

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Paper 0511/11

Reading and Writing (Core)

## Key messages

In this session there was evidence that greater precision was needed by some candidates in their reading of questions, particularly in Exercise 1 and Exercise 2 and the rubric of Exercise 7. It should be noted that precise reading of specific questions is vital as a first step in ensuring a successful answer.

The completion of Exercise 3 showed continued improvement, especially in *Sections A, B and C*, although the lack of clarity in handwriting in some cases prevented top marks being awarded. Exercise 3, *Section D* continued to challenge a number of candidates, with only the more able managing to achieve the combination of correct contextual detail with accurate sentence formation, spelling and punctuation. A fair percentage achieved half of the available marks, and there were fewer omissions in this section than in previous sessions.

Exercise 4 was well attempted, with candidates generally offering brief factual notes in their answers, rather than full sentences. Centres are asked to remind candidates that success can be achieved through these note-form responses.

Many candidates observed the 70 word limit in Exercise 5, with only a small number continuing beyond the line specification. Teachers are asked to emphasise to candidates that this exercise requires a cohesive paragraph, extending and developing the note-form answers from the previous exercise. Candidates who listed their notes without any attempt to link them in a coherent manner were prevented from achieving full marks in this exercise.

Of the two extended writing tasks, Exercise 6 was better attempted, with the majority of candidates completing the response satisfactorily and the more able candidates writing in an engaging style and showing an awareness of audience through the appropriate use of register and idiom. Exercise 7 proved to be more challenging, with a relatively small proportion of candidates able to address effectively the core issue in the question, and the majority offering answers peripheral to the central idea.

## General comments

Overall the majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level and many showed a good response to the demands of the different tasks included in the paper. There were a small number of candidates who scored particularly highly and who could arguably have benefited from being able to demonstrate their linguistic ability on the extended tier.

The paper offered a range of tasks within each exercise, requiring candidates to demonstrate a number of practical skills, from scanning to identify detail and express this as a short answer or in note form, to the more complex demands of writing at greater length in a summary, a letter and a discursive article.

Across the candidature there were few examples of misunderstanding of the rubric of each exercise, and the whole range of marks could be awarded.

Presentation of answers and handwriting were acceptable in most cases and an increasing number of candidates used black ink. Where candidates needed to continue their answers beyond the page, especially in Exercise 6 and Exercise 7, they did so appropriately, using the blank pages at the end of the booklet. Many clearly indicated to the Examiner that extra work had been added. As a general rule, candidates are advised that the amount of space and number of lines provided on a page should give guidance as to the length of answer required, and they should not consistently exceed this length. There was evidence of good time management throughout the paper and fewer candidates were unable to complete all the exercises.

If candidates supply overlong responses to Exercises 1, 2, and 4, this can be detrimental in that there may be a tendency to include superfluous, repetitive or inaccurate information, which can deny the mark. A further drawback is the reduction in time available to candidates to complete the final three exercises in the paper.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Exercise 1**

As an introduction to the comprehension tasks, this exercise provided varying degrees of difficulty and was successfully completed by many candidates.

- (a) Precise understanding of the key question words 'how often' was necessary to supply details of 'once a year', 'annually', or 'every February'. Candidates who did not identify the regularity of occurrence of the carnival and responded 'in February' were denied the mark.
- (b) This was generally well answered, with most candidates showing understanding of 'apart from Brazil' in the question. 'Rio de Janeiro' was a common incorrect response.
- (c) There was a mixed response to this question. The best answers correctly identified the Sambadrome as 'an arena'. Marks were lost by candidates who transferred the entire sentence from the text, putting 'they perform' at the beginning of their answer and thus not answering the question. 'Area' was a common misspelling.
- (d) Most candidates correctly recognised the key word 'judged' in the question and could find two required points from three. Mistakes were made by a lack of the precise detail 'quality' and 'theme' in answers from a number of candidates, who supplied the too general response 'music' and 'performance'.
- (e) This was well answered by the great majority of candidates. Those who incorrectly identified 'the biggest stars' as a personal quality did not achieve the mark.
- (f) This was a good differentiating question. The best answers correctly found 'the beach' and 'a café' as places where the 'blocos' performed. Common errors were those in which candidates failed to identify the key verb 'perform' in the question and incorrectly copied information relating to the place they gathered, 'in the square', or where they paraded, 'through sections of the city'.

