FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

> **Paper 0524/11**
> **Reading**

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- followed instructions carefully, responding appropriately to the command words in the question
- read the texts carefully
- understood the different requirements of the extended response questions
- paid attention to the guidance offered to help them focus their answers
- considered the marks allocated to each question and focused their response accordingly
- avoided unselective copying and / or lifting from the text where appropriate
- considered the ideas, opinions and details in the text rather than inventing untethered material
- used their own words where required
- returned to the text when necessary to check understanding of an idea or important detail
- 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
- avoided repetition
- checked and edited their responses to correct any careless errors, incomplete ideas or unclear points.

General comments

Candidates seemed to find all three texts accessible and the majority demonstrated engagement through their responses. Occasionally a failure to follow the rubric or complete a task fully limited opportunities to demonstrate understanding. This was most common in **Question 1(f)** where a very limited range of the ideas in the text were considered, in **Question 2(c)** where a candidate did not select an example from the text provided, or in **Question 2(d)** where some candidates offered three choices of language in total rather than three choices from each paragraph as specified in the task.

In **Question 1**, the most successful approach taken by candidates was to work through the tasks in the order presented paying careful attention to the number of marks allocated and the space provided for their responses as helpful indicators of how detailed their answers needed to be. They also referred carefully to the lines or paragraph specified in each question moving carefully through the text as directed. Most candidates remembered to base their responses on evidence from the text to evidence their reading skills, but a few offered unsolicited opinion or comment that could not be rewarded. Less successful responses to **Question 1** tended to lack focus on the text or lacked relevance to the question. At times candidates used the language of the text where they had been asked to use own words – for example in **Question 1(f)** where some candidates copied phrases (or whole chunks of text) rather than remodelling the language of the text in their response.

In **Question 2** candidates were required to explain carefully selected words or phrases from the text. **Question 2(c)** supplied a short section of the text to select from as a preparation for the longer response in **Question 2(d)**. More effective answers were able to consider meanings in context and as well as the effects of the powerful language identified, often further demonstrating understanding of the writer's purpose in an overview. Middle-range answers tended to focus on the meanings of the language choices showing mostly clear understanding. Less effective responses struggled to develop viable explanations, sometimes repeating the language of the text in the comments. These answers did not always choose appropriate language to discuss or only selected three examples in total.

In **Question 3** the majority of responses addressed all three bullets in the question, although some candidates found it challenging to develop ideas for the third one. Most candidates wrote as Jose, with the

best responses developing a convincing voice and tone for his journal demonstrating understanding of the reflective element of the task. More effective responses used the ideas and details in the text selectively to work through the bullets logically. They were able to describe the challenging events of the journey using details carefully to explore Jose's impressions, capture his frustration and fatigue but also imaginatively use the clues in the text to develop convincing ideas about his attitude to their findings at the end. Responses in the middle range tended to use the text rather mechanically, often paraphrasing closely rather than selecting ideas and details to use in their own writing to demonstrate understanding. Less effective responses tended to lack focus on the text, covering only the main ideas and sometimes inventing material that lacked close tethering to the text. Some responses copied unselectively thus providing little evidence of understanding.

Paper 1 is primarily an assessment of Reading, however 15 of the 80 marks available are for Writing – 5 marks in **Question 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 instructions as well as the number of marks allocated to individual questions. These responses demonstrated sound understanding by selecting appropriate details and evidence from the text in concise, focused answers. Less effective responses tended to write too much or failed to follow the instruction to use own words. Some candidates offered several possible answers thus using time inefficiently and diluting evidence of understanding.

(a) **Re-read paragraph 1 ('Ecuadorian legends tell … in the area.').**

Give two reasons why locals believe an ancient race of giants once existed, according to the text.

In **Question 1(a)** candidates needed to provide two examples of evidence from paragraph 1: the existence of legends *and* the tribes' recollections or memories of them. Where candidates did not achieve the mark for this question, they either tended to look at the wrong section of text providing evidence such as the oversized bones and tools mentioned in paragraph 3, or they only provided one of the pieces of evidence required from paragraph 1. More careful reading of the question would have paid dividends for a number of candidates.

