

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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<p><b>Paper 9093/12</b> <b>Passages</b></p>
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## Key messages

- Candidates need to ensure that they read a wide range of material from a range of diverse sources – such as travel writing, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, newspapers articles, blogs, advertisements – so that they can assess not only the conventions and language associated with different formats and genres, but also comment on the effects and qualities conveyed by specific words and phrases.
- Successful candidates will be able to comment on how a particular extract is structured in the way that it unfolds and develops in term of subject, mood and tone.
- Candidates should be able to explore the contrasts and differences between the sections of a given extract; they need to move beyond identifying essential aspects of language and style such as personification, alliteration, and punctuation, to consider such features in relation to their context and the extract as a whole.
- Candidates who write precisely and economically, maintaining a close focus upon style and tone, are those who tend to achieve best results.
- They also need to be able to adapt their own writing style to incorporate diverse directed tasks – for example, letters, voiceovers, articles, diaries – and demonstrate secure familiarity with their conventions and style.
- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation, and tenses – is required at this level.

## General comments

All three passages on the paper were found to be generally accessible and engaging. Most candidates demonstrated a clear sense of purpose in approaching both the commentaries and directed writing and there was a general sense that the commentaries were more fully developed than is sometimes the case. This series showed a marked improvement in the relevance of opening paragraphs, with fewer candidates simply repeating the question or summarising the contents of the passage. A corresponding improvement in the closing paragraphs is yet to be seen, with many simply repeating points made earlier rather than developing them. These conclusions sometimes represented a sizeable percentage of the answer but offered only a minimal amount of information which could be credited.

Most candidates seemed to understand that language features need to be related to their effects within the passage, but these effects were often generally stated and needed more specific application. The evaluation of effects continues to be an area where improvements can be made to allow candidates to be able to engage with the text rather than just list language features or to write descriptively. There was a similar tendency to generalise when referring to the use of imagery in the texts. Where the author's use of imagery was identified – specifically in **Question 1 (a)** – for higher reward, candidates needed to specify the nature of the imagery or the effect created.

Punctuation and sentence lengths were sometimes credited with the capacity to affect reading speed, but genuinely purposeful examination of the effects of punctuation was rare.

There were some vibrant and perceptive responses in the directed writing, though candidates needed to be aware of the necessity to check the accuracy of their work, which sometimes seemed to suffer in the imaginative involvement of the exercise. There were relatively few significant cases of candidates significantly exceeding the word limit; there was some evidence of unintentional underwriting, which is no

more acceptable than exceeding the specification. The stated parameters are always 120–150 words, and it is between these two boundaries that candidates should aim to complete their response if they are to meet the marking criteria.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) This passage offered enough language features to ensure some confident and well-developed responses, though there was a tendency to answer at length concerning the opening scenes and then skip over the description of the city. Weaker responses needed to develop beyond recognising some of the supposed ‘persuasive’ techniques employed. A significant minority of responses attempted to identify features, but did so inaccurately and needed to explain the effects created. Otherwise, there was generally good understanding of the language features employed: the use of contrasts such as the fever of the taxi driver being thwarted by the traffic; the bank employee with Ramon who is ‘polite and cheery in a workmanlike way’; the use of similes such as ‘like a demented chimp’, ‘like a spaceship at take-off’, ‘like a fat man clearing his throat’; the use of diction such as the use of the verb ‘curdling’ to describe the rising sounds of the city; and the use of superlatives such as ‘most economical’, ‘cheapest’.

Visual imagery was, initially, addressed in respect of ‘the dusty arrivals hall’ and ‘the pretty flight attendant’ who was checking ‘her nails’. Candidates referred to the lack of care taken and/or that the airport was dirty. Some more successful candidates attempted to develop points about the imagery of the arrival by remarking on the writer’s use of ‘towering billboards’ that ‘showed caramel-skinned women’ being displayed in a ‘decorative’ way.

Middle-band responses made comments about the writer’s focus on sensual imagery, notably the ‘scent of coffee, hair cream and strong tobacco’; these tended to focus on the harm of cigarette smoking and then continued with ‘the man behind the glass’ who was breaking the ‘Royal Decree’; similar distaste was expressed for those in the café who ‘breakfasted on cigarettes and anis’; for many, these were simply stereotypes of lawlessness and went hand in hand with Madrid being ‘full of bad types’. The most perceptive responses mentioned the implicit masculinity of the culture, suggested by ‘businessmen [who] breakfasted’ and the fact that the passage was supposed to be about ‘the world of bullfighting’.

The imagery of the cab ride was addressed by most candidates and this was often reduced to comments about the cab driver’s ‘madness’, together with the writer’s views of the buildings, the lift at the Hostel Playa and the view from the writer’s window, which was seen as suggesting his boredom. Most candidates referred to the negative impressions suggested by the text, especially in the writer’s use of onomatopoeia, for example, ‘a steadily swelling cacophony of clanging, banging and cursing’. The more successful addressed the writer’s ambivalence and changes in tone, whilst the majority of responses identified mixed emotions from ‘I felt excited and fatigued, exhausted but elated.’ There was some engagement in the writer’s use of Spanish and the use of fact and opinion; very few candidates addressed the fact that the writer’s opinion is, largely, suggested rather than stated.

