FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

> **Paper 0524/13**
> **Reading 13**

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- followed task instructions carefully, responding appropriately to the command words in the question
- attempted all questions and all parts of each question
- considered the marks allocated to each question and targeted their response time accordingly
- read the introductions to the texts carefully
- planned the ideas to be used and the route through extended responses before writing
- selected only the material that was most appropriate for the response to the question
- paid attention to the guidance offered to help them focus their answers – for example, writing no more than 120 words in the summary, using just one example from the given text extract in **2(c)**, and selecting six language choices in **Question 2(d)**
- used their own words where specified in the question
- avoided repetition
- checked and edited their responses to correct any careless errors, incomplete ideas or unclear points.

General comments

Candidates' responses indicated familiarity with the format of the Reading paper and the demands of each question type. There were some candidates who did not pay attention to the guidance offered in the task instructions; they missed opportunities to evidence their skills and understanding. Instances where one or more tasks had not been attempted were rare, though there were occasions where responses to part questions were incomplete or missing, limiting the possibility of scoring higher marks.

Candidates seemed to find all three texts accessible and the majority demonstrated engagement through their responses. Occasionally, candidates lost focus on the rubric – for example, in **Question 1(f)** where some candidates included a limited range of ideas in their responses, in **Question 2(c)** where a number of candidates did not select a clear example from the text provided, and in **Question 2(d)** where a few candidates attempted to choose and explain a number of choices from other paragraphs rather than from paragraph 4 and paragraph 6 as instructed.

In **Question 1**, candidates scoring highly had worked through the tasks in the order presented and made efficient use of their time, noting the number of marks allocated and the space provided for their responses as helpful indicators of how detailed their answers needed to be. They focused on answering the question as set and did not add unnecessary material. They also referred carefully to the lines or paragraph specified in each question moving through Text A as directed. Less successful responses to **Question 1** tended to lack focus on the question, and therefore lack relevance, or fail to focus on the text. At times there was an over reliance on the language of the text where candidates had been asked to use own words – for example, in **Question 1(b)(ii)** by using the word 'threat' in their explanation instead of showing clear understanding of the whole phrase. Some candidates also copied phrases (or whole chunks of text) rather than remodelling the language of the text in their response in **Question 1(f)** which limited the evidence of their understanding.

In **Question 2**, candidates were required first to select (**2(a)**) or explain (**2(b)**) specified words or phrases from Text C. **Question 2(c)** then supplied a short section of text from which to select and explain one example, ahead of the longer response required in **Question 2(d)**. Stronger answers to the language question were able to consider meanings in context, as well as the effects of the powerful language identified, demonstrating understanding of the writer's purpose in a clear overview. Middle-range answers generally focused on the meanings of the language choices, which were not always considered within the context of the text. Weaker responses tended to repeat the language of the original text and/or struggled to develop viable explanations. These answers did not always choose appropriate language to discuss or only selected a limited number of examples in total. The selection of very long language choices instead of focusing on shorter phrases resulting in generalised comments was often a feature of some weaker answers.

In **Question 3** responses for the most part had attempted to include ideas relevant to all three bullets of the task, though a few candidates lost their focus on the text: for example, writing creatively about additional facilities that might be available at Kalinga Centre for Rainforest Ecology, which were not relevant in a response to reading task. Most candidates wrote as a guide at KCRE, with the best responses developing a convincing voice and tone for their talk. Stronger responses were able to select appropriate ideas and adapt information from the text about the area and its facilities, including the aims and importance of the work of KCRE, supporting them with details and developments. Middle range responses tended to paraphrase closely and use the text rather mechanically, rather than selecting ideas and details to demonstrate evidence of understanding. Weaker responses lacked focus on the text and covered only the main ideas.

Paper 1 is primarily an assessment of Reading, however 15 of the 80 marks available are for Writing – 5 marks in **1(f)** and 10 marks in **Question 3**. In these questions, candidates need to pay attention to the quality and accuracy of their writing to maximise their achievement. Candidates are advised to plan and review their responses to avoid inconsistencies of style and to correct errors that may impede communication.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Comprehension and summary task

Questions 1(a)–(e)

In response to Text A candidates were asked to answer a series of short answer questions. Effective responses paid careful attention to the command words in the questions as well as the number of marks allocated to each one. These responses demonstrated secure understanding by identifying appropriate details and evidence from the text in concise, focused answers. Weaker responses tended to repeat the language of the original and failed to follow the instructions that candidates use their own words. Some candidates offered several possible answers which diluted evidence of understanding and was an inefficient use of time.

