

Example Candidate Responses

Cambridge
International
AS & A Level

Cambridge International AS and A Level English Language

9093

Paper 2

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Contents

Introduction	4
Assessment at a glance	6
Section A – Question 1	8
Section A – Question 2	12
Section A – Question 3	18
Section B – Question 4	21
Section B – Question 5	25
Section B – Question 6	28

Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS and A Level English (9093), 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 to exemplify a range of answers. Each response is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answers.

Each response is annotated with clear explanation of where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This, in turn, 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 will have to do to improve their answers. At the end there is a list of common mistakes candidates made in their answers for each question.

This document provides illustrative examples of candidate work. These help teachers to assess the standard required to achieve marks, beyond the guidance of the mark scheme. Some question types where the answer is clear from the mark scheme, such as short answers and multiple choice, have therefore been omitted.

The questions, mark schemes and pre-release material used here are available to download from Teacher Support. These files are:

Question Paper 12, November 2016	
Question paper	9093_w16_qp_12.pdf
Mark scheme	9093_w16_ms_12.pdf
Question Paper 22, November 2016	
Question paper	9093_w16_qp_22.pdf
Mark scheme	9093_w16_ms_22.pdf
Question Paper 32, November 2016	
Question paper	9093_w16_qp_32.pdf
Mark scheme	9093_w16_ms_32.pdf
Question Paper 42, November 2016	
Question paper	9093_w16_qp_42.pdf
Mark scheme	9093_w16_ms_42.pdf

Past papers, Examiner Reports and other teacher support materials are available on Teacher Support at <https://teachers.cie.org.uk>

How to use this booklet

Example candidate response – high	Examiner comments
<p>Mrs Gillard's speech is characterised by strong, emotive language and an accusatory, outraged tone. It is written in a thought-provoking manner, and exposes the flaws of the Leader of the opposition ¹</p> <p>Answers by real candidates in exam conditions. These show you the types of answers for each level.</p> <p>Discuss and analyse the answers with your learners in the classroom to improve their skills.</p> <p>she and the misted by ad conviction. ² something e attention of they feel compelled</p> <p>She refers to Abbott repeatedly as "this man". Such a phrase resonates as slight bathing, contempt and disgusts. By choosing not to give him a name or title here, she reduces his influence and importance</p>	<p>¹ Immediate and purposeful assessment of the tone of the passage.</p> <p>² Examiner comments are alongside the answers, linked to specific part of the answer. These explain where and why marks were awarded. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams and helps your learners to refine exam technique.</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

There was some engagement with the passage focus was very variable and rhetorical devices

The response would have benefited from a more disconnected and this prevented any clear exam

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

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

The examiner expected candidates to:

- identify language examples and features the passage
- comment on specific effects of the chosen effect of the passage as a whole

Lists the common mistakes candidates made in answering each question. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes at the exam and give them the best chance of achieving a high mark.

Assessment at a glance

For Cambridge International AS and A Level English Language, candidates:

- take Papers 1 and 2 (for the Cambridge International AS qualification)
- or
- follow a staged assessment route by taking Papers 1 and 2 (for the Cambridge International AS qualification) in one series, then Papers 3 and 4 (for the Cambridge International A Level qualification) in a later series

or

- take Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the same examination series, leading to the full Cambridge International A Level.

Cambridge International AS Level candidates take:

Paper 1 Passages	Duration	Weighting
The paper contains three questions. Candidates answer two questions: Question 1, and either Question 2 or Question 3. Questions carry equal marks. Externally assessed. 50 marks	2 hours 15 minutes	50%

and

Paper 2 Writing	Duration	Weighting
Two sections: Sections A and Section B. Candidates answer two questions: one from Section A and one from Section B. Questions carry equal marks. Externally assessed. 50 marks	2 hours	50%

Cambridge International A Level candidates take:

Paper 1 Passages	Duration	Weighting
<p>The paper contains three questions.</p> <p>Candidates answer two questions: Question 1, and either Question 2 or Question 3.</p> <p>Questions carry equal marks.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 50 marks</p>	2 hours 15 minutes	25%

and

Paper 2 Writing	Duration	Weighting
<p>Two sections: Section A and Section B.</p> <p>Candidates answer two questions: one from Section A and one from Section B.</p> <p>Questions carry equal marks.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 50 marks</p>	2 hours	25%

and

Paper 3 Text Analysis	Duration	Weighting
<p>The paper contains two questions.</p> <p>Candidates must answer both questions.</p> <p>Questions carry equal marks.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 50 marks</p>	2 hours 15 minutes	25%

and

Paper 4 Language Topics	Duration	Weighting
<p>The paper contains three questions, each on a separate topic area.</p> <p>Candidates answer two questions.</p> <p>Questions carry equal marks.</p> <p>Externally assessed. 50 marks</p>	2 hours 15 minutes	25%