More successful responses gave some consideration to the structure of the passage in addition to imagery, tone, use of third and first person, changes in tense and the use of contrast. Very few recognised the time of day of the passage or the season and that this was a City – and indeed a writer – ‘waking up’, although the more perceptive did address the latter in terms of appearance and reality. One candidate offered some interesting comments about the writer’s preoccupation with ‘control’ or the lack of it, suggested by the cab driver ‘muttering to himself and humming’, the architecture being a ‘blend of baroque and art deco’, the ‘smartly dressed’ who ‘scampered’, and the ‘swelling cacophony’ of noises. The most consistent engagement came from candidates who discussed the writer’s use of irony throughout the passage, suggested to them by ‘puffing away regardless’ of the ‘Royal Decree’, ‘the festively named Hostal Playa’ being ‘400 kilometres from the nearest beach’, the ‘flourishing’ of the desk boy’s hand to showcase ‘the shared toilet’, and the ‘busier the city got [...] the lonelier I felt’. These responses also addressed the disappointment and sense of alienation of the ending.

- (b) Candidates were invited to imagine that the same writer visits their country and to write the opening description of his arrival.

This question gave rise to some beautifully evocative responses, bringing countries to life effectively, and the sense of place was, at times, enthralling. Many responses reiterated content, often resorting to copying the content so closely that the answers fell short of achieving the purpose required – focusing upon the style and features of the original. This meant that the smell of coffee, hair cream and tobacco was reproduced with only slight modification, as was the cab ride. A good many also forgot to specify the location of their answer and few attempted to adapt the shape of the passage. Many also missed the opportunity to consider other forms of transport and were hampered furthermore by lack of engagement with the prevailing tense of the original. The weakest responses were written in the third person.

The most effective writing paid attention to style and features whilst giving ‘a flavour’ of the writer’s arrival in a new place. One memorable piece began: ‘Humid air carried the heat of the afternoon sun and the foreign chatter of fishermen lounging by the docks.’

## Question 2

- (a) This text was generally handled with confidence, and some features – such as the use of personification and bold headings – were regularly noted. There was also understanding of the persuasive techniques employed, as well as the conscious attempt to reach as wide an audience as possible. Although most candidates recognised the ‘sales patter’ and the sales pitch of the Hilton Dubai, some tended to fall for the pitch and lost focus on the technicalities by discussing how exciting the text was for the reader, even concluding that they would be booking their flight at the earliest opportunity if they were able to.

Responses identified a range of features in varying degrees, including the rhetorical opening, with the most sensitive responses recognising the element of predetermination in the question. Most responses noted that structurally, the passage was divided into sections under clear headings; the more perceptive commented that, ironically, the longer ‘seven days’ was given the shortest section in the passage; the personification in ‘rub shoulders’ was often mentioned by these responses. Candidates also commented on the use of direct address and of exaggeration and/or superlatives such as ‘best beach’, ‘oldest building’, ‘world’s biggest’/‘tallest’/‘highest’. Some explored the writer’s use of contrasts: ‘heritage’ collides with ‘futuristic’ elements, and mosques and older buildings are described alongside ‘cutting edge’ bars, shopping malls and tall towers. There were various developments on the theme of the new vs. the archaic and the young vs. the old/aged to engage the audience. The use of imperatives, such as ‘Book your stay’, ‘Visit’ and ‘head to’, appropriate to the purpose was often noted.

The most engaged responses recognised the clichéd sales patter such as ‘get high in the afternoon’ and ‘with a spot of dune bashing’. A perceptive few were humorously cynical about the whole passage and its suggestion of affordability for everyone; the most astute suggested that there would be nothing to do by day 7 but relax and look back on it all in sheer exhaustion.

Weaker responses tended to describe the opportunities available. Some identified language features; for higher reward, candidates needed to explain the effect of the features rather than simply explaining the features themselves. Likewise, where these responses stated generally that the writer used ‘promotional language’, they needed to specify the specific features concerned.

- (b) Candidates were invited to write a section for an advertisement that might have been produced by the same hotel chain for a tourist destination that they had visited and, in so doing, to follow closely the style and features of the original.

There was some assured writing on this topic. Many weaker responses were often in need of greater attention to accurate expression. There was much lifting of the opening and the subheadings of the original, and these responses would be much improved if candidates had used their own language and ideas, with echoes of the passage.

For the most part, candidates recognised the need to conduct a holiday sales pitch on behalf of the same hotel chain, employing present tense and direct address. Many responses were able to bring their chosen destination to life. Destinations included the Maldives, the Bahamas, Cape Town, Copenhagen, London and even Portsmouth in the UK; there were some particularly confident

responses about Victoria Falls. The use of the imperative voice was quite effective in much of the writing. Candidates, generally, understood the need to sell some unique features to tourists. For example, one memorable piece invoked 'The Queen' as an instance of cultural heritage: 'You might even see the queen as she gently shuffles past a window.' The most successful pieces attempted to combine futuristic elements (usually regarding architecture) with heritage sites and physical activities.

### Question 3

- (a) This text was less well handled by those who attempted it; weaker responses merely repeated the passage, lapsing into description. Most candidates commented on the graphological features of the text, noting that it was clearly divided, organised and structured with headings and lettered points in the last section to convey information clearly. The usual features for comment included the use of first person and direct address to engage the reader and make the text more appealing to a wider audience. Most candidates also noted the use of the colloquial phrases such as 'rookie', 'crank up', 'check out', 'way too seriously' to assume a friendly, helpful style. Many noted the rhetorical question, 'can you afford to avoid taking risks?'

There was some focus on high- and low-frequency lexis to reinforce the expert advice and to provide friendly encouragement. However, there was little acknowledgement of the use of negatives, even in the headings: 'NOT PREPARING ENOUGH'.

