

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11
Passages

Key message

Learners need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources – such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspapers articles, blogs, advertisements – so that they can assess not only the conventions and language associated with different formats and genres but also comment on the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases; they should be able to comment on how a particular extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops in term of subject, mood and tone. Learners should be able to explore the contrasts and differences between the sections of a given extract; they need to move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as personification, alliteration and punctuation so that the effects of such features are considered in relation to their context and the extract as a whole. Learners who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone, are those who tend to achieve best results. They also need to be able to adapt their own writing style to incorporate diverse directed tasks – for example, letters, articles, diaries – and demonstrate secure familiarity with their conventions and style. A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

General comments

The passages selected for this series offered a very varied range of styles, settings, linguistic features and presentations. The compulsory question in each paper was either a report or an article and each one presented some feature of journalistic presentation. The remaining passages were a very eclectic selection but in each case offered a great many opportunities for comment, though inevitably some were found more engaging than others.

The rubric was generally well observed, though there were a few candidates who penalised themselves by omitting the first, and compulsory, question. Until this session, there had been a steady decline in the number of candidates who significantly exceeded the stipulated word boundary for the directed writing pieces. This improvement was interrupted on this occasion, as a sizeable number of candidates did not stay within the guidelines.

Concentration on style and language, required in every question, was variable. Candidates must ensure that they fully engage with the effects of language selection.

Lengthy and purposeless introductions remain a problem in many responses. Candidates would do better not to write introductions that simply summarise the passage and present a condensed version to the reader; this does not demonstrate understanding. The redundant introduction also costs writing time, which would be better spent in examining style and language. There remains a tendency for some candidates to think that a narration of the contents of the passage is a sufficient answer, but the questions ask for more than a simple comprehension; they need examination of language and style.

In making any meaningful assessment of a passage, precise definition of language effects is essential. Candidates too often rely on a pre-determined and at times formulaic approach to the texts, which sometimes seems to be used as a substitute for specific language examples. The division of a passage into elements of Ethos, Logos and Pathos may be a useful approach initially, but it is not a substitute for demonstrating specific effects of language. Formulaic responses to the passage run the risk of simply evading the specifics of the passage, often ending in very generalised conclusions about the writing.

There is a similar need for precise use of critical vocabulary, without which a response is unlikely to achieve perceptive appreciation of a passage. There remains too much reliance upon the phrases, “positive language” and “negative language”. These are very broad terms indeed and simply invite the question as to how the positivity or negativity is created. Similarly, when trying to define the tone of a passage, “formal” and “informal” are too often regarded as a complete summary; on most occasions, there will be more to say and in greater detail.

As before, the best approach for all candidates is to read the passage thoroughly and define as precisely as possible how the effects of the passage are achieved.

Directed writing exercises produced some fluent, confident and in the case of some responses, impressive writing. There was an encouraging growth of responses which conveyed a strong reaction to the question and some clearly enjoyable adoption of the original style.

A familiar problem with the directed writing is the confusion of tenses, and this series proved no exception. It is often the case that candidates whose writing in the commentaries is generally accurate are less precise in the directed writing, when invention puts greater strain upon accuracy. Candidates will benefit from careful checking for correct spelling, punctuation and use of tenses, particularly for the directed writing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1A

Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of a passage dealing with Oxfam's efforts to assist the population of Liberia in the wake of a civil war.

Key features in the passage included the stark contrast between the living conditions of the Liberians and their helpers, the isolation of the aid agencies and the less than altruistic motives of Firestone.

There was also a marked contrast between the atmosphere of the Monday section of the article, a pervading sense of darkness, and that of Tuesday, where Liberia seemed to have been tidied up for the use of the NGOs.

Many candidates will have been surprised to find charity projects depicted in an unsympathetic light, but generally speaking the passage was well understood, though specific effects needed far more precise definition.

While most candidates were aware of a contrast between the two sections of the report and of the two locations, this was not always fully developed. The stronger responses picked out revealing details, such as the aid worker enjoying a croissant or the alienation of the Liberians ‘devotedly’ gazing at ‘Baywatch’. There was also good understanding of the physical separation of the aid workers, the thick boundary walls and the swollen American embassy.

The neutral voice of the passage, with its contained irony and implicit criticism of Oxfam was not always well understood or explained. The most popular definition of the tone was the very imprecise ‘depressing’. A better choice was ‘sombre’ and the stronger candidates came close to understanding ‘the restrained grimness’ of the tone. These responses also understood the persistent reference to darkness and light in the first section: the dramatic effect of the lightning, the darkness of the Firestone plant and the ‘dead street lamps’.

Some candidates struggled with the passage, thinking it to be portraying the agencies in a flattering light, which was certainly not the case. Most, however, picked out specific language features but without fully developing their effects. The ‘dead’ street lamps were often cited as evidence of personification but not always related to the creation of the whole blasted landscape. There was some interesting use of punctuation in the passage, allowing some candidates the pleasure of using the term ‘asyndeton’ and explaining the use of the hyphen. This was helpful when it was achieved concisely, but some responses spent far too long examining relatively straightforward features of punctuation and failing to consider key features of the passage. There was a similar tendency to copy out the full list of statistics without further illuminating them, ignoring the opportunity to make significant language points. As always, the advice must be to make points as concisely as possible and move on to make more.

Question 1B

Candidates were asked to write the script of a television appeal for charity donations.

Most candidates were familiar with the genre of the charity appeal and these responses were confident and assured in their approach.

There was a variety of approaches, some choosing a straightforward journalistic approach while others presented the appeal in a script form, often with directions for camera work and musical backing: both approaches were acceptable.

Successful responses tended to use the statistics of the passage very judiciously; weaker efforts were little more than a rehashing of the passage's statistics, with an appeal attached at the end.

Many appeals were founded on the approach of asking how the reader would feel in the same situation, and this was sometimes very effective. Less effective were those responses that continued the passage's criticism of the aid agencies and then asking for donations to support their work.

Question 2A

Candidates were invited to comment on the style and language of a speech given by Malcolm X.

This was the more popular of the two options and was generally tackled with an engagement, and often with a passion and intensity equal to the original. Many candidates seemed familiar with Malcolm X as a historical figure and this clearly gave them confidence when discussing the passage. The boldness of the rhetorical devices also proved helpful in establishing some assured and enthusiastic responses. However, this familiarity with Malcolm X sometimes proved a mixed blessing, with some digression into considerations of historical significance rather than language components.

The tone of the passage, use of repetition, colloquial, and sometimes violent language, rhetorical questions and striking metaphor were all widely commented upon. The use of personal pronouns was often well understood. Even the weaker responses generally identified the key points of the speech and the passion of the speaker. The stronger answers pointed out that this was an introduction to Malcolm X defining himself and, by implication, his audience too. The metaphor of the American 'dinner table' was also generally commented on and understood. Candidates generally understood the change of tone by which the speaker identified himself and, again by implication, his audience as 'victims'.

The latter part of the speech was probably the least well understood and examined. The sense of revelation and awakening suggested by 'These 22 million victims are waking up' was often missed, as was the explanation of the importance of the black vote. There was a particular problem with the sudden denunciation of 'your vote, your dumb vote, your ignorant vote, your wasted vote'; as often as not, this was taken to refer to the white vote rather than otherwise. This should act as a reminder of the importance of reading the passage thoroughly.

One of the aspects of the passage which might have had greater attention was the remorselessly logical development of the argument, which tended to be eclipsed by the pyrotechnics of the language.

Question 2B

The candidates were invited to write the opening of a speech, dealing with another major issue and using the language and style of the original.

There was some misunderstanding of what constituted a 'major issue'. A few, such as the injustice of homework, being comically inappropriate for the chosen style. Generally, however, there was quite a narrow choice of issue; women's rights, abortion, and global warming were all very popular and often gave an impression of passionate involvement.

The speech patterns of the original proved relatively straightforward to emulate, particularly so in the case of the opening paragraph with its repeated negations. In fact, the biggest problem for many candidates was how to avoid too close a replication of the language of the original and to find variations in the accusatory tone, which sometimes prevented any argument emerging.

The very best of the answers succeeded in echoing the cold fury of the original tone, together with the confident use of rhetorical devices.

Question 3A

Candidates were invited to comment upon a memoir dealing with a sailor's experience of the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Key features of the passage which might have been addressed included the ominously tranquil opening, the differing uses of fonts, the understated tone of the memoir, and the creation of the sense of entrapment in the lower decks.

There was evident engagement and empathy with the plight of the sailor but sometimes this amounted to not much more than a sympathetic retelling of the story,

Some points were consistently recognised and well explained, notably the illusion of calm and normality created by the opening sentence: 'As usual, there was a warm breeze'. The decisive tonal change created by the capitalised 'REALLY IT!' was also understood and, generally speaking, the self-proclaimed irony of having no ammunition was noted.

Relatively few candidates made any significant engagement with the tone of the passage, with its understated, almost folksy relation of the attack and the complete absence of histrionics in the account. Paradoxically, some candidates found the simple statements of truth hyperbolic or exaggerated. The author was sometimes accused of exaggerating how much powder he had to carry and the amounts responsible for the explosion. The ordeal of the narrator was also unaccountably neglected, and the use of short, conclusive sentences – 'It was the forward magazine', 'Everyone on top' – hardly mentioned at all. Candidates could have improved their responses with more effective close reading, rather than jumping from the explosion to the narrator's emergence on deck, and leaving out the battle for life in between. Very few responses singled out the temptation to give in to death, suggested by 'I hung to the ladder ... I felt it was all right to let go.'

The response to this passage was another example of the importance of not settling for a couple of the most obvious language features and assuming that there was nothing more to be said: there was.

Question 3B

Candidates were asked to continue the memoir, without necessarily bringing it to a conclusion.

There were many enthusiastic responses to this question, some of which ignored the sober realism of the passage and produced exploits of extraordinary daring. Consistency of tense usage also tended to suffer in some of these exchanges, as the candidate became more and more engaged in the action. Several candidates forgot that Admiral Kidd and the gun crew had been killed and this resulted in some contextual problems.

The stronger responses, even when the action was extremely dramatic, managed to sustain the understated quality of the original passage and the reflective nature of the narration. There was a general tendency, despite the disclaimer in the question, to try and finish the story at all costs. This was often done at the expense of any convincing sense of context and probability. When this happened, there was also often increasing carelessness in both spelling and grammar.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12

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how the positivity or negativity is created. Similarly, when trying to define the tone of a passage, “formal” and “informal” are too often regarded as a complete summary; on most occasions, there will be more to say and in greater detail.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1A

Candidates were asked to discuss a newspaper opinion column which concerned email contact with work during a holiday period.

Features of the passage which might well have been considered were the writer’s use of rhetorical questions, the colloquial language, the presentation of issue and solution, font size, and use of comic hyperbole. Candidates might have taken their cue from the use of the phrase ‘inbox tyranny’ in the title. This was plainly a passage that was going to employ comic hyperbole for its effects and was intent on giving a quite minor issue the appearance of world importance. Stronger responses understood this technique and made reference to the ‘digital inferno’ consuming unwanted mails and the ‘servitude’ which office workers had to endure. They also, to varying degrees, understood how the matter gradually inflated the importance of unwanted mails, until they became ‘a problem like world communism’ in need of a ‘go-slow solidarity movement’.

Understanding the nature of the writer’s chatty engagement with the reader differentiated the more successful answers. Weaker responses simply called the approach of the writer ‘humorous’ or just as often ‘sarcastic’, whereas ‘tongue-in-cheek’ or ‘ironic’ would be much closer to the effect. Several language features, including puns and use of short sentences, were largely ignored but the ‘credibility’ of the neuroscientist David Levin was noted in most answers. Perceptive responses understood the mock-serious approach of the writer to the issue and clearly demonstrated the candidates’ enjoyment of the passage.