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Section A – Question 1

Example candidate response – high	Examiner comments
<p>Plan : Missing Sense of Suspense and mystery Opening</p> <p>Missing - taken, abducted, run away, lost Characters - narrator, mother, friend, father Setting - Zimbabwe, Harare Plot - Two best friends one in England, one in Zim Drifting apart Lack of contact becomes worrying Search for answers Plot twist.</p> <p>Gather up rosebuds while ye may Some may live lives of quiet desperation. I have scars on my hands from teaching certain people. The course of true love never did run smooth I am not what I am In the end we all become stories</p> <p>1 I am not what I am. It's almost sardonically funny that I begin my day quoting Shakespeare. And not even something romantic and enchanting like Romeo and Juliet, but I start with the maudlin Othello. This specific instance is just another precursor for the direction my life is going. As I slowly rise out of bed and the vestiges of sleep concede to the rather malevolent 2 thoughts I find myself possessing, I can't help but think again. I really am not what I am. For the functioning person I am going to appear as for the rest of the day is nothing but a slender replica of bravado.</p>	<p>1 An eye-catching introduction using an allusion to Othello. Stimulates interest and informs the examiner that this is a candidate who is well read and is able to use language devices.</p> <p>2 'sardonically', 'precursor', 'malevolent' are instances of ambitious vocabulary used in an apt manner by the candidate.</p>

Example candidate response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>A completely different person from the mind it contains. ³</p> <p>Now this pre- pre-eminent existential crisis ⁴ that I find myself in is not so much the result of one pivotal catastrophic event, but more of a coalescence of cumulative episodes of misfortune. And like every situation where there is a the proverbial "dice effect" there was a tipping point that began the avalanche of melancholy. A definitive moment. The departure of my best friend. ⁵</p> <p>Oh no, it's almost seven a.m and I'm still not ready for the day. It's almost surprising - my mother hasn't raised all hell ^{at} for my tardiness. Maybe the intensity of my mood has finally reached a tangibility ⁶ that it has repelled her from my room. The situation is not too dire yet, I can still make jokes!</p> <p>Back to the issue at hand. My best friend left for the United Kingdom earlier this year on an academic scholarship. Her absence has been bittersweet. ⁷ Bitter, because of the way it sometimes feels like I've lost a limb. Like I'm in a situation where her assistance or com companionship is warranted but as soon as I seek for it, I realise it's not there. However, it has been sweet because it has allowed me to realise some truths. Realistically her ⁸ and I are of perfect compatibility. Whilst I tend to be aloof and unfocused at times her erudite and even temperamental grounds me. I realised I leaned heavily on that in the past. ⁹ She She did too, but to a lesser extent. I held our friendship in such great esteem I was positive we would survive the distance and beat the odds. I was wrong.</p>	<p>³ This first section manages to develop a singular idea of a persona who is troubled. The reason for the melancholy is not explained, giving rise to mystery. Withholding information raises suspense and stimulates the reader's interest.</p> <p>⁴ Spelling error here – and there are a few scattered throughout the piece – but it's through ambitious vocabulary and therefore some leeway is given.</p> <p>⁵ The variety of sentence types so far, together with range of long and short sentences, adds interest and pace to the story.</p> <p>⁶ The humour used in the language – using some overly formal words for a domestic situation and acknowledging it – is masterly.</p> <p>⁷ The idea of a 'missing' person is guessed at here by the examiner – who might have missed the silence of the mother in the paragraph above.</p> <p>⁸ Error – it should be 'she and I'.</p> <p>⁹ Persona still muses on her 'lost' friend, but we find out later this is a bit of a false clue meant to trick the reader.</p>

Example candidate response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>It has been almost two weeks now since our last phone conversation which was as hollow and detached as the mental space I find myself in now. ¹⁰</p> <p>This was just a confirmation of what I had feared. The most influential and important person in my life was slowly being taken away from ¹¹ like the person she was had disappeared. Typical of human nature, I became self-indulgent in my pity party and began to reflect back on our relationship. I saw how I'd taken the role of the reliable handkerchief. Always there ¹² when needed to relieve or then hastily thrown away when not. This brought to mind that one quote from J.D Salinger, "I have scars on my hands from touching certain people." Yet she was left completely unharmed in comparison to the emotional injury that came from my "bleeding heart". ¹³</p> <p>As I quickly finish preparing for the day my father makes the off-handed comment that he hadn't heard from my best-friend's dad in a while. Most unusual since they practically work together. ¹⁴ Really, I think spitefully, who knew jealousy was passed hereditary. I distractedly peep into the kitchen to see where my mother is but it's ^{it's} quite empty. ¹⁴ She must have left for her sister's place on this early this morning. With that thought I hurry off to school.</p> <p>In English class later that day we're discussing the merits of none other than Shakespeare but in this case his play "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Specifically the discussion is centered around the phrase "the course of love never did run smooth." My feelings are the quote is quite universal in its meaning of love. Say, the love you</p>	<p>¹⁰ Complex idea – language use is sophisticated enough to accommodate this.</p> <p>¹¹ '...from (me).' Missing word.</p> <p>¹² Use of metaphor to depict relationship.</p> <p>¹³ Interesting build-up of characterisation.</p> <p>¹⁴ Another mention of the mother missing though the persona is too busy caring about her own problems to actually pursue this thought.</p>