Successful responses explored the use of triads – 'uninvolved, uninteresting, unenthusiastic' and 'driving, shopping or running' – and the use of anecdotal elements – '80–90 per cent of the presenters that I observe', 'I often come up with great ideas', 'As I often say to clients', 'As my mentor and co-founder [...] said', 'I've heard of speakers who'. They also noted that the advice is given in contrastingly colloquial/elevated language, for example, 'succinct and cogent' and 'exacerbates'. The most successful commented on the passage as a whole, discussing specific examples of language use, techniques and structure which were often replicated in the individual sections. More engaged responses considered how the writer subtly enforces the message of each extract through providing a concrete example, such as 'Crank up the energy level!', where the imperative voice enforces the message about 'SPEAKING WITH LOW ENERGY'.

- (b) Candidates were invited to write a post to the blog as an inexperienced speaker, commenting on whether the advice given was useful, and in doing so to base their writing closely on the style and language the original blog.

Most candidates handled this form successfully; responses were, generally, straightforward with information about how the blog had helped. Candidates recognised the need to write in first and second person. Responses offered a variety of formats and not all responses were written as a blog post in the style and language of the original as stipulated in the question; many adopted the layout of the blog itself when organising their post. More informed writing adapted the colloquial and enthusiastic style of the original passage to provide a friendly opening; 'Hey there. Rookie speaker here' was one such example and one candidate added humour, commenting that they had found practising beneficial 'in front of my chihuahua, Mr Kit'.

Some weaker responses showed uneven purpose by offering advice themselves rather than commenting on whether the advice in the original blog was useful. Lifted material was prevalent here due to the limited semantic field of public speaking, with the hyphenated 'S-l-o-w d-o-w-n!' being the most used.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/22  
Writing

## Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Candidates need to allocate a set amount of time to: identifying factors for writing; planning to write; writing; proofreading.
- When reading the questions, candidates should concentrate on the instructions and should carefully deconstruct the question, perhaps underlining key instructions. For example, in **Question 1** the key instruction is to 'write the opening of a story', creating a sense of 'excitement and anticipation'.
- Effective planning, following on from successful interpretation of the question (as above), leads to better crafted and well-shaped responses, therefore minimising irrelevant detail and generic content.
- During the planning stage, candidates should consider the following: the *purpose* of the piece, the prescribed *form* and *audience* as well as the most appropriate *voice* or *persona* to adopt, the *mood* and *tone* that they should try to create in their writing and the most suitable *structure* to employ.
- One key aspect of the most successful and effective writing in **Section A** is a convincing and credible narrator/persona. Key aspects of the most successful and effective writing in **Section B** are a clearly developed, logically sequenced structure, together with an authentic sense of voice.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation. Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow easily in long, rambling sentences.
- Candidates must also be aware of the need for correct spelling and paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- In preparing for **Section A**: Imaginative writing, candidates should develop skills in differentiating between 'showing' versus 'telling', to improve both descriptive and narrative skills.
- When preparing for **Section B**: Writing for an audience, candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles as background preparation. Candidates should be exposed to the tone, register and format of these texts, as well as of speeches and voiceover scripts.

## General comments

Technical accuracy tended to be more secure in **Section B** than in **Section A**, where tense errors and confusions often caused problems. **Section B** responses were also often structured more effectively than **Section A**. It may, therefore, be appropriate to advise candidates to attempt their chosen **Section B** task before their **Section A** task.

Quite a number of submissions self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some essays were appreciably short of the minimum word limit. Responses that either fall short of the minimum word limit or exceed the maximum are unlikely to form full, well-rounded pieces, or to meet Mark Scheme criteria relating to structure. Candidates should practise writing time-limited tasks to a specific word length.

For **Section A**, strong responses were those with an original flavour and a convincing sense of place, character or atmosphere. For example, the reader was able to feel a sense of excitement and anticipation in the story in **Question 1**; appreciate the contrasting outlook and mood of the two diary entries in **Question 2**; or visualise the sound, movement and colour in **Question 3**. Where some candidates fell down in their imaginative writing, it was often due to issues related to structural control (for example, an entire piece written as one paragraph), or to the use of suitable language devices to create effects. A number of answers were hampered by tense confusions, especially when attempting to create drama or a sense of time passing in **Question 1**. Candidates should be encouraged to utilise one main tense in their stories.

The more successful **Section B** answers kept the target audience in mind throughout and adopted language and structural techniques to match that audience. Elements that could be improved in weaker responses are the use of the conventions of different forms, the ability to establish a mature, credible voice, and the development of a well thought out, logically organised line of argument.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section A: Imaginative writing**

##### **Question 1 – Story opening**

**Write the opening of a story called *Setting Off*, about an expedition which has taken many months to prepare for. In your writing, create a sense of excitement and anticipation.**

The word ‘expedition’ was understood by the majority of candidates, although a small number interpreted this as ‘exhibition’ and wrote about preparing to exhibit artwork at a gallery.

Stronger candidates produced some lively pieces of writing, choosing to write about expeditions ranging from trips into space and mountain climbing to tracing a family tree. Some showed a sense of enjoyment as they planned for a gap year with friends, sometimes focusing their attention on a strong opening by communicating immediately a sense of purpose: ‘Months and months of gruelling hard work and planning has finally come to pass. The exhilaration and excitement thrumming through my veins promises an experience for the books. It will be an adventure of a lifetime.’

Weaker candidates often wrote about a normal holiday rather than specifically about an exhibition. Some candidates over-emphasised the preparation aspect of the question, never quite communicating a sense of excitement. For example, they often produced accounts of packing for a holiday and going to the airport, needing to provide more of an insight into the narrator’s emotions. Where others demonstrated that they had a good story they wanted to tell, they needed to make sure that they linked their story solidly to the question.

