ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/11
Reading and Writing (Core) 11

Key messages

In **Exercise 1,** candidates are advised to read the questions carefully in order to identify the key requirement of each one and avoid the distracting information. Candidates should also be precise in writing their answers, as including too much detail may make the answer incorrect and affect the mark awarded. In this series, there were many fully correct responses to **Exercise 1.**

In **Exercise 2,** the information in the texts will be expressed using different words and structures from those in the questions, so candidates should look for synonyms and paraphrases. Candidates are required to identify opinions and attitudes and to show awareness of information that is implied but not explicitly stated.

In **Exercise 3,** the requirement is for short notes. Candidates do not have to use their own words, and it is recommended that they use words from the text, as substitutions may not always be appropriate. Each note should correspond to the correct question, and be written on a separate line. In this series, a number of candidates included two correct notes on the same line, which affected the mark awarded. Additionally, extra notes were often written below the lines, which could not be credited.

In **Exercise 4,** candidates are encouraged to write to the stated length and to avoid copying lengthy extracts from the text, as summaries which exceed the 90-word limit are restricted in the mark which can be awarded. It is vital that candidates read the question closely, in order to decide what information is required and what should be considered irrelevant and therefore not required. In this series, some candidates included a long introduction with too much narrative detail about the writer of the text, which had an impact on the mark.

Exercise 5: in this series, the purpose of writing the email was well recognised, and many responses included sufficient development of the ideas to achieve higher marks for Content. Additionally, the majority of responses showed a suitable level of awareness of the target audience by adopting a conversational style and using informal language.

In **Exercise 6,** responses must demonstrate a more formal register, suitable for the audience given in the rubric. In this series, this was not always achieved, and some candidates continued to use an informal style for their report. In addition, responses should include and develop candidates' own ideas beyond those provided in the prompts. Many responses lacked development, which had an impact on the mark.

Responses should also show clear organisation. Candidates should be aware that the use of paragraphs and accurate punctuation can assist in the coherent presentation of ideas. In this series, clear separation of ideas in some responses was evident through the use of sub-headings, which was acceptable.

General comments

Overall, most candidates were correctly entered at this level.

Some responses far exceeded the suggested word length in the final two writing exercises, which risked lower marks for Content and Language, due to the inclusion of much irrelevant detail and the loss of coherence.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

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Generally, this exercise was well attempted. Candidates should be aware that there is distracting information in the text for every question, therefore close reading of the text is important in order to distinguish correct details from those which are incorrect or irrelevant.

Question 1

Many responses correctly focused on the number of trees that were planted, and selected 'thousand' as the answer. Incorrect answers tended to highlight the particular tree which had a sign on it, and opted for 'one of a thousand' which could not be credited. Candidates are advised that close reading is required to find the details that correspond fully to the question.

Question 2

This question was generally well attempted. The relationship between '*writer'* and '*show*' in the question and '*author'* and '*demonstrate*' in the text appeared to be well recognised, with *'the ability to inspire'* correctly selected. A number of responses also included the idea of being '*well-known internationally',* which could be accepted as additional information, although that detail alone could not be credited.

Question 3

Many responses provided the correct detail '*spring'* in answer to the question '*What time of year...'* Precise reading of the text was required to eliminate '*autumn'* which was the time when the name of the author was announced. Other incorrect responses tended to focus on a particular year, '*2014'* and '*2114',* rather than on a time of year.

Question 4

This question was very well answered, with the majority of responses correctly selecting the fact that the '*site can be accessed by hiking'* which corresponded to *'how...reach the location'* in the question.

Question 5

This question proved to be more challenging. Two details were required for two marks and the majority of candidates managed to locate the section of text where the answers could be found, and select at least one correct answer. The focus of the question was on '*instructions'* that were given to each writer, correct answers being '*cannot be illustrated'* and must be completely '*original'.* Common wrong answers tended to feature not instructions, but the benefit to writers in that they could have '*complete freedom to write about anything'* and the fact that '*no one will be able to check...'* which could not be credited.

Question 6

There was a mixed response to this question. The key element in the question was the phrase '*at the last minute'* which corresponded to '*only just completed'* and '*shortly before the public ceremony'* in the text. A significant number of responses appeared to overlook this aspect of the question and simply focused on the nationality, wrongly opting for '*Canadian'* and '*Turkish'.*

Question 7

This question produced the greatest number of incorrect answers. The key focus in the question was that Katie was *'concerned'*, which indicated that she was worried about something. There was evidence that this idea had not been fully understood, as many responses had a positive focus, *'the project represent hope'* and '*gives Katie confidence in the future'.* Correct answers provided evidence of her worries, '*whether the forest will survive'* and *'admits that people might have no interest in printed books'*.

Exercise 2

Overall, there was a varying degree of success in this exercise. Almost all candidates attempted answers, and while some achieved full marks, many candidates scored at least half of the available marks. Some candidates provided the same answer for all the items, ensuring that they could achieve two marks, and there were instances of individual items being omitted.

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Candidates achieved the greatest success in **Questions (b), (f)** and **(g).** Many also found **(h)** accessible and scored well. The most challenging questions proved to be **Questions (a), (c), (d)** and **(e).**

Question (a): the two key elements in this question are '*enjoying'* and '*learning to be more artistic'* and there is reference to the idea of '*enjoying*' in all the texts. In **Text A,** the writer refers to working at the factory as '*really rewarding';* in **Text B,** having a wedding dress shop is something that the writer loves, and in **Text D,** the writer had not realised *'how relaxing'* basket-making was. As these texts only include one of the two aspects in the question, they are incorrect choices. **Text C** is the only text which addresses both of the required elements in the question, with the sentence '*I'm finding it really satisfying to develop my creative skills'* and is the correct answer. Candidates are advised to look for a paraphrase which corresponds to all parts of the question.

Question (c): the focus of this question centres around the idea that the craft might help the environment. In **Text C,** the sentence '*people want...shoes that last, not...get thrown away as household waste',* although not explicitly stated, implies that there would be an environmental benefit and is the correct answer. Candidates may have been tempted by the word '*environmental'* in **Text D,** however close reading of the text shows that this refers to the subject the writer studied at university, so is incorrect.

Question (d): in this question, the key phrase is '*items for all budgets'* and candidates should look for details which relate to products that are a range of prices. In **Text A**, the writer says that there are '*incredibly expensive handbags'* produced at the factory, but without including the idea of a range of prices, is an incorrect choice. **Text B** provides the correct detail where the writer says that they produce '*a variety of designs*, *from detailed handmade dresses to simple ones',* and in the sentence, '*Everyone should have the chance to wear a traditional dress on their wedding day, no matter what they earn.'* This combination of ideas fully corresponds to the key focus of the question.

Question (e): all four texts refer in some way to the future; in **Text A**, the writer compares possible future plans with their friends' plans; The writer in **Text B** explains their dreams for a future, and In **Text C,** the writer indicates that they '*plan to stay for a while'* at the factory. However, **Text D** is the only one that includes the central focus of the question which is a '*concern about the future of her craft.'* In **Text D,** the writer states that '*it's a craft that seems to be disappearing'* and follows this by saying '*if only more young people would take it up...'* While **Texts A, B** and **C** might refer to a part of the question, only **Text D** shows a clear concern on the part of the writer about the future of her craft and addresses all parts of the question.

Exercise 3

Overall, this exercise was very successfully answered by the majority of candidates. Almost all candidates attempted the two questions and many candidates achieved maximum marks. Greater success was achieved in **Question 10** than in **Question 9**. Answers should use the wording from the text and be in note form. Where responses are phrased using candidates' own words, this risks obscuring the exact meaning, and can affect the mark awarded.

Question 9

All the possible correct answers were equally chosen by candidates and the majority of candidates used short notes to convey their answers. On occasion, candidates omitted a key detail from their note, which affected the mark. For example, '*nature'* could not be credited without the idea of '*being outside'* or '*being in nature'.* Similarly, '*having fun'* did not fully express the required idea without '*with other people'.* Such incomplete responses suggested that more precise reading of the text was required.

Question 10

This question proved to be generally more accessible and produced a greater number of fully correct answers. Candidates responded well to the challenge of giving advice and recognised the need to include a verb in each note. Three points from a total of five were required and all the possible correct answers were equally selected. Occasionally, marks were lost when an essential element to the answer was missing, for example, '*place the line above ground'* could not be credited without the key idea of '*flat'* ground. Similarly, misspellings, such as '*light'* for '*tight'* could not be credited as this changed the meaning of the point.

Exercise 4

In this series, candidates were required to summarise ways to care for a bonsai plant. Many responses successfully addressed the topic and included at least five of the eight available points within the 90-word

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limit. The most successful summaries kept the focus throughout on the selection of details which advised on how to look after the plant and provided some organisation to their writing through the use of simple cohesive devices such as *'also', 'then'* and *'as well as....'.* Additionally, the accurate use of pronouns for reference, *'watering them when they are almost dry is the key to healthy growing'* and relative clauses, '*trim the roots which prevents overgrowing'* contributed to good summary technique.

Higher marks were available to candidates who attempted to paraphrase the language of the text, either by restructuring the grammar of the sentence '*Cutting the branches annually is a must; 'protecting them in winter is essential'* and '*the tools you use must be high quality'* or through the use of synonyms, and there were many good examples of synonyms in this series, such as '*chop'* or *'clip'* for *'cut'; 'equipment'* for '*tools'; 'monthly'* for '*once a month'; 'at once'* for '*immediately'* and '*diagnose sickness, bacteria, illness'* for '*treat diseases'.*

Less successful responses were those which relied on copying the language from the text. Points were made using lifted language, with little attempt to rephrase them. These points were then linked using simple conjunctions or sequencing words. Such summaries could be credited with marks for Content, but without any attempt to re-work the language seen in the source text, it placed the mark in the middle band for Language.

In this series, there were a significant number of responses where marks for both Content and Language were affected because they exceeded the 90-word limit. Words were wasted by including an introduction about where the writer was when they first learned about bonsai plants and their early attempts to grow one. Including details not relevant to the task frequently meant that a key point which occurred after the limit could not be credited. Candidates are advised to read the rubric carefully and ensure that their writing corresponds fully to the task in order to have access to higher marks.

Exercise 5

In this series, there were many successful responses which fulfilled the email task and achieved high marks. Most candidates appeared to relate well to the topic with responses that showed a good sense of purpose and some development of ideas. Paragraphs or connecting phrases such as *'Do you remember when we sold lemonade in junior school....' 'My idea is that we could....' 'The reason I'm asking you is....'* were frequently used effectively to separate ideas, and aided cohesion. Together with a short introduction and ending, these responses generally formed a well organised and realistic piece of writing. Many successful responses also recognised the requirement for an informal tone and register and adopted an appropriately conversational style throughout the email, '*I've been up to my eyes in exams...', 'I know you'll be great...' 'Give your brother a hug from me...*' which also contributed to engaging effectively with the target audience. In contrast, in less successful emails, more formal adverbial connectives such as '*nevertheless'* or '*furthermore'* tended to be used incorrectly, which led to inconsistency in tone. Candidates are advised of the need to sustain an informal style throughout their email.

Most responses addressed all three bullet points with satisfactory or good development. Better responses tended to provide a great amount of detail for each point, whereas less successful emails concentrated more on the first and last points. For the first point, there were many imaginative and ambitious ideas for a business, ranging from those connected with the school environment, for example giving younger candidates extra help; providing snacks and drinks; organising a homework club, to online business ventures, such as making jewellery '*girls our age always like to wear bracelets';* supplying a babysitting service or selling make-up. Other ideas included activities in the community, for example washing cars or shopping for neighbours. Less successful responses to this point were limited in the amount of detail provided, or those which asked for help to think of a business idea. Some responses which featured setting up a sports competition and others which described a business competition that had already happened did not fulfil the task and had an impact on the mark awarded.

The second bullet point was the least well developed. This point required candidates to explain what they had to do to enter the competition, and there were some detailed accounts which gave information about filling in an application form; getting parental permission; giving a Power Point presentation or being interviewed by the Head teacher, which scored high marks. Other less successful responses only referred to entering the competition with another candidate. Without development of this detail, or further ideas for entering the competition, the response could not be credited with marks in the higher levels.

For the final point, candidates were asked to say why they wanted to enter the competition with the friend, and the most successful responses provided as much detail for this point as for the other two points. The friend was frequently chosen because of their knowledge of business, '*her ambitious personality and her*

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design skills could play a big role in advertising our business', or because their personality would suit the business, '*I've chosen you to be my partner because of how creative you are'.* Less successful responses were limited in detail, '*I want to do it with you because you're my friend',* and a number of responses did not provide any details in answer to this point, which affected the mark.

From a language point of view, the whole range of marks was awarded. Some responses showed attempts at less common vocabulary, *'collaborate, clothing brand, submit a form'.* There were also many good attempts at more complex grammatical structures, '*I thought we could partner up and do a sculpturing business like we used to do when we were young'.* More successful responses were competent at moving from present to past within a sentence, as in '*our school is running a business competition and I thought about writing a car magazine',* and combining present and future, as in '*Let's make a fully organised plan together – with your innovation and my eye for detail, we'll smash this'.* Other responses attempted more complex language but tended to lack accuracy, *'We must send an email to our teacher that why we want to join this competition and what is the idea we will present'.* In many responses, punctuation was limited to commas or was omitted altogether, which resulted in a loss of focus and meaning.