Question 1B

Candidates were invited to write the opening of another article complaining of another problem of modern life.

This exercise gave candidates the opportunity to give their opinion about their pet hates as well as a convenient style to air them in, and there was some strong writing.

There were some very sharp, amusing and heartfelt responses to this question, the favourite choice of subject being too much reliance on mobile phones and technology in general. Some responses simply became a diatribe about the chosen subject, but those who had understood the nature of the original often produced some very perceptive and funny pieces of work.

There was some inventive and clever use of headlines and double inverted commas to flag up particular words and phrases.

Question 2A

Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a passage taken from ‘The Big Sea’, in which the author recalled journeying with a pet monkey.

Possible features of the passage which might have been included in the candidates’ response included the

use of simple past tense, mock formal language, an inverted sense of order, and the depiction of Jacko.

This passage was clearly enjoyed by most of the candidates, though some struggled to relate language features to their effects. The passage largely derived its effect from the loss of human control and the chaos created by the monkeys; candidates needed to establish how this was created. There was much consideration of verb choices but without always full explanation of their specific effects, candidates often settling instead for a generalised reference to 'adding emphasis' or a similarly broad phrase. There was a sense of a military invasion in the reference to a 'flying phalanx' of monkeys and of their complete elusiveness as they 'worked swiftly and were as volatile as the wind'. The stronger responses made perceptive references to these effects, while less successful answers tended to simply repeat the passage with a few additional comments.

Responses were often more successful in describing the isolated language features, such as the alliteration of the monkeys growing 'fat and frisky' and the onomatopoeic 'chattering' of Jacko. There was also some appreciation of the comic imagery of the passage, such as the 'missionaries screaming from their mid-morning prayers' and the Captain growing 'too red in the face to speak'.

Certain aspects of the style remained elusive for most candidates, notably the rather bluff approach of the writer to the events. Comic inflation of the language such as 'the simians made so bold' tended to be ignored or not fully recognised.

Problems in clearly identifying the stylistic features of the writing resulted in a great deal of narrative repetition or too much attention to the human-like characteristics of the monkey horde.

Question 2B

Candidates were asked to write an account of a second monkey escape in the American docks.

There was some evident enjoyment in the writing of these responses and there were some skilled and really compressed accounts. Weaker answers tended to repeat the events of the original passage without much development or organisation of material. However, there were many candidates who did develop the original and even found an extra cast of characters, though the ship's furious Captain was a regular feature.

Some candidates, in their eagerness to create a completed episode, tended to pay less attention to echoing the style of the original. The strongest responses, however, contrived to convey the no-nonsense heartiness of the original with some crisp anecdote.

Question 3A

Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a passage by Eric Newly, recalling a childhood trip to Harrods.

Features of the passage which candidates might have considered were as follows: extended metaphors of departmental landscapes, the child's eye perspective, and the contrasts of grandeur and tedium in the merchandise.

The majority of candidates recognised the dominant imagery of various landscapes, applied to department store display. The strongest answers understood and developed the relation between the chosen landscape and its merchandise: jungles of silk, mountains of cheese and puddings.

There was also understanding of the importance of the naming of the goods to convey the exclusivity of the store: 'Angus Beef', 'South Down Lamb', 'foie gras' and so on.

Almost all candidates understood the significance of the child's eye perspective, though some mistakenly thought it was written when he was a child. The more perceptive responses related the childhood viewpoint to the opulent grandeur of the displays and the particular dreariness of the Linen Hall. Some of the most perceptive answers identified the sense of threat implicit in the situation, the tight handhold of the mother and the threat of being 'swallowed' by the Piece Goods Department.

There was little attention given to the sense of the store belonging to another, and possibly to some candidates, unimaginable age of four poster beds and white only bed linen. The image of the mother as 'some elegant ruminant' met with a variety of responses but only a few picked up on the suggestions of both browsing and discernment.

In general, the responses were focused upon the first half of the text and there was very little attention to the forbidding wastes of the Linen Hall, which closed the passage. Candidates should always remember that there are likely to be significant language features at the end of a passage as well as at the beginning.

Question 3B

Candidates were invited to write the opening of a piece by the same writer, but set in a location with which they were familiar.

There was very varied success in locating the authorial voice but most candidates seemed to relish the opportunity of describing a setting that was both familiar and impressive. The exaggeration of the spatial scale to accommodate a child's perspective was often well achieved. A common choice of setting was another exclusive store or shopping mall, often in New Delhi or Dubai, but there were also some interesting excursions to temples, botanic gardens and even football grounds.

Strong engagement in developing the opulence of the settings sometimes meant that stylistic features were lost or watered down. There was, however, genuine engagement in most responses together with a sustained effort to keep the children's viewpoint of the chosen setting.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1A

Candidates were asked to comment on the language and style of an investigative report from The Chicago Tribune newspaper concerning the sale and regulation of dangerous children’s toys.

Features of the passage which might have been considered in any response included the urgency of the language, the contrast of emotional pleas with institutional responses, the structure of the passage, and the inclusion of some graphic medical detail.

Some candidates recognised the importance of the varying font sizes in attracting the reader’s interest but fewer commented on the writer’s instant engagement with the problem of dangerous toys: ‘Sharon Grigsby pleaded ... a popular new toy, Magnetix, nearly killed one of her preschoolers’.

There was also some recognition of the urgent and emotional language used by the writer as Sharon Grigsby ‘pleaded’ and ‘urged’ and magnets were removed from a toddler’s ‘intestines’. There was little attention, however, to the other side of the coin, the bland and noncommittal responses of the safety agencies.

Some of the stronger responses recognised the use of a series of short paragraphs to gradually build up evidence against the authorities. Many candidates could have improved their responses by paying more attention to the structure of the passage.

There was more comment on the effects of following complex sentences with short, brutally directed ones to underline the effects of inaction: ‘federal agency, in its myopic and docile approach to regulation, fails to protect children. The result: injury and death.’

Several candidates picked out the lack of exclamation marks to convey an overt sense of indignation. The best responses noted how this apparent neutrality was contradicted by the content.

There was a great deal of opportunity to comment on the effects of the language, but examples often tended to be sporadic and disconnected. Some candidates picked out the writer’s use of quite violent images to force home her point: ‘They don’t expect pieces from a broken toy to rip holes through a child’s gut like a gunshot.’ There was less attention to the interspersal of slang such as ‘corroded globs’ among some very unadorned and functional writing.

This passage was generally well understood, but that was not always translated into fully developed responses; in many cases, candidates might have improved their responses simply by making a greater number of individual points.

Question 1B

Candidates were invited to write the opening of a similar report on any issue which they felt needed investigation.

There was a very eclectic choice of issues for these responses, among them treatment of animals, parental abuse, the danger of fireworks, and teenage drivers.

This was a significantly stronger response than the commentary, with some engaged and spirited writing. Many candidates picked up the immediate engagement of the original passage, with openings such as 'A child is pleading with the operator. ... The animal continuously pleads ... to be free of this torture'.

There was also effective use of rhetorical questions: 'This would be a major controversy if this happened to us humans, right?' There was also effective use of the terse, warning sentences that are such a feature of the passage; typical conclusions were 'children will die' and 'this will happen soon.'

The strongest answers managed to develop quite powerful arguments without exceeding the stipulated word boundary and the majority of candidates achieved a sense of purpose and engagement.

Question 2A

Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a text by Paul Theroux that recounts a train journey from Afghanistan to Pakistan.

Features which might have been commented on included the uncompromising tone and language, disjointed sequence of observations, first person narrator, terse phrasing, and lack of authorial judgement.

This was the slightly less popular choice from the two optional passages. It was certainly a bleak depiction of human behaviour and the lack of obvious authorial sympathy with the characters clearly proved off-putting – even to some who did choose the passage. One candidate commented on the 'crazy and odd theme to his journey', while another deplored the 'tone of indifference'. Another response likened the train to 'a cage packed with animals fighting each other.'

Several candidates tried to discern a moralistic motive in the writing, one stating that 'the powerful effect of the passage suggests tormenting others will not bring happiness but pain.' Weaker responses resorted to narrative or, in a few cases, speculation concerning the reasons for the behaviour of the so-called 'lunatic' and the purpose of Mr Haq's and Mr Hassan's journey.

However, there were some engaged and perceptive responses which demonstrated that the passage was far from unsympathetic or lacking in language structures. These responses understood that 'Theroux presents a series of antitheses: hostile to friendly, light to darkness' and that the 'changing and volatile moods within the train are what the passage illustrates.'

One very perceptive response wrote of the 'aura of strangeness' which hung over the journey and realised that the 'hostility of the environment' created the 'controversial attitudes of the people.'

Other candidates tended to concentrate on the exchanges between the 'lunatic' and the beggars, some pointing out the irony of a person with mental health problems abusing 'rural unfortunates'. Several candidates pointed out the volatile and rapidly shifting moods within the train, while a few noted the juxtaposition of appalling scenes with the author's small talk with Mr Haq. Relatively little was made of the final paragraphs of the passage, though the final lines were generally recognised as a cliffhanger.

This was a passage that, although it might have seemed forbidding at first, rewarded close and careful reading; there was a great deal to say about language, tone and style.

Question 2B

Candidates were asked to continue Theroux's account, basing their responses closely on the style and language of the original.

Some candidates needed to read the instructions more carefully and therefore ensure that they picked up the passage where it left off, rather than switching their attentions to the 'lunatic' and the beggars. Several responses continued to demonstrate the brutality of the setting and the apparent indifference to suffering: 'Now the lunatic was in a battle with the police. Much to the public's amusement, he was beaten.'

The better responses caught the seeming detachment of the writer's voice and married it to more convincing accounts of the surrounding landscapes. There were also some excellent developments of Mr Haq's exchanges with the author, strongly echoing the speech patterns of the original passage and suggesting that he was not all that he seemed: 'As a lawyer, I am often called upon to represent less innocent individuals. I fear for my safety in the city. Those I represent are not liked by the authorities.'

Another response, unfortunately not fully developed, showed Mr Haq trying to get rid of his companion: 'I have Mr Hassan with me, but he has surely gone mad, said Mr Haq. I need advice for where I can put him.'

There was often a sympathetic engagement with the characters that was not always made evident in the commentaries.

Question 3A

Candidates were asked to comment on the style and language of a review from the website Trip Advisor of a hotel in Buenos Aires.

Features which might have been considered in the responses included the colloquial and unadventurous writing, the self-deprecating nature of the tone, the use of parenthesis, and the timidity of some of the expression.

Most responses tended to take this passage at face value and commented on the 'positive connotations' of the language and the 'amiable quality of the tone'. There was some endorsement of the admission that this was plainly not professional writing, though it was not often made clear why it was so obviously the work of an inexperienced reviewer. Weaker responses did little more than enumerate the ways in which the passage demonstrated 'positive connotations' and the writers demonstrated their approval of the hotel. However, there was also some understanding of the limitations of the writing. Some candidates picked out the repetitive use of 'helpful' and the general simplicity of the diction.

Stronger answers recognised the defensive quality of the writing, exemplified by the modifying phrase 'at least we think so' and the use of parenthesis to qualify their opinions. Few candidates took the opportunity to wholeheartedly criticise the insipidity of some of the writing but there was an awareness of its limited quality.

Language features which might have been commented on were often missed or passed over without development. The persistent use of modifying language such as 'rather good location' and 'rather nice breakfast' was not always noticed, nor was the bathos of getting the milk, 'if you like that way ... from a little pitcher.'

This was a passage which needed some critical self-confidence to demonstrate its limitations and, possibly, its unassuming charm. It is worth candidates remembering that any passage presented in the exam will have a range of features to comment upon, but they may not necessarily be examples of accomplished writing.

Question 3B

Candidates were asked to write a review of a stay at a less congenial hotel, the answer to be based closely upon the style and language of the original.