#### **Exercise 2**

This exercise was more challenging and required precise reading of the questions and of the text. The more able candidates provided accurate and brief answers, selecting and transcribing the correct detail from the text. Some answers demonstrated a lack of precision in identifying key question words, resulting in responses which were too general or included inaccurate extra information which could not be credited. In some cases credit could not be given for ungrammatical answers, although the essence of the answer was correct. The interpretation of the graphic element in Question (f) was generally correct, although many candidates merely looked for the highest figure, without relating it to the question. The full range of marks was awarded across the exercise as a whole.

- (a) Many gave a good short answer 'by donkey'. Errors arose when candidates copied the entire sentence – an overlong response which included unnecessary detail of the librarian and the way he displayed the books. Other errors included the misspelling 'car' or 'chart' for 'cart'.
- (b) This was mostly well answered, with the majority correctly transcribing 'a few'. Here also, some candidates supplied too much contextual detail, 'one of only a few', or even ascribed a particular number, '1' or '2', which could not be credited.
- (c) This proved to be a discriminating question and one in which the more able candidates could recognise the key question phrase 'how long' and who offered the time phrase 'more than two decades' in response. Less able candidates copied the entire sentence which unfortunately did not answer the question, or included 'after more than two decades', or just 'two decades', which similarly did not address the question precisely.

- (d) The majority answered correctly, matching 'behave' in the question with 'sit quietly and listen' from the text. The most common error was when candidates described the children's reaction to the library's arrival, 'shouting and racing down the road', rather than to the storytelling.
- (e) Most candidates managed one point in this question and a good many achieved full marks. 'Greater productivity' was the most used answer. Marks were lost through imprecise reading of the question, 'apart from health factors', 'better health and longer life' being a widespread inaccurate response. Many realised the practical benefits of being able to read, 'able to vote in an election' and able to apply the correct amount of fertiliser' being commonly written.
- (f) The graphic required candidates to identify the organisations which had donated the most money to the library. Many candidates gave importance to the highest figure – '15,000' and offered 'other libraries' as their answer. In this case, candidates had not clearly read or understood the key question word 'money'. Closer analysis of the graphic showed that 'charity groups' had donated the most money. The best candidates selected the correct detail and were awarded the mark.
- (g) Many candidates identified the main problem in bringing books back to Ethiopia, but lacked precision in the answer, losing marks by writing 'no library', rather than 'almost no libraries'.
- (h) The response was correct in the majority of cases, although a number of candidates supplied detail of the furniture in the library, 'sofas', 'tables'.
- (i) This was very well attempted. Most candidates provided one of the two correct options 'he loves the library' and 'the stories bring him back'. A number of candidates located the correct sentence in the text, but selected the wrong detail, 'he doesn't know what he will do with his life'.

### **Exercise 3**

Candidates continue to show better preparation for the specific demands of this exercise. More candidates are completing the task, and understanding the conventions of form-filling and the need for total accuracy in spelling. In general, the selection of detail from the text was appropriate, although at times otherwise correct responses received no mark through careless transcription. Centres are asked to encourage candidates to ensure that their responses are clearly written, and that if a wrong answer is corrected, Examiners can be sure which answer to accept.

#### **Section A**

Almost all candidates were successful with the name, age and contact details. Candidates were much less successful with the address, often omitting 'Apartment' and including the preposition 'in' Paris. Centres are reminded that the use of prepositions 'in' or 'at' is not part of the convention of writing addresses and cannot be credited. The spelling of 'Montmartre' was often incorrectly transcribed, and some candidates were unable to identify the college club attended. Candidates were generally successful in the application of the conventions of circling and ticking.

Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of good, clear handwriting throughout the paper and particularly in this exercise. A clear difference must be seen between capital letters and small letters when writing proper nouns in names and addresses.

#### **Section B**

Candidates were less confident in this section and errors were made through misapplying the convention of underlining and circling the options chosen. Other candidates were unable to identify the correct choices and underlined each one. The suggestion for a future event was not well addressed, with many candidates showing confusion and supplying incomplete answers, 'artistic programme', or 'rock music', or information regarding the choice of the artistic directors, or omitting this point.

#### **Section C**

This section was satisfactorily attempted by most candidates, who were generally successful with the name, position and contact details of the referee. There were occasional examples of misspelling 'Dubios' for 'Dubois'. The requirement in the final point was to identify 'the college noticeboard' as the place where the information could be found. A number of candidates lost marks through careless spelling 'collage', or the misspelt inclusion of extra information, 'in an advertisement'. Other candidates wrongly selected information

about the possible way in which the arts Centre could contact the members, 'by email', 'by weekly newsletter'.