##### **Question 2 – Contrasting diary entries**

**Write two contrasting diary entries (300–450 words each): the first by a teacher on his first day of work; and the second by the same teacher on his last day of work before retirement. In your writing, create a sense of outlook and mood.**

In most cases contrast in voice and tone was managed well. Stronger candidates produced some very realistic and sympathetic portrayals of a teacher’s life and of the irritating sets of behaviours exhibited by students. They often communicated a positive and heart-warming image of the teaching profession and a fondness for their teachers. They also used a more mature voice in the second diary entry, to provide contrast. One candidate created a clear sense of mood in the second diary entry: ‘I thought about how much I had changed as a person. From an impatient, nervous and timid teacher I turned into a confident, assertive and patient person. As I walked out of the gate for the last time, my journey as a teacher came to an end.’ One of the most striking retirement day entries achieved a sense of outlook and mood through symbolism: ‘The classroom seemed dull. My desk had lost its shine over the past thirty years [...]. The lesson bell rang for one last time.’ Another strong candidate used subtle observations to highlight the passage of time: he had been held up on his way to school on his first morning by an anti-apartheid demonstration and had later been given directions to his classroom by a tall blonde colleague. On his last day the woman he bumped into in the corridor now had grey hairs amongst the blond ones and was his wife; his favourite student, who was helping him to pack up his possessions, was a girl who would not have been permitted to enter the school at the time of the demonstration which had delayed him on his first day.

Weaker candidates dwelt too much on going through morning preparations in the first entry, and sometimes the second as well. Typically the young teachers were full of high hopes of moulding their students into upright citizens; they were apprehensive on their first day, and met with some disobedience and hostility in the classroom; then on the last day the retiree was sad to leave the school, had become deeply attached to the students, and was given a fond farewell by both students and colleagues. Candidates should note that work in the top two bands of the Mark Scheme will be 'imaginative', and 'possibly original' in the very top band.

### Question 3 – Descriptive writing

**Write a descriptive piece called *The Crowd*. In your writing, create a sense of atmosphere, and focus on sound, movement and colour to help your reader imagine the scene.**

Most candidates were able to picture the required sound, movement and colour effects. Many candidates used a narrative frame or a single person's perspective, which worked well in cases where the focus of the piece remained descriptive.

Stronger candidates often wrote from their own experience and were able to write evocatively about the crowd at a sporting event, a music festival, a train station, a national celebration or a protest. Stronger candidates focused on specific people within the crowd, incorporating the elements of sound, movement and colour in a subtle way, producing an effective descriptive piece. One candidate described the crowd at a music festival, giving the crowd a sense of identity: 'The noise of the crowd was deafening. It was like watching an angry ocean in a violent storm. The lights flickered furiously in a mix of colours.' Others took an imaginative approach such as a musician looking out at the crowd, or a bird's eye view of lunch time in a school cafeteria, with the focus on a student attempting to navigate his way through a queue in an attempt to get food.

Weaker candidates often descended into narrative about going to an event, and lost focus on the crowd by describing the event itself. Others utilised fictional sources such as zombie apocalypse films, fantasy or medieval battles and were often plot-driven rather than a deliberate presentation of apt descriptive details. A number of weaker candidates had attempted to enhance the descriptive quality of their writing by using fragmented sentences; in fact, appropriate sentence demarcation would have been a much more effective aid in achieving the effects which the vocabulary selection was intended to create. Candidates should be wary of overusing the continuous present tense, which can result in non-standard, often unclear sentence construction.

### Section B: Writing for an audience

#### Question 4 – Article for school website

**In class, you have been discussing whether it is a good idea to take a year off from formal education before going to university. Write an article for your school website about the pros and cons of taking a 'gap year'.**

This question produced many responses which showed clear engagement with the topic. Cultural influences made a big difference to what people thought, as in some countries it seems to be an indication of failure, as you may only have a gap year if you need to improve your exam marks. In other countries there was a big fear of being a year behind their contemporaries. Others considered a gap year as an opportunity to mature and gain life experience that helps people to be confidently independent and to focus on their studies once they start university.

Stronger candidates used a wide range of rhetorical devices and some showed cleverness with headings, thus really focusing attention on the school website audience. Effective sub-headings included: 'The Brain Break', 'You jumped off the train', 'Zero Funding' and 'The Nothing Gap'. Many responses were lively and entertaining and often took into account the differing views of teachers, peers and parents. Such responses had a good sense of the audience for this task, adopting an appropriately informal style, often with an effective opening, such as in this example: 'Seven years of primary school, plus five years of high school, then four years of university, then work until retirement. This is the way society has structured our lives. What if you could choose to slow life down to catch your breath before whizzing on to the next chapter? Enter the gap year.'

Weaker candidates mainly listed pros and cons and often needed more balance in their approach. Many had an extreme take on the cons of taking a gap year, with visions of candidates falling into organised crime and generally dissolute behaviour; such views were difficult to support.

### Question 5 – Contrasting reviews

**A new luxury hotel has recently been built in an old part of your town. Write two contrasting reviews (300–450 words each) of the hotel: one praising it, and the other criticising it.**

Stronger candidates clearly focused on a review form, providing personal comment on the hotel and its amenities. Where candidates connected the location of the new building being in the old part of the town, it gave them more to say, both negatively (for example, the new business was ruining existing local businesses), and positively (for example, this would be a boost to the local economy). There were two different and equally valid approaches to this question: first, the alleged advantages of resurrecting an old and stagnant area with new energy and employment for locals, as against the discrepancy between a posh and tasteless edifice totally out of keeping with the old but culturally rich area where it was situated, driving out local businesses and staffed by outsiders; second, details of a stay by a guest and what each experienced. Some stronger candidates mixed both elements. One candidate enthused: 'Oh what joy it brings me to see new life injected back into this old town! We have not had a new building or new infrastructure set up in our humble town for years!' Another writer was less than impressed: 'The receptionists greet you with a distant glare with a hint of glee. Not to mention the tantalizing array of breakfast choices; a beige semi-fluid with a white blob floating is supposed to be the early morning drink to keep the gears turning.'