Example candidate response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>have for a friend maybe? An even stranger coincidence occurs just as I'm musing to myself on that. Another friend of mine asks me if I'd heard from my best friend recently. Of course I say I haven't, almost self-deprecatingly. She says she was curious because she had passed by her old house and my best friend's parents cars were absent and there was a "For Sale" sign. Strange. Her ignoring me I could begrudgingly understand but firstly my father mentioning her father's sudden disappearance, then now this information. As the proverbial saying goes once is a fluke, twice it's a coincidence and the third time it's a pattern. I had to investigate. ¹⁵</p> <p>Quite anti-climactically, a simple I call to the real-estate agency gave the information that my best friend's parents were simply relocating to England but had not made any formal announcements of it. I would have asked my mother ¹⁶ about it but unusually her phone was unreachable. I'd latched on to the ember of hope that my best friend would not just forget me but something dramatic had happened to account for this behaviour. Again, I was wrong. The sepulchral mood returned and I morosely trudged back home. I arrived to find a cross circus. ¹⁷</p> <p>¹⁸ Police cars and curious neighbours neighbours filled the streets like a procession of chaos. My father quickly ran out and asked if I'd heard from my mother today. I told him that I thought she left early in the morning and he informs me she hadn't even returned last night. He assumed she had decided to go to her sister's that night. As I warily scanned the cacophonous picture of disaster unfolding before me, I realised filled with trepidation. She was gone ¹⁹</p> <p style="text-align: center;">²⁰</p>	<p>¹⁵ Mystery sustained in the idea of the absent friend and her missing family.</p> <p>¹⁶ Third reference to the mother – the 'real' missing.</p> <p>¹⁷ Ambitious vocabulary still used with care.</p> <p>¹⁸ Good use of paragraphing – a new paragraph is used as there is a change of venue (the persona has arrived home). Good continuity between paragraphs is seen in the cohesive vocabulary choices – idea of 'circus' at the end of one paragraph coheres with the 'chaos' in the opening of the next paragraph.</p> <p>¹⁹ The mother is the missing person. We only find this out at the end. However, the sense of mystery is sustained till the end by the subplot of the absent friend. There is also suspense created.</p> <p>²⁰ Engaging and imaginative. Strong sense of purpose and focus on the parameters of the task. Ideas are complex, language used creates a real sense of character, mystery and suspense.</p> <p>Total mark awarded = 23 out of 25</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

There were a few spelling and expression errors. These could have been avoided by a final check at the end. The errors, mostly of spelling, were due to the ambitious vocabulary used. Although the composition did not get full marks as there were quite a few errors, it was still a very good piece of work which achieved an A grade.

Section A – Question 2

Example candidate response – middle

Examiner comments

Plan	
✓ Amsterdam	✓ Canals full of big boats
✓ Canals	✓ Bridges
✓ Bridges	✓ Anne Frank House
✓ Anne Frank House	✓ small independant
✓ small independant	shops
✓ shops	✓ Bikes - hot bikes
✓ Bikes	anymore.

1 In Amsterdam the canals run through the whole place. Every where you turn you are not quite sure if you've been there before. The canals are soathing to look at and somewhat relaxing. On the canals, boats rest. Every boat you can imagine, from house boats to pecal boats. Along the walls of the canals, house boats are connected to the sewage system. You come across some very posh house boats and then you see some that can only be described as 'hippy.' Still fantastic to look at. Along with all the canals comes 2 bridges. All for^{ur}teen thousand of them. To add to this they all look very alike. You can easily mistake one bridge for another and you will end up going in a completely different direction, but it's all part of the fun of the place. A talking point of this beautiful city is the Anne Frank House. The long queue

1 Immediate task focus on the description of a city/town, as the task is to contrast a town 50 years later in the second piece.

2 Error: subject-verb disagreement.

Example candidate response – middle, continued	Examiner comments
<p>is worth standing in so you can walk around the historical house. It stands tall looking out onto the canal and a little row of shops. It is sandwiched between two even taller houses. Not to give too much away, it's an extraordinary experience that shouldn't be missed. It's eye opening to what was really happening and makes you feel grateful that you don't have to live like that.</p> <p>Amsterdam is full to the brim with small independent shops. Every side road is saturated ³ with so exquisite pieces and the odd cafe. In each shop window there is something different that will no doubt catch your eye. Whether it's the bohemian dress sense or the Rock and Roll style jewellery. ⁴</p> <p>There is a souvenir guaranteed. ⁵</p> <p>Finally, you will have never seen bikes quite like these. The vast number of them and the low quality. It has Bikes have got become so popular that rules have been made. You cannot lock your bikes in certain places or it will be taken away. If you want it back you have to pay. However most of the bikes aren't worth keeping. If you do fancy a stroll along the canal keep to the pavements as these cyclists don't hold back. They pedal fast, they travel fast. Perhaps because</p>	<p>³ Some ambitious vocabulary is used to give variation to the expression.</p> <p>⁴ Fragmented sentence.</p> <p>⁵ Spelling errors of 'souvenir' and 'guaranteed'.</p>

