ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/12
Reading

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Key messages

- Candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a diverse range of sources such as advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.

- Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic elements and features of texts such as parts of speech / word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph and text-level structure, formality/informality of tone, pragmatics.

- Candidates should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.

- For **Question 1(a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their directed response. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

- For **Question 1(b)** candidates need to ensure they compare the form, structure and language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting elements from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.

- For **Question 2** candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of a text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, organise information in their answers and write using clear and appropriate language.

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

General comments

The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were some overlong responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words, and while there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, this is an aspect of the response's 'relevance to purpose'. As such, adherence to the word limit is assessed as part of the second bullet point of AO2. Candidates should remember that they are being marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, though, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. There was some evidence of a few candidates lacking the necessary language skills for text analysis.

Question 1(a) is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the language, style and structure to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session the original text was an autobiography. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was a diary entry (150–200 words). Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates are expected to write clearly and accurately, with relevant content, and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the text produced for **1(a)** with the given text, analysing form, structure and language. Here, candidates are assessed for their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of texts with clear reference to characteristic features, and comparative analysis of form, structure and language and how a writer's stylistic choices relate to audience to shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach in their response to **Question 1(b)**. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a conclusion can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts. Those who adopted a topical approach tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic elements.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of a text in terms of meaning, context and audience with reference to characteristic features, and their ability to analyse form, structure and language. In the case of most candidates, there was a clear understanding of the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the given text. Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise use of language to link evidence with explanatory comments; phrases such as 'the writer is trying to persuade the readers' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a)   Candidates were asked to read an extract from Michelle Obama's autobiography *Becoming*. They were required to write a diary entry as Michelle's great-aunt Robbie recording her thoughts and feelings after one of Michelle's weekly piano lessons.

Responses to this question generally showed genuine enthusiasm and there were consistently imaginative and developed responses to the task which included Robbie's personal thoughts, feelings and reflections. They were aware that the characteristic features of diary writing can include detail, description and emotive language. Most candidates took their cue from the text's representation of a 'straight spined' martinet who exercised a 'rigid kind of authority' but in almost every case she was endowed with a soft centre and a genuine affection and concern for her great niece. Some responses gifted Robbie with prophetic powers and a sense for upcoming greatness in the four-year-old. Most simply developed a convincing portrayal of a dedicated teacher who would put up with no nonsense.

Clear responses recognised that the diary entry was to be written as if by Robbie, not by Michelle, and the different voice was much in evidence with Robbie's strictness tempered by her affection for Michelle and her desire for the girl to play the piano well. Good textual details were included, without unnecessary lifting of material from the passage, and some logical and credible development of ideas occurred. Clear and detailed answers, for example, did not suggest that Michelle could play Fur Elise after just four lessons.

In effective responses, tenses were clear and consistent, lifted material did not dominate and there was a credible sense of the diary form. Candidates referred correctly to named individuals such as Craig, Michelle's brother, or her grandfather Shields, and conveyed a clear sense of the strict but loving and proud nature of Robbie, Michelle's great aunt. Some responses were exquisitely expressed, with a real empathy being shown. In these responses, there was some effective use of the details of the passage, particularly the chipped piano keys and Robbie's *rigid kind of authority*.

Limited responses showed some misreading of the text. There were some areas of confusion, especially regarding Shields, his relationship to great-aunt Robbie, his occupation as a carpenter and his 'rechristening' as Southside; similarly, these limited responses misread the family connection with Craig. Furthermore, these weaker responses often showed errors with use of grammar and incorrect tenses – frequently as a result of being over ambitious with language choices. Several of these weaker responses quoted large amounts from the given text, which was rarely justified.

The need for careful reading of the question was underlined by a number of responses that did not acknowledge that they were required to write from a different perspective and also that they needed to reflect on the events in the passage rather than introducing completely new material.

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Getting the balance between showing understanding of the passage and crafting an effective response is the key to this question and the tendency was to be a little too safe. It is important for candidates to be aware that understanding is not necessarily demonstrated by rearranging chunks of the text. Often the most effective writing came at the end of responses when candidates freed themselves from checklisting the text.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150–200 words). Several candidates wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

(b)   Candidates were asked to compare their diary entry with the autobiographical extract, analysing form, structure and language.

To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse form, structure and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, i.e. the text given and the one that they have just created. An integrated approach is more effective for this type of comparative task than dealing with each text separately. Where textual evidence is selected, candidates should remember to offer clear analysis of how the writer's choices of form, structure and language are related to audience and shape meaning.

Most candidates wrote effective introductory paragraphs, showing their understanding of both texts and their purpose and audience. They showed understanding of the difference in terms of the purpose of the autobiography and diary entry and elaborated on this. In addition to this, a common feature mentioned was the use of voice and personal pronouns and the distinguished differences and similarities between the two texts in terms of how this was appropriate to their purposes.