Weaker candidates adopted a list-like approach, providing a tour of the hotel, sometimes after a lengthy prologue detailing travel to the hotel. A significant number of weaker candidates wrote essays, rather than reviews, thus falling short of the requirements of the question. Elements that one would expect to be incorporated into a review include mention of the hotel facilities and comment on them, and offering advice to readers.

### Question 6 – Speech

**Your headteacher has asked you to give a speech to your year group about a free-time activity that you are very good at. Write the text of the speech. In your writing, create a sense of enthusiasm for the activity and a desire to share this enthusiasm with others.**

Candidates who selected this question dealt with a wide variety of activities, from belly dancing, surfing, fishing, baking and yoga to reading, acting, singing and listening to music.

Stronger candidates used a range of rhetorical devices to engage the audience, many beginning their responses with a rhetorical question. They adopted a motivational tone with suitably emotive language; they thoughtfully explained how the activity helped them get through stressful study for exams or difficulty in forming friendships and were very encouraging towards others wanting to take up the interest. Better responses outlined, for example, the benefits of eating healthily, challenging oneself and persevering in difficult situations. They also provided relevant information to reinforce their arguments with claims about improvement in mental health and academic achievement. Many of these stronger candidates wrote from experience, which gave their speeches an authentic feeling. One candidate wrote about drumming: 'It is a fantastic form of catharsis and can help to relieve stress and anxiety. The drums can speak when you cannot.' For another, who had suffered a number of personal problems, running was a fix-all cure. Others wrote about volunteering, with strong conviction: 'Through my free time activity I am able to have a social, economical and environmental impact to the people living in various communities. Do we not want to be the reason for change? Do we not want to help others in need? Do we not want to be proud of something we have achieved?'

Weaker speeches needed more structural attention. They often gave long lists of necessary equipment or wrote about the minutiae of the rules of the game. In many cases it was apparent that candidates would have done better to have written about an activity they were familiar with. For example, cooking was a popular choice, but where candidates made little reference to the process of cooking their speech became less persuasive.



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 9093/32  
Text Analysis

## Key messages

- Candidates should prepare for this Paper by gaining a solid knowledge of linguistics which they can apply both when producing a piece of Directed Writing and when analysing and comparing texts linguistically.
- For **Question 1(a)** the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their Directed Writing text. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.
- For **Question 1(b)** candidates need to ensure they compare both the style and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting the aspects of language from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate the specific effects that are created.
- For **Question 2** candidates need to identify specific features of each text's language and style, relate these to supporting textual details to examine the specific effects produced, and compare how the texts' differences in purpose, context, and audience affect the creation of different meanings.

## General comments

Many candidates were evidently well prepared for a Paper designed to test their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of linguistics and to analyse texts in a comparative fashion. A small proportion of the responses to **1(b)** and **2** appear to have resulted from candidates chiefly gleaning hints from the information provided in the Questions' instructions, as opposed to carefully analysing the texts themselves.

**Question 1(a)** is a Directed Writing task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the style and language of the accompanying text, in this session a guide to birdwatching taken from the website of an international organisation dedicated to conserving nature. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was the opening 120–150 words of a speech in a formal school or college debate that outline the main arguments about whether birdwatching is a worthwhile hobby. Careful consideration of the target audience (the members of the other side in the debate and the audience in attendance) was required. Candidates are expected to write clearly, accurately, creatively and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the style and language of the text produced for **1(a)** with the style and language of the guide to birdwatching. Here, candidates are assessed for their ability to select and analyse specific textual details, for example those concerning purpose and register, format and choices of lexis and the ability to support with close textual reference their evaluation of the language found in both texts. Recognition of the style and the range of lexical choices exhibited guide and comparing the effects produced with those in the speech were key discriminators in the most informed and substantive responses.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed for: comparative appreciation of the texts' forms and conventions and awareness of their effects; an understanding of how purpose, context and audience shape meaning; and an appreciation of linguistic techniques. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a concluding section can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts and the relative strengths of each. It is good to

see that a significant proportion of candidates adopted a topical approach – these also tended to be the candidates who demonstrated the most comprehensive linguistic knowledge.

It is important to bear in mind that **Question 1(a)** accounts for only one-fifth of the total marks available and that the analytical and comparative nature of the tasks for **Questions 1(b)** and **2** require adequate time for thorough assessment of the texts and the writing of detailed comparative responses. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to complete **Questions 1** and **2** within one-hour time allocations, having begun to carefully assess all the Texts (three in total) in the initial fifteen minutes of the examination (the total length of the examination being two hours and fifteen minutes).

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

- (a) Candidates chiefly responded enthusiastically to this directed writing task, usually demonstrating sound familiarity with the purpose and conventions of a debating speech. Most candidates ensured their speech opening statements included a salutation addressed to the debate's opponents and audience either generally ('Good morning ladies and gentlemen') or more specifically ('Respected teachers, my fellow candidates'). Formality varied from the exceptionally formal to a modified formal register usually employed by candidates recreating the website's conversational tone: 'I'd really like to encourage you all to think about taking up this hobby.' Most responses consisted of a few short to medium-length paragraphs in which candidates demonstrated a sense of familiarity with the debating convention of supported arguments, through a clear focus on ideas from the website text. Many candidates structured their main points by successfully mimicking the rhetorical questions of the original text. Some sought to develop a personal anecdote to advocate birdwatching as a hobby from a position of experience: 'Back in 2017 when I got my first pair of binoculars...'