Exercise 6

This appeared to be an accessible task and responses were of an appropriate length. The task required candidates to write a report on an art exhibition which had been held at school, and to make suggestions for future improvements. Four prompts were provided to support candidates with their ideas. In order to achieve high marks, responses should fully address both aspects of the task and provide some original ideas beyond those provided. Responses should be well organised and be written in a more neutral or formal tone, suited to the target audience. In this series, some candidates appeared to be unsure of the appropriate style and continued the informal and conversational style from **Exercise 5**, which did not suit the format of a report and affected the overall mark for this exercise.

Some responses were very successful, with ideas clearly separated through the use of paragraphs or subheadings, with discourse markers such as *'to begin with*; *as for improvements, all in all',* which allowed the report to read logically. Many effective reports took the opportunity to expand on the positive features of the exhibition, naming different types of art, '*water colours, portraits, landscapes, abstract, realism, sculpture',* while others featured original ideas, including '*provided snacks; the room was crowded but the air conditioning helped, teachers were supportive of candidates who were not very talented'.*

At all levels of ability, the second aspect to the task was less well addressed. There were some effective suggestions, for example '*The school should provide name tags under the pieces of art';* '*It would be a better idea if the exhibition took place in a more spacious room,'* and *'what should be improved for the next time is to lower the price of tickets'.* Other possible improvements featured a larger venue, better food and holding the exhibition outside. However, many linguistically high achieving responses were limited in the overall mark awarded due to simply repeating the suggestions for improvement which were provided, or highlighting many negative features of the exhibition, with little or no attempt to make suggestions for improvement as the task required. Practice in developing and contributing independent ideas to fulfil the task continues to be an area for improvement in order to achieve higher marks.

Less successful responses tended to rely very closely on the prompts provided throughout, with little or no further development. Some responses overlooked the requirement for a report, and were written as an article, discussing the positive and negative aspects of art exhibitions, and with no reference to suggestions for improvement, such responses were limited in the marks available. Other responses centred around considerable data from the results of surveys conducted with other candidates, which at times tended to obscure the main point of the report. A number of responses provided a detailed account of a visit to an art exhibition locally or in another country, which had an impact on the mark awarded.

From a language point of view, there were many successful attempts at more complex language, and candidates were able to demonstrate the use of passives, conditionals and relative clauses to good effect, '*visitors would have been happier if it had been less crowded', candidates were not limited to any genre or theme, everyone had an opportunity to present what they would like, which made them all interesting'* and *'the microphone had an issue with the volume, and people recommended adding more speakers'.* Many reports included good attempts at topic-related vocabulary, such as '*really caught my eye, ceramics, full potential, categories, canvas, showcase the candidates' fabulous talents',* which contributed to an effective report.

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Punctuation continues to be an area for improvement. In this exercise, a lack of basic punctuation meant that at times, different ideas were not successfully separated, which had an impact on organisation and the coherence.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/21
Reading and Writing (Extended) 21

Key messages

In **Exercise 1**, answers should be precise, but also brief. Too much superfluous information may well include incorrect details which could affect the accuracy of the answer. Candidates should also avoid unnecessary repetition of the wording in the question.

In **Exercise 2**, candidates should respond to all questions, clearly writing the letter given as the response. They should attempt to locate synonyms and paraphrasing of key details in the text which are provided in the question.

In **Exercise 3**, candidates' answers should be brief and in the form of a note. It is important to carefully read the wording of the heading.

In **Exercise 4**, some candidates wrote in excess of 120 words. Candidates should carefully read the wording of the question and concentrate solely on those areas of the text that are relevant to the task.

In **Exercises 5** and **6**, candidates should focus on the requirements of the writing task, and ensure different bullet points or aspects of the task are developed. They are required to write 150-200 words, so responses of less than 150 words may not sufficiently cover the topic or fulfil the task.

General comments

Overall, the vast majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

This exercise was generally well answered by candidates.

Question 1

This was well attempted. Occasionally, candidates lifted the wording of the text *'one of a thousand' ,* which could not be credited.

Question 2

This was very well answered and most candidates matched the word *'shown'* in the question with *'demonstrated'* in the text. Some candidates wrote an excessive amount by copying the whole sentence, including the detail about *'the author being well-known internationally'*. This extra detail was unnecessary, but it was tolerated as being irrelevant rather than incorrect.

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Question 3

This was well attempted and most candidates recognised the importance of the wording *'hand over'* in the question. There were some who answered with the distractor *'autumn'* presumably because they had overlooked the key word *'submits'* in the text.

Question 4

This was very well answered and almost all candidates appeared to realise the significance of the key word *'finally'* in the question and were not distracted by *'cars'* and *'the metro'*.

Question 5

It was essential to identify 'instructions' in the question as being the key information. Many recognised this and were credited with both marks. Some gave one correct answer but also offered *'no-one will be able to check this'*, which was not an instruction. Less successful responses could not be credited because they answered with two details *'never hearing any criticism of your book'* and *'complete freedom to write about anything',* which were attractions rather than instructions.

Question 6

This was very well attempted. Only a very small number of candidates selected the distractor *'Turkish'.*

Question 7

This was a two-mark question and proved to be a very good discriminator. Close reading of the text and the question was required. For the first answer, many candidates omitted *'people might have'* and wrote *'no interest in printed books'* which incorrectly referred back to Katie in the question. Similarly, some candidates did not include the key word *'printed'*, which made the answer too general. For the second answer, the wording had to convey some idea of doubt or negativity and the answer *'the forest will survive'* was in fact the opposite message and needed *'whether'* or *'may not'* to be correct.

Question 8

A large number were credited with the maximum four marks. Common incorrect answers were *'complete freedom'*, which was imprecise without the idea of *'to write about anything'.* Similarly, the answer *'with authors who are not yet born'* made no sense without the idea of *'being involved'.* Other incorrect answers included *'no payment for taking part',* which could not be considered an attraction for writers, and also *'no-one will be able to check this'.*

Centres are reminded that for this final question in Exercise 1, candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because key information may appear at any point in the text.

Exercise 2

Question 9

There was evidence that the majority of candidates were able to employ appropriate and effective strategies for retrieving relevant details from the correct section of text.

Most candidates were successful with **Questions (b)**, **(c)**, **(g)** and **(i)**, with many also credited with correct answers for **(e)**, **(f)** and **(j)**. **Questions (a)**, **(d)** and **(h)** proved to be very good discriminators and only more able candidates scored well here.

In **Question (a)**, candidates needed to match the statement *'which person is enjoying learning to be more artistic'* with the detail in text C, '*now I am finding it really satisfying to develop my creative skills'.* The most common incorrect answer was A, where candidates most likely linked the statement with the detail in the final sentence *'the attraction of working in a traditional industry for a young person like me'.* The wording in both texts conveyed some idea of enjoyment but it was text C which best matched the idea of learning on the job and its artistic, rather than traditional nature.

In **Question (d)**, the statement asked *'which person suggests that her craft benefits the environment'*. The correct match was with text C and the observation *'people want to buy well-made shoes that last, not cheap*

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shoes that fall apart and get thrown away as household waste…'. Many candidates selected statement D where they were possibly attracted by the 'word-spot' *'environment'* in the expression '*After graduating in environmental science'.*

In **Question (h)**, candidates needed to match the statement *'which person is proud of the level of demand for her work' w*ith the detail in text E *'it gives me a good feeling to see a long list of our potential customers'.* Again, there were several candidates who appeared not to look beyond the word-spot in text C *'I'm really proud when I've made a good pair'* without fully understanding the importance of the wording *'level of demand'* in the statement.

Candidates need to be aware that single word-spotting, which is matching the same words in both statement and text, is rarely successful.

Exercise 3

This exercise was very successfully answered by the majority of candidates. Many were able to demonstrate enough understanding of the text to score well here, with brief answers in note form. The bullet points and the length of the lines are always a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers in this exercise.

Question 10

The full range of possible correct answers was chosen by candidates and many managed to convey at least 4 of them correctly. Points 2 and 3 on the mark scheme were particularly well attempted. The importance of the comparative *'stronger'* in point 5 and the idea of *'improving'* in point 6 were well recognised. A few candidates were too brief with their answers and omitted key detail. For example, in point 1, *'the challenge of learning'* could not be credited without the idea of *'a new skill'* and also in point 4, *'having fun'* was incomplete without *'with other people'.* There were very few occasions where candidates unnecessarily used their own words.

Question 11

This question proved to be equally accessible to most candidates and most achieved 3 out of the 4 possible marks. Candidates used all the possible answers on the mark scheme and key words such as *'flat'* in point 3 and *'short'* in point 5 were well recognised. The most common error, however, was the omission of key details in responses. Candidates are reminded that their answers must correspond with the heading. In this question, the item required *'advice'* and so answers such as *'the line near the ground'* and *'the line as tight as possible'* did not fulfil this requirement without a suitable verb at the beginning.

Exercise 4

Question 12

There was a full range of marks awarded on the summary question. All the content points proved accessible, and most candidates were able to identify at least five relevant details successfully. The task had two aspects, namely what are the harmful effects of light pollution and what people can do to reduce it. The most successful responses conveyed all relevant detail, demonstrated good use of own words for key points and featured good organisation. Some approached the two aspects individually and used appropriate linking words when they switched from one to the other, whilst some preferred to link the two aspects throughout. There were good examples of candidates who used this approach, such as *'Drivers may be disturbed by bright lights and so all lighting close to the road should not be too glaring',* which was credited with two marks for Content. Both strategies required a good use of effective cohesive devices such as *'moreover', 'in addition', 'importantly' and 'however'.* which gave a natural flow to the summary. Candidates who used *'firstly', 'secondly', 'thirdly'*, *'also…also'* conveyed the idea of sequencing, but this tended to read like a list.

There was a significant number of candidates who completed the summary outside the prescribed 120-word limit. This occurred generally when candidates wasted words with irrelevant introductions, mainly lifted from the first paragraph with its description of the power cut in Los Angeles. This part of the text contained no detail specific to the demands of the question. Consequently, some summaries were overlong and key details were often only addressed after the 120-word limit and could not be credited.

From a Content point of view, credit could not be given if key words were omitted. For example, when referring to the harmful effects, point 2 required some idea of *'successfully'* to convey the detail precisely and

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point 4 needed some reference to *'bright'* to fully describe the negative effect of light on drivers. Similar precision was demanded when outlining what people can do to reduce light pollution. For example, in point 1, *'turn lighting off'* was too vague and did not fully express the message in the text without the idea of *'when not required'*. Similarly, in point 5, *'keep your curtains closed'* without including the detail of *'at night'* was not precise enough when describing how we can improve our vision of the night sky. Successful responses demonstrated this need for precision and ensured that all these key details were included.

Centres are reminded that higher marks for Language are available to those candidates who try to paraphrase language from the source text. In this particular summary, for example, more successful responses reworded *'hunting'* to *'catching their prey', 'rely on moonlight to find their way'* to *'depend on the light of the moon to navigate'* and *'light only aimed downwards'* to *'light directed solely towards the ground'.* There were similar examples of single word alternatives, particularly with verbs such as, *'confuse', 'distracted'* and *'making sure'* which were changed to *'disorientate', 'disturbed'* and *'ensuring'.* More successful responses contained a mixture of vocabulary from the text and use if own words, together with a good level of grammatical accuracy.

Exercise 5

Question 13

General comments

Many responses attempted to supply a suitably brief introduction and concluding statement, in an informal register. There were also fewer prolonged greetings and conclusions with pre-learnt expressions than in past series. In addition, there was far less evidence of inappropriate and outdated idioms.

There are three written prompts which must be addressed and two picture prompts which are provided as a guide for students in their selection of content. Candidates are always free to select their own material, however, and those who do so often produce more successful responses.

Exercise 5

Most candidates engaged very well with the task, and many ideas were well-developed with an appropriately informal tone for the email format. The most successful responses conveyed a full description of their business idea together with credible details of what they have to do to enter the competition and the reasons why they have chosen their friend to be a partner.

For the first bullet point, more successful responses produced innovative ideas, for example *'Many officeworkers desire to have home-made food for lunch which could be fulfilled by us. We would offer it through our own app*'.

Amongst the most popular suggestions were setting up a bakery or an ice-cream stall, selling notes or creating a study app for candidates as well as various schemes involving recycling. There were some ideas which were ambitious, such as sending tourists into space. One of the most intriguing ideas was to make a pencil which contained a seed. When the pencil wore down, it was planted in the ground to become a tree again. Some responses featured ideas that often involved working with a relative in an existing business rather than creating a new idea.

The most successful responses to the second bullet point included writing a business plan, submitting a video, presenting a power point or delivering a speech before a panel of selectors. For example *'The business idea should be approved by the school faculty and you must also agree to regular inspections by them to ensure that everything is up to standard'*.

Less successful responses lacked development and only provided limited information such as filling in a form with name and contact details.

For the final bullet point, some responses were able to successfully a genuine feeling of friendship and described how well they get on together. Many emphasised that the friend is a perfect choice because they have skills which contribute greatly to the business idea, either because they are good at giving presentations, making speeches, creating websites or advertising through IT or are simply gifted in different

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aspects of the chosen business. *'Your outgoing and extroverted personality will make you a great salesman which is someone I need because I will only be focused on the cooking side of things'*.

On occasion, candidates interpreted the rubric from a different point of view, namely that the recipient of the email was not the friend being chosen. The writer was informing the recipient that it was another friend who had become the partner in the business venture and outlined the reasons why they would work well together.