Limited responses were often brief, focused more on the autobiography than on their own directed response, and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of an autobiography and/or a diary. Some merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without any reference to effect. These limited responses often dwelt on defining the difference between the public autobiography and the private diary, which offered little comparative purpose.

Clear responses compared the two texts throughout and referred accurately to specific techniques used in both, quoting them clearly and explaining the precise effects they created. There was no generalisation such as 'this really created rhythm' or 'this engaged the reader', but precise consideration of the impact of individual examples upon the reader. Responses such as these often fell into a clear pattern of identifying the technique, giving the example and the subsequent effect of its use, as well as highlighting the broader effect in the passage. These answers also related the tone and purpose to precise features of the writing, realising that language use creates tone, rather than relying on a broad identification of tone unconnected to language use.

In detailed and sophisticated responses, candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their writing, for example by proceeding from a line-by-line approach to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of form, i.e. the typical text conventions used in the original autobiographical extract and the candidate's own diary entry and the ways in which the different purposes affected the content and style of the two texts. They also commented successfully on the ways in which the autobiographical extract and diary entry were relevant to their respective intended audiences, e.g. through the tone and register used in each text. These responses offered an integrated comparison of these elements with their own writing.

In terms of language, these stronger responses referred to the use of first-person pronouns enabling the reader to see things from the writer's perspective, the question-and-answer sentence forms in the second paragraph that create a chatty style and involve the reader in the text – *Was I afraid of Robbie? Not exactly*. They explored the connotations of vocabulary choices such as *dangled* and the use of colloquial vocabulary – *kids*, *straight-up* – which lowers the register and adds to the informal, chatty style of the text, and then compared this with their own vocabulary and stylistic choices. A key comparative element was the connotations of words used to present Aunt Robbie's character – *exacting*, *scolding*, *demanded*, *unscathed* – and how this was reflected in their own writing. They often compared the use of a lexical field associated with music – *piano*, *keys*, *Middle C*, *treble*, *bass clefs* – with the inclusion of this lexical field in their own writing. Some

candidates had made use of simile and rhetorical questions in their directed response and where they had done so, they were able to comparatively analyse these stylistic choices.

The very weakest responses offered no comparison, focussing only on the given text.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to read a review of Augustine Sedgewick's book *Coffeeland: One Man's Dark Empire and the Making of Our Favourite Drug*. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

The text was generally well understood and was answered with obvious engagement by most candidates. There was a wide range of responses with a significant number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There were several answers which achieved a genuinely sophisticated level of understanding, particularly in tracing the shifts in focus between the historical and economic context of the book, its content, the reviewer's opinion and the final judgement of the book. There were very few short answers.

Stronger responses showed awareness of the characteristic features of a review, i.e. that they can be subjective and give an opinion, create rapport with the audience, include details of – in this case – the book, and offer a final judgement. They were often characterised by the greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language. Conversely, weaker responses often described style, mood, and vocabulary as having 'positive connotations' or 'negative connotations', with little further elaboration or definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'creating an interesting image' or 'stopping the reader from being bored'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology to access the higher levels; for example, 'personification' was often used incorrectly with reference to *leapfrogged*. The wider the critical vocabulary of the candidates, the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

Responses to form were, generally, rather limited. However, many candidates noted the audience of the article and made clear reference to what they deemed to be characteristic features of such a text (dates, figures around exports, historical context – attempts to provide authority to the piece). More detailed commentaries noted the hybrid nature of this text with its combination of imagery, factual detail and final opinion. Such candidates went on to consider purpose (to inform, persuade and analyse) and to comment on how this combination related to a much wider audience or demographic than simply those interested in coffee.

Clear and detailed understanding about structure was exemplified through engagement with how the text develops in response to the title of the review, *How Coffee Ruined a Country*. Here, candidates focused on the hook of the title, the way in which the opening paragraph establishes the subject of the book review, the use of chronology through the inclusion of key dates – *1889*,*1979*,*1930s*, *1980s*, *1992* – giving cohesion to the text together with the way in which discourse markers and anaphoric references develop the review. The more successful and insightful responses explored the way in which the concluding paragraph is structured suggesting that there are remaining unanswered questions by Sedgewick's book and how the final paragraph conveys the review writer's overall opinion of the book.

Limited responses focused on basic points about the arrangement and number of paragraphs of this text. Many candidates also focused on sentence types but, generally, this amounted to feature spotting rather than effective, critical engagement. Some of these limited responses offered over-earnest reference to the presence of short, long and complex sentences, without clear analysis.

