

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/11
Reading Passages (Core)

Key messages

Candidates should read all questions carefully to ensure that their answers focus on the questions.

Where candidates are asked to answer in their own words for the sub-questions in **Question 1**, candidates should avoid lifting long phrases or whole sentences from the passage.

Where a sub-question in **Question 1** requires candidates to select one detail from the passage, excess information will deny the mark. Candidates should be selective.

Proof reading is essential. Marks were lost through avoidable mistakes which could have been corrected by candidates checking over their work.

In **Question 1(g)**, candidates should remember that they cannot simply repeat the same answer to **(ii)** as they used in **(i)** but should elaborate on the single-word definition given in **(i)** and focus their response on describing the effect of the whole phrase.

Candidates must remember to deal with all three bullet points in **Question 2**, and attempt to develop the ideas in the passage, both factual and inferential. The key message here is to develop the details offered in the text for the third bullet point, using the passage to develop a plausible response.

Candidates need to ensure that they are writing in the correct voice for **Question 2**.

Candidates should avoid copying from the passage in **Question 2**.

In **Question 3(a)** candidates should only make one point on each line and avoid repeating similar points.

General comments

Overall, the reading passages proved to be accessible to nearly all candidates and they responded positively to both passages and questions. Most of the vocabulary appeared to be within the range of candidates at this level. Most candidates completed the paper in some detail and examiners reported seeing a reasonable number of high quality responses to **Question 2**. It is clear that the vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for these questions and were confident in their approach. Some candidates lost marks through missing key requirements of the question such as selecting one detail or offering one word.

Responses to the sub-questions in **Question 1** revealed that the main points in the passage had been clearly understood and many responded well to the more straightforward questions. In general, the questions enabled all candidates to produce some correct answers while at the same time challenging those who were more perceptive to gain higher marks. The majority of candidates were familiar with the requirements of **Questions 3(a)** and **3(b)**. There was very little evidence of candidates not working within the paper time limit and few examples of No Response answers.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) **Using your own words, explain why Grandpa calls the event described in paragraph 1, 'A genuine curiosity ...' (line 5), and how people reacted to this event.** [2 marks]

This was a reasonably straightforward question with many candidates gaining both marks. Most identified the 'curiosity' of snow on a sunny day to gain one mark. A large number of candidates were able to identify people's happiness or smiles for the second mark, but at times the reaction was wrongly lifted from the passage as 'admiring' which of course related to their shadows.

- (b) **Using your own words, explain the effects of the falling snow on the surrounding environment (paragraph 2, ‘Soon, though, the sky ...’).** [2 marks]

In order to gain marks on this question candidates were required to reshape material from the passage or to answer using their own words. Some candidates copied phrases from the passage, such as ‘mysterious white lumps’ which could not be credited. Many candidates were able to score at least one mark on this question, usually by demonstrating that the snow was covering everything. Fewer candidates were able to explain the effect of the snow on the litter in their own words.

- (c) **Give one detail from paragraph 3, ‘It snowed all ...’, that tells you the narrator was excited by the falling snow.** [1 mark]

The vast majority of candidates answered this question correctly by selecting one of the three details from the passage. Some candidates, however, provided more than one detail and therefore did not gain the mark. The question does not ask the candidate to respond in own words therefore offering up to one sentence from the passage was an acceptable approach to this question.

- (d) **Give one detail mentioned by the narrator in paragraph 4, ‘In the morning ...’, that tells you that the snow was very deep.** [1 mark]

Again, candidates were asked to select one detail, but there was no requirement to use their own words. Many candidates correctly identified that either or both of the fences being buried in snow indicated the depth of the snow. A number of candidates, however, lifted the sentence beginning ‘In the yard ...’ and did not get the mark because it did not offer a detail to show that the snow was very deep.

- (e) (i) **Which one word in paragraph 5, ‘The wind blew hard ...’, tells you that Grandpa was concerned about the possible effects of the snowfall?** [1 mark]

Most candidates were able to identify ‘grimacing’ as the correct answer but some chose to ignore the need for one word and sometimes provided a complete sentence both with and without the word ‘grimacing’. Some candidates wrongly thought the word showing grandpa’s concern was ‘electrocution’ or ‘trembling’, presumably because of the assumption that Grandpa was trembling as opposed to the electricity wires.

- (ii) **Using your own words, explain why Grandpa had cause for concern (paragraph 5, ‘The wind blew hard ...’)?** [2 marks]

There were a number of ways that candidates could gain two marks for this question. The most common correct answer to this question was the poles moving/swaying because of the strong wind. Some candidates were also able to explain the danger associated with this and cited that the poles could fall and hurt people. Fewer candidates thought that the wires making odd noises was a cause for concern. Those few who did usually just lifted ‘clacked and chattered’ from the passage and were denied the mark because they had not used their own words. A number of candidates got the second mark for indicating a fear of electrocution.

- (g) (i) **Re-read paragraph 3, ‘It snowed all ...’, and the final paragraph, ‘When the wind ...’. Using your own words, explain what the writer means by the words underlined in each of the following quotations:**

- 1 *‘Flakes of white day fell through the night and brushed against the glass.’ (lines 14–15)*
- 2 *‘... the snow rose alive, spinning and swirling, and the world went white.’ (lines 32–33)*
- 3 *‘Dead black vines were hanging in tatters from the back fence.’ (lines 37–38).* [3 marks]

Not all candidates appeared to understand the precise requirements of this task. The question asked them to explain in their own words what the writer meant by the **words in italics**. Some candidates produced ‘catch all’ phrases which were more akin to a (g)(ii) type explanation of the whole phrase. Only the more successful responses showed real understanding of the underlined words and only a small number of candidates gained all three available marks for this question.

- 1 Most candidates successfully explained the 'gentle' nature of 'brushing' against the window by using a range of appropriate synonyms such as 'touched gently'.
- 2 With 'swirling' many candidates identified the circular nature of such movement but quite a few chose 'spinning' to explain the movement even though it was in the quotation and could therefore not be rewarded.
- 3 Most candidates explained the meaning of 'tatters' correctly in terms of being broken, torn, or pieces and so on but some candidates thought that the vines were 'tatty' and therefore messy.

(ii) **Explain how the language in each of the quotations in Question (g)(i) helps to convey the effects of the snow on the surroundings. You should refer to the whole quotation in your answer, not just the word underlined.** [6 marks]

In response to this question some candidates merely repeated their answers to (g)(i) and therefore gained no further marks. Very few attempted to explain the whole phrase given or comment on the effects of the writing. Some candidates who had given explanations in (g)(i) for the whole quotation rather than the underlined word, then failed to give the same explanation to (g)(ii) where it would have gained at least one mark.

- 1 *Flakes of white day fell through the night and brushed against the glass.'* (lines 14–15)

This was very rarely understood in terms of language and effect and many candidates simply said that the snow fell throughout the night. A few candidates commented on the sensation of light provided by the snow.

- 2 *'... the snow rose alive, spinning and swirling, and the world went white.'* (lines 32–33)

Some candidates effectively explained the chaotic or wild nature of the snowfall, and its increasing heaviness. Other simply repeated the idea of the snow falling in a circular motion.

- 3 *Dead black vines were hanging in tatters from the back fence.'* (lines 37–38).

Some candidates were able to explain the destructive power of the snow and the darkness of the vines against it. Some confused the vines with the electricity wires.

Question 2

Imagine that you are Grandma, from Passage A. It is two weeks later and the snow has finally gone.

Write a letter to your sister who lives in another part of the country, telling her about all that has happened.

In your letter you should cover the following points:

- what happened during the first few days of the snowstorm
- how the people in your household and the neighbours reacted to the snow
- the problems caused by the snow and how you and your family coped with them.

Base your letter on what you have read in Passage A, but do not copy from it. Be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullet points.

Begin your letter, 'My dearest ...'

Write about 200 to 300 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing. [Total: 15 marks]

For this task the majority of candidates seemed to understand quite clearly the need to address each of the bullet points given in the question and to give a credible account of the snowstorm from the Grandmother's perspective. The most successful responses developed a credible voice for Grandma and explored her feelings about the storm, exploring the reactions of her family and neighbours, as well as using the information in the passage to predict her concerns and experiences of the problems caused by the snow. The vast majority of candidates were comfortable writing a letter to a family member, offering an appropriately warm register and tone. Some candidates mistakenly wrote the journal as the grandchild or

Grandpa, and a number merely narrated the events of the passage without focusing on the three prompts given in the question rubric. A small minority of candidates merely copied extracts from the passage with very few own words or produced general narratives which were very close to the original passage.

Many candidates attempted to cover the three bullet points offering a balanced response to the whole task. However, although some candidates produced promising letters, they only focused on the first two prompts in the question. These responses gave convincing descriptions of what happened when the snow began to fall and continued to get worse, as well as the reactions of the people in the town and her family but would have gained higher marks by developing the third bullet about the problems caused by the snow and how the family coped. Furthermore, some candidates chose to ignore the third bullet point completely while others only made a cursory reference to it at the end of the letter, usually simply stating that the snow had melted, and things had become normal again. Quite a number of candidates did remember to address the third bullet point and used the details of the passage to express concerns about food running out, the electricity causing problems, roads being inaccessible, the house being completely cut off, and worries about the neighbours coping with such deep snow for a prolonged period.

Some candidates' rather narrative approach to the task led them to cover the prompts partially by, for example, describing the initial sun and snow, people's reactions and the gradual worsening of the weather. At times they used the grandchild's excited reactions in the night as Grandma's feelings, which was unconvincing. The less successful responses tended to be those where candidates simply repeated the details from the passage. This meant that although, generally, there wasn't extensive lifting of material, there was often little sense of candidates putting themselves in the position of the character and giving life to her experiences. The weakest responses simply lifted large sections of the passage, often writing as the grandchild as a result.

To gain the higher marks of Bands 1 and 2 for Reading it is essential that candidates develop ideas based on the passage rather than add their own imagined content. A few responses wrote general narratives about being trapped in a snowstorm, or accidents caused by the snow. Of course, any developed response should rely to some extent on imagination and feasible extension, but all development should be firmly tethered to details given in the passage. A few letters were further removed than this with some bearing little relation to the passage and becoming works of fiction, which of course, is not within the remit of the Reading Objectives for this paper.

The best responses – and there were a number – managed to develop imaginatively all three bullet points using and developing the finer details in the passage. These responses firmly tethered any development to the clues given in the passage and were able to convincingly adopt the perspective of a concerned adult rather than an excited child.