Most responses featured a suitably informal register. The most effective responses often referred back to the recipient of the email and were written as if to a real friend, with expressions such as: *'Trust me on this, I think it would be a brilliant idea'* or *'remember when we used to try baking cakes when we were 10?'*. Reponses which scored highly for Language included such phrases as *'we'd better hurry up or we'll miss the boat',' our profits will go through the roof', 'her ideas for the logo design are mind-blowing'* and *'he is a real gem for this kind of competition'*.

Spelling and punctuation were generally accurate even when more ambitious language and structures were used. Most responses used paragraphs to good effect to divide ideas.

Exercise 6

Question 14

General comments

Two prompts are provided to help with simple ideas. However, there needs to be evidence that if candidates use these prompts, they can develop and widen them with a formal register suitable to the requirements of a report.

A clear, organised sequence of views and arguments is important. Some responses lacked this and repetitions of both language and content were evident.

Exercise 6

Most responses adopted a formal tone and register. There were two aspects to this question as outlined in the rubric wording and successful responses produced ideas well beyond the suggestions of the prompts to present a balanced report, focusing equally on both aspects.

When expressing what was good about the exhibition, most candidates wrote about artwork as paintings and drawings with the possible addition of sculpting. However, there were several who interpreted the idea of art in its broader sense and included dance, music and theatre in their report. More ambitious responses not only commented on the quality of the work on display and the hard work of the candidates themselves, but also conveyed a positive sense of the atmosphere at the exhibition with descriptions of the decorations and the sights, sounds and smells of the event. For example, '*a group of candidates got together to create their space to look like the inside of a gear box of a car…and all of the gears then moved'.* Less successful responses relied heavily on the prompt *'there were lots of different types of art'* and added little development to this. Most candidates placed the exhibition within their own school premises but there were some who located it at another venue, with descriptions of the journey to the event and comments on the transport which tended not to be relevant.

When addressing the second aspect of the report, suggesting how the event could be improved next time, many responses relied on the idea in the prompt *'the exhibition should last more than one week'*. They developed this detail with credible reasons why more time was needed, stating that there were so many exhibits on display and that opening times did not allow parents and members of the public to view them. They convincingly argued for more time for next year's event. There were some very detailed suggestions which included the recommendations that the artist should be on hand to explain their work with the opportunity for the public to buy some of the exhibits and that the event could further be enhanced by professional artists giving talks and demonstrations. There were also proposals that there should be refreshments provided together with more security staff to deter damage and vandalism. Less successful responses offered little beyond the wording of the prompts with ideas such as *'the duration of the exhibition could be extended'* or *'the exhibition should last more than one week, people enjoy art*'. Some responses only addressed what was wrong with the exhibition and, although there was the implication that such issues should be put right for next time, there were no explicit suggestions offered.

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Most candidates separated the two aspects of the question well either through paragraphing and cohesive wording, which created a suitable division, or by using sub-headings such as *'introduction', 'positives of the exhibition', 'suggestions for improvement'* and *'conclusion'.*

From a Language point of view, the most successful responses used ambitious and complex structures to express feelings and suggestions. For example, *'fascinating to see what started as a small candidate proposition has captured the attention and admiration of everyone'* and *'it was an insight into a classmate's piece of mind'*. There were also many examples of less common vocabulary such as *'intellectual property', 'creative freedom', 'works were showcased'* and *'inspirational'.* Paragraphs and linking words were generally well used and provided a balance when conveying both aspects of the report. Words and expressions such as *'without a doubt', 'given these positives…'* as well as *'the overall impression', 'taking all into account…'* and '*that being said'* significantly added to cohesion.

Overall, most candidates responded with a structured report which covered both aspects of the rubric requirements. To gain access to higher marks for Content, both sections should be developed well. Generally, a good balance to the writing was established by also providing an introductory comment on the aim of the report and a concluding statement, both of which helped to give a sense of cohesion to many responses. More successful responses provided different wording in the concluding paragraph to that used in the main body of the report and avoided repetition of the same vocabulary and expressions.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/22
Reading and Writing (Extended) 22

Key messages

In **Exercise 1** responses should be precise but also brief, to avoid the inclusion of superfluous information which could affect the answer.

In **Exercise 2** candidates should respond to all questions, clearly writing the letter given as the response. They should attempt to locate synonyms and paraphrasing of key details in the text which are provided in the question.

In **Exercise 3** notes should be precise and include key details such as verbs or adjectives that relate to the requirements of the headings. Responses should correspond to the headings in each section and each response should be presented on a separate line as shown by the bullet points.

In **Exercise 4**, it is vital that candidates do not exceed the 120-word limit. Any content points made after 120 words will **not** be credited, and the language mark may also be affected. Candidates should consider the requirements of the summary, referring only to relevant aspects. Taking whole sentences or phrases containing content points directly from the text should be discouraged as this will preclude candidates from accessing higher band language marks.

In **Exercises 5** and **6** candidates should focus on the requirements of the writing task, and ensure different bullet points or aspects of the task are well developed. They are required to write 150-200 words, so responses of less than 150 words may not sufficiently cover the topic or fulfil the task.

General Comments

Most candidates were entered correctly for the Extended paper.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Precise answers are required for this comprehension exercise. Candidates should ensure they focus on the requirements of the question and locate the relevant section of the text when responding. They should read carefully around what they recognise as the correct response to check there is no further information that negates or changes this.

Question 1

This question was very well answered. The most common incorrect responses were ‘by email’ or ‘signed up to receive regular updates,’ which were things Luke had done before he saw the advert about helpers being needed.

Question 2

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This question was very well answered. The most common incorrect response was 'free entry to all events,' the original reason for Luke becoming involved, rather than 'discounts', which he found out about on his first day.

Question 3

This question was very well answered. A few candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of 'venue' in the question and gave the response 'talks by writers.' Others gave other venues mentioned (theatre, science museum) as opposed to where the *majority* of events were held, the library.

Question 4

This question was very well answered. Most incorrect responses referred to the number of writers that had been invited (36) rather than the 19 writers that turned up to speak.

Question 5

This question was well answered. Incorrect responses mainly referred to '(specific type of) literature,' which was the focus of each event, not the most popular event. 'Travel writing' was also given, but the tickets did not sell out 'as fast as they did for the crime writing one.'

Question 6

This question was quite well answered. Some candidates appeared not to connect 'a quiz on the final night' in the text with 'the last evening' in the question, and gave responses such as 'film show' or 'several social things.'

Question 7

This question was well answered. Some candidates appeared not to link 'we *set off* from the market square' in the text with the question, 'Where did the guided tour *start?*,' so gave other places visited such as the castle or the police station.

Question 8

This question was quite well answered. Many candidates provided one correct detail but gave 'selling tickets' as another. The correct responses were 'giving directions,' which Luke *did a lot of*, and 'welcoming visitors', which he spent *most of his time doing.*

Question 9

This question was very well answered, and a significant number of candidates gained the full four marks available. The most common incorrect responses were 'help out beforehand,' which was not specific enough, and 'getting financial support', which was inaccurate and needed the comparative idea 'getting *more* financial support'. Some candidates wrote 'read extracts', which omitted a key detail as Luke thought it would be a great idea if '*actors* could read extracts'.

Exercise 2

This multiple matching exercise proved challenging for some candidates though many were able to gain all ten available marks. Generally, Questions **(a)**, **(b)**, **(f)**, **(i)** and **(j)** were the most difficult for some. The task was based on a magazine article about the origins of certain punctuation marks. Candidates were required to match facts and suggestions with information from each section of the text. They should not only skim and scan the text, but also identify the key words in the question and ensure that the text they select fully supports their choice of answer. They should look for synonyms, antonyms and rephrasing of the ideas.

Question 10

(a) Candidates gave **A** or **B** as the most common incorrect responses. They needed to find the section that suggested that a symbol was 'created to reduce the feeling of frustration among writers', which was clearly stated in option **D**, 'in order to avoid what he described as the annoying repetition of having to write the word equals'. In section **B**, the text states: 'it seems that some punctuation marks are considered to be rather annoying'. Candidates may have incorrectly, in this instance,

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connected 'frustration' and 'annoying', rather than ensuring the section relatedly appropriately to the question.

(b) This question was quite well answered. **A** and **E** were the most chosen incorrect responses. **A** focuses on the importance of punctuation marks and **E** mentions a few currency symbols, all of which were created combining two items. Neither section refers to how the shape of a specific punctuation mark developed from two letters, as described in **B**, the correct response.

(c) This question was well answered. The correct answer (**A**) contained information about why it would be difficult to understand text without punctuation. This was clearly stated in, 'In fact, imagine what this paragraph would look like if all the punctuation was removed…'.

(d) This question was fairly well-answered. The correct response was **D**. Candidates were asked to find a reference to 'an example of a punctuation mark which failed to become popular'. The most common incorrect answers were **B**, which explains the development of the exclamation mark, and **C**, which describes how the question mark evolved.

(e) This question was well answered. **D** was the most common incorrect choice. Candidates needed to find 'theories which can't be proved about the origin of a punctuation mark.' In the final sentence of the correct section (**C**), it states 'a lack of accurate historical records means that we are never likely to be sure which of these stories is correct, or indeed if either of them is' and was understood by most candidates.

(f) This question was quite well answered, with **C** and **E** being the most common incorrect responses, although there was a range of incorrect answers. Candidates were asked to identify 'an example of messages that consisted only of punctuation'. The correct answer is **A**, an account of messages only containing the punctuation marks ? and !.

(g) Candidates often chose **A**, **C** or **D** rather than the correct answer **E**. They were asked to identify the section that describes 'a symbol which became well known despite having *no clear purpose*'. The text states 'And then there's the hashtag: #. It began to be used in the 1960s when it was included on early telephone keypads. It had *no real function* then, but today is used widely in social media.' Some candidates were unsuccessful in connecting 'having no clear purpose' in the question with 'no real function' in the text.

(h) This question was well answered, with most candidates choosing the correct section (**B**). **D** was the most frequent incorrect answer. Candidates were asked to identify the section referring to 'the opinion that using a particular punctuation mark too much creates *poor writing.'* The text explains, 'a writer should avoid including exclamation marks too frequently. Otherwise, the impression given is that *the writer lacks skill*.'

(i) This question was quite well answered. A significant number of candidates gave an incorrect response, with **D** being the most frequent. Candidates were asked to find 'an example of an exception to a rule.' The correct answer (**E**), uses a rhetorical question to identify the exception, 'So why is the symbol for the dollar a line through an S and not a D?.' Reference to 'One such symbol' in **D** may have caused some candidates to connect this with **Question (i)**.

(j) This question was fairly well-answered, with **C** and **B** being the most common incorrect answers. Candidates were asked to identify the section that referred to 'a punctuation mark which was developed to help people read texts aloud.' The correct answer was in section **A**, which states 'Its original purpose was to indicate when a speaker should take a breath while reading to an audience.'

Exercise 3

There was a very good response to this note-taking exercise with a large number of candidates gaining at least seven or eight marks out of the nine marks available. Notes cannot be credited when key information is omitted or if they are placed under the wrong heading.

Question 11

This section was very well attempted with many candidates correctly providing at least five accurate notes. A significant number of candidates failed to achieve the full six marks available as they appeared not to

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recognise that ‘the amount of climbing was huge’ and ‘climbing and descending 42 peaks’ expressed the same idea, and they gave these two notes as separate points. Some candidates gave responses which omitted key details, writing notes such as, ‘there was no route,’ which was not entirely accurate.

Question 12

This section was also very well attempted, and a significant number of candidates provided the required three correct notes out of a possible four.

Exercise 4

In **Exercise 4**, candidates are required to provide eight discrete, relevant content points. They should aim to express the content of the summary as far as possible in their own words, not exceeding the 120-word limit. Candidates should read the requirements of the summary carefully to ensure the focus is correct.

In this exercise, a significant number of candidates included at least four of the ten possible points, with some providing the required eight or more. Although some candidates attempted to use their own words in the writing of the summary, others relied heavily on language from the text.

Some responses were concise and relevant, while a number of candidates began with a long, irrelevant introduction containing information about the importance of healthy eating, fitness and happiness, with no content points. This often meant that some content points were made after 120 words and therefore could not be credited. Some points did not include essential key details. For example, the point that natural materials should be used *for building* often omitted the ‘for building’ idea, and only referred to using natural materials such as wood. Another point was that objects from places that remind people of happy times should be in the home. When some candidates attempted to make this point, they often omitted the idea of objects being connected to happy memories, writing ‘have objects that make you happy’. Expressed in this way, the point was not accurate enough to be credited.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range with the majority of candidates gaining three to six marks. Many responses featured good paraphrasing and effective use of cohesive devices.

It is important that content points remain clear when re-expressed as marks cannot be awarded if the meaning changes. Practice with verb, noun and adjective synonyms, along with practice in forming alternative grammatical structures is beneficial to enable candidates to attain the higher bands.

Exercise 5

In this exercise, candidates complete an email task based on fulfilling the requirements specified in three bullet points. It is also important that candidates relate the email to the context set in the exercise, in this case the visit of a friend from another country, for the first time.

Most responses featured development of all three bullet points, fulfilling the task with an appropriate style and a good sense of purpose. The content was communicated clearly. Occasionally a bullet point was omitted, which affected the content mark awarded. There were candidates whose emails were less than 150 words, so there was not sufficient development for higher band content marks. Candidates should attempt to write *at least* 150 words.