The ideal responses to this exercise would have married the rather insipid and unassertive tone of the passage to dramatically awful shortcomings in the hotel; not many candidates succeeded in doing this. The temptation was to pitch in, without qualification, about the incompetence of the establishment and rudeness of the staff. As a result, the opportunity for humour deriving from understatement or euphemism was often lost. However, to compensate, there was a wide and imaginative variety of defects, insults and calamities and much genuinely amusing writing, but this was not often close to the apologetic and uncertain tone of the original.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should focus on the prescribed instructions and focus within each question – for example, concentrating on ‘anticipation and adventure’ for **Question 1**, ‘outlook and mood’ for **Question 2** and ‘sense of enthusiasm’ for **Question 6**. They must ensure time management skills are observed, avoiding over-long narratives in **Section A**, often leading to short, self-penalising answers for **Section B**. Within the time limits of the exam, candidates should be prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about, and writing out, a short plan to ensure the sound and effective structure of an answer.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in sustaining narratives in the tense they start out with, and safeguard against confusion of tense forms. Candidates should differentiate between ‘showing’ versus ‘telling,’ to improve descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make the reader feel as if they are in the world created in their narrative, and seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work.

When preparing for **Section B: Writing for an audience**, candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles and print newspaper correspondence (where available), and should prepare various modes of discursive writing in the media. Some appropriate skills in composition and rhetoric should continue to be the focus of exercises.

General comments

The sections *Imaginative writing* and *Writing for an audience* arguably afford candidates the opportunity to write in modes that deviate somewhat from standardised English and to employ idioms more particular to the colloquial parlance of everyday speech. This notwithstanding, some candidates demonstrated over-reliance on buzz-phrases such as ‘a thing,’ ‘literally,’ or ‘on the daily’.

The main area for improvement, as suggested in the *Key messages* above, is in sustaining tense forms. If a candidate began an imaginative writing task in the present tense, he or she would often struggle not to switch randomly to the past tense.

There was frequent evidence of candidates referring to ‘amounts’ rather than ‘numbers’ of people, and the confusion of ‘less’ and ‘fewer’ occurred even in some of the more competent submissions. Some candidates struggled with syntax: they either created comma splices or ended sentences without main verbs. Dangling modifiers were in evidence: candidates should be instructed as to the perils of beginning a sentence with ‘By ___ing’ formations, especially if participles are not related to the subject noun of a sentence.

Incorrect apostrophe use was evident in some cases, but a more common error was the absence of punctuation. Some candidates seemed to eschew capitals at the beginning of sentences completely. Candidates ought to ensure that if their sentences commence with a subject pronoun, the subject ought not to be different from the person named by way of a proper noun in the previous sentence.

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

Where some candidates were less successful in *Imaginative writing*, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes an answer was devoid of paragraphs, even for new speeches in dialogue) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions. Stronger responses were often those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or

atmosphere; for example, some of the more successful responses to **Question 1** allowed the reader to vicariously experience the excitement of the commitment to a new future.

The more successful *Writing for an audience* answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were less effective in demonstrating the conventions of different forms, establishing a mature, credible voice or developing a well thought out, logically organised line of argument. This was particularly true of some responses to **Question 5**, which asked for two letters, and implied an inherently structured response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – *New Horizons*

Candidates generally approached the imaginative writing exercise *New Horizons* with enthusiasm. The question, which asked candidates to produce the opening section of a story in which someone sets off on an adventure and to create in their writing a sense of anticipation, appeared to facilitate imaginative work across a range of candidate capabilities. Candidates seemed to respond well to the task of writing expository descriptive and narrative action and creating characters/establishing narrative voices, without feeling the pressure of foregrounding the action of a completed story within the span of 600–900 words. The most successful responses to the question were able to incorporate a range of devices, including dialogue, flashback, and even free indirect thought in some exceptional cases. Even where it was apparent that candidates had approached the question with pre-prepared story ideas in mind, the question allowed them to answer the question fairly appropriately.

In many cases, as in many imaginative writing tasks, one key technical problem tended to affect this question: continuity of tense forms. Candidates often used a mix of tense forms, fluctuating back and forth unpredictably in mid-sentence.

Assessment of answers to this question yielded the constructive criticism that candidates be prepared for this exam by developing skills in ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. In other words, candidates should be encouraged to improve ways of using descriptive and narrative tools, to describe action and scenes indexically through visual or auditory imagery rather than through a more pedestrian form of fact-detail. Successful candidates for this question would ordinarily tend towards showing rather than telling, and thus their answers demonstrated a broader range of narrative as well as descriptive capabilities than did those of other candidates.

Question 2 – *Before and after a job interview*

In this question, candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces featuring the same person before and after a job interview. In this exercise, candidates needed to create a sense of the person’s outlook and mood. Since the vast majority of answers to this question constituted first-person narratives, outlook and mood were in the main successfully voiced. The most successful responses demonstrated skill in affecting a degree of irony. In the first piece, an unreliable narrator would be presented as boasting of his or her unquestionable suitability for a job prior to the interview; the candidate would employ imaginative skills to set the narrator up for a terrible fall in the second, post-interview narrative of bewilderment and despair. The majority of responses followed a more predictable and sometimes more prosaic narrative of pre-interview nerves and post-interview euphoria. Candidates tended to be more successful in ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’ in this question, as they found it relatively easy to convey the physical manifestations of nervousness, fear and relief. Better answers drew on both the given requirements for language effects, and successful candidates were just as willing to describe the more tricky aspect of the character’s general outlook on life and well as the easier depiction of fluctuating moods.

As with **Question 1**, a key technical problem candidates found was in maintaining tense forms. The first, pre-interview piece would often begin in the present tense with the narrator waking up for their interview. However, with the interview in the near future (later that morning), the candidate would struggle to maintain the sense of the present. By the second piece, candidates were generally successful in voicing a present-tense, post-interview narrative where the narrator looks back at the interview has just taken place. Still, it would seem that some stronger preparation for writing in the present tense would be of advantage.

Question 3 – *The Mountain*

The imaginative writing exercise *The Mountain* required of candidates that they wrote a descriptive piece creating a sense of atmosphere and focusing on colours and sounds to help the reader imagine the scene. Candidates were generally successful in this endeavour, although -- the inevitable problems with tense forms notwithstanding -- there were two identifiable areas for improvement. First, there was still some tendency to tell rather than show. Secondly, candidates might nod to the question rubric by listing red sunsets, green grass and blue skies as well as sounds of wind and rain, but only a comparative few candidates would successfully integrate allusions to colours and sounds into an effective evocation of atmosphere. The strength of this piece was that it allowed candidates to write progressive narratives of ascent as well as descriptions of flora, fauna and atmosphere encountered at each stage in the trek. The most competent, proficient or outstanding submissions achieved the delicate balance of narration and description, where it was clear that the descriptive element was of foremost priority.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – *Communication*

This proved a very popular question, where candidates were given the task of imagining that they had been asked to write a school magazine article on the topic of how communication has changed in their lifetime and how it might change in the future. The vast majority of submissions achieved an appropriate sense of voice and directed their discourse at an appropriate audience. A balance of persuasive and enthusiastic argument was largely maintained across a range of submissions at all levels of demonstrated capability. Some candidates grappled less successfully with imaginative considerations of future technology and tended to imagine technologies that are already in mainstream circulation, but on the whole candidates demonstrated a lively ability to create humorous journalistic effects in envisaging the future trajectory of communications technology.

Question 5 – *Prison*

This is one question that implicitly confirmed the extent of change in communications over recent years, as candidates wrestled with the task of writing two contrasting letters to a newspaper in response to the topic of prison being the best solution to crime. Some candidates were careful to format their letters with fictional addresses, dates, appellations, body text and signatures. Other candidates simply wrote two contrasting mini-essays, seemingly unfamiliar with epistolary conventions. In terms of content, a majority of candidates, with varying degrees of skill, succeeded in employing rhetorical figures and measured composition in constructing coherent arguments for and against the proposition outlined in the fictional newspaper article. In some cases, less successful candidates exhibited technical problems that compromised not only linearity of argument but on a deeper level, lexis and syntax. Further attention to teaching candidates to avoid mid-sentence connectors, dangling modifiers, and comma splices could aid enhanced expression.

The better answers for this question used a subtle blend of subject knowledge, comparisons that often referred to the other letter/review in ironic or humorous ways, and a strong sense of voice to engage their readers. Less successful responses made simplistic comparisons, often using precisely the same language, but with a few negative words in the 'disagree' statement. There was excessive ranting at times and where this was in character, for example a wrongly-convicted ex-prisoner, the language effects were rewarded; less effective responses tended towards excessive and inappropriately gruesome praise for the death penalty or repetitive hectoring about keeping the streets safe.

Question 6 – *Resort hotel voiceover*

This task, where candidates were asked to write an enthusiastic voiceover advertising a hotel resort, produced some of the most varied and imaginative work across submissions for this paper. Some candidates in particular seemed to demonstrate exhaustive knowledge of hotel resort facilities, from double vanity bathrooms and pool noodles to Tiki bars and facial spas. However, while there were lively descriptions of the benefits of stopping off at the resort, too often the answers were a pure and exaggerated list of the perfections of all aspects of the experience. Candidates often turned this list into a succession of rhetorical questions and their ecstatic answers, which after a while, became off-putting rather than persuasive.

Candidates often incorporated aspects of video screenplay-writing and direction, including descriptions of visual shots accompanying the voiceovers. An appropriate, lively and engaging tone and register was frequently achieved by candidates across a broad spectrum of capabilities. Some candidates fell short of the rubric requirement for length, with some expending more words on paratextual material to convey the

conventions being used than on the script itself. Overall though, most candidates were able to create an effective voice.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should focus on the prescribed instructions and focus within each question – for example, concentrating on ‘mood and how it changes’ for **Question 1**, ‘mood and place’ for **Question 2** and ‘gratitude and importance’ for **Question 6**. They must ensure time management skills are observed, avoiding over-long narratives in **Section A**, often leading to short, self-penalising answers for **Section B**. Within the time limits of the exam, candidates should be prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about, and writing out, a short plan to ensure the sound and effective structure of an answer.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in sustaining narratives in the tense they start out with, and safeguard against confusion of tense forms. Candidates should differentiate between ‘showing’ versus ‘telling’, to improve descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make the reader feel as if they are in the world created in their narrative, and seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work.

When preparing for **Section B: Writing for an audience**, candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles and print newspaper correspondence (where available), and should prepare various modes of discursive writing in the media. Some appropriate skills in composition and rhetoric should continue to be the focus of exercises.

General comments

The sections *Imaginative writing* and *Writing for an audience* arguably afford candidates the opportunity to write in modes that deviate somewhat from standardised English and to employ idioms more particular to the colloquial parlance of everyday speech. This notwithstanding, some candidates demonstrated over-reliance on buzz-phrases such as ‘a thing,’ ‘literally,’ or ‘on the daily’.

The main area for improvement, as suggested in the *Key messages* above, is in sustaining tense forms. If a candidate began an imaginative writing task in the present tense, he or she would often struggle not to switch randomly to the past tense.

There was frequent evidence of candidates referring to ‘amounts’ rather than ‘numbers’ of people, and the confusion of ‘less’ and ‘fewer’ occurred even in some of the more competent submissions. Some candidates struggled with syntax: they either created comma splices or ended sentences without main verbs. Dangling modifiers were in evidence: candidates should be instructed as to the perils of beginning a sentence with ‘By ___ing’ formations, especially if participles are not related to the subject noun of a sentence.

Incorrect apostrophe use was evident in some cases, but a more common error was the absence of punctuation. Some candidates seemed to eschew capitals at the beginning of sentences completely. Candidates ought to ensure that if their sentences commence with a subject pronoun, the subject ought not to be different from the person named by way of a proper noun in the previous sentence.

