ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8021/11
Essay

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Key messages

- Candidates are advised to make a plan before writing their essay.
- Candidates should choose their question carefully to ensure it is a topic they can write effectively about.
- Candidates should use an appropriate formal tone and register – they should not write their essay as if they were speaking with their friends such as saying 'alright', 'you know what I mean' or similar.
- Candidates should avoid using contractions in their essay e.g. 'do not', 'would not', 'I'd'.
- Candidates should work towards being able to analyse the meaning of the question, develop and evaluate different arguments relevant to the question in order to reach a supported conclusion.
- Essays are more convincing with real examples and not fictional sources.
- Candidates should write clear, evaluative conclusions rather than repeating everything that has already been written in the argument.
- Avoid opening phrases to each paragraph that break up the natural flow of the essay.

General comments

Candidates performed better overall than in June 2021. There were fewer shorter, poorly focused, irrelevant or partly relevant answers. Many responses ranged from good to excellent.

With more attention given to planning, candidates could avoid beginning their essay with an assertion that they later contradict, as they change their minds in the process of writing. Weaker responses moved from point to point with no clear overall argument. Taking a few minutes to think through precisely what the question is asking and organising thoughts accordingly, before beginning writing, is time well spent. At times, when a weaker response ran out of ideas, those mentioned earlier in the essay were repeated. Other weak responses did not fully understand the wording of questions which led to partial answers, lacking the range of better responses.

Overall, responses tended to follow a simple 'point, example, explain' outline, with both introduction and conclusion referencing key points. Higher level scripts tended to include current references with a more critical understanding of events such as the Capitol riots, social media, fake news, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the impact of global warming on the environment. The language used was of a more advanced level, with accuracy and academic tone. Lower-level responses tended not to have a clear essay outline, instead listing points with occasional examples and explanation to strengthen their ideas. Language on lower-marked scripts tended to be informal/slang/incorrect and impeding understanding of the response. Many essays contained a balanced argument, but some simply juxtaposed points of view.

There was a tendency among several candidates to rehearse all the ideas and examples that were going to be used in the answer in an introduction, then work through these in the course of an answer with supporting evidence added, before repeating them in the conclusion. Although candidates generally managed to deliver analysis in this format, evaluative material was in less evident. There was a lack of examples in a number of essays: an example, however straightforward, can enhance the overall argument. There were also factual errors, suggesting that the writer lacked full control of the material being discussed.

Candidates would be advised to be wary of adopting an emotive tone within their responses if it is at the expense of critical engagement with the viewpoints/ideas. The tone of some responses was too conversational and inappropriate for a formal, academic essay. While that method of communication did allow candidates to demonstrate a breadth of vocabulary, blending that breadth of vocabulary with a more objective, less emotive approach could have allowed them to have fulfilled more of the higher-level descriptors not only for AO3 but also for AO2 where analysis and evaluation need to be evident to award

those levels. An assertive tone does not always demonstrate the cogency required for the highest marks in AO2 and, indeed, those candidates that were cogent tended to be more objective in their tone than emotive.

COMMENTS ON LANGUAGE (AO3)

Many candidates at a range of levels knew how to construct the essay appropriately, crafting an introduction, using discourse markers at the start of paragraphs and concluding clearly. Within paragraphs, candidates had clearly been taught to make a point using a topic sentence, then using an example before developing towards a concluding sentence, which was linked to the question. This made it easier to award 'mostly coherent' or 'clear' in this AO.

A good number of candidates found it difficult to maintain a high level of language performance from start to end of a 600 – 700-word essay. Errors tended to increase during the second half of the answer.

Common errors in control of language included misuse of prepositions – particularly 'on' and 'of' and spellings based on words heard rather than words read. For example, many candidates could not differentiate between 'then'' and 'than', 'bias' and 'biased', 'being' and 'been'. Other common spelling errors included 'convenience' and 'beneficial', together with the confusion of their/there, where/were, your and you're and whether/weather.

Paragraph openings were often very colloquial, rather than using formal discourse markers – e.g. 'First off…'; 'Adding on…'; 'Wrapping up…', 'furthermore', 'moreover', 'conversely', 'For starters', 'Second of all' and 'Third of all on'. However, many discourse markers were successful and showed some variety.

There were relatively few examples of 'text speak', but 'wanna' and 'gonna' appeared frequently. Colloquialisms like 'kids', 'go figure', 'is a thing' (in the sense of a (usually new) phenomenon), 'crazy' are inappropriate in a formal essay.

A better awareness of basic grammatical distinctions notably may/might, amount/number, less/fewer, criterion/criteria, due to/owing to, among others was needed in weaker essays. Also evident in many responses was the repetition of hackneyed phrases ('dawn of time', 'day and age', 'a lot of' as well as hyperbolic language such as 'crazy', 'insane' and 'humungous' which was out of place.

Imprecise terms such as 'messed up', 'a bunch of stuff' and the interjection 'right?' appeared frequently, weakening achievement on this AO. There was also overuse of 'etc.', or 'ect.' and 'off of'. Another common trait was to refer to a previously mentioned item as 'said', as in 'said minority group'.

An area for improvement is appropriate register in written expression: many candidates wrote in a tone that was too familiar for a piece of formal writing, predicating sentences with 'Well…', 'So...' and 'Sure…' Contractions like 'do not', 'can not' *etc.* are inappropriate in academic writing, but these were widespread. Some words cannot be joined either at all or without a change in meaning, *e.g.,* 'anyway' and 'everyday' have quite different meanings from 'any way' and 'every day' but were too often used indiscriminately. Some candidates showed a tendency to omit determiners e.g., writing 'Majority of people…' rather than 'The majority of people' or 'A majority …' and '&' should not be used in academic writing at any level.

Punctuation within sentences, especially commas for clauses, was not always secure. Very few candidates used any advanced punctuation. A feature of lower-level responses was insecure use of sentences. There was an overuse of the comma, followed by a continuation of the sentence with no sense of completion. There was also the omission of the comma when separating clauses. The apostrophe was often misplaced on contractions. Frequent or occasional use of the apostrophe as a contraction inadvertently lowers the register. Misusing the apostrophe within possessive pronouns (especially in its which was commonly spelt as it's) was common.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

To what extent is history based on lies rather than facts?

Weaker responses found it hard to engage with the command of the question 'to what extent'. Others had difficulty using ideas about the accuracy of sources and/or the biases that may come from those responsible for creating or disseminating the sources. Most answers used historical texts (especially the Bible) as an example of lies, whereas modern eye-witness accounts of what happened in more recent wars (especially the First and Second World Wars) were examples of history not being based on lies. Interestingly, many candidates quoted the narrative surrounding Christopher Columbus as an example of history being based on a lie, but many of those candidates could not engage with the reasoning behind why these 'false truths' surrounding Columbus were being promoted. They did not use this example and others as a springboard to look at other arguments exploring the question outside of the realm of the reliability/unreliability of documents or sources. Many arguments showed good awareness of the notion of distortion, bias and lies. Some of the examples offered were factually inaccurate or overstated. For instance, one response argued that we could know nothing certain about the Second World War as there were no cameras in those days erred on both counts. Many responses did not clearly address the question of lies – that is, deliberate untruths. Mistakes and misjudgements are not the same as lies. Some less convincing arguments were very assertive, sometimes relying on assumptions and theories (e.g. the moon landings or covid vaccines) that were advanced in a propagandist manner.

Question 2

There are no great leaders in the world today. Discuss.

An interesting way to approach the question, which allowed some candidates to produce more developed responses, was looking at previous leaders who were considered great and then compare/contrast modern-day leaders with those. However, a number of these arguments struggled with the assumption that, for instance, figures like Franklin D. Roosevelt or Martin Luther King were figures whose most notable achievements were all that they did and against such standards, today's leaders were almost bound to fall short. Few pursued the possibility that immoral leadership might, in some cases, be effective (or the reverse). Weaker responses were often assertive, offering contradictory statements formulated as 'there are no great leaders today because…' and 'there are great leaders today because…': a degree of modality would have benefited both the English and the argument in such cases. It would have been more beneficial to consider the differing qualities of leaders and use relevant examples to illustrate those skills and use that to make a judgement as to whether it can be confidently stated if there are/are not great leaders in the world today. Some responses were a simplistic list of good and bad examples of leaders, A couple of evaluative responses were able to discuss the nuances of the word 'great', showing an intelligent appreciation of the ways in which many despotic dictators have been highly successful in their manipulation of the people, therefore being considered 'great' for a time. However, time and circumstances went on to show that they lacked any sort of moral compass.

Question 3

To what extent are timed examinations a fair means of assessment?

Some candidates offered a passionate denunciation of timed assessments while still, in many cases, accepting that, in some respects, they may have some merit. There were very few poorly focused or under-developed responses to the question and the best drew on examples of specific examinations or vocational pursuits to consider whether, all things considered, there was a realistic alternative to timed testing. Many arguments concluded that, generally speaking, there was not. Better responses explored what the aims and potential usefulness of assessment are and how its practice affects candidates and their results. They also gave examples – from schools, higher education and professional exams. The common arguments that appeared considered the stress factors of time limits and the benefits of offering time limits in order to hone organisational skills that would be needed in the workplace post-education. Some responses focused too much on those primary arguments which meant they could not engage with a range that may have facilitated a more informed conclusion or well-developed discussion. Some solutions offered to difficulties were impractical – suggestions included unlimited time and allowing candidates to decide the time and place of examinations.

Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Question 4

Governments should be responsible for funding a nation's performing arts. Discuss.

Whilst a small number of candidates did choose to respond to this prompt, very few of these responses showed a full understanding of what constituted 'performing arts'. Answers usually agreed that governments should provide funding, however, apart from the obvious reason, that organisations providing entertainment and training lack sufficient money to function, very few additional arguments were provided. Some responses were clearly grounded in personal experience – some very positive but, sadly, most having suffered lack or withdrawal of funding. It is always good to read such responses and feel the passion behind them, but candidates should take care to argue and justify their case, *as well as* expressing their feelings. Many candidates found it difficult to offer examples of the benefits of providing funding to performing arts beyond their presence in the classroom or mainstream education. In addition, candidates tended to describe the benefits of performing arts as opposed to what funding of those performing arts would generate. Most suggested the government may have other spending desires that could have a wider impact (specifically military and education), but, even then, these points were not overly developed and few candidates were able to write about the benefits funding performing arts programmes could generate on a wider social level.