In general, responses were successful. Some fulfilled the task skilfully and effectively and developed the email to include a range of information and ideas. Candidates generally used an informal register, though this was not always consistent. For example, phrases such as ‘I would like to inform you’ or ‘In conclusion’ are not appropriate for this task.

Candidates had a range of ideas regarding where to take the friend such as to shopping malls, restaurants, tourist attractions and theme parks, along with places in nature like mountains and lakes. Some candidates included a number of places, explaining why they had chosen them, which ensured good development of this aspect of the email. Regarding the second bullet point, some responses only mentioned who their friend would meet (a member of the family, friends, a famous person). However, those who included information about the person, for example character traits or interests again demonstrated good development of the task. The third bullet point concerning what the friend should bring included various ideas such as sunscreen, types of clothes, books, passports and many more. This bullet point was developed by suggesting several items and why they would be useful.

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Effective emails connected the content of the email to the recipient, writing for example, 'I know you're a nature lover, so I planned two hikes to two different locations … if you want, we can also go to the nature park.' Such emails demonstrated good cohesion and often began with natural openings, referring to some aspect of the recipient's life. Endings often expressed the writer's impatience to see their friend, and how they were looking forward to their arrival.

Most candidates wrote using a good range of well-organised language. There were a few who used mainly simple structures and were more limited in range and accuracy. Some candidates were able to construct accurate sentences of different lengths, which included more complex structures and a range of appropriately used, less common vocabulary.

Language deserving of the higher bands should demonstrate a wide range of structures and vocabulary. An example of higher band language is, 'The natural beauty of my country is well worth photographing. We will have plenty of opportunities to do this when on hikes, so bring your camera to capture these memories together.'. In this example complex language is used accurately and effectively. Other responses featured attempts at more complex language such as, 'My family and I will waiting at the enter of the airport.' and 'Don't forget to bring the pretty skirt you've been took photos to me.' but which were not wholly accurate. Some emails included mainly very short sentences (subject + verb + object), which were accurate but did not demonstrate a wide range of language required for the higher bands.

Exercise 6

In this exercise candidates are required to write an article, a review or a report for a particular target audience. It is important that they read the task carefully and consider the two prompts which are given to help form ideas on the subject. Candidates may include other points and ideas relevant to the task, along with developing the views in the prompts if they choose to, expressing these in their own words. The style and register should be appropriate for the type of task.

Candidates were expected to write a report to the head teacher saying what they liked about the club and suggesting how it could be improved in the future. One prompt was a quote from a club member saying that they would like to meet more than once a month, and the other was about the fun experienced when taking part in a concert.

Most responses fulfilled the task with a generally good sense of purpose and audience, some referring only to the ideas in the prompts and others also introducing ideas of their own. Some examples of other ideas that candidates included were: 'there was a wide range of musical instruments available', 'there is a relaxed atmosphere in the club', 'the after-school club is a good place to find new friends' and 'there are students who are serious about music and the club will help them to start a career in music'. Responses which gained high marks featured a balanced report which explained what was enjoyed, rather than just explaining what was done. They also developed both aspects of the report, what they liked and improvements they would like to see. Some candidates chose to use relevant sub-headings and although this is not a requirement, such responses covered all aspects of the task fully. Most candidates used the correct register and style.

The full range of marks was awarded for language, with most responses attempting more complex structures and some less common vocabulary. Effective responses included accurate, varied sentence structures, good punctuation and paragraphing, along with a wide range of less common vocabulary. This quality of language is exemplified in, 'if we provided newer instruments, more students would be interested in joining.' and 'After a long day of acquiring academic knowledge, students can escape from schoolwork pressure and devote themselves to singing and playing instruments such as flutes and cellos.' Some responses attempted complex language though some errors were present. For example, 'But one hesitation is that our original music teacher had leaved due to some reason so we had no teacher to guide us.'

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/31
Listening (Core) 31

Key messages

- Candidates need to be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the rubric carefully for each question on the paper. This is particularly important where a word limit must be adhered to. This applies to **Exercises 1** and **2**.
- Candidates should be made aware of distracting information in listening texts and practise listening for specific detail which is required as the intended answer.
- In **Exercise 1**, candidates should establish what a question is asking for, by highlighting the question words, e.g. *how, why, when,* and the key words in the question. In most cases, short, direct responses are most successful. Responses must also stay within the word limits as stated in the main rubric for each applicable section.
- In the gap-filling exercise (i.e. **Exercise 2**), candidates should be encouraged to predict the answers in the gaps. At the end of each section, candidates should also check their responses carefully to make sure they fit grammatically and are within the word limit.
- In **Exercise 2**, candidates should be reminded not to include words that are printed in the statements on the question paper before or after each gap as part of their answer.
- In **Exercise 2**, it is advisable for candidates to practise using the framework provided by the gapped statements, to guide themselves through the audio text. This technique will help candidates locate the required missing detail and ensure that this detail is inserted in the appropriate gap.
- In the matching speakers question (**Exercise 3**) and the multiple-choice questions (**Exercise 4**), candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which answer they wish to be taken as their final selection by Examiners.
- In **Exercise 3**, candidates need to be reminded to use each letter only once.
- Candidates' awareness should be raised of the importance of using the correct singular/plural form of nouns and prepositions as these can alter the key meaning.
- When making phonetic attempts, it is recommended that candidates try to mimic the number of syllables in the word that has been heard and also to try to re-create the vowel and consonant sounds accurately. However, phonetic attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. sea/see, weak/week etc.).
- More pronunciation awareness activities, particularly of connected speech (e.g. assimilation of sounds, omission of sounds), would be beneficial to learners. Learners should also be made aware of the importance of transcribing voiced and unvoiced consonants accurately as these may change meaning (e.g. s/z as in 'prices' and 'prizes').
- Some questions involve transcribing numbers, and these should therefore be practised. For example, it is useful to help candidates to distinguish between the pronunciation of eighty and eighteen. Candidates would benefit from more practice in writing larger numbers correctly and the standard form of abbreviations of common units (e.g. 'min' for minutes, 'km' for kilometres, etc.).
- Learners should practise a range of listening skills (e.g. listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for grammatical/lexical detail, etc.) in various formats (e.g. announcements, informal dialogues, formal talks, etc.).

General comments

- Candidates were required to use a set number of words for **Exercises 1** and **2**. A large number of candidates, although with correct responses, could not be credited as they exceeded the required number of words.

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- Successful responses were those which provided short, clear answers and which adhered to the word limit required.
- Candidates should be reminded that the answer will be heard; they must not make up an answer.
- Candidates should be reminded that no two questions will have the same answer.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Overall, this section was well answered. There were few omissions, but responses could not be credited when more than the required words were written.

Question 1

(a) The majority of candidates identified the correct response ’12 pound sixty’. Several candidates wrote ‘£12.60 for each’ and lost the mark. Many candidates used ‘dollars’, ‘euros’ and ‘cents’ or a mixture of these currencies e.g. ’12 pounds 60 cents’. Other responses that could not be credited were ‘12.60p’ and ’12.6 pounds’.

(b) There was a very mixed response here. Quite a few candidates chose ‘sweet popcorn’ which could not be credited. Many candidates wrote ‘popcorn and sweets’. A large number of candidates lost marks through inaccurate spelling.

Question 2

(a) This was very well attempted, and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. A significant number of candidates wrote ‘cousin and uncle’ or ‘aunt and uncle’ and lost the mark. Other responses that could not be credited were ‘Maria West’ and ambiguous spelling.

(b) This was generally well answered although many candidates gave both the distractor (visiting the museum) and ‘ice skating’ as their response, which lost them the mark. Incorrect responses included ‘ice kating’, ‘eye skating’ and ‘ice sketting’.

Question 3

(a) There was a mixed level of success here. Quite a few candidates wrote ‘river’ or ‘beach’ and lost the mark. Ambiguous incorrect spellings were not credited. Some candidates included the wrong preposition e.g. ‘by the park’ or ‘beside the park’ which could not be credited.

(b) There was a mixed level of success here and there were a variety of spelling errors that lost candidates marks. A few candidates wrote ‘Tuesday’ or ‘Thursday’.

Question 4

(a) This question was extremely well attempted with the vast majority of candidates picking out the correct response ‘jumper’. The distractor ‘jacket’ was frequently selected while some wrote ‘jamper’ or the plural ‘jumpers’ that could not be credited.

(b) This was extremely well attempted with the majority of candidates scoring a mark here. Quite a few candidates included the distractor ‘reasonable/good prices’ with their correct response and lost the mark. Many candidates omitted ‘free’. Ambiguous spelling errors could not be credited.

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Exercise 2

Question 5

Large parts of this question were answered well by many candidates. Responses containing repetition of words, either preceding or following the gap, were not credited as they led to an incorrect grammatical fit. In some cases, wrong singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

(i) This was consistently well answered by the vast majority of candidates. However, the following responses could not be credited: '700 hundred', '7 hundreds', '700+' and 'more than 700'.

(ii) On the whole, this question was generally well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing '1218' while others wrote 'early 1280' or '1250'.

(iii) There was a mixed level of success here. Quite a few candidates wrote 'white clouds'. Some wrote 'bride world' while others wrote 'bright wold' which could not be credited.

(iv) The vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark here. The responses that lost marks were '18', '20' and '30'.

(v) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates although some candidates left it blank. However, some candidates wrote 'Asia' and lost the mark. Other responses that could not be credited were 'South of America', 'North America' and 'America'.

(vi) This was generally well attempted by the vast majority of candidates although some made spelling errors which could not be credited. Other responses that could not be credited were 'western part', 'south' and 'central'.

(vii) This was quite well attempted with many candidates giving the correct response. Some of the responses that could not be credited were 'Australia', 'lamb' and 'agriculture products'.

(viii) This was consistently well answered by the vast majority of candidates, although some candidates lost the mark by writing 'football' and 'rugby'. Ambiguous spelling errors were not credited.

Exercise 3

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates need to ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

Exercise 4

Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates failed to clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be absolutely no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/32
Listening (Core) 32

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

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/41
Listening (Extended) 41

Key messages

- Candidates need to be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the rubric carefully for each question on the paper. This is particularly important where a word limit must be adhered to. This applies to **Exercises 1**, **2** and **5**.
- Candidates should be made aware of distracting information in listening texts and practise listening for specific detail which is required as the intended answer.
- In **Exercise 1**, candidates should establish what a question is asking for, by highlighting the question words, e.g. *how, why, when*, and the key words in the question. In most cases, short, direct responses are most successful. Responses must also stay within the word limits as stated in the main rubric for each applicable section.
- In the gap-filling exercises (i.e. **Exercises 2** and **5**), candidates should be encouraged to predict the answers in the gaps. At the end of each section, candidates should also check their responses carefully to make sure they fit grammatically and are within the word limit.
- In **Exercises 2** and **5**, candidates should be reminded not to include words that are printed in the statements on the question paper before or after each gap as part of their answer.
- In **Exercises 2** and **5**, it is advisable for candidates to practise using the framework provided by the gapped statements, to guide themselves through the audio text. This technique will help candidates locate the required missing detail and ensure that this detail is inserted in the appropriate gap.
- In the matching speakers question (**Exercise 3**) and the multiple-choice questions (**Exercise 4**), candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which answer they wish to be taken as their final selection by Examiners.
- In **Exercise 3**, candidates need to be reminded to use each letter only once.
- Candidates' awareness should be raised of the importance of using the correct singular/plural form of nouns and prepositions as these can alter the key meaning.
- When making phonetic attempts, it is recommended that candidates try to mimic the number of syllables in the word that has been heard and also to try to re-create the vowel and consonant sounds accurately. However, phonetic attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. sea/see, weak/week etc.).
- More pronunciation awareness activities, particularly of connected speech (e.g. assimilation of sounds, omission of sounds), would be beneficial to learners. Learners should also be made aware of the importance of transcribing voiced and unvoiced consonants accurately as these may change meaning (e.g. s/z as in 'prices' and 'prizes').
- Some questions involve transcribing numbers, and these should therefore be practised. For example, it is useful to help candidates to distinguish between the pronunciation of eighty and eighteen. Candidates would benefit from more practice in writing larger numbers correctly and the standard form of abbreviations of common units (e.g. 'min' for minutes, 'km' for kilometres, etc.).
- Learners should practise a range of listening skills (e.g. listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for grammatical/lexical detail, etc.) in various formats (e.g. announcements, informal dialogues, formal talks, etc.).

General comments

- Candidates were required to use a set number of words for **Exercises 1**, **2** and **5**. A large number of candidates, although with correct responses, could not be credited as they exceeded the required number of words.

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- Successful responses were those which provided short, clear answers and which adhered to the word limit required.
- Candidates should be reminded that the answer will be heard; they must not make up an answer.
- Candidates should be reminded that no two questions will have the same answer.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Overall, this section was well answered. There were few omissions, but responses could not be credited when more than the required words were written.

Question 1

(a) The majority of candidates identified the correct response ’12 pound sixty’. Several candidates wrote ‘£12.60 for each’ and lost the mark. Many candidates used ‘dollars’, ‘euros’ and ‘cents’ or a mixture of these currencies e.g. ’12 pounds 60 cents’. Other responses that could not be credited were ‘12.60p’ and ’12.6 pounds’.

(b) There was a very mixed response here. Quite a few candidates put down ‘sweet popcorn’ which could not be credited. Many candidates wrote ‘popcorn and sweets’. A large number of candidates lost marks through inaccurate spelling.