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

(i) 'thriving cities' (line 3)
(ii) 'ancient structures' (line 5)

In **Question 1(b)** candidates were instructed to use their own words to evidence understanding of the phrases in the question. 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 number of candidates used the word 'cities' in their explanation of 'thriving' thus only partially addressing the task. More successful responses were able to explain the full phrase as used in the context of the text by demonstrating understanding of a largely populated area which was successful, growing or developing. In **Question 1(b)(ii)** more candidates successfully explained the meaning of the whole phrase and gained both marks with many using phrases such as 'very old' or 'very long ago' to explain 'ancient' and 'buildings' or 'constructions' to explain 'structures'.

(c) **Re-read paragraph 3 ('The largest structure is … to wield them.').**

Give two reasons why it might be assumed that the giants worked hard.

To achieve both marks for this question, candidates were required to offer two distinct reasons based on the size of te pyramids, the tools that were found, or the boulders used in the construction. The majority of candidates were able to score both marks for selecting appropriate details such as the height of the pyramid and the weight of the boulders, or the heavy tools found, and the large number of boulders used. Where candidates failed to gain both marks, it was usually because they only focused on one piece of evidence such as the boulders.

(d) **Re-read paragraph 4, ('This evidence has … artificial origin.').**

(i) **Identify two pieces of evidence that the Ecuadorian authorities did not want to believe the findings.**

(ii) **Explain why researchers believe that these are man-made pyramids.**

To answer **Question 1(d)(i)** candidates needed to identify two pieces of evidence from paragraph 4 to demonstrate the idea that the authorities did not want to believe the findings presented to them. A significant number of candidates did not read this question carefully and misinterpreted what they were being asked to do. These candidates offered details from the researchers' evidence instead of noting that the inspection was brief, the evidence in front of them deliberately ignored, and / or the conclusion drawn by the authorities was unsupported.

In **Question 1(d)(ii)** candidates tended to be reasonably successful at gaining two of the three marks available by referring to the precision of the cut of the blocks and the way that they had been assembled but fewer candidates were able to get the third mark by referring to the regular shape of the blocks. Some candidates did not offer three distinct points.

(e) **Re-read paragraph 5 ('Furthermore, several other … leader is buried.').**

Using your own words, explain why it is possible that the researchers are wrong in their theories.

This question required candidates to show both explicit and implicit understanding from their reading of paragraph 5. Most candidates were able to achieve one mark, a reasonable number gained two marks, but few gained all three. The most common correct inference was that there may be nothing under the mounds due to the coverings of mud and foliage. A number of candidates also correctly suggested that the researchers desire to believe the stories may make them more susceptible to being misled, and a few candidates pointed out that as the mounds hadn't been excavated the evidence simply didn't exist. Again, it is possible that some candidates did not look at the number of marks available for this question and therefore offered a less developed response than required.

(f) **According to Text B, why are the existing theories about how the Crooked Forest was formed unlikely to be correct?**

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

This question was based on Text B and required candidates to select relevant ideas to use from the text and organise them into a focused summary which addressed the task. The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate at least a general understanding of the text and offer some relevant ideas to demonstrate understanding of why the theories put forward to explain the crooked forest were unlikely to be correct.

The most successful responses were carefully planned and coherent, focusing sharply on the task by referring to a wide range of theories and offering full explanations for why they were unconvincing according to the text. These 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. Responses in the middle range tended to consider the validity of a more limited range of theories, the most

Cambridge Assessment
International Education

common being the Second World War tanks, genetic mutation, gravity and aliens. These responses often missed the effects of snowfall and the idea that the trees were manmade. Candidates at this level of performance usually considered why the theories were unlikely to be true but often missed the more subtle points. Some less successful responses focused too heavily on the theories and did not refer to the text's suggestions of why they were unreliable or unlikely, thus missing the focus of the task. Other candidates offered their own reactions to and comments about the ideas, for example, citing that aliens do not exist or that the supernatural is nonsense rather than picking out the idea that this theory was deliberately invented to fool tourists.

Length was often an indicator of the level of the response with some responses being too short and others very long and wordy due to unnecessary information and comments. The most effective responses tended to adhere to the advised length through adopting a concise and focused approach to the task. Less effective responses were either very brief due to a very limited number of ideas being considered or were excessively long and unselective. Occasionally less effective responses adhered to the advised word count but took far too long to consider a few ideas by including unnecessary details and / or comments. In most responses, there was an attempt to use own words although some candidates did rely on lifting phrases from the text. In less effective responses, there was some misreading of the text, most commonly when trying to explain the theory of genetic mutation and attributing the whole tree being affected to the trees in the crooked forest rather than the aspen trees in Canada. There was also a tendency to include too much introductory and irrelevant detail about the crooked forest in less effective responses.