Question 3

- (a) **What do you learn from Passage B about the Vikings' discovery of North America and what they found there?**

Write your answers using short notes.

You do not need to use your own words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer.
Information about the Vikings' discovery of North America and what they found there.

[10 marks]

This question gave candidates the chance to boost their total score by appropriate selection. It was generally answered well with many candidates making one point per line as instructed and focusing on the topic and the question. However, there were a small number of candidates who (largely by selective lifting) included several points on the same line thereby self-penalising. This was particularly apparent where candidates grouped 'lush meadows', 'rivers teeming with salmon' and 'grapes' without realising that they were separate findings. Sometimes candidates included more than 10 relevant points, but by putting them more than one point on each line gained fewer than 10 marks overall. There were also some points repeated several times, most notably focused on the timing of the expedition.

Candidates should also ensure that the points they offer are relevant. Many candidates just wrote unfocused points relating to different sagas without ensuring that they were answering the question. Occasionally candidates added numbered points at the end of the response; these extra points were not marked, as they

are expected to select 10 only. It is essential on this question that the candidate reads the question clearly enough to ensure that they are picking out the appropriate material and equally that some attempt is made to set out the relevant points one on each of the 10 lines. This also contributes to avoidance of repeating similar points. Only a small number of candidates gained over eight marks, although the majority of candidates achieved four or above.

(b) Summary

Now use your notes to write a summary of what Passage B tells you about the Vikings' discovery of North America and what they found there.

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should include all 10 of your points in Question 3(a) and must be 100 to 150 words.

Up to 5 marks are available for the quality of your writing.

[5 marks]

Although some candidates were able to achieve Band 1 for clear, concise and fluent summaries the majority of candidates' responses were Band 2 (points were 'mostly focused' and made 'clearly') or Band 3 ('some areas of conciseness'). Many candidates lifted phrases, making no effort to rephrase 'lush meadows' or 'rivers teeming with salmon', for example. The least successful responses, of which there were only a few, were marred by personal comments and unselective 'lifting'. The most successful responses showed careful planning and organisation of material with some synthesis of points. Middle range responses tended to be list-like with a series of loosely connected statements about the discovery of North America and what they found there.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0524/13
Reading Passages (Core)

Key messages

Proofreading is essential. Marks were lost through avoidable mistakes which could have been corrected by candidates checking over their work.

In **1(g)** candidates should remember that they cannot simply repeat the same word in their answer to **(ii)** as they used in **(i)** but should elaborate on the definition given in **(i)** and focus their response on describing the effect of the whole phrase.

Candidates must remember to deal with all three bullet points in **Question 2**, and attempt to develop ideas, both factual and inferential. The key message here is to look for clues within the passage and to develop those ideas, beyond the text, for the third bullet point.

Candidates need to ensure that they are writing in the correct format for **Question 2** as well as following the bullet points to construct their response to the task. They also need to ensure that they pay attention to their spelling, punctuation and grammar to assist clarity.

General comments

Overall, the passages proved to be accessible to virtually all candidates and they responded positively to both passages and questions. The vocabulary appeared to be within the range of candidates at this level.

Responses to the sub-questions in **Question 1** revealed that the main points in the passage had been clearly understood and the majority of candidates responded well to the more straightforward questions. In general, the questions enabled all candidates to produce some correct answers while at the same time challenging those who were more perceptive to gain higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Using your own words, explain why the girl 'has no idea where she is' (paragraph 1, 'An eleven-year-old ...'). [2 marks]

Many candidates gained one mark by explaining that the girl was a long way from home or that she was in a wilderness (or remote place). Fewer candidates gained a second mark; this could be awarded to anyone who explained either that she was alone or that she was 11 years old. Overall, a reasonable number of candidates gained both marks.

- (b) **State one sound the girl hears before she stops and one sound she hears when she listens more closely (paragraph 2, ‘The crunch of bicycle ...’). [1 mark]**

The key to gaining the one mark for this question was to provide both details. The first detail (heard before she stops) was the sound of the wheels on gravel, the roar of the truck on the highway or the wind. The second detail (heard when she listens more closely) was the rustle of barley or the buzzing of a bee. The majority of candidates correctly gave two appropriate details. However, it may be noted that this is a question that demonstrates the importance of reading questions very carefully in order to ensure that sufficient information is provided in response.

- (c) **What details in paragraph 3 (‘The pale grass ...’) suggest that the schoolyard had been neglected for a long time? [2 marks]**

The possible details to identify were (i) the grass is long/up to her knees; (ii) the yard is overgrown with weeds or dandelions and (iii) there is a square of shrubs around it.

- (d) **Using your own words, explain why the girl does not walk up the steps to the school building (lines 17–19). [2 marks]**

Many candidates gained one mark on this question by explaining that the girl was afraid of finding something unpleasant inside the building. The other mark required the candidate identifying that she thought there might be animals inside and didn’t want to disturb them. Again, it demonstrates the importance of going into sufficient detail in the response to obtain both marks.

- (e) **Using your own words, explain what the change in the girl’s feelings after she picks up the rock (lines 25–27). [2 marks]**

Candidates gained one mark for this question by explaining that she was scared by the ants. The second mark was given for explaining that the girl admires the rock. There were some candidates who gave a similar response to this question as they gave to (d) above. Again, this demonstrates the importance of giving each question a careful reading and giving attention to the line references where they are given.

- (f) **Using your own words, explain what the girl felt about walking in the meadow (paragraph 5, ‘I was, at that time...’). [2 marks]**

There were several possible details that could be accepted: (i) she thought the land was private (or didn’t know it was common land) and/or that they shouldn’t be walking there; (ii) she was excited at doing something new; (iii) she was thrilled at the thought of trespassing and (iv) had no idea that she would not be going there with her mother again.

- (g) (i) **Re-read paragraph 2 (‘The crunch ...’) and paragraph 4 (‘She remembers ...’). Using your own words, explain what the writer means by the words underlined in each of the following phrases:**

- (a) ‘When the girl stops and listens closely, the rustle of barley and the buzz of an occasional bee add detail to the texture of the afternoon.’ (lines 9–11)
- (b) ‘In the middle sits the old school. Still white from its initial coat of paint, it’s a standard one-room school building.’ (lines 13–14)
- (c) ‘... more of an outcrop of untouched prairie than the other man-made rock piles dotted randomly through the fields.’ (lines 21–22)

[3 marks]

The question asked candidates to explain in their own words what the writer meant by the words underlined. Candidates recognised the need to explain just the underlined word and a good number of candidates gained three marks for this part of the task. A few candidates produced ‘catch all’ phrases which were more akin to a (g)(ii) type explanation of the whole phrase.

- (a) For 'texture' candidates were able to explain that this meant the feeling or atmosphere of the afternoon.
- (b) 'Initial' was explained correctly as 'the first' or 'the original' coat.
- (c) 'Randomly' was successfully explained as something disorderly or without a plan.

(g)(ii) Explain how the writer conveys the quiet and emptiness of the surroundings through the use of language in each of the three underlined phrases in Question 1(g)(i).

You should refer to the whole phrase in your answer and not just the words underlined.

[6 marks]

Many candidates achieved marks on this question by showing some understanding, offering a partial explanation of individual phrases (as a whole). Most commented successfully on the way the language suggested that the place was remote, peaceful or had not been altered or inhabited for a long time.

Less successful responses made general comments about the girl's situation and about the how the atmosphere was peaceful (sometimes repeating details from their answers to (i)) without demonstrating a clear understanding of the individual phrases. Sometimes answers to (g)(ii) did, as noted, no more than repeat those given for (g)(i) or because a misunderstanding was carried through from (g)(i). Some responses attempted explanations of the phrases by simply re-iterating them or lifting the language from the phrase and simply produced a circular explanation. It is important to note that each phrase requires a different explanation, as some less successful responses gave very similar explanations for all three phrases. It is also worth pointing out that the explanations of the phrases should be grounded in the context of the question as opposed to simple interpretations of the words used. The key focus of explanations here was 'the writer's presentation of the story' but many responses did not relate their explanations to the focus of the question. More successful responses made the connection between the atmosphere and the sounds and commented on the simplicity of the school buildings.

Question 2

Imagine that you are the writer from Passage A and that you are now a senior student. Your school magazine has a regular feature called 'Childhood Memories'.

Write your article for the magazine, describing your earlier life and what happened after the events described in the passage.

In your article you should cover the following points:

- your thoughts as a child about where you lived**
- your memories of your life with your mother**
- how your life changed and why you never walked to the meadow again.**

Base your interview on what you have read in Passage A, but do not copy from it.

Be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullets.

Write about 200 to 300 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content or your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing.

For this task the majority of candidates seemed to understand the need to address each of the bullets and to give a credible account of the events of the passage from the girl's point of view. The majority also understood the format and gave answers with an appropriate register and voice for the girl. The task provided a challenge as it required candidates to adopt a view looking back from a later age on events that were already presented as looking back.

Many candidates attempted to cover the three bullet points in a balanced approach. However, the less successful responses tended to be those where candidates (albeit in their own words) simply repeated the details from the passage. This meant that although, generally, there wasn't extensive lifting of material there was often little sense of candidates going beyond the details in the passage which obviously had a bearing

on the detail included for the third bullet point. Few candidates appeared to be muddled about the sequence of events.

More successful responses were able to give some explanation for the changes in the girl's life and the reasons for her and her mother not returning to the meadow. This included sensitive accounts of the mother's death and nostalgic explanations of the land being sold for development. A good proportion of candidates made some attempt to address this third bullet point. Overall, the responses showed a very good understanding of the passage, the atmosphere of the place and the girl's feelings about the going inside and about walking in the meadow.

Most candidates wrote correct, though relatively simple, sentences, with an adequate range of vocabulary and tried to use an appropriate register. The most successful responses – a significant minority – achieved Band 1 marks for both Content and Language.

Question 3

(a) Notes

What do you learn from Passage B about the life of Mary Kingsley and her achievements?

Write your answers using short notes.

You do not need to use your own words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer.

