

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8009/01
Paper 1

Key messages

- Candidates should read all the questions carefully before making their choice. There was some evidence of candidates' indecision about the question they were going to attempt as there were scripts with detailed plans or crossed out pages of an essay other than the one eventually selected. There were a few instances where a complete draft was produced before a fair copy; this is not a productive use of examination time.
- Many introductions would have benefitted from specific reference to the terms of the question. Weaker introductions made sweeping or vague assertions, referring to the topic in general terms and finishing only by restating the question. Stronger introductions introduced a line of argument. Most introductions were of appropriate length and focus. Use of English in some introductions was weak in the last sentences where responses addressed the chosen question.
- Most candidates focussed their responses on the wording of questions. However, in responses to questions 5 and 9 especially, many candidates lost focus and wrote lengthy descriptions of the causes and effects of global warming and the positives and negatives of internet use. This approach to the questions did not provide enough analysis or evaluation for higher marks.
- Nearly all essays had an appropriate overall structure and were of an appropriate length. However, some essays contained paragraphs that repeated ideas and added little to the response. In clear responses, paragraphs were well-structured, often following a pattern where relevant points were explained, developed, illustrated and linked to the question.
- Some responses contained sweeping statements and unsubstantiated claims that did not add weight to the arguments. Many responses contained sweeping statements such as 'everyone has access to the internet' or 'people in developed countries do not care about the environment' that are not truly universal. Many of the questions contain phrases such as 'to what extent' and 'how far' and in the most successful responses, candidates responded to these formulations by adopting a nuanced approach, writing with balance and complexity when making their arguments.
- There were a number of essays where exemplification was generalised or absent. Stronger responses included a range of examples that were pertinent to the argument. These responses also contained sufficient factually correct detail to enhance the reader's understanding but not so much as to become a lengthy description or catalogue. In the best essays, there was sound local knowledge and also clear demonstration of carefully selected relevant illustrations.
- Although almost all the essays had a conclusion, in weaker answers these were often only a summary of points made earlier in the response, or one or two sentences that stated agreement, disagreement or remained ambivalent about the question. Stronger answers used their conclusions to weigh up the evidence to offer a clear answer to the question, and in some cases offered a valid personal view but without being overly emotional. Strong responses often used more than one paragraph to close their argument and offered perceptive and evaluative commentary to make their case more convincing.

General comments

Use of English

Many responses demonstrated a good standard of English with few responses awarded marks in the lowest band of the mark schemes for use of English. There were many examples of text that had been well crafted

for effect, particularly in choice vocabulary and varied sentence structures. Most candidates used the apostrophe accurately.

However, for many candidates, control of grammar was not consistent, especially in lengthier essays. In many responses, grammatical accuracy was good in the introductory paragraphs but deteriorated as the essay progressed.

The most common errors were in:

- subject-verb agreement, especially in complex sentences
- incorrect use of the singular and plural forms
- inconsistent use of tenses
- omission of the definite article, for instance from 'the internet' and 'the welfare state'
- inaccurate or unidiomatic use of discourse markers such as 'furthermore', 'on the other hand' and 'moreover'
- inaccurate use of pronouns, for instance, using 'he' to refer to the government instead of 'it'
- sentence separation, such as the omission of commas and comma splicing.

Some candidates used overly elaborate forms of expression and vocabulary which were then inappropriate for the context.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates answering this question had some ideas about business set-up, but answers were sometimes general and theoretical, and would have benefitted from a discussion of more concrete examples. There were some nuanced responses which recognised that success is not always guaranteed by innovation and that failure need not be the result of imitation. A few strong responses looked beyond innovation and imitation and considered other factors such as price, location, and advertising, though some responses moved away from the terms of the questions when they made this argument. In most responses, the term 'successful' was recognised only in terms of creating a profitable business, but some stronger responses made reference to reputation and prestige, and to customer or brand loyalty. Some examples of companies and products were cited but these were not often developed in detail or fully linked to imitation or innovation.

