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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

GENERAL PAPER

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Papers 8001/01 and 8004/01-03

General comments

Essays should conform to a certain standard of written expression. It is expected that they will be articulate, fluent and demonstrate a systematic ordering of suitable material. There are ways and techniques that can be taught to ensure that this becomes a common aim. This is desirable and achievable if marks are to be raised in this domain.

Examiners have been impressed this year by the level of awareness of the candidature in current affairs and political acumen. This is commendable and makes the marking procedure a stimulating one. It is, thus, even more disturbing to realise that potentially thorough and mature essays are losing marks due to minor mechanical errors in Use of English.

A key determinant to examination success is the choice of question. There is ample choice and time to make a considered decision. It is essential that both the wording and range of the question are appreciated. In some questions a clear direction is indicated, for example, **Question 4**: *Is it preferable for education to be run by private organisations rather than the State?* A choice is offered between two alternatives. This should trigger an essay of roughly two equal halves, each alternative explored and analysed and a decision arrived at by the conclusion.

On the other hand there are more open ended questions, where no definitive decision is possible, for example, **Question 7 (8001)**: **Question 8 (8004)**: *Examine the role of natural remedies in the treatment of illness.* This is asking for a more descriptive approach, the word "role" does not suggest the measurement of success or failure by the candidate.

There are questions that appeal as a topic perhaps, but within the wording there may be a phrase or word that the candidate is not confident about. This happened frequently in responses to **Question 1**: *"Beauty contests are degrading and should be banned." Is this a fair comment?* Many candidates did not understand the meaning of "degrading" which in this context was intended to indicate a degree of humiliation or a negative sexual situation undermining women.

Interpretation can also be at variance to the intention of the question, for example, **Question 11 (8001)**: **Question 13 (8004)**: *Can music contribute anything of worth?* "Of worth" was taken by the majority to mean of financial merit, whereas what was intended by the wording of the question was 'of value' or 'significance'.

There should be no doubt in the candidate's mind about the focus of the question selected.

Once the question has been chosen the candidate should look carefully at the command words. Some ask for assessment, some for discussion, some for agreement or disagreement.

Often a definition of terms or words is required. This can indicate to an Examiner that the candidate has registered the area to be covered and that the chosen realm is one within which a breadth of knowledge or opinion can be offered. Definition can help too, to set the scene or provide a context for analysis or discussion, in a comprehensive and exemplified manner.

At a more prosaic level candidates should be encouraged to improve their practical essay writing skills. Handwriting needs to be clear, with letters properly formed. Crossings out should be at a minimum, especially if the expedient of writing a plan has been employed. This is good practice, which Examiners have been encouraging for some years. Those who do write a plan invariably produce a more fluent and presentable essay.

Light coloured ink should be discouraged; black or dark blue ink have greater resolution on the page.

Use of English

Moving on to the construction of the essays, Examiners have noted, again, the number of basic errors in grammar. It is apparent that punctuation is not being utilised correctly. Far too many candidates write sentences of ten to twelve lines, with ten words or more per line, and with perhaps a single comma used. The comma and semicolon are used to aid coherence by breaking sentences up into manageable and succinct phrases.

Single/plural number agreement is frequently confused.

It is not stylish, or accurate mechanically, to write a string of phrases with no main verb and allow this to masquerade as a sentence – it was, however, highly fashionable to do so this examination season. Notes, numbered sentences and bullet points are not appropriate in academic essays, this technique is for note-taking in class or for précis from a book or article.

Accuracy in grammar is preferable to the sound-bite approach creeping insidiously into our spoken language. This tendency to colloquialism in essays is not appropriate in an academic essay. “*Children*” is correct, “*kids*” is not. “*Such matters*” is acceptable, “*stuff*” is not.

Candidates were also found to be unsure of the rules concerning agreement and tense, or, by extension, singular and plural forms. There were difficulties in deciding whether to use the definite or indefinite article and they were often unsure of the appropriate prepositional form, for example, “*she would not realised*”, “*this world do not*”, “*contributed into*”, “*the mentally of people*”, “*the society are*”, “*a good parents*”, “*many damage*”, “*a much crimes*”, “*this have teach him*”. Equally, many candidates were seemingly unaware that discursives are one word, frequent errors including, “*now a day*”, “*there fore*”, “*mean while*”, “*how ever*”.