Question 5

Using a telephone is the best way of communicating. To what extent do you agree?

This question was a popular choice, but not always answered well. Many candidates found it challenigng to respond to the word 'best' in the question. For something to be the best means in comparison with at least one other thing. Weaker responses lacked comparison with anything else and were simply an account of the glories and problems of the telephone. The stronger responses reminded the reader that the phone was a device to access the internet, unlike those who became too internet-focused in a way which meant their argument lost their way as they began to lament/praise the internet as a global network or social media as a form of communication, forgetting that the telephone is the device which helps with that communication and, indeed, was the focus of the question. Most candidates found it easy to exemplify occasions where the telephone was especially helpful for aiding communication instead of other forms of communication, such as how telephones were used to keep in touch with friends and family during the Covid-19 pandemic. AO1 is only worth 20 per cent of the mark so, even if a question provides the opportunity to list many examples, it is how these examples are used to enhance evaluation of the arguments and the quality of written communication in exploring those arguments that candidates should be more considerate of when selecting a question. Responses were often counter-argued with the cost of mobile phones and data packages, addiction to phones/social media, and issues with signal limiting communication. Interestingly, for a digitally native population, there were frequent references to the importance and benefits of in-person communication and a preference for this form of communicating due to the inclusion of body language/facial expressions which could not be replicated digitally even with video-calling, demonstrating an understanding of the impact of this, on such areas as a lack of social skills.

Question 6

To what extent is it necessary to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads of <u>your</u> country?

Though not especially popular, many candidates used this question to competently demonstrate their environmental science knowledge. Many instances of subject-specific terminology were seen which helped candidates to demonstrate their ability to use language with control and some accuracy. In addition, it was pleasing to see that candidates were paying attention to the 'your country' aspect of the question and felt comfortable in engaging with the particular situation regarding vehicles in their countries and the wider public transportation situation. Many weaker responses did not exemplify their points beyond the 'general' when they could have drawn on 'roughly estimated figures', for instance, to exemplify some of their ideas (especially in relation to the number of households owning cars in their country or those who died due to vehicle-related accidents). Whilst there was much discussion of the issue of transportation in an environmental/pollution context there was also consideration of problems caused by congestion and the safety aspect of over-reliance on private cars. Many took the opposite approach, arguing that the elimination or reduction of private vehicles would curtail individual freedoms and enforce reliance on an often untrustworthy or inefficient public transport system. The weakest responses wrote answers about pollution in general with only the occasional mention of vehicles.

Question 7

There should be no limits to a country's surveillance of its citizens. Discuss.

Successful arguments passionately supported the limits of surveillance, and, because of this, candidates were able to showcase their linguistic flair in promoting their viewpoints and, thus, meet the higher-level criteria for AO3. Such cases showed there were some merits in choosing a topic which people were passionately for/against. Several responses to this question took a rather extreme approach, comparing polarised views of two dystopian scenarios: one a 'big brother' style superstate and the other a criminal's paradise where no surveillance of any kind existed. Better responses focused on the 'limits' aspect of the question, discussing the extent to which a degree of surveillance is beneficial or permissible. A notable number of responses did not provide exemplification of the benefits/negatives of surveillance. This was especially the case when responses addressed the use of surveillance to help deter criminals and maintain law-abiding citizens' safety through the use of surveillance. Many, when dealing with this argument, provided no examples of the different surveillance methods that have been/could be used to enhance public safety (though many, instead, were able to suggest surveillance techniques had helped to reduce the crime rate). Some candidates considered surveillance only in the context of CCTV monitoring or software on devices. Where candidates were fully aware of countries that were known for their rigid surveillance of citizens (especially China and North Korea), they were able to explore the ramifications of these measures on citizens' privacy and daily lives. Also, a number of other weak responses became overly descriptive of the authoritarian practices of these countries and lost focus on the question. Arguments sometimes became confused between censorship and surveillance which, while having some overlap, was not indicated in a manner that may have helped the essays' arguments.

Question 8

To what extent do films have to be realistic to be enjoyable?

Many candidates were able to provide examples of specific films that allowed them to develop convincing arguments. One area that was a feature of many weaker responses was the lack of examples of films from a specific genre that would have allowed them to exemplify the points they were attempting to make. In cases where they could not, they, unfortunately, tended to describe the non-fictional or fictional aspects of those genres and, as a result, tended to explain why they could be seen as real/not real when it would have been more pertinent to consider why lack of realism did/did not make the film enjoyable. A large majority of candidates engaged with the command of the question ('to what extent'), but, again, where candidates limited their argument to a few perspectives, it meant they were not able to demonstrate as informed a response or as insightful a conclusion as they could have. There was exploration of the concept of 'relatability' and demonstration that 'realistic' features could be present in depictions of family ties, friendship, moral dilemmas even in the most outlandish fantasy film. Less successful responses took the opportunity to list and recount the plots of their favourite films, but better responses were thoughtful reflections on what counted for realism in terms of sympathetic characters and general credibility. An interesting problem for some was the use of the term 'documentary' used for feature films with some relation to real events, despite much fictionalisation. Films such as 'Dunkirk' or 'Titanic' were often cited in this category. The best answers discussed specific elements of a film which exemplified points *e*.g. the very hard-hitting realism of a film like 'Dunkirk' proved to be a success because of the way it documented and paid homage to the soldiers and civilians involved in the actual event. Additionally, well-written responses explained how the appeal of a film, be it realistic or otherwise, depended upon a whole range of factors including: a strong plot; powerful performances; the musical score; an existing fan-base and whether the movie 'chimed' with the mood of society at the time. Several answers argued very successfully that viewers cannot simply be pigeon-holed into lovers of realistic or non-realistic movies – what people watch depends upon their emotional needs at any given moment. Likewise, better answers pointed out that, although some films do fit reasonably neatly into the category of realistic or non-realistic, there are many others which contain elements of both genres. Most arrived at the conclusion of both facets contributing to a film. The answers were often more confidently handled as candidates were on familiar territory and were able to use illustration knowledgeably and successfully.

Question 9

Evaluate whether poets have any role to play in society.

Those who were able to highlight named poets produced the most convincing arguments. Some candidates wrote about poetry and its relevance in very general terms without mentioning a single poet. There were responses that clearly illustrated how poetry from Shakespeare to modern day Rap draws attention to issues

of perennial concern. The stronger responses were able to look at the impact which solo singer-songwriters (from Bob Dylan to Kendrick Lamar) had on society from an entertainment, progressivist, and philanthropic perspective as a means of evaluating the role poets had to play in today's society. There were some excellent answers, that explored the changing role of poetry over time – changes in the kind and quantity of ways in which ideas and feelings can now be both conveyed and consumed. The most successful responses cited a variety of ways in which poetry is still highly relevant – *e.g.* protest poetry, song lyrics, romantic verse, commemorative poetry *etc.* – *and* demonstrated the significance of specific examples of these. Less successful essays simply *mentioned* poets, without any indication of their significance in terms of the question: 'name dropping' Shakespeare, Frost, Plath can do little to enhance an argument.

Question 10

The media has become a dangerous part of daily life. To what extent do you agree?

Candidates that were able to draw on media in all forms (whether written, broadcast, or spoken — including television, radio, advertising, the internet, newspapers, magazines, and so forth) were able to draw on many arguments. Several candidates seemed to run out of time as their conclusion was rather basic and did not draw on all of the different arguments which they had developed within the main body of their response. Indeed, where one of the L4 descriptors in AO2 requires candidates to 'analyse the meaning of the question to inform the scope of the response', this question offered candidates an opportunity to consider media in a broader sense than just news channels or social media. Where candidates only focused on one form of media, they were reducing the scope of their argument. The word 'dangerous' in the question being an emotive adjective seemed to stimulate the candidates to showcase their linguistic flair by drawing on different synonyms for 'dangerous' and display their abundant vocabulary in their evident passion in support of/against the notion that the media is a dangerous entity. Several responses glossed over the concept of 'media' in favour of examining the 'dangers' of social media. A large number were highly critical of social media and were very clear about its dangers, many of these responses mentioning its advantages as an unconvincing afterthought. There were a number of essays that focused specifically on social media, discussing dangers such as stalking and cyberbullying as well as its potential to be a debilitating lifestyle choice in terms of neglect of exercise and real relationships. Others looked at more traditional forms of media, discussing news coverage in terms of the dangers of fake news, political bias and a propensity to fan the flames of outrage or revolt. Several arguments became assertive, and this manifested itself often in the treatment of examples they felt particularly impassioned about (the Depp/Heard case was a popular choice and very few discussed this example in a balanced or nuanced way). Many candidates appeared to hold the view that everybody except them was brainwashed by a hostile media. In this spirit, there was some discussion of conspiracy theories but sadly also a popular tendency simply to describe them uncritically. One issue among weaker responses was, presumably in the interests of balance, a tendency to approach the 'good' aspects of media first which left some candidates lacking time to say much about the dangers. Better responses foregrounded the issues or dangers and discussed any potential benefits in that context, for instance, arguing that media could be dangerous in terms of fake news, but equally provide a news source that informed or enlightened.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/12
Essay

Key messages

- Make a simple plan
- Keep the introduction focused on the question
- Address the key words of the question throughout the response
- Develop and exemplify all arguments
- Analyse rather than describe
- Link ideas and opinions
- Write an evaluative conclusion and not a summary of the points
- Use punctuation correctly and appropriately
- Choose precise vocabulary and appropriate idioms
- Maintain a consistent formal register
- Set time aside to check for grammatical errors, especially in agreement, articles and tenses.

General comments

There was a wide range of performances and a large number of good essays. The vast majority of candidates presented structured essays which met the suggested word limit of 600–700 words. Longer responses tended to be disorganised and repetitive. The frequency of linguistic errors generally increased with essays that were lengthy.

Most candidates offered introductions which got to the point quickly and focused on the key words of the question. A number of weaker responses tended to spend too much time giving extraneous information such as definitions of television and television programmes and their history (**Question 9**) to lengthy descriptions of the formation of fossil fuels or the Industrial Revolution (**Question 4**).