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

Where some candidates were less successful in *Imaginative writing*, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes an answer was devoid of paragraphs, even for new speeches in dialogue) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions.

Stronger responses were often those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere.

The more successful *Writing for an audience* answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were less effective in demonstrating the conventions of different forms, establishing a mature, credible voice or developing a well thought out, logically organised line of argument. This was particularly true of some responses to **Question 5**, which asked for two letters, and implied an inherently structured response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1– *At Last*

In this task, candidates were asked to write a story with the title *At Last*, featuring a protagonist who has waited a long time for something to happen. Many submissions successfully balanced the construction of a complete story with attempts at characterisation, setting and appropriate narrative voice. The more successful attempts at third-person narration achieved quite complex effects such as free indirect discourse in the representation of the interior world of presented characters. In fact, many of the better answers were told from an omniscient point of view and thus enabled the writer more narrative control. Some better structured answers had a twist in the tale where, for example, the chance for the character to arrive ‘at last’ to a satisfying denouement was cleverly concealed in the first half of the narrative. In some cases, although it was clear that candidates had already pre-planned a story in advance of the exam, they were in the main able to adhere to the specifications of the question rubric.

In many cases, as in many imaginative writing tasks, one key technical problem tended to affect this question: continuity of tense forms. Candidates often used a mix of tense forms, fluctuating back and forth unpredictably in mid-sentence.

Assessment of answers to this question yielded the constructive criticism that candidates be prepared for this exam by developing skills in ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. In other words, candidates should be encouraged to improve ways of using descriptive and narrative tools, to describe action and scenes indexically through visual or auditory imagery rather than through a more pedestrian form of fact-detail. Successful candidates for this question would ordinarily tend towards showing rather than telling, and thus their answers demonstrated a broader range of narrative as well as descriptive capabilities than did those of other candidates.

Question 2 – *Contrasting pieces about a hotel*

Candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces of 300–450 words each about a hotel: the first from the perspective of a receptionist and the second from the perspective of a hotel guest. The question invited the candidate to not only sketch a general observation of a place but also the subtler ironies of the expectations and moods of the fickle tourist and the (usual) boredom of the poor receptionist – those staff whose words seemed more like advertisements were less convincing. The more competent or proficient submissions for this question balanced descriptive and narrative effects in ways that achieved convincing character contrasts through voice. Less successful candidates tended to give rather flat descriptions of interior and exterior features of hotel life. This could likely be remedied by exploring ‘showing versus telling’, and setting candidates tasks to create a sense of mood and atmosphere, as mentioned in the comments regarding **Question 1**. Occasional submissions seemed to misunderstand the question and offer only the hotel guests’ view of the scene.

Question 3 – *Sailing*

When attempted, this question – an imaginative piece on the topic of sailing – resulted in some of the more outstanding or proficient responses of any variant of the AS-Level English Language (Writing) paper. Although candidates were encouraged to write a ‘descriptive piece’, some leeway was given to answers involving narrative elements if enough descriptive contrast was seen to justify criteria such as ‘clear focus’ or ‘relevant form and content’. Obviously ‘consistent focus’ would not apply in this case. Occasional submissions struggled to maintain appropriate tense forms, but on the whole this piece saw a range of interesting responses, with some very descriptive and even poetic atmospheric effects. Many of the better

responses concentrated on specific descriptive detail, including the contextual location, atmosphere, weather and other associated ambient factors when 'sailing'.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Post-school education

This question asked candidates to respond to an imagined class discussion on the topic of whether candidates should have to pay for post-School education, and to produce an article on the topic creating a sense of the importance of education. The majority of responses demonstrated, across a range of abilities and with varied success, the aptitude to write a sustained, discursive argument on the topic with some evidence of compositional and rhetorical skill. Among the less successful submissions, however, were responses that failed to comprehend the rubric of the whole question; such essays might typically have offered an appraisal of the value of education in general, rather than debate one way or another regarding the value of paid further and higher education. Occasional submissions demonstrated some inconsistency of argument or a propensity toward contradiction. Less successful submissions offered a series of seemingly unconnected or rambling points with a weak rationale or vague aim, rather than a developed, linear argument. Other less successful responses often descended into rants about the unfairness of not giving free tertiary education to all in developing countries – without necessarily outlining any practical methods for bringing about this ideal transformation.

Question 5 – A new exhibition

For this task, candidates were asked to produce two contrasting national newspaper reviews of the same exhibition. Each article would constitute 300–450 words and offer different experiences. In general, not many answered this question, but those that did generally did quite well and described either straightforward 'art' exhibitions or demonstrations of dinosaur artefacts. However, this question allowed the more successful candidates to employ imaginative as well as discursive skills in describing as well as evaluating the relative merits and demerits of a carefully described event. In some cases, the tone of reviews was not without humour as candidates gently satirised the snobbish prejudices and attitudes of newspaper critics. Less successful submissions were not so much compromised by inappropriate voice, tone or discursive approach as by technical errors.

Question 6 – A local charity

In this question, candidates were tasked with replicating the appropriate tone and address of a charity director giving a speech to a school to thank candidates for their financial support and explaining the charity's work. Similarly to the sailing exercise in **Question 3**, this task produced some of the most outstanding and proficient responses across all the variant papers for this AS-Level English Language (Writing) examination. Candidates were often able to use this task as a vehicle for explaining their understanding of complex socio-political themes, from war famine to honour killings, and from acid attacks against women to refugee displacement. Less successful submissions demonstrated a vagueness of detail regarding charity work and were often very generalised in approach, some forgetting to remind their audiences even what the name of the charity was, let alone its specific purposes. Some responses seemed to assume the candidates had not given anything yet and needed to be persuaded in the first instance, which was not what the question required. In the main, though, most responses successfully achieved an appropriate sense of audience and voice.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23
Writing

Key messages

Candidates should focus on the prescribed instructions and focus within each question – for example, concentrating on ‘suspense and anticipation’ for **Question 1**, ‘atmosphere and place’ for **Question 2** and ‘excitement and interest’ for **Question 6**. They must ensure time management skills are observed, avoiding over-long narratives in **Section A**, often leading to short, self-penalising answers for **Section B**. Within the time limits of the exam, candidates should be prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about, and writing out, a short plan to ensure the sound and effective structure of an answer.

In preparing for **Section A: Imaginative writing**, candidates should develop skills in sustaining narratives in the tense they start out with, and safeguard against confusion of tense forms. Candidates should differentiate between ‘showing’ versus ‘telling,’ to improve descriptive and narrative skills. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to make the reader feel as if they are in the world created in their narrative, and seek to utilise a broad range of effects in their work.

When preparing for **Section B: Writing for an audience**, candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of magazine articles and print newspaper correspondence (where available), and should prepare various modes of discursive writing in the media. Some appropriate skills in composition and rhetoric should continue to be the focus of exercises.

General comments

The sections *Imaginative writing* and *Writing for an audience* arguably afford candidates the opportunity to write in modes that deviate somewhat from standardised English and to employ idioms more particular to the colloquial parlance of everyday speech. This notwithstanding, some candidates demonstrated over-reliance on buzz-phrases such as ‘a thing,’ ‘literally,’ or ‘on the daily’.

The main area for improvement, as suggested in the *Key messages* above, is in sustaining tense forms. If a candidate began an imaginative writing task in the present tense, he or she would often struggle not to switch randomly to the past tense.

There was frequent evidence of candidates referring to ‘amounts’ rather than ‘numbers’ of people, and the confusion of ‘less’ and ‘fewer’ occurred even in some of the more competent submissions. Some candidates struggled with syntax: they either created comma splices or ended sentences without main verbs. Dangling modifiers were in evidence: candidates should be instructed as to the perils of beginning a sentence with ‘By ___ing’ formations, especially if participles are not related to the subject noun of a sentence.

Incorrect apostrophe use was evident in some cases, but a more common error was the absence of punctuation. Some candidates seemed to eschew capitals at the beginning of sentences completely. Candidates ought to ensure that if their sentences commence with a subject pronoun, the subject ought not to be different from the person named by way of a proper noun in the previous sentence.

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

Where some candidates were less successful in *Imaginative writing*, it was often due to lack of structural control (sometimes an answer was devoid of paragraphs, even for new speeches in dialogue) or a lack of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions.

Stronger responses were often those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere.

The more successful *Writing for an audience* answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Weaker responses were less effective in demonstrating the conventions of different forms, establishing a mature, credible voice or developing a well thought out, logically organised line of argument. This was particularly true of some responses to **Question 5**, which asked for two letters, and implied an inherently structured response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Imaginative writing

Question 1 – *He had only one more chance to succeed*

In this task, candidates were asked to write a story with the opening sentence, *He had only one more chance to succeed, and he knew it*. Candidates had to create a sense of suspense and anticipation in their work. This question saw some enthusiastic and in the main successful responses. As the opening line was presented in the past tense, most candidates were able to write consistently without confusing tense forms. There were inevitably some submissions where tenses shifted back and forth.

Some of the more successful responses to this question were sports-based in theme, often involving a heroic sporting protagonist who defied setbacks and the odds to win from an underdog's position. Less successful submissions, which were relatively limited in their attempts to create suspense and anticipation, tended to be scholastic in theme: there were several scripts where a protagonist sat for an exam, knowing that it was his or her last chance to escape from restrictive personal conditions. Many of the better answers were told from an omniscient point of view and thus enabled the writer more narrative control. Some better structured answers had a twist in the tale, where, for example, the chance for the character to 'succeed' was cleverly concealed in the first half of the narrative.

Less successful responses saw more frequent technical and structural problems, as would be expected according to mark scheme descriptors. As well as confusion of tenses, such responses often contained problems with syntax (ambiguities with subject nouns and pronouns, dangling modifiers, comma splices, or premature full stops), incorrect lexical choices and malapropisms, and reduced clarity of expression. Candidates could also improve by presenting a less pedestrian mode of diegesis, where the pace of sentences is varied and effects are employed to create a sense of suspense via the language.

Question 2 – *A tourist resort*

This task, where candidates were asked to write two contrasting pieces of 300–450 words each about a tourist resort at alternately busy and less-busy times of the year, produced responses that on the whole proved satisfactory and appropriate to the task across an expected range of abilities and results. Answers were reasonably uniform in the ways they sought to provide indexes to a busy or relatively vacant resort at different times of the year. The question perhaps called for a more descriptive approach than this, but the better responses were often seen through characters' own perceptions of a narrative taking place at two different times of year, often invoking the weather having a big effect or otherwise the crowded nature of the resort being somewhat claustrophobic. Candidates who concentrated solely on descriptions of place missed out on a chance to evoke the differences in atmosphere and, by association, the nostalgic feelings of a holiday resort off-season.

Question 3 – *Backstage*

This task asked candidates to write an imaginative piece describing the sights, sounds and movements backstage as a theatrical production is in progress. Responses to this question demonstrated an enthusiastic approach that in turn evidenced successful attempts to show as well as to tell of the atmosphere of behind-the-scenes theatrical bustle. Many of the better responses concentrated on specific descriptive detail, including the contextual location and atmosphere, and contrasts between the actors and the 'backstage' crew. Rather than merely list perfunctory visual and auditory signifiers as well as allusions to movement, many candidates employed a degree of narrative perspective in facilitating setting description and action. Some introduced dialogue to show a breadth of facility in creating appropriate effects. Not many candidates attempted this question, though, given the success of the responses, it might be fair to propose that most

candidates who approached this question were those who demonstrated competence or proficiency in their work overall.