Personal pleas to “*dear examiner*” detract from the tone of the essay and slang or colloquial expression should be kept for personal interactive use at the coffee shop or in the tabloid press.

Candidates still seem to favour writing lists. However, these destroy the notion of writing linked paragraphs which lead to a cohesive whole.

It is also fashionable to pose simplistic questions, for example, “*what is crime?*”, “*what are the world’s problems?*”, “*who are parents?*”, “*what does society consist of?*” These serve no useful purpose and usually indicate to the Examiner that the candidate is floundering, with insufficient material to put forward. Examiners are looking for statements, information, arguments, discussion, moving towards a considered conclusion or decision.

This conclusion should be arrived at by a route that comprises sequential, properly constructed sentences, clearly written, that can be controversial or personal, supported by exemplification.

Some questions obviously require exemplification to support opinion or stated knowledge, for example, **Question 6 (8001): Question 7 (8004):** *Consider the view that too many people are trying to inhabit too little land;* **Question 10 (8001): Question 12 (8004):** *Why write or read poetry?;* **Question 11 (8001): Question 13 (8004):** *Can music contribute anything of worth?* etc. Examples of named countries, poets and music are all necessary.

Whilst most candidates are now writing essays with a proper structure, this is sometimes theoretical rather than substantive. Introductions are intended to set the scene, to introduce the various threads that will be considered. They may provide some provenance or a context. What introductions need to be is cogent and relevant, not lengthy, often anecdotal, passages without pertinence. Many times the dwellers of the Stone Age were cited unnecessarily. Judgement is required to decide where to commence an essay chronologically. There has too been too much latitude in this area.

It is irritating to re-read the same sentence beginning, especially when it is bland, for example, “*in this essay I intend to...*” or “*imagine the scene*”. A pithy opening is more likely to captivate the reader. Paragraphs that all begin in an identical manner, for example “*another reason for*” can make essays dull and predictable.

In conjunction with this, conclusions should always be present, to summarise the major points or opinions. An essay left in mid air is unsatisfactory and marks are lost, no matter how good the content has been to that juncture.

Spelling has improved beyond measure in recent years. This is evidence that candidates are reading more widely, which is most pleasing. However, there is a tendency for those candidates who choose a subject specific question, for example one of scientific, economic or sociological orientation to try to dazzle the Examiner with specialist terminology. The General Paper is not the place to demonstrate tranches of specialist knowledge. Part of the task of this paper is to test whether the candidate can present material in an accessible way.

Equally a format of all the advantages being offered, followed by all the disadvantages, can make reading the essays tedious. More variety demonstrates maturity and a flexibility of approach whilst still being a part of a systematic analysis. The main imperative for the candidate is to keep the focus of the wording of the question at the forefront of their mind, in the name of relevance.

Lists of words that have been learnt for the examination seldom succeed in correct application, as a context cannot be predicted. A classic example this year was the word “ameliorate”. It was correctly spelt, it was incorrectly used, for example, “*children ameliorate their parents when they live law abiding lives*”.

There was the usual and tiresome usage of “and”, “so”, “but” and “well” to start sentences. All of these are wrong. All of them occur every year. Their usage in this way loses marks. The most commonly misused phrase this season was “*the latter*” or “*the latters*”.

A final point in this section – candidates would more usefully utilise their time proofreading what they have written, rather than meticulously counting the precise number of words in their essays. Proofreading would eliminate a number of errors, which would result in higher marks for use of English.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

“Beauty contests are degrading and should be banned.” Is this a fair comment?

This question was one that was selected with a basic misunderstanding, as noted in earlier comments re “degrading”. As a result many that chose it wrote about gender equality or simply stated that all contests of this sort should be banned because they are “*for women*”, therefore discriminating against men.