[10 marks]

This question gave candidates the chance to boost their total score by appropriate selection. It was answered very well with many candidates making one point per line and focusing on the topic and the question. However, there were a significant number of candidates who (largely by selective lifting) included several points on the same line thereby self-penalising – only one mark is awarded for each line regardless of the number of points it contains. Sometimes candidates included more than 10 marks worth of relevant points, but by putting more than one point on each line gained fewer than 10 marks. Similarly, only the first 10 lines are marked, so candidates who added further lines and points were still only credited for points included in the first 10 lines. It is essential on this question that the candidate reads the question clearly to ensure that they are picking out the appropriate material and equally that some attempt is made to set out the relevant points one on each of the 10 lines. This also contributes to avoidance of repeating points in the summary that follows. Only a small number of candidates gained full marks, although many achieved seven or above.

(b) Summary

Now use your notes to write a summary of what **Passage B** tells you about the life of Mary Kingsley and her achievements.

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should include all 10 of your points in **Question 3(a)** and must be 100 to 150 words.

Up to 5 marks are available for the quality of your writing.

[5 marks]

On the whole, although some students were able to achieve Band 1 for clear, concise and fluent summaries the majority of candidates' responses were Band 2 (points were 'mostly focused' and made 'clearly') or Band 3 ('some areas of conciseness'). The least successful responses, of which there were only a few, were marred by personal comments and unselective 'lifting'. The most successful responses showed careful planning and organisation of material with some synthesis of points. Middle range responses tended to be list-like with a series of loosely connected statements about the unicorn's behaviour and appearance.

Concluding comments

Most candidates completed the paper in some detail and the responses to **Question 2** in particular were of a generally good standard. It is clear that the vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for these questions and were confident in their approach and, overall, this was an accessible and engaging paper.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/21
Reading Passages (Extended)

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- used examination time efficiently to address all parts of the three questions equally carefully
- read the instructions for each task closely, paying attention to key words and guidance
- considered the evidence of the skills and understanding they needed to demonstrate in each response
- planned and organised their ideas before beginning their answer
- selected only the material appropriate for the response to the question
- avoided repetition
- used a range of their own words carefully, appropriately and precisely
- edited their response to amend any careless slips, incomplete or unclear ideas
- adapted their writing style to suit each task, taking account of form, audience and purpose
- revisited passages to clarify details, refine understanding and identify implicit meanings

General comments

Candidates' responses largely demonstrated familiarity with the general demands of each task and indicated at least some understanding of the need to adapt and use relevant material from the passage in order to answer the question. Most had taken on board guidance regarding word limits and were able to attempt all parts of all three questions. Where responses to individual tasks appeared rushed or unfinished, candidates had sometimes spent valuable time unwisely by counting the number of words on each line of their response and/or appeared to have answered questions out of order. The most successful answers often showed evidence of having been planned beforehand to target the specific demands of the question, as well as having been carefully checked and edited. Candidates appeared to find both passages equally accessible, with stronger responses avoiding the copying and/or recycling of the language of the text that featured at times in some less successful answers.

In **Question 1**, successful responses included a good range of relevant ideas over all three bullets, supported by appropriate detail with development well-related to the text. They were able to consider and reflect on the evidence in the passage offered through the eyes of the narrator and reinterpret the information and ideas in a new form for a given audience and purpose. The strongest responses were able to adopt and maintain the perspective of Andrew's father in his professional capacity to offer a convincing and detailed report reflecting on his son's experience. Some mid-range answers missed opportunities to develop and interpret the material – the task invited them to 'comment on', not simply replay events as described in the text. The least successful answers demonstrated limited understanding of the text and/or task.

For **Question 2**, responses need to offer detailed comments in relation to appropriate choices selected from both paragraphs. Candidates should explore and explain the precise meaning, effects, connotations and associations of their identified choices, demonstrating an understanding of the writer's purpose. In most responses, there were a sufficient number of appropriate choices selected from the relevant paragraphs to allow for a range of comment and many contained accurate explanations of meanings in context and/or weak effect. In order to target higher marks, many responses needed to go further in considering and explaining the specifics of the examples they had chosen – developing their explanations to go beyond general or basic comment. Weaker responses offered little comment and/or tried to explain the selected choice in the same language as the language choice. Others repeated very similar explanations for very different choices and

limited evidence of their understanding as a result. Candidates are reminded that the guidance for the task suggests they focus on **four** choices in **each** paragraph (a total of **eight** choices in all). Where answers elected to discuss fewer than eight choices, or offered explanations of choices taken from one paragraph only, evidence of understanding was necessarily limited.

In **Question 3**, many candidates were able to demonstrate the skills and understanding required in a selective summary task and did more than offer a simple paraphrase or précis of the original text. In part **(a)** short notes identifying each separate idea precisely are required, rather than the whole sentences and/or imprecise selections from the passage apparent on occasion in less focused responses. Many candidates managed to achieve a good range of the marks available through identifying a good number of points, then reorganising and expressing these clearly, concisely and fluently in their own words. Whilst candidates do not need to use their own words to be credited in part **(a)**, those who chose to do so were often better able to avoid the repetition and/or incomplete ideas which limited other less secure answers in both parts of the question. In part **(b)** own words must be used where practical and ideas need to be re-organised to address the focus of the question. A number of responses missed opportunities to target higher bands by relying on lifted phrases from the passage and/or including comment or significant repetition. Candidates should use their own words as far as possible in this summary task, and remember the need for overview of a good range of ideas as well as the need for concision.

Though Paper 2 is primarily a test of Reading, 20 per cent of the available marks are for Writing, split evenly between **Questions 1** and **3**. It is important that candidates consider the quality of their writing, employing a range of precise vocabulary, appropriately used, and planning/checking their responses efficiently to avoid unforced errors which affect the communication of their ideas or result in awkwardness of expression. Candidates should be aware that undeveloped language or inconsistency of style will limit their achievement, as will over-reliance on the language of the passages. Candidates are advised to leave sufficient time to check and edit their responses. The best responses were able to adapt their style of writing to suit the task in hand, taking account of audience, purpose and form.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Imagine you are Dad from Passage A. The owner of the company wants to introduce holiday work experience for more young people. You have been asked to present a report to the owner of the company following your son's experience.

Write the report.

In your report you should comment on:

- the challenges faced by Andrew and what you hoped he would gain from his six weeks at the factory**
- how different staff members treated Andrew**
- what you have learned about the thoughts and feelings of the people who work at the company.**

**Base your report on what you have read in Passage A, but be careful to use your own words.
Address each of the three bullet points.**

Begin your report, 'Summer work experience for young people ...'

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing.

The task invited candidates to demonstrate their skills and understanding through using and modifying ideas from Andrew's narrative account; to present them within a convincing and appropriate report from his father to the owner of the company where he worked. The question encouraged candidates to show that they could do more than just repeat or retell events from the text, thinking their way into the role of Andrew's father to demonstrate understanding of both explicit and implicit ideas and evaluate the experience for both sides. A few had failed to recognise key details in the text – for example that Dad worked at the company and/or that Andrew was in a privileged position – and offered more limited responses as a result. Some lost sight of the

task as primarily an assessment of their reading skills and drifted away from the text to offer their personal views and recollections of work experience, or speculate at length on what might have happened outside of events covered in the passage.

A number of candidates wrote overlong introductory paragraphs (occasionally pages) about the virtues of work experience in general, which may have helped them establish the voice of the father, but rarely tapped into the specifics of the passage. Where responses were over reliant on the language of the original and/or had not considered the audience and purpose for their report, evidence of understanding was also less convincing. Good responses were able to reflect on events, offering considered judgement and balanced comment, taking into account that this report was intended for the owner of the company who had initially only agreed to the work placement as a favour to Andrew's father and was now considering introducing it for more young people. Detailed reasoning with supporting evidence drawn from the text were features of successful answers.

A few of the weaker answers wrote responses in forms other than that specified in the question – for example as a letter to the owner of the company, or a teacher's work experience report on Andrew, Andrew's diary or an article for teenagers interested in completing work experience. Whilst it was still possible to indicate some general grasp of the text via such responses, opportunities to demonstrate secure understanding of both explicit and implicit ideas were likely to be more limited. Responses which made little use of the passage or offered only very general comments in relation to work experience and/or teenagers demonstrated little understanding of the text or task. For example, circular explanations such as 'I hoped that work experience would offer Andrew experience of work' were redundant unless the candidate went on to consider the nature of details of that experience in the light of the passage.

Where responses – sometimes written as letters – adopted an outraged tone and blamed the owner for poor Andrew's 'suffering' at the hands of unreasonably strict management and/or ranted that the owner was 'responsible for [his] unwelcoming staff and needed to make them behave better' evidence of understanding of both task and text was diluted. More successful responses often recognised that his father held a position of some authority – picking up on clues in the text such as Andrew's preferential treatment and/or Dad not needing to clock in or wear overalls. They mitigated any implied criticism, suggesting potential concerns as 'areas we might need to think about ...' and shared some responsibility in any negative observation – suggesting for example how the system for lateness penalties for factory floor workers might be usefully reviewed and/or be presented more positively. Some judged that Andrew might not have wished to lose his advantage or alienate himself further by reporting details of the lateness penalty avoidance scheme to his father at the time, explaining that this had only come to light later once he had finished.

The question offered candidates an invitation to show how well they could read between the lines to pick up on implications as well as respond to the more obvious, explicit ideas. Many candidates took full advantage of this and produced sophisticated, convincing responses showing that they had made careful decisions based on the evidence in the text. In relation to bullet point one, most were able to refer to issues connected to punctuality or having to wake up early in the holidays. Mid-range answers often included reference to the need to be sufficiently organised – citing the example of the forgotten lunch – and the vast majority referred to the task of fetching coffee allocated to Andrew during his time in the coil winding department. Better answers commented on those explicit points, integrating details of them into the overall explanation of the challenges faced. They developed points further from the father's perspective, for example by suggesting the value of an active work experience for Andrew relative to spending his holiday watching sport on television and recognising the value of Andrew needing to start from the bottom with menial tasks such as coffee fetching and work his way up. A number of responses might have benefitted from revisiting the passage to identify the more subtle details and hints in Andrew's account of his experiences with a view to expanding the range of ideas they could include. For example, strong responses had often recognised the clue in 'fetching' that Andrew was less than impressed with the lightest blue overalls he had to wear, with the best responses often making the connection that the shade of blue for overalls indicated very visibly his inexperience. Most answers noted that Andrew would be working with different people and/or different departments and many were able to judge that it could be difficult to fit in. Some noted but did not always fully exploit Andrew's favoured position with relatively few suggesting that it could be a challenge for him, for example by having to learn to consider the impression he and/or his presence there might be creating.

