us
		- We incapacitate them & flee
		- Hide in the crowds to escape
		- Learnt an important lesson
		- Never trust anyone
		- Conclusion

1 Planning is a sensible idea, especially when it helps to determine the proper sequence of events and tenses. It is important not to spend too much time doing this, especially if it stops the candidate checking afterwards.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

Question Part

Task 5

Factual Draft

- 2 We were getting late. Chloe and I had been waiting for over an hour. If they got any later, we ~~go~~ would not have made it. I had already tried to call
- 3 John and Simon on their mobile phones, at least ten times. I was just about to lose my temper when they stepped into the room. Chloe and I were waiting in.
- 4 It was a dark night. The moon was almost completely hidden by the clouds behind the clouds. It had a strong feeling that it was going to rain. It looked like a scene from a spy movie right before
- 5 when something bad is about to happen. But then again, maybe it ~~a~~ was a spy movie and maybe something bad was about to happen. I quickly ~~st~~ pushed that thought away before any suspicion got to me.
- 6 "So, what do you think," said John with his arms spread out like a waltador
- 7 about to fight a bull. "I don't know how you look, but I do know you're late", said Chloe. 8 annoyed. John and Simon were both wearing a regular tuxedo except that the collars were extremely 'puffy' and ruffled. I thought they

2 This is a slightly awkward sentence but it is short and dramatic and sets the tone for a spy narrative of this sort.

3 It is clear from the whole of this paragraph that, although the sentence structure is not very varied at this stage, the writing is accurate.

4 Another short sentence helps to set the correct atmosphere.

5 The correct use of tenses is helping to suggest the correct sequence of events.

6 The inclusion of speech by the candidate helps to vary the sentence structure so that it reads fluently and naturally.

7 Appropriate images are used.

8 Effective choice of vocabulary and detail ('annoyed') helps to create character.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

Question Part

were ugly, but I didn't say anything. I just wanted to get the job done.

We were actually part of a secret British intelligence agency known only by the Queen and our superiors. Not even MI6 or MI7 knew about us. Anyway, we were in Germany getting ready to assassinate the President at an opera show. ⁹ But I had a bad feeling about it but, I was keen on completing the job and returning home. ~~to be~~

¹⁰ When we finally got to the gigantic theatre, housing all of Germany's most powerful generals and politicians, we were already late. The show had begun. Luckily, we were informed that the president would also be late, so we were fine. We got to our seats and started preparing. Suddenly, the door opened behind us. ~~we~~ I thought we had been caught, but it was just another spectator. In fact, it was a couple. When they entered the room, we were impressed by what they were wearing. It looked really expensive and I thought that maybe they were some rich diplomats.

After nearly fifteen minutes, the opera was ~~#~~ halted for the arrival of the president. This was our cue. The door ~~hung~~ open ¹¹ and to our surprise, soldiers marched in.

⁹ The candidate continues to write in a way which is accurate and also manages to include some sophisticated expression ('keen on completing...'). Three lines later the word 'housing' is precise enough to convey shades of meaning.

¹⁰ Paragraphing is effective throughout.

¹¹ The very occasional slips in verb forms only serve to highlight that the sequence overall is consistent and clear.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

Question	Part
	<p>instead of the president. Before we could react, we heard a voice shout out, "Don't move a muscle." It was the man who had entered our cubicle. Him and his 'wife' had both pulled out a gun and had them pointing at us. I instantly knew what had happened.</p>
12	
	<p>John and Simon had tipped them off and had guaranteed their own safety at the cost of our lives. I knew the clothes this 'couple' had worn were too much. It was almost like they were trying too hard to blend in. That is why John and Simon had taken so long.</p>
13	
	<p>The president was safe but we were not. I needed to think fast. I lunged forward snatching the gun out of the stranger's hands and held it up to his temple. In the mean time Chloe had knocked out John and had Simon in an arm hold. She broke his arm and slowly moved towards me. I pushed the man at his 'wife' and rushed out the door locking it behind myself.</p>
14	
	<p>We were out! I don't know how I did it but it just happened. I got it. The rest of the way was a breeze. We were wearing formal clothes, so we let a few shak loose and blended into</p>
15	
16	

12 Again, the precise use of vocabulary such as 'instantly' conveys the meaning well and the use of tense ('had happened') adds sophistication.

13 The candidate cleverly uses the punctuation of 'couple' to convey meaning. The same is true of the word 'wife' later on this page. Overall in this essay the punctuation is accurate and helpful.

14 Excellent vocabulary here in 'lunged'. This also demonstrates how good the spelling is throughout the essay.

15 The punctuation and the short dramatic sentence combine to contribute to the atmosphere.

16 The effective use of a modern idiom is sophisticated as it is typical of the genre.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

Question	Part
	the hundreds of people fleeing the scene.
17	That day I learnt an important lesson, you can never trust anyone. It makes life hard to live, but forgetting that lesson will always give you a far much harsher reminder.
	638 words-

17 This is a long, sustained essay and the final paragraph provides a sensible summing up of the action. A sense of unity is achieved.

Total mark awarded =
25 out of 30

How the candidate could have improved their answer

- This was a successful essay and so the areas for improvement were relatively few.
- Although the use of short sentences was at times successful in creating dramatic impact, there was sometimes an overuse of quite simple sentence structures, for example, in paragraphs 1 and 2. The sentence variation was a little limited on such occasions and needed the introduction of a more complex sentence to break up this repeated pattern.
- In a similar way, while the vocabulary was very good overall, it was not exceptional and there were times when the addition of a more sophisticated or 'difficult' word was needed. Using paragraphs 1 and 2 again as an example, the vocabulary here contained very little that was exceptional. It was accurate and correct but rather straightforward. The use of 'lunging' in the essay demonstrated that the candidate needed a little more vocabulary of this advanced sort.
- Apart from the above, all the candidate needed to do was be aware of the occasional slips in spelling ('superstion') and expression ('...the collars we extremely ...') in order to correct them.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- Most candidates chose the Narrative question. This was entirely sensible as narratives are more natural for the vast majority of candidates. However, there were occasions when candidates had a fixed idea of the story they wished to write. One of the Narrative titles always asks the candidate to integrate a given sentence into a storyline. The problem with not being flexible when writing was that often they did not integrate the given sentence convincingly. This could happen when the candidate has not taken notice of the past tense used in the given sentence and written the rest of the essay in the present tense so that the given sentence sounds awkward in context.
- Adding variety to a Narrative essay is essential and one of the best ways is to include convincing dialogue. However, for this to work properly, it must be punctuated correctly, including setting out different speakers on different lines. Many candidates found it difficult to do this.
- Another common mistake made in writing direct speech was when candidates confused it with reported speech so that it became a mixture of the two – She said that 'I am going out.'
- Prepared opening paragraphs were used in Narrative essays, usually involving the candidate waking up on a bright, sunny morning and going through the whole routine of washing and having breakfast when in fact it all had very little to do with the story which tended to start in paragraph 2.

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