

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 1123/12  
Writing

## Key messages

- In **Section 1** it is essential that candidates include all three of the bullet points.
- Attention should be given to the **full** requirements of each bullet point in **Section 1**; often there is a word, such as **and**, in bold type, to indicate two parts to the bullet point.
- The use of correct tenses and agreement would improve the work of the majority of candidates.
- The use of capital letters continues to cause problems; often candidates use them when not necessary or omit them when they are essential.
- The lack of and misuse of definite and indefinite articles limits the fluency of a response considerably.
- Correct punctuation (full stops, commas) and a more varied use of punctuation (colons, semi-colons, exclamation marks) would raise the level of most responses.
- The use of learned idioms (such as *raining cats and dogs* and *in the pink of health*) can sound old-fashioned and candidates need to be exposed to more modern, as well as accurate, expressions.

## General comments

The overall standard of candidates this year was comparable to those in previous years. The very best candidates achieve a high standard in their use of language, most particularly with their vocabulary. This year Task Fulfilment in **Section 1** was more variable in accuracy and quality than in previous years. As far as the use of language is concerned there is still a need for candidates to check their work thoroughly, particularly their use of capital letters, punctuation in titles and speech and consistent use of tenses. Sentence separation was slightly better this year. This year, in **Section 2**, all of the titles were popular and there was an increase in the number of candidates attempting the Argument titles. Time management for the vast majority was very good.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1 – Directed Writing**

In **Section 1**, candidates were asked to imagine that there were problems with the public transport in their area. They had to write a letter to the Editor of their local newspaper to explain how unhappy they were with the situation. The majority of candidates responded very well to the **purpose** and **situation** as they were able to use details from their locality. In **Section 1** candidates this year had to be aware that in order to satisfy the requirements of the bullet points a perfect answer required:

- details of the problems with public transport in their area
- an example of when **and** how they were affected
- what they thought should be done to improve the situation.

As last year, for **bullet point 1**, a few very weak responses relied almost entirely on lifting (or giving a close paraphrase of) the opening two sentences from the question. They said only that there were difficulties but did not say what they were. More successful responses were able to specify public transport such as buses, trains, taxis and rickshaws and to explain that there were many problems to do with the organisation and running of these. Such problems included poor schedules and the services being late or early. The vehicles were often old and unreliable and so broke down; one candidate spoke of *An ancient 50-year old bus, never serviced, moving at a snail's pace...* Buses were considered unhygienic and poorly maintained, usually with broken seats and inadequate air-conditioning. Candidates felt that drivers often crammed passengers into these overloaded vehicles and made the situation dangerous. Finally, there were many mentions of harassment and theft on public transport. Some candidates mentioned only one problem, even though the

word *problems* was in the plural. Some did not specify problems to do with public transport and spoke more about traffic conditions and driving (private transport) or they spoke about problems with the transport infrastructure (roads etc.). While these ideas gained some credit, they did not quite carry the weight of specific difficulties in public transport; at best, they were useful only in supporting more specific comments about public transport.

When addressing **bullet point 2**, stronger candidates realised that the bullet point required an example and that a letter to a newspaper would benefit from something specific. Therefore, they gave a precise date or an occasion which clearly stood out as significant (*..when I was doing my O level English Paper..*). Candidates who relied on more general terms, such as *Once/some time ago/previously*, lost the urgency that such a letter demanded. The great majority of responses gave details showing how the incident affected them with, for example, the dire consequences of being late for an examination or to work. Sometimes the outcome was much more alarming and one candidate witnessed a fist fight when the passengers were '*paralysed with anxiety*'. As with bullet point 1, incidents about private transport and infrastructure (usually pot holes in the roads) were less relevant than incidents directly relating to buses, taxis and rickshaws.

Some responses merged bullet point 1 and 2 but these risked only implying how they personally were affected by the problems they described.

In **bullet point 3**, the solutions to the problems followed naturally from bullet point 1. Training drivers to do their duty fairly and expertly, running accurate schedules, upgrading the vehicles (especially with effective air conditioning) and introducing harsher penalties for wrongdoers were all seen as necessary to improve the conditions of public transport. Some responses outlined some or all of these and introduced infrastructure improvements such as new roads and bridges as a back-up, whereas those responses which referred only to such infrastructure improvements (*re-routing the traffic*) added very little to the discussion about public transport. Occasionally, only one solution or improvement was given (e.g. *new buses*), even though there were many problems, and it was difficult to see how the one solution could address all that was wrong. A few responses were not planned adequately, with too much time spent on addressing bullet points 1 and 2 and not enough on bullet point 3. The weakest responses gave no suggestions for improvement but said only that *the government should do something*.