The second bullet was addressed well by those candidates who teased out the different treatment received from identifiable groups and individual staff members. In the weakest answers, ideas for this bullet were sometimes limited to the very general idea that 'different staff members treated Andrew differently'. Some mid-range answers only hinted at different groups' reactions through the detail they touched on from the text. Responses at most levels recognised the dismissive attitude of the apprentices and usually noted the relative similarity in their age to Andrew's with many taking the opportunity to suggest that their attitude might in part be due to the perceived threat from Andrew's presence. Most mentioned the canteen staff's reaction suggesting that it showed they were amused in any one of a number of possible ways by Andrew's comment (including amusement at his father's embarrassment). A number suggested it indicated that the staff had not understood his attempts at 'wit' and were mocking his naivety. Responses citing Andrew as having made a genuine request for salad which had been unfairly denied were not evidencing close reading. The 'brown foodstuffs' described as on offer would not suggest that such healthy options as salad existed and 'Wittily, I requested salad' shows Andrew is well aware of that.

Typically, opportunities to offer a full range of ideas in relation to bullet two were missed where answers offered more general remarks about the staff as a whole rather than picking up on the instruction to comment on how different staff members treated Andrew. Most did distinguish successfully between the reactions of the apprentices, the clerk who dealt with pay packets and canteen staff, though missed opportunities to broaden the range of ideas by passing over other characters. The passage also included reference to interaction with a junior clerk, a supervisor and an older worker, offering opportunity to comment for example on the surly nature of the supervisor (surprising to one convincing version of Dad who had not seen this side before as his own interactions with staff on the factory floor had been far more positive).

Better answers were careful to revisit the passage to check their understanding of details and ideas they planned to use. Candidates who had read closely to the end of the passage understood that shifting baked beans was a task allocated by Andrew's father, not a task invented for him by the junior clerk, and were then able to offer more convincing interpretations of Dad's character and attitudes in the light of this information. Those who confused the junior clerk and clerk in charge of pay missed opportunities to recognise both the hierarchy in the company – real and assumed – and the divide between factory workers and office staff – ideas leading usefully to bullet three points. Answers suggesting that the apprentices were unhappy because their children had been denied work experience or that the clerk with 'absolute power' was the owner of the factory who had unfairly berated Andrew for losing his card indicated that key details had been misread and offered less convincing evidence of skills and understanding as a result.

Where responses kept in mind the purpose for the task and imagined themselves into the situation of presenting a report to the owner of the company, they were best able to produce relevant and detailed ideas in relation to bullet three, often relating them convincingly to the relative probability of success of the introduction of an extended work experience programme. Some well-planned and carefully constructed responses were able to begin their answer with this third bullet, offering an initial overview of what had been learned through Andrew's experience and an assessment of how the company might profit from such insights in future. Most answers were able to include reference to discontent in the workforce, supporting the point through the detail of planned strike action, though fewer went on to develop the idea by considering the root of the discontent. Better answers made full use of their understanding of the unpleasant conditions in the canteen to note that this was not likely to be helping workers' morale and picked up on details suggesting the narrow and unappealing range of food on offer as well as the cramped conditions as needing to be improved. The unappealing coffee and/or tedious job of fetching it from the machine was mentioned by some candidates as an example of the poor provision for workers and hierarchical nature of factory. Along with the attitude of the pay clerk this was often considered as indicative of issues needing attention within the wider context of the business. Recognising that Dad was skilled in navigating canteen, office corridors and the factory floor, sensitive to workers' views as well as in favour with the owner, some responses carefully developed his report to include his own observations (rooted in the text) suggesting that the ethos of the place needed to improve to indicate to workers they were valued. Most common were suggestions to extend the canteen and improve the range of foods on offer – Dad had clearly been in the canteen previously and chose to bring sandwiches each day instead. Others included allowing flexibility to start times to take account of workers' family commitments – Dad had 'muttered almost inaudibly' that he did not need a clocking in card, knowing that this would not go down well and was aware that others had children too.

Most candidates understood the need to write using a formal register and many were successful in employing this tone throughout. Stronger responses recognised the need to retune Andrew's voice when writing from his father's perspective for a formal purpose, with the best maintaining a measured tone for their report. They understood that Dad would be unlikely to use terms like 'grunts' or 'The One with Absolute Power' without making it a feature of the report itself, for example by identifying the attitudes behind that use of language and what it revealed about the hierarchical nature of the company. A number of candidates chose to include subheadings within their report and where these were used carefully to highlight key points they often worked well. A few assumed that the report would be presented orally and offered the words of a speech to do that – where the focus on audience and purpose was clear, this approach was often appropriate.

Advice to candidates on Question 1:

remember that the task is an invitation to show how well you have read and understood the ideas in the passage
read the passage carefully, more than once, thinking about how you are going to use key ideas to answer the question before you begin writing your answer
look for details, hints and clues in the text to help you to work out any implied meanings or suggestions
give equal attention to each of the three bullet points in the question
plan a route through your answer to ensure that ideas are sequenced logically
make sure that the ideas you include can be traced back to details and suggestions in the passage
answer using your own words – do not copy phrases or sentences from the passage
take account of the form and perspective required for your response
consider the audience and purpose for your response
leave sufficient time to edit and correct any errors in your writing which might affect meaning.

Question 2

Re-read the descriptions of:

- (a) Andrew's first experience of the canteen in paragraph 5, beginning 'At the canteen ...'**
- (b) the visit to the Accounts Department in paragraph 7, beginning 'After only 20 minutes ...'**

Select four powerful words or phrases from each paragraph. Your choices should include imagery. Explain how each word or phrase is used effectively in the context.

Write about 200 to 300 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer.

Responses to **Question 2** should take the form of continuous prose, offering opportunity for candidates to explore their choices fully in the context of the passage. Having selected relevant examples to discuss, the focus needs to be on the quality of the analysis. Some of the weaker responses offered only slight comment in both halves, whilst others offered meaning and/or basic effect in one part and very thin, or no, comment in the other. Some made very general remarks such as suggesting that choices 'were from the same lexical field' without examining them further. Many responses would have benefitted from more careful consideration of how the language was working to move beyond explicit meaning and/or general comments on effect.

Where answers considered both the implications and associations of individual words, they were often able to explore and explain the image in hand. For example those who did more than simply note that navigating was 'another word connected to the sea' were able to demonstrate understanding of how the language was working by recognising that it implied Dad's knowledge, experience and expertise, as well as demonstrating his ability to find them a safe and quick route through the crowd in the canteen to the serving area. The best answers also considered how it separated Dad from the 'sea' of workers, indicating he held a more senior position, reminiscent of the captain of a ship. In less successful responses, there was a tendency to run some choices together: 'Nodding dumbly, I trailed blindly after him through a maze of corridors' which led to general/vague explanations. Additionally, in some of the weaker scripts the occasional word was highlighted, for example 'maze' or 'sardines', without analysing the image as a whole.

In stronger answers images were explored at some length – for example, extending explanations of the popular selection of ‘an overall sea of blue’ to take account of the motion and potential force of the crowd of workers as well as consider the wordplay of ‘overall’. The image of the workers ‘packed in like sardines’ was a similarly popular choice, with a number of candidates suggesting a connection between the industrial process of canning and the nature of the work/treatment of workers in the factory. Others considered the image as relating to a shoal of the small fish and were equally able to suggest that these workers were presented as expendable and insignificant. Most candidates recognised that the food on offer in the canteen was not being presented as either appealing or healthy, commenting on the use of the word ‘brown’, with better answers often responding to the indeterminate nature of both ‘foodstuffs’ and/or ‘something’. Stronger responses in part (a) went on to unpick the connotations of ‘slopped’, going further than the suggestion that it showed a lack of care or interest, for example by highlighting unpleasant connotations and associations linked to waste liquids, prisoners and animals. A number of answers missed opportunities to capitalise on their general understanding of the effect of the image though misreading/careless copying of the word ‘duly’ as ‘dully’.

In part (b) some mid-range answers offered less convincing evidence of understanding by repeating very similar explanations for more than one choice. The suggestion that the clerk considered herself / was considered as some kind of deity was potentially a useful explanation and better answers teased out the humour and differences in the examples of ‘religious’ language they noted, for example the potentially sinister threat of the title ‘The One with Absolute Power’ noting the use of capitals as significant in emphasising this and the connotations of royalty in ‘granted an audience’. Many offered explanations of Andrew’s attitude as mocking or sarcastic and were able to interpret the ‘maze of corridors’ as a deliberately confusing device to disorientate anyone trying to visit, with a good number of responses referencing nasty surprises such as a minotaur at the centre. Suggestions that the maze indicated anxiety on Andrew’s part as he did not know how his work experience was going to go and/or a fear of being lost in a large factory had failed to consider the description in the context of the passage – the corridors were restricted to the area around the clerk’s office and Andrew was being led by his father. There was no suggestion that he was in any genuine danger of becoming lost or that he was taking this visit seriously.

Choices in part (b) that were most commonly well explained included the ‘warning of perilous doom awaiting mortals who failed’, with most candidates splitting the longer quotation into smaller sections and others dealing with the image as a whole. Many also dealt convincingly with ‘trailed blindly’ and ‘chiding me’, though others had clearly selected ‘chiding’ without having a secure understanding of its meaning and or intended effect.

The most successful responses to **Question 2** showed specific focus at word level and were engaged and assured in their handling of their appropriate choices. They tackled images with imagination and answered both parts of the question equally well. The best responses considered precise meaning and effects throughout the response, without repeating generalised effects. Weak responses offered generic comments such as suggesting that ‘blue symbolises sadness’ in the workers and/or empty assertions such as ‘this gives us a better picture of the workers in the canteen’. The weakest responses often struggled to find suitable vocabulary to communicate subtleties of meaning and relied on repeating words of the original in their explanations, limiting evidence of understanding as a result.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- re-read the whole paragraph before making selections; ensure that the choices you select for comment are relevant to the question and you have some ideas about the ways in which they are being used
- do not write out whole sentences or offer only one word if it is part of a descriptive phrase
- remember to put quotation marks around your choices – it makes it easier for you to focus on the exact wording
- avoid presenting your choices as a list or group of choices; treat each choice separately to avoid generalised comments
- avoid general comments such as ‘it helps you to imagine his experience’, or ‘this creates a picture in the reader’s mind’ which will not gain any marks
- avoid repeating the wording of the text in your explanation
- aim to give a meaning, in context, for each of your choices, even if you are unsure of effects
- try to include and explain images from each paragraph
- check back through your explanations asking yourself ‘How?’ and ‘In what way...?’ to make sure that you have explained your ideas fully.