Question 2

(a) This was very well attempted, and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. A significant number of candidates wrote ‘cousin and uncle’ or ‘aunt and uncle’ and lost the mark. Other responses that could not be credited were ‘Maria West’ and ambiguous spelling.

(b) This was generally well answered although many candidates gave both the distractor (visiting the museum) and ‘ice skating’ as their response, which lost them the mark. Incorrect responses included ‘ice kating’, ‘eye skating’ and ‘ice sketting’.

Question 3

(a) There was a mixed level of success here. Quite a few candidates wrote ‘river’ or ‘beach’ and lost the mark. Ambiguous incorrect spellings were not credited. Some candidates included the wrong preposition e.g. ‘by the park’ or ‘beside the park’ which could not be credited.

(b) There was a mixed level of success here and there were there were a variety of spelling errors that lost candidates marks. A few candidates wrote ‘Tuesday’ or ‘Thursday’.

Question 4

(a) This question was extremely well attempted with the vast majority of candidates picking out the correct response ‘jumper’. The distractor ‘jacket’ was frequently selected while some wrote ‘jamper’ or the plural ‘jumpers’ that could not be credited.

(b) This was extremely well attempted with the majority of candidates scoring a mark here. Quite a few candidates included the distractor ‘reasonable/good prices’ with their correct response and lost the mark. Many candidates omitted ‘free’. Ambiguous spelling errors could not be credited.

Exercise 2

Question 5

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. Responses containing repetition of words, either preceding or following the gap, were not credited as they led to an incorrect grammatical fit. In some cases, wrong singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

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(i) This was consistently well answered by the vast majority of candidates. However, the following responses could not be credited: '700 hundred', '7 hundreds', '700+' and 'more than 700'.

(ii) On the whole, this question was generally well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing '1218' while others wrote 'early 1280' or '1250'.

(iii) There was a mixed level of success here. Quite a few candidates wrote 'white clouds'. Some wrote 'bride world' while others wrote 'bright wold' which could not be credited.

(iv) The vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark here. The responses that lost marks were '18', '20' and '30'.

(v) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates although some candidates left it blank. However, some candidates wrote 'Asia' and lost the mark. Other responses that could not be credited were 'South of America', 'North America' and 'America'.

(vi) This was generally well attempted by the vast majority of candidates although some made spelling errors which could not be credited. Other responses that could not be credited were 'western part', 'south' and 'central'.

(vii) This was quite well attempted with many candidates giving the correct response. Some of the responses that could not be credited were 'Australia', 'lamb' and 'agriculture products'.

(viii) This was consistently well answered by the vast majority of candidates although some candidates lost the mark by writing 'football' and 'rugby'. Ambiguous spelling errors were not credited.

Exercise 3

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates need to ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

Exercise 4

Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates failed to clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be absolutely no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

Exercise 5

Question 8

There was a mixed response to this question. Some responses provided were not always a grammatical fit and incorrect singular and plural noun meant that some candidates could not be credited. There were a few questions that were not attempted by some candidates.

Part A

(i) There was a mixed level of success here, with a high number of spelling attempts that could not be credited. Other incorrect responses were '24 festivals', 'calendar festivals', 'animal behaviour' and 'seasons'.

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(ii) This was very poorly attempted, and most candidates struggled to pick out the correct response. A large number of candidates wrote 'barometer'. Other incorrect responses were 'air compression' and 'high pressure'.

(iii) This question elicited many correct answers. Occasionally, the following incorrect responses appeared: 'equations', 'calculators' and 'formulae'.

(iv) This was fairly well answered although some candidates wrote the singular 'balloon' and lost the mark. Some spelling attempts could not be credited.

(v) This was very well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Amongst the incorrect responses were '1960s', 'space' and '1957'.

Part B

(i) There was a mixed level of success here – many candidates wrote 'unreliable ways' or 'unreliable sources' and lost the mark. Incorrect spelling attempts were not credited.

(ii) This was extremely well answered by the vast majority of candidates, although some candidates lost the mark due to incorrect spelling. A few candidates chose the distractor 'summer' while some gave unusual responses such as 'clouds' and 'forests'.

(iii) This was generally well answered. Some of the incorrect responses were 'reflex sunlight', 'reflect sun' and 'trap heat'.

(iv) This was very well answered by the vast majority of candidates. However, the following responses could not be credited: 'feelback', 'feeback', 'fedback' and 'fitback'.

(v) This question was consistently well answered by the vast majority of candidates, but some candidates struggled with the spelling. Some responses that could not be credited were 'six times', '3 times' and 'increase'.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/42
Listening (Extended) 42

Key messages

- Candidates need to be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. When altering their responses, candidates should simply cross these responses out and write their corrections next to them. Candidates should not write over, or try to erase, their initial answers. Attempts which cannot be read, may not be awarded.
- Learners should be reminded of the importance of using the right singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing spelling attempts, the intended meaning of the attempted word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. sea/see, deer/dear).
- Candidates should be encouraged to read and listen to the rubric for each part of the paper very carefully to ensure they meet the exact requirements of each particular exercise.
- In **Exercise 1**, **Questions 1** to **4**, candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for by highlighting the question words, e.g. how, where, when, and the key words in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful. In cases where candidates decide to supply additional information, in addition to the expected key answer, and the extra information is incorrect, such attempts cannot be credited. For this reason, candidates should be encouraged to provide concise answers.
- In the gap-filling **Exercises 2**, **5A** and **5B** candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name, etc.) before listening. Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercises 2**, **5A** and **5B**, candidates should also be reminded not to include words, or ideas, which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In the multiple matching items, **Exercise 3**, and the multiple choice items, **Exercise 4**, candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. If there is any uncertainty about which option is intended as the candidate's definitive choice, such attempts may not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it cannot be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4,** if two boxes are ticked rather than one then no marks can be given.

General comments

- Many candidates appeared to use appropriate exam techniques (e.g. predicting parts of speech needed in gap-fill exercises) to help them listen for the correct detail.
- The vast majority of candidates adhered to the required word limit set out in the rubric of each exercise. However, there are still some candidates who write their answers as long sentences, especially in **Exercise 1**.
- Many candidates seemed to be aware of the distracting information in the listening exercises. However, there was a slight increase in instances of candidates providing the distracting details in addition to the correct detail, particularly in **Exercise 1**. Such attempts could not be credited.
- Candidates need to be reminded not to use the same letter more than once in **Exercise 3** and only tick one box in **Exercise 4**. There was a significant increase in instances of candidates using the same letter more than once in **Exercise 3** this series. Candidates need to be encouraged to read (and listen) to the rubric at the start of each exercise carefully and follow the instructions they hear.

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- Overall, most candidates dealt with listening for gist and speakers' opinions relatively well, but more practice of listening for correct specific detail is recommended. This includes listening for grammatical (e.g. width/wide) and phonetic detail (e.g. bet/bat). Listening to longer talks proved challenging for some candidates and learners would benefit from more practice to ensure they can follow, and navigate themselves through, longer texts (e.g. talks and presentations).

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Questions 1 – 4

Overall, this section was fairly well attempted by most candidates. Most marks were lost where candidates selected the distracting detail in error instead of the correct answer. This was a particular issue in **Questions 1(a)**, **4(a)** and **4(b)**. Other reasons for loss of marks are outlined below. There were minimal instances of No Responses for this part of the test.

(a) This question was answered reasonably well. Many candidates provided the expected detail 'train station', but 'railway station' was also allowed. Most responses were spelled correctly, although some spelling attempts put the intended meaning in doubt and could not be awarded any marks. No marks could be given to attempts which omitted the key detail 'train' or included the wrong detail (e.g. train centre). Most marks were lost due to the inclusion of the distracting details 'museum', 'city centre' and 'shopping centre'.

(b) This question was attempted fairly well, with many candidates providing the expected detail '19A'. Other creditable attempts included 'A19' and '19thA'. Incomplete responses which only included the number 19, were given zero marks. Many candidates misheard '19A' as '90A' or '98'. Some candidates selected the distracting number '16'.

Question 2

(a) There was a high level of success for this question. The expected answer was 'surfing', but 'surf' was also accepted here. Some responses were given as a longer phrase (e.g. surfing lessons). Most spelling attempts were creditable. However, attempts which were ambiguous were not credited. Some candidates selected the distracting detail 'sailing' or only included the location 'beach' rather than the water sport the speaker learned.

(b) The expected answer was 'teacher' and the vast majority of candidates provided this detail. Other creditable attempts included 'teaching' and 'coach'. Some responses were given as part of a longer phrase and, as long as the extra detail did not change the targeted idea, these attempts were awarded (e.g. teacher was friendly, great teacher). The plural form 'teachers' was not allowed as it changed the targeted idea. The vast majority of candidates provided the correct spelling.. Ambiguous spelling attempts gained zero marks.

Question 3

(a) Candidates dealt extremely well with this question. The expected detail here was 'bee', but the longer phrase 'shot of a bee' was also credited. However, some candidates misheard this phrase as 'shadow of a bee' and lost the mark. A few candidates provided an ambiguous spelling attempt 'bea' and lost the mark. The plural form 'bees' was also disallowed as it changed the targeted idea. Only a small number of candidates selected the distracting details 'butterfly' and 'flower'.

(b) This was another question that produced a very high level of success, with most candidates selecting the targeted idea 'street'. The plural form 'streets' was also credited as it did not alter the overall meaning of the targeted idea. However, where candidates provided the distracting details 'park' and downtown' no marks could be given. Unsuccessful responses often included ambiguous spelling attempts.

Question 4

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(a) Candidates dealt with this item fairly well. The intended answer for this question was ‘rainy’, but other word forms were also allowed (e.g. rain, raining). Responses that were too general (e.g. bad weather) could not be credited. Most spelling attempts were deemed recognisable and credited. However, there were a few attempts which put the intended meaning in doubt and lost the mark. The inclusion of the distracting details ‘sunny’ and ‘windy’ did not gain any marks when provided, either on their own or in addition to the correct detail.

(b) This question provided a reasonable level of success, with most candidates providing the correct detail ‘relieved’. The noun ‘relief’ was also credited. Most spelling attempts gained the mark as they did not put the intended meaning in doubt. Marks were often lost when spelling attempts were too ambiguous or when candidates selected the distracting detail ‘concerned’ or ‘disappointed’.

Exercise 2

Questions 5 (a) – 5(h)

A fair level of success was achieved in this Exercise. On average, candidates scored 5 marks. The most successful attempts were for **Questions (b)**, **(c)** and **(h)**. Candidates were least successful with **Questions (e)** and **(f)**.

(a) There was a relatively high level of success here, with many candidates selecting the correct detail ‘mist’. Some candidates provided a synonymous idea and most of these gained the mark (e.g. haze, fog, vapour). Marks were mainly lost where candidates misheard the targeted idea as ‘missed’. Marks were also lost due to the inclusion of the distractor ‘heavy rain’.

(b) The correct detail ‘500’ was selected by more than two thirds of the candidates. Most marks were lost here due to the inclusion of other distracting numbers: ‘900’ and ‘3000’.

(c) This item was answered fairly well by most candidates, who provided the correct detail ‘sea’. Other creditable attempts included ‘sea level’ and ‘ocean’. The plural form ‘seas’ was also allowed. Less successful attempts included the distractor ‘land’ or random nouns (e.g. weather, distance). Marks were also lost where spelling attempts created a homophone (i.e. see).

(d) This question was attempted fairly well, with many candidates successfully selecting the expected detail ‘sunlight’. ‘Light’ and ‘sun’ on their own were also credited as they conveyed the correct idea. Most candidates chose to provide the detail as part of a longer phrase ‘direct sunlight’. However, some responses included a detail already printed in the statement on the question – ‘lack of sunlight’ and lost the mark, as the response did not convey the targeted idea correctly. The plural form ‘lights’ could not be credited as it altered the intended meaning. Spelling attempts which put the intended meaning in doubt or created a new meaning (e.g. suntight), failed to secure the mark. Marks were also lost due to the inclusion of the distracting detail ‘fog’.

(e) There was a relatively low level of success for this question. The expected answer was ‘leaves‘, but many candidates provided the distracting detail ‘branches’ as their response. Marks were also lost where candidates provided the singular form ‘leaf’. Many unsuccessful attempts included nouns such as ‘stems’ and ‘hight’, which did not feature in the recording. Some candidates provided ‘thickness’ as their response, but did not gain any marks as this detail did not convey the same idea as the targeted detail ‘leaves’. Most spelling attempts were deemed recognisable and were credited.

(f) The question targeted something that certain plants in the cloud forests consume and only a small number of candidates provided the detail ‘insects’ successfully. Most marks were lost due to the inclusion of the distracting details ‘berries’ and ‘orchids’. The singular form ‘insect’ also was not allowed. Marks were also lost where spelling attempts were deemed ambiguous) or created a new meaning (e.g. insets, inserts).

(g) This question was attempted with a reasonable level of success. The expected detail was ‘storms’, but most candidates also provided the extra detail ‘heavy’. Other creditable attempts included ‘heavy rain’ and ‘tropical storms’. Less successful attempts included the idea of ‘mountain slides’ already printed in the statement on the Question Paper. The singular form ‘storm’ was not given any marks. Marks were also lost where spelling attempts put the intended meaning in doubt or created a new meaning (e.g. heavy stones and heavy stores).