In weaker responses, candidates tended to repeat much of the information about birdwatching from the original material in summaries. Such responses could often have been improved by making direct reference to purpose and form, and presenting their debate arguments in a more concise and clear way. A number of candidates presented conclusions, including statements thanking the audience for their attention, which did not fulfil the requirements of the task to write the 'opening' of a speech, and highlights the need for close reading of the question. Some candidates used many words to introduce the speaker to their audience and express how honoured they were to be making their speech, where they would have done better to get to the point earlier in their writing. General comment about hobbies also caused some pieces to go off topic, with discussion including the benefits of having a hobby, what a hobby involves and how one might go about selecting a hobby. Where responses were intended to oppose the motion, candidates need to remember that arguments should still be based in reworking of the original text.

In strong responses candidates consistently and purposefully introduced the topic and established a clear set of arguments through corresponding effective reworking of the text. Many made effective use of discourse markers to structure their responses: 'I will present three arguments in support of my position [...] My first argument [...] My second [...] Finally [...]'. Other techniques employed were: rule of three; thoughtful use of adverbs and adjectives; and purposeful selection of connectives and triadic structures: 'Birdwatching increases personal health and wellbeing, encourages a spiritual connectedness with nature and educates its practitioners in a practical, hands-on manner'. A considerable number of candidates successfully adopted the opposition position in the debate, arguing that today's youth might prefer to look up birds online and learn much more with the comfort of being indoors and not having to get out of bed early in the morning.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (120–150 words). A number of candidates wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

- (b) To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse style and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them. An integrated approach is more effective for this type of comparative task than dealing with each text separately. Examples of this were seen where candidates clearly identified the impact of lexis appearing in the website guide to birdwatching and then examined the carefully chosen vocabulary used in their opening remarks of a debating speech in a comparative fashion. Such responses achieved an equal, or

very nearly so, comparative emphasis on the website description and the debate speech opening. Where textual references are made, candidates should remember to draw conclusions concerning functions and lexical properties.

Weak responses were often brief, focused more on the guide to birdwatching than on their own Directed Writing, and likely to primarily summarise content rather than endeavouring to analyse comparatively. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of written texts they could identify in the website guide, especially the use of a title, paragraph structure, numbered points in bold type and capitalisation for a main point ('LISTEN') and a variety of sentence types. Some could have gone into more detail in their comparison of the formality of each text. Sometimes tone could be contrasted, as the website guide is wholly positive whereas some of the speech openings produced by candidates either advocated the opposition's potential observations about anti-social hours and uncomfortable conditions associated with birdwatching.

The majority of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of a range of conventions of the birdwatching guide and the opening of a debating speech. Candidates often began their comparisons by succinctly outlining the purpose and audience of each text (informative and potentially broad for the website guide, argumentative and quite limited for the debating speech opening). Most contrasted the structure of the website guide and its step-by-step instructions, indicated by the numbered paragraphs, with the less rigidly structured advocacy of their speech opening. Many candidates noted that the most obvious difference is that the website guide is a 'conventional' written mode text that would be read online and likely in private, compared to the speech as a written mode text that is delivered orally to a live audience. Candidates usually focused on the guide's rhetorical questions, designed to 'grab' the reader's attention, and also considered the use of the second person in both the guide and their speech opening, to indicate how the guide's author 'creates' synthetic personalisation so that 'each reader feels personally spoken to', much like listening to a speaker deliver a speech. There was usually comparison of the descriptive language of the guide with the more concise lexis of the speech, often with examination of the enthusiastically persuasive and friendly tone in the original text in contrast to the more serious tone of the latter. Consideration of comparable imperatives usually included the observation that the authors of the two texts were seeking to ensure that the readers and listeners would consider doing as they are instructed. There was occasionally some focus on the guide's field-specific lexis of bird species and the technical requirements of suitable binoculars, as well as on how the informal abbreviations 'nocs' and 'birding' helped to familiarise readers with central aspects of the hobby.

In the strongest responses, candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their writing, for example by proceeding from word- to sentence-/utterance- to whole text-level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of style, quoted briefly and analysed in detail. Candidates clearly appreciated the differences in the texts on the basis of structure, syntax (imperatives and rhetorical questions) and semantics (the lexical field of the primary sense of sight associated with birdwatching, and the field of a formal debate associated with references to the opposition side, a chairperson or judge(s) and, once, a timekeeper). There was detailed consideration of the instructional nature of the progression of the guide's imperatives ('Get binoculars and a bird guide in preparation, 'Take a walk' to familiarise oneself with the activity, and 'Use the internet' to become better informed). A few candidates additionally noted the guide's informal personification of birds implicit in 'refuel' instead of 'feeding', and how the texts credibility was established through some of its field-specific lexis serving to identify specific bird species (e.g. 'Black-throated Blue Warbler').

## Question 2

As was the case for **1(b)**, candidates needed to analyse Text A and Text B's language and style in a comparative fashion in order to demonstrate their appreciation of the techniques employed and awareness of the effects created. There was a tendency in weaker essays to summarise the content of both Texts and list techniques they could identify. In such responses there was exhibited some recognition of the use of form and language to inform the readers of each Text and to convey subject-specific concepts. Candidates who employed a comparative approach were best able to identify and clearly explain the differences in purpose and audience between the two Texts and the significance of the differences in their forms and the ways conventions were employed.