Section B: Writing for an audience

Question 4 – Technology in schools

Candidates were asked to write a speech for an imagined school audience, on the topic of technology in schools. Candidates had to create a sense of enthusiasm regarding how technology in schools might change in the future. In general, the more conversant the candidate seemed to be in describing the function of technology in a learning environment, the more reasonably evaluative and coherent the candidate appeared to be in offering a prognosis for its future trajectory. The 'enthusiasm' here was ideally for both serious and fun aspects of the benefits possible for candidates and teachers. Other less successful responses tended to provide lists when discussing how useful (or not) these dizzying changes were to schools, but often the discussion did not progress further than the fact that lazy teachers did not have to grade so many actual papers and just pressed a few buttons on screen. More competent and proficient submissions demonstrated appropriate voice and a relevant sense of audience, incorporating correct greetings, allusions to the school environment in which the speech was meant to be set, and a sense of form and structure that concluded with the kinds of closing remarks that are hallmarks of public speaking. Lower-scoring responses tended not to have such a strong sense of voice or audience and showed less argumentative development. This task successfully tested candidates' functional English and indicated a range of capabilities across mark scheme descriptors. In all, it was an instructive task in facilitating assessment.

Question 5 – The right to vote at 16?

In this task, candidates in the main showed enthusiasm in responding to the instruction to compose two contrasting letters to a newspaper regarding an imaginary article debating the right to vote at sixteen. Some candidates were careful to format their letters with fictional addresses, dates, appellations, body text and signatures. Other candidates simply wrote two contrasting mini-essays, seemingly unfamiliar with epistolary conventions. In terms of content, a majority of candidates, with varying degrees of skill, succeeded in employing rhetorical figures and measured composition in constructing coherent arguments for and against the proposition outlined in the fictional newspaper article. In cases where candidates scored 9 or below, there was evidence of frequent technical problems that compromised not only linearity of argument but, on a deeper level, lexis and syntax. Further attention to teaching candidates to avoid mid-sentence connectors, dangling modifiers, and comma splices could aid enhanced expression.

Question 6 – Voiceover for a TV news report of a sporting event.

There were relatively few submissions regarding the task of producing a voiceover for an imaginary TV news report on a sporting event. Candidates who approached this question were, however, enthusiastic in their tone and appropriate in their sense of voice and audience. Even in cases where candidates demonstrated some limitations regarding functional English, they would still often manage to score quite well according to other mark scheme descriptors on account of the appropriateness of their work in response to the set task. It was at times apparent that the candidates were sports fans who enjoyed writing about their favourite teams or athletes, whom they would list, and whose prowess they would describe with tangible relish.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis and register to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. In their responses to **1 (b)** and **2** candidates need to ensure that they focus on carefully analysing the texts themselves, rather than primarily basing their writing on 'hints' gleaned from the information provided in the Questions' instructions. Very few candidates resorted to simply quoting large tracts of the relevant text(s) linked together with short passages of superficial commentary.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session the transcription of an extract from a spoken debate addressing the motion 'A time machine would be a terrible invention'. 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 an email message offering advice to the speaker opposing the motion. Careful consideration of the target audience (the email message is solely for the attention of a speaker who opposed the motion) and the requirement to clearly convey a particular perspective (as a member of the debate's audience motivated to help the speaker improve the impact of his speeches in future debates) is required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively 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 style and language of the email message they produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the article. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register (varying levels of formality), format and choices of lexis, and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of speakers' or writers' opinions. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the transcription and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the best informed and most substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. A significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach this session – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated more comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both Centres and candidates that **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1 (b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) The pieces of directed writing candidates produced featured generally solid engagement with the form and style of an email message, conveying advice and suitably reworked references to the original text. Most candidates successfully assumed the persona of a knowledgeable member of the audience who had heard the speaker's debating speech who is now offering helpful advice, or, as many candidates phrased it, 'constructive criticism'. They also produced pieces of writing in recognisable email message format (including headers containing the sender and the recipient's details along with date and subject information) and usually incorporating conventions of a formal letter (salutation, clear topic sentences, concise paragraph structure and a respectful signing off). Most responses featured at least some identification of the speaker's deficiencies, chiefly indicators of his unpreparedness and resultant nervousness (e.g. the speaker's numerous voiced pauses could be interpreted in either or both ways) and the informal style of address used for what was meant to be a formal debating speech (use of contractions such as 'dont' and 'couldve' and idiomatic expressions such as 'you know' and 'how things are going'). More sophisticated recasting was usually achieved simply through the use of a topical structure (beginning with less significant faults and progressing to the more significant ones, however each candidate prioritised these) rather than adhering to the chronological order the faults appear in in the original text.

Weaker responses were often too brief or belaboured, too vague or detailed, too intently focused on the content of the speech about time machines, or did not demonstrate the expected degree of objectivity of someone who might be invited by the speaker to offer practical advice. The tone of such responses was too casual, overly congenial or harshly critical. Some apt identification of the speaker's faults was usually demonstrated but this was frequently related to excessive listing and a tendency to focus too much on the speaker's informality and the personal uses of the time machine he envisioned (meeting his wife earlier than he did and travelling to the future to 'check on my wife in years to come').

In stronger responses candidates assumed an appropriate persona who might be creditable enough to receive a request to give feedback to the speaker on his debating style. Opening paragraphs contained a clear declaration of purpose and possibly some degree of sentiment (e.g. the sender feels honoured to be invited to offer advice). The advice was concise and relevant and was delivered in a friendly, encouraging style, with a sound mix of praise (the speaker's successful use of humour to be more relatable to the audience even though it was unintended) and critique (the absence of rhetorical devices and clear evidence of having thoroughly researched the topic). Such responses were convincing in their reworking of the original material, accurate and eloquent in expression and convincing in their awareness of audience and purpose.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

(b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, the

transcription of an extract from a spoken debate addressing the motion 'A time machine would be a terrible invention' and the email message offering advice produced in response to **1 (a)**. Few candidates simply paraphrased the contents of the transcription and the email message. Some candidates did not recognise the nature of the transcription and showed little evidence of understanding the methodology required to analyse it. The purpose and hence the conventions of a transcription consisting of utterances with regular pauses were not appreciated by these candidates, many of whom attempted to compare the punctuation and grammar of their email message to the transcription, often at considerable length but to little analytical effect. Simply using the comparative words 'spoken' and 'written' in the opening sentence of their responses ought to have ensured these candidates were immediately on the correct analytical track. Overall it was apparent that most candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a transcription of a speech.

A considerable number of candidates did not adopt an integrated approach and sought to deal with each text separately. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by the speaker in the transcription and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary in their email message in a comparative fashion. By so doing, such responses usually achieved an appropriately proportionate comparative emphasis on both the transcription and the memo.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate or better knowledge and understanding of at least some conventions of a debating speech and the purposes of both persuading and entertaining an audience primarily consisting of educated, knowledgeable (and likely young) adults. They could at least briefly examine the level of formality exhibited by the transcription and that of the email message (whether the email message was written in an informal, mixed or formal register) and appreciate the persuasive intent of the speech as opposed to the advisory nature of the email message. There was often far more consideration of the transcription than the email message, candidates especially noting that it is presented in the first person singular with frequent direct references to the audience ('you') as well as frequent use of the plural first person ('we') to suggest a shared outlook between speaker and audience (that was often replicated in their email messages but not always acknowledged) and listing the elements of spontaneous speech they found in the transcription, especially voiced pauses and repetition (especially the phrases with modal verbs e.g. 'I could...'). In their email messages candidates usually selected and examined examples of the imperatives used and the prevalence of the modal verb 'should' to emphasise the sender's main advisory points and also recognised how the email message could be edited and polished whereas the speaker's delivery could not. Weak responses were often brief, focused too much on the speaker's arguments (the audience member doing so would only be useful if the speaker was to debate the same motion again), likely to primarily summarise the content of both texts or simply be wholly critical of the debate speech.

In stronger responses candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. In relation to the transcription they examined the speaker's frequent use of subordination and coordination in clauses to provide structure to his speech and the occasional use of conditional clauses to elaborate on some of his points about possible uses for a time machine. Candidates could additionally compare these aspects of syntax with those they employed in their pieces of directed writing, usually concluding that the latter were more cohesive and had a more defined structure (more often than not featuring a mixed register to better relate with the speaker as he had sought to do with his debating audience). In discriminating responses it was recognised that the speaker's regular use of high frequency lexis enabled him to remain relatable to his audience whilst the deliberate inclusion of appropriate low frequency lexis (e.g. 'paradox', 'multiple universes', 'time lines') demonstrated some evidence of both preparation of the debating motion and the intention to achieve a degree of intellectual credibility with his audience.

Question 2

As was the case for **1 (b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the

techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. Very rarely did candidates simply paraphrase information contained in the Texts and offer a brief summary of their contents, usually demonstrating a surer grasp of the meanings produced by Text A (perhaps as the candidates were better accommodated by an entertaining style with its variety of figurative language features) than Text B. Some candidates often dealt too much with the content of both Texts and listing techniques they could identify. Some concentrated too much on punctuation, sentence and paragraph length. Some ability to recognise the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text, but in isolation from each other, was usually demonstrated. Candidates who eschewed a comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a sure grasp of Text A's more specific and detailed focus on gardening in a small outside space in a specific geographic location. It was usually understood that Text A was a first-person narrative with a primary purpose to entertain (and to inform indirectly) whilst Text B was an informative guide to creating a water garden with the purpose of giving instructions in a clear, concise style. Candidates could establish the difference in audience, such that the readership of Text A could encounter the column whilst reading the national newspaper it appears in (and usually recognising that only a portion of that readership might open the Home and Garden section containing the column) whereas the audience for Text B might discover the online guide to creating a water garden as a result of searching the Internet using carefully predetermined key words. Text A's use of figurative language, some of which is clichéd ('My mind is abuzz ... like the bees'; 'the terrace ... as a blank canvas') and of adjectives ('sun-baked windswept') was usually at least identified. The transactional purpose of Text B was usually examined in the context provided by its title, 'Making your own container water garden', the use of a rhetorical question to start the article and engage the reader's attention, the frequent appearance of the second person singular to directly address the reader and the imperative verbs used to give precise instructions ('use bricks...', 'top up the water...', 'let it sit first...'). Basic differences in the subject-specific language used were usually appreciated, for instance Text A's use of specialist language with which it is assumed readers are familiar, some of which is Latinate (such as 'bougainvillaea'), and Text B's use of more generic terms ('potted' and 'water plants') in addition to some scientific language ('evaporation', 'chlorine') to aid the reader in understanding specific processes related to the maintenance of water gardens.

In stronger responses candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language more efficiently, noting the similarities and differences that were most pertinent but not attempting to analyse every stylistic feature of both Texts. Text A's structure was usually deemed to be more complex, given its mix of simple, compound and complex declarative sentences across six paragraphs: the first two explain the harsh climatic conditions during summer in Dubai; the third describes eventual cultivation success later in the year; the fourth and fifth reveal the writer's local sources of inspiration for future attempts at gardening herself; and the final one alludes to the potential wide appeal of terrace gardening. In contrast it was often recognised that Text B features more regular use of complex sentences and only three paragraphs that were, in turn, usually assigned the functions of introducing the concept of water gardens, emphasising their ease of construction and maintenance, and explaining the process to construct one. There was direct comparison of Text A's clustering of gardening vocabulary with both negative ('pests that must be fought', 'devoured by snails', 'woody remains') and positive ('sunlight is gentler', 'tomatoes ripening', 'lush fragrant basil') connotation with Text B's wholly positive one ('easy to set up', 'very little effort', the imagery implicit to 'mini watery paradise'). It was usually observed that the depiction of gardening as hard work in Text A ('bags of soil and sand that must be lugged', 'the watering that cannot be skipped') was both realistic and indicative of the great satisfaction its more specific audience might enjoy if they took up terrace gardening whereas Text B catered for a much more diverse audience that primarily needed to be assured that 'most water plants are tough so the garden is low maintenance' and how anyone could succeed at container water gardening, 'even those of us with a black thumb have a chance because [the plants] are generally hard to kill'.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis and register to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. In their responses to **1 (b)** and **2** candidates need to ensure that they focus on carefully analysing the texts themselves, rather than primarily basing their writing on 'hints' gleaned from the information provided in the Questions' instructions. Very few candidates resorted to simply quoting large tracts of the relevant text(s) linked together with short passages of superficial commentary.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a welcome message from the headteacher on a school's website. 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 frequently asked questions (FAQ) page on the same school's website. Careful consideration of the target audience (candidates who are due to join the school) and the requirement to clearly convey a particular perspective (as the teacher presenting and answering the FAQ) is required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively 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 style and language of the FAQ and accompanying answers produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the article. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register (varying levels of formality), format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of speakers' or writers' opinions. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the welcome message and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the best informed and most substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an

understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. A significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach this session – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated more comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both Centres and candidates that **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1 (b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The pieces of directed writing candidates produced featured generally solid engagement with the form and style of a FAQ page and suitably reworked references drawn from the original text. Most candidates successfully assumed the persona of the teacher given the responsibility of producing the FAQ page. They also produced pieces of writing in recognisable FAQ format, usually including a suitable heading and a brief preamble (usually a short welcome message, sometimes also introducing the teacher with a few professional details) followed by the stipulated three pairs of questions and answers in numerical order. The content candidates produced, both in the phrasing of the different questions and the information imparted through their answers, bore at least some resemblance to the school described in the headteacher's welcome message.