Advice to candidates on Question 1(f):

- re-read Text B after reading the question to identify potentially relevant ideas
- plan your response using brief notes to ensure a wide range of ideas from the text is selected
- avoid including unnecessary details which do not address the question
- organise the ideas, grouping them where relevant, to ensure that your response is coherent
- avoid repeating ideas
- use your plan rather than the text as you write your answer to avoid lifting
- write clearly and make sure you express yourself fluently in your own words
- do not add comments or your own views
- try to keep to the guidance to 'write no more than 120 words'.

Question 2

(a) **Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:**

    (i)   The adventurers were <u>fed up</u> of constantly roaming around.
    (ii)   Jose <u>unwillingly</u> trailed Manoel.
    (iii)   Manoel had not expected the deer to have such <u>speed and sprightliness</u>.
    (iv)   Raposo <u>tried to encourage and sweet-talk</u> the men.

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 text and then identified the answer within it. This was acceptable but likely took candidates more time than was necessary. Answers that used the text more widely than in the equivalent phrase / sentence could not be rewarded even if the correct word / phrase was included. Most candidates were familiar with the demands of this question but a few over-looked the specific instruction to identify a word or phrase from the text and attempted to offer own words equivalents of those underlined in the question instead, missing the opportunity to evidence relevant skills and understanding.

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

Camp was pitched and the party was <u>resting</u>, when <u>confused</u> shouting and crashing in the bush brought them to their feet. Manoel <u>burst</u> into view. 'We've found it!' Manoel cried. 'We've found the way up!'

(i)   resting
(ii)   confused
(iii)   burst

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 'confused' refers to the shouting rather than to the men's reactions to it, so successful answers offered words such as 'chaotic', 'jumbled' or 'unclear'. Less successful responses focused on the men's confusion about the general situation and could not be rewarded.

(c)   **Use <u>one</u> example from the text below to explain how the writer suggests the feelings of the leader, Raposo, when the adventurers enter the cleft.**

<u>Use your own words in your explanation</u>.

Clusters of rock crystals and frothy masses of quartz gave the wide-eyed leader the feeling of having entered a fairyland, and, in the dim light filtering down through the tangled mass of creepers overhead, his anticipation of a wondrous citadel on the other side was palpable.

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 Raposo's feelings as he entered the cleft. A significant number of candidates did not follow these instructions but instead offered a very general response. Where a paraphrased version of a language choice was offered it was usually possibly to reward some of the comments, but they often lacked focus on the specific words used by the writer. The most successful responses offered a concise quotation then considered how the writer was able to convey Raposo's feelings through the language used. The most popular example was 'the feeling of having entered a fairyland' and many responses explored the connotations of a fairyland fully considering his amazement and sense of having entered a magical world as well as his child-like wonder at the sights before him. Other responses considered the 'wide-eyed leader' and were able to explain his awe, disbelief and amazement at the sights in front of him as well as a sense of innocence and naivety about the discoveries in the cleft. Many candidates were able to offer convincing explanations of 'a wonderous citadel' and show full understanding of the writer's use of 'palpable' as offering a sense of Raposo's dream being so close that he feels it is within touching distance, and the overwhelming feelings of hope and expectation he is experiencing at this point in the text. Some less effective responses tried to do too much, selecting several examples. Only one example could be rewarded so offering more used examination time that could have been spent on **Question 2(d)** where more developed responses would have helped candidates to target higher marks.

(d)   **Re-read paragraphs 2 and 4.**

- **Paragraph 2 begins 'These were no ordinary mountains …' and is about the sight of the mountains to the weary adventurers.**
- **Paragraph 4 begins 'Next morning …' and is about how the adventurers try to ascend the mountain in daylight.**

Explain how the writer uses language to convey meaning and to create effect in these paragraphs. Choose <u>three</u> examples of words or phrases from <u>each</u> 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. The most successful approach was to consider the meanings of carefully chosen phrases in the context of the text and then consider the effect in terms of connotations and the atmosphere or attitudes created by the writer's language choices. These responses often offered a clear overview of the writer's intentions in each paragraph. Less successful responses were sometimes written in note form and offered

Cambridge Assessment
International Education

less developed analysis or repeated the same ideas about effects, often making rather generalised assertions rather than considering specific words more closely. Middle range responses were usually more successful when explaining meanings but struggled to explore the effects, and the least effective responses tended to offer quotations but struggled to find anything relevant to say about them. A significant number of candidates chose three language choices in total rather than three from each paragraph as clearly stated in the question. This led to some under-developed responses to this question.