Essays were usually organised and candidates used the paragraph structure to argue, develop and exemplify an idea or opinion. What was often missing was the analytical or evaluative comment of these points. Most candidates limited their evaluation of the arguments to one or two comments in the conclusion. Weaker responses were largely descriptive or explanatory and relied on unsupported, sweeping statements. In some cases, candidates offered examples of research or statistics which did not stand up to casual inspection and appeared to be exaggerated or fabricated.

Almost all essays had a conclusion and candidates frequently summarised the points which had been discussed. Strong conclusions did not just reiterate ideas or simply state their agreement or disagreement with the question. Instead, candidates used the conclusion to justify their stance and present nuanced consideration of the arguments.

The quality of communication was generally clear in most essays though grammatical errors were very common which suggests that candidates should pay more attention to proof-reading their essays. The omission of essential commas was frequently seen as well as the use of commas in place of full-stops or instead of 'and' to join phrases. Maintaining a consistent formal register is important as many candidates lapsed into a conversational tone and the use of colloquialism. Whilst the use of contractions (don't; we'll; won't) is grammatically correct, it does not convey an academic tone.

Key points and common errors
- Avoid colloquialism – 'a big deal', 'a whole lot of'. 'gonna', 'wanna', 'pretty fast'
- Failure of subject-verb agreement – 'Watching television programmes are one of the many sources of entertainment.'
- Incorrectly joined words – 'alot', 'infact', 'incase', 'aswell', 'afterall'.
- Incorrectly separated words – 'can not', 'where ever', 'now a days'
- Plural form – 'Television programme is watched by everyone', 'people drinking alcohols' 'There is lots of language that people can learn.'
- Preposition errors – 'awareness on Nature', 'negative influence to the programmes', 'bad things in the internet', 'arguing on how', 'different than'
- Misspellings – 'seperate', 'adolesence', 'comit', 'agressive', 'argumeant', 'recieve'.
- Confusion of words – 'their/there/they're', 'specially/especially', 'till/until'

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Nations and peoples should always forgive the wrongs of the past. Evaluate this view.

This was not a popular question but nevertheless produced some outstanding responses which gave examples of conflicts and grievances exemplifying the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness. Stronger responses deconstructed the question and gave appropriate focus to 'forgive' and 'forget'. Candidates recognised that forgiveness is an ongoing process that cannot be realised overnight. Additionally, there are some acts which are so heinous that they should not be forgiven nor forgotten. Atrocious crimes committed by one nation against another were also mentioned as leaving lasting damage on nations. The Second World War was often mentioned as an example with most candidates referring to Germany and their treatment of the Jews. China and Japan were also often mentioned as was British colonialism. Some of the better responses described a range of global examples both past and current. Many highlighted that it is difficult to forgive war crimes especially where nations or people do not acknowledge their wrongdoings but candidates also discussed nations forgiving past wrongs and striking up close bonds for mutual benefit. A few candidates discussed the question at a personal level referring to disputes between friends or family. These tended to be weaker responses but nonetheless they did make some valid general points relating to the question.

Question 2

The most successful businesses make the biggest profits. Discuss.

Most candidates assumed that 'success' can almost exclusively be measured by profit, though some did recognise that the question is more subtle than it first appears. Often, weaker responses were characterised by a 'textbook' approach with a lot of explanation of the way a business is formed and conducted, which digressed from the question. These also tended to be responses where examples of specific businesses were lacking or where generalised examples of categories of businesses were given. Better responses were able to draw a broader perspective and focus on the need to create profit while acknowledging ethical considerations and also recognising corporate social responsibility. They incorporated such issues as taking workers' rights into account and not contributing to environmental degradation. Some candidates were able to strongly argue that successful businesses were those where the owners' objectives had been achieved, such as filling a niche market or solving an existing problem. In addition, other factors such as economies of scale or profit margins also mean that the size of the profit made is not the sole decider of success.

Question 3

To what extent has traditional family life lost its importance in your country?

This was a moderately popular question. There was a tendency in weaker responses to focus broadly on tradition, for instance, dress, diet or cultural celebrations, than specifically on family life. Some candidates discussed their country without mentioning it by name and so produced generalised responses or outlines of different traditions and practices. There were also many thoughtful essays which looked at the changes to traditional family life brought about by greater gender equality; urbanisation; secularization and external influences such as social media. Candidates explored how historically prescribed roles within families have

changed as well as the emergence of different types of family. Most candidates offered counter-arguments of how certain traditional aspects have been retained or maintained and the reasons for this.

Question 4

Fossil fuel extraction belongs in the past not the future. Evaluate this statement.

This was a popular question choice and candidates were well-informed on the topic of fossil fuels. Many weaker responses included extensive descriptions of how fossil fuels and their extraction have damaged the environment and people's health rather than directly answering the question. Better responses integrated these points into arguments about the viability of fossil fuels in the future and covered ideas such as the unavoidable depletion of fossil fuels; their comparative efficiency to alternative energy sources and other pros and cons. Weaker responses held the idealistic view that renewable energies would provide a quick and easy solution. Stronger responses analysed the cost of switching from fossil fuels for poorer countries and for individuals who cannot afford electric cars. They also considered the economic and political impact of the dependence on fossil fuels along with the geographical factors required to generate solar, wind and hydroelectric power.

Question 5

To what extent has migration harmed the development of <u>your</u> country?

The best responses to this question were aware of the differences between emigration and immigration and continually tied the impacts of migration to the development of one specific country. Generally speaking, candidates focused on the economic sector and discussed positive impacts such as remittances from overseas citizens boosting the home economy or immigrants taking up low-paying jobs which the locals refused to do. Most were of the opinion that immigration harms their country's development and cited the increased burden on infrastructure; increased pollution and crime. Many candidates argued that emigration had led to the loss of talented and skilled citizens in all sectors due to better opportunities offered in highly developed countries. Rural-urban drift was often discussed by candidates and how it has caused uneven development in their countries. Some essays looked beyond economic development to the impact, both positive and negative, on the socio-cultural landscape. Weaker responses were limited to listing the push and pull factors which cause migration. It was interesting to see a varied position taken by candidates – some of whom welcomed migrants and others who were less sympathetic.

Question 6

Evaluate how important it is for a person's health, to spend time in the natural world.

A small number of candidates interpreted the 'natural world' as the opposite of the 'cyber/virtual world' which restricted their answers to the harms associated with social isolation and the addiction to the use of phones, computers and video games. Other weaker responses were dependent on descriptions of pleasant landscapes and outdoor activities or wrote about the importance of taking care of one's health. Those who understood the question in the broader sense pointed out that those living near or in the countryside are often healthier than city dwellers and they discussed some of the physical and mental ailments associated with living in urban societies. Many responses referenced the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns and how the natural world offers a welcome break. Some offered balance in recognising that the same health benefits could be achieved by diet, indoor gyms/exercise and meditation. There was also a negative side seen in the threats of the natural world such as diseases, exposure to the elements and dangerous wildlife.

Question 7

Poetry is irrelevant in the modern world. To what extent do you agree?

This question attracted some responses which showed a passion for poetry and produced some creative and emotive responses with a range of contrasting, past and current examples. Poetry was compared to other art forms, like music, and nursery rhymes were commonly offered as an example of its continuing relevance in the modern world. Some strongly argued for the relevance of poetry today, saying that it is an elegant, artistic way of raising relevant issues, such as suffering, racial and sexual discrimination; all the more effective because of its use of symbol, imagery and metaphor. A few candidates compared heroic/epic poetry of the past with the present, arguing that modern poets deal with the lives of ordinary people, thus making poetry much more relevant. Weaker responses tended to focus more on the historical context of poetry or were less able to give specific illustrations of poets or poems.

Question 8

Attending a live performance is the best way to experience music. Evaluate this statement.

Most candidates argued that attending a concert is a superior experience to listening to a recording. The most frequently raised points were the bond created between the artist and the fans at a live performance as well as the connection with fellow fans at a performance. Most candidates concentrated on an individual singer or band where others discussed cultural festivals enjoyed with family and friends. The thrilling, unique experience of live music was mentioned by many and some candidates named performers who are known for their energetic live performances. It was also argued that live music performances often included dancers, costumes and sets which elevated the entertainment value.

On the negative side, the cost of tickets was seen as prohibitive to many as well as some worries about being in a crowded place with reference to the tragic events of stampedes and terrorist attacks at recent concerts.

It was also recognised that some people prefer listening to a perfect recorded music in private and in the comfort of their own home.

Question 9

To what extent do television programmes have a negative influence on people?

Many of the weaker responses included lengthy introductions about the origins, development and ubiquity of television sets and categorisation of programmes. They also exaggerated the negative influence of television programmes. There were many sweeping statements about how universally and easily viewers would adopt criminal or immoral behaviour as a result of watching television and the extreme degree of 'addiction' to television. There was little acknowledgment of regulation by broadcasters though better essays considered the impact of state censorship and bias on programmes. There were many generalised portrayals of programme content and the assertion that producers usually seek to promote illegal activities, fake news and violent attitudes in programmes for adults and children. The lack of subtle argument in numerous essays was seen in the abrupt switch from heavy criticism of programmes to praise for their educational and entertainment value within the essay. The better responses offered a balance of perspectives, a range of examples of different programmes and nuanced comment.

Question 10

Assess the importance of learning a second language.

Nearly all candidates who attempted this question recognised the positive impact of learning a second language. Many discussed learning English as their second language and the benefits they thought English or other widely-spoken languages could bring them in terms of job opportunities, trade and travel. Weaker responses described a number of situations where speaking and understanding the local language could help a traveller who is lost or ordering food or buying souvenirs. Better essays showed an understanding of today's multicultural, multi-language and cosmopolitan society and how fluency in more than one language is beneficial. Some argued that learning another language could bring in-depth understanding of other cultures, literature and religious texts. The benefits to the learner's cognitive ability were also stressed and supported with references to learning new vocabulary or grammatical structures. There were a few candidates who acknowledged that learning a language is an extremely challenging task that is possibly not worth the trouble, especially as there are translation apps widely available. Furthermore, some argued that native speakers of global languages did not need to know another language.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8021/13
Essay

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Key messages

- Candidates should spend time to planning their essay leaving enough time to complete their essay
- Try to avoid using contractions such as 'wouldn't', 'can't; 'would've'. In formal academic writing, unless you are quoting what someone has said, avoid contractions
- Fillers, commonplace in speech, such as 'at the end of the day', 'all in all', 'in actual fact', are not appropriate in formal writing. They may help the word-count, but they diminish the writing
- Try to limit the use of slang. 'Hanging out with' was common this session and also 'kids' as opposed to children. In formal written expression it would be preferable if such words and phrases did not appear
- Begin with an effective introduction that demonstrates an understanding of the question's key words and indicate the direction of the essay's argument.