A slight weakness across **bullet points 1 and 3** was the tendency to list large numbers of problems and improvements at the expense of some elaboration on points. For example, some responses gave as many as six problems but gave them as bare problems (e.g. *Drivers are not good at their job*) whereas the more convincing responses gave fewer problems but were able to elaborate so as to make the problems very real and more convincing in this type of letter (e.g. *Drivers are not good enough because of their poor driving and their lack of consideration towards elderly passengers*).

Generally, there was a very good awareness of **purpose** and **situation** and candidates were admirably clear about what they were doing in this text. The proper **audience** for this task was the newspaper Editor but also the readers of the newspaper. Virtually everyone was aware of this, although many candidates expected the Editor to solve the problems rather than just raise awareness and provide publicity in an article. The **register** was very well maintained this year and kept properly formal and polite by most. Several examples of appropriate technical language (*catalytic converters* in particular) were useful in rooting the report in the correct context. Most responses provided an appropriate **format** for a formal letter. Most responses correctly ended the letter with *Yours faithfully* or *sincerely*: relatively few signed off with inappropriate, informal valedictions such as *Regards*.

Candidates generally followed the structure provided by the bullet points for their organisation, together with a very short opening and closing paragraph. There was some over-use of narrative in the response to **bullet point 2** when a concise and clear account was required.

Overall, the vast majority wrote a suitable amount for **Section 1** and captured the polite, formal **tone** and approach very well. **Opinion** and **justification** arose naturally when the improvements were suggested in **bullet 3**. There were very few short scripts indeed in **Section 1** and even fewer examples of no response.

Linguistically, most candidates produced a convincing piece of work. Spelling (*schedule, punctual*) and punctuation were generally satisfactory but *public transports* was common. Linking words like *moreover, furthermore* were often used a little randomly. Paragraphing continues to improve in the **Section 1** task. In this text, there was some weakness in the use of tenses when weaker responses switched from the present state of public transport to a specific example in the past. There was a confusion between *complain* and *complaint*.

## Section 2 – Composition

### Question 2

**Describe two places near where you live which are beautiful in different ways.  
(Remember you can describe the places, the atmosphere and what makes the places so special.)**

More candidates attempted the descriptive title than in previous years. Most candidates were successful in evoking two locations which they knew very well; they were also very good at choosing locations which were different and added variety to their responses. Very few responses referred to only one place. Locations varied hugely but very popular ones were local parks, historic buildings and markets, all of which demonstrated a sense of pride. There were thoughtful reflections on how the impact of globalisation has not yet reached the Old City with its shophouses, shrines and street traders. All this was contrasted with mountain regions with glacier-fed lakes, secluded from society, and local people dependant on their livestock farming, all with breath-taking views. One response presented a poetic description of the beach near Karachi, contrasted with an historical palace, now a museum, in the Old Quarter of the city, with a timeless quality. There were a significant number of locations which were linked to family memories and in particular places which had been enjoyed with grandparents. One unusual response described two locations (a butcher's shop and a fishmonger's shop) from the point of view of a cat. Whatever the interpretation, these responses adequately suggested how they were *beautiful in different ways*.

Less successful responses were mainly narratives about a visit to the places rather than a description of the places. Weaker responses had difficulty in determining the correct tense.

Linguistically, successful responses evoked an atmosphere by close description and the use of the senses, rather than relying on words like *interesting*, *attractive*, *peaceful* and *beautiful*. Many responses included wide ranging and precise vocabulary: *preposterous*, *penurious*, *rectitude*, *destitution*, *prodigious* and *ameliorate* were just some of the words used to good effect.

### Question 3

**What are the most important qualities a friend should have? Give reasons and examples to support your view.**

Candidates were generally very much in agreement about the qualities that made a good friend. Loyalty, kindness, generosity, honesty, a sense of humour, a good character as well as a good personality and the ability to be available even in tough times were the most valued attributes. Some responses made brief but effective use of contrasting bad qualities to emphasise the point. Overall, the responses were extremely mature in their appreciation of the qualities of a friend and many candidates gave good examples of their own friends. This year, both of the argument titles were characterised by developed arguments. Responses included reference to personal illustrations to convince the reader. When choosing an Argument essay candidates should be sure that they have plenty to say on the topic as well as the language ability to make and develop their points. One way of achieving more complexity and depth is by introducing personal anecdotes and illustrations as stated in the question and this will give depth and life to the topic.

These arguments benefited greatly from careful planning with candidates using separate paragraphs to highlight different qualities.

#### Question 4

**Is being a brave person always about using physical strength or are there other ways of being brave?' Give reasons and examples to support your view.**

This title was quite popular with candidates. Most responses appreciated that bravery could come in a show of physical strength and there were many examples of someone fighting off an attacker, or soldiers in war or sportsmen and women. Nevertheless, candidates universally believed that bravery came in many other forms than merely physical strength. They appreciated that bravery could be mental as well, with many examples of people having to overcome bad fortune, medical issues and betrayal by friends.