Some candidates exaggerated the benefits that can follow the winning of this type of competition for the nation. Some cited Mr Universe as a comparable demonstration of the male form. Few, however, had any realisation of the contestants being viewed as sexual objects.

Better, more aware candidates hinted at the freedom of choice and action that anyone entering these competitions exercises but without any attempt to look at counter arguments from a feminist or religious viewpoint.

One or two did perceive the danger of the eating disorders that might afflict contestants or aspiring contestants.

Question 2

Should parents be held responsible when young people commit crime?

There were some solid responses to this question, but overall it was characterised by a tendency to exaggerate and make sweeping generalisation. The tone in which it was answered seemed to be more colloquial than many questions, especially when the opportunity to be critical of parents was concerned.

Many essays were formulaic: parents need to work in this materialistic day and age; as a result children are abandoned and left without supervision and love; they automatically turn to drink and drugs, bad older peer influences and watch continuous films of sex and violence; the end result is an explosive crime wave and a turn to the worst social ill of all – prostitution. This painted a very bleak and extreme picture of youth culture in many countries.

What candidates did not attempt to do was to make any type of evaluation of the weighting of factors other than parents. Peers and media were correctly identified as having a part to play. What, however, of the role of personal responsibility? There were few that considered this factor.

The second most popular question on the paper was depressing in the image it portrayed and it tended to be treated in a rather emotive and naïve way.

Question 3

“People should have less freedom, not more.” Do you agree?

A decision is asked for specifically in the wording of this question. Generally those candidates who perceived this from the outset and presented the range of freedoms under a democracy, with definitions, were the most successful.

The responses from these more mature candidates were able to provide some balance and their examples were diverse, going from freedom of worship to artistic licence. The weaker responses tended to present freedom in one specific regard, that of the press.

The idea of curtailing freedom did not receive extensive treatment. The areas that could have been addressed were for the protection of the young, innocent or vulnerable, and in time of war. Discussion on morality and anarchy could also have merited some time.

This was a more esoteric question, offering opportunity for a less prescriptive response.

Question 4

Is it preferable for education to be run by private organisations rather than the State?

This was a popular question and relatively well answered. All candidates were able to relate personal experience, or that of a family member.

For Examiners it was interesting to read of such different systems and priorities. There were some pertinent comments made about the contrast between welfare-driven First World nations and developing nations. Politically corrupt governments can divert the funding of education, whereas in the Northern Hemisphere there is often apathy in reaction to education, especially amongst young people.

Candidates did tend to focus on three main issues: fees, teacher qualifications and facilities. The provision of extra curricular activities, class size, single sex options and special needs were only rarely mentioned. Candidates who did refer to these elements usually gained outstanding marks.

This was the most successful question on the paper if measured in terms of content marks awarded.

Question 5 (8001): Question 6 (8004)

Why is it more acceptable to say “I am no good at sums” than “I cannot read”?

There were few who chose this question, reflecting perhaps a disturbing lack of connection with mathematics. The main thesis by those who did attempt this was that reading is far more important than being numerate, but whilst the illiterate cannot gain employment those without mathematical competence often can.

No-one mentioned writing as the inevitable concomitant to reading.

Question 6 (8002): Question 7 (8004)

Consider the view that too many people are trying to inhabit too little land.

Many geography candidates chose this question with mixed fortunes. Many were tempted to concentrate on too narrow a focus, usually the human use of space, over population and the rural–urban drift. This resulted in a marginal redirection of the question.

Candidates also put emphasis on the causes of land pressure rather than the consequences of it. The wider implications of land pressure should have dealt with food and water.

Deforestation, soil erosion, monoculture, chemical leaching and pollution, species extinction and threat to bio-diversity were all relevant but largely ignored. A global approach and agreement on health and education would have provoked a favourable response from Examiners.

This was a vast topic and would have been straightforward to answer had candidates teased out the implications of the question wording rather than becoming tangential in their approach.

Exemplification was needed here, too, to demonstrate awareness of the real pressure points.

One or two candidates introduced the problem of war-torn land, which was good.