Question 3

What did the miners find frightening or distressing about conditions working in the mine?

To answer the summary task successfully, candidates must first identify fifteen points from Passage B which are relevant to the specific focus of the question and list them, one per numbered line, in note form on the grid in part **(a)**. Those ideas then need to be reorganised and adapted to provide a clear, concise response to the question in the candidate's own words in part **(b)**. Candidates are reminded that they are only credited with a maximum of one point per line in part **(a)** and that any points added after line fifteen are not credited unless replacing an answer crossed out earlier on. On the whole, candidates showed awareness that in a question testing their ability to 'select for specific purposes' they should not include long sections of copied text and/or groups of potential ideas on each line of the grid, but rather look to identify and select individual distinct points.

In the best answers, candidates had evidently planned to avoid repetition and organised their ideas sensibly. Most understood that own words needed to be used where it was practical and appropriate to do so – recasting, reorganising and representing ideas helpfully for the benefit of the reader. It is not necessary to change every word – the idea needs to be clear to the reader and there may not be a suitable replacement for the word in the text.

On occasion, spelling errors clouded meaning. Candidates are advised to check back carefully to ensure that their understanding has been communicated clearly, for example to avoid such errors as suggesting that one fear faced was of 'Great builders above held by nothing'. There are no marks to be scored for writing in **3(a)**, however, checking responses for accuracy in spelling and grammar is essential if candidates are to avoid the potential danger of negating points through careless error.

Question 3(b) responses that did well had used their points from **3(a)** carefully, organising them purposefully into a concise, fluent prose response rather than relying on repeating points in the order or language of the passage. Successful answers organised their ideas in a number of ways, for example by first dealing with the cage then the pit, or by assigning points to physical and then mental issues. Good answers recognised that there were several examples of technical problems connected to machinery and combined these into one umbrella point, avoiding the repetition of less focused responses that tracked through the passage and offered several repeated points as a result. Some missed the detail that the physical discomforts such as carelessly buckled kneepads were more of a helpful distraction than a cause of distress or fear and others added details from their own knowledge or commented on conditions in mines. The most successful summaries avoided long introductory statements, redundant material and unnecessarily lengthy explanation. They demonstrated focus on both text and task by clearly communicating understanding of a wide range of relevant points. Candidates who had edited and refined points in **3(a)** with their audience in mind were best able to offer efficient and well-focused summary responses in **3(b)**.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

- re-read the passage after reading the question, in order to identify potential content points
- reflect on the ideas you have highlighted to establish and select 15 complete and distinct points
- list your points – one complete idea per numbered line in **3(a)**
- do not include illustrative examples of the same point or add detail
- plan your response in **3(b)** to organise content helpfully for your reader
- write informatively and accurately, avoiding errors which affect meaning
- you can choose to use your own words in **3(a)** and must use your own words in **3(b)**
- avoid repetition of points
- check that you understand the point you are trying to communicate
- when checking and editing your answers to **Question 3**, consider whether each point you are making could be easily and precisely understood by someone who has not read the passage
- do not add further numbered points in **3(a)** in addition to the 15 required
- leave sufficient time to check back through your **3(b)** answer – for example, to correct errors which affect meaning

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/23
Reading Passages (Extended)

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- used examination time efficiently to address all parts of the three questions equally carefully
- read the instructions for each task closely, paying attention to key words and guidance
- considered the evidence of the skills and understanding they needed to demonstrate in each response
- planned and organised their ideas before beginning their answer
- selected only the material appropriate for the response to the question
- avoided repetition of the same idea
- used a range of their own words carefully, appropriately and precisely
- edited their response to amend any careless slips, incomplete or unclear ideas
- adapted their writing style to suit each task, taking account of form, audience and purpose
- revisited passages to clarify details, refine understanding and identify implicit meanings.

General comments

Candidates' responses to this paper indicated some familiarity with the general demands of each task and the need to adapt and use relevant material from the passages to answer the questions. Most candidates attempted all parts of the three questions and most responses were an appropriate length, however on occasions answers were not sufficiently well focused on the detail of the task to gain higher marks. Candidates found both passages equally accessible and most were able to finish the paper within the time allowed.

Most **Question 1** responses were generally focused on the question, though some did not attempt all parts of the task. Good responses displayed a sound understanding of the ideas in Passage A by including a range of relevant ideas that were often developed and supported by appropriate detail to describe Harris's visit and its effect on Safeena's life and relationships, and how the situation might be resolved. Less effective responses tended to describe the reasons why Harris came to be staying with the family, but not use the information to develop points. Some of the least successful responses displayed little modification of the material and/or lost sight of the task in hand. Candidates are reminded that lifting or copying from the text, even of relatively short phrases, should be avoided.

Responses written from the wrong perspective were relatively rare, though a small number of candidates paid insufficient attention to task instructions – for example writing the journal entry as Nawaz. Some mid-range answers missed opportunities to develop and interpret the material, and often produced uneven responses which included the addition of extraneous material, for example, involving an extended hospital stay for Harris.

For **Question 2** candidates needed to make specific, detailed comments about their choices from the two paragraphs. To gain marks in the higher bands candidates need to demonstrate understanding of the writer's purpose and consider the effects, connotations and associations of the language used. Most responses included a sufficient number of appropriate examples from the relevant paragraphs. Fewer answers included the clear explanations of effects and images that are required for marks in the higher bands. Many contained some accurate explanations of meanings and the identification of some linguistic devices, but effects were only partially explained. Less successful responses tried to explain the selected language in the same words as the language choice – for example, suggesting that 'dangling and dancing' means that he dangled and

danced with the baby, or that ‘booby-trapped’ means that there were traps. Some candidates missed opportunities to consider individual words within longer choices and demonstrate understanding at higher levels, giving instead rather broad and vague comments such as ‘this shows that he wants to remain staying with the family’ and/or simply labelling devices without exploration of how the example was working within the context of the passage.

In **Question 3** many candidates managed to achieve over half the marks available by finding a reasonable number of points. Candidates do not need to use their own words in **Question 3(a)**, though some did to good effect. In **Question 3(a)** short notes, identifying each separate idea precisely, are required, rather than whole sentences or imprecise selections from the passage. In **Question 3(b)** own words need to be used and some responses missed opportunities to target higher bands by simply paraphrasing the original text. Candidates should use their own words as far as possible in this summary task, otherwise it suggests that they do not understand the wording of the original and limits the evidence of their own writing skills. It is not a requirement that every word is altered – more technical terms or names for example are unlikely to have suitably precise synonyms, and words such as ‘contagious’ and ‘genetics’ did not need to be replaced or explained. Some candidates included unnecessary comment and additional information, which prejudiced their ability to summarise the key aspects of the passage effectively.

Although Paper 2 is primarily a test of Reading, 20 per cent of the available marks are for Writing, split evenly between **Questions 1** and **3**. It is important that candidates consider the quality of their writing – planning and editing their responses to avoid inconsistencies of style, imprecise meaning and awkward expression. Whilst writing is not specifically assessed for accuracy in this paper, candidates should be aware that unclear or limited style will limit their achievement, as will over-reliance on the language of the passages. Candidates are advised to leave sufficient time to check and edit their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Imagine you are Safeena.

Write your journal entry for the day after the argument with Nawaz.

In your journal entry you should comment on:

- how and why Harris came to be staying with you and how you felt about it initially**
- the effects Harris’s stay has had on your life and relationships**
- the different ways in which the situation might now be resolved for the benefit of everybody.**

Base your journal entry on what you have read in Passage A, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the three bullet points.

Begin your journal entry, ‘Things surely cannot get much worse...’.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing.

The majority of candidates read the question carefully and engaged with the task of writing Safeena’s journal entry based on the events surrounding Harris’s stay and its impact on her family, adopting a relevant register and revealing her emotions and frustrations. In many, the voice of Safeena was quite convincing, though some overstated her reaction to Harris from the outset, asserting that she was opposed to him staying in their apartment. Responses written in the wrong voice were relatively rare, though some misread the question and wrote from Nawaz’s perspective. A few candidates confused the characters of Harris and Nawaz, and a small number misread the text and believed that Safeena was delighted with Harris’s actions. A few misinterpreted the relationships between the characters, for example believing that Nawaz was jealous of Harris. In relation to the third bullet of the question, some overlooked the possibility of letting Harris stay but establishing rules, therefore missing opportunities to incorporate details from the passage as evidence of their reading skills. A number of candidates also misread the ending of the passage, and accepted Harris’s view that the overheard comments were about Nawaz, rather than himself. This resulted in inappropriate

solutions being offered to the problems being faced such as putting Nawaz on a diet and encouraging Nawaz to eat less in order to save money.

The best responses showed evidence of close reading, moving beyond surface meaning, with many taking opportunities to work in detail from the text in an evaluative response. They adopted an apt tone for Safeena and skated over irrelevant detail, homing in on specific effects that Harris's stay had had on her life and relationships and how these could be remedied. Where responses were less successful in targeting higher bands, there was often the sense that candidates had not returned to the text to identify and plan content for their answers in advance of writing. Some had attempted to write a more general journal entry, with limited focus on the details of the passage. Others had undertaken to work back through the passage repeating and replaying events using a narrative style and limiting their focus on the task.

In relation to the first bullet of the question, most candidates were able to identify how and why Harris came to stay with Nawaz and Safeena, and selected details such as 'Harris was lonely', 'his daughter refused to visit him' and 'Nawaz invited him'. Some missed out that he had 'stayed indoors for days after the incident'. Candidates were mostly successful in being able to identify that Harris was ill, thought he was dying, and that his attacks were caused by anxiety or depression, whereas others reading less carefully believed that Harris had suffered a heart attack that required hospitalisation. Less secure responses often identified the events, but were unable to use detailed information to develop points, or sustain them into other areas.

The second bullet provided many candidates with an opportunity to explain the effects of Harris's stay with regard to the increase in household duties; the increase in expenses and spoiling the children. Few candidates developed ideas about Safeena's friends wanting to get away and Harris undermining her authority. The strain on Safeena's relationship with Nawaz was also frequently identified, though Harris's influence on their neighbours was less well noted. A few less effective responses repeated the same ideas, such as Harris's spoiling of the children or the expense incurred. Some mid-range answers missed opportunities to develop and interpret the material, replaying the passage, albeit in their own words, and often producing uneven responses. A mechanical use of the text demonstrates at best a reasonable level of understanding – those displaying a competent or thorough reading of the passage were able to go further, adapting and modifying the material in the passage.

