

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

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in English Language (4EB0) Paper 01

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Introduction

The extracts were accessible across the full range of abilities and enabled candidates to respond appropriately. Examiners commented on the engagement with the topics that the candidates showed. The full range of ability was seen in the responses.

Better candidates were able to engage fully with both extracts and respond with sensitivity and fluency. In their writing they produced lively and confident responses which were well controlled and accurate. Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to understand the extracts. Their writing lacked coherence and the use of idiomatic English.

There are still candidates who copy out all or considerable parts of the extracts in response to Question 11. This can never be a successful way to respond as the candidate is required to produce their own work.

Fewer examiners commented on prepared essays in response to Question 12.

Some responses to Question 11 and 12 lacked paragraphing. Candidates must understand that the lack of effective paragraphing will limit the success of the response.

There was some good evidence of teaching and learning in the responses to this exam.

Section A (Questions 1-10)

Questions 1-9 are short answer questions which require candidates to locate and retrieve relevant information. Some questions required candidates to use their own words. Question 10 is longer requiring candidates to give a personal response and justify it with references to the text.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7 generally posed little difficulty for candidates who were able to retrieve the correct information from the passage. For Question 7 some candidates unfortunately offered the examples given in the first bullet point as three separate examples thus losing some marks.

Examiners commented that in responses to Questions 4, 5 & 9 many candidates achieved full marks and responded mostly in their own words but weaker candidates tended to copy directly from the passage with little attempt to use their own words. Examiners were pleased to see responses

that used synonyms and were able to change the word order of the details to show understanding. Centres need to work with candidates to develop their vocabulary and ensure that candidates realise they must attempt to produce responses to these questions using their own words. Some candidates wrote much more than was necessary to achieve full marks. While it is understandable that candidates wish to ensure they achieve the maximum mark, candidates need to be sure they are not spending too much time on these questions.

Question 8 produced a variety of responses with most candidates able to provide points but not all were successful in offering valid support for them. A number of candidates simply used quotations from the passage with no accompanying point or produced narrative responses. Better candidates were able to use their own words to identify the points and provide appropriate quotations from the text in support. However weaker candidates often simply quoted from the text or re-stated the quotations they had chosen. Centres need to ensure that candidates do not respond to the first part of this question by copying the passage but by making the point in their own words and then supporting it with reference to the passage.

Question 10 provided varied responses with most candidates able to make some sort of choice but only the more able were able to provide developed ideas and close reference to the texts that the task required. There were responses to this task showing that candidates had been well prepared for this question and had a secure understanding of what is required. Those that were effective structured their answer well with two clear points supported by evidence and then one point against the second text, again supported by evidence. The better responses referred to the writers' techniques and supported the choice they made with good evidence in the form of quotations and developed explanations. However there were some rather vague reasons given to support the choice made e.g. '...written in a way that makes me want to keep on reading.'. There were some candidates who only responded on their chosen text which limited their achievement. Some candidates summarised the texts and so missed the focus of the question. Examiners commented that many responses were content based

rather than analysing the impact of the texts. Occasionally candidates made their choice based on which text was true or believable (both were true stories). There were some candidates who appeared to have misunderstood the question and wrote about who was the most successful survivor rather than which text was most successful. The weakest candidates simply copied sections of the text. Centres must continue to work with candidates to make sure that they have a clear understanding of valid ways to respond to written texts. There were some candidates who confused Text 1 and 2 and, while examiners marked these responses positively, it would be helpful if candidates could check carefully to ensure there is no confusion.

Section B (Question 11)

There was evidence of good teaching and learning in the responses to this section.

There was some evidence of planning which is to be encouraged. This helped candidates to focus and organise their ideas effectively. Lengthy plans and rough drafts are not, however, a good use of time.

There were some lively and effective responses. Most candidates understood the requirement of the task however not all were able to adopt an appropriate register for an article. More successful responses wrote lively, engaging articles, using a range of features and demonstrating sustained awareness of audience and purpose. Some candidates had problems sustaining the required register for an article throughout their response, often starting reasonably but failing to maintain the appropriate register and a few candidates wrote speeches. There were some responses that did not use the ideas from the extracts as a focus for their responses but better candidates were able to integrate ideas from the extracts with their own ideas very effectively. Some examiners commented that there was not sufficient detail and development of the points made in relation to the bullet points. Some candidates did not cover the three bullet points (the most commonly missed was the third one on how to get rescued).