(a)   How many species of snakes are venomous, according to the text?

Most candidates successfully answered this question. The main weakness was in presenting the statistic that 'about seven per cent are able to kill or significantly wound a human' without mentioning the number specified as being venomous in the text.

(b)   Using your own words, explain what the text means by:

        (i)   'significantly wound' (line 3):

        (ii)   'pose little threat' (line 7):

In **Question 1(b)** candidates were instructed to use their own words to evidence understanding of the phrases in the question. More successful responses were able to explain the full phrase as used in the context of the text by offering explanations for example in **part (i)** such as 'seriously harm' or 'really injure'. Where answers failed to achieve both of the marks available for each phrase it was usually due to the candidate's partial use of the words from the text. For example, in **Question 1(b)(i)** a small number of candidates found an appropriate synonym for 'significantly' but used the word 'wound'. In **Question 1(b)(ii)** several candidates struggled to explain 'pose little threat' suggesting that incorrectly it meant that snakes were either not at all dangerous or were harmless.

(c)   **Re-read paragraph 3 ('Almost all . . . moves.').**

        Apart from trapping moisture, give two other functions of a snake's scales.

To achieve both marks for this question candidates were required to offer two functions of a snake's scales. Many candidates were able to score both marks by clearly offering two separate points, often by identifying that they protect the snake, regulate body temperature or reduce friction. Well focused answers showed that the question had been understood – either by careful selection of relevant quotation from the text, or through precise use of own words. Where candidates failed to gain both marks, it was usually because they only offered one relevant explanation and then discussed the arid climate in the second one.

(d)   **Re-read paragraphs 4 and 5 ('Snakes also . . . it there.').**

        (i)   **Identify two features of a snake's anatomy that make eating their prey easier once they have caught it.**
        (ii)   **Explain the different ways snakes are able to locate food, according to the text.**

In **Question 1(d)(i)** most candidates were able to identify the fact that snakes' lower jaws can unhinge and that their teeth face inwards or hold prey in place, gaining two marks. In **Question 1(d)(ii)** many candidates were successful at gaining all three marks available by referring to snakes flicking their tongues in different directions to smell their food, their pit-holes sensing heat and their jaws picking up vibrations. Some candidates missed points by limiting their responses to solely specifying the anatomical features without explaining their function – for example, copying phrases from the passage which did not make the salient points clearly enough such as 'snakes also have forked tongues' or 'bones in their lower jaws'.

(e)   **Re-read paragraph 6 ('Not quite . . . is required.').**

        <u>Using your own words</u>, explain why some people might not know or be surprised to discover that some snakes are critically endangered.

This question required candidates to show both explicit and implicit understanding from their reading of paragraph 6. Most candidates were able to achieve at least one mark, a reasonable number gained two marks, but fewer gained all three. The most common correct inferences were that snakes are not hunted as much as some other animals and that people do not hear as much about them. Fewer candidates were able to explain the fact that they are not as appealing as other animals, or they would expect them to be able to adapt. Several candidates simply repeated the words of the question and offered 'some people might not know about them' or included environmental factors. Some candidates did not take account of the number of marks available for this question and offered a less developed response than required.

(f)   **According to Text B, why do people have negative attitudes to snakes and why are these attitudes unfair and unjustified?**

        You must use <u>continuous writing</u> (not note form) and <u>use your own words</u> as far as possible. Your summary should not be more than 120 words.

Question 1(f) was based on Text B and required candidates to select relevant ideas from the text and organise them into a focused summary which addressed the task. The most successful responses were carefully planned and coherent, focusing sharply on the task by referring to a wide range of reasons why people have negative attitudes to snakes, re-ordering the material where necessary to aid fluency and achieve logical progression. Effective responses were often preceded by a bullet-pointed plan in which ideas from the text were noted briefly before being included in a fluent own-words response. Middle range responses tended to include a more limited range of ideas in response to the task, the most common being the first three relevant ideas in the text that humans fear what they don't understand, a void of direct knowledge and myth and media. They tended to stress the idea of snakes being presented as dangerous or feared, sometimes leading to repetition and inclusion of excess material. Occasionally candidates misread the text and suggested that media meant social media.