Example candidate response – middle, continued	Examiner comments
<p>their breaks don't work.*</p> <p>6</p> <p>In Amsterdam the canals are filled with muddy water that occasionally over flows and fills the water runs riot through out the roads. They are dull and boring to watch. They show nothing but sadness and neglect. The number of house boats has dramatically decreased since the quality of the water deteriorated. Unfortunately the 7 number of large boats similar to barges has increased causing the water works to be congested and avoided by those who used the 8 pedal boats. Which Which, I may add, have become in such a state that they cannot be used. The pedals are rusty and they are now homes for city wildlife.</p> <p>The bridges have been rebuilt in the last 2 twenty five to fifty years. Instead of being built of stone they are now an eyesore and are built from concrete and steel bars. If you were to take a photo of a bridge and the canal it would not have the same effect as it did fifty years ago. Each bridge has a name now and it is in big letters.</p>	<p>6 Contrasting piece sets up a description of the same town 50 years later.</p> <p>7 Spelling error of 'unfortunately'.</p> <p>8 Fragmented sentence.</p>

Example candidate response – middle, continued	Examiner comments
<p>next to it so there's no chance of having that excited, slightly terrified feeling of being lost and on an adventure.</p> <p>The more fantastic Anne Frank House is now surrounded by nothing but gloomy canals and modernised building buildings and houses. It stands out like a sore thumb. Although it's an important part of Amsterdam's history it doesn't look a part anymore. It looks like someone has taken it from somewhere else and squeezed ^{squeeshed} it in a gap.</p> <p>¹⁰ Small independent shops. What small independent shops? Every road is is filled with big branded shops. To make things worse there is more than one of each shop. There are six H&M's in the space of four roads. This is not necessary. Nothing stands out in the shop windows, everything is the same. Every t-shirt, jumper and dress have ^{are} the same, the same. The bohemian, rock and roll vibe has gone and the mainstream things have taken control.</p> <p>If you're looking for a bike or two, don't bother with Amsterdam. They have all gone. Not Not a handle bar to be seen, not a chain or bell.</p> <p>¹² Now, everyone takes to their hover boards. As state of the art as they</p>	<p>⁹ 'squeeshed' is non-standard English; 'squeezed' would have been a better choice.</p> <p>¹⁰ A rhetorical question to add a language effect – that of a character who sounds disappointed with the new Amsterdam.</p> <p>¹¹ The candidate should have used 'is' instead of 'are'.</p> <p>¹² Triplet used for descriptive and rhetorical effect to pass judgement.</p>

Example candidate response – middle, continued	Examiner comments
<p>are, they are just not a bike. There's nothing comical about the bad ¹³ quality or walking past and there's nothing left but a was single wheel. It's just not Amsterdam anymore As well as hoverboards, electric cars have really taken Amsterdam by storm and everyone has one. They also have very big cars, very unnecessary ¹⁴. Instead of having bike parks there's a constant demand for multi-storey car be parks.</p> <p>Will this an interesting the lifestyle change strongly continue to grow? I hope not. The people of Amsterdam are unwelcoming and somewhat grumpy. Every citizen storms around like they have somewhere very important to be. Even if they are just going to the nearest supermarket to buy some jam. There's almost no people having a catchup in a café with a nice sandwich, probably because they spent half an hour on Skype and that was satisfactory. They don't have a buzz about them. It's as if they have lost their shing.</p> <p>¹⁵ * The people of Amsterdam are always smiling. Everyone you walk past is in a deep conversation with someone else. They cycle around talking, laughing and having a really enjoyable time. When you walk past cafés they are every table is occupied by friends or families ¹⁵ talking and sharing stories and tales. Their happiness and excitable sense of life radiates ¹⁶ the entire city. ¹⁷</p>	<p>¹³ Unclear what 'bad quality' refers to. Thought has not been properly formulated.</p> <p>¹⁴ Spelling error.</p> <p>¹⁵ Part of the first piece: the candidate has managed to add another detail to structure the contrasts between the two pieces. This seems like an afterthought; hence a brief plan would have been a good idea.</p> <p>¹⁶ The word 'throughout' is missing.</p> <p>¹⁷ Imaginative touches, some appropriate sense of audience.</p> <p>Total mark awarded = 11 out of 25</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

A number of errors were made. The candidate could have checked for subject-verb disagreement mistakes, fragmented sentences, missing words and spelling errors.

The description could have incorporated more specific details of people and activities to add to the atmosphere.

The language used was a little unvaried: the candidate could have used more ambitious vocabulary, different ways of starting sentences and using varying sentence lengths and types. There were a few attempts at language effects, though not always successful because of the lack of variation of devices. This sits at the bottom end of a C grade.

Section A – Question 3

Example candidate response – low

Section: A Imaginative Writing.

The view from the window.

I wake up every morning to see the sun rising from its bed. It is one of the best scenes that I get to watch everyday. As soon as I wake up I cover myself with my fluffy woolen ¹blanket, and I turn ²my face to my side to look at the window. It was ³there – the breath taking view of the day, the beautiful ball of orange-tender fire revealing itself from the deep-blue mountains. It is as if it's all planned. When the sun throws its warm rays from behind the sleepy mountains, the magic happens. Slowly the region ⁵below the mountains light up ⁴rythamically. The yellow fields get its shiny, sparkelling ⁶touch to it. The scarecrows come alive with a beaming smile on its ⁷pot face.