Candidates must try to cover all three bullet points otherwise their achievement for AO1 will be limited. The bullet points provided guidance for content and structure which was helpful for some candidates. Examiners commented that some candidates directly lifted content from the original

extracts which affected the overall quality of the response. A number of responses missed the focus of the task and wrote a narrative story about survival. The task requires candidates to demonstrate reading skills and the ability to adapt the material given for a specified audience and purpose. A small number of candidates simply copied the extracts. Language controls were not always secure, especially grammar, and some responses lacked paragraphing. The three bullet points provide a rudimentary structure which should help students to use basic paragraphing. Centres need to remind candidates that lack of accurate paragraphing will limit their achievement.

Section C (Question 12)

Examiners commented on how much they enjoyed reading the responses in this section.

There was evidence of some good preparation and teaching in this section. There was some evidence of planning which is to be encouraged. A short plan will help candidates focus on the task but lengthy plans and draft responses are not a good use of time. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their response in the answer booklet rather than on separate additional sheets.

12b was the most popular choice.

Question 12a was the least popular choice. There were a few well written responses with ambitious vocabulary and clear and developed arguments. Some candidates used evidence from films, documentaries & Bear Grylls to support their arguments; others used personal experience very effectively. There were some interesting ideas about what comprises a dangerous sport or activity. The majority of responses focused on the danger to the participant with very few references to the rescue groups who sometimes have to put their lives at risk. A few of the responses seem to have been rather limited suggesting candidates had not chosen well. A small number of candidates retold one or both of the stories in the extracts. Some examiners commented that, although there were clear ideas, some responses lacked organisation and structure, limiting the response. Better responses were fully controlled with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar; however the weaker responses had poor language controls and weak paragraphing. Centres need to ensure that candidates who choose this

option are well prepared in argumentative, discursive and rhetorical techniques and are able to develop their ideas effectively.

Question 12b produced some original ideas with a wide range of interpretations of the title (being mentally/spiritually lost as well as physically). Plane crashes and survival stories were also plentiful, obviously inspired by the content of the extracts. Examiners commented on how lively and interesting some of the responses were. Better responses demonstrated a secure and sustained awareness of purpose and it was clear that the candidates had consciously crafted the organisation of the narrative. Weaker responses tended to be mundane and lacked detail. Weaker candidates sometimes tended to rely too much on the content of the extracts. Occasionally it was felt that weaker candidates did not understand the title. There was less evidence of prepared essays than in previous series, which was pleasing. A very small number of candidates just summarised the texts. Better responses were able to create tension and use effective description and dialogue with good technical accuracy. Weaker responses had poor language controls and limited and underdeveloped ideas. Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of narrative techniques and the ability to develop a coherent personal response.

Question 12c produced some well written responses that were fully focused on the task, effectively describing a journey. The majority wrote about a straightforward journey or holiday. Some candidates who wrote about a holiday tended to simply recount events rather than attempt to describe the experience. Although this task is supposed to be a descriptive task a number of candidates wrote a narrative. Better responses were detailed and used creative imagery to describe their surroundings. Some candidates chose an emotional journey e.g. motherhood or dealing with an illness, often presented in a thoughtful and engaging manner. Weaker candidates tended to list features in responses that tended to be pedestrian and lacked detail. Some weak candidates struggled to understand the concept of 'a journey'. Better responses had full control of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Weaker candidates had poor language controls and weak paragraphing. Centres need to ensure candidates are aware of the techniques they can use in descriptive writing and also ensure candidates develop a varied vocabulary.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

This is assessed in Questions 11 and 12.

Better responses were accurate using a wide range of grammatical constructions, punctuation and vocabulary.

There was evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation but examiners, again, commented on candidates who had problems with grammar and expression. Some of this was unidiomatic English but there were also problems with tenses and sentence structure. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

Centres need to focus on developing accurate and effective grammatical structuring and idiomatic English to enable candidates to express themselves clearly and access the higher mark bands.

Summary

Most successful candidates:

- Read the extracts with insight and engagement
- Selected relevant points in response to the reading questions
- Used their own words in response to questions that required them
- Wrote clearly with a good sense of audience and purpose in an appropriate register (for an article) in response to Q11
- Engaged the reader with writing that was well structured with fully-developed ideas (Q12)
- Used ambitious vocabulary
- Wrote with accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Least successful candidates:

- Did not engage fully with the extracts
- Did not find enough relevant points in response to the reading questions
- Did not attempt to use their own words in response to questions that required them
- Did not write in an appropriate register in response to Q11
- Were not able to select and adapt relevant information for Q11
- Sometimes copied the original texts (Q11)
- Were not able to sustain and develop ideas in response to Section C (Q12)

- Sometimes used prepared essays
- Did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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