Question 7 (8001): Question 8 (8004)

Examine the role of natural remedies in the treatment of illness.

This attracted those candidates who had a real, practising interest in the topic. Some wrote about it almost with a fervour that we would normally attach to someone writing about a belief.

The responses did tend to have a narrower range than had been expected, concentrating on the efficacy of a healthy diet, the value of sleep and of exercise.

Prevention was seen as the primary imperative, whereas the question was directing candidates to look at "treatment of illness". Those who did address this were passionate in their espousal of herbal treatment as opposed to drug therapy. Many stated that in developing countries the authorities cannot afford drugs, that herbs are free as well as non-synthetic. It would have been impressive if candidates had gone on to indicate that in First World nations, herbal or natural remedies are often seen as fashionable or trendy, the cost factor not arising. Any candidates who watch American television via satellite would see this as a plot line in soap operas.

Responses to this question were, on the whole, engaging.

Question 8 (8001): Question 9 (8004)

Assess the impact of technology on the environment.

This was the most popular question on the paper by far and generally not well answered. The main criticism is that candidates, almost universally, redirected the question, substituting "industry" for "technology". There ensued lengthy and rambling accounts of the effects of industrialisation on the individual, the home and the work place, on transport and on the economy in general.

The development from Stone Age tools to the Internet, incorporating cars, washing machines, the microwave, television and rockets became rather too familiar by the conclusion of marking.

The focus of the question should have been the effects, both positive and negative, of technology on the physical or natural environment.

The key word in the question was "assess". This was ignored by most and much accurate though irrelevant information was produced that was merely descriptive with no evaluation at all. This inevitably brought the marks for content down. Had candidates only looked the wording of the question and thought what it was asking for via "assess", and "the environment" this would not have occurred.

However, a large number of candidates proved unable to spell the word "environment". It is a major error to misspell a word clearly printed on the examination paper.

A welcome few did not redirect the question and there were some that wrote compelling and informative essays, with mature commentary on short-sighted government policy with regard to pollution, and environmental damage caused by accelerated industrialisation.

Equally, many digressed to weapons of mass destruction and the role of terrorism.

Candidates must be exhorted to read the questions slowly, not see a word and then bombard the Examiners with everything that they know about that word, relevant or not. It is quality of argument or information that is sought, not quantity of learnt notes.

Question 9 (8001): Question 11 (8004)

Assess the claim that an uncensored press is dangerous.

Most candidates realised that the freedom of the press is a basic right within a democratic and free society. Generally those who opted to do this question were well prepared and apposite in their commentary.

There was marginal confusion between freedom of the press and freedom within the media, with some blurring about the difference between State censorship and censorship to protect the vulnerable via, for example, a Board of Film Directors.

Some moved the argument to consider the dynamism of religious intolerance and the role of a free press to calm or inflame a situation. This was worthy of extra marks and showed perception of a mature type welcomed in the General Paper.

Question 10 (8001): Question 12 (8004)

Why write, or read, poetry?

There were few responses to this question. Those who did select it were readers of poetry and provided Examiners with creative appreciation of the genre that were a delight to find, fully exemplified and written with passion.

Question 11 (8001): Question 13 (8004)

Can music contribute anything of worth?

There were some interesting answers to this question and quite a high number opted for it. Examiners reported that, unlike in previous years with the topic of music, responses were relevant, exemplified and relevant. We learnt much about local music and the controversial issues arising from it. Violence and drug abuse are two such issues that can incite a group of young people to behave in a dangerous manner and pose a threat to the law and order of a society.

The positive aspects of representation of a culture and the ease with which messages can circulate the world in this age of mass communication were also noted. The link to charitable work and fund raising was highlighted by most.

There was some confusion for a number of candidates who interpreted “of worth” as meaning financial worth alone, as noted earlier.

Question 12 (8001): Question 14 (8004)

Is the study of the art of ancient civilisations of any relevance today?

This question did not appeal to many. Those who did select it were unclear about what the question terminology was seeking. There was confusion about “art”, it being interpreted as ‘history’. “Ancient civilisations” was not seen to be, for example, referring to times largely before recorded written history. One candidate who did respond to this question produced Shakespeare and Elizabethan England as examples of “ancient civilisation”.