The strongest responses tended to adhere to the advised length through adopting a concise and focused approach to the task using their own words. Some responses were too short and others very long and wordy due to unnecessary information. Occasionally weaker responses satisfied the advised word count but took far too long to consider a few ideas by including unnecessary details and/or comments. There was evidence that some candidates did rely on lifting phrases from the text, which affected the quality of their response despite selecting appropriate ideas. The least effective responses were almost entirely reliant on the language of the original – candidates are reminded that lifting sections of text and splicing them together is unlikely to evidence understanding of either the ideas in the passage or requirements of the task. In weaker responses there was some misreading of the text, most commonly through discussing the suitability of snakes as pets. The weakest responses also included too much introductory and irrelevant detail based on Zoo Chats or discussing particular species of snakes. Candidates should be aware that not every paragraph in Text B will contain relevant summary points.

Advice to candidates on Question 1(f):

- re-read Text B after reading the question to identify potentially relevant ideas
- plan the response using brief notes to ensure selection of a wide range of ideas from the text
- check the ideas you have highlighted in your plan are distinct and complete
- use your plan as you write your answer
- avoid including any extra details which are not relevant to the focus of the question
- organise the ideas, grouping them where relevant, to ensure that your response is coherent
- avoid including your own comments or views and repeating ideas
- do not add a general introduction or summative conclusion to your response
- write clearly and make sure you express yourself fluently in your own words
- aim to keep close to the guidance to use no more than 120 words.

Question 2

(a)   <u>Identify a word or phrase from the text</u> which suggests the same idea as the <u>words underlined</u>:

      (i)   As the writer arrived in the forest, there was <u>unexpected, heavy rainfall</u>.
      (ii)   Access to both online services and mobile signals was <u>sporadic and unreliable</u>.
      (iii)   There were steps down to the camp site to <u>provide an easier path down for visitors not used to walking in the rainforest</u>.
      (iv)   The campers enjoyed eating a <u>large, delicious meal</u> on the morning of their first day.

The most successful answers to **Question 2(a)** focused on the underlined word or phrase, located the correct version in the text and gave it as the answer. Other responses copied the whole sentence from the question inserting the appropriate phrase – an acceptable approach, though a less efficient use of examination time. Most candidates were familiar with the demands of this question, but a small number of candidates had not followed instructions and attempted to offer own words equivalents of the underlined words instead of locating them in the text.

Focused responses to **Question 2(a)** clearly identified in each part the correct word or phrase from Text C to correspond with the meaning of the underlined example – simply and efficiently giving the word or phrase as their answer. Marks were sometimes missed where answers were incomplete (for example, giving 'less-experienced trekkers' without 'cater for') or lacked precision in their selection by copying out longer sections of text that went beyond the sense of the underlined words.

(b)   <u>Using your own words</u>, explain what the writer means by each of the <u>words underlined</u>:

      Ah! My brimming heart and soothed soul enjoyed restful sleep in the tent that first night. Bonfires and loud music are <u>prohibited</u> to avoid any <u>disturbance</u> to animals and hygienic common bathrooms (with hot-water facilities) were <u>appreciated</u>.

      (i)   prohibited
      (ii)   disturbance
      (iii)   appreciated

In **Question 2(b)** the most successful answers considered the meaning of each word as it is used in the text. For example, the word 'prohibited' refers to something being not allowed or against the rules. Some candidates did not understand the meaning of the word 'disturbance' within the context of the text, thinking it meant to 'interrupt' the animals, without giving a sense of causing annoyance or distress to the animals. Others went further by suggesting this meant actually harming the animals. Most candidates were able to explain 'appreciated' as 'grateful for' or 'thankful for', though a number offered the derivative 'thanked' which did not work in this context. Candidates should be reminded that they must offer precise meanings for the words as they are used in the context of the text. They should use clues in the surrounding text to deduce the meanings of any unfamiliar words.