General comments

In this examination **Question 9** about the influence of music was the most popular. All the other individual questions afforded opportunities for learners to develop their ideas and responses were seen to one or another question. There were a few short responses but most of the candidates were able to write essays of sufficient length. Most of the candidates had knowledge of their chosen topic and were able to communicate their ideas clearly.

A handful of essays showed no evidence of clear paragraphing, but the main structural problems were long introductory and concluding paragraphs; both should be concise, the introduction indicating the direction of the essay without examples. The conclusion should contain a summary of the overall argument without repeating points already made.

All the questions, using a variety of command words and phrases such as 'discuss', 'to what extent', 'assess', require evaluation, debate and discussion. These words and phrases call for a presentation of differing viewpoints. The learner's own opinion is important but without an acknowledgement of alternative views there is a danger of coming across as too opinionated.

Specific examples are required in an essay, but these must be used to illustrate the developing argument not as ends in themselves. Learners need to ask themselves if an example chosen is really adding anything to the essay's purpose.

Regarding **Assessment Objective 1**, supporting information and exemplification varied in breadth and relevance but there were several instances of appropriate illustrative material being provided. While anecdotal illustration needs to be used selectively, several learners' responses to **Question 4** were vivid and poignant because of their personal or family experience of natural disasters. The same was true of responses to **Question 2** where learners used their family history to illuminate the importance of knowing local history. One excellent response to **Question 4** drew on personal experience of surviving a hurricane. This essay appreciated the global context by pointing out the difficulties faced by less economically developed countries in preparing for disasters and dealing with their aftermath. Another essay added historical context by referring to measures taken in the Netherlands many years ago to mitigate the effects of inundation. These essays were a testament to the fact that candidates should attempt questions where they have evidence to support the arguments being made.

A distinguishing feature of **Assessment Objective 2** is evaluation. A candidate wrote in response to **Question 10**: 'No news is good news, as the saying goes but I choose knowledge over ignorance. I suppose no news is better than the fake news which makes us even more ignorant than we are but I am part of this country's future and if education means anything I need to be able to tell the difference between a lie and the

truth'. This learner starts with a statement and continues to contrast knowledge with ignorance but also adds the context of education. That addition provides the evaluative edge, an ability to stand back for a moment and reflect upon the situation. In the rest of the essay, the candidate pressed home the argument that whether the news media must always tell the truth, it is up to us to develop powers of discernment. Independence of thought is the hallmark of a good essay. Evaluation is present when a writer shows a capacity to draw comparisons, to see likeness and difference.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Countries with poor human rights records should not be allowed to host international sporting events. Discuss.

There was a significant response to this question and and learners understood the benefits and disadvantages of interfering with countries' freedom to host events. It was pointed out that there are very few places where human rights are upheld completely and therefore it might be seen as hypocritical for some countries to impose boycotts on these events. Learners were aware of the financial implications, the media interest and the sporting world's desire to compete under any circumstances. A few learners argued that human rights should be accorded to those that enable competitions to go ahead, for example the migrant workers who build the infrastructure required. Concerns were raised about the freedom denied to women in certain parts of the world both to participate in and watch sport. Other responses stressed the probable fact that unrestricted participation has positive aspects; internationalism and continuing infrastructural benefits.

Question 2

Studying local history is as important as world history. Discuss.

This question sparked the interest of more learners than expected. History questions are common in this examination, but local history has made its first appearance. One essay of considerable merit made the point that local history can connect 'people to their heritage and act as a building block for world history'. This idea was appreciated and demonstrated by those candidates who linked war, both global and civil, slavery, the plight of indigenous peoples, to the history and development of their local areas. The interface between world and local history, appreciated by many candidates, provided an evaluative element to many of these essays. The distinctively local was not ignored. Several learners mentioned that local records offer fascinating glimpses into family history, the diseases that afflicted their forebears and their occupations. Others wrote about archaeological discoveries in their local regions and how these were constantly changing how we view the past. These learners often remarked that they wish they had known about this rich tapestry before. Benefits of knowing about local history included the greater sense of identity and pride that knowledge of their locality had fostered. A few candidates examined aspects of local culture linked to music, art and writing that are known across the world.

Question 3

Assess whether a one-party system is an effective form of government.

Most of the responses to this question offered examples of one-party states and explored their deficiencies, the main one being the restriction of free expression. Several learners adopted a historical approach by referring to totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century in Europe, South America and Asia. The idea that multi-party systems are effective by their very nature was also challenged. One candidate remarked that all you get in democracies is 'legislative paralysis' and another argued that popularly elected governments are just as likely to be dictatorships if they have dominant power in their assemblies. Many took the view that political bickering did not serve the people well and those one-party systems would therefore be better.

Question 4

To what extent is it possible for governments to protect their people from the effects of natural disasters?

This was a popular question as noted earlier in this report. Many used their personal experience of hurricanes and floods to illustrate the devastation and misery caused by these events. The role played by the media in both informing and warning was also stressed. That these warnings were often ignored was also mentioned by candidates who made pleas for people to shoulder their personal responsibilities as well as the

governments. The challenges facing less economically developed countries were also appreciated. A few candidates with a historical perspective referred to past volcanic eruptions and there was that one candidate who lauded the preventative measures taken in the Netherlands to mitigate the effects of inundation. One interesting aspect among the responses was an understanding of the mental health problems that afflict many of those who experience loss when disasters occur. There was a sensitive understanding of these issues and repeated calls in the essays for governments to establish the necessary after-care provision.

Question 5

Examine the extent to which information and communications technology is having a negative impact on <u>your</u> country.

This is one of the two questions that stipulates a **your country** response. It is expected in the words of the mark scheme that 'answers will be focused on one country with which the candidate identifies or to which they direct their answer'. This does not mean that candidates cannot make relevant international comparisons which for example in this question, ascribe the negative impacts to the influence of other countries with more developed ICT systems and global reach. Most of those who attempted this question read it as a question about social media. This was an acceptable if rather narrow approach. Consequently, there was emphasis on the dangers of Twitter, misinformation, cyberbullying, with only a few considering the benefits of ICT in facilitating connections and the exchange of ideas in a variety of contexts. Nearly all the candidates expressed regret about how ICT was creating social isolation amongst the young.

Question 6

Evaluate the effectiveness of public transport provision in <u>your</u> country.

The other **your country** question and the type of question that can elicit list-like responses rather than evaluative ones. It is to the candidates' credit that this did not happen. Nobody fell into the trap of simply describing the provision available. The relative affordability of public transport compared to other means of travel featured prominently. An unexpected slant on the question was the number of learners who stressed the community cohesion that can be strengthened by travelling together on public transport. Several candidates drew attention to excessive car use and pollution to make the argument that using public transport is a better environmental option. A few pointed out that public transport is not always convenient and sometimes dangerous.

Question 7

Evaluate the importance of 'the hero/heroine' to readers of fiction books.

This proved to be a relatively popular question but too often the books referred to were narrow in range and characterisation. Many responses did not pay full attention to the expectation that fiction books would be named and discussed. Captain America, Batman and Superman were frequently cited as heroic figures and quite correctly their antagonists as anti-heroes. It was encouraging that candidates even within this limited range recognised complexity. The need for role-models was evident in many essays and one well-informed learner compared Scrooge in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' to Pip in 'Great Expectations'. Another excellent essay suggested that Ulysses was a flawed hero.

Question 8

There was ample scope to interpret what pictures and illustrations entail. One candidate writing about surrealism pointed out that many of Dali's paintings offer 'more than words can communicate'. Another referred to Rothko's paintings along the same lines. An excellent essay suggested that illustrations and pictures reignite 'ideas of basic human rights' by referring to past and present conflicts and struggles. Nearly all of the candidates took the written word into consideration and one memorable essay emphasised that without written constitutions many countries would have no legal framework that protects the rights of their citizens. Surprisingly there were no references to graphic novels but plenty of relevant references to visual presentations and even emojis.

Question 9

Assess the extent to which music can influence a person's life.

Question 9, although well expressed
Weaker responses tended to be generalised and descriptive in their approach. Some were well expressed and managed to discuss music's influence with no reference to a particular musical piece, song or genre. Stronger responses identified different genres of music and highlighted the music that had most influence on them. Some of the lyrics in Rap music were seen as dangerous but most candidates were aware of its more positive social and political content. Mozart was hailed as an aid to concentration by many and the cultural significance of Jazz and the Blues also featured. Music's role in defining cultures and groups was made clear.

Question 10

News media must always tell the truth. To what extent do you agree.

None of the candidates wrote exclusively about social media. Every response referred to news outlets such as television, radio and the printed press. There were references to 'fake news' and propaganda. Learners were well versed in those terrible events that are routinely covered up by state media in several countries. The relationship between news media, finance and certain political causes or pressure groups was well understood. A few learners expressed the opinion that in times of national emergency the media has a duty to hide the truth so as not to alarm its viewers, listeners or readers but the majority took the view that being able to rely on news media to tell the truth is one of the ways in which we can relate to and understand what is going on in the world.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 8021/21
Comprehension

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Key messages

- It is highly recommended that if a question does not instruct the candidate to write a response in their own words or within a certain word limit, candidates copy the relevant wording from the material. Responses in own words to certain questions (for example, **1(d)**, **2(a)**, **2(c)** and **2(f)**) were often not detailed enough to gain credit. The use of the candidate's own words had unnecessarily affected the precision of their responses.
- Candidates are strongly advised not to use ellipsis, as such responses are rarely creditworthy.
- It is recommended that when candidates are allowed to copy from the material, they copy words carefully. For example, the words '*principal*', '*intrepid*' and '*aisle*' proved to be difficult words to copy for some candidates.
- It is important that candidates note the section of material that they have been directed to in the question (e.g. the panel's discussions in order to answer **1(d)** and lines 1 to 36 in order to answer **2(g)**).