In relation to bullet three of the question, most candidates were able to offer one or two recommendations. Stronger responses were able to respond thoughtfully to problems outlined previously to suggest plausible and relevant resolutions to the situation. Less successful responses resorted to creative writing, with ideas that were inappropriate in the context of the passage, such as recommending that Harris found himself a wife, a job or adopted a pet. There were misconceptions in the degrees of affection being expressed for Harris by Safeena which diluted evidence of close reading. These ranged from mild dissatisfaction to tolerance and even to believing he was a superb addition to the household. Occasionally, at odds with the text, Safeena was perceived as enjoying the company of Harris so much that she ended up preferring him to her husband - with the suggestion of a possible love affair. Many candidates missed opportunities to consider any positive feelings Safeena might have towards Harris in relation to the possibility of him changing his attitude. Others suggested that Harris should simply be asked to leave, without considering the role of Alia or reassessing the role of Harris within the family.

Good responses focused on all three bullet points and displayed the ability to select material relevant to each part of the task. They contained a range of ideas that were developed and closely related to the passage, and a good range of integrated detail. Less successful responses often focused on more generic points, such as the increased workload associated with Harris's visit, which limited their focus on the task. The least successful answers were often thin, simple or short. They offered a very general view of the situation but few ideas and details in response to the bullet points, and often did not move beyond the first bullet.

The Writing mark reflected the clarity, fluency and coherence of the response. The majority of candidates were able to respond in the required form of a journal entry, structuring their response helpfully, producing clear and often fluent responses. Better responses adopted a convincing and consistently appropriate style and were clearly well-planned to avoid repetition and build their argument from the start. In some less successful responses, weaknesses in expression arising from a restricted range of secure vocabulary and/or unforced errors affected meaning. Occasionally, awkward expression and/or weaknesses in structure detracted from the overall effect.

Advice to candidates on Question 1:

read the whole passage carefully
plan your answer to ensure that the material is sequenced logically and to avoid repetition
give equal attention to ideas relevant to each of the three bullet points
maintain attention to the purpose, audience and form of the response throughout your answer
use relevant details from the passage to demonstrate close reading
develop and extend your ideas by considering the perspective of the given persona
re-read the passage to ensure that you have selected enough relevant detail for each of the bullet points
leave sufficient time to edit and correct your response.

Question 2

Re-read the descriptions of:

- (a) **Harris's behaviour and the reaction to it in paragraph 13, beginning 'Within days Harris...'**
- (b) **Safeena's attitude and Harris's reaction to it in paragraph 14, beginning 'He was forbidden by Safeena...'**

Select four powerful words or phrases from each paragraph. Your choices should include imagery.

Explain how each word or phrase is used effectively in the context.

Write about 200 to 300 words.

Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer.

In response to **Question 2**, candidates are advised to select four appropriate examples for each part of the question. Some answers offered very long quotations which encompassed several separate choices, for example, 'a hazardous run, booby-trapped with the boys' electric toys and sharp outcrops of plastic play-bricks'. This often meant that candidates missed opportunities for more detailed analysis at word level. Some candidates chose less than striking phrases, such as 'lounge furniture' or 'on the mend', which resulted in inappropriate comments.

The most successful responses to **Question 2** carefully selected appropriate choices, including images, explained them in context and answered both parts of the question equally well. A few candidates picked up on the general effect of Harris as an over-bearing intruder, oblivious to the negative impact he is having on the family in part a, and the general effect of Safeena's fierce defence with military precision the attempts of Harris to further encroach upon her territory and the humour in Harris's lack of understanding of her motives in part b. The best responses considered meaning and effects throughout the response, without repeating generalised effects. Subtle nuances were not identified in some responses, which showed a lack of understanding of the overall tone of the selected paragraphs. The weakest responses had very few language choices, or offered few explanations beyond the very general, such as referring to Safeena attempting to prevent Harris from undertaking any chores. A number of candidates incorrectly surmised that Safeena 'forbid' Harris because she genuinely wanted to take care of him rather than stop him from interfering. Often the words of the original were repeated, for example 'it was hazardous' or 'there was a constant stream of food', which would not gain any marks.

Less successful responses sometimes adopted a 'technique spotting' approach by identifying literary techniques. This approach often led to rather generic comments about the techniques rather than the words themselves which limited the response. Some candidates offered single word choices only, not always selecting the most appropriate words, for example, offering 'plastic play-bricks' instead of 'sharp outcrops of plastic play-bricks'. Generally, vocabulary in these passages was understood by candidates, though there were some frequent misinterpretations, particularly with 'swivelled' and 'riveted', which was sometimes taken literally rather than developing meanings that were rooted in the text.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

select choices for comment that are relevant to the question and not those which happen to come first
insert quotations around your choices to help you focus on the exact wording
treat each of your choices separately and do not present them as a list or give a general comment which applies to all of them
do not write out whole sentences containing two or more choices
avoid general comments such as 'the writer makes you feel like you are there', or 'this is an outstanding image', which will not gain any marks
avoid repeating the wording of the question as an explanation of effect, for example, 'this shows that it was hazardous'
do not label literary devices without considering how each example is working in context
if you are unsure about effects, begin by offering a meaning, in context, for each of your choices
to explain effects, think of all that word might suggest to a reader - the feelings, connotations and associations of the language – and then reflect on how any of those might be relevant to the word in context

Question 3

What are the causes of loneliness, according to Passage B?

**Write your answer using short notes. Write one point per line.
You do not need to use your own words.**

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer.

To answer **Question 3(a)** successfully, candidates needed to first identify fifteen points from Passage B that were relevant to the question and to list them clearly, one per numbered line, in note form on the grid in part **(a)**. Candidates are reminded that they should attempt to offer the full 15 points, though they are only credited with a maximum of one point per line. Any points added after line 15 are not credited unless replacing an answer crossed out earlier on. Mostly, candidates understood that in a question testing their ability to 'select for specific purposes' they should not include groups of ideas on each line. The majority of candidates were able to score more than half marks. As an opinion piece, the passage required students to read critically to determine the causes of loneliness described in the text. Less-focused responses often included the incorrect suggestion that living alone or moving to a new country caused loneliness. Better responses were careful to be clear and unambiguous in the ideas they presented – for example avoiding the generalised suggestion that feeling lonely causes loneliness.

Where candidates had not engaged fully with the task and/or attempted a more mechanical approach paraphrasing the material, repetitions were common, such as 'introspection' and 'trying to work out what you want to do', or offering 'finance', 'money' and 'economic standard of living' as separate points. There was a lack of careful reading in some responses, for example with candidates lifting the partial phrase 'one's economic standard of living increases' as a cause of loneliness, whereas the reverse is the case. Where candidates had not focused precisely on the text, they often presented incomplete or inexact ideas – for example, social interactions needed to include a sense of being less positive, or negative. Where points were imprecise and/or unclear in part **(a)** they could not be credited. One word answers such as 'misunderstanding' were insufficient to communicate an understanding of what loneliness is and were too vague to relate to misunderstood adolescence.

There are no marks to be scored for Writing in **3(a)**, however, checking responses for accuracy in spelling and grammar is clearly essential if candidates are to avoid the potential danger of negating points through careless slips. Candidates should pay particular attention, for example, to correct any slips that might change meaning; for example, some candidates wrote 'emotional support' instead of 'lacking emotional support' or 'no emotional support'.

There were very few cases of wholesale copying. In using own words, it is not necessary to change every word – the idea needs to be clear to the reader and there may not be a suitable replacement for the word in the text. There was no need for example to replace the words 'social media' or 'stereotypes' and attempts to do so were often awkward and unclear.

A large proportion of candidates went beyond the task to philosophise at some length about loneliness arising as a result of broader social pressures, and cited examples from their personal experience. They also sometimes offered uplifting but irrelevant advice (in the context of the task) to people who might be feeling lonely. A substantial number of candidates also confused factors causing loneliness with symptoms of loneliness, most particularly illness and some cited smoking and obesity as causes of loneliness.

Question 3(b) responses that did well had used their points from **3(a)** carefully – organising them purposefully into a concise, fluent prose response rather than relying on repeating points in the order or language of the passage. There was some suggestion that answers at the top end had revisited points in **3(a)** during the planning stages of **3(b)** in order to edit and refine points in this part of the question – leading to clearer more distinct points in **3(a)** and an efficient and well-focused response in **3(b)**.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

read the question carefully and underline the key words
re-read the passage after reading the question, to identify precisely relevant content points
reflect on the ideas you have highlighted to establish and select 15 clear points, one per line
read through your list of points in **3(a)** checking each is distinct and accurate and that there are no repetitions or very similar points
do not add further numbered points in **3(a)** in addition to the 15 required
plan the structure of your response in **3(b)**, for example organising and sequencing content logically
do not add details or examples to the content of the passage
you can choose to use your own words in **3(a)** and must use your own written expression in **3(b)**, although you do not need to change technical terminology
pay attention to the guidance for length in **3(b)**

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/04
Coursework Portfolio

Key messages

In this component, candidates should aim to:

- reflect in their writing their personal ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world about them;
- choose original assignments that challenge them to write at the highest standard of which they are capable;
- write independently of undue guidance from published materials or from teachers;
- demonstrate variety of style, use of language and genre in the three assignments;
- write in fluent and varied sentences separated by full stops and clarified by the appropriate use of commas and other punctuation;
- revise, edit and correct first drafts in their own handwriting;
- proofread their work carefully, avoiding typing errors and errors caused by the inaccurate use of the spell check.

General comments

There were very few errors or misjudgements in fulfilling the requirements of the syllabus, and the Moderators congratulated centres on the presentation of their folders. There was a high standard of word processing and the work was overall very orderly. The folders were generally of a high standard and Moderators noted many examples of very good writing. This report sets out to help centres to make further improvements to assist candidates in achieving the highest marks of which they are capable.

Content of the folders: One noticeable improvement over previous sessions was that candidates were frequently given a considerable choice of topics for Assignment 1, which resulted in more personal opinion and originality. The quality of the narratives written for Assignment 2 varied both in the maturity and originality of the content, and in the management of language. There were still some problems in the final assignment, largely owing to enduring misunderstandings about the need to analyse and evaluate ideas and opinions from the chosen text in order to demonstrate the scope and depth of the reading. These matters are detailed later in this report.