(c) **Use one example from the text below to explain how the writer suggests his feelings the first time he saw a snake in the wild.**

Use your own words in your explanation.

At the bottom, we were greeted by a snoozing Common Vine Snake, so inconspicuous that it took me quite some time of bobbing my head to spot it. I still cherish that precise moment when I saw my first snake in the wild, perfectly poised on its luxurious bed of green. I knew I would never behold snakes the same way again.

In **Question 2(c)** candidates were required to select one example of language from the specified section of the text and explain how it suggested the feelings of the writer the first time he saw a snake in the wild. A significant number of candidates did not follow these instructions but instead offered a very general description of the specified text extract with no selection and no focus on the writer's language. The most successful responses offered a concise quotation then considered how the writer was able to convey his feelings through the language used. The most popular example was 'cherish that precise moment' with many responses exploring how he looked back with fondness at that point in time and the sense of awe and wonder of seeing the snake in the wild. Others suggested that it was a precious memory and one that he has since romanticised. Other responses considered the idea of 'perfectly poised on its luxurious bed of green' suggesting admiration for the form, shape and attitude of the creature, as well as suggesting it was somewhat regal in its appearance. Many candidates were able to offer convincing explanations of 'would never behold snakes the same way again' and suggested that though he had a less than positive view of snakes before, he had had an almost spiritual conversion.

(d) **Re-read paragraphs 4 and 6.**

- **Paragraph 4 begins 'Three hours later ...' and is about the writer's reactions to the creatures in the rainforest.**
- **Paragraph 6 begins 'Next morning …' and gives a description of the rainforest as the writer wakes up after his first night camping there.**

Explain how the writer uses language to convey meaning and to create effect in these paragraphs. Choose three examples of words or phrases from each paragraph to support your answer. Your choices should include the use of imagery.

The most successful responses to **Question 2(d)** offered clear analysis of three appropriate language choices from each of the two paragraphs indicated in the question. Higher level responses considered the meanings of carefully chosen phrases in the context of the text and then explored the effect in terms of associations, connotations and the atmosphere created by the writer's language choices. Responses at level 5 frequently showed imagination and precision when discussing choices, for example in relation to the sense of awe and the impact on his senses the writer feels when encountering the creatures in the rainforest and the sense of childish delight he experiences as he wakes up after his first night camping in the rainforest. Less successful responses tended to repeat the same ideas about effects or offer less developed analysis, often making generalised comments rather than considering specific words more closely. Middle range responses tended to feature explanations of meanings and then struggle to explore the effects. Unselective lengthy quotations were often offered by the weakest responses, and they consequently struggled to find anything relevant to say about them. A significant number of candidates selected and discussed language choices from paragraphs other than paragraphs 4 and 6, ignoring the text references in the question. Others discussed one paragraph only or offered only three choices overall.

In **part (a)**, many answers had identified 'bubbles of amazement and wonder rising' as a potentially interesting example to discuss, with most able to offer a basic explanation of the build-up of excitement coming to the surface being comparable to gas floating to the top of a fizzy drink. A number of answers missed opportunities to target higher marks by limiting their comments to an explanation of just one or two words within longer choices – for example, not all considered the word 'intricate' alongside 'infinite varieties' and many weaker answers dealing with this popular choice did little more than repeat /replay the wording of the text to describe the dragonflies as being infinite in number. Others misinterpreted the meaning of 'saturated' and considered it a colour as opposed to the amount of liquid. Some candidates selected one or more less-interesting choices such as 'three hours later, returning from the trek' or 'native creatures' that did not engage them in a productive discussion about how language can convey meanings and effects. Mid-range answers tended to offer more careful selection and explanation in one half of the answer than the other – often repeating the word 'beautiful' or 'amazing' in the second part, rather than finding synonyms to evidence understanding of meaning and explore individual word connotations. They replayed these general ideas for every language choice selected, sometimes using the wording of the text such as 'colourful' in their explanations. Others selected lengthy choices such as 'rhythmic sounds, musical, coordinated and orchestrated, and pleasantly deafening' providing a generic explanation without exploring these choices separately – for example missing opportunities to discuss how the creatures' noises worked together after the storm creating natural tones and melodies before exploring the use of the oxymoronic image stressing the loudness yet irresistibility of the sounds.