General comments

In **1(a)**, some candidates showed that they had excellent organisational and analytical skills. These candidates employed connectives and conjunctions (such as 'meaning that', 'however', 'additionally') to good effect, so that their answers were structured in such a way that the considerations offered were signposted clearly as advantages or a disadvantage. Their responses were nuanced, gaining credit by incorporating modal verbs (e.g. 'may help negate', 'might inspire' and 'could motivate') and employing words such as 'possibly' (e.g. 'possibly spark an interest'). They exhibited a strong command of the language, using expressions such as 'a star-studded achiever', 'could promote the school to prospective candidates' and 'might be more inclined to overlook'. A few responses included informal language (such as 'wanna' and 'gonna'), but many candidates used the correct register (e.g. 'it is mentioned that', 'it is stated that' and 'this would be beneficial'). Most candidates followed the instruction to answer in continuous prose. However, a significant number of responses matched the criteria found in the two lower levels. Responses that were too generalised, assertive and/or speculative were seen.

Some candidates wrote more than was permitted in **2(b)** and/or **2(e)**. One of the key skills examined on this paper is the ability to compose succinct responses, resulting in responses appearing after the word limit not gaining credit. It is highly recommended that a candidate does not include an introduction or repeat the question as part of their response.

In **2(d)**, some candidates copied words and phrases from the material and placed them in quotation marks. Unfortunately, when responding to questions requiring the use of the candidate's own words, words and phrases that are copied from the material cannot be credited even when the candidate acknowledges and attributes them by placing them in quotation marks.

It is essential that candidates read the question carefully and respond to the focus required by that question. For example, in **1(a)**, some candidates offered the advantages and disadvantage for Mr Ortega and the radio station, while in **1(b)**, some cited the advantages for Mrs Dvorin, the school and/or the basketball team.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a)   Candidates gaining the most credit exhibited the ability to interpret the evidence offered in the material and read between the lines to show understanding of the various aspects of Mrs Dvorin's situation and how they linked to her voting for Franzi's podcast. They understood that the most convincing responses are nuanced ones. Candidates gaining high marks gathered pieces of information from across *Section A* and put them together to create four cogent considerations, including one disadvantage. They would offer considerations that had been developed, whether by explanation or by linking two pieces of information from different places in *Section A*, thereby highlighting the ability to present sustained and relevant analysis. For example:

- 'Primarily, Dr Duchamp is a former candidate and because of their notable achievements (award-winning scientist and film music composer) they would make BHS look good as a place that fosters the success of candidates',
- 'Franzi's podcast contains music composed specifically for the purpose by Dr Duchamp which may make more candidates interested in it. The candidates at BHS are losing interest in music, so seeing Dr Duchamp's creativity might encourage them, which would please Mrs Dvorin as she would not then need to make a music teacher redundant' and
- 'However, Mrs Dvorin might shy away from choosing Franzi's podcast because Franzi had to do the interview remotely, which impaired the quality of the audio. Mrs Dvorin would not want to post a poor quality interview and risk the school's declining reputation any further.'

Valid points beyond the mark scheme that were seen included the following: references to her podcast having the ability to reach a wider audience (e.g. deaf people would be able to read the transcript) and 'the podcast is trying to fit in as much information about the school and two careers in 30 minutes. This could create a rushed feeling.' Many candidates followed the instruction not to refer to the other podcasts in their response.

Some candidates could have attained higher marks if they had considered both the advantages and one disadvantage as instructed, thus making sure that they offered a balanced response by including a disadvantage. Some candidates gave a creditworthy disadvantage, then did not explain why it was a problem, only developing it with a mitigation as to why it would not be an issue. A few candidates communicated either more disadvantages than advantages or an equal number of advantages and disadvantages. Some candidates did not note the focus of the question and offered the advantages and disadvantage for Mr Ortega and the radio station (such as increasing the radio station's listener numbers). Some responses were too vague to gain any credit (e.g. her podcast was interesting). Some were too generalised, meaning they could apply to two or all three of the podcasts (e.g. it was credible/it had interviews/it had local interest), so they required more detail to be creditworthy. Some were too speculative (e.g. Mrs Dvorin loves music). Common misunderstandings noted included the following: Franzi was the ex-candidate and award-winning scientist and film music composer; '*It is her first post as principal*' meant that this was Mrs Dvorin's first online post (presumably because of the context being podcasts); Franzi travelled 1000 km to Dr Duchamp to conduct the interview; Franzi interviewed Mrs Dvorin, and the government (instead of the governors) was concerned about the school's academic decline. Some candidates selected random facts, then cited them in their answers without any development or indication as to whether they were advantages or disadvantages, so that their response was more of a narrative than an analysis. Weaker responses were also characterised by the repetition of considerations, and/or a consideration and its development being separated from each other in the answer, thus affecting the clarity and fluency of the response.

(b)   Stronger responses were characterised by candidates being able to interpret the evidence and read between the lines to show that they understood the various aspects of Mr Ortega's situation and how they linked to his voting for Zeenah's podcast. Candidates gaining high marks gathered pieces of information from across *Section A* to create considerations that had been developed, whether by explanation or by linking two pieces of information from different places in *Section A*, and used nuanced language in their responses. For example:

- 'Zeenah's podcast revolves around high school boys, which means it could attract an adolescent audience, which would help with Binde Xtra's listener numbers in that category',

- 'Zeenah's brother Yurie is a professional basketball player for a national league club. Therefore, by picking Zeenah's podcast, Mr Ortega can attract listeners due to Yurie's commentary and fame' and
- 'Zeenah's brother, who commentates, is a professional basketball player, so the podcast is likely to be of good quality and could bolster the professionalism of Binde Xtra.'

Many candidates followed the instruction not to refer to the other podcasts in their response.

Some candidates did not note the focus of the question and offered the advantages of Zeenah's podcast being broadcast for Mrs Dvorin, the school and/or the basketball team (such as highlighting the success of the school's basketball team and so helping improve the school's reputation). A few candidates wrote about the wrong podcast. Some responses were too vague to gain any credit (e.g. it was exciting). Some were too generalised, applying to two or all three of the podcasts (e.g. it had first-person sources/it had a mixture of interviews/it was local/it was made by teens), so they required more detail to be creditworthy. Common misunderstandings noted included the following: Binde Xtra was a sports radio station and Zeenah's podcast was short. Some candidates selected random facts, then cited them in their answers without any development, so that their responses were more of a narrative than an analysis. Weaker responses were also characterised by the repetition of advantages cited with slightly different wording but the same meaning.

(c)   Insightful responses were seen. In **(i)**, 'Mrs Dvorin knows that the school is starting to decline and if Ugo sheds more light on the school, it might lead to her being fired' and 'Perhaps candidates and teachers commenting on the school, or giving advice about what to change made her feel as if her current efforts as a new principal are not good enough and it might have bruised her confidence.' Some candidates took the reference to '*chaotic*' at face value, offering answers describing the ways in which it was chaotic. Some candidates speculated generally on the levels of possible interest in this podcast.

In **(ii)**, many candidates offered perceptive responses: 'Mr Grega might have been motivated by frustration, since he has had a few arguments with Mrs Dvorin' and 'Spite may have led Mr Grega to showcase Ugo's podcast. Underappreciated, he strikes at Mrs Dvorin's pride as the Principal.' Some candidates did not read the question closely enough, omitting to cite an emotion. Some responses were too general (e.g. it would promote the media department), purely descriptive (copying out the podcast's content) or irrelevant (referring to his previous posting). Common misunderstandings included the following: he was happy/excited because he loved the school/it supported new candidates/it would promote the school, and responses relying on an incorrect sequence of events (e.g. some candidates not noting that Mr Grega's choice of finalists pre-dated Mrs Dvorin's comments during the discussion).

(d)   Candidates gaining credit copied out in full both the false statement and the exaggeration from the panel's discussions. It was very rare for responses utilising ellipsis to score, as key words and/or phrases were omitted.

(e)   Creditworthy responses included the following insights: 'He needs more listeners, but if a podcast he does not like wins, he can rescind the offer' and 'By saying "might", Mr Ortega remains in control and can choose if he wants to broadcast the winner.' Responses lacking in logic and/or focus referred to the station struggling to fill airtime, the winning podcast perhaps being too long and the school needing to improve its reputation.

Section B

Question 2

(a)   Candidates gaining credit cited the first reason as directed. However, some candidates offered lines 18 to 19, Robbie Crow or the Ocean Youth Trust Scotland as the first reason. Some cited evidence rather than a reason: destinations making more effort and disabled travellers being more assertive.

(b)   Candidates scoring marks noted the key word 'realisations', linked it to lines 7 to 10 and offered a response within the word count. Some candidates, though, wrote about his life skills (**2(f)**) or his personality (perhaps misunderstanding 'you feel' for his feelings and emotions).

(c)   Candidates who copied carefully from the material gained credit. However, some candidates offered responses that were too vague, either by omission (e.g. citing 'a compass' rather than '*a talking compass*') or by offering answers in their own words. Some candidates paraphrased '*a spotter*' successfully, but unnecessarily so, as they were asked only to identify the aids in the question.

(d)   Candidates gaining credit offered some excellent synonyms: 'he created a travel website' and 'he started an online resource' for '*he founded an online guide*'; 'post' and 'submit' for the idea of '*written by*', and 'first-hand accounts' and 'direct experience' for '*who has visited the venue*' were seen. Some candidates handled the idea of '*readers get an honest picture*' with assurance: 'the information is reliable and authentic', 'unbiased opinions', 'credible reviews', 'accurate portrayal', 'realistic reviews' and 'truthful illustration' were all examples that were noted. Excellent synonyms for being '*clear about its target audience*' were also seen: 'tailored for various types of disability', 'match your specific disability' and 'their needs can be satisfied based on their disability'.

The phrases most commonly lifted from the material were 'he founded an online guide', 'find great places to go', 'every entry is written by', 'who has visited the venue', 'how accessible facilities work' and 'its target audience'. Some candidates did answer using their own words but did not gain much credit for the content of their responses as they were too vague. Common misunderstandings seen included the following: he set up a booking site; he started a campaign to improve accessibility, 'call out' venues and/or change the attitudes of businesses, and he found the website (a misunderstanding of the meaning of 'founded') Some responses did not focus on the material, but offered generalised comments or personal opinions on the issues facing disabled travellers instead (e.g. 'it would be good to be able to travel to a place you know is set up properly'). Some candidates cited factors answering **2(e)** rather than **2(d)**.