In terms of language, many candidates' approach was to focus on the characteristics noted above regarding form and structure and to address the imagery and lexical field of the text. Candidates commented on the way in which facts and details taken from the book being reviewed were used by the writer and, in particular the effect of the metaphor, a canvas on which Augustine Sedgewick paints a beautifully written, engaging and sprawling portrait. They noted the use of a lexical field concerned with trade/economy – *capitalism*, *global capital flows*, *supply chains*, *consumer markets*, *labor mobility*, *seasonal employment*, *booms and busts* and detailed responses considered these choices and how they shape meaning and relate to the audience. Many noticed and some analysed the effect of listing and triplicate structures such as, *producers and importers and advertisers*. The more successful explored the effect of metaphor, *products leapfrogged across the map* and *many other fascinating threads weave through the main story of coffee growing in El Salvador*. Detailed responses commented on the way in which inverted commas are used in the text and the connotations of the phrase *yearned for* in the final paragraph, and the most successful showed sophisticated awareness of the effect of the triplicate interrogative sentence forms in the final paragraph.

Many candidates who had written limited to clear level responses took a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the … paragraph', or adopted an approach to analysis which ranged haphazardly across the text. It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' and similar descriptors, are a feature of the higher levels; a whole-text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of the line-by-line approach was the repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of alliteration. It is worth remembering that the same point can not be rewarded twice.

Less successful, basic responses offered very generalised comments. These responses identified some language features but offered limited analysis. These weaker responses tended to summarise the contents of the text and they generally did this at great length.

Selection of evidence by way of quotation was not always expertly used in these weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at too great a length, or merely referring to a range of lines. Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22
Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Candidates need to allocate a set amount of time to: identify factors for writing; plan to write; write; check; correct.

- Candidates should look at the key instructions in the questions they answer. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instruction is to *write the diary entry for the day you arrive on Antarctica*, focusing on *the atmosphere and the sense of excitement*. To ensure that candidates understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question.

- Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question, leads to better crafted and well-shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and generic content. Candidates should consider the following as part of the planning stage: the *purpose* of the piece, the prescribed *form* and *audience* as well as the most appropriate *voice* or persona to adopt, the *mood* and *tone* that they should try to create in their writing and the most suitable *structure* to employ.

- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, responses were weaker where candidates lost control of grammar in attempting to write in long, complex sentences. Two errors that occurred quite regularly were: separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; and writing in sentence fragments, rather than in complete sentences. Sentence construction and demarcation are key, followed by accurate use of commas, and then the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.

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

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

- In preparing for this paper, candidates should be exposed to a wide range of tone, register and format by reading a broad variety of text types, as outlined in the syllabus, as background preparation.

General comments

A few candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some *Section B* responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**.

Stronger responses to **Question 1(a)** focused clearly on the question, writing about the day of arrival in Antarctica, as opposed to weaker responses which included a lot of information about preparations for the trip.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. Most candidates made some attempt to comment on the form, structure and language of their diary entry, showing some awareness of how these aspects link to audience and shape meaning. Weaker responses often did not link features to their effects, or explain their relationship to the audience, meaning

and purpose. Weaker responses to **Question 1(b)** tended to focus on simple identification of features with little or no analysis of their effect or the ways in which they relate to audience and shape meaning. Quite a few responses focused entirely on the content of their piece of writing and therefore only provided minimal analysis of their writing, often indirectly by outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on *Section B* generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (descriptive, review or discursive), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions, as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on *Section B* generally lacked focus on what the task required or were poorly planned. For example, some **Question 2** responses were lacking in descriptive detail. A number of reviews for **Question 3**, meanwhile, did not offer any kind of evaluative comment on the careers event, providing a straightforward report on it instead. In some responses to **Question 4**, writing lost focus on the amount of time teenagers spend on social media, focusing instead on the benefits and disadvantages that social media brings in general.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You recently won a travel writing competition and the prize was a trip to Antarctica. You decide to keep a diary of your trip.

(a)   **Write the diary entry for the day you arrive on Antarctica, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on the atmosphere and the sense of excitement.**

Most responses achieved the targets of writing a diary entry with focus on atmosphere and excitement and the vast majority of responses adhered to the specified form for the task. However, some responses did not fully comply with the conventions of a diary entry, with some responses reading more like a piece of narrative fiction, and others like simple recounts with little focus on thoughts and feelings.

Stronger responses explicitly established Antarctica as the destination for the trip, and gave brief contextual information early on, which enabled them to quickly move on to focus on the atmosphere and sense of excitement on the day the speaker arrived on Antarctica. Such responses addressed the key words and phrases in the question and featured fully considered, appropriate vocabulary choices, overall tone, and mood. In those stronger responses, candidates described initial feelings at the start of the trip by conveying a keen sense of excitement for a 'spectacular trip', for example. Imaginative use of language was evident in some well-crafted responses, for example: 'The very ocean seemed empty and devoid of life'; 'Snow sparkled and shimmered like diamonds on a Queen's necklace'; 'Staring out across the ocean towards this seemingly infinite expanse of white made me feel isolated, but it also gave me a strange comfort that looms over me even now.' The following example is taken from a strong response in which the candidate focused closely on atmosphere, as required by the task, using some very well selected details and vocabulary: 'A thick blanket of fog covered us in all directions as the steamer headed southwards. The journey would take a little under twelve hours – the captain had informed us prior. Travelling was my biggest passion; however, this experience was surreal – I was about to witness the mighty continent that Captain Scott first set foot upon, the key abode of the emperor penguins, an unexplored winter wonderland where Mt. Sidley stood tall amid the snow-covered terrain … ahh! This was too much excitement to contain!'