The sun rays travel further down the main lane and reaches ⁸all the small huts far away from my home. I could see the spec ⁹of flowers dancing along with the sun rays like a magical dust which is been sprayed on this paradise. I have always waited for this moment, when the sun rays reached my ¹⁰window, I stretched ~~to~~ my head out of the window and I could feel the warmth of the sun rays on my face. As I took a deep breath, the fresh ¹¹air flowed through my body waking up my sleepy cells.

Far away from my home, I could see small people coming out of their huts and getting ready for the day. They had tiny ¹²brown baskets with them which they carry

Examiner comments

- ¹ Spelling error of 'woollen'.
- ² Spelling error of 'turned' but this should be in the present tense anyway.
- ³ Tense inconsistency.
- ⁴ Spelling errors: 'happnes', 'reagion'.
- ⁵ Spelling error 'rythamically'.
- ⁶ Spelling error 'sparkelling'.
- ⁷ Unclear what 'pot face' means. Also 'scarecrows' is plural; but 'its' is singular.
- ⁸ Subject-verb disagreement 'rays' – 'reaches'.
- ⁹ The plural 'specks' is needed to match 'flowers'.
- ¹⁰ Tense changes from the present to the past tense.
- ¹¹ Spelling error of a basic word.
- ¹² One basket is not enough for all.

Example candidate response – low, continued

along with them around the field. ¹³ ~~at~~ ~~was~~. I knew them all but I haven't spoken with them. In one of those tiny huts, there were two dogs. One with olive black ¹⁴ and the other with husky brown. They also enjoy the sunlight like I do ¹⁵ but, they had their own way of enjoying it. Each day, they run behind, chasing each other and jumping with joy. Whenever I see them my sole jumps inside me with joy and happiness. ¹⁶

By this time, I can hear the chirping sound of the birds. I lean down to look at the bird's nest on the mango tree in the garden. The mother bird was feeding her chicks. I could see their ~~at~~ dark ~~at~~ black eyes gleam with excitement. ¹⁷ ¹⁸

The mountains are now widely awake and wild. The rich emerald green surface of the mountains were densely populated with wild bushes and trees. I always ¹⁹ wandered what was under those mysterious thick bushes? And it is one of my unanswered question ²⁰ ²¹ about nature.

All of these gave me hope and something to look forward to. I would never miss this moment in my day. No, not at any cost. I get out of my bed and shift myself to my wheelchair. As I move across ²² my room, I turn back for the ^{and} last time towards my window and give a big ~~and~~ hearty smile. ²³

Examiner comments

¹³ Unclear, undeveloped detail.

¹⁴ Missing word, 'fur'.

¹⁵ A general idea lacking specific concrete details which would have engaged the reader.

¹⁶ Another basic spelling error – 'happynes'. 'Soul' is also misspelt as 'sole'.

¹⁷ 'can' and 'could' – confusion of tenses.

¹⁸ More errors of spelling – 'excitement' – this one is a common error.

¹⁹ 'widely awake and wild' – a bold claim that is not developed much in terms of supporting ideas.

²⁰ Spelling errors are now frequent.

²¹ 'one of my unanswered question' is ungrammatical; the plural form 'questions' is needed here.

²² More spelling errors.

²³ A short composition lacking in development. There is focus on relevant content and the form is mostly descriptive, which is appropriate.

Total mark awarded = 6 out of 25

How the candidate could have improved the answer

The candidate could have developed more specific details in this short answer. There is some focus on 'colour and light' as demanded by the question but there is more 'telling' than 'showing' in this composition. Imagery could have been developed further to enable the reader to better imagine the scene.

Spelling and tense errors were made throughout the composition. The candidate could have spent a few minutes checking the work at the end to correct these errors.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

The examiner expected candidates to write either a narrative or a descriptive piece of work in Section A, depending on the command words in the question. For example, 'Write the opening to a **story**' in Question 1 was asking for a narrative piece, as understood by the word 'story', whereas 'Write a **descriptive** piece called *The View from the Window*' in Question 3 was asking for a piece of descriptive writing, as it clearly stated.

Other important words were the 'focus' areas that each question contained. For example Question 1 asked the candidate to create a sense of 'suspense and mystery'; whereas Question 3 wanted the description to focus on 'colours and light'. For Question 2, the command words were, 'Write two contrasting pieces'. The question was asking for a description of 'a town in the present day', and 'the same town in fifty years' time'. The focus words were to 'create a sense of place and atmosphere.' The words 'place and atmosphere' clearly referred to a description of a setting, though elements of dialogue could be incorporated to evoke that atmosphere.

Candidates sometimes did not focus on the instructions within each question, for example, 'suspense and drama' for Question 1 and 'a sense of place and atmosphere' for Question 2. Time-management skills were lacking at times: overlong narratives in Section A often led to short, under-developed answers for Section B.

Some candidates did not spend a few minutes writing out a short plan to ensure the sound and effective structure of an answer. A lack of a plan often leads to diffuse, rambling work.

There was frequent evidence of candidates referring to 'amounts' rather than 'numbers' of people, and the confusion of 'less' and 'fewer' occurred even in some of the more competent submissions.

Some candidates struggled with syntax: they either created comma splices or ended sentences without main verbs. Incorrect apostrophe use was evident in some cases, but a more common error was the absence of punctuation.

Some candidates neglected capitals at the beginning of sentences completely.