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(h) The vast majority of candidates successfully gave the targeted detail 'climate change'. Candidates provided a range of other attempts and as most conveyed the same or a very similar idea, they were credited. These included 'weather changes' and 'global warming'. The plural form 'climate changes' and 'climate' on its own were also awarded the mark. Most spelling attempts were given the mark as the intended meaning was clear. However, there were a few that were deemed too ambiguous and lost the mark. Some marks were also lost due to the inclusion of the distracting details 'land development' and 'road construction'. Less able candidates often provided 'cutting down trees' as their response.

Exercise 3

Most candidates dealt reasonably well with this part of the test. The majority of candidates matched around 4 – 5 speakers correctly with the expected letter. Candidates dealt extremely well with matching the correct answers to speakers 4 and 6, but were less successful with speakers 1 and 2. The most common errors included opinion A being given as the answer for speaker 2 and C being wrongly given for speakers 1 and 3. The answers for speakers 1 and 5 were sometimes transposed.

There were minimal omissions in this part of the test. However, there was an increased number of instances of the same letter being used twice, or even three times, compared to previous sessions. These attempts could not be credited.

Exercise 4

This part of the test was attempted fairly well, on the whole, with most candidates scoring between 5 – 6 marks. Candidates were particularly successful with **Questions (e)** and **(g)**. Weaker candidates tended to be less successful with **Questions (a)** – option A was often given in error, **(b)** – option C was often wrongly selected as the answer, and **(h)** – option B tended to be the wrong answer here. There were only minimal instances where candidates ticked more than one option for individual questions. Such attempts were not given any marks.

There were very few instances where candidates did not provide any answers to some of the questions in this part of the test.

Exercise 5

Part A

There was a high level of success in this Exercise, with most candidates scoring 4 marks. Candidates particularly excelled in **Question (a)**. Candidates were least successful when attempting **Question (d)**. The majority of marks were lost due to the inclusion of distracting information instead of the correct detail.

Question 8A

(a) Candidates attempted this item extremely well. The expected answer was 'deer' and the vast majority of candidates provided this response. Marks were mainly lost where candidates provided the homophone 'dear'. Less successful attempts included responses that were too general (e.g. species, wildlife). Occasionally, candidates provided the distractors 'ducks' and 'foxes' as their response.

(b) This question was attempted with a fair level of success. The required detail was '800' and many candidates provided just that. Most marks were lost due to the inclusion of the distracting numbers '1300' and '400'.

(c) This question was reasonably well attempted by most candidates. The expected answer here was 'beauty', but most candidates also provided the extra detail 'real'. Other responses that were also creditable included 'appearance' and 'look'. Less able candidates often included the idea of 'aging' or 'development'. No marks could be given to these attempts as they did not convey the targeted idea closely enough. Most responses were spelled correctly; however, spelling attempts which put the intended meaning in doubt could not be given any marks.

(d) There was a mixed level of success here. The expected detail was 'complaints', but 'complaining' and 'bad comments' were also credited. Most marks were lost due to the inclusion of the distracting

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detail ‘support’ or the singular form ‘complaint’. Ambiguous spelling attempts were not given any marks.

(e) This question was attempted with a fair level of success and many candidates provided the targeted detail ‘outdoor museum’. However, ‘outside museum’ was also given the mark. Less able candidates provided examples of what the park contains (e.g. ancient exhibits) or contained (e.g. medieval farms) rather than what the speaker compares the park to. Most spelling attempts were creditable, as they did not put the intended meaning in doubt. However, there were a few spelling attempts that were deemed ambiguous and which were not given any marks. Some candidates also provided the wrong adjective (e.g. old museum, ancient museum) and no marks could be given to such attempts. Incomplete answers (i.e. museum) were also not credited.

Part B

Part B was attempted very well, with most candidates scoring 4 marks on average. The more successful attempts were for **Questions (d)** and **(e)**. Candidates were less successful when attempting **items (b)** and **(c)**. The most common reason for the loss of marks was the inclusion of distracting detail.

Question 8B

(a) Most candidates coped reasonably well with this item and gained the mark by providing the expected detail ‘volunteers’, but ‘helpers’ was also given the mark. Some candidates gave ‘caretakers’ as their response. This attempt could not be credited as it did not convey the targeted idea closely enough. Some candidates misheard the plural form as ‘volunteer’ or provided the distracting detail ‘scientists’ as their response.

(b) There was a mixed level of success when attempting this question. The expected answer was ‘bats’. Many candidates provided the distracting details ‘swans’ or ‘parrots’. Some also misheard the targeted detail as ‘bets’ or ‘bat’. Responses that were too general (e.g. species) could not be given any marks.

(c) This was another question with a relatively low level of success. The targeted idea was ‘width’, but the spelling attempt ‘widht’ was also credited. Some candidates misheard the targeted form as ‘wide’ or ‘widen’. As these forms did not make the required fit, they could not be given any marks. Some marks were lost due to the inclusion of the distracting detail ‘height’.

(d) Most candidates attempted this question very well and provided the expected detail ‘attraction’. The vast majority also included the extra detail ‘tourist’. Other creditable attempts included ‘tourist destination’ and ‘holiday attraction’. Responses that were too general (e.g. tourist area, visitor place) did not gain any marks. Some candidates misheard the form as ‘attractions’ or included the distracting details ‘conservation area’ and ‘playground’.

(e) This item was attempted extremely well, with the vast majority of candidates providing the targeted detail ‘bird boxes’, but ‘bird houses’ was also given the mark. Marks were mainly lost where candidates omitted a key detail (e.g. boxes) or the spelling attempt put the intended meaning in doubt. The singular form ‘bird box’ was also given zero marks.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/51
Speaking 51

Key messages

- Most centres administered and conducted the tests well, conforming to the guidelines provided by Cambridge International, and doing their utmost to get the best performance from their candidates.
- Centres should only carry out internal moderation if there is more than one examiner.
- All examiners should enter their names on the SEFS and introduce themselves at the beginning of each test.
- Examiners should ask open questions after each prompt, not only at the end.
- Recordings were generally of good quality. Examiners are reminded to check their recording equipment in advance in the room where the tests will take place.

General comments

Part A

Most examiners read out the script and checked that the candidates understood the format of the test. Some examiners read the script very quickly and candidates may not have understood. There were very few examples where the information in the examiner script of **Part A** was paraphrased which often resulted in making the instructions being more difficult to understand or missing out key details such as 'you may keep the card until the end of the test'.

Part B

Although this part was sometimes too short or too long, it was generally well conducted and eased the candidates effectively into the exam situation. Most candidates were asked about their hobbies and interests in order to identify the most appropriate card for **Part D**. It was less productive when examiners encouraged the candidates to talk about themselves and did not ask any specific questions. Some examiners used the topics from the assessment cards in the warm-up to identify which card to choose or chose the cards randomly. Cards did not always match the candidate's interests.

Part C

Most centres used a good range of speaking assessment cards and examiners generally dealt well with candidates' questions. The best examiners chose a topic card related to the interests expressed by the candidate during the warm-up.

Examiners should give candidates 2–3 minutes of preparation time. **Part C** was sometimes too short, too long or occasionally missed out altogether. When it was short, it was usually candidates signalling readiness to begin. Most examiners reminded them they had more time. Occasionally, candidates asked for clarification and examiners provided helpful explanations. Most examiners stated the topic before the preparation period.

Part D

Some discussions were too long or too short. The majority of examiners gave the appropriate time using all five prompts in order and aske related questions to encourage discussion, which gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Successful conversations in **Part D** often depended on the examiner's ability to respond to what candidates were saying, to ask open follow-up questions and not

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interrupt unnecessarily. Paraphrasing of prompts was an issue with some examiners, sometimes resulting in questions that sounded as if a particular 'correct' response was expected of the candidate or causing confusion. Some examiners worked through the prompts too quickly and had to add extension questions to fill up the 6–9 minutes. Some examiners allowed candidates to deliver monologues or extended speeches with no intervention.

Application of the marking criteria

The marking criteria were generally applied accurately, although a slight tendency to mark weaker candidates severely was noted.

Structure

Most centres accurately marked candidates' performance in this area, though this criterion was the least accurately assessed. The overall tendency was to mark generously in the higher mark range and slightly severely in the lower to middle range. The difference seemed to arise when deciding on a mark for candidates who spoke accurately and confidently, but without many complex sentences. Conversely, differences arose at the middle to lower end of the scale, for candidates who showed ambition and confidence, using some complex grammar, but made errors.

Vocabulary

The marking was generally accurate for the vocabulary expected at this level. There were some instances of higher-level candidates possibly getting higher marks for fluency rather than using vocabulary with precision. For weaker candidates, there were some instances of candidates including a good use of vocabulary, but perhaps being marked down for their hesitancy. At times marking at the top end of the scale was generous, perhaps because examiners were impressed by a candidate's use of topic-specific vocabulary, while overlooking a lack of nuance in the candidate's use of more general vocabulary. A tendency was noted among some examiners to feed vocabulary to the candidate in their questions (or through interruptions, or by completing the candidate's sentences for them).

Development and fluency

There was generally accurate marking in this area but there was a tendency towards generosity in the higher mark range and severity in the lower mark range. In particular, some examiners awarded high marks when candidates talked a lot but did not develop the topic enough to be in Band 1. Where the test was short, the final prompt was often not addressed in full.

It is noted that performance against this criterion is most susceptible to being affected by the examiner's approach to conducting **Part D.** Examiners who allow monologues, for example, may be restricting the candidate's ability to achieve higher marks for maintaining a conversation, while others who do little more than read out the prompts are likely to restrict the candidate's ability to develop and expand the topic.

Administration

This was mostly competent. Overall, the quality of recordings was good but there were some cases of not being able to hear the candidates very well. Some recordings were very quiet, or the examiner could be heard clearly, but the candidate was very faint. A small number of centres had not identified a sufficiently quiet room to hold the tests in; background noise was often intrusive in such cases. Centres using multiple examiners need to make sure all examiners are clearly identified, both on the Speaking Examination Summary Form and recordings.

Internal moderation

Internal moderation was sometimes not carried out when it was required, and sometimes it was carried out when it was not necessary. Even when it was appropriate for internal moderation to be carried out, the marks often appeared to have been carried over to the 'internally moderated mark' column, without any changes. Where adjustments had been made, centres did not always indicate which criteria had been adjusted.

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Comments on specific questions

Card A – Computer games

In response to prompts 1 and 2, candidates mentioned a range of popular computer games. Candidates listed features of some of the games such as imaginary weapons, simulations and building electric circuits. Many candidates said that computer games are popular because they allow players to compete, develop strategic skills and give access to magical worlds where one can meet people without going out. For candidates interested in graphic design, a job testing these games would be both an interesting and enjoyable way to earn money. Prompt 3 gave candidates the opportunity to discuss their views on using computer games to assist classroom learning. Many candidates thought that games could make classroom activities more motivating, interesting and even help with exam preparation. The amount of time spent using games varied widely from a couple of hours to the whole day, and most agreed that parents should limit and control usage. Most candidates agreed that being outdoors, getting fresh air and being in contact with nature were all important, and felt that these activities would continue.

Card B – Playing sport

In response to prompts 1 and 2, candidates named a range of sports. Most candidates were able to expand on the positive aspects of playing games such as making friends, being part of a team and getting fit. A range of appropriate vocabulary was used when candidates talked about feelings during a competition. Candidates were enthusiastic when giving examples of personalities they thought were positive role models. Many candidates thought that footballers such as Ronaldo and Messi inspired others ‘through the effort they put into the game’. Prompt 4 elicited compelling arguments on both sides, with candidates exploring ideas about sport and relaxation. Some candidates thought that compulsory sport helps get rid of negative energy and builds resilience. For prompt 5, candidates listed many advantages of watching an event on TV, e.g. not having to pay and travel and good quality images while acknowledging that there is a lack of atmosphere associated with being at a live event.

Card C – The importance of money

In response to prompt 1, candidates were able to list recent purchases (e.g. clothing, books, laptops, birthday presents) and discuss their love of shopping and the need to get a refund or exchange an item. For prompt 2, candidates gave reasons for their decisions to spend or save money. Some candidates pointed out the benefits of saving up to buy more expensive items. When discussing prompt 3, most candidates agreed that children should help their parents around the house with a variety of chores without being paid but that receiving payments helped children to learn about saving and managing money. Strong candidates considered the country’s economy and the environmental benefits of public transport when addressing prompt 4. The final prompt gave candidates the opportunity to predict the future for using cash and explain how modern technology, face recognition and apps on their phones made spending easier. Some candidates explained that it depended on where you lived but the general feeling was that sooner or later, we would be a cashless society.

Card D – Going to school

Prompt 1 presented candidates with a choice between talking about their first day at school ever or their first day at their current school, each option being chosen with roughly the same frequency. This was clearly an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their ability to use past tenses, and stronger candidates were able to use a range of these effectively. The second prompt promoted discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of each mode of studying, usually raising the distinction between being able to concentrate on your own, and the risk of being distracted when working with others. Many preferred the company of others: ‘I would prefer to study with other people because we can discuss, talk with each other about the topics’. In response to prompt 3, few candidates stated a preference for becoming a teacher. Many were decidedly against the idea and could provide reasons that ranged from the personal qualities needed to the workload demanded of teachers (‘My mother is, was a teacher, and she had to work at home every day, even on Sundays.’). For prompt 4, some candidates talked about creative subjects as a means of releasing stress by being able to express feelings or mentioned the benefits of developing other talents. Others expressed the idea that school should have a primarily academic focus. The final prompt elicited stories of personal experiences during the COVID lockdown. Candidates were able to use future tenses, modal verbs as well as adverbs to grade their opinions.