Weaker responses concentrated on lengthy descriptions of preparations for the trip, such as packing, or on describing the journey or on lengthy accounts of learning about having won the writing competition. Others focused too much on what the speaker had to eat and drink when they reached their accommodation or made no mention of Antarctica. Quite a lot of weak responses lacked clear focus on the question or were underdeveloped, sometimes under 200 words. Others showed no sense of the diary entry form, and communication was impeded by errors in expression and technical accuracy, for example: 'It was my first time to win such competition. I couldn't believe myself, I had an opportunity to get to experience Antarctica. Although I had attended many competition, but I never get to win any vacation.'

(b) **Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.**

Most candidates started their commentaries with an introductory paragraph citing audience and purpose and most showed at least some linguistic knowledge. They would often have been more successful had they gone beyond simple identification of linguistic features.

Stronger responses maintained close focus on linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully, with appropriate terminology, as in this example: 'The use of the power of three in the phrase, "pinching, stabbing, piercing cold" connotes the negative emotions of the writer towards the weather, personifying the characteristics of the cold and placing it into the role of an antagonist.' Another strong candidate explained: 'Following the conventions of a diary entry, it lays out the events in a chronological manner, taking the reader through the events of the writer's day systematically. The phrases: "fourteen hours ago", "8am in the morning", and "rest of the afternoon" serve as timestamps, providing context to the diary entry and shaping its structure.'

Stronger responses connected the aim of using certain text features with the purpose of the text, for example: 'The use of first-person narration allows the diary writer to give the reader an insight into [their] character and their reactions to different aspects of the journey/exploration.' Another candidate explained how: 'The landscape is said to be "draped in a white blanket", implying a sense of comfort in the otherwise barren land of Antarctica. The verb "draped" also implies a certain elegance.'

Weaker responses often focused on describing or summarising the content of the diary entry rather than reflecting on the ways in which form, structure and language contribute to meaning. Some weaker responses listed figures of speech and syntactical terminology with little or no analysis of their effect or the ways in which they relate to audience and shape meaning. They were often in need of exemplification or gave incorrect examples. Others identified linguistic features and then gave a definition of the terms, often incorrectly, rather than reflecting on their effects. In their analysis, weaker responses often included the phrases 'to create excitement', 'to create atmosphere', 'to help the reader visualise the scene', which do not demonstrate understanding of effect. Difficulty was demonstrated in accurately identifying language, instead using phrases such as: 'I used the word …', 'I used the phrase …'.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Description

Write a descriptive piece about a library. In your writing, focus on the sound, light and movement inside the library to help your reader imagine the scene.

Nearly all candidates acknowledged the descriptive form and managed to create a sense of place. Many placed themselves in the scene with an appropriate use of a first-person perspective. The idea of using a narrative to frame the description was popular, with some adopting a personal, even nostalgic visit to a library. The three prompts of *sound*, *light* and *movement* were noted, with candidates mostly concentrating on describing light in the building. Librarians, mainly female, were often featured, usually in an extremely negative light with unattractive features such as: 'the small bug-eyed librarian.'

Stronger responses were engaging and used appropriate and imaginative choices of language that captured mood and atmosphere, for example with sunlight described as a 'heavenly halo'. Mood and atmosphere were strong in many responses where there was evidence of conscious crafting of language. One candidate described the library in ghostly terms: 'the book let out a sound of disapproval as it snapped shut. Books were everywhere, towering all around her, circling her.' Some stronger responses included effective use of personification and similes, such as in this example where they were used to focus on sound: 'The books voice their crackling discomfort, the pages turn at a steady speed, like a metronome ticking down each fourth second in a place where time is sluggish.' Another candidate used a simile in an evocative way to describe one of the smells of the library: 'A smell of ageing paper fills the air, a musty and ancient odour, much like a grandfather's embrace – warm and comforting.'

One candidate used a clever structural technique of shifting the focus in each paragraph to the various characters in the library, as seen in the following two extracts from the response, describing the librarian and

the cleaner with carefully selected vocabulary: 'The librarian is old and wizened and grey and, yet, not quite as old as the book she studies. The pages crinkle and creak with weariness, groaning about their dog ears and creased spines.'; 'On the fourth floor is a ballet virtuoso, a young girl of around twenty. She stands illuminated under a single spotlight as she performs her routine with Tchaikovsky in her earbuds. She glides, guiding her partner mop across the floor, twirling with her apron tutu.'