In the second part of the question, many candidates were able to explore their individual choices within the context of the effect of the childish delight of the writer after spending the night camping in the rainforest. Many candidates selected 'fairy-tale landscape' to describe how unreal it felt and the magical atmosphere of the rainforest. They could successfully develop these ideas through exploring the beauty of 'frilled coral cups' as being decorative and similar to being under water. Many candidates chose to discuss the forest 'blooming with fungi' to give a sense of it growing in abundance and thriving. Strong responses picked up on the more nuanced tone of the writer's temptation to pick up and touch everything, particularly describing the 'brightly coloured confectionary' as sugary treats meant to tempt him. They recognised that despite these temptations and suggestions that some might have attempted this due to inquisitiveness, handling the fauna and flora was not allowed as they understood the importance of not harming this sensitive ecosystem.

There was very little evidence of misreading in the two paragraphs specified in the question, but some candidates found it challenging to move beyond literal interpretations. Some candidates identified linguistic techniques but did not move beyond generic explanations of these devices and did not engage fully with the language. Some weaker responses also included very long quotations with general explanations rather than engaging closely with specific words. Very rarely no quotations were included at all with a brief description of the paragraphs offered instead. In **Question 2(d)**, it is the quality of the analysis when considering how language is being used which attracts marks.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- select three precise and accurate language choices from both of the specified paragraphs – six in total
- make sure that the quotations you select from the text are precise – do not copy out chunks of text, miss out key words or include only part of the choice
- explain meaning within the context of the text
- avoid very general explanations such as 'this creates a picture in the reader's mind' or 'this gives us details of what the forest looks like' unless they are developed with clear links to the words of the text
- always start with the contextualised meaning then move on to the effect created by the language in terms of how it helps our understanding of the events, characters, atmosphere, etc.
- consider each of the key words within an identified choice separately, including connotations and associations, as well as how they work together
- avoid repeating the same explanations of effects for each language choice: focus on specific analysis at word-level.

Question 3

You are a guide at Kalinga Centre for Rainforest Ecology KCRE and have been invited to speak to candidates in a city school to persuade them of the importance of the work KCRE does.

In your talk you should explain:
- **what the area has to offer to visitors and why people might enjoy visiting**
- **what facilities KCRE provides for its visitors and how you ensure that visitors remain safe**
- **what the aims of KCRE and its founder are, what you hope to achieve by welcoming visitors and why that's important for the future.**

This question required candidates to write a talk in order to persuade candidates in a city school of the importance of the work Kalinga Centre for Rainforest Ecology does. The three bullet points in the question offered guidance to candidates to help them identify relevant ideas for their talk. The first and second bullets required candidates to retrieve relevant information from the text and adapt it to fit the guide's perspective about what the area has to offer visitors and why people might enjoy visiting, and what facilities KCRE provides for its visitors and how they ensure that visitors remain safe. The third bullet required candidates to infer what the aims of KCRE and its founder are, what they hope to achieve by welcoming visitors and why that's important for the future, using ideas and clues in the text to support their inferences. Most candidates were able to show general understanding of the text, addressing the task by using some of the main ideas in the text to support the response. Many of the responses were also able to develop the ideas by creating a convincing voice for the guide, evaluating the ideas and adapting them accordingly. Most candidates addressed the bullet points in chronological order using them to structure the talk coherently. Less successful responses tended to be unselective or closely paraphrase the text without adapting the perspective, therefore lacking the experienced voice and local knowledge needed for the guide. The least successful responses used the ideas in the text thinly, often copying phrases in response to the first and second bullets without offering any further details or trying to develop the ideas in any way.