There were many sophisticated and developed arguments including one response which advocated mental and emotional strength/bravery, but admitted that facing an intimidating opponent could be difficult. Standing up for one's rights was very important, but the writer still regarded physical presence (and being muscular and strong) as important and not to be under-estimated and was envious of such people and those courageous people who are not afraid to stand in front of an audience. Another interesting angle on the question came from a candidate who considered non-violence (e.g. Gandhi) as bravery. Standing up to oppression/occupying forces and fighting against tyranny was admirable, but those who strive to implement alternatives are even braver. A few candidates developed this idea in talking about mental strength being translated into confidence – usually the confidence to speak out against what they saw as wrong in society.

#### Question 5

**Write a story which includes the sentence: 'He spoke in such a nervous way, she thought he was going to change their plan.'**

This was the most popular option. There were some excellent stories where the candidates managed to include the given sentence smoothly. There were many themes, from the uncertainty of marriage proposals to planned bank robberies. The best stories involved suspense and shock, including one about a search for a missing mother, which dissolved into horror, with several chilling, heart-stopping moments. Several stories featured betrayal of trust by someone very close to the protagonist through cunning manipulation, an example being the thwarting of an elopement. The best narrative responses are always characterised by an understanding of narrative structures, ambitious vocabulary, control of tenses and usually by a variation in tone through the sparing use of dialogue. Weaker responses included repetition of ideas, confused tenses and an overuse of simple grammatical forms and vocabulary. Most responses would have benefited from more variety in their punctuation, provided it was used accurately. With specific reference to dialogue, two points are worth remembering here. First, if dialogue is added it should have a purpose – perhaps to show character in some way. Second, dialogue should be properly punctuated, not least because it shows a skill as well as making communication clear.

#### Question 6

**Write a story in which a map plays an important part.**

There were some equally successful stories in response to this title. There were many which included road trips and many which included treasure hunts. There were several stories which included the loss of a phone signal and many in which a map was left to someone or found in a will. Many stories contained humour, including the amusing story of the (not very well-off) boy who brought a map of the hill country and was mocked by his friends for not having a cell phone with GPS. However, when they later entered an area with no network, he became the hero.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 1123/22  
Reading

## Key messages

In **Question 1(a)**, practice is needed in identifying the overarching points and eliminating unnecessary examples. Irrelevant examples and extensions of overarching points, when included, can spoil an otherwise competent response to **Question 1(a)**, which can then have a detrimental effect on responses to **Question 1(b)**. In **Question 1(a)**, candidates should focus on general rather than on particular information and often the more succinctly expressed it is, the better. Samples of responses which lose focus by giving examples as if they are overarching points are given in the section entitled: 'Comments on specific questions.'

- In **Question 1(a)**, some candidates write sentences in full which include extraneous information, sometimes abandoning any use of bullet points or line separation. This can cause blurring of points and should be avoided.
- In **Question 1(a)**, the use of multiple slashes needs to be discouraged as it can result in a response which takes the form of a list of disjointed words. An example of this is: 'shoppers / further money / travel / fuel / coffee', which cannot be regarded as a content point; the content point needs to be expressed succinctly and still make sense in isolation as a meaningful piece of writing which would be intelligible to any reader and not simply to people who have had the benefit of having read the text.
- In **Question 1(a)**, points should focus firmly on the question (advantages of online and in-store shopping) and avoid the disadvantages which are out of scope of the question, for example: 'People who shop in stores are restricted to particular opening hours' (alone).
- In **Question 1(a)**, candidates should avoid repetition, for example, 'the internet is always open and online shopping can be done at any time.'
- In **Question 1(b)**, although there is no specific assessment of use of English, candidates should aim to express their points clearly; this will ensure a well-organised piece of writing which is easy to follow. Practice in the appropriate use of linking devices is necessary to ensure coherence. Linking devices were frequently included but were not always used in a logical or sensible way.
- Candidates should try to gain a good, overall picture of both the given texts and all questions, before they begin to answer; this is especially important for questions on the second passage. Closer reading of the whole text before tackling the questions helps to clarify the narrative described in the text. Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the summary passage but experienced difficulty in responding to the detailed demands of the questions on the second passage. In both sections of the Paper, close reading and careful attention to detail bring the best results.
- Candidates should have practice in recognising the difference between opinion and fact in the first, non-fiction passage. Candidates should understand that the opinions they are being asked for are the opinions of the author and not their own opinions.
- Candidates might be encouraged to highlight or underline key words in the question, e.g. in **Question 4(b)** 'the worst of these driving conditions', or in **Question 5(d)** 'give one word'.
- In the multiple-choice vocabulary question, candidates should be encouraged to think about the given words in the context in which they appear in the text.
- Many candidates experienced difficulties with questions in which they were required to answer in their own words. This was seen particularly in capturing the idea of 'adamant' in **Question 3(b)**; closer attention to the context of the words to be re-cast should produce responses with a clearer focus.