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Card E – Lifestyles

For the first prompt, weaker candidates were able to talk about likes and dislikes in the present simple, whereas stronger candidates were able to use a range of present tenses, including present perfect and present perfect continuous ('I've been learning a lot of new things'). Most candidates expressed positive feelings about their lives, although some bemoaned the onset of exams, and the impact that was having. Some weaker candidates took this prompt as an opportunity to describe their daily routine, rather than talk about their lives in general. In response to prompt 2, most candidates were able to use basic vocabulary to talk about their local area. Some used conditional structures ('If I want to go to the cinema, I have to ask my parents to take me there'). For prompt 3, most candidates were able to talk about social media and influencers. Strong candidates provided nuanced ideas ('They are forced to be perfect because it's what we expect from them'). Good vocabulary included 'privacy', 'personal space', 'bombarded by', 'manipulate', 'authentic', 'aspire to'. Prompt 4 also encouraged candidates to use conditionals ('If you have a lot of money, it doesn't mean you're happy'). Although most expressed the conventional view that money cannot buy you happiness, many admitted that having a certain amount of money makes life a lot more comfortable. The last prompt encouraged most candidates to use future forms and vocabulary and collocations related to pollution and the environment ('greenhouse gases', 'reduce our carbon footprints').

Card F – The weather

When discussing prompt 1, most candidates agreed that weather affected their mood in some way, often referring to the depressing effect of cold or rainy weather compared to the energising effect of the sun. Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary to describe basic weather conditions; some were able to demonstrate more sophisticated vocabulary ('misty', 'partially cloudy', 'perfectly clear', 'a chilly breeze'). For prompt 2, many candidates referred to a sports event or other outdoor activity, such as going to the beach for a picnic, that had been affected by the weather. The first two prompts allowed candidates to demonstrate the use of past tenses, and to develop personal narratives. Prompt 3 encouraged some interesting discussions of the impact of weather on different jobs, sometimes in unexpected ways (e.g. doctors being busier during wet weather because of the increased number of accidents on the roads, for example. In response to prompt 4, few candidates said that they paid particular attention to weather forecasts. Although most candidates were in favour of developing alternative energy sources, some expressed scepticism that this would ever provide a total solution to our needs. Candidates generally displayed a good grasp of the vocabulary associated with this aspect of the topic. Prompts 3, 4 and 5 gave opportunities to use passive forms and modal verbs when candidates described work routines or considered hypothetical situations related to sustainability and renewable energy.

Card G – Food and drink

In response to prompt 1, candidates named a variety of foods, including pizza, chicken, salads, sandwiches. Stronger candidates were able to explain why they liked these foods, using a range of adjectives and talked about the ingredients and how things were prepared and served. For prompt 2, candidates talked about different celebrations, including birthdays, seasonal celebrations, holidays. Many used descriptive language when talking about what happened. Strong candidates talked about why the meals were so special and gave detailed accounts using a variety of past tenses. For prompt 3, many candidates spoke about preferring fast food and not being interested in healthy eating. More advantages than disadvantages of being a vegetarian were mentioned. These included being healthier and it being good for the environment. Candidates used modal verbs when discussing this prompt. Most candidates thought that everyone should learn to cook their own meals, for a variety of reasons – a healthier option, being cheaper, good for when you leave home. Prompt 5 elicited a range of opinions ranging from gender differences to the need to learn before going to university.

Card H – Email and the internet

In response to prompt 1, candidates talked about the number of hours they used the internet for. Reasons for being online included research, watching films and videos, studying and communicating with friends. Most candidates said that they probably spent too much time online. Prompt 2 enabled candidates to use descriptive language to give details of what had happened when they could not use the internet. Stronger candidates used a variety of tenses, including the past perfect. Not being able to use the internet resulted for most candidates in feeling bored and having a backlog of messages to reply to. For prompt 3, many candidates gave not wasting time and life being less stressful as benefits of life without social media. Many candidates were able to use modal verbs and language of hypothesis to discuss their ideas on life without internet or social media. In response to prompt 4, candidates commented on the risk of technical problems or

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the risk of misunderstandings arising. Prompt 5 elicited some interesting ideas with sophisticated language about handwriting as a form of art and about losing the ability to write. Stronger candidates had more thoughtful and abstract notions of writing for pleasure and as a back-up when technology fails.

Card I – Reading for pleasure

In response to prompt 1, most candidates mentioned a book they had read, and used descriptive language to talk about it. Stronger candidates described characters in the books they had read using a range of adjectives. For prompt 2, candidates were split in what they preferred, citing that through reading you could use your imagination more, and know the characters better. Candidates who chose films or TV series said it was easier to follow. When discussing prompt 3, most candidates said that reading stories to children was a good idea as it boosts creativity, makes children interested in things, helps them with learning to read themselves and promotes a bond with a parent. This prompt led to a lot of personal memories and anecdotes with a good range of narrative tenses used by the stronger candidates. For prompt 4, most candidates thought that not everyone could write a book, citing that there were a lot of things to consider, that it was difficult and tiring. For prompt 5, some candidates feared that all books, newspapers and magazines might only be online in the future but hoped that paper books would also be available. This prompt enabled candidates to use a range of modal verbs. It also generated a lot of comparisons between reading a novel and the smell and feel of the paper versus the merits of reading on electronic devices.

Card J – Choosing what to wear

Many candidates with an interest in fashion were able to discuss and develop ideas included in the prompts. There was good evidence of topic-related vocabulary in the first two prompts, with stronger candidates using collocations (‘choose an outfit’, ‘a sense of fashion’). Prompt 2 encouraged a story about a special event using the past simple tense, as well as expressions of feelings. Strong candidates showed their knowledge of other past tenses, such as past perfect continuous (‘I had been looking forward to’). The third prompt invited the use of the future tense, modal verbs and conditional structures, with the more able candidates using more complex conditionals. Prompts 4 and 5 also elicited the use of passive voice (‘you are considered cool’, ‘they are judged by what they wear’) and more advanced collocations (‘update your wardrobe’, ‘follow the dress code’) whilst developing comparisons and reasoning.

Card K – Taking care of others

In response to prompt 1, candidates used past tenses when giving examples of situations when someone took care of them. Prompt 2 elicited a range of job-related vocabulary. Stronger candidates used appropriate collocations (‘severe problems’, ‘compromise their performance’) and considered taking care of others both ‘physically’ and ‘mentally’. Prompt 3 encouraged the use of language for comparison and contrast (‘drawback’, ‘pro’), and linking words (‘however’, ‘additionally’), with many discussing unconditional love and responsibility. In the final prompts, candidates used a range of modal verbs and complex sentences, developing their ideas and supporting their arguments. For prompt 4, stronger candidates discussed the importance of having particular personality traits and skills to be able to provide good care to others. For prompt 5, many candidates said that robots lacked empathy, often making comparisons with human behaviour and using vocabulary related to robotics and artificial intelligence.

Card L – Going on holiday

In prompt 1, candidates talked in detail about holidays, events, places and feelings, using common collocations such as ‘go to the seaside’, ‘go abroad’, ’visit my family’. Stronger candidates supported their responses with personal anecdotes, using a range of past tenses. Prompts 2 and 3 enabled candidates to expand on advantages and disadvantages of holiday destinations and going on holiday to the same place. The second prompt invited the use of relative clauses. The third prompt elicited the use of signposting expressions, e.g. ‘What’s good about’, ‘On the plus side’. Prompt 4 encouraged opinions, and candidates often used words and phrases such as ‘too’, ‘so … that’ and ‘enough’. For prompt 5, candidates gave examples of ways to save the environment whilst travelling, making use of conditional structures as well as the future tense.

Card M – Work

In response to prompt 1**,** all candidates were able to speak about what they wanted to do in the future. Most candidates gave reasons for their choices. Prompt 2 encouraged the use of speculative modals and conditional structures but was sometimes left undeveloped if the examiner did not ask candidates why they would or would not like to move or investigating where they might choose to go. Prompt 3 allowed

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candidates to explore ideas around privacy, distraction and motivation. It was frequently expanded and examples of personal experiences during the Covid pandemic were discussed, using a range of structures to express personal preferences. Stronger candidates were able to use linking phrases to order the advantages and disadvantages. Prompts 4 and 5 enabled candidates at all levels to give a clear opinion, with stronger answers drawing on vocabulary linked to responsibility, different kinds of reward and satisfaction. Some candidates speculated on how difficult it is to be a parent and many based their opinions on their experience of taking care of younger siblings. At times the fourth prompt was not discussed in depth by weaker candidates; the answers tended to be short, and most candidates moved swiftly to the final prompt, which generated a longer discussion. Stronger candidates were able to employ a range of phrasal verbs and verb phrases related to work, such us ‘earn/make money’, ‘make sacrifices’, ‘raise kids the right way’, ‘apply for a job’, and work-related adjectives, such as ‘hard-working’, ‘passionate’ and ‘stressful’.

Card N – Pollution

When addressing prompt 1, all candidates were able to give examples of pollution in their local area, with many focusing on traffic in the cities or difficulty with breathing. Prompt 2 generated longer discussions and modal verbs were used accurately to discuss possibilities and obligations. Prompt 3 elicited ideas such as contamination of the food chain, and conditionals were used to reflect on possible consequences of pollution. Stronger candidates were able to develop prompt 3 well, giving examples of what will happen if we do not change our current ways of living. A range of tenses and conditional structures were used accurately by stronger candidates and the examples given centred around the global warming. Prompts 4 and 5 encouraged the use of comparatives, and prompt 5 in particular enabled the use of some sophisticated vocabulary around the ideas of authority, engagement and changing attitudes. It elicited descriptive language, with comparative and superlative forms of adjectives used accurately. Stronger candidates were able to employ a range of phrasal verbs and verb phrases related to pollution such as ‘reduce the release of carbon dioxide’, ‘harm aquatic animals’ and ‘put pressure on politicians’ and related nouns such as ‘global warming’, ‘microplastics’ and ‘climate change’.

Card O – Living in a city

In response to prompt 1, all candidates were able to describe their neighbourhood. Most candidates gave developed and personalised responses using a range of present and past tenses. There were many examples of descriptive language, with comparative and superlative forms of adjectives being used accurately and confidently by most candidates. Prompt 2 elicited precise terms such as ‘suburb’ and ‘outskirts’. When addressing this prompt candidates used narrative tenses to develop stories about a recent holiday. For prompt 3, candidates talked about farming, beautiful scenery, opportunities and entertainment as important elements of life in the city and countryside. Stronger candidates were able to develop prompt 3 by giving some examples but the discussions tended to be short in comparison to the other prompts. Prompt 4 elicited the use of conditional structures and vocabulary linked to environment. In response to prompt 5, candidates discussed problems linked to heavy traffic and concerns about wheelchair users and families with small children. Stronger candidates were able to employ a range of phrasal verbs and verb phrases related to living in a city, such us ‘get to know people’, ‘cross the road’ and related nouns, such as ‘infrastructure’ and ‘deforestation’, and conditional forms like ‘If I had to choose, I’d live in the countryside’.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0993/52
Speaking 52

Key messages

- Most tests were conducted well. Most examiners demonstrated an ability to get the best from the candidates.
- Examiners should use open questions and develop individual prompts to engage candidates and encourage them to expand their responses.
- A timer should be used to ensure candidates are given the correct amount of time for each part of the test.
- Internal moderation is required if there is more than one examiner.

General comments

Part A

The majority of examiners read the instructions at the beginning of the recording, although some delivered their own version, which did not always include information such as which part would be assessed or the fact that candidates could keep the card until the end of the test. Some examiners also repeated the instructions for each part of the test as it progressed, particularly prior to **Part C** and **D**.

Part B

The majority of centres allocated sufficient time for the warm-up phase of the examination, allowing candidates to relax. The most successful warm-ups occurred when examiners asked open questions to elicit a suitable topic for each candidate. Most examiners asked questions about interests and hobbies, but some asked candidates about examination preparation, studying and even topics from the assessment cards.

Part C

This stage was more consistent if examiners used a timer. The majority of centres adhered to the timing of 2–3 minutes. Generally, examiners encouraged candidates to use all their time for preparation, even when they said they had finished early. Overall, preparation periods were adequate in most centres. However, many centres did not remind candidates of the time they had to prepare nor the fact that they could ask questions if something was not clear. Most examiners carefully selected appropriate topic cards based on warm-up conversations and announced the topic cards prior to the preparation period. Most examiners provided clear explanations of words and phrases when clarification was needed.

Part D

A wide range of topic cards was used for **Part D**. Most examiners conducted the tests well, followed all the prompts in order and encouraged candidates to develop the conversation. The prompts were generally not paraphrased unless candidates required clarification. Most centres adhered to the timing of 6–9 minutes, but at some centres candidates were only allowed 3–4 minutes, yet in others, some candidates were given up to 12 minutes. Some candidates were given the instruction ‘begin the discussion’ and then left to give a monologue, with no intervention from the examiner. This clearly put them at a disadvantage as they were unable to demonstrate their ability to maintain a conversation. **Part D** was conducted successfully when candidates were given the opportunity to participate in a two-way discussion and when examiners linked open questions to what the candidate said. These conversations generated a wider variety of structures and vocabulary while allowing candidates to fully develop their responses.