(e)   Candidates gaining credit offered responses incorporating concisely all the key ideas: 'toilets are poorly designed due to misunderstandings about the diversity of disabilities' and 'flying is stressful for those with complex disabilities'.

Some responses were too vague, either by omission (e.g. 'flying is difficult for disabled travellers', with no reference to it being '*a stressful experience, especially if they face more complex disabilities*') or because some candidates thought that they were not allowed to lift the key ideas from the material (e.g. 'makers of facilities' to avoid using '*Designers*' and '*toilets*'). Some candidates offered generalised or opinionated responses about the lack of provision for disabled travellers with no reference to the material. Misunderstandings seen included the following: '*trunk support*' meant being helped with one's luggage, or it related to the plane, the chair or the staff rather than to a disabled traveller, and '*aisle chairs*' were seats next to the aisle rather than small wheelchairs.

(f)   Candidates gaining credit noted the instruction to identify and copied out the key phrases or sentences in full, so all the relevant details were included. Candidates paraphrasing the material sometimes gained credit, but those using ellipsis rarely scored marks. In **(i)**, some candidates cited an incorrect amount of money or omitted the idea of '*in the UK (alone)*', thus diminishing the financial importance globally of '*the purple pound*'. Some were distracted by the reference to Marcia being helped lifting Leo into his seat (evidence rather than the reason). In **(ii)**, many candidates scored well. Some candidates paraphrasing the skills did manage to gain credit (e.g. 'using quick thinking' for '*to think on his feet*'), but many responses in own words were not successful. In **(iii)**, responses were often too vague or referred to the facilities in general in Tenerife. In **(iv)**, some candidates were distracted by the reference to '*his ski-bottomed chair*'. Some candidates misunderstood the reference to 'the environmentally friendly aspect' in the question, citing the ability for disabled travellers to visit the mountains.

(g)   Responses gaining credit noted the instruction to identify the exact word or phrase in the material and quoted only the relevant word or phrase that had exactly the same meaning, so, for example, offered '*bittersweet*' in **(iii)** rather than '*a bittersweet and beautiful short film*' (which was not creditworthy). Some candidates misread the question and offered definitions of the word or phrase (e.g. that you are restricted in **(ii)**), gave instances from the material that they thought exemplified the word or phrase (e.g. learning to sail in **(i)** and better design of accessible facilities in **(iv)**) or cited antonyms (e.g. 'limitless' for '*limited*')'.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

> **Paper 8021/22**
> **Comprehension**

Key messages

Before starting to write their answers, candidates should read each question carefully, to ensure that they know exactly what it is they have to do. For example, they should ascertain the number of points required, whether development, exemplification or explanation is likely to be necessary, and whether they should write mainly in their own words to show understanding, or can simply locate and communicate relevant ideas directly from the material. Unless specifically asked to render ideas in their own words, or within a certain number of words, when selection and paraphrasing are useful skills, candidates are best advised to use the language of the material, since attempts at alternative renderings may lack the precision of the original.

Where a word limit is imposed, candidates should keep in mind the need for brevity and concision, rather than 'using up' words by including unnecessary or irrelevant detail, restating the question stem, or offering an introduction. Candidates might usefully consider writing the answers with which they are most confident first, to ensure these fall within the word count and can gain credit.

General comments

The candidates mostly demonstrated good levels of understanding of the material set in both *Sections A* and *B*, and a degree of engagement with the questions, especially in *Section A*, some parts of *Section B* proving more challenging. It was rare to see any infringements of the rubric or blank response areas, and relatively few scripts scored very low total marks.

The vast majority of candidates communicated clearly in written English and organised their responses in the answer spaces provided. Where errors of expression or grammar occurred, these rarely made a response unintelligible. Most also gave an appropriate number of points relative to the available marks for the question. Candidates generally seemed well prepared for the various question styles, although inevitably some found it more difficult than others to select the essential and relevant points from the material, and to offer sufficient detail and precision, given the constraints and demands of particular questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Candidates generally demonstrated a good level of understanding of the material provided for *Section A* and the scenario detailed therein. The concept of developing apps as an educational assignment, and working in pairs on such a task, certainly appeared to be an accessible one.

Question 1

The discrimination in the questions in *Section A* related mostly to the understanding of the logic of the situation presented and the ability to make connections across different parts of the material to explain, support and develop relevant ideas. This was especially true of **Questions 1(a)**, **1(b)(i)** and **1(b)(ii)**. In these questions, it was important to note the rubric instruction, '**not** (to) refer to the other apps' and offer points specific to the one in the question, for example not to defend the choice of the fitness app in **1(a)** by saying that it had more value to society than the game. Some suggestions were even more general and referred to elements of *all* (i.e. any) apps.

(a)   The vast majority of responses successfully identified one or more points relevant to the idea of health and fitness, usually making at least one link to the stated preoccupations of the Ministry of

Health, the statistics showing the lack of motivation to exercise among teenage girls and/or the teacher's focus for the assessment, on apps most 'useful… to society in general'. Where these angles comprised the bulk of the answer, however, the focus remained rather narrow. Broader responses were able to address the likely success of Aneeta's demonstrations of the exercises, given her enthusiasm and participation in active fitness events (Additional Information point 1), with surprisingly few questioning her authority to demonstrate exercise routines or offer nutritional advice. There was also reference to the possible motivation for teenage girls of her becoming a good female role model. A good example of this angle being well explained and developed included: 'While studies show that teenage girls tend to disengage from exercising, this could act as a potential market to capture for Aneeta who, as a member of this demographic, will understand their needs.'

The app being free, on its own, was not creditworthy, since two (the game also) made no charge at the basic, entry level. Relevant points must be specific to the app in question to gain credit. Similarly, for the presence of advertisements, this was also a feature of the magazine app, so needed to make specific reference to the sports content for credit, and be linked to the idea of not being popular to download, from the Additional Information (point 10), to count as a developed point.

A number of answers focused too strongly on the economic potential, either to the creators or the potential users, not recognising that the context was a university assignment. There was also some reliance, in weaker responses, on mere narration of material and the features and content of the proposed app, with no indication as to whether, or how, the information selected was an advantage or disadvantage.

In this style of question, nuance is important, and is often achieved by the use of modal verbs. Candidates were sometimes too assertive, for example in suggesting that the mere existence of this workout-based app 'would solve the issue of girls being keen to stop exercising' or 'will address the Ministry's concerns' or, stronger still, that the Ministry would immediately throw its weight behind the pair, by sponsoring or promoting it. Stronger responses only implied this as a possibility: 'Additionally, since the Ministry of Health is becoming more concerned… this app would be well-timed and may receive additional support from such institutions.' Other examples of nuance included: 'Paulo, having an aversion to physical exercise, could optimize the app to draw in non-sportsmen' and 'Moreover, Aneeta is likely to be capable of making the workouts' content owing to her love of running and keeping fit.'

Perceptive response were sometimes able to make more original use of the material, for example in suggesting that, since it was Aneeta's idea, this would help her overcome her usual timidity and be more confident in the presentation, a key element of the assessment. Many of the other personality traits were not relevant, however, because they would have applied equally whichever app was chosen. Another good use of this aspect in context, however, was that if Aneeta was going to have to keep Paulo on track and be the driving force behind the work, it might be better to select her own idea and area of expertise.

Most candidates were able to offer some balance to their answers, either with the likely input from Paulo being potentially limited by his past record in avoiding sports (also sometimes used positively, in his being more likely, or at least encouraged, to begin exercising as a result of taking part) or the similar app, by Franck and Pilar, being close to completion. Not all answers successfully developed or explained their chosen disadvantage, and mitigation was common instead, for example the fact that these two candidates overrate their own creative abilities, so reducing the competition for Aneeta and Paulo. (Although this could be credited positively, it did not count as a development of the balance.) Better responses explained that the later app might be accused of lacking originality, or even of plagiarism, and be subject to competition during assessment. The advertisement angle was often used for balance but not always successfully (see above).

(b) (i) The most common correct answer here was the universal appeal of games with 'cute characters', although not all responses went on to link this explicitly to the 'adorable angelfish' present in this particular game. Paulo's proficiency in gaming was also noted by many candidates but some relied simply on his enthusiasm and relatively few explained how his prowess might translate into receiving high marks from the target audience, for instance in the likely quality, or features which peers would appreciate. Some candidates gained credit for the lack of advertisements, this being the only one of the three app ideas not to contain such material, but few made the link to the point

about appeal to potential downloaders, which could have been used to develop the idea (if not already credited as a disadvantage in **1(a)**). Some responses remained too vague or speculative about the multi-player element or games in general, or that it was free to play, but this was not a unique feature of this app (see **1(a)**). Logical choice is also important. For example, the not-infrequent attempts to justify the cooperation developed in multi-player gaming, in terms of use to society and thus gaining good marks from the teacher, were unconvincing, since this was the least likely of the three apps to be so considered. An occasional candidate rightly recognised that the game app was almost certainly the most technically challenging to create and that this might be recognised, and rewarded, by peers.

(ii) Most candidates were able to identify the relevant point from the Additional Information here (16) but needed to say a little more to gain a second point, for example by referencing financial viability. This was the only one of the first three questions where the 'launch' of the app (rather than just as an assessed assignment) was to be considered, so the commercial angle was relevant and logical here. Where reference to lacking advertisements was offered as a disadvantage, the link with the download angle was needed to gain credit, but not to have been repeated from **1(a)**, since it was a feature of both the fitness and magazine apps. A number of candidates picked up the more specific element of this app, the charging of a subscription fee, but few explained why this might be a problem. Some responses remained rather speculative or general on the appeal of magazine-style content or the likely level of interest from candidates. An occasional response took the term 'survival guide' from its title too literally and referred to wild camping and similar.

(c) There was only one acceptable answer here (Additional Information point 4) and just over half the candidates correctly identified this as the least relevant piece of information, being common to all three apps and having no bearing on the one most likely to be chosen. Common distractors included, in order of frequency seen, points 14, 7, 3 and 2.