- In final question of **Section 2**, candidates should concentrate on appreciation of the writer's craft. Although the format of these questions may appear to be new, the requirements are not. Candidates are still being asked to recognise the literal meaning of a given section of the text, and to comment on the effect on the reader of the writer's use of particular words or images. Further practice in answering this type of question would be beneficial.
- Candidates should be able to write their answers within the parameters of the examination booklet. Where this is not possible, they should write on official additional paper.

### **General comments**

Candidates were required to answer questions based on two passages of around 700 words each, the first being non-fiction and the second being fiction, with answers written in a common answer booklet. Candidates appeared to find Passage 1 more accessible than Passage 2.

There were very few incomplete scripts, and few instances of candidates writing their answers outside the parameters of the spaces provided in the examination booklet.

In **Question 1(a)**, there were only a few instances of candidates putting information into the wrong section.

Both passages, the first entitled 'Online and in-store shopping' and the second entitled 'Jennifer', seemed to engage candidates and to stretch and discriminate amongst them. Responses suggested that candidates felt comfortable with the subject matter of both texts, and found them interesting and relevant to their experience.

The first passage assessed candidates' ability to read for ideas and the second, their ability to read for meaning. 22 marks were available for the summary question, with 12 of these marks being awarded for selection of content points and 10 marks for the expression of these points in a piece of writing which is relevant, well-organised and easy to follow. Almost all candidates wrote to the required length in **Question 1(b)**, although some responses which were in excess of this were somewhat verbose – affecting scores on Relevance – and less fluent, affecting scores on Coherence.

Where the main points offered in **Question 1(a)** were dependent on unacknowledged examples or were omitted altogether in favour of unnecessary extensions of the points alone, this irrelevant detail was carried forward into **Question 1(b)**. The result was less relevant summaries.

As specified in the rubric for **Question 1(b)**, candidates should use their own words as far as possible. This suggestion, and the explanation that credit is given for organised information presented in an easy-to-follow manner, encouraged the strongest candidates to re-phrase and synthesise their content points fluently and coherently. Some candidates successfully used parts of the passage, rearranging and adding to them to ensure a coherence of their own and to suit their own personal organisation of the content.

The second passage, 'Jennifer', tested the candidates' literal and inferential comprehension, their understanding of vocabulary, their ability to select appropriate quotations, their use of own words and their appreciation of the writer's craft.

While the majority of candidates attempted every question, there were a number who did not respond to the final section on the writer's craft, though fewer than in previous sessions.

Both spelling and punctuation were generally strong throughout, as were handwriting and legibility.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Section 1**

**Question 1(a)** was the first part of the summary question, carrying 12 marks. Candidates were asked to identify the advantages of online shopping, and the advantages of in-store shopping, as outlined in the passage. The summary had to be based on Paragraphs 2 – 7, and candidates were required to write their answers in note form, and were free to use either the words of the text or their own words. One content point

under each heading of the rubric was given by way of illustration, although these given points were not rewarded with a mark.

Excluding the provided content points, which were not rewarded, there were 14 content points, of which candidates could identify any combination up to a maximum of 12, each carrying one mark. Most candidates expressed the points either in note form or in short sentences lifted from the text; some responses presented long, verbatim copies of the text for each content point. Candidates were not instructed to use bullet points, although the rubric and sample points suggested that they might. Most candidates did use bullet points, and this facilitated a focused approach to identifying content points.

Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 described the advantages of online shopping, and there were seven points (excluding the first, which was given) which the candidates could make. In Paragraph 2, there were three content points. The first was that goods purchased online are cheaper. The subsequent point was that online shoppers make further savings as they don't have to pay to travel to the shopping centre or pay for fuel, or pay for the coffee or lunch they might have at the shopping centre. Simply writing that shoppers make further savings was insufficient; the nature of the savings had to be specified. The final content point in this paragraph was that online shoppers are not at the mercy of the elements. Alternatively, the text examples – shoppers aren't caught in the rain or burned by the sun – were acceptable; an 'own words' attempt – such as they are not affected by adverse weather conditions – was also acceptable, provided the negative idea of 'at the mercy of' or 'adverse' was captured. A number of candidates offered the idea in this paragraph of goods being stored in basic warehouses; however, as methods of storage are an advantage for retailers but not for shoppers, this was irrelevant and not credited.