Most candidates demonstrated a secure grasp of the conventions of written language in Text A, two extracts from a textbook entitled 'An Introduction to Painting Portraits' written by Rosalind Cuthbert, and of spoken

language in Text B, a transcript of part of a televised demonstration in which professional illustrator Nick Sharratt shows an audience of teenagers how to draw a face (there are also two presenters, Michelle and Ricky). While candidates could usually establish how the audience for both Texts is potentially niche given the topic, most argued that the audience for Text B would be greater in size than that for Text A: regular viewers of the television programme would swell its audience whereas the textbook containing the extracts about drawing human ears and hands would need to be sought out by interested readers. The different modes were usually well understood through reference to the use of short paragraphs and a concise structure facilitated by subheadings in Text A and the contractions and stresses typical of spontaneous speech in Text B. Differences in tone were identified as didactic as opposed to colloquial. There was usually some engagement with lexis on the basis of high and low frequency, Text B featuring the former ('guys', 'things') and Text A the latter through artistic jargon ('contour', 'tonal', 'proportional'). Candidates established how more descriptive language features in Text A, especially with its use of similes (ears 'as lovely as shells or as grotesque as cauliflowers'), which are not required in Text B because the audience can see what Nick is doing. A number of candidates additionally cited evidence of the politeness principle ('you all look very studious (1) this is good') and some also argued that Michelle's utterances could serve as evidence to support gendered language theories which suggest that women tend to say less in mixed sex discussion and be more supportive in conversations: e.g. her tag question, 'are they looking good guys' and back-channelling, 'yeah nice'.

Many candidates focused especially on the conventions of spoken language they identified in Text B, especially the non-fluency features associated with spontaneous speech exhibited by Nick: a voiced pause ('erm'), repetition ('lets lets'), false starts ('have you all done your (1) how are you getting on') – perhaps because he is drawing at the same time as speaking. The context of Text B was appreciated through Nick's constant use of the plural first person, such as 'we can add', to encourage interest and participation by the studio audience, alongside singular first person ('i think') and second person ('youll get some tips') to establish himself as the experienced artist instructing beginners. It was frequently noted that Nick uses questions to encourage and engage his teenage audience ('how are you getting on', 'do you know what').

In a number of weak responses candidates approached the task by contrasting the ways the topic of how to produce artistic portraits was handled. They maintained that Text A is much too formal, dry and boring, and consists of too many words to instruct the reader efficiently. They criticised Text B for being too 'laid back', with a lot of unnecessary information in it and too many people trying to speak all at once for efficient instruction to take place. Such candidates would have created more successful responses had they taken a linguistically analytical, rather than a generally critical, approach.

In the strongest responses, candidates tended to focus confidently on the effects produced that relate directly to the Texts' shared context of producing artistic portraits of people. They considered the use of the plural first person ('we can see...'); singular first person ('I love...') and the second person ('you') by the author of Text A to accommodate her audience in much the same manner as employed by Nick in Text B. Text A's range of information-laden compound and complex sentences, comparative adjectives ('broader', 'flatter', 'shorter') and striking organic verb choices ('the ear springs', 'the ear grows out of', 'the wrist from which it springs') were frequently contrasted with Nick's use of hedges and tentative language ('i think perhaps', 'maybe youll get some tips', 'i just find', 'you might'). Some candidates additionally focused on some features of Text A that are not normally associated with textbooks, such as vague lexis ('at some distance', 'quite complicated', 'squarish') and the use of imperative verbs ('Check this by...', 'Ask a friend...', 'Do contour drawings...'), presumably deliberately to accommodate as wide an audience as possible. In relation to Text B there was consideration of the presenters' roles in speaking directly to the audience: Michelle uses simple language ('good', 'nice') and both she and Ricky use the noun 'guys' perhaps intentionally to accommodate the teenage audience that may be presumed to be mixed gender, and employ tag questions ('are they looking good', 'good tip isnt it') as attempts by TV presenters to sustain their audience's interest. Some candidates considered how Ricky seems to have more authority than Michelle, as he also asks questions directly of Nick ('why do you start...') and advises the audience ('you guys should be...', 'make sure youve got') on the artist's behalf.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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<p><b>Paper 9093/42</b> <b>Language Topics</b></p>
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## Key messages

- In this Paper, candidates are expected to select carefully from the three questions offered and to write a fluent, developed response to two of them.
- Responses should be structured in a logical sequence of ideas, using – where appropriate – succinct references from the stimulus material and reference to theories which illustrate points made.
- Responses to **Questions 1** and **3** should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription, including the features of conversation shown in the transcription key.
  - In **Question 1**, responses should provide a linguistic analysis of the conventions and ingredients of spoken language and social groups, and the effects and qualities conveyed by the language.
  - In **Question 3**, the linguistic analysis should similarly discuss the ways the interlocutors are using language, here in terms of child language acquisition.
- **Question 2** is different in that it requires analysis of the ideas presented in the stimulus material rather than the language it comprises.
- Responses to each of the three questions should be sustained, cohesive and should use a full and accurate range of technical terminology.

## General comments

Weaker candidates tended to produce shorter work which were likely to be uneven or undeveloped. This was the case for all three questions. Those responses which were detailed and sustained moved through the higher bands, especially where it was clear that references to theories and theorists had been selected carefully for their appropriateness to the points being made, rather than being briefly mentioned.

In **Questions 1** and **3**, candidates should exercise caution when relying on use of the transcription key for clues which may aid spotting features in the transcriptions, such as overlap, pause, intonation and raised volume. They need to go beyond identifying these features to analyse them in the context of the speech in which they appear. Some weaker responses demonstrated lack of familiarity with the conventions of transcription, ascribing the lack of punctuation to delayed cognitive development, which was not the case. Stronger responses discussed in detail and at length the nuances of the language of the interlocutors using linguistic terms accurately.