The term “relevance” was ignored completely.

This was invariably an example of a bad choice of question, as the marks for content show.

Additional questions from 8004

Question 5

“Most countries should be ashamed, not proud, of their history.” Discuss.

This was not a popular question. The focus of responses was on shame, and usually in military terms.

The scope of the question was huge. Candidates could have commented upon slavery, genocide, conquest; foreign aid, famine relief and humanitarianism; social rights, suffrage, reduction in the class system, democracy; artistic endeavour. Instead, tyranny and war was the inevitable route selected. Exemplification was in evidence, although the only incidents really nominated or partially analysed were British colonialism and the war in Iraq.

Question 10

Do we rely too much on scientific methods to solve the world's problems?

In order to achieve anything approaching success in the content mark for this question, it was essential for candidates to define their interpretation of “world problems” at the beginning of their essay. Hardly anyone did this and the result was over generalisation and a lack of focus.

Most who did choose this topic concentrated on over population and pollution, to the exclusion of all else. The range of the question was much broader than that. Candidates could have nominated drug traffic, pandemic disease, totalitarianism, fundamentalism, land and water shortage etc.

Scientific methods to deal with over population via birth control and health campaigns, and recycling and emission control, to address pollution were included.

However, due to the narrow scope of selected problems, no thought was given to alternative methods, such as negotiation, accords, treaties or compromises.

Question 15

Do films reflect, or influence, society?

Many who opted to answer this question failed to provide any examples to support what they were asserting.

Most candidates looked at either “reflect” or “influence”, not perceiving that there was scope to do both, indeed that there was potential for considerable overlap. Those who concentrated on the “reflect” option tended to provide far too much commentary and detailed lurid description of the content of violent or pornographic films.

There was some delight expressed by Examiners at essays from the small number of candidates who differentiated between commercial and arts based films. These were from the real devotees of the film genre.

There was marginal digression to television programmes.

Conclusion

Examiners hope that this report will enable a more efficient preparation for this examination. Management of time in the selection of the appropriate question to suit the interest and flair of the individual candidate will result in higher success rates. Making sure that every aspect and implication of the question is understood, rather than seizing upon a word and fitting the response to that topic, will enable candidates to achieve the grade that they deserve.

Paper 8001/02

Paper 2

General comments

The candidacy apart, the paper was comparable to those of previous years. The comprehension passage for **Question 1** and the exercises based on it were by no means the most demanding that had ever been set. As regards **Question 2**, questions involving diagrams and tabulated data have rarely featured in recent years but all the tasks to which they gave rise should have been extremely straightforward. Something very like **Question 3** appeared in November 2003 although candidates had never been required to discuss an issue before.

In the event, faulty examination technique on a scale that was without precedent was responsible for some very low marks. This was particularly the case with **Question 1**, which all too many candidates chose to answer without apparently having read through the rest of the paper to weigh up the advantages of the alternative assignments. Mercifully, very few candidates attempted more than one question but, where they did, their performance in either **Question 2** or **3** was far more assured than in **Question 1**. An outline of what went wrong follows.

In **Question 1**, despite four instructions in capital letters or in bold not to do so, far more candidates than normal regurgitated line after line of text, instead of using their own words, while they paid scant regard to the suggested length of three of the answers. More candidates than usual assumed that Examiners would not notice when there was a glaring discrepancy between the declared (for example, 151 words) and the actual total (for example, 222 words). A disturbing number also wrote more than one sentence for each answer in part **(e)(ii)** or used a different grammatical form of the word that they had elected to illustrate.

Candidates were rarely so perverse when they tackled **Question 2**, although in part **(c)**, the focus was seldom on the problems caused by passengers, as opposed to their predicament.

As a rule, candidates who opted for **Question 3** experienced mixed fortunes. When they went badly astray, they merely echoed, in part **(b)**, what **Speaker A** had claimed, rather than pick holes in the argument or, in part **(d)**, wrote on an issue without ever stopping to work out what an issue was.