Paragraph 3 contained two content points, both concerning the concept of time. The first was that online shopping is quicker, and the second was that time is freed up for online shoppers to do other or interesting things. Many candidates spoiled their attempt at the first of these points by offering instead, or by adding to an otherwise correct answer, that weekly groceries can be bought in a matter of minutes. This is an example rather than an overarching point and as such cannot be awarded the mark. Being able to separate overarching points from examples of points is one of the tests in this question. Many candidates spoiled their attempt at the second of these points by suggesting that families were the only shoppers who benefitted from online shopping; writing that time was freed up for families (rather than 'people' more generally) to do more interesting things.

In Paragraph 4, there were a further two content points. The first of these was that shoppers know immediately that items are available to buy; conversely the idea could be expressed as shoppers be able to quickly make alternative arrangements if a desired item is unavailable. The qualifications of 'immediately' in the first option, or 'quickly' in the second option, were necessary as in-store shoppers can also find that items are unavailable, but the point of online shopping is that this information is discovered immediately and not after a trip to the shopping centre. The other content point in Paragraph 4 was that the internet is always open, or that online shoppers are not restricted to particular business hours. Many candidates made both of these points.

In the second section of the summary, candidates were asked to give the advantages of in-store shopping and, as with the first section of the question, there were seven points (excluding the first, which was given) which the candidates could make.

In Paragraph 5 there were two content points, excluding the first given point. The first point which candidates could make was that there is a social dimension to in-store shopping. This could also be expressed in the idea that shoppers can catch up with, or have coffee with, friends at the shops. The other content point was that there are more reductions available when shopping in a store. Many candidates made both of these points.

In Paragraph 6, there were a further two content points, the first being that shopping can be carried out in malls, or under one roof, and either that these malls buzz with activity or that such shopping is interactive. Some candidates wrote that shopping itself was interactive without specifying that it was malls which provided this. The second available point in this paragraph was that in-store shopping allows us to judge items closely. Many candidates spoiled their answer here by omitting the reference to the idea of 'closely'. Other candidates omitted the content point here, citing one or more of the examples related to perfumes, clothes or fabrics, as if they were an overarching point.

In the final paragraph, Paragraph 7, three content points could be found. The first was that goods purchased in a store are instantly available, or that shoppers don't have to stay at home waiting for deliveries, or that delivery companies might let them down. As with the earlier point that shoppers know immediately if an item

is available, the mention of 'instantly' or 'immediately' was necessary here too. The second and third points to be found in this paragraph were concerned with towns and local areas and people: shops (and not shopping) add colour, personality or individuality to towns or shops attract tourists or visitors to towns who then generate income for the town, and; shops or shopping provides employment for local people. A few candidates made a point about the 'unattractive wildernesses' caused when shops shut in towns, losing sight of the focus of the task.

In **Question 1(b)** candidates were asked to use their notes to write a summary of the advantages of online shopping, and the advantages of in-store shopping, as outlined in the passage. They were advised to write between 150 and 180 words (the first ten of which were given), within the space available. They were asked to write up their note form content points from **Question 1(a)** into a continuous piece of writing which was relevant, well-organised and easy to follow. The responses which scored highly on relevance did so by adhering to the points of the text which were relevant to the question, by avoiding the over-use of supporting details and examples, and also by avoiding non-specific topic sentences, such as 'But there are also advantages to in-store shopping.' Responses that scored highly on coherence were fluent, combined similar points, and linked points in a way that guided the reader through the text using devices such as connectives and adverbial phrases. The best responses included common adverbial connectives such as 'nevertheless', 'however', 'furthermore', etc. appropriately but not excessively, while in weaker responses, these were sprinkled throughout candidates' summaries, not always appropriately. The repeated use of 'and', 'but' or 'also' to string points together was also prevalent in weaker summaries. These linking words also appeared in stronger responses but were used sparingly and skilfully to synthesise ideas. Sometimes, a succession of fluent but simple sentences was presented almost as a list. The ability to present answers to **Question 1(a)** in clear bullet point note form avoiding wholesale copying from the text, facilitated a successful transformation of their notes into prose for **Question 1(b)** using appropriate linking devices. There were very few cases of incoherent writing. As already indicated, very few answers were shorter than the recommended length and hardly any candidates omitted the question completely.

In **Question 2** candidates were required to select and write down three of the writer's opinions, one from Paragraph 3, one from Paragraph 4, and one from Paragraph 5. The key to answering this type of question is to identify words or phrases which are subjective rather than objective. The words were 'boring' for the first opinion, 'there is nothing more disappointing' for the second opinion and 'satisfying and thrilling' for the third.

The opinion in Paragraph 3 was that wandering around a supermarket is (a very) boring (activity); this opinion was emphasised by the adjective 'boring', the implication being that another opinion might as easily be that some people love supermarket shopping.