Dangling modifiers were an issue: candidates should be taught the risks of beginning a sentence with 'By ___ing' formations, especially if participles are not related to the subject noun of a sentence. Some vocabulary was incorrectly used.

Other common errors were:

- spelling errors
- tense inconsistencies
- lack of subject-verb agreement
- unvaried vocabulary
- unvaried syntax.

Section B – Question 4

Example candidate response – high

Examiner comments

Travelling for the first time

Hooray! You made it! ¹ You've finally managed to convince ~~your~~ ^{and your} parents that you are responsible enough to travel on your own. If you haven't got there yet don't lose hope! Hopefully this article will help you with some life-saving tips and save you from getting ^{those} long lectures by your parents.

1. Spending Savvy ²

Travelling on your own also means dealing with money ~~and~~ ^{as} you no longer have parents who say you can't have everything your heart desires. Even though you may have heard it a hundred times, you shouldn't spend all your money in one go or on everything you like. Prioritise ³ the necessities now and it will save you a whole lot of worries later. That means make sure you have money for food and transport and always keep some leftover in case of an emergency.

2. Stranger Danger ⁴

Yes you've been told this since you were little but this ^{piece} ~~piece~~ of advice could never prove more ^{useful} ~~helpful~~ than now. Keep to the people you know and don't accept

¹ Lively tone established from the outset, appropriate for young audience. Direct address is used, indicating a sense of audience and involving them straightaway.

² Subtitles add to the structure of this composition as well as a sense of purpose.

³ The use of imperatives continues to directly address the audience. It also lends a tone of authority to the piece, and has the correct function of advising the reader.

⁴ Rhyme helps to make the article appealing to the audience, particularly young people.

Example candidate response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>things from strangers, ^{either} when you're partying the night away with friends or sitting de alone by the bus stop. This can prove difficult at a time when you are young and ^{constantly} told to be open and social, however, follow your instinctive warning signals and if a person you don't know asks you to go somewhere with them don't be afraid to say no. (^{picture} like Meghan Trainor in her music video for courage.)</p> <p>3. Fat what you want.</p> <p>Let's face it, we're all going to want to binge eat on our favourite kinds of junk food when in a foreign land without parent supervision. Howe You'll You may not believe it now but you'll actually get tired of this after a week and voluntarily want to go back to healthy food ^{like} a nice crisp apple. Don't believe me, fine, but just look after yourself and your body and prove to your parents that you are able to withstand the temptations of that cheesy pizza every day. Trust me the satisfaction of proving them wrong will ^{definitely} be worth it, and nobody wants to get fat when on holiday.</p>	<p>5 Specific hypothetical situations that the teenage reader would encounter.</p> <p>6 Allusion to pop culture appeals to a teenage reader. This tells the examiner that the candidate is aware of the audience and understands form.</p> <p>7 Continued appeal to audience with use of idiomatic English gives rise to tone of confidentiality.</p> <p>8 Needs a comma here.</p>

Example candidate response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>4. Have the right papers</p> <p>Depending on your mode of transport you'll need to have the right papers and documentation ⁹ smooth to get by all smooth sailing. The usual necessities include your passport and transport ticket. If you are under the age of eighteen ¹⁰ make sure you have that special letter with the approval and consent from your parents on your travels. You wouldn't want to be held up in O.R Tambo Airport and in South Africa without them, ^{or else} and you'll be stuck ^{and stranded} waiting in the immigration office for hours, or even days.</p> <p>5. Write it down.</p> <p>All this seems like an impossible load to remember which is why you should keep a travel notebook, not just to record your fabulous adventures but also jot down important things to remember like departure times, addresses and phone numbers. Or Alternatively, use your fifth limb that is permanently attached to your body – your phone. You'll be surprised at the number of useful travel apps your phone can download, not just games and social media. It's also better because you can set alarms</p>	<p>⁹ 'documentation', 'approval' and 'consent' are all apt lexical choices of vocabulary for this particular subsection.</p> <p>¹⁰ Shows continued awareness of teenage audience.</p>

Example candidate response – high, continued	Examiner comments
<p>and reminders so you don't miss your flight, dozing off in the hotel room.</p> <p>6. Surrender to the enemy.</p> <p>If all else fails, the last thing you want to do is have to ring up your parents and admit defeat, but remember they are on your side and will always be able to give you advice on anything. Don't be afraid to ask your family and friends for help when you are in a pickle; because the likelihood is that ¹¹ they have been through the same thing, and you'd would rather ^{now} surrender and ask for help than letting the problem get bigger and more complicated.</p> <p>Hopefully ¹² this article has made you more confident about your independent travels and don't forget to have fun and try new things whilst learning about the place and people you are visiting. Who knows, you may even love it so much as to want to live there one day.</p> <p>¹³</p>	<p>¹¹ Continued use of idiomatic speech shows the candidate's facility in English.</p> <p>¹² A proper conclusion to the article.</p> <p>¹³ Thoughtful and engaging, this composition shows a strong structure, voice and purpose. It develops each point clearly, with subtitles helping to organise ideas. There is a concrete sense of audience, expression is fluent and there are very few errors. Candidate achieves an A in this piece.</p> <p>Total mark awarded = 20 out of 25</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

The use of an anecdote or two, some more varied use of language effects and a showcasing of the ability to use slightly more ambitious vocabulary would have improved the mark.