The first bullet of the question invited candidates to explain what the area has to offer to visitors and why people might enjoy visiting the area described in the text. This offered opportunities to look at a wide range of ideas: the rainforest; trails; fauna and flora; snakes and local host families. The best responses looked for details to support each idea, for example, the trails in the Western Ghats mountains, or examples of wildlife such as frogs or lizards. These responses were also able to develop ideas about the challenges of steep descents and photographic opportunities and the range and variety of wildlife. Less successful responses did not mention either the wildlife or the snakes, with some including unnecessary information about World Snake Day from Text B. Others misunderstood the nature of a visit to a rainforest, which is described as not being 'a tourist resort' in the text, likening it to visiting a zoo or being able to handle the animals despite them being wild. Some wrote creatively and became lost in the narrative about opportunities to enjoy relaxing facilities in expensive hotels, or ziplines, which were outside the text and did not show evidence of close reading skills, without showing knowledge of the accommodation in tents or the camp site described in the text. Candidates should be wary of moving too far away from the text and need to remember that any development offered has to be rooted in the facts and details of the passage to be creditworthy as evidence of their reading skills and understanding. Where candidates moved into more speculative suggestions, they were often missing opportunities to target higher marks.

The second bullet required candidates to explain the facilities KCRE provides for its visitors and how the centre ensures that visitors remain safe. Most were able to identify factual elements, such as providing socks, rules and hygienic facilities. When describing the bathroom facilities, some candidates did not understand the meaning of 'common'. When referring to the existence of rules, many lapsed into lifting from the text at length, without modifying the material, with regard to not allowing bonfires and loud music, disturbing the animals and/or flora. Others blurred meaning by including extraneous information about how telephone and internet connectivity is intermittent, which would not be considered as a positive for people wishing to visit. Others kept in mind a sense of purpose to recast this information, developing and linking it to an offer of adventure - being able to escape the noise of the city to enjoy observing animals in their natural habitat. The most successful responses selected carefully and were able to re-model the material, developing the ideas and creating an appropriate voice. Many responses developed a convincing voice in response to this bullet by demonstrating an awareness of the functions of the facilities aiming to avoid accidents at night, making descents easier for beginners and socks being essential to prevent bites and stings. Some candidates spent longer developing their response to this bullet, sometimes at the expense of the other bullets. Creating a plan prior to answering this question would help to ensure adequate coverage of each of the bullet points.

When responding to bullet 3 the most successful responses used the clues in the text to explain the aims of KCRE and its founder, what they hoped to achieve by welcoming visitors and its importance for the future. They most commonly cited education and conservation. They also suggested the scientific study based on the founder's work on King Cobras. Many good responses also described the importance of publicity, through the use of articles and photographs, which might attract new visitors and help to spread the message about these remarkable creatures. Fewer candidates picked up on the funding or community aspects, such as involving locals as guides or host families, and the importance of this work in ensuring animals and humans learn to coexist. Many less successful responses struggled to infer from their reading of the text what the aims of KCRE were and found it hard to develop this bullet point, instead focusing on a misreading of KCRE as being a tourist resort with a lack of Wi-Fi and its plans to remedy this.

Most candidates seemed comfortable and familiar with the format of a talk, with most adopting an appropriate tone and focusing on the bullet points to help scaffold their response. Some candidates wrote from the perspective of a visitor rather than a guide which limited their response. The less successful responses tended to be too narrative as they relied too heavily on the sequencing of the original text and did not offer reflections to adapt the material to the perspective of the guide. However, the language used was mostly appropriate and some more successful responses created a wholly convincing voice as the guide, utilising the ideas in the text to give them an inviting and persuasive tone. In less successful responses the language and voice were rather plain but rarely inappropriate for the character. On occasion, unforced errors with punctuation and grammar detracted from otherwise stronger writing – resulting, for example, in some awkward expression or loss of clarity. Candidates are advised to leave sufficient time to read back through their response to correct any mistakes or inconsistencies in their use of language – for example, to ensure that meaning is clear and that the register sounds appropriate. Generally, accuracy was good with some skilfully written responses. Stronger answers were able to carefully develop points relevant to the text and integrate supporting details through more extended descriptions contributing to a strong sense of purpose and approach.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

- read Text C carefully, more than once, to ensure sound understanding and identify details you can adapt for use in your answer
- consider the perspective required for the task – for example, the voice being created as well as the purpose and audience of the task
- do not invent information and material that is not clearly linked to the details and events in the text
- when planning, remember to give equal attention to each of the three bullet points
- avoid copying from the text: use your own words as far as possible
- leave sufficient time to check through your response
- do not spend time counting words: the suggested word length is a guide, not a limit.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0524/03
Coursework Portfolio 03

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.