In Paragraph 4, the opinion was 'there is nothing more disappointing than finding that a (particular) item is out of stock, or unavailable in the correct size'. Candidates could write 'there is nothing more disappointing than finding that a (particular) item is out of stock', or 'there is nothing more disappointing than finding that a (particular) item is unavailable in the correct size'; again the subjectivity was located in the words 'there is nothing more disappointing'.

In Paragraph 5, the opinion was 'it is satisfying and (even) thrilling to search through discounted items looking for a bargain.' As with the opinion in Paragraph 4, candidates could write 'it is satisfying and (even) thrilling to search through discounted items' or 'it is satisfying and (even) thrilling to search / look for a bargain'. The key lay in discerning the subjectivity inherent in the words 'satisfying' and 'thrilling'. Where candidates found one correct opinion, they very often went on to find the other two.

There was, as always, a small number of candidates who offered their own opinions rather than the writer's opinions. Sometimes these suggested opinions were facts selected from the text, e.g. 'In my opinion, online shoppers know immediately if an item is available.' Occasionally, material from Passage 2 was selected and presented as an opinion.

## Section 2

Most candidates seemed to find this narrative text more challenging than the non-narrative Passage 1.

**Question 3(a)** was a literal comprehension question asking for the two reasons why Jennifer was upset that she was late getting away from the office. This relatively straightforward question was designed to ease candidates into this section of the examination. Candidates could write that Jennifer was upset because she would be late meeting her daughter, or that her daughter was coming home, or coming from university, or coming for the long vacation. Lifting lines 2–3 'this was the much-anticipated day when her daughter Anna was coming home from university for the long vacation' was also an acceptable response. To write merely



that 'her daughter was coming' was too vague. Similarly, 'she was picking up her daughter from the airport', was insufficient, as there was no context for an airport in this paragraph. Some candidates wrote, incorrectly, that it was Jennifer's 'last minute paperwork' which caused the upset.

**Question 3(b)** was the first of the questions on the paper which required candidates to answer in their own words. They had to explain what was meant by 'her boss was apologetic but adamant that she should do the extra task'. The key lay in capturing the meaning of 'apologetic' and 'adamant', although this had to be done within a sensible context as the question was more than a test of vocabulary. The question required candidates to 'explain how Jennifer's boss felt' and so answers such as: *apologetic – sorry; adamant – insisted* were not accepted. In addition, the contrast in the boss's feelings had to be brought out by words such as 'but', 'however' or 'although'. Almost all responses included some reference to a relevant context with very few simply giving synonyms, and almost all included the contrast. Acceptable answers were responses such as 'he was sorry he had to ask her to do this work but he insisted there was no other solution' or 'although he regretted having to give her the work, he was determined she had to do it'.

There were many successful attempts at 'apologetic'. 'He was sorry' was the most popular correct response; 'he felt bad' was also acceptable. A common incorrect response was to write 'he was sympathetic' or 'he was sorry for her', both of which conveyed a different meaning. Candidates were less successful in capturing the idea of 'adamant'. Correct responses were words or expressions such as 'he demanded', 'he was strict', 'he was unyielding' and 'he would not change his mind'. Incorrect attempts were words or expressions such as 'he persisted', 'he was stubborn' or 'he forced her'.

In **Question 4(a)** candidates were asked in another literal comprehension question for 'the two physical signs of Jennifer's anxiety', the first being that her shoulders were hunched or tense or stiff, and the second being that her heart was racing or beat quickly. The first mark could be awarded by lifting lines 9–10, 'her shoulders hunched' or 'her shoulders hunched up to her ears (with tension)'. However, if the lift continued into 'she peered through the gaps created by the windscreen wipers' the mark was not awarded as this was not relevant to the question. The second physical sign could be given by lifting from lines 11–12, 'her heart raced with the effort of driving' or 'her heart raced with the effort of driving in such difficult conditions' but, if the candidate went on to lift the text further, again the mark was not awarded. Some incorrect responses referred to the windscreen wipers as one of the physical responses, while others incorrectly referred to 'seeing Anna after her absence of almost a year'.

**Question 4(b)** asked candidates what 'the worst of the difficult conditions' was for Jennifer as she drove. Many candidates correctly selected 'the wind', drawn by 'even worse' in the text which separated the wind from the rain and the darkness. However, 'wind and rain' or 'wind and darkness' were incorrect responses as the question asked for a singular condition, as shown by the words 'the worst' in the question.

In **Question 4(c)** candidates were asked 'what made Jennifer relax'. The answer was that she thought of her plans for Anna's vacation. Alternatively, one of the plans could be given, as in 'their visits to family members' or 'their invitation to friends to share dinner' or 'their shopping trips'. In each case, reference had to be made to 'plans' and to either plans for Anna's vacation or to the idea that the planned activities involved both Anna and Jennifer. It was not necessary to include 'she thought of', but any suggestion that Jennifer was planning activities for Anna's vacation as she was driving, was not correct: the focus of a correct response had to be plans already made. A relatively common incorrect response was 'she thought of spending time with Anna'.