In **Question 2**, successful responses focused clearly on the contexts provided, using them as a springboard for ideas pertaining to the overall topic. Candidates should ensure that a demonstration of knowledge of the history of English, or an overview of a particular theory, should be directly applied and kept succinct to avoid loss of focus. Some weaker responses reproduced long sections of the text or tended to paraphrase the passage without supplying their own ideas.

In all questions, strong and confident candidates were able to provide detailed examples from the material provided. These candidates provided argument and counterargument with theoretical examples drawn from an extensive exploration as part of their wider reading.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

Most responses engaged with the ways in which the context of the radio interview between Nicola Adams and Kirsty Young might affect language, using time constraints and absence of visual clues to the audience, for example, to explore the transcription.

In some cases, it was clear that weaker candidates had not read the question fully; there, the gender of Nicola Adams was indicated ('the first British woman to win an Olympic gold medal in her sport') and such misreading led to difficulty in some responses which attempted to ascribe gender theorists to evidence from the transcription. Other, more confident responses used Adams' use of high rising terminals in place of tag questions (for example between lines 18-25) to explore genderlect theories including those from Lakoff, Tannen, Cameron and Coates. Development was also evident where discussion took place regarding the way high rising terminals were used to elicit backchannel or to yield the conversational floor.

In general, discussion of the perceived emotional content of the exchange overshadowed analysis from a linguistic viewpoint. However, stronger responses appreciated the ways in which Young used language to manipulate Adams' responses to demonstrate her vulnerability and to bring about the shift towards triumph ('it was all worth it') at the conclusion of the exchange.

Most responses explored the balance of status between Adams and Young: weaker responses described Young's method of delivery, using declaratives rather than interrogatives ('the doctors thought you might not walk again') as being rather rude. Stronger responses argued, often making reference to Fairclough, that Young's technique purposefully delivered backstory to ensure audience engagement and to maintain Adams' focus.

Some weaker responses showed an eagerness to discuss the use of jargon, whereas stronger responses referred more accurately to the field-specific lexis used in order not to exclude a wider audience.

### Question 2

**Question 2** offered two passages as stimulus material, both of which considered the place of English in international business. **Passage A** stated the ways in which 'English is now the global language of business' saying that, in business, a common language is 'a must', and proceeded to describe the ways in which the Japanese internet services company, Rakuten, strove to 'mandate' English speaking in order to achieve success. **Passage B**, written by the CEO of Rakuten, described the commitment to – and challenges of – the project, using the example of Singapore as a successful role model.

Each of the passages offered the opportunity to candidates to create argument and counterargument on the ideas they contained. Weaker responses tended to discuss each of the two extracts separately, whereas stronger candidates had used the stimulus material to construct a cohesive whole discursive essay. Developed responses maintained focus on the language of international business and relations, making reference to Nerriere's 'Globish' construct.

Most responses discussed the idea of language 'take-over', making reference to Crystal's 'snowball' and Diamond's 'steamroller' effects. Weaker responses merely mentioned these names, whereas stronger responses described fully the effects on cultures which have undergone language change, often providing first-hand examples from local knowledge and understanding.

Language death was generally explored, as was hybridisation of Japanese and English into Japlish. Taking the example of Singapore used in **Passage B**, successful responses considered Singlish and the different ways in which hybrids can be used successfully, noting differences between these and the use of official languages in various cultures.

Most responses identified Japan's placement in terms of Kachru's concentric circle model; weaker responses provided some irrelevant material in an effort to describe the model. Those responses which moved through the higher bands gave a detailed discussion on how Kachru's theory might now undergo change as the successes of international business may affect the growth of English as a global language.

Some strong responses described Rakuten's strategy for 'Englishnization' as akin to colonisation, using their knowledge and understanding gained from wider reading on Widdowson's notion of language spread and

distribution. Developed responses further explored the extent to which the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis could be deemed appropriate to the contexts provided.

### Question 3

Most responses to Question 3 identified that the two interlocutors, Emily and April, were in the continuing development stage of language acquisition, with stronger responses exploring the ways in which Piaget's concrete operational stage could be applied, including the ability to self-analyse in Emily's 'we were changing' at line 9. Development also evidenced how Aitchison's networking stage had been passed, although there remained naivety in the girls' utterances such as 'we'll each pierce each others ears'.

Often, weaker responses opted to discuss a perceived emotional content of the exchange rather than provide a close linguistic analysis. Weaker responses also provided lengthy descriptions of the holophrastic and telegraphic stages the girls must have passed through to arrive at their present stage of linguistic competence, where they would have done better to focus on analysis of the linguistic features present in the transcription.

Stronger responses explored the appropriateness of Halliday's imaginative function and how it could be applied to the utterances between lines 45-49, the childlike nature of the role play and mimicry of their mothers as Vygotskyan more knowledgeable others.

Confident responses argued fluently, with linguistic detail on the extent to which April and Emily evidenced Skinner and/or Bruner and absorption of language such as the American 'cool dude', with developed analysis demonstrating continuing virtuous error in 'im a better cool dude than you' at line 25.

There was some analysis of the ways in which April and Emily might evidence the beginnings of genderlect, although this was not always confident and led at times to irrelevant material. Strong responses maintained focus on theories and theorists of child language acquisition, as are the demands of the question. These included reference to Crystal's later stages, exploring Emily's use of the conditional 'i might' at line 41. Further, confident development analysed the cognitive development in verbs 'think', 'hope' and 'forget' to assess the girls' linguistic competence against their use of vague language 'different stuff' and 'and everything'.

Candidates should be wary of a tendency to conclude an essay with a generalised statement as to whether the interlocutors were 'on track' with their use of language according to their age. Such judgment can lead to a tendency to assertion which detracts from the evidenced linguistic analysis which is the focus of this Question.