Section B – Question 5

Example candidate response – middle

Leaving age - 16

Good morning my fellow students and ¹ teachers.
 Today I would like to address ² the topic of age.
 more specifically; at what age students should
 be able to leave school and start with their
 lives as an independent person. ³

It is my strong belief that students should
 be allowed to leave school at the age of 16.
 Here are some of the reasons why I believe
 that this is a good age. ⁴

Knowledge:

Throughout our schooling careers we strive to
 expand our knowledge. ⁵ yes we do learn a lot
 of new things but we also repeat a lot
 of the same topics even though we have mastered
 it the first time. We can take all that wasted
 time and use it to develop new skills that we
 would only be able to learn at a higher standard.
 This would reduce the amount of years needed
 by, from what I have calculated, two whole
 years. ⁶

Experience:

School takes a lot of time out of ones ⁷ life at
 a young age. This often means people can't
 experience other fundamental ⁸ parts of becoming
 an adult. For instance many jobs require a
 certain number of working years ⁹ experience.

Examiner comments

¹ Audience is made explicit from the outset – and it is immediately clear that this is a speech.

² Spelling error.

³ Topic is made clear from the outset.

⁴ The speaker's purpose is also made clear now by a straightforward statement of intent and a simple indication of direction.

⁵ Spelling error from carelessness (the candidate spelt it correctly in the subtitle). Also, this should be followed by a full stop.

⁶ The first point has been made but no example has been given. Development is minimal.

⁷ It needs an apostrophe here – 'one's life'.

⁸ Spelling error.

⁹ Apostrophe needed – 'working years' experience'.

Example candidate response – middle, continued	Examiner comments
<p>experience we cannot attain as we can't work at small businesses. Two years working experience will greatly help in the future.</p> <p>University:</p> <p>My final point is universities. A lot of universities look at grades from lower standards. For instance IGCSE levels are highly respected in our universities and one can often get in on those alone. So why waste time doing a lower standard ¹⁰ for longer when you can do a slightly higher, more recognised, one that takes less time.</p> <p>Leaving age – 21</p> <p>Good morning all, I cannot see that a leaving age of 16 will be effective both for ones self or for the community. ¹¹</p> <p>My belief is that at an age of 21 students will be far more equipped to handle future tasks of the adult world.</p> <p>Firstly ¹² I personally think that people of ages 20 or lower have not fully reached a mature level. ¹³ Yes there are people that are more mature than others but about 87% of all teenagers under 20 are not at a mature level ¹⁴ especially in today's society. Having immature people working or studying greatly affects productivity and quality in a working environment. ¹⁵</p>	<p>¹⁰ Unclear. Does candidate mean 'while still at school'?</p> <p>¹¹ Again, unclear here what 'doing a lower standard' means.</p> <p>¹² Purpose is clear from the outset. This is the opposing argument.</p> <p>¹³ Use of discourse markers to indicate structure. This also helps give a sense of purpose to the argument.</p> <p>¹⁴ A full stop is needed here to avoid the sense of a run-on line.</p> <p>¹⁵ Repeats phrase – this makes the composition seem a little unvaried.</p> <p>¹⁶ Spelling error.</p>

Example candidate response – middle, continued	Examiner comments
<p>Yes work is often repeated but on the other hand why only do something once when you can do it a few times and be very good at it. At the end of the day your grades are only going to be higher but why stop there? An increased maturity will allow for an increased work load and thus an expanded knowledge and understanding of the work. This will help when looking for a job as people will know that you are more qualified. ¹⁷</p> <p>It will also not only be easier to get into a university but it will also be a lot easier to cope with the work at that higher level. First and second year university will be easy as there is a high probability ¹⁸ that the work has already been covered. A better understanding will lead to better grades and eventually lead to more and better opportunities ¹⁹ in the future.</p> <p>Finally ²⁰ I believe that by leaving at a mature and academically achieved age ²¹ of 21 will allow you to know what you want to do or what you want to study. Very often will students have no idea of what they ²² want to do after school. By having this piece of knowledge time can be well ²³ spent and money not wasted. ²⁴</p>	<p>¹⁷ A question mark is needed here, as this is a question.</p> <p>¹⁸ Some development of thought here, which helps the audience follow the logic of the speaker. Again, this point would have benefited from a specific example.</p> <p>¹⁹ Vocabulary is apt here.</p> <p>²⁰ Spelling error.</p> <p>²¹ Discourse markers continue to the end.</p> <p>²² The expression 'academically achieved age' is unclear.</p> <p>²³ Careless spelling of 'they'?</p> <p>²⁴ A conclusion is needed here. The speech ends too abruptly.</p> <p>²⁵ Overall, a consistent focus on the relevant content and form. Apt sense of audience, and a clear structure showing two opposing viewpoints. Lexical choices are apt and give a sense of two voices.</p> <p>Total mark awarded = 15 out of 25</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

While there was a consistent focus on the topic in the candidate's answer, the number of errors, especially of spelling and punctuation, brought the candidate's mark down. The use of specific examples would have made the arguments more convincing and persuasive. More varied use of language effects could have made for a more engaging set of speeches.