Assessment: Most of the assessment was satisfactory but frequently slightly lenient. This resulted in a typical scaling of between –1 and –3, which is fairly normal for this component. In some cases there was a scaling of +1 to +3, often at the bottom of the mark range, owing to comparatively accurate writing and qualities of style. There was a trend towards higher marking of reading, and it was not always possible to justify the frequent award of marks in the top band, often owing to the quality of the responses to individual ideas and opinions and the lack of evidence of a grasp of the text as a whole. The rank order of candidates was generally sound.

Administration: Centres are asked to check the section of this report that deals with administration. While there were very few major issues, there were a number of details that caused problems to the Moderators. These generally arose from a lack of understanding of the Moderating process. The chief problems concerned the information given on the CASF, the secure fastening together of the folders, and the annotation of drafts and final versions of work. In general, the administration of this component has improved over the past few years, and centres are thanked for their hard work and attention to detail.

The following section on good and less good practice is repeated from an earlier report as it is still relevant and is also a useful checklist for centres.

Good practice was where:

a wide range of topics was provided for Assignments 1 and 2, and candidates were allowed to choose to respond to what interested them

some imagination was used in suggesting unusual ideas for writing, and there was a certain amount of risk taking

there was a strong sense of the candidate as an individual writing with conviction and enthusiasm

drafts were considered and improved

teachers gave clear advice about how Assignment 3 was to be attempted, and it was explained that it was a test of reading in depth and with understanding, often of subtle shades of meaning.

Less good practice was where:

the teacher set the same topic for an assignment to everyone and gave too much guidance as to the content. The result was undue similarity between the work of candidates, and this affected the marks

there was little imagination in task setting, and candidates wrote on well-established themes without conviction or imagination

there was a particular problem in Assignment 2 where candidates wrote incredible and often immature stories about unrealistic topics

in Assignment 3, candidates addressed the topic rather than the text

the work was significantly too long or too short, which affected the quality. However, centres should remember that the word lengths are given for guidance, and there should be no automatic penalty for ignoring them.

The content of the folders

Consistency: the best candidates were those whose standard of writing was consistent from assignment to assignment. It is recommended that a weak assignment should be replaced with a better one before the final assessment is made.

Variety: one of the aims of the component is to encourage candidates to write in different genres, for different audiences, and in different registers. There were examples where two of the three assignments were very similar, for example, where the first assignment was based on a text or texts, which made it similar to the third task. Centres that planned the course imaginatively achieved this variety of task setting.

Length of assignments: there was a tendency for candidates to write at much greater length than advised in the syllabus. While there was no automatic penalty for this, some candidates were unable to sustain the quality of the work and both the structure and the content sometimes faltered. A few excellent candidates benefited by writing at such length, but there was no advantage for the majority.

Assignment 1: This was an opportunity for candidates to present their views on a topic with which they felt knowledgeable. While it was perfectly acceptable for them to write informatively they often had more scope when arguing a case and writing persuasively. It allowed them to adopt a register which the best of them sustained throughout the piece.

Using texts and references: some centres based the work on texts and internet references (the research essay). Most candidates deconstructed the references and reconstructed them as their own account. However, without looking up all the references the Moderator did not know how much of the resulting piece was in the candidate's own words, and the comments by teachers suggested that they did not either. These pieces needed a statement that the final work was original. However, very often, the work was academic in nature and did not express candidates' own ideas and opinions. Centres should consider whether this approach was the best for the assignment. In many ways the candidates who wrote about their outward bound trip to Mount Snowdon approached the intention of this assignment more successfully.

Structure: it was in this assignment that the candidate's grasp of structure best manifested itself. Some of the writing was not sustained, so that it ran out of developed content before the end. Some of the paragraphs were in no logical order, but just a series of divisions. Lastly, within the paragraphs, weaker candidates lost the sequence of sentences, and it was here that the writing became more confused and even repetitious.

Choice of content: it was wise to let candidates choose their own topics. One centre required everyone to write about the Holocaust, which had the potential to be an interesting topic, but proved difficult for less able writers, who leant heavily on shared ideas. Guide books, restaurant reviews and accounts of films all seemed a little limited in content and were best when they did not follow a template or a professional writer's style. Topics such as social media, video games, euthanasia, the death penalty and drugs have been used too frequently, and many of them lacked originality of thought.

Register: Candidates were sometimes successful in adopting an appropriate register for a speech. However, others used too colloquial a voice that tended to interrupt the flow of the argument. It is recommended that they experiment with various types of register and decide which is most effective for the topic and audience.

The following are a selection of topics that were chosen for Assignment 1:

The Paris terror
Procrastination
Academic study v athletics
Is war good for anything?
The banning of guns
Is the US still racist?
The life of a forensic scientist
Ultimate Frisbee
The effects of alcohol
Middle child syndrome

Assignment 2: There were the usual assortment of narratives, descriptions and personal writing. Perhaps this time there was more fiction, some of which was very fine with various devices such as more than one narrator, time lapses and flash backs. Descriptions were fine, but sometimes became lists of details without much structure. The best descriptions allowed for some movement of time and place – they did not have to be static.

Content: it took a fine writer to succeed with a haunted house or a zombie – and nearly all of these stories were so incredible as to become childish and laughable. They should be avoided completely since the reader has to be engaged, and the only way to do this is through an element of realism. Many of the violent stories also lacked a sense of credibility, as in this quotation: *Dave scratched the rope with his collar and it slowly was sawed through and he jumped on the witches back and put her is a sleeper hold.*

Style: it is in this assignment that candidates show their range of imaginative vocabulary. In some cases they tried too hard. The use of language at best was wide ranging and assured, which meant the right word in the right place. These were examples of language that was too colourful to make sense: *Glimmering light poured down upon the floor exterminating the silence of the rainforest, and His footsteps accelerated into a crescendo and sounded like a wondrous funeral bell.* It was also in this assignment that some of the writing used disappointingly simple language, so that candidates missed the opportunity to give an indication of their potential range of vocabulary.

Detail: the most outstanding stories chose the details that were most relevant to the narrative and which best engaged the reader's attention. Such details made the story sound realistic. Some personal accounts include details that did not assist the reader in imagining the situation because they were mundane and barely relevant.

Endings: the majority of these stories had arresting endings, some of them unexpected, but still realistic. Others tended to fade away at the end, which was a disappointment after a promising beginning.

There was an imaginative selection of titles, including:

The cursed doll
The grass is greener
The yellow brick
The elevator
The outsider
Thunders end
No-one is up the chimney

And for personal writing:

Life with Dad
A recurring nightmare
Life as an army child
Dartmoor zoo

As in Assignment 1 there were several titles that have been used so often that it was considered time to move on: These included:

The beach
The deserted fairground
Train station
A place in summer and winter

A number of candidates imagined themselves as a bird or animal and wrote about a day in their life. Some of these were imaginative, but others were not particularly effective. Some care was necessary in planning their content.

Assignment 3: it should be remembered that this was a test of reading as well as writing, and that at a high level candidates had to show a grasp of the whole text and also the writer's attitude to the topic. This extended overview was missing from many of the responses given marks in the top band.

Text choice: there were some good choices of controversial arguments, but a number of the texts were informative, which made it very difficult to grapple with individual ideas and opinions. The text generally proved difficult to handle if it was longer than two sides of A4 paper, but insufficient if it was shorter than one.

Content of answer: the best responses either started with an extended overview of the text (see above) or wrote an overall, structured response that assimilated ideas and opinions as it proceeded. Candidates who chose a minimum of four ideas and opinions from the text and evaluated them for consistency and bias scored high marks for reading. However, many candidates made a choice but their comments were simple and did not evaluate: some of them simply stated that they agreed or disagreed. It was not sufficient just to choose single words to discuss.

Attacking the writer: some of the texts were extreme in their views, tempting candidates to attack the writer rather than what was written in the text. This was not what was required and cannot be rewarded by the mark scheme.

Use of the text as a stimulus: this was not what was envisaged. As a test of reading, candidates who wrote their own responses to the topic rather than to the ideas in the text were given very few marks for reading. However, their responses were marked in the normal way for writing without reference to the text.

Structure of the response: there were some very cohesive answers with strong introductions and a series of interconnected points leading to good endings. However, other candidates wrote a few lines for an introduction and then made a series of random points that did not connect into a progressive piece of writing.

Some good texts included the following topics:

Grenfell Tower (a disastrous fire in a block of flats)

Celebrity politicians

Self esteem

Single sex schools

A speech by Donald Trump

Football is more of a business than a sport

Transgender issues

A defence of boxing

Assessment of coursework

The standard of assessment was generally good. Where there was disagreement it was either because all the four assessment objectives, (content, structure, style (including register) and accuracy had not been equally weighted or because there was more than one teaching set and the marks had not been fully brought into line.

Content: at the top of the range, the content should be sufficiently complex and mature. It should allow for a variety of points to be made and successfully thought through.

Structure: the structure should be effective in that the reader is clearly guided from one section of the writing to the next. The sequence of sentences and paragraphs should be considered carefully to avoid loss of clarity in arguments and events.

Style: many candidates did not vary their sentence structures enough. Lengthier sentences provided fluency, but sentences that were too long easily caused confusion. Better candidates demonstrated a varied register from task to task.

Accuracy: few centres annotated accuracy fully in the final versions of assignments. In particular, attention should be paid to the number of sentence separation errors, and marks adjusted accordingly. As this is a coursework component, it is expected that there will be few errors, as candidates are able to redraft and review their work before submitting, and word process their assignments using spellchecking software. Homonym errors often indicate where this has been ineffectively used. Some of these included:

Children will need to emphasise with each other

How bazar is that!

There was lots of nosie coming from the room

It was not clear what was meant by *atramentous*.

The mark schemes: the mark schemes describe standards for each of the objectives in each mark band. Centres should ensure that all are appropriately met before awarding a mark in a particular band. Where there is a weakness in one of the objectives, the mark will be lower in that band, or it may be necessary to consider the band below.

There was some evidence that the mark scheme for reading was not used carefully enough if at all. The current syllabus has re-numbered the mark bands. Some centres were still using the old numbering.