(d)(i) The central focus of this question, how <u>Aneeta</u> might benefit from the pairing, was sometimes missed. It was important to recognise the contrasting personalities and, if citing a trait specific to Paulo only, for example his 'extrovert' nature, to demonstrate how this would help her in this context. Those who cited Aneeta's potential to keep Paulo on task, for example, were not addressing the question. The most common creditworthy points made compared their introverted and extroverted characters, and emphasised Paulo's 'charming personality', as an asset for their presentation to peers, and his being the *more* creative.

(ii) The vast majority of candidates engaged well with this question on peer assessment, possibly as a result of direct experience. Most suggested possible bias of some sort and developed the idea with possible examples of its demonstration; giving higher marks to friends/popular candidates, and the reverse, judging the app for entertainment value or personal preference rather than on assessment criteria or meeting the brief, or deliberately marking down obvious competitors. A few candidates made reference to a fear of being too honest or critical, or the possible impact of hearing others' negative views on one's efforts, which were thoughtful angles. Occasional responses considered more extreme situations, such as jealousy, grudges or vendettas, even conspiracy or bribery, while more realistic ones recognised the lack of experience or qualification to make a judgement, in comparison with a teacher. Since '**one** disadvantage' was sought, it was important to explain just one idea, rather than to offer several, unconnected points, and most candidates managed to do this successfully.

(e)(i) Not all candidates focused on the correct part of the material here, with some using the personality traits, despite the rubric instruction to refer 'to the Additional Information'. Most correct answers selected point 2 but not all were able to say why this would contribute to working well as a team, sometimes simply repeating the question stem. Better responses mentioned possible past experience of working together, knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses, and being comfortable together. There was some reliance on assertion as to the strength of their friendship or bond. Point 14 was frequently also cited but was not convincing unless explained, as it related most specifically to the magazine app. Some candidates were able to recognise that this subject choice demonstrated similar skills and tastes, for example.

(ii) Some answers to this 'own knowledge' interpretative question were rather general and/or relied on repeating or reworking the question stem term 'working collaboratively' and being deemed 'an important quality' by 'society'. There was, among successful responses, reference to various contexts, usually the workplace or large-scale projects, such as in construction, and to the range of skills – sometimes simply listed – which can be enhanced by working alongside others. Other

candidates focused on the exchange of ideas, speed and efficiency of outcomes, achieving a common goal, learning tolerance and respect, and learning from others' views and methods.

(iii) Recognition of the context was essential again in this question, whereas some candidates recycled points from earlier questions relating to team work (**1(e)(ii)**) or focused on (equal contributions to) pair work in the *assignment*, rather than in the presentation. Credit could be gained by offering skills development, although explanation or exemplification was needed, rather than a list, as with **1(e)(ii)**. Some candidates picked up on the link to assessment and the awarding of joint marks, hence the need for both participants to speak and thus contribute to fair overall marks. Reference was also made to building confidence, especially in shy candidates, and demonstrating mastery of the process and knowledge of the app. Most responses focused on fairness of contribution and distribution of workload, not always explaining why that mattered, in favour of repetition or mere reversal.

Section B

Most candidates seemed to grasp the essential thrust of the material's subject matter and content but some of the more technical and nuanced points were missed in the responses offered.

Question 2

Some of the necessary detail and precision was lacking in some answers and candidates did not always successfully identify the correct part of the material for their responses. Sometimes, important parts of the rubric were ignored (specifically the word counts in **2(b)(i)**, **2(b)(ii)** and **2(e)** and the use of own words in **2(c)(ii)**). Where a question imposes no word limit, nor specifically requires the use of own words, candidates are best advised to provide as much of the relevant information from the material as possible, since the inclusion of more detail can only be of benefit in such questions. The only exception to this advice is single-mark-tariff questions, where only the first response is considered.

(a) (i) Many responses missed the point of this question, which was to identify that early peoples' lives 'changed' from a nomadic to a settled existence, i.e. this was the point at which they 'became farmers'. Nearly all answers described, or named, the 'nomadic lifestyle' or referred to the Neolithic Revolution.

(ii) Candidates tended to be more successful here than in 2**(a)(i)**, correctly identifying the key feature of the new lifestyle; the building of 'permanent dwellings'. Some responses were too vague, along the lines of *settling in one area*, or lacking the notion of permanence. The alternative creditworthy answer, relating to 'communities' growing 'among the crops they learned to cultivate', was far less frequently attempted, and often lacked the precision of the original by referring only to *growing crops*, especially when candidates paraphrased. Several responses did not locate the correct information at all, citing irrelevant parts of the material.

(b) (i) In this, the first of the word-limited questions (30 words), candidates generally managed to aim for approximately the correct number of words, although quite a few began their answers with the location and essential elements of the Neolithic Revolution, which took up quite a number of words without scoring a mark. The two most commonly correct points identified related to the independent invention and gradual development of farming, and the slow spread of tool and methods across the world by means of migration. Sometimes, the notion of 'gradually' or 'slowly' was omitted from either or both (though only required once), while 'tools' were missed from the latter. Where candidates copied out the list of countries, they often 'wasted' a considerable number of their 30 words. The 'genetically distinct' DNA was another point not too infrequently identified, while those identifying the practice of farming as having evolved among several groups in the region, rather than just one, were seldom selected.

(ii) Also, a question in which answers were to be limited to around 30 words, most candidates managed to identify the three relevant points for credit but did not always achieve full marks. Some included too much information or repeated the question stem and so ran out of words, while others lacked the necessary precision, usually in the point relating to competition for food and the need to seek alternative sources, or when attempting to paraphrase the idea of increased human intelligence. There were, however, some succinct and successful renderings of this concept in own words, for example 'human brains evolved or humans became more intelligent'. It is not in the spirit of word-count questions to write in bullet points. Some responses limited themselves in this regard, even where some or all of the correct information had been located. This was only really an issue

on this question, among the three of the same style, usually affecting the 'climate change' idea. Points needed each to contain a finite verb to receive full credit.

(c) (i) Some candidates clearly found it quite challenging to select advantages and disadvantages (for **2(c)(i)** and **2(c)(ii)** respectively) from the same section of the material, indicated in the rubric by line references. A small number of responses contained material from outside those paragraphs, but it was more common to see confusion of positive and negative developments and/or statements included which were merely descriptive, for example the emergence 'of writing, the wheel, currency, astronomy and many more innovations' (lines 9 to 10) and the domestication, herding and ritual significance/role of particular animals (lines 41 to 44). Most candidates correctly identified the points relating to the 'division of labour' facilitated by population growth, and the freeing up of 'time for leisure activities', although many failed to reference any of the examples of such pursuits. Later points relating to agricultural changes – use of animals for labour, nutrition and clothing materials; wheels and oxen; ploughing being a more efficient method of turning the soil – tended to be too incomplete or conflated to credit. Occasional candidates picked up the 'manure as fertiliser' angle, though most often seemed to imply this was produced by the farmers, rather than by their animals. Occasional responses offered their own ideas on the advantages of farming, sometimes with anachronistic references to people not having to *go out shopping to buy food*.

(ii) This 'own words' question proved reasonably accessible, if only because there was a range of possible disadvantages to attempt from within the line numbers cited, for a total of five marks. In such questions, candidates are not required to rework words or phrases which have no obvious synonyms ('food' and 'bones', for example) and it is permitted to use different forms of verbs present in the material, as well as minor linking words and similar. However, some candidates almost completely ignored the instruction to use their own words and copied verbatim the relevant section. Such an approach can gain no credit and candidates feeling unable to rework the material might be best advised not to waste time copying but to focus on other questions, where they might be able to polish a better answer.

The most common points to gain credit were those relating to growing populations or demand for food linked to famine or food scarcity, the relatively weak bones and the spread of disease, followed by the issues linked to food variety and quality, sometimes connected with life expectancies being reduced. Some candidates gained credit for the comparison with their hunter-gatherer counterparts, but this was often mentioned out of context and was awarded almost inadvertently. The specific natural disasters, spread of agriculture, strength of foragers, sedentary lifestyles within a limited sphere, and being too near numerous other people and animals were all points which proved either to be passed over and/or more challenging to render effectively in own words.

Some responses used incorrect sections of the material, for example the later sections on social inequality, or even offered their own ideas about the disadvantages of farming (in modern times). These were rare, however, given the direction offered by the rubric towards the relevant line numbers.

Examples of successful rendering of key points in own words included:

As the population increased, the risk of famine increased because of the lack of food (1)… Because of restricted food options (1) the diet of farmers was less nutritionally rich (1) so their expected lifespan decreased (1). Their bones became fragile (1) due to lack of extensive movement (1). The spreading of disease increased (1) as they lived near one another and their animals (1). (max. 5)

Farmers had weaker physical health due to their vulnerable bones, which is (sic) easier to be broken (1). Farmers also had imbalanced diet (1) and likely to die at younger age (1) due to restricted types of food (1). Moreover, they are prone to diseases spreading (1) as farmers live nearby to one another, together with the animals (1), causing micro-organisms such as bacteria to spread easily and become resistant (1). Farmers also work and reside in one specific space (1) rather than moving around to look for food (1). (max. 5)

… as the demand grew due to increasing population and the supply became stagnant, it caused famines./The exponentially growing population . . . led to widespread hunger.

Overpopulation can result in a dramatic number of people starving (1) and being malnourished (1).

A homogenous diet (1) meant farmers suffered from poor nourishment (1) compared to their hunter-gathering counter**parts (1)**.

Due to less protein and other vitamins which were present in meat (1) the humans had a monotonous diet (1) which ultimately resulted in reduced lifespans (1).

Farmers had a reduced amount of time to live/died at younger ages/earlier. (shorter life expectancies)

Consuming a small range of food types/lack of diversity in their consumption (eating a limited variety of food)

Spread of diseases also became a pressing matter. (another drawback… was the outbreak of disease)

There was an increase in the spread of disease (1) as a lot of people and animals were staying in a congested space, making it overcrowded (1).

created disease (1) due to the close residency of humans and animals (1)

(d)(i) Precision was key here since different types of plant were mentioned in the material; 'wild plants' in relation to seed dispersal but 'domesticated crops' increasing greatly in size. The example of the latter point ('maize seeds' being '15 times bigger than their wild counterparts') was not often cited and many responses missed either 'crops' (in favour of 'plants') and 'much' prior to 'larger'. Some responses offered ideas from elsewhere in the material, such as the use of manure for fertilisers (**2(c)(i)**) but this was a less common way of missing the (full) credit than the imprecision of answers mentioned. When questions impose no word limit and do not preclude the use of the same words as in the material, candidates are best advised to render their points in the same manner as presented therein, and to offer full detail, rather than to abbreviate or paraphrase.