In weaker responses candidates did not create a sufficiently convincing persona of a knowledgeable and approachable teacher, either by adopting too casual a tone for the school described in the Text (utilising phrasing such as 'No worries' and 'Feel free to bombard the comments section below') or coming across as overly official and distant (often simply replicating the tone and vocabulary of the headteacher). The sense of audience was often insecure, with parents rather than the candidates who are actually joining the school being better accommodated by topics such as the ethos of the school and its governance and the professionalism of its staff. More sophisticated recasting was usually achieved simply through the selection of more apt topics, such as admissible subject combinations and grade requirements, the availability of scholarships and financial aid, and uniform regulations.

What often distinguished the stronger responses was not only the expression of an apt persona through a suitably knowledgeable, encouraging and friendly tone, but also how the topics directly addressed the needs of candidates starting a new school and wanting to know specific details about such plausible matters as the orientation programme, the teaching methods to be encountered, how the school prepared its candidates for further education and the 'world of work', and opportunities to socialise with their new peers. There was often some consideration of the graphology of the FAQ page (bold, upper case titles, blocked paragraphing) and recognition of the text's electronic medium (including pseudo-hyperlinks to other website pages providing details of various campus facilities and galleries of pictures). Such responses were convincing in their reworking of the original material, accurate and eloquent in expression, and sound in their awareness of audience and purpose.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two written texts available to them, the welcome message from the headteacher on a school's website and the FAQ page appearing on the same website produced in response to **1 (a)**. Few candidates simply paraphrased the contents of the welcome message and the FAQ page. Overall it was apparent that almost all candidates had been adequately prepared to analyse a formal letter (which candidates apparently found the

headteacher's welcome message to most resemble in form) although far fewer appeared to have had prior experience of analysing an FAQ text.

A considerable number of candidates sought to deal with each text separately. Whilst it is possible to compare in this way it is far more efficient and fluent if a topical approach is used. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by the headteacher in her welcome message and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary for the teacher's FAQ page in a comparative fashion. By so doing such responses achieved an appropriately proportionate comparative emphasis on both the welcome message and the FAQ page.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate or better knowledge and understanding of at least some conventions of a formal letter and an FAQ text. They could at least briefly examine the level of formality exhibited by the welcome message and that of the FAQ page (whether the latter text was written in an informal, mixed or formal register) and appreciate the persuasive intent of the welcome message – and the associated use of adjectives to impress the reader, including 'new', 'first class' and 'world-renowned' – as opposed to the informative nature of the FAQ and their answers. There was often far more consideration of the welcome message than the FAQ page, candidates especially noting the headteacher's use of plural first person pronouns ('we have') after the more personal introduction ('When I knew...') – whilst not always recognising the similarly heavy use of pronouns often replicated in their FAQ text – and also her penchant for tricolon ('Such ambitions entail foresight, drive and enthusiasm', 'realise their full potential academically, socially and personally') that frequently appears in promotional literature. A frequent point of appropriate comparison was a shared educational lexis (e.g. in the welcome message: 'school', 'learning environment', 'academic team'; in the FAQ text: 'learning resources', 'laboratories', 'candidate body') given that both texts appear on the same website. Weaker responses were often brief, focused too much on the headteacher's endorsement of her own school and likely to primarily summarise the content of both texts rather than endeavouring to comparatively analyse their style and language.

In stronger responses candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. In relation to the welcome message they recognised the clear delineation of a tripartite audience in the headteacher's salutation ('Dear families, staff and students') that is immediately echoed by the anaphoric parallel construction in the first, single sentence paragraph: '...where students would be eager to come and learn and interact... where parents would be confident... where staff would feel professionally fulfilled and proud' and examined her use of strong though not striking adjectives (such as 'principled and knowledgeable' for the school's governor; a few candidates also astutely noted 'growth and development' was a redundant pairing). In their FAQ texts candidates emphasised a simpler style in a friendlier, more encouraging tone and examined the prevalence of suitable superlatives in direct correspondence to issues that candidates would prize more highly than would their parents and teachers (and indeed a headteacher). In more discriminating responses candidates often recognised that the mean length of the sentences in the welcome letter was considerably greater than that in their FAQ texts, and carefully examined the frontier imagery to the effect that current parents are 'pioneers' who 'have been willing to make the journey with us' by entrusting the education of their children to the headteacher and her school.

Question 2

As was the case for **1 (b)**, candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. Some candidates could have improved by concentrating less on paragraph and utterance length and the production of lists of linguistic devices unaccompanied by the sort of concise quotation and precise commentary that would facilitate the communication of a more thorough appreciation of the effects produced in each Text. Most candidates demonstrated at least some ability to recognise the use of form and language to inform readers in each Text, albeit sometimes in isolation from each other. Candidates who eschewed a topical comparative approach also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in mode, purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates could compare at least a few aspects of Text A's spoken mode – such as the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech (like hesitations, filled pauses and false starts e.g. 'im asking (. .) im asking (. .) my question is...') usually with an understanding that these are less frequent than in everyday conversation and how the question/answer structure of the exchanges between the interviewer and Chris Packham form adjacency pairs, and how cooperative turn-taking is not sustained for long before speech overlaps occur – with those exemplifying the written mode of Text B, such as the use of the opening paragraphs to introduce the topic and the use of a question in the single-sentence fourth paragraph to introduce the debate; the use of simple discourse markers such as 'but' to structure the text within short tabloidese paragraphs; and how the Text's two headings clearly delineate the two sides of the debate in a logical sequence ('Is Breeding in Captivity Worth it?', 'Putting Pandas Back'). There was usually some consideration of how the interviewer appears to have prepared in advance (the deliberate pause in his or her first question, line 1; some of his or her turns of phrase e.g. 'evolutionary cul de sac' and 'become extinct') alongside an appreciation that Text B was researched and likely edited and published before being posted on the National Geographic website. The audience for Text B was frequently determined to be potentially quite broad (as its readers could either directly access the named website to find the article or search the Internet using keywords such as 'panda' and 'endangered' and 'conservation') whilst Text A's may be deemed a little narrower (as the transcription is an extract of a television interview that fewer people may be able to access easily). Packham was generally regarded as a highly opinionated expert (a campaigner for wildlife protection) in opposition to the objectivity evidenced in Text B (even though the statistics provided are approximate and modified – 'possibly as few as 1,600 giant pandas'; 'more than 300 live in captivity') with the intention of allowing the reader to form his or her own conclusions.

In the stronger responses candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language more efficiently, noting the similarities and differences that were most pertinent but not attempting to analyse every stylistic feature of both Texts. These candidates were more likely to identify how the interview lacks an introduction (and so demonstrably appreciate that Text A is an extract of a longer interview, here commencing *in media res*) and that it consistently achieves and maintains a formal conversational level with the interviewer's use of questions to shape the opening phase of the interview and thereafter use declaratives to elicit agreement from Packham. They tended to hone in on Packham's expertise and authority and how he employs a persuasive style evidenced by his juxtaposition of some sophisticated lexical choices ('motivate', 'disproportionate', 'foisted', 'tenure', 'extinction') with the use of some clichéd expressions ('changed our tune', 'wave the flag', 'part and parcel') to ensure he remains relatable to a broad (though mainly educated and knowledgeable) audience and his use of stressing to demarcate important aspects of his argument ('tiger', 'whale', 'panda'; 'target', 'audit', 'afford', 'carefully') as well as appreciating how the interviewer accommodates Packham's intention to hold the conversational floor by introducing a new (and contentious) topic for discussion ('well weve done it with the panda for example'), employing negative politeness ('well you do not (. .) if I may say so') to prompt Packham to defend his position before encouraging the interviewee to express his opinions more forcibly ('you said that ... and frankly you've said several times ...'). In Text B candidates examined the inclusion of direct speech from experts along with reported speech to maintain the objectivity of the piece of journalism, how long, complex sentences were employed to contain extra detail and the effects of the Text's predominantly elevated, low frequency lexis (the most common phrases analysed being 'the most recognisable conservation symbol', 'preserving threatened habitat', 'inspirational icons' and 'wildlife-advocacy group Born Free USA'). A few astute candidates also deliberated over the effects of the portmanteau word 'pandamonium' (usually finding its effect to be slightly ironic given the general public's occasional strong support of some notable campaigns to save endangered species but relative indifference towards efforts to preserve threatened habitats).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33
Text Analysis

Key messages

Candidates should prepare for this Component by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply when producing a piece of Directed Writing, commenting on the style and language of that piece of writing in relation to an accompanying text, and when comparing two texts on the same subject for their different styles and use of language.

For **Question 1 Part (a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. In producing their reworking of the original text candidates ought to concentrate on making carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis and register to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.

For **Question 1 Part (b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.

For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Component designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. In their responses to **1 (b)** and **2** candidates need to ensure that they focus on carefully analysing the texts themselves, rather than primarily basing their writing on 'hints' gleaned from the information provided in the Questions' instructions. Very few candidates resorted to simply quoting large tracts of the relevant text(s) linked together with short passages of superficial commentary.

Question 1 (a) is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a welcome message from the headteacher on a school's website. 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 frequently asked questions (FAQ) page on the same school's website. Careful consideration of the target audience (candidates who are due to join the school) and the requirement to clearly convey a particular perspective (as the teacher presenting and answering the FAQ) is required. Candidates are instructed to produce responses of 120–150 words in length and were expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively 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 style and language of the FAQ and accompanying answers produced for **1 (a)** with the style and language of the article. Here candidates are assessed for the ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register (varying levels of formality), format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of speakers' or writers' opinions. Recognition of the level of fluency and the range of lexical choices exhibited in the welcome message and comparing the effects produced with those in the candidate's own reworking were key discriminators in the best informed and most substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. A significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach this session – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated more comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is again worth reminding both Centres and candidates that **Question 1 (a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1 (b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The pieces of directed writing candidates produced featured generally solid engagement with the form and style of a FAQ page and suitably reworked references drawn from the original text. Most candidates successfully assumed the persona of the teacher given the responsibility of producing the FAQ page. They also produced pieces of writing in recognisable FAQ format, usually including a suitable heading and a brief preamble (usually a short welcome message, sometimes also introducing the teacher with a few professional details) followed by the stipulated three pairs of questions and answers in numerical order. The content candidates produced, both in the phrasing of the different questions and the information imparted through their answers, bore at least some resemblance to the school described in the headteacher's welcome message.