Example candidate response – low, continued	Examiner comments
<p>oxygen to breathe, we are polluting what we need to drink and survive survive. Our advancements for better better ¹⁴ feeding off ¹⁵ the Earth ¹⁶ if this continues there will be no us.</p> <p>(Film (Film of industrial pollution))</p> <p>Look at the amount of waste gases that are given off these waste gases will And ¹⁷ this from only one factory, to imagine the amount of smoke given out every day. Imagine the amount of waste ¹⁸ entering the water bodies. What would we do without fresh air and fresh water? We have done enough harm. There is too much pollution and global warming. Our sins are committed ¹⁹ but we should work together and take simple actions to pay back back Mother Earth.</p> <p>(Film of a flower's transition from a bud)</p> <p>The first thing we should ²⁰ is to grow more plants and trees. They are beautiful aren't they? So why not grow them ²¹ in our concrete world to make it more beautiful and green ²² Twenty percent of of our population is are the teenagers, but they are ²³ hundred percent are our future. Every one of you has ²⁴ the power to this world a better place, it ²⁵ only a matter of choice.</p> <p>(Zooming out showing a greener Earth from space)</p> <p>The ability to bring out change is the most in ²⁶ our teenagers. You have to live a life here on this planet, ²⁷ would you choose it to be dull or healthy?</p> <p>Deforestation must be loved ²⁸ by a forestation. More of public transport should be used and more must be done in research to ²⁹ of ³⁰ co-friendly fuels. If you don't want the ice caps ³¹ to melt or the atmosphere to change. Earth is already in red alert. Global warming is rising due to pollution. Slipping is it is surely a slow process and and will take years, but we must start take efforts now, before it's too late ³² in order to restore Earth to its beauty where humans and other species live in harmony, a better future, a better life.</p>	<p>¹³ Spelling error.</p> <p>¹⁴ Subject-verb agreement error.</p> <p>¹⁵ 'feeding off' is an unclear expression.</p> <p>¹⁶ Punctuation is needed, either a full stop or a colon.</p> <p>¹⁷ More sentence fragmentation.</p> <p>¹⁸ This should be singular.</p> <p>¹⁹ Spelling and grammatical errors.</p> <p>²⁰ Word 'do' is missing.</p> <p>²¹ Spelling error.</p> <p>²² A question mark is needed here, as this is a question.</p> <p>²³ '(one) hundred' – missing word.</p> <p>²⁴ Subject-verb agreement error. This should read 'Every one of you has the power...'. ²⁵ Missing apostrophe.</p> <p>²⁶ There is a missing word here.</p> <p>²⁷ This should be a colon.</p> <p>²⁸ 'loved' is an inappropriate word here.</p> <p>²⁹ 'More of public transport' is an unclear expression.</p> <p>³⁰ 'For' is needed, rather than 'of'.</p> <p>³¹ Wrong word – should be 'caps'.</p> <p>³² This should be a comma, as it should lead on to 'in order to restore...'. Total mark awarded = 8 out of 25</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

This composition was relevant, with an appropriate structure in place. Language effects were attempted. Expression was unclear at times and did not flow easily.

The candidate made frequent errors in this composition: inconsistent use of pronouns, sentence fragmentation, spelling and punctuation errors, use of imprecise or unsuitable vocabulary, subject-verb disagreement. Although the content was relevant, the ideas were not always clear and ideas could have been developed more carefully and appropriately. The form was appropriate, but not always consistent – there were instances where the text did not read like a voiceover, e.g. in the use of ‘I guess’ which is unsuitable for a voiceover. The candidate could have made sure that all elements of the text cohered to the style of a voiceover.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

The examiner expected candidates to persuade, argue or advise in Section B, depending on the command words in the question. For example, Question 4 ‘Write a magazine article called *Travelling for the First Time*’ clearly asks for offering advice and guidance. This meant that candidates had to give suggestions in a positive and thoughtful way, using language effects to steer readers to accept the ideas as beneficial to them. The purpose and audience were understood to be travel advice for ‘older teenagers’ travelling for the very first time without their family, so candidates had to select their vocabulary and phraseology to appeal to that age group.

For Question 5, the words ‘debate’ and ‘argues’ should have alerted candidates to the form expected; and the command was ‘write two speeches’ with ‘opposing attitudes and viewpoints’. Candidates therefore had to formulate two different speech texts with completely different points of view. The more sophisticated candidates also created two different voices with varied styles of speaking to emphasise two different personas.

For Question 6, candidates were told to ‘write the script of a voiceover’. The examiner expected candidates to tie in the content with some visual elements of a TV documentary, not merely write an essay with a passionate argument or a quasi-speech exhorting young people to ‘step up to the plate’. There was no need to write ‘stage directions’, but candidates should have written so as to reference the imagined visual components in the documentary. Candidates should have spent their time in using language persuasively and convincingly.

The more successful ‘Writing for an audience’ answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Less successful responses were unable to use the conventions of different forms, establish a mature, credible voice or develop a well thought out, logically organised line of argument. Across Section B (as in Section A) there was a range of technical and structural errors which often impacted on the clarity and accuracy of expression. The most successful responses avoided this tendency.

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