In weaker responses, candidates sometimes got side-tracked from the descriptive task and wrote in narrative form. Others were not clearly punctuated. Some candidates would have done better to keep to one main tense, either present or past; such errors impeded the effects the candidate was trying to achieve. Some candidates lost control of their writing by attempting to write in overly long, complex sentences, sometimes as long as seventy words.

A few candidates misread the task and produced factual responses by listing a library's purposes in the community.

Question 3 – Review

You recently attended a one-day careers event, aimed at helping teenagers to decide on their future career. Write a review of the event, which will be posted on a careers advice website.

Most candidates approached the question in a logical manner by explaining the purpose of the event and citing both strengths and weakness.

Stronger responses consisted of credible, balanced reviews; many named the event, using titles such as, 'Finding yourself', 'On course' and 'Newark's one stop shop careers event.' A resume of the company was often part of the text, followed by an introduction to the guest speakers. One clear introduction summarised the organizing body as follows: 'Career Net is famous for its unique approach to helping students define their career paths through matching their values and personality with their intellectual and vocational abilities.' Stronger responses considered a wide range of aspects of the event, including value for money, ease of access to experts, the range of academic/vocational options featured and the presentations/activities offered. Successful responses adopted a persona – an interested parent or a teacher for example. Responses were often structured using headings and subheadings, and direct quotations were embedded across the text as evidence from other attendees. Stronger reviews were also concluded well, ending with a sentence or paragraph that gave further credibility to the review and the persona that had been adopted.

One candidate adopted the persona of a teacher who attended the careers event and wrote the review for students. The review began by offering a rating for each of four headings, including 'Industry relevance' and 'Value for money'. The candidate then went on to structure their review effectively by using these as subheadings to organise and develop their ideas. The candidate communicated in a sophisticated manner, using complex structures and less common lexis, and provided evaluative comment on the event as the review task required: 'At this event, I met with some of the most profound industry leaders and was able to pose my questions to them. This was especially useful for those adolescents who wanted to know how their lives would look twenty years from now. While I do not recommend idealising another individual's life path, it could be useful to gain some inspiration to develop a rough framework. Overall, the professionals were highly experienced and had valuable insights to share with the young adults.'

Weaker responses tended to consist of a narrative account that focused on the student's own areas of interest instead of on the purpose of critically reviewing the event or commenting on how useful it was. Sometimes these responses were more akin to a personal diary entry than an unbiased assessment for publication on a website. The following example is from one such response: 'At the one-on-one session the counsellor spoke to the student about their interest, academics and family background. After which the student filled a questionnaire where both open and closed questions were asked such as "How awkward they are in a social situation on a scale of one to 10?"'. Other weaker responses included content that was vaguely relevant, using basic expression with frequent errors which impeded communication, such as in this example: 'They can guide you how to study and what is suitable for your carrer. Students who seeked guidance and mentor from successful people it will boost their learning curve exponentially.'

Question 4 – Email

You have just read a newspaper article which said that teenagers spend far too much time on social media these days. You decide to write an email to the editor in response to the article, giving your opinion.

Nearly all candidates acknowledged the newspaper article in their opening address. Stronger responses presented reasonable, balanced arguments on the subject of teenagers' use of social media, for example: 'To this day, as a 16-year-old, although I have been given greater responsibility and more freedom from strict parental control, I know when to set my phone down and focus on my work or spend time with family.' More nuanced responses identified that social media can be a great addition to a student's sources of academic information, but then concluded that other, more reliable resources can fulfill the same aim. Some candidates adopted a persona (such as a parent, teenager or expert) which gave their writing a sense of authenticity and credibility. For example, this candidate took on the persona of a parent and utilised this approach well: 'I know of many teenagers who have started their own businesses on social media. In fact, my son runs a shoe consignment business on social media. By conducting this business my son is becoming more responsible, confident, and he is also learning the value of money.'

Many candidates who produced stronger responses consistently referred to points raised in the article and addressed each in turn, while writing with great passion about the merits of social media as well as making the audience aware of its harmful impact on vulnerable, young people. Some stronger emails started with a strong statement, such as: 'Social media is a black hole, sucking in time, energy, everything. Teenagers today see themselves through a heavily distorted lens of filters.' This response broadened into a deeper discussion of the impact of so called 'Instagram Influencers' who were labelled as the 'new age disease.'

In weaker responses, candidates sometimes took issue with the premise that teenagers spend too much time on social media and argued rather churlishly either that their use is not excessive or that their parents spend just as long as they do on social media. Many were in need of clearer organisation and signposting in their arguments. Weaker responses were characterised by generalised content which centred around the positives and negatives of social media, and lost focus on the amount of time being spent by teenagers on social media platforms. These responses therefore lost focus on the question somewhat. Similarly, some candidates offered a critique of the original article, expressing opinions about the writer's style and content without expressing opinions on whether or not teenagers spend far too much time on social media these days.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/32

Language Analysis

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Key messages

Paper 3 offers the opportunity to candidates to demonstrate their analytical skills. Two compulsory questions are presented; there are 25 marks available for each question. The assessment objectives, AO1, AO2, AO4 and AO5 are not all applied to each question; those which are, are not equally weighted between the questions, therefore each question requires candidates to demonstrate specific skills and techniques.