In weaker responses candidates did not create a sufficiently convincing persona of a knowledgeable and approachable teacher, either by adopting too casual a tone for the school described in the Text (utilising phrasing such as 'No worries' and 'Feel free to bombard the comments section below') or coming across as overly official and distant (often simply replicating the tone and vocabulary of the headteacher). The sense of audience was often insecure, with parents rather than the candidates who are actually joining the school being better accommodated by topics such as the ethos of the school and its governance and the professionalism of its staff. More sophisticated recasting was usually achieved simply through the selection of more apt topics, such as admissible subject combinations and grade requirements, the availability of scholarships and financial aid, and uniform regulations.

What often distinguished the stronger responses was not only the expression of an apt persona through a suitably knowledgeable, encouraging and friendly tone, but also how the topics directly addressed the needs of candidates starting a new school and wanting to know specific details about such plausible matters as the orientation programme, the teaching methods to be encountered, how the school prepared its candidates for further education and the 'world of work', and opportunities to socialise with their new peers. There was often some consideration of the graphology of the FAQ page (bold, upper case titles, blocked paragraphing) and recognition of the text's electronic medium (including pseudo-hyperlinks to other website pages providing details of various campus facilities and galleries of pictures). Such responses were convincing in their reworking of the original material, accurate and eloquent in expression, and sound in their awareness of audience and purpose.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words) although a few wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) This question challenged candidates who did not attempt to analyse style and language or to directly compare different approaches and features in the two written texts available to them, the welcome message from the headteacher on a school's website and the FAQ page appearing on the same website produced in response to **1 (a)**. Few candidates simply paraphrased the contents of the welcome message and the FAQ page. Overall it was apparent that almost all candidates had

been adequately prepared to analyse a formal letter (which candidates apparently found the headteacher's welcome message to most resemble in form) although far fewer appeared to have had prior experience of analysing an FAQ text.

A considerable number of candidates sought to deal with each text separately. Whilst it is possible to compare in this way it is far more efficient and fluent if a topical approach is used. Textual references were often made without drawing conclusions concerning their functions and lexical properties. Such approaches usually yielded thin and perfunctory responses.

Integrated approaches were almost invariably used to good effect when candidates clearly identified the impact of lexical choice exercised by the headteacher in her welcome message and then examined their own carefully chosen vocabulary for the teacher's FAQ page in a comparative fashion. By so doing such responses achieved an appropriately proportionate comparative emphasis on both the welcome message and the FAQ page.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate or better knowledge and understanding of at least some conventions of a formal letter and an FAQ text. They could at least briefly examine the level of formality exhibited by the welcome message and that of the FAQ page (whether the latter text was written in an informal, mixed or formal register) and appreciate the persuasive intent of the welcome message – and the associated use of adjectives to impress the reader, including 'new', 'first class' and 'world-renowned' – as opposed to the informative nature of the FAQ and their answers. There was often far more consideration of the welcome message than the FAQ page, candidates especially noting the headteacher's use of plural first person pronouns ('we have') after the more personal introduction ('When I knew...') – whilst not always recognising the similarly heavy use of pronouns often replicated in their FAQ text – and also her penchant for tricolon ('Such ambitions entail foresight, drive and enthusiasm', 'realise their full potential academically, socially and personally') that frequently appears in promotional literature. A frequent point of appropriate comparison was a shared educational lexis (e.g. in the welcome message: 'school', 'learning environment', 'academic team'; in the FAQ text: 'learning resources', 'laboratories', 'candidate body') given that both texts appear on the same website. Weaker responses were often brief, focused too much on the headteacher's endorsement of her own school and likely to primarily summarise the content of both texts rather than endeavouring to comparatively analyse their style and language.

In stronger responses candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their response, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. In relation to the welcome message they recognised the clear delineation of a tripartite audience in the headteacher's salutation ('Dear families, staff and students') that is immediately echoed by the anaphoric parallel construction in the first, single sentence paragraph: '...where students would be eager to come and learn and interact... where parents would be confident... where staff would feel professionally fulfilled and proud' and examined her use of strong though not striking adjectives (such as 'principled and knowledgeable' for the school's governor; a few candidates also astutely noted 'growth and development' was a redundant pairing). In their FAQ texts candidates emphasised a simpler style in a friendlier, more encouraging tone and examined the prevalence of suitable superlatives in direct correspondence to issues that candidates would prize more highly than would their parents and teachers (and indeed a headteacher). In more discriminating responses candidates often recognised that the mean length of the sentences in the welcome letter was considerably greater than that in their FAQ texts, and carefully examined the frontier imagery to the effect that current parents are 'pioneers' who 'have been willing to make the journey with us' by entrusting the education of their children to the headteacher and her school.

Question 2

As was the case for 1 (b), candidates who did not attempt in responding to **Question 2** to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion demonstrated only limited appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. Some candidates could have improved by concentrating less on paragraph and utterance length and the production of lists of linguistic devices unaccompanied by the sort of concise quotation and precise commentary that would facilitate the communication of a more thorough appreciation of the effects produced in each Text. Most candidates demonstrated at least some ability to recognise the use of form and language to inform readers in each Text, albeit sometimes in isolation from each other. Candidates who eschewed a topical comparative approach

also struggled to identify and clearly explain the differences in mode, purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates could compare at least a few aspects of Text A's spoken mode – such as the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech (like hesitations, filled pauses and false starts e.g. 'im asking (.) im asking (.) my question is...') usually with an understanding that these are less frequent than in everyday conversation and how the question/answer structure of the exchanges between the interviewer and Chris Packham form adjacency pairs, and how cooperative turn-taking is not sustained for long before speech overlaps occur – with those exemplifying the written mode of Text B, such as the use of the opening paragraphs to introduce the topic and the use of a question in the single-sentence fourth paragraph to introduce the debate; the use of simple discourse markers such as 'but' to structure the text within short tabloidese paragraphs; and how the Text's two headings clearly delineate the two sides of the debate in a logical sequence ('Is Breeding in Captivity Worth it?', 'Putting Pandas Back'). There was usually some consideration of how the interviewer appears to have prepared in advance (the deliberate pause in his or her first question, line 1; some of his or her turns of phrase e.g. 'evolutionary cul de sac' and 'become extinct') alongside an appreciation that Text B was researched and likely edited and published before being posted on the National Geographic website. The audience for Text B was frequently determined to be potentially quite broad (as its readers could either directly access the named website to find the article or search the Internet using keywords such as 'panda' and 'endangered' and 'conservation') whilst Text A's may be deemed a little narrower (as the transcription is an extract of a television interview that fewer people may be able to access easily). Packham was generally regarded as a highly opinionated expert (a campaigner for wildlife protection) in opposition to the objectivity evidenced in Text B (even though the statistics provided are approximate and modified – 'possibly as few as 1,600 giant pandas'; 'more than 300 live in captivity') with the intention of allowing the reader to form his or her own conclusions.

In the stronger responses candidates explored the Texts' structures and analysed language more efficiently, noting the similarities and differences that were most pertinent but not attempting to analyse every stylistic feature of both Texts. These candidates were more likely to identify how the interview lacks an introduction (and so demonstrably appreciate that Text A is an extract of a longer interview, here commencing *in media res*) and that it consistently achieves and maintains a formal conversational level with the interviewer's use of questions to shape the opening phase of the interview and thereafter use declaratives to elicit agreement from Packham. They tended to hone in on Packham's expertise and authority and how he employs a persuasive style evidenced by his juxtaposition of some sophisticated lexical choices ('motivate', 'disproportionate', 'foisted', 'tenure', 'extinction') with the use of some clichéd expressions ('changed our tune', 'wave the flag', 'part and parcel') to ensure he remains relatable to a broad (though mainly educated and knowledgeable) audience and his use of stressing to demarcate important aspects of his argument ('tiger', 'whale', 'panda'; 'target', 'audit', 'afford', 'carefully') as well as appreciating how the interviewer accommodates Packham's intention to hold the conversational floor by introducing a new (and contentious) topic for discussion ('well weve done it with the panda for example'), employing negative politeness ('well you do not (.) if I may say so') to prompt Packham to defend his position before encouraging the interviewee to express his opinions more forcibly ('you said that ... and frankly you've said several times ...'). In Text B candidates examined the inclusion of direct speech from experts along with reported speech to maintain the objectivity of the piece of journalism, how long, complex sentences were employed to contain extra detail and the effects of the Text's predominantly elevated, low frequency lexis (the most common phrases analysed being 'the most recognisable conservation symbol', 'preserving threatened habitat', 'inspirational icons' and 'wildlife-advocacy group Born Free USA'). A few astute candidates also deliberated over the effects of the portmanteau word 'pandamonium' (usually finding its effect to be slightly ironic given the general public's occasional strong support of some notable campaigns to save endangered species but relative indifference towards efforts to preserve threatened habitats).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41
Language Topics

Key messages

In order to achieve marks in the higher bands, candidates should make good use of embedded quotes from the passage whilst arguing their points, and provide a full, balanced, articulate and developed explanation of any appropriate theoretical examples.

General comments

Candidates engaged well across the three topic areas. Responses were expected to refer to the extracts provided and to candidates' own wider research and reading. At times there was evidence that responses were theory-led, with less emphasis on linguistic analysis. This was particularly evident in responses to **questions 2 and 3**. **Question 1** responses occasionally demonstrated engagement with less important features and some showed lack of familiarity with the conventions of transcription of conversation analysis.

On occasion, shorter responses evidenced 'running out of time': in such cases candidates may benefit from making briefer essay plans and spending a longer amount of time on their full written responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Responses on the whole were carefully constructed, with appropriate reference to relevant language theories. Examples from the text supported points and were suitably punctuated. Those candidates who were unfamiliar with the conventions of transcription (lack of punctuation, for example) were at a considerable disadvantage. Understanding of language theory is best exemplified when a text is analysed by considering the purpose of the text and applying theory to what is being said or written. Answers that work through the text making comments can become repetitive and are often judged to be 'feature-spotting'.

Some candidates managed to convey their understanding of the speaker's speech style, and distinguished between the sections aimed at the young audience and the comments aimed at parents. Successful responses tackled the issue of Johana, although few candidates realised that the Principal had set up, and singled out, this particular student for a very particular reason. Again, stronger candidates picked up on the issue of the seemingly random radio, and the structural link between Extract A and Extract B. Stronger candidates recognised the upward intonation after 'radio station do' as a politeness feature that softened an actual command.

Stronger responses noted that Chesham tries to accommodate both age groups in his audience, and moves between speaking to each group appropriately; that he is able to use his interaction with Johanna, by hedging his address to her, to demonstrate both the friendly atmosphere of the school and his approachability.

Responses could be improved by not only discussing micropauses, but also including the key indications of sentence repair and repetition. Furthermore, improvements could have been made by not adopting a deficit model wherein Peter Chesham is identified to be a poor, disorganised speaker; a restricted view on what counts as 'correct' English will usually limit the response.

Though many candidates referred to the genderlect theories of Lakoff, Tannen and Cameron, their responses could have been improved by providing a fuller explanation of theoretical principles rather than solely providing the names of theorists. Many candidates also referred to Grice. When doing so, candidates could improve through further explanation and development.

Responses could be enhanced by maintaining linguistic rather than sociological analysis. Some discussion on the speaker's socioeconomic, regional or intellectual status was evident, yet was not required by the question. Some responses focused on inferences regarding personalities and relationships, with assertions pertaining to dominance. Candidates should be aware that this approach may not produce a linguistic line of argument.

Question 2

This question comprised two accessible extracts, and offered much to comment upon regarding the different sources and target audiences of the extracts.

Theoretical examples tended to focus on Kachru, Crystal and Diamond, although the work of other theorists was occasionally referred to, providing depth and colour to examples from candidates' wider exploration.

Stronger responses discussed distinctions between world, global and international English and the perceived advantages and disadvantages of a globally-intelligible language. Most candidates discussed language death. Responses could be improved by not making this the sole focus.