**Question 5(a)** was an inferential question asking what Jennifer had to do. Candidates were required to infer from 'she had no alternative but to do the same' that she had to do what the car in front did, and slow down or brake. It was incorrect to write that she had to stop the car, and some candidates spoiled an otherwise correct response by adding 'and stop' to 'she had to slow down'.

**Question 5(b)**, like **Question 4(a)** was a literal comprehension question which asked for 'the two indications of roadworks ahead'. As with **Question 4(a)** the marks could be scored by lifting directly from the text, but the lifts had to be sensible and avoid straying into excess material. The first 'indication' was the signs at the side of the motorway or road, and the second was the flashing lights. For the first 'indication', the mark could be gained by lifting from lines 17–18, 'signs by the side of the motorway depicting matchstick-figure workmen warned of roadworks ahead' or simply 'signs by the side of the motorway'. 'Signs' (alone) was not sufficient as that was simply a synonym of the question word 'indication'. There was much confusion over 'matchstick-figure workmen', with some responses describing these as real human beings who were warning motorists rather than as symbols on the roadway signs. Candidates who went on to refer to Jennifer's exasperation were not awarded the mark as by now the focus of the question had been lost. For the second 'indication', the mark could be gained by lifting from line 21, 'flashing (orange) lights confirmed the need for caution', or simply 'flashing (orange) lights'. As with the first 'indication', candidates who went on to refer to the radio, or

who added to an otherwise correct response the fact that ‘the car had crawled along for half a kilometre’ were not awarded the mark as by now the focus of the question had been lost. Some candidates wrote incorrectly that one of the ‘indications’ was that the car in front slowed down. This event happened too early in the text for it to be a sign of roadworks; the car in front slowed down because, presumably, the roadworks were slowing down the traffic, or the driver of the car in front had seen the signs by the side of the motorway and/or the flashing orange lights before Jennifer had, simply because his car was in front of Jennifer’s car.

**Question 5(c)** was the second of the questions on the paper which required candidates to answer in their own words and explain what Jennifer’s ‘best options’ were. The meaning of the key words ‘endurance’ and ‘good humour’ had to be captured, and, as with **Question 3(b)**, this had to be done within a sensible context. Words and expressions such as ‘bearing’, ‘being tolerant’ and, popularly, ‘being patient’ or simply ‘patience’ were acceptable responses to capture ‘endurance’ and there was a reasonable degree of success here. Less successful were attempts to capture ‘good humour’, with many candidates referring to telling jokes or seeing the situation as funny or amusing, rather than correctly capturing ideas such as ‘cheerfulness’ or ‘optimism’ or ‘being positive’. Common incorrect responses to this question were: ‘Jennifer thought she should relax’, ‘Jennifer thought she should calm down’, ‘Jennifer thought she should wait’, ‘Jennifer thought she should listen to some music’, ‘Jennifer thought she should look for a short cut’ or ‘Jennifer thought she should not drive dangerously’.

In **Question 5(d)** candidates were asked to pick out the single word used in Paragraph 3 which conveyed a similar idea to ‘crawled along’, the answer being ‘edged’. Many candidates offered, incorrectly, ‘imperceptibly’. Other wrong choices included ‘queue’, ‘traffic’, ‘forward’ and ‘crawled’, despite the fact that ‘crawled’ appeared in the question. Some candidates erroneously gave two words, the most popular choice being ‘imperceptibly forward’.

**Question 5(e)** was an inferential question which asked what Jennifer did when she ‘chose silence again’, the correct answer being that she switched off the radio. The link had to be made between the radio announcer’s time check and her agitation at being late; her agitation was increased because the time check reinforced the fact that she was late. Some candidates wrote that Jennifer switched on the radio, information taken from line 21 (‘she switched on the car radio to listen to some calming music’); this information came too early in the text to be the correct response to this question.

**Question 6** was another inferential question which asked candidates, what Jennifer’s ‘mission’ was. They had to infer from lines 27–29 (‘driving up and down each lane looking for a space shaved even more precious minutes off her schedule’) that her ‘mission’ was to find a parking space or to park her car. Less precise answers such as ‘she parked her car’ or ‘she found a parking space’ were acceptable, but ‘to look for a parking space’ was not acceptable, as a correct answer required an outcome and not simply a desire. Some candidates wrote, incorrectly, that her ‘mission’ was to reach the airport; careful reading of the passage in the context of the word ‘mission’ was needed to see that Jennifer’s need to get to the airport was specified earlier. Other incorrect responses were that she had to pick up Anna, or she had to take the exit from the motorway. Other candidates ignored the question which asked for her mission, and gave two missions, as in ‘to get to the airport and to find a parking space’.