Question 2

Stronger answers to this question addressed or compared specific art works, especially famous works, in detail, and explained the concept of value other than in monetary terms. Weaker responses remained relevant but tended to adopt a narrower view, such as concentrating on how local artwork and crafts are on sale to tourists and are therefore a helpful development of the local economy.

Question 3

There were a wide range of responses to this question. Weaker answers talked about advertising in general or did not focus on advertisements aimed at children but instead that aimed at older teenagers and adults. Stronger answers discussed relevant examples, such as 'pester power' and peer pressure that may be brought about advertising. Weaker answers lost focus on the terms of the questions because they discussed issues that were not directly pertinent to the question, such as a lack of parental supervision of their children's viewing. Other weaker response described public interest campaigns, but did not link this to the question. Although most answers drew examples from local television, candidates did not always make convincing links to the Mauritian context and there were few references to specific advertisements, rather than to broader types and techniques. Most answers were in favour of a ban but there was little consideration of responsibility for regulation or the recognition that enforcement, especially on digital media can be problematic.

Question 4

Answers to this question discussed how the use of a particular language or languages might influence one's world view, with some simple examples. Most answers were confined to a discussion of the advantages of knowing more than one language. Arguments were often strongly supported with reference to Mauritius' multilingual context, with shared language(s) being seen as part of a cultural or national identity. The strongest answers attempted to examine the philosophical and linguistic implications of the question.

Question 5

The best responses to this question were those which marshalled the wealth of available examples and applied these to measured arguments on where the obligation should rest and the extent to which this responsibility can be shared amongst all nations. Balance was often given in stronger essays, but some answers were not always convincing when what less developed countries might be able to do or what everyone should do was written about. These points had some merit, but were not always well handled. Many weaker responses did not sustain focus on the relative obligations of developed and less developed countries to combat climate change. There were some lengthy and not always accurate descriptions of the causes, results and possible solutions surrounding climate change. A significant number of answers were unclear or incorrect in their classification of countries as well as in assumptions that 'Africa is a country' or that 'people in less developed countries do not care about the environment'. There were many essays which started well but became more general in their focus on forms of pollution, or gave emotive descriptions of environmental damage but without articulating a clear argument.

Question 6

There were a wide variety of approaches taken by candidates to this question. Weaker answers were narrowly focused on lifestyle choices rather than health care and treatments. Stronger answers usually considered a range of stakeholders other than the patient, such as medical professionals, family, friends and the government in terms of provision of health care facilities. The moral dimension of issues such as euthanasia and abortion also featured in discussions and focus given to 'rights' and the extent to which individuals have autonomy over their own health and treatment options. Better answers looked at whether groups of people such as children, comatose patients and those who are intellectually impaired can make informed decisions.

Question 7

There were some excellent answers to this question, points made about wider crop rotation versus the need to grow mainly staple food crops, and the financial implications for farmers of different growing methods. The effects of weather conditions and climate change on farming a diverse range of crops were also discussed and the reality of this for farmers. Some candidates were offered a strong range of examples about local agriculture and the impact of changing consumer tastes which influenced farmers' decisions.

Question 8

Answers to this question were often well-exemplified with information about celebrities and their involvement in Mauritian politics. The best essays referred to global celebrities and their involvement in political activism and in some notable cases, becoming politicians themselves. Strong answers also considered potential dangers of young people, in particular, of following a celebrity without understanding their politics or positions. Weaker essays were overly focused on corruption, and did not address the terms of the question.

Question 9

Better responses to these questions discussed how the internet improves communication and connections, but could have been improved had they explained the difference between superficial connections and the deeper sense of unity. There were many examples given, but in weaker responses these were often limited to quotidian interactions such as family disagreements. Stronger answers examined the potential of the internet to unite or to divide people on issues such as racism, sexism, environmental concerns, charitable causes and extremism. There were some strong discussions about how being a member of online groups can lead to both inclusion and exclusion, so that the exact same activity or participation could at once be both divisive and unifying. However, many weaker answers did not clearly answer the question because they digressed into a discussion of the general benefits and disadvantages of the internet. These weaker responses described the issue at some length, but the precise role of the internet was addressed only briefly, in a sentence or a few lines. Weaker responses also made sweeping statements about the negative impact

of internet use which encompassed a range of extreme scenarios of immorality and criminality. In many cases, candidates made very binary decisions in their conclusions which demonstrated little evaluation. Stronger responses offered more balanced conclusions which made a judgement after considering both sides of the argument.