The question paper is set into two sections, each containing one of the two compulsory questions. **Section A**, *Language change*, contains **Question 1** and addresses assessment objectives AO2 (5 marks), AO4 (5 marks) and AO5 (15 marks). Three data sets are presented as Texts A (a prose text), B (a word table) and C (an *n*-gram graph).

Section B, *Child language acquisition,* contains **Question 2** and addresses assessment objectives AO1 (5 marks), AO4 (15 marks) and AO5 (5 marks). The data presented in this section is a transcription of conversation between child and adult interlocutors. Candidates should be aware of the different ways in which the assessment objectives s are applied and respond to the questions accordingly.

General comments

Responses were generally sustained and thoughtful. Overall, work was organised well, with paragraphs forming a logical, fluent sequence of ideas. At times, some ideas needed more development. There was evidence that candidates had divided their examination time equally between answering the two questions, thus responses tended to be of equal length across both sections. On occasion, candidates had devoted too much time to creating elaborate plans prior to writing up their analysis. In such cases, the resulting analyses had been short and therefore limited by their own brevity.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Three data sources were presented in this question, Texts A, B and C. Candidates were advised to refer to specific details from the texts, as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of language. Most responses attempted analysis of all three data sources to some extent. Where fewer than three data sources were used, it was not possible for marks to be awarded above level 3 of the mark scheme. That does not mean, however, that where all three texts have been referenced that responses will automatically move beyond level 3.

Writing

Control of expression is assessed at AO2 in this section. Most responses demonstrated a clear control with occasional lapses in register, which needed to be maintained to be described as *effective*. It is important to note that development of ideas is also assessed at AO2, therefore even where effective or sophisticated expression is evident, unless ideas are developed, the full range of marks at AO2 cannot be awarded.

Stronger responses were crafted by progression through a sequence of linguistic frameworks including lexis, grammar, morphology, pragmatics, graphology or orthography. This approach is not a requirement of the mark scheme although responses which were structured in this way demonstrated clarity and logic, and maintained a linguistic standpoint throughout the analysis. Moreover, those responses which adopted this approach tended to use a wider range of technical descriptors, thus elevating register further.

At times a pattern was evident through responses where opening paragraphs provided historic or sociological discourse. This is not required in Paper 3 and such discussion runs the risk of becoming irrelevant material.

A further pattern was identified where weaker responses tended to analyse each source in the chronological order running through the question paper. Candidate confidence was demonstrated, however, where data from each source was interwoven, providing synthesis of ideas. At times, Texts B and C were discussed only very briefly with no real analysis of data being offered.

Conceptualisation

The 9093 syllabus is not prescriptive with regard to appropriate theoretical examples, and any which were cited relevantly were credited. There was some evidence of theories being referenced which were understood but not relevant to the discussion, including Jesperson and the Great Vowel Shift. Methods and approaches which were used by more confident candidates were Aitchison's Damp Spoon, Halliday's functional linguistics and theory of lexical gaps, Chen's S-Curve, and Crystal's position on technological influence.

Responses which were effective or insightful maintained focus on how and why any referenced theoretical examples were relevant to the selected data. Those responses which were basic or limited in their conceptualisation often did not apply comments to any data selection or left the reference incomplete.

Given the present-day English of Text A and the data in Text C, discussion of technological influence was provided by all candidates. Other concepts which were known and understood were narrowing and broadening, coinage, neologism and compounding, all particularly relevant to lexical items such as *clickbait*, *flagship* and *influencer* in Text A.

Data Handling

Most responses attempted to analyse the graphology of Text A including capitalisation in the title, use of hyperlink and position of author, time and date, comparing them to those expected by an archaic audience. Such discussion often resulted in vague commentary which was not necessarily analytical.

Insightful reference was made in stronger responses on the lexical content of the article where it showcased the ease in which Merchant moved through sophisticated (*self-reflexive critique)* to colloquial (*he's sold off)* language choices to engage his anticipated relatively young, educated audience.

Initialism in *IM* and *bb* was often discussed as was clipping in *alt*, with stronger responses offering analysis and opinion on the extent at which such language choices are widely used and understood due to change over time.

Text B's *web* was not generally fully explored; indeed, seldom was the appropriateness of the metaphorical use of *web* in 'worldwide web' discussed, for example. Weaker responses tended to mention the lexical items of the table without analysis of semantic or pragmatic changes.