Some candidates offered no examples from their own wider study whereas more successful responses demonstrated full exploration of the linguistic issue.

Some candidates chose to include long discussions on the history of the English language, which meant that more relevant discussion did not demonstrate as much focus.

Weaker candidates did not mention the sources at all, nor analyse the bias of passages A or B.

Question 3

This question allowed for a range of language acquisition theory to be applied and was, on the whole, well answered. Stronger responses were those that considered the context and purpose of the talk rather than an overview of the subjects covered.

Many responses attempted to provide a 'deficit' model, describing the younger child's non-standard forms as 'mistakes', with some referring to these as evidence of limited intelligence or low social status. Stronger candidates commented on the on-going process of language acquisition and the state of achievement demonstrated in the script, including tense, pronouns and turn-taking. Furthermore, stronger responses differentiated between the examples of holophrastic speech and those complex structures which indicated that the younger child was beyond the telegraphic stage.

Stronger responses discussed the role of the older child and compared the stages of language acquisition of the two sisters.

Theorists such as Skinner, Bruner, Chomsky, Piaget and Vygotsky were incorporated into most responses, with stronger responses selecting examples from the text, providing a linguistic discussion on the example, and then explaining why and how this example tests the theory. Strong and confident responses demonstrated knowledge of child-directed speech and how it was being used in the extract provided, comparing the methods employed by the mother and the father. Responses could be improved by analysing the extract and applying Hallidayan functions, which were appropriate in this case. Some candidates applied Grice's maxims, which were less appropriate.

Some responses detailed the behavioural rather than linguistic aspects demonstrated in the transcript. Candidates should maintain a linguistic stance in relation to the requirements of the question.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42
Language Topics

Key messages

In order to achieve marks in the higher bands, candidates should make good use of embedded quotes from the passage whilst arguing their points, and provide a full, balanced, articulate and developed explanation of any appropriate theoretical examples.

General comments

Candidates engaged well across the three topic areas. Responses were expected to refer to the extracts provided and to candidates' own wider research and reading. At times there was evidence that responses were theory-led with less emphasis on linguistic analysis. This was particularly evident in responses to **questions 2 and 3**. **Question 1** responses occasionally demonstrated engagement with less important features and some showed lack of familiarity with the conventions of transcription of conversation analysis.

On occasion, shorter responses evidenced 'running out of time': in such cases candidates may benefit from making briefer essay plans and spending a longer amount of time on their full written responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Responses on the whole were carefully constructed, with appropriate reference to relevant language theories. Examples from the text supported points and were suitably punctuated. Those candidates who were unfamiliar with the conventions of transcription (lack of punctuation, for example) were at a considerable disadvantage. Understanding of language theory is best exemplified when a text is analysed by considering the purpose of the text and applying theory to what is being said or written. Answers that work through the text making comments can become repetitive and are often judged to be 'feature-spotting'.

This question allowed for candidates to comment on the co-operative context of a television interview. In the transcript there was much evidence of spontaneous speech, allowing candidates to comment on sociolect. Some candidates attempted to analyse pronunciation, which was not evidenced in the transcript. Many, however, successfully engaged with the structure of exchanges and the frequency of co-operative overlaps and interruptions.

Some candidates commented on the apparent dysfluent nature of the conversation and pursued a line of argument in a fashion that was not always balanced and coherent. The theoretical approach taken was often that of Grice, although responses could have been improved by thorough discussion, further explanation and greater development.

Many candidates referred to the genderlect theories of Lakoff, Tannen and Cameron and strong candidates developed a counter-argument to these by referring to Beattie and Zimmerman and West. In some cases, the opportunity for genderlect discussion was lost, where candidates wrongly identified the gender of Andrea as male. Some responses could be improved by providing a fuller explanation of theoretical principles rather than solely providing the names of theorists. The unusual change in roles as Dan questions Andrea was explored well by stronger candidates, as was the highly co-operative nature of the conversation.

Candidates should be aware that maintaining a wholly sociological analysis may not produce an appropriately linguistic line of argument.

Question 2

The stronger responses to this question were those that demonstrated an appreciation of a wider, more balanced argument concerning the complexities of the emergence of a global language. A restricted response on only that which is presented in the extract will usually limit the response.

Stronger and more confident candidates engaged with the wider ramifications of a globally intelligible language, making appropriate and sustained connections with the passage provided.

Many candidates had made use of the 'Relevant areas for study' in the syllabus. Stronger candidates had made explorations beyond these and were able to include them within articulate responses. A restricted view on what is 'correct' English will usually limit the response. A more appropriate response will describe 'standard' and 'non-standard' language and discuss in a balanced manner the relative advantages of these forms. Candidates should be aware of the differences between pidgins and creoles and the manner in which they are created and used.

The most careful readers acknowledged the Australian source and the different notions of English, and also addressed the questions posed in the source; some candidates could have improved by paying closer attention to the source and relying less on their own knowledge of global English.

Some candidates chose to include long discussions on the history of the English language, which meant that more relevant discussion did not demonstrate as much focus.

Theoretical examples tended to focus on Kachru, Crystal and Diamond, although the work of other theorists was occasionally referred to, providing depth and colour to examples from candidates' wider exploration.

Question 3

This popular question allowed for a range of language acquisition theory to be applied and was, on the whole, well answered. Stronger responses were from candidates who considered the context and purpose of the talk rather than an overview of subjects covered. Candidates generally responded with confidence regarding developmental stages and linguistic competence, commenting on the sentence structures and comparing these with the virtuous grammatical errors.

Many responses attempted to provide a 'deficit' model, describing the child's non-standard forms as 'mistakes', with some referring to these as evidence of limited intelligence or low social status. This was evident in discussion of Amy's attempt at a complex structure – 'breakfast delicious yours' – where comments on 'incorrect' syntax could have been developed further.

Stronger candidates commented on the on-going process of language acquisition and the state of achievement demonstrated in the script, including tense, deletion, pronoun, turn-taking, topic management and object permanence.

Theorists such as Skinner, Bruner, Chomsky, Piaget and Vygotsky were incorporated into most responses, with stronger responses selecting examples from the text, providing a linguistic discussion on the example, and then explaining why and how this example tests the theory. Strong and confident responses demonstrated knowledge of child-directed speech and how it was being used in the extract provided. Many candidates applied Halliday's functions to their analysis, using evidence of at least four of these in their response.

Stronger candidates noted that overextension connected the father's mention of the gym with running – and, further, with all sorts of people who might go running – with the idea that it was not just play-running but actual running that needed to be done.

Strong answers considered the context and purpose of the talk rather than an overview of subjects covered in the conversation. Some responses detailed the behavioural rather than linguistic aspects demonstrated in the transcript. Candidates should maintain a linguistic stance in relation to the requirements of the question.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43
Language Topics

Key messages

In order to achieve marks in the higher bands, candidates should make good use of embedded quotes from the passage whilst arguing their points, and provide a full, balanced, articulate and developed explanation of any appropriate theoretical examples.

General comments

Candidates engaged well across the three topic areas. Responses were expected to refer to the extracts provided and to candidates' own wider research and reading. At times there was evidence that responses were theory-led with less emphasis on linguistic analysis. This was particularly evident in responses to **questions 2 and 3**. **Question 1** responses occasionally demonstrated engagement with less important features and some showed lack of familiarity with the conventions of transcription of conversation analysis.

On occasion, shorter responses evidenced 'running out of time': in such cases candidates may benefit from making briefer essay plans and spending a longer amount of time on their full written responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Responses on the whole were carefully constructed, with appropriate reference to relevant language theories. Examples from the text supported points and were suitably punctuated. Those candidates who were unfamiliar with the conventions of transcription (lack of punctuation, for example) were at a considerable disadvantage. Understanding of language theory is best exemplified when a text is analysed by considering the purpose of the text and applying theory to what is being said or written. Answers that work through the text making comments can become repetitive and are often judged to be 'feature-spotting'.

This question allowed for candidates to comment on the co-operative context of a television interview. In the transcript there was much evidence of spontaneous speech, allowing candidates to comment on sociolect. Some candidates attempted to analyse pronunciation, which was not evidenced in the transcript. Many, however, successfully engaged with the structure of exchanges and the frequency of co-operative overlaps and interruptions.

Some candidates commented on the apparent dysfluent nature of the conversation and pursued a line of argument in a fashion that was not always balanced and coherent. The theoretical approach taken was often that of Grice, although responses could have been improved by thorough discussion, further explanation and greater development.

Many candidates referred to the genderlect theories of Lakoff, Tannen and Cameron and strong candidates developed a counter-argument to these by referring to Beattie and Zimmerman and West. In some cases, the opportunity for genderlect discussion was lost, where candidates wrongly identified the gender of Andrea as male. Some responses could be improved by providing a fuller explanation of theoretical principles rather than solely providing the names of theorists. The unusual change in roles as Dan questions Andrea was explored well by stronger candidates, as was the highly co-operative nature of the conversation.

Candidates should be aware that maintaining a wholly sociological analysis may not produce an appropriately linguistic line of argument.

Question 2

The stronger responses to this question were those that demonstrated an appreciation of a wider, more balanced argument concerning the complexities of the emergence of a global language. A restricted response on only that which is presented in the extract will usually limit the response.

Stronger and more confident candidates engaged with the wider ramifications of a globally intelligible language, making appropriate and sustained connections with the passage provided.

Many candidates had made use of the 'Relevant areas for study' in the syllabus. Stronger candidates had made explorations beyond these and were able to include them within articulate responses. A restricted view on what is 'correct' English will usually limit the response. A more appropriate response will describe 'standard' and 'non-standard' language and discuss in a balanced manner the relative advantages of these forms. Candidates should be aware of the differences between pidgins and creoles and the manner in which they are created and used.

The most careful readers acknowledged the Australian source and the different notions of English, and also addressed the questions posed in the source; some candidates could have improved by paying closer attention to the source and relying less on their own knowledge of global English.

Some candidates chose to include long discussions on the history of the English language, which meant that more relevant discussion did not demonstrate as much focus.

Theoretical examples tended to focus on Kachru, Crystal and Diamond, although the work of other theorists was occasionally referred to, providing depth and colour to examples from candidates' wider exploration.

Question 3

This popular question allowed for a range of language acquisition theory to be applied and was, on the whole, well answered. Stronger responses were from candidates who considered the context and purpose of the talk rather than an overview of subjects covered. Candidates generally responded with confidence regarding developmental stages and linguistic competence, commenting on the sentence structures and comparing these with the virtuous grammatical errors.

Many responses attempted to provide a 'deficit' model, describing the child's non-standard forms as 'mistakes', with some referring to these as evidence of limited intelligence or low social status. This was evident in discussion of Amy's attempt at a complex structure – 'breakfast delicious yours' – where comments on 'incorrect' syntax could have been developed further.

Stronger candidates commented on the on-going process of language acquisition and the state of achievement demonstrated in the script, including tense, deletion, pronoun, turn-taking, topic management and object permanence.

Theorists such as Skinner, Bruner, Chomsky, Piaget and Vygotsky were incorporated into most responses, with stronger responses selecting examples from the text, providing a linguistic discussion on the example, and then explaining why and how this example tests the theory. Strong and confident responses demonstrated knowledge of child-directed speech and how it was being used in the extract provided. Many candidates applied Halliday's functions to their analysis, using evidence of at least four of these in their response.

Stronger candidates noted that overextension connected the father's mention of the gym with running – and, further, with all sorts of people who might go running – with the idea that it was not just play-running but actual running that needed to be done.

Strong answers considered the context and purpose of the talk rather than an overview of subjects covered in the conversation. Some responses detailed the behavioural rather than linguistic aspects demonstrated in the transcript. Candidates should maintain a linguistic stance in relation to the requirements of the question.