Question 10

Stronger responses to this question highlighted the difference between equal and equitable access to welfare benefits but did not pursue the argument with regard to sustainability. Weaker answers did not address the notion of 'sustainable' in the context of the welfare state and only focused on its environmental sense, but nearly all responses included a range of examples of features of a welfare state and the benefits and subsidies offered in Mauritius. Most essays described the range of benefits such as free education and healthcare and their purpose, but would have been stronger answers if they had examined whether such benefits can be funded in the long term if they are universally available.

Question 11

Better responses to this questions suggested that commonalities such as the 'beach culture', the dodo, Creole and the sega crossed ethnic boundaries and were part of a national identity. Weaker answer did not address the potential challenges of promoting a national identity whilst preserving cultural diversity, so the words 'extent of success' in the questions were not discussed. In many responses, candidates described aspects of Mauritian culture and identity and completely agreed that cultural diversity is well-preserved, but rarely considered of what the national identity might comprise and how this might be a work in progress.

Question 12

Stronger responses to this question discussed the role of parents and schools in shaping the financial habits of young people by informal and formal lessons. There were, sometimes, pertinent illustrations of the issues that young people will be confronted by as they enter adulthood, such as economic crisis, student debt and pension planning. Weaker answers did not address the question and were often written in general terms, asserting that young people are reckless and offering exaggerated descriptions of extravagant expenditure. Most responses discussed the need to understand the value of money, how to budget and save for the future, but discussions were usually too general in focus and not clearly linked to young people throughout the response.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8009/02
Paper 2

Key messages

It is most important that the material provided in the Insert is read with great care. Whilst there is often a place for the inclusion of valid ideas drawn from a candidate's own experience, answers should be based on the material for the two sections.

This paper assesses candidates' ability to demonstrate their understanding of material by using their own expression. Where this is specified in the rubric little, if any, credit can be awarded to a candidate who only copy from the text. It is better for a candidate to try and compose sentences using their own vocabulary even if the result is not altogether satisfactory.

A feature of this paper tests candidates' ability to write economically; where a word limit is stipulated credit cannot be gained for material which goes beyond this limit.

Certain questions invited candidates to use bullet points but few appear to have had the confidence to use this option. Their use can assist in writing concisely as well as help avoid the repetition of material.

General comments

Almost all candidates showed clear engagement with the paper and there were very few scripts where every question had not been attempted. There was evidence that almost every candidate could comprehend the material and wrote in intelligible English. Although written English is not formally assessed on this paper, the standard of expression was commendably high, writing was usually clear and legible, and meaning unambiguous. There was no evidence to suggest that any candidates were short of time.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 and 2

The majority of candidates were unable to work out the credit that Hagen would be given for his six years in industry and link this to the salary that would be paid in his second year at the university. **Question 2** was answered correctly by the majority of candidates who showed a good understanding of candidate to staff ratios.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates had sufficient material to make a convincing case for any of the three applicants under consideration and, whilst there was usually good understanding of the contribution each applicant could make as a teacher, the majority either did not read or ignored the job requirements concerning research and residential duties. In Hagen's case many candidates referred to his linguistic ability and versatility, the promotion of languages in schools and the extra funding which might become available. Hagen's versatility in language competence was rarely linked with the fluctuating numbers across the different languages taught/studied. Some candidates tried to justify his appointment on the grounds that he would be cheaper than Hilde or not disabled like Gunther but no credit could be given for such comparisons. A number of candidates incorrectly asserted that he had teaching experience or made unjustified assumptions that he would always be on time for work because he had a house in the city centre. Only a very small number of candidates used

the candidate/staff figures to justify his appointment to the department which already had the highest candidate to staff ratio.