Very few candidates, on this occasion, ran out of time or wrote in extremely faulty English though much of it was entirely derivative. The most common mistakes in written expression were the omission of the definite article, especially when referring to the Internet, the use of 'which' instead of 'who' and inventing a plural for such uncountable nouns as 'shopping' and 'information'.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

As indicated above, this question proved to be the downfall of a large number of candidates although the subject matter of the passage was not particularly formidable, while any technical term was fully explained in its context.

- (a)** Confining their answers to the second paragraph rather than exploiting much of the text, the majority of candidates could not see the wood for the trees and referred specifically to the Queen of Sheba, the Egyptians, Phoenicians and Prester John without making any attempt to state what they had in common as people coming from ancient civilisations in other parts of the world. Others made little sense when they based part of their answer on the misconception that 'of a much later date' meant 'much older'.
- (b)** Very few candidates, indeed, endeavoured to answer the question on its own terms and determine what kind of power (i.e. religious) would be associated with a 'sacred house' and what kind of power (i.e. royal or political) would be associated with a 'seat of a king'. The more imaginative tried to describe what went on in such places but the majority simply quoted from the text the meaning of 'zimbabwe', as given above, or, erroneously moving on to commercial considerations, shifted their attention to the next, irrelevant sentence which they rarely even paraphrased.
- (c)** Only the most able could distinguish between the various enigmas associated with Great Zimbabwe, the factors that had led them to become even more difficult to solve and what steps scholars were now taking to resolve them. When candidates chose to write about the ramifications of cognitive archaeology or on what had happened to the site of Great Zimbabwe in comparatively recent times, they produced totally irrelevant answers, which should have concentrated on all the unanswered questions that remain about Great Zimbabwe in its heyday. Subject matter, when relevant, was usually copied straight from the text, with no attempt at re-phrasing.
- (d)** A large proportion of answers dwelt on factors that would have been more suitable in part **(c)**, thus failing to distinguish between Great Zimbabwe's period of prosperity and its subsequent decline. For example, the passage implies that the gold deposits, while having nothing to do with the growth of Great Zimbabwe, were certainly mined at its zenith. All candidates then had to do was suggest that eventually such wealth would have been exhausted or might have attracted the envy or greed of other nations but few, in fact, did this. Worse still, it was quite common for candidates to blame explorers and excavators for the downfall of Great Zimbabwe which, according to the passage, had collapsed centuries before their advent. By way of contrast, there were a few highly imaginative or perceptive interpretations of what could have happened to Great Zimbabwe.
- (e)** As a rule, candidates who had made little headway with parts **(a)–(d)**, made up some ground at least in parts **(e)(i)** and **(ii)**. In this part of the question, the standard was very much the same as in previous years. Only a few candidates were misguided enough to produce eight answers in each exercise rather than the stipulated six.
- (i)** Almost invariably, 'significance' and 'edifice' were defined correctly while attempts to explain 'speculation', 'scale', 'sustain' and 'exploited' were seldom wide of the mark, though candidates sometimes needed to qualify what they had written. Relatively few candidates, however, realised that 'ideology' embraced more than a single belief. The word that proved too much for most candidates was 'ascendancy' which was frequently confused with 'ascent' or with ancestry or inheritance.

- (ii) As always, some sentences were so bland that the word to be illustrated could have meant anything. For example, 'garden', 'film', or even 'cake' could be substituted for 'edifice' in 'The edifice commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of our country's independence'. On other occasions, a word that had been appropriately defined was used with a completely different connotation, 'scale' being the most obvious example when it featured along a ruler or at the bottom of a map rather than as the size or extent of something.