The most effective responses selected phrases but also considered the individual words within them suggesting how they worked within the context of the whole language choice. Rather than just identifying literary devices they engaged fully with the language, considering its impact and connotations fully and linking each choice to a coherent and developed consideration of the paragraph. In paragraph 2 many were able to explore their individual choices within the context of the mountains at sunset offering the men hope and lifting their spirits. They considered phrases such as 'no ordinary mountains', 'lit up in flame' and 'rich in colour and light' as representing the beauty and awe of the mountain but also containing promises of the wealth and success anticipated by the adventurers. They could successfully develop these ideas through other phrases such as 'studded with gems' and also 'a rainbow beckoned' as symbolising the end of their quest where they may discover their pot of gold after all. These choices could all be linked successfully yet considered independently. In paragraph 4 many responses were able to draw an obvious contrast citing the bleak and hostile view of the same mountains in the morning light. Phrases such as 'black and menacing', 'unscalable precipices' and 'vast' enabled candidates to consider the enormous challenges posed and the impossibility of their task as well as the threatening nature of the environment the men have set out to conquer. Phrases such as 'struggled over' and 'glossy sides' also contributed to the sense of despair and hopelessness created by the writer at this point in the text.

There was very little evidence of misreading in the two paragraphs specified in the question, but some candidates found it challenging to move beyond the beauty of the mountains in paragraph 2 and the enormous size of them in paragraph 4. They tended to repeat these general ideas for every language choice selected sometimes using the wording of the text in their explanations. Less effective 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. Such responses did not address the question at all.

Candidates are reminded that it is the quality of their language analysis which attracts marks. Listing of literary devices or the selection of plain language from the text is unlikely to lead to a successful response. Candidates need to exercise care when selecting their language choices to maximise their opportunities for developed discussion.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- select precise and accurate language choices from the specified paragraphs
- make sure explanations of meanings make sense within the context of the text
- avoid very general explanations such as '*this creates a strong visual image*', '*this makes us want to read on*' or '*this makes the reader feel part of the story*'
- try to engage with the language at word level by considering connotations / associations of words and why the writer has selected them
- when considering chosen examples start with the contextualized meaning then move on to the effect created by the language in terms of how it helps our understanding of the events, characters, atmosphere, for example.

Question 3

You are Jose. A day later you write an entry in your journal, in which you:

- **describe where you have been and what you have seen in the final stages of your adventure**
- **explain how you have felt during the recent days about the expedition and your leader, Raposo**
- **describe what has happened since you saw the broken remains of the human settlement.**

<u>**Write the words of your journal.**</u>

Base your journal entry on what you have read in Text C, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullets.

This question required candidates to write a journal entry documenting Jose's experiences and feelings about the expedition. The three bullet points in the question offered guidance to candidates to help them identify relevant ideas for their journal entry. The first and second bullets required candidates to retrieve relevant information from the text and adapt it to fit Jose's perspective, as well as develop his feelings about the events and Raposo's leadership. The third bullet required candidates to infer what may have happened after discovering the remains of the human settlement using ideas and clues in the text to support the inferences.

The majority of 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 Jose and interpreting the events from his perspective, evaluating the ideas and adapting them accordingly. Where candidates had followed the bullets carefully, they were often able to develop explicit and implicit ideas effectively to include convincing articulation of Jose's mixed feelings about Raposo's leadership and charting his reactions to different stages of the arduous journey undertaken to search for the lost city. Some candidates interweaved the first and second bullets by charting the events of the journey and adding Jose's feelings at each stage. This proved to be an equally successful approach to the task where some prior planning had occurred. Less successful responses tended to track the text often paraphrasing it closely and therefore lacking development of Jose's perspective on the events. The least successful responses used the ideas in the text thinly, sometimes muddled Jose and Manoel and / or misread some of the details such as the discovery of the cleft in the precipice and the discovery of the remains of a human settlement.