Many candidates made an equally strong case for Hilde citing her experience, popularity with candidates, the ability to act as a role model for females wishing to study science, and her academic qualifications. Many of these points were convincingly developed.

Those candidates who chose Gunther focused on his youth and enthusiasm for philosophy, which would attract and motivate candidates and the probable need for more philosophy lecturers as a result of the neighbouring closure. Perceptive answers commented on the opportunity for the university to demonstrate its anti-discrimination policy. Others made the valid point that philosophy was not on the school curriculum and might attract additional candidates due to its novelty value, hence the need for additional staff. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given how few candidates selected the correct irrelevant material in **Question 4** (see below), a number of candidates tried to make a case for Gunther's being able to step into the shoes of absent language staff on the strength of an A level.

- (b) Gunther was a popular choice and almost all candidates explained their answer with support reasons such as his cat and his disability which would limit his access to various parts of the campus. Few answers, however, linked these points to the residential aspect of the post, and very few candidates developed the access issue, because they did not recognise that financial constraints could hinder the university's ability to address it. His youth and lack of experience were often noted in answers as the probable dearth of candidates supported by evidence from the neighbouring university. The point about his passion for his subject being demonstrable by his plan for secondary school liaison, was often misunderstood and quoted as if it were a negative, in the sense that he was *only* interested in secondary school teaching.

Hilde was often chosen with most focusing on her salary cost, and the difficulties of her relationships with male staff and possibly male candidates who would be in the majority. Less acceptable arguments centred about her age (35 being too old to relate to candidates) and the fact that she had worked in two other universities and therefore would be unlikely to stay in the job. Some candidates used the staff and candidate numbers as a reason not to appoint her.

Some candidates who chose Hagen used the ratio material but incorrectly, claiming that there were plenty of language staff, so another would be unnecessary. A number noticed that he did not have a higher qualification, unlike the others, but did not relate this to the research aspect of the post to develop fully the point. A small number of candidates argued that his marriage meant that he would not be able to concentrate on the job sufficiently, but this was not acceptable as a valid reason.

Question 4

Only a very small number of candidates answered this correctly. Of those that chose the correct response (Gunther's A Level language), most candidates gained at least one of the two available marks for explaining the choice, usually by stating that he was to be employed as a philosopher, not a linguist. A little more explanation about the specific level of competence was required in many responded to gain the full three marks.

Section B

Questions 5 to 9

Of these, **Questions 6** and **8** were successfully answered by the majority; **Questions 5** and **9** proved the most difficult.

Question 10

Most candidates provide synonyms and wrote successfully about accommodation, staffing issues and the availability of drugs. However, the requirement for 'own words' was not met by a number of candidates who could not effectively rework phrases such as 'very expensive', 'mental health problems', and 'extra resources'. Some responses dealt with the wrong part of the text, despite being directed to the relevant paragraphs, and offered solutions to the issue rather than the problems. There were some misunderstandings also as to the government's plans and resources, with a number of accusations of

potential corruption. The issue of 'costs rising to... for young offenders' was not infrequently taken to mean that costs were increasing.

Question 11

Although few candidates began with a lengthy introduction or preamble, and most went straight in to the points they intended to cover, many candidates nevertheless wrote too much in response to this word-limited question. Some excellent responses gained maximum marks, usually by using clear and brief bullet points which allowed many aspects to be covered within the limit. Candidates were not helped, if they began with observations related to children that were outside the brief. Many answers did not clearly convey which groups were intended with the various actions, particularly the dangerous and less dangerous women so did not gain credit for the recommendations or the related improvements. There were misunderstandings related to the issue of life sentences which was sometimes taken to mean capital punishment, and the idea of giving redemption was often reversed in many answers i.e. that there should be none. Although general understanding was often shown, often the detail or precision was lacking, such as the psychiatric care was for those with *mental* health problems, or the 70 per cent recidivism being among *young* offenders and *within a year* of leaving custody. Other issues such the scrapping of short sentences and the use of community services were usually well understood.