Question 2

Although many candidates made heavy weather of **Question 1**, those who chose **Question 2** were not defeated by the diagram and the accompanying data for they usually responded well to the material that had been supplied, and linked the characteristics and aims of the travellers with the conditions associated with their chosen route. Marks, though, were still thrown away when, in parts (a) and (b), they wrote far in excess of the suggested number of words for each answer. In such instances, they insisted on setting the scene in a leisurely way before addressing the task in hand and, consequently, had made no more than a couple of relevant points by the time the Examiner decided that enough was enough. When answers to (a) and (b) kept within reasonable bounds, the main criterion was whether candidates were able to interpret and develop each pertinent factor and incorporate it into a structured and comprehensive argument. In both exercises, an obsession with road distances was often counter-productive in that some routes were virtually the same length so that any discussion of the odd five kilometres' difference was purely academic and, in fact, precluded much else.

- (a) Sound commonsense lay behind much of what was written about the Loovas' choice of the ferry on their way to a holiday in Irta while only a few candidates were sidetracked into describing what they would see and do once they reached their destination. It was, however, quite common to find candidates wishing to protect Mrs Loova from the dark rather than from a confined space, presumably, because they had not understood what claustrophobia involved.
- (b) Whereas quite a few candidates did not pick up the significance of a day trip, most readily appreciated some of the implications of travel sickness and respiratory problems and rightly considered speed to be more important than cost. The shrewdest realised that the tunnel was only much more expensive than the ferry if one was contemplating a fortnight's holiday, which was not the case with the Maisios. A fair number of candidates, on the other hand, confused tunnel and shuttle, with interesting results, or worried about safety since they had misinterpreted the significance of operating 'regardless of weather conditions'.
- (c) This was the only assignment where many candidates failed to see what was entailed. A fair number erred on the side of caution and merely copied out the rules and regulations of the company without going on to describe how passengers could have attempted to infringe them. As indicated earlier, even more candidates dwelt on the inconvenience that such rules and regulations could cause passengers rather than on how such passengers could cause mayhem for the company. Once in a while, candidates commented on matters such as tariffs that could have been a deterrent before passengers arrived at the terminal but would hardly be likely to come as an unpleasant shock once they were there.

Question 3

A substantial minority may have chosen this question because they imagined that they knew all about the Internet. Such candidates tended to write on what they thought the questions should be asking, especially when tackling part (d) in which they turned their backs on the text in their extravagant eulogies.

- (a) Although some of their answers were by no means brief, the majority of candidates fared well in this question so that maximum marks were often secured. When this was not the case, candidates either neglected to justify their choice of speaker or suggested someone who could possibly have done one of the things described but was by no means the most likely person to do so. The odd misunderstanding was the result of either faulty comprehension, as when being 'at liberty to download' was taken to be the same as infringing copyright, or of confused thinking, as when being assertive or in a hurry was equated with feeling intellectually superior.

- (b) The weakest candidates simply paraphrased, or worse still, actually supported the views of the speaker in **Extract A** instead of challenging them, the need for disputing them being overlooked. Much more common, however, was the response that concentrated on one aspect of what had been said to the exclusion of everything else, the charge of illiteracy being the usual assertion that came under fire. In this regard, candidates who pointed out how all sorts of professionals used the Internet for all sorts of purposes produced more plausible arguments than those who concerned themselves with how actual illiterates could benefit from what was on offer.
- (c) As observed above, some candidates were reluctant to admit that there could be anything wrong with the Internet, despite all indications to the contrary in **Extracts A to D**. Those who did manage to be more critical ignored the malign influence it could have on the character of the speaker in **Extract B** and restricted their answers to the downside of shopping via the Internet. Whereas nearly everyone realised that a major concern in **Extract C** was the exposure of young children to pornography when they surfed the Internet, relatively few candidates considered the other undesirable consequences that were hinted at in the text.
- (d) Only a handful of candidates bothered to determine what the word 'issue' signified, namely, a subject for concern or discussion giving rise to opposing points of view. Hence, the usual answer that simply listed the advantages of some activity that was conducted through the Internet would have received some marks but nothing like so many as one which wondered whether, for instance, we should buy anything that way at all, in the light of what might happen to other retailers. In such instances, candidates tended to go over exactly the same ground as was covered in **Extract B**. One final example of faulty examination technique was when candidates spread their net much too widely and used all four extracts as their source material, devoting a sentence to each.