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Application of the marking criteria

Structure

This was generally accurately applied. However, there was a tendency to mark generously in the higher mark range and severely in the lower mark range. Candidates were credited for using complex sentences, appropriate tenses, passive voice, relative clauses and conditional structures. In some centres, there was a tendency to be generous towards candidates who were accurate but did not demonstrate a variety of structures.

Vocabulary

This was mainly accurate but marking of this criterion tended to be slightly generous in the higher mark range. Examiners sometimes allocated Band 1 marks for performance which did not demonstrate 'shades of meaning and sophisticated ideas'. There was a tendency to award high marks for vocabulary when a candidate spoke at length rather than rewarding the candidate on the strength of the vocabulary provided. There were also some instances where candidates were awarded higher marks for the use of sophisticated subject-specific vocabulary than for the effective use of idiomatic language, collocations and phrasal verbs.

Development and Fluency

Some examiners tended to mark this criterion more generously at the top of the mark range and more harshly at the bottom of the range. Candidates who spoke with deliberation and took their time to choose more sophisticated vocabulary and included a range of structures, were often marked down in centres where 'fluent' was understood to mean 'fast'. Examiners did not always note that the candidate needs to contribute at some length to gain top marks.

With some candidates, pronunciation and intonation were not adequately considered, so that fluent candidates were often marked generously despite being very hard to understand.

Administration

Most centres carried out the administration well and sent the correct number of samples including the full mark range. The documentation was generally completed accurately. However, some centres either did not complete all the required information on the Speaking Examination Summary Forms (for example individual mark breakdowns or total marks for certain candidates) or mistakes were made when entering candidates' details or marks on the Submit for Assessment website. Some centres, when asked to resubmit documents or marks, resubmitted the original, incorrect information.

Recordings were generally clear and both examiners and candidates were audible. Sometimes there was difficulty hearing the candidates. This could have been due to the direction of the microphone and/or background noise.

Internal moderation

While some centres were very conscientious in carrying out internal moderation fully and accurately, many did not carry it out at all, despite using more than one examiner. In some cases, the names of the examiner and the internal moderator were the same, suggesting that moderation had not been carried out by a person other than the examiner. Where internal moderation has been carried out, it should always be recorded in the right-hand column on the Speaking Examination Summary Form, even if there is no change to the mark.

Comments on specific questions

Card A – After-school activities

Although some candidates talked about after-school clubs, most discussed things they did with their friends after school such as going out for a coffee. Prompt 1 elicited a wide range of activities from sports and cooking to frisbee and writing. The second prompt elicited more creative activities: drawing manga and designing seemed popular. The second prompt enabled candidates to use conditional structures. The third prompt was also handled well with candidates using a range of suitable connectives. In response to prompt

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4, there were good discussions about health for the body and mind versus being too tired and a range of appropriate vocabulary was elicited, e.g. ‘not a fan of sports’, ‘feeling down’, ‘psychological health’. When addressing the final prompt, candidates used modal verbs to discuss the possibility of activities being online. The prompt was relevant to the modern world and even weaker candidates were able to discuss online learning and online free-time activities.

Card B – Playing games

This card enabled candidates to reminisce about their childhood games. Examples of activities elicited by the first prompt included games such as hide and seek, chess and various team games. In response to prompt 2, candidates used a rage of appropriate vocabulary and structures, e.g. ’don’t care if I win or lose’, ‘you can restart the game’, ‘build self-confidence’, ‘beat them next time’ The third, fourth and fifth prompts elicited some mature discussions about the advantages, disadvantages and future predictions. Stronger candidates were able to answer prompts 4 and 5 successfully and explain the value of games for both learning and as a way of relaxing and interacting with other people.

Card C – The entertainment industry

Most candidates were able to talk fluently about types of television programmes, films and concerts they enjoy. In response to prompt 3, most candidates agreed that you could earn a lot of money working in the entertainment industry, but also recognised the challenges of being an actor or singer which include having to deal with over-enthusiastic fans and internet trolling. Stronger candidates produced sophisticated vocabulary such as ‘stalk’, ‘hate comments’ and ‘privacy’ when describing the disadvantages of being famous. Prompts 4 and 5 elicited language of speculation such as conditional sentences and modal verbs. For prompt 5, many candidates said that live entertainment would not be popular in the future.

Card D – Childhood

For prompt 1, all candidates could relate to the idea of childhood and were able to talk about things that children like doing. The second prompt elicited jobs such as teacher, doctor, scientist and hairdresser. In response to this prompt, many candidates recalled amusing anecdotes. Prompt 3 elicited a wide range of appropriate vocabulary, e.g. ‘don’t have the pressures of study’, ‘more carefree’, ‘lots of energy’’. In response to prompts 4 and 5, candidates offered opinions about relationships between parents and children and children’s ability to make independent decisions. Stronger candidates demonstrated accurate use of the passive voice and a variety of sentence structures.

Card E – Being outdoors

In response to prompt 1, candidates were able to list activities they do with friends using adverbs of frequency and giving preferences. The most successful answers expanded this by giving reasons and saying how long they had been doing the activity. For prompt 2, most candidates were able to offer an example of an outdoor activity they enjoyed with their family, with many giving humorous and elaborate accounts of specific events. Heat and pollution were frequent examples for prompt 3. Prompt 4 enabled candidates to expand their ideas, provide detailed justification and occasionally add examples of the positive effects of spending time outdoors. When addressing prompt 5, candidates used a variety of structures to speculate and make predictions. Effective responses used modal verbs and conditionals. Some candidates expressed worry about the future with restricted and limited space due to overpopulation.

Card F – Buildings and monuments

When used, this card elicited a range of favourite global monuments such as the Eiffel Tower or the Statue of Liberty. Candidates were able to provide detailed answers, using a range of past tenses, when talking about the time they visited an interesting building. They demonstrated good knowledge of vocabulary to describe monuments, particularly adjectives, such as ‘stunning’, ‘impressive’ or ‘monumental’ and some effective collocations: ‘the heart of the whole of France; ‘gives you a unique experience’; ‘beautifully designed’; ‘well-built’. Prompt 2 enabled candidates to list the buildings they would like to visit and justify their choices using some effective expressions, for example, ‘a dream destination’ or ‘a must-see’. When addressing prompt 3, candidates used appropriate structures to compare the experience of visiting a place and reading about it. Stronger candidates were able to make some cogent points on why the latter can sometimes be better than the former. Prompts 4 and 5 enabled the candidates to comment on the current state of tourism in their own countries and all over the world using conditional sentences to highlight the effect of paying entrance fees and how they might be justified.

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Card G – Outdoor markets

When addressing prompt 1, most candidates were able to give a detailed account of an occasion when they visited an outdoor market. Many candidates were able to use some subject-specific vocabulary, for instance, 'stall' or 'haggle'. Prompt 2 enabled candidates to express their views and use a range of adjectives to justify why certain personality traits would be helpful for a market trader. Prompt 3 elicited the use of structures of comparison and appropriate cohesive devices to highlight and compare shopping experiences. In response to prompts 4 and 5, candidates used a wide range of expressions to speculate about the future, as well as some complex grammatical structures, such as conditional sentences or passive voice.

Card H – Socialising

In response to prompt 1, most candidates talked about events such as weddings or family gatherings and many were able to use a range of appropriate collocations: 'feel honoured', 'bring good memories', 'bond with people'. Prompt 2 was well answered, with most candidates talking about their favourite celebrities or sports stars. Most candidates gave details of why they would value the time spent with them, e.g. 'he is my inspiration for all things fitness-related', 'we would get along.' Prompt 4 allowed candidates to expand the topic by focusing on why listening was important in a friend, and to produce some correct collocations: 'listen more carefully', 'solve their problems', 'share your thoughts.' For prompt 5, most candidates said that there was going to be a lot of change in the next ten or twenty years, but not necessarily for the better, using future structures including conditionals and relative clauses. Many referred to 'technological advancements' and 'tremendous opportunities'.

Card I – Project work

In response to prompt 1, all candidates were able to offer examples and recollections of projects they had done, such as creating a car in a robotics club, designing a poster and a project about dinosaurs. Many used a range of past tenses and provided detailed descriptions using precise vocabulary. Present and future tenses, and modal verbs were used for the second prompt. Candidates gave reasons why working independently can be challenging, e.g. 'difficult to think of new angles', 'you can't share ideas,' 'time consuming.' In contrast, some candidates commented on the advantages of working independently and being 'in control'. A range of adjectives was used to describe the qualities of a leader such as 'self-confident', 'capable', 'competent'. Modal verbs and the second conditional were among some of the structures used for the third prompt. Candidates used a variety of comparatives and superlatives to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of using online resources, saying that although online resources were convenient, they could give false information and that paper-based resources were more trustworthy. Some candidates asked for clarification of the fifth prompt. Comparatives and superlatives were used to present ideas for the final prompt as well as a wide range of vocabulary ('accomplishment', 'overwhelming', 'analyse', 'committed', 'experience', 'atmosphere').

Card J – Science

When addressing prompt 1, many candidates said that they enjoyed studying science subjects. Prompt 2 enabled candidates to use subject-specific vocabulary ('chemicals', 'formula', 'fermentation). Various experiments were described such as a baking soda volcano, frog dissection and magnetism. Many candidates defended art and music as being important to 'life', 'general understanding' and 'personal development' and stressed that people have different strengths. The fourth prompt encouraged candidates to use the present perfect and modal verbs to talk about values, fairness, and what science has done to improve life around the world. Most candidates disagreed with prompt 5 and provided examples such as space and the ocean, arguing that we still know very little about these two areas and more research needs to be done. Some candidates mentioned areas they themselves would like to explore if they were scientists. A wide range of sophisticated vocabulary was used by stronger candidates ('hypothetical theories', 'satellite', 'naked eye', 'molecules', 'phenomenon').

Card K – Sound and vision

Descriptive language and present tenses were used in response to prompt 1 as candidates talked about the sound of traffic, the sounds of wildlife in their gardens and the scenery from their bedroom windows. Some mentioned noisy neighbours or other family members and how familiar sounds are part of their routine. Stronger candidates also touched on the issue of sound and light pollution in cities. The second prompt elicited the use of past tenses, and candidates described things like rainbows, bright stars, stunning modern architecture, a painting that they had seen, or a concert that they had been to, using a range of adjectives and adverbs. Prompt 3 encouraged the use of comparatives, and contrasts were made between man-made

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sounds in the city, such as construction, and the peace of nature in the countryside. The final prompt elicited the use of passive voice and a variety of discourse markers, e.g. ‘whereas’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘nevertheless’, ‘moreover’.

Card L – Home and away

For prompt 1, all candidates were able to successfully detail numerous family activities and reasons why they enjoyed doing them. Most candidates used present structures, relative clauses and adverbs (‘frequently,’ ‘absolutely’) to describe family life, mostly talking about family dinners, watching TV, cooking and playing games. Stronger responses included reasons why these activities are important. The second prompt encouraged the use of narrative tenses to provide vivid descriptions of events, using appropriate adverbials. The third prompt elicited the use of conditional structures. In response to prompt 4, most candidates talked about robots helping with chores or using apps to turn on the lights. Future tenses and modal verbs for speculation were used by most candidates. When addressing prompt 5, many candidates provided personal anecdotes about going away and returning home.

Card M – Computers

When addressing prompt 1, candidates gave examples of problems they had faced with computers, particularly related to schoolwork, ranging from viruses and problems with Wi-Fi to links to homework sites not opening. Strong candidates were able to elaborate on the details of those challenges and talk in more detail about solving the issues. Prompt 2 elicited modal verbs and conditional structures to express opinions of how parents should control their children’s use of computers, which focused on imposing a time limit, and the repercussions if this did not happen, citing addiction, eye health and obesity. However, using the computer for homework or educational purposes did not require supervision. In response to prompt 3, candidates were almost unanimous in their opinions on the benefits of online communication. Almost all candidates disagreed with prompt 4, while prompt 5 allowed them to consider a hypothetical situation outside their life experience, using a range of past and future tenses as well as the third conditional, expanding into the notion of AI.

Card N – Stories

For the first prompt, candidates were able to use relative clauses to discuss their favourite type of story. Many candidates said they enjoyed science fiction and fantasy stories because they ‘offer a different perspective, an escape’. Most candidates did not want to become professional story writers, explaining that they lacked the ‘necessary qualities and talent’ and that it ‘can be quite challenging to write from different people’s perspectives’. The issue of role models in prompt 4 was felt to depend on the age of the viewer as young children ‘can’t tell the difference between reality and fiction and that can be a bad influence’. However, others felt that stories ‘show the bad side so that children know he is the villain’. Conditional structures were used regularly when answering this prompt, and the emphasis was on lessons being learnt: ‘the viewers know that there are different kinds of people’. In response to prompt 5, many candidates pointed out that many real-life stories are made into films. It also allowed candidates to delve into the concept of AI writing stories.

Card O – Past, present and future

When addressing prompt 1, all candidates said they were happy with their current lives and grateful for them. Many compared themselves to other people who were less fortunate. Prompt 2 encouraged the use of past tenses as candidates shared their childhood memories of doing something exciting such as going on a rollercoaster or travelling to beautiful places. Prompt 3 gave candidates the opportunity to use conditional sentences, with most candidates choosing to travel to the future because it was ‘mysterious’ and because they wanted to know what would happen to them or their family. When talking about learning from the past, most candidates referred to mistakes they would avoid based on what they learned from their previous experience

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