Drafts: some drafts were sufficiently different from the final versions to show the development of the work. Others were unmarked sheets with or without teachers' general advice for improvement at the end. Very occasionally, drafts had clearly been corrected by the teacher and this is strictly not allowed. There should be no teacher marks in the margin or the body of the text because it is the responsibility of the candidate to produce the final version.

Some candidates had obviously worked on their draft. It is envisaged that there should be evidence in coloured pen of editing, revising and correcting a draft. It would be sensible if the candidates were to sign the draft to make it clear that the changes were their own.

The draft should be clearly marked as such so that it cannot be mistaken for the final version.

Administration

Internal moderation

Centres are reminded that where there are two or more sets, all the marks must be formed into a reliable rank order at the end of the process. It is normally possible to sample a set and to scale the marks according to the trend. These marks must be entered on to the CASF because the Moderator needs to check what changes have been made to the marks of the different set teachers. There were some indications that where sampling had taken place the only marks that were changed were those in the sample. If the sampling shows that there is a trend to leniency or severity, then this should be applied to the whole or part of the set, or it may be necessary to hand the set back to the teacher for re-marking.

Folders

Most, but not all, folders were securely fastened together so that no sheets of paper could be lost or put into the wrong order. The centre's submission is handled by a variety of different people once it is posted, and if items are not securely fastened there is a risk that pages will be lost or muddled. We do request that folders are not placed in plastic folders because this makes it difficult to handle.

The work should be annotated. Each piece should carry the teacher's opinions about its strengths and weaknesses so that the Moderator can follow the centre's marking justification.

The text used for the third assignment must be included with the folders. It is not the Moderator's responsibility to look it up online.

If the folder is not complete a mark for writing should be awarded and one third of the marks deducted for each missing piece.

Forms

There were comparatively few problems with the forms which were carefully and fully completed.

The Moderator carries out checks to ensure that the marks on the CASF are the same as those on the folders and the submitted mark sheet. The Moderator also checks the addition of the marks in the sample. The CASF is the master form because it has the details of every candidate, including the set teacher and changes to the marks made at internal moderation.

Moderators thanked centres that indicated the candidates in the sample by placing an asterisk against their names on the CASF.

Some of the changes to candidates' marks were indicated on the folders and these marks were then transferred to the CASF. However, the Moderator wanted to see the original marks before internal moderation took place and these should have appeared on the CASF with the changes written in the right hand column.

Some centres entered the original marks on the submitted mark sheet instead of those agreed at internal moderation. Centres are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring all forms are completed and submitted accurately. Where there is confusion, delays in awarding grades can occur.

Conclusion

Once more, the Moderators congratulate and thank centres for their hard work. Coursework is not a matter of just completing three pieces of work: it is a way of encouraging students to think and to write – hence the emphasis on imagination and personal response. Apart from its educational validity it gives teachers the chance to develop their skills of assessment. This year's folders were a substantial proof of all this.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/06
Speaking and Listening (Coursework)

Key messages regarding administration

Cambridge requires a centre to provide four different items in the package sent to the moderator. These are:

All the recordings of Task 1 and Task 2 for the whole cohort entered for the series. Preferably, these can be sent on a CD or USB drive.

All the Coursework Assessment Summary Forms for the whole cohort entered. If more than one teacher/examiner is involved in the process then a separate form completed by that teacher/examiner should be included. This allows the moderator to cover the range of teacher/examiners used by the centre.

The Individual Candidate Record Cards for all the entered candidates in the cohort.

A copy of the marks that have already been sent to Cambridge.

It is essential to successful completion of the moderating process that all the required items are present in the packet sent to Cambridge. Of equal importance is that the addition and transcription of marks is accurate and that the marks on the separate forms tally against each other. The moderator will undertake an administration check before moderating and any discrepancies can cause a delay in the process.

The following guidelines may prove helpful in completing the sample successfully:

Centres should generate audio files in a recognised common audio file format such as mp3, wav and wma (but not AUP) that can be played by standard computer software. It is helpful if for each candidate, a separate track is created and its file name is the candidate's name and examination number. Where possible, the recordings should be transferred to a single CD or a USB drive. It is highly recommended that the quality of the recordings is checked regularly during the recording sessions. The final CD or USB drive should also be checked before despatching to Cambridge.

The teacher/examiner should introduce each recording using the rubric in the syllabus. For paired activities, it would be helpful if candidates introduce themselves and the roles they are playing before beginning the task so the moderator can clearly distinguish as to who is speaking when.

Although there is no formal requirement that activities should be of a minimum length, please consider whether the assessment criteria can be adequately met if the activity is very short.

An Individual Candidate Record Card is required for each candidate entered. These cards should be treated as 'living' documents that are completed when each task is undertaken. Specific information about the choices made for each task is required by the moderator and not just generic statements that are unhelpful. For Task 1 a comment reading 'a talk about a hobby of your choice' is not helpful but 'my interest in (explain specific hobby)' is useful for the moderator.

Where there are multiple teacher/examiners in a centre, internal standardisation and moderation is encouraged for obvious reasons. If, as a result of this internal moderation, the marks for candidates' tasks are changed please indicate on the Summary Forms exactly where these changes have taken place. Changing just the total marks is unhelpful for the moderator.

General comments

Generally, the standard of administration and accuracy of assessment continue to be of a high standard. There was pleasing and substantial evidence of centres and their candidates fully committing to the component and producing work of a very good quality as a result. A wide range of topics were chosen in response to Task 1 and some inventive literature-based paired discussions were evident in response to Task 2.

Centres are reminded that the Individual Candidate Record and the Summary Form are specific to Component 6 and cannot be substituted by forms from any other component.

For Component 6, centres are encouraged to be creative in the choice of tasks but the assessment criteria should always be used as a guide to the skills being assessed. The integration of literature-based activities is encouraged where it will benefit the candidates' performance.

Comments on specific tasks

The most successful tasks attempted were those chosen by the candidates themselves with the beneficial guidance of their teachers also apparent. Candidates who were genuinely interested in the topics they had chosen often had more to say in greater depth.

Well planned and prepared responses to tasks are generally more successful but responses do not benefit from over-scripted and seemingly 'artificial' performances where spontaneity is missing.

Task 1

A wide range of topics were undertaken although the task generally took the form of an individual presentation. A pleasing alternative was the use of dramatic monologues created by the candidates at one centre.

Candidates perform best when they are able to choose their own topics, rather than attempting to talk about a generic theme imposed on the entire group. It is important to consider that this component allows differentiation by task setting so the ability of the individual candidate needs to be taken into consideration when these choices are made. More able candidates should be encouraged to choose more exacting and mature topics that extend their abilities to construct a compelling argument within a time frame of approximately 3–4 minutes that includes an element of introspection and reflection.

*Some examples of productive **Task 1** activities include:*

- A significant moment in time
- My love of a personal interest/hobby (that moves beyond the purely descriptive and is reflective and thought-provoking)
- An in-depth and evaluative review of a movie, piece of music or work of art
- Hope
- Why I recommend a specified holiday destination
- The benefits of being technologically adept in the twenty-first century
- Helicopter Parents
- In-character monologues

*Some examples of less successful **Task 1** activities include:*

- Should cannabis be legalised? (This has potential safeguarding issues)
- Football (Most often too generic and unfocussed)
- A single topic imposed by the centre for the whole of its cohort in which no individual choice is allowed (Ownership of and commitment to the topic is not always evident)

Task 2

The Pair-Based Activity works best between two candidates of similar ability discussing a topic they have prepared and that they feel strongly about or engaging in a lively role play that allows them to demonstrate their discursive strengths. A clearly defined focus is better than a general exchange of views. 'Football' remains a popular topic amongst boys but where there is no sense of audience or specific focus there will be little evidence of the skills expected for those wishing to attain a mark in the higher bands. Where candidates have clear viewpoints that lead to persuasive argument the resulting task will be more successful than when candidates are unsure of their opinions.

Generally, entirely scripted responses, be they discussions or role plays, do not allow candidates to access the higher attainment bands.

It is unlikely that both candidates in the Paired-Task activity can meet higher level criteria such as 'responds fully', 'develops prompts' or 'employs a wide range of language devices' in a performance lasting less than four minutes. Given that both speaking and listening are assessed for both candidates, it is important that the activities last long enough for candidates to clearly demonstrate their strengths in both if marks in the higher bands are to be awarded.

*Some examples of productive **Task 2** activities include:*

- Arguing for and against a current affairs topic such as the benefits of modern technology or the moral implications of cloning
- Discussing a text or author both candidates know well
- Planning a special event – either at school or for a more personal joint function
- Facebook or Instagram? Apple or Microsoft? Modern Art or Traditional Art?
- Comparing the merits of two famous people where each candidate acts as a champion for one of the celebrities
- In-character discussions between two literary personalities focussing on a specific point(s) in the text

*Some examples of less successful **Task 2** activities include:*

- Should cannabis be legalised? (This has potential safeguarding issues)
- Interviews where one of the candidates acts solely as the interviewer (This is limiting for the candidate)
- Disagreements between neighbours
- Customer complaints regarding faulty service

A single topic imposed by the centre for the whole of its cohort in which no individual choice is allowed (Ownership of and commitment to the topic is not always evident)

Task 3

Task 3 may take the form of a group discussion debating an issue which is topical and or a role-play where each candidate plays the part of a character. Both can be successful as long as the assessment criteria for the group work are met. It is most important that each candidate in the group is allowed sufficient scope within the activity to demonstrate their strengths without being dominated by others. To this end, it is advisable to create groups of similar ability levels so that weaker candidates are not disadvantaged and to consider the group dynamic so that each member has the opportunity to contribute to the best of their ability. A group should consist of no less than three members and it is advised that it does not exceed five candidates. A group consisting of three or four candidates is preferable for the logistical purpose of being able to assess each candidate's performance more accurately.

*Some examples of productive **Task 3** activities include:*

- A trial scene, possibly based on a literary text – e.g. George Milton, Arthur Birling
- A discussion of a topical issue with each candidate having their own viewpoint
- Balloon debate – who to include/discard from a list of famous people where each candidate champions the cause of their chosen celebrity
- An interview panel discussing potential candidates for a job

General conclusions

Component 6 remains a successful vehicle for candidates to express their opinions, demonstrate their oral skills and genuinely engage with speaking and listening.

The standard of assessment by centres is accurate and easy to follow.

As in all examinations, candidates clearly benefit from clear instruction, careful planning and thoughtful practise.