The first bullet of the question invited candidates to describe Jose's journey with the adventurers focusing on the final stages. This offered opportunities to look at the arduous nature of the journey, the difficult terrain, the initial hope then insurmountable obstacles provided by the mountains, the discovery of the cleft through the precipice where they discovered the quartz, and the three-hour climb resulting in the discovery of human activity evidenced by the tools and remains of a settlement. The most successful approach to this bullet was one where candidates extracted the relevant stages of the journey and adapted them to fit with Jose's perspective, including his negativity when faced with challenges and his assumption that the expedition was doomed to failure. These responses tended to adopt a reflective tone suitable for a journal exploring the events in hindsight rather than describing them as immediately happening. In responses where candidates just repeated ideas from the text without considering Jose's perspective they tended to be rather mechanical (or even thin and general) rather than reflective hence the more subtle ideas were often missed. There was little evidence of misreading in response to the first bullet but some responses did not consider many stages of the journey. Sometimes there was confusion about the time taken to explore the cleft and the eventual climb up to the ledge where they could see the plain, and some candidates were confused about whether they camped overnight before attempting it.

The second bullet offered many opportunities to explore Jose's feelings about his experiences and about the leader of the expedition, Raposo, using the many clues in the text about his negativity and resentment. The best responses picked up on the more subtle details such as the adventurers' lack of belief in the lost city at the beginning of the text, the hope symbolised in the rainbow at sunset contrasted to the despairing struggles the following morning, the resentment at being asked to collect firewood, the frustration with Manoel's excitement on discovering the cleft, the 'mutinous expressions' of Jose and a group of adventurers when they are forced to pack up the camp to explore the cleft, and Jose's close observation of Raposo's growing sense of anticipation as they discover more evidence that they are close to their goal. All of these ideas could be developed through convincing explorations of Jose's feelings. Many responses explored his mixed attitude to Raposo by expressing irritation with his insistence on continuing the expedition rather than camping for the night but also admiration for his determination, positivity and leadership. Less successful

responses failed to focus on Jose instead offering a rather bland description of his reactions to the events. Some less effective responses missed the difference between Manuel and Jose's reactions when asked to gather firewood and when returning to the camp with the news about the discovery of the cleft. They also failed to appreciate Jose's conflicting views of Raposo's leadership. Close reading of the text is required to provide evidence of more than reasonable or general understanding.

When responding to bullet 3 the most successful responses focused on the discoveries already made such as the crystals and quartz, the axe head, and the remains of a human settlement developing these ideas by exploring the reactions of Jose, Raposo and the other adventurers, their next steps and their visions of a future changed by the fame and fortune they may enjoy. Many responses focused on Jose's warmer response to Raposo and his acknowledgement that his optimism and determination had paid off. Many good responses interpreted Raposo's disbelief as a sign that the discoveries were a disappointment and this was equally acceptable if the textual details were used to support it. Less successful responses often added new material about the actions of the men in the following days without attempting to connect it to textual details. In some responses, the candidates did not attempt to address the third bullet at all instead ending the journal entry with Raposo gazing at the remains of the human settlement. There was some misreading here with some responses confusing the human settlement with human remains, but this did not necessarily detract from the response to bullet 3 if other ideas had been fully explored.

Candidates seemed comfortable and familiar with the format of a journal entry with most adopting an appropriate tone. 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 Jose's perspective. A few responses wrote as Raposo or Manual or thought that Jose and Manuel were the same person. The language used was mostly appropriate and some more successful responses created a wholly convincing voice as Jose reflecting on his adventures. In less successful responses the language and voice were rather plain but rarely inappropriate for the character. Generally, accuracy was good with some skilfully written responses. Others struggled to maintain fluency resulting in some awkward expression caused by errors in grammar and punctuation. Candidates are advised to check through their work carefully to correct errors where possible. There were few instances of wholesale lifting from the passage but some candidates were over-reliant on lifted phrases and sentences.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

- read Text C carefully, more than once, to ensure sound understanding
- pay careful attention to the perspective required for the task – for example, the voice being created and whether you are looking back at the events
- keep the audience and purpose firmly in mind
- do not invent information and material that is not clearly linked to the details and events in the text
- give equal attention to all three bullet points
- briefly plan your response to ensure that you are selecting ideas relevant to all three bullets
- avoid copying from the text: use your own words as far as possible
- remember to use ideas and details from the text but to adapt and develop them appropriately to create a convincing voice and new perspective
- leave some time to check through your response
- the suggested word length is a guide, not a limit.