The *n*-Gram in Text C offered the opportunity to analyse the change over time between 1970 and 2015 of *Internet, internet* and *online.* Graphic representation of the data was clearly understood. Some detailed analysis of the data was provided, although there was a tendency in weaker responses to insert the numerical data from the *y*-axis without providing clear analysis of them.

Section B

Question 2

Understanding

Most responses demonstrated understanding of child-directed speech, using the mother's questioning technique, intonation and positive reinforcement to evidence comments. Further understanding of how the mother operated the conversation by initiating adjacency pairs, allowing Blake to participate in the conversation using turn-taking, was seen in most responses.

Characteristic features which were identified included recasting and repetition from the mother and use of pronoun and contraction from Blake. Those which were accurately described using a wide range of technical terminology provided evidence of deeper knowledge and understanding.

Conceptualisation

Most responses identified Blake's stage of language acquisition as post-telegraphic, although many assumed such because of his age rather than analysing language features which were indicative. Those responses which progressed to identify Blake's cognitive development as in Piaget's pre-operational stage also relied on knowledge of Blake's age instead of deep reading of characteristic features. Naming stages without providing evidence from the transcription resulted in limited analysis.

Weaker responses made reference to a few linguistic concepts, methods and approaches in a basic manner, with some responses making no reference. On the other hand, some responses included very limited reference to a wide range of child language acquisition theories. Neither of these techniques proved fruitful. Strong responses made a clear, detailed or insightful selection of fully relevant theories which supported points of analysis.

Linguistic theories relevant to this transcription included a Chomskyan approach to virtuous error in *letted*, examples of Halliday's functions (Representational – *somebody took all of the stickers that i got*; Personal – *I love maggie*; Heuristic – *whos that boy*↗; Imaginative – *a knight in shining armour*) and reference to Brunerian scaffolding and the ways in which the mother led Blake to a Zone of Proximal Development according to Vygotsky.

Data Handling

In this series, there was less of a deficit approach being taken, with most responses analysing Blake's competencies to some extent. These included Blake's ability to form questions and correct his own utterances: *whos that other (.) whos that boy*↗ and his use of compound and complex sentence structures: *um well i really love maggies um er brother cause his face looks like um (.) a an oval but its not (.) its like a circle* and *i said no since i dont have a job*. These examples also illustrated Blake's recognition of shape and use of conditionals.

Most responses acknowledged Blake's varying use of tense, with stronger analyses comparing the use of simple past in *she invited me* and his non-standard constructions in *you made me took (.) take (.) er the one that you letted me.* Competencies acknowledged included Blake's self-correction, his ease with pluralisation: *stickers*, use of qualifiers *only* and *even*, and the comparative *more*.

Blake's emotional development drew comment in most responses where his annoyance was expressed in his increased volume: *DIDNT GIVE THEM BACK*. Weaker responses tended to attempt development of analysis with further comment on the emotional state of the child, discussing the extent to which he could really *love Maggie*. At times, this led to some irrelevant material, whereas stronger analysis explored Blake's competence in using prosody for effect.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Key messages

Examination candidates are required to demonstrate writing skills and techniques and their knowledge and understanding of language topics by presenting two sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to stimulus material provided in the question paper. Responses should develop ideas which are supported by carefully selected evidence from the text and further by theoretical examples which demonstrate wider study of linguistic issues.

Analysis of the language presented in the stimulus material is not a requirement of Paper 4 and provision of such analysis is not rewardable. Some such irrelevant content was provided in only a minority of responses in this series. Moreover, there was evidence that candidates had divided their examination time equally in responding to each of the two sections, which resulted in responses of equal development.

Responses in each section are assessed by three assessment objectives: Understanding (AO1 – 10 marks); Writing (AO2 – 5 marks), and Conceptualisation (A)4 – 10 marks). Candidates should be aware of the demands of each assessment objective and their weightings in order to craft cohesive, sustained responses.

General comments

Some weaker responses used the stimulus material only sparingly, providing lengthy and generalised explanations of the overall topics, which resulted in loss of focus on the particular requirements of the questions. The stimulus material presented by the question paper provided very specific contexts in both sections, but in some weaker responses the main body of the discussion was given over to examples gained from wider reading.

On the other hand, there were further weaker responses which did not present any evidence of wider reading. It is important to note that AOs 1 and 4 carry an equal weighting of marks, therefore the required cohesive response should acknowledge the context provided and theoretical examples in equal measure.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Understanding

In March 2022, the source text provided for **Question 1** was an extract from a blog written by the publishers of the Oxford English Dictionary which was written to explain why 29 Nigerian English words and phrases were added to the dictionary in 2020. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English in the world, referring to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of *English in the world*.

In general, responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the linguistic issues put forward in the article, making clear reference to points made in the text. These included the way in which *Nigerians have made, and are continuing to make, a unique and distinctive contribution to English as a global language, lexical invention*, *coinage*, and the ways in which *loanwords* assist English to evolve due to its changing use worldwide.