**Question 7** asked candidates why Jennifer thought she had been ‘so stupid’. Many candidates answered correctly that she had gone to the wrong part of the airport, that she was looking at the wrong board, that she was looking at details of the wrong flights, or that she had gone to domestic arrivals instead of international arrivals. Lifting from lines 36–37 (‘she was looking at information about domestic and not international arrivals’) was the most popular correct response to this question. Incorrect responses tended to be that Anna’s plane had been delayed by one hour, or incomplete, as in ‘she went to domestic arrivals’ (alone) or ‘she didn’t go to international arrivals’ (alone).

**Question 8** was a multiple-choice synonym question. Candidates who fared best were those who apparently worked out the best possible choices by taking each word back to its context.

The most successful responses were to **Question 8(c)**, where ‘possible’ was correctly chosen as the synonym for ‘prospective’, to **Question 8(d)**, where ‘position’ was correctly chosen as the synonym for ‘spot’ and to **Question 8(e)**, where ‘examining’ was correctly chosen as the synonym for ‘scrutinising’. Less successful were **Question 8(a)** where the correct answer was ‘rapidly’ for ‘hastily’, with ‘nervously’ being the most popular incorrect response, and **Question 8(b)**, where ‘correct’ was the right synonym for ‘appropriate’ with ‘suitable’ being the most popular incorrect answer.

**Question 9** was a writer’s craft question. In each section, **Question 9(a)** and **Question 9(b)**, candidates were asked to give the meaning of a phrase as used in the text, followed by the effect of this phrase.

**Question 9(a)** directed candidates to lines 25–26 ‘hotels, like shiny white teeth, rose against the skyline’ and asked for its meaning and its effect. The meaning given could focus either on the simile ‘like shiny white teeth’, or on the expression ‘rose against the skyline’. Correct answers focusing on ‘like shiny white teeth’ were those which linked ‘shiny’ to the idea of light and described the hotels as bright, illuminated, glowing or gleaming. Another correct response was to state the idea of their being close together or in a row, like teeth. A common incorrect response was to link ‘shiny’ to colour rather than to light, and to describe the hotels as painted in a bright colour or painted white. Candidates could also respond correctly by taking their answer from the expression ‘rose against the skyline’ and state that the hotels could be seen, or became visible or noticeable. A common response here was that ‘Jennifer saw the hotels’ but this was incorrect as the focus was on Jennifer and not on the hotels.

As with meaning, there were two methods by which candidates could give a correct effect, although they did not need to make their ‘effect’ response match up to their ‘meaning’ response. So, for example, candidates could give the meaning of ‘like shiny white teeth’ and the effect of ‘rose against the skyline’. The effect of ‘like shiny white teeth’ was that a contrast was created between the brightness, or illumination of, the hotels and the darkness of the sky. This was a very challenging idea as the reference to darkness was made in line 7 while the hotels were not mentioned until line 25. There was more success for candidates who opted for the effect of ‘rose against the skyline’, the answer being that the hotels were beautiful, grand, impressive or imposing, (although not luxurious or opulent, as words like these are associated more with the invisible interior of the hotels than with the visible exterior, which was the focus of the question – Jennifer could not possibly have seen inside the hotels as she drove). A common incorrect response here was taken from line 26: Jennifer ‘was approaching the airport’. This was incorrect as it was no more than a meaning lifted from the text and did not relate to the effect of the expression.

Candidates seemed to fare better in **Question 9(b)** than in **Question 9(a)**. Candidates were asked for the meaning and effect of line 47 (‘And suddenly, at last, there she was – Anna herself!’) The meaning could be captured in, for example, ‘Anna arrived’ or ‘Anna came through the doors’, or ‘Jennifer saw Anna’. Answers such as ‘Anna came out of the airport’, or ‘Anna came out of the aircraft’, although not precise, were also accepted as candidates could not be expected to have knowledge of airports or airport procedures. Common incorrect responses were: ‘Jennifer found her daughter’ or ‘Jennifer met her daughter’; or featured repetition of the question wording: ‘Anna was there’ or ‘there was Anna’.

The effect was that Jennifer was happy or relieved, or that Jennifer had forgotten all her worries or that the waiting had been worth it. It was incorrect to state that the expression showed that Jennifer was worried or that she had a long wait; the focus of the effect was that the waiting and the anxiety were now in the past. The agent had to be specified here; as ‘she’ could be either Jennifer or Anna. Writing ‘she was happy’ was therefore too imprecise to be considered correct. Alternatively, the effect on the reader was taken into consideration here, so that ‘the effect is to make the reader happy’ was an acceptable correct response.

As indicated above, some candidates did not answer **Question 9** at all, more opting not to answer this question than any other on the Paper.