(ii) It was essential to include the idea of '*how* crops evolved and yields increased', rather than simply the fact of their evolving or, less frequently, *how to get crops to evolve*. Many candidates did correctly locate and reproduce this information or the alternative correct answer ('food sustainability') but those who attempted to convey this concept in their own words often lost the precision of the original.

(e) As with the two parts of **2(b)**, the word count was an important discriminator here, as was precision. For example, the 'inequality' between 'the sexes' needed the reference to men taking 'leading roles', and the emergence of new, 'different roles' required at least one example. Words were often used up in the 'warriors' point by not changing 'outsiders looking to steal their wealth' to *thieves* or *robbers*, for example, while other attempts at this idea simply offered 'outsiders' and/or omitted the reference to animals, which was then too vague. Many candidates offering the 'building (of) places of worship' point copied the whole sentence, which used 17 words. Fortunately, this was often their final attempt and credit could be gained if the essential elements appeared prior to the end of the word count. The ideas relating to surplus food production and storage, and to the elites, were most elusive to candidates and were rarely offered or credited.

(f)(i) When synonyms for words or phrases are sought, there are some general principles of which candidates should be aware; crucially, responses require precision of meaning and grammatical form. For example, if a noun appears as the original item to convey, then a noun must be offered in response. In this way, the new word or phrase should be able to 'replace' that given from the material and make lexical and syntactical sense in its place. **2(f)(i)** here sought an adjective, whereas some candidates provided a noun phrase, for example *dramatic change*. The most common correct answers were *drastic*, *revolutionary* and *dramatic*, with some also offering *momentous*, *ground-breaking* or *earth-shattering*. Many answers focused more on scale than impact for 'seismic', such as with *huge*, *enormous*, *sudden* and similar, or were too vague in context, for example *significant* or *impactful*, although these could be credited with appropriate qualifiers.

(ii) Of the two synonym questions, candidates found this the more difficult. Too many responses were, perhaps in light of recent world events, concerned with illness or infection (*infected*, *diseased* and similar). Those who realised the use of the term was figurative in context were frequently too vague in their choice of synonym, for example *worried*, *bothered* or *scared*, although these were creditworthy if strengthened with appropriate qualifiers. Common correct answers included *haunted*, *troubled*, *threatened*, *burdened*, *constantly/severely affected*, and *continuously scared*.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Key messages

The material in the Insert is the basis on which candidates should answer most of the questions. Therefore, it is very important that candidates read the material carefully before starting to write their answers. Whilst some questions may require candidates to answer from their own knowledge and experience, candidates are expected to focus their answers on the material given in *Section A* and *Section B*.

Candidates should read the rubric for each question carefully; clear instructions are given regarding use of own words and word limits.

The paper assesses a range of skills including the ability to develop extended answers, the ability to write concisely and the ability to write in own words using clear English. The ability to write concisely is an important skill: if a candidate writes beyond an imposed word limit, this part of the answer will not be marked and therefore will not gain any credit, no matter how good it is. In questions where a word limit was imposed, a significant number of candidates wrote much more than was allowed. The word limits were quite short (for example 30 and 40 words); therefore, it is important that candidates do not repeat back the question at the beginning of their response, wasting some of the words they could have used to gain credit. Future candidates would benefit from a range of opportunities to support writing concisely within a given word limit in preparation for the exam. Where applicable, the word limit is specified in the question rubric and candidates should use this as their guide.

There will always be questions when candidates are required, by the rubric, to answer using their own words as far as possible; if candidates use the words in the text to make a point, they are not doing what the question requires. Only in a small number of circumstances will a word from the text be allowed; this is usually when the word is very technical or an alternative word cannot be found easily. Future candidates should be given plenty of opportunity to practice writing extracts of text of different lengths in their own words in order to practice and master this skill and prepare well for their future exam.

Candidates are often asked to find words or phrases in the material to match one given in the question; candidates should be given lots of practice to do this and be trained to chose only words/phrases that match exactly that given and not include superfluous text as they will gain no credit.

If candidates are asked to provide a simile for a word/phrase in the text, they must make sure they are using the same grammatical form as the original, otherwise they will gain no credit.

General comments

Most candidates engaged with the material and found it reasonably accessible, especially *Section A*. *Section B* presented more challenges, especially the questions where candidates were required to write in their own words.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

In questions like this, where candidates are required to give advantages for a particular option, answers should focus only on information that is most pertinent to that particular option. There will always be information in the material that is generic, relevant to other options and not as relevant as other information.

It is a skill that candidates need to develop, to select pertinent information from one part of the material and link it to that in another part. This will then reward candidates with marks for developed points.

(a)   This question required candidates to choose a redevelopment option for an old library. All three options were chosen with option A and C being the most popular. The best answers were from candidates who were able to connect separate pieces of information from the material and produce a developed point. Some candidates merely repeated back the proposal for the development rather than any reasons for it and therefore scored few marks.

Examples of a creditable developed point for each option:

Option A
'The library has large gardens surrounding it which the special school can benefit from, this will address concerns raised by parents about lack of outdoor space.'

Option B
'Stenning has a lot of elderly people, many who live on their own, the community centre could provide somewhere for them to socialise and meet others.'

Option C
'The local council is looking to increase revenue long term as central government have cut funding and leasing out offices to local business is a good way to do this'

(b)   This question assessed candidates' ability to use the material in the Insert to choose the least favourable redevelopment option for the library. They should not have used the option chosen in **1(a)** which some candidates did. Option B was the most popular choice.

When candidates successfully understood the question, they were able to communicate some disadvantages quite well.

Examples of a creditable developed point for each option:

Option A
'The library has already closed once and borrowing of books dropped before its closure therefore there may not be demand for its use which would be a waste of money.'

Option B
Stenning already has a lot of services like shops and restaurants so the new ones in the community centre may not get used as much as so may lose money

Option C
Stenning is surrounded by established businesses so there may be a lot of competition for the new start-up firms

(c)   Many candidates were successful in identifying that additional information point 18 was the least relevant to their decision making in **Questions 1a** and **1b**, picking the location of the town Stenning surrounded by beautiful countryside as the correct answer.

(d)(i) Many candidates were able to give a good explanation as to why elderly people may not use the internet; popular reasons were the fact that the elderly have not grown up with the internet therefore may not understand how to use it; are more comfortable with other ways to communicate of find information (telephone and books) and may therefore see no need to use it. Using the information from the material about Stenning's elderly population did not gain candidates any credit.

   (ii)   The main points made in responses were: electronic books save space and multiple books can be held on an electronic device; some examples of response: they are environmentally more friendly (saving paper and printing costs); they are downloadable anywhere and save the time and money in travelling to book shops and libraries; there is more choice than in a shop of library

Section B

Question 2

(a)   The most common responses focused on the healthy food eaten by the author of the article and on playing lots of sports. Some candidates were able to recognise that eating with family was also beneficial for the author.

(b)   This question required candidates to answer in their own words. Very few candidates were successful in executing this skill. When candidates are faced with a question like this, they need to consider alternative words to those that are in the text e.g., 'started' could be changed to 'begun to',' 'fattier' could change to 'fattier' or 'greasier'. They will gain *no credit* if they simply lift words from the passage.

An acceptable example of a creditable point for:
have started to eat more fatty foods: *they are consuming fattier things*
have increased portion sizes*: they are eating greater amounts*
Fewer Italians enjoy social meals with family*: a smaller number of Italians get enjoyment from dining with relatives*

(c)   Many candidates were able to correctly explain, within 40 words, the contradiction in lines 15 to 22. The most popular points were those about the healthy traditional Mediterranean diet being ignored by Italians and the situation of excessive food in the world but large numbers of people starving in poorer countries. Some candidates wrote much more than the word limit, however and gained no credit for relevant points that were beyond 40 words.

(d)   In this question, candidates were, again, required to write in their own words and explain how the sustainable development goals could be achieved. Like **Question 2b**, candidates found this very challenging and it was rare to find a script that contained a good response. Candidates can score well on these questions if they are trained to approach them in the correct way – find similes to the words presented, rework tenses of verbs and rewrite the response with as few same words as possible.

A good example of a creditable response scoring two marks: *Giving greater access to better quality and healthier food without high expense.*

A good example of rewording 'slash food waste' provided by a candidate: *authorities can do everything in their power to massively cut down on wasting food'. Food would be acceptable in this case as there are limited similes.*

(e)   Some candidates were able to score well on this question, writing within the word limit and recognising the combination of business working with the long-standing knowledge of farmers about crops, the use of modern technology like weather forecasting and efficient use of fertilisers which increased profits and produced better wheat.

(f)   This question required candidates to find synonyms. When candidates are required to identify a word in the material that has the same meaning as a word or phrase in the question, they should pick only the exact word or phrase that matches. If they copy the whole sentence or phrase that the synonym is in, they will not gain any credit. For example, 'paradigm shift' is creditable for 'fundamental change in approach' but 'paradigm shift is needed' is not. Many candidates explained the meaning of the word/phrase given rather than finding the equivalent in the material. Candidates must read questions carefully to ensure they are engaging with the rubric.

Candidates were most successful in finding the synonym for 'fundamental change in approach'.

(g)   In this question candidates were required to provide a simile for a word or phrase in the passage. In questions like this the candidates need to re-read the word or phrase in the passage and consider its meaning in the context it is in, then provide an alternative that is the same grammatical form. They can check if they have been successful in their choice if they replace their new word for the original one in the material and it makes the same sense as the original word. A common error on **(g)(i)** was to use a verb instead of a noun.

Creditable alternatives for 'designation' were selection and classification and 'to embrace' was a popular alternative for 'to embrace'.

Future candidates would benefit from plenty of opportunity to practice this skill in preparation for the exam.

(h)   Very few candidates understood the demand of this question and focused their answer on diet. The question required them to think of sustainable actions such as recycling, buying locally, using less plastic, having an electric car.