Basic or limited responses lost focus at times, tending to explore the generalised concept of language change or providing a long discussion on the origins of English. However, clear, detailed or insightful responses rooted discussion in the context of the stimulus material to demonstrate understanding of *English in the world*.

Writing

Most responses demonstrated a clear control of expression within a framework of logically sequenced ideas. There were some lapses in register and use of high frequency lexis which detracted from the overall control of expression. In discursive responses at this level, a wide range of technical terminology should be evident to maintain a linguistic standpoint and to avoid generalisation. In detailed and effective responses this was managed very well.

At times, there seemed to be a tendency to use a paragraph of wider but generalised knowledge of the topic of *English in the world* as an introduction to the discussion. This was sometimes but not always relevant to the context provided nor the points made in the main body of the essay. Generalisation was also seen in some conclusions which added little to the points made earlier in the response. Rhetorical questioning is not generally appropriate in discursive work and where used an answer which fulfils development of the idea should be provided.

AO2 does not only assess control of expression; in some responses there was evidence of an effective or even sophisticated level of expression but points were developed only in a basic manner. In such instances, without development of ideas, marks cannot be awarded across the full range.

Conceptualisation

Discussion of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches was generally clear with a need for detail. Not all theoretical reference was relevant; effective responses will always provide examples of how and why a particular linguistic theory is relevant. In this series, limited responses did not develop discussion as to how their references were represented in the stimulus material.

Kachru's concentric circles model was widely introduced. Sometimes this reference was limited by long explanation of how the model worked in theory; detailed or insightful responses took issue with the first presentation of the model, making an effective exploration of how linguistic boundaries are changing as English evolves and moves through the world. Nigeria was generally placed accurately inside the model with some developed hypothesis exploring the possibility of it moving towards the inner circle in the future.

Clear discussion was presented on new varieties of English and hybridisation examples such as Chinglish, Hinglish and Singlish were explored. Some development was provided on the concept of language death. This was generally only briefly touched upon without acknowledging UNESCO's stages, and would have been more highly rewardable if better synthesised into the essay.

Reference to the timeline of border crossing, dialect levelling, pidgin, and creolisation was effective in more confident responses. In weaker responses, there was some confusion as to the individual meanings of pidgin and creole.

The debate between prescriptivism and descriptivism was clearly understood by most candidates, although discussions on these approaches sometimes needed more development.

Section B

Question 2

The stimulus material for **Question 2** was an extract from an article published on The Conversation website in 2019. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think, referring to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Understanding

Although some responses made only basic or limited reference to the specific points made by the stimulus material, depending instead on generalised discussion or reference to knowledge and understanding gained from wider study, there was some detailed or insightful work presented.

Specific points from the article included how words may be *associated with more than the literal meaning*, for example *Torschlusspanik* or *Hiraeth*, whether speakers who have different lexicons experience *different concepts,* the power and intensity of compound words and potential problems encountered *when words don't readily translate from one language to another*. In general, candidates engaged well with the title of the stimulus material – *The power of language: we translate our thoughts into words, but words also affect the way we think* – and used it as a successful springboard for ideas.

Responses which maintained focus on the context provided included a careful selection of quotations to support the discussion. Maintaining focus on the context is different from simple paraphrase, and the latter limited some responses which did not demonstrate understanding of the ideas presented in the stimulus material.

Writing

Overall, responses demonstrated clear control of expression with some lapses of register and high frequency, generalised lexis. Clear paragraphing assisted fluent sequences of ideas for the most part, although there was a tendency, even in responses which were mainly effective, to not fully develop all paragraphs.

Effective or sophisticated responses maintained accurate use of linguistic terminology and an elevated register, appropriate to writing at A level.

Some irrelevant material was introduced in basic or limited responses. Often, material which was not fully relevant was over-developed, leading to a loss of focus on the specific topic of language and thought. There was occasional analysis of the writer's language choices, which is not required by the question.

Conceptualisation

In clear, detailed or insightful responses, a range of theoretical approaches was referenced. The main theoretic focus was on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis with some detailed discussion on the relative merits of determinism and relativism. Developed responses introduced the extended work of Boas-Jakobson and there was occasional detailing of Fodor and LoTH in some insightful responses.

Orwell's Newspeak in 1984 appeared to be known and understood and was mainly used appropriately where referenced, as were Chomsky and Innatism and the beliefs of Locke. There was also detailed discussion of explicature and implicature at times, and some exploration of abstract thought being supported or otherwise by language.

At times, there was basic reference only to the name of a particular theory without explanation of its relevance to the argument in hand. Furthermore, some responses limited themselves by providing too much information on a theory – sometimes giving up to a full page of writing to explain all known aspects of the model but without comments being tied into the argument or supporting evidence from the text. Theoretical reference should maintain relevance at all times, thus demonstrating skills and techniques which result in sustained and cohesive discursive writing.