### **Section D**

This section continues to be challenging for many candidates and Centres are asked to continue to provide as much practice as possible for this task. Nonetheless, fewer candidates omitted this section than in previous sessions and most scored half of the available marks. Additionally, the majority of candidates understood the need to write as Jacques and made a good attempt at writing in the first person, 'I'. The required information for the first sentence was well recognised by most candidates, who transferred the relevant wording from the text. Marks were lost through errors in grammar and the misspelling of 'exhibitions'. At times candidates supplied incorrect contextual information, which despite being completely accurate grammatically, could not be credited. The second sentence proved to be more demanding, with a number of candidates misinterpreting 'work experience', and writing about experience of oil and watercolour painting and membership of the Art Society. The best answers related to working part-time in the local art gallery.

Finally, in this session the vast majority of candidates wrote two succinct sentences, with evidence of considerable improvement in writing in a clearly defined and grammatically accurate manner. A final reminder to candidates is that the full stop at the end of the sentence is part of the marking requirement in this exercise, and that full marks cannot be given if it is omitted.

### **Exercise 4**

A great many candidates were able to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the text to make a satisfactory attempt at this task. Overall, candidates found it easier to select relevant information to answer the first section of the exercise than the second. An increasing number of candidates used brief note-form answers, and generally handwriting was legible. Centres are asked to remind candidates to supply only one key detail on each response line, as the second will not receive credit. Similarly, the length of the lines should be used as a guide as to how the answers should be presented and full sentences which are continued down the side of the page are unlikely to receive merit.

#### ***Design features of the flying car***

The key contextual points were well recognised and all the six possible content points were used, which showed a good understanding of the relevant paragraphs in the text. Many candidates scored highly in this section. Marks could not be awarded for incomplete answers, 'weather patterns', or 'can fly up to 500 miles'. Less able candidates included items which were not design features, such as 'propeller spinning' and 'can take off from any airfield'.

#### ***Problems faced by the potential buyer***

This section proved to be more of a challenge, with few candidates scoring full marks. The most selected point was 'it's expensive', and some correctly offered the amount '\$200,000'. Some also recognised that having 'no pilot's licence' would be a problem, and identified the 'difficulties in finding insurance'. Less able candidates overlooked the idea of it being 'difficult' to find insurance, and incorrectly supplied 'no insurance'. Many candidates correctly located 'potential customers' in the text, but responded that 'they are older and retired', which could not be credited.

### **Exercise 5**

Although this exercise continues to present a considerable challenge for many candidates, in this session there was an increase in the number who made a satisfactory attempt at it. A problem that still remains is with candidates who write overlong answers, sometimes extending to the blank pages at the end of the booklet. In these cases candidates are advised that the objective of this exercise is to present information in a succinct manner, keeping within the limits as stated in the question. Work which continues beyond the word limit will not be read or credited. Many candidates successfully fulfilled the task by using their notes from the previous exercise, highlighting the design features of the flying car and indicating some of the problems involved for potential buyers.

The full range of marks was awarded for this exercise, with the majority of candidates achieving half of the marks available. The most successful responses were those in which the candidates attempted to use their own words to describe the flying car, connecting the details into a cohesive paragraph. Less successful

were those who merely copied their notes from the previous exercise, with little attempt at paraphrase or the use of appropriate linking words. These responses could not be awarded the highest marks for this exercise.

### **Exercise 6 and Exercise 7**

There was a good response by the majority of candidates who attempted both extended writing exercises at an appropriate word length, indicating a good use of time throughout the paper as a whole. Few were unable to provide any answer at all, although some candidates spent too long on Exercise 6, which meant that they were unable to spend sufficient time on the last exercise and complete it within the allocated time. Candidates are reminded that Exercise 6 and Exercise 7 carry equal weight and so are encouraged to divide their time equally between the two exercises. The whole range of marks was awarded, with some candidates demonstrating high quality work and others less confident writing.

### **Exercise 6**

In the rubric for Exercise 6 a visual prompt was included in the form of pictures, intended to act as an optional guide in the planning stage of the writing. It should be stressed that these pictures are only a guide and that candidates are always free to use their own ideas. It is often the case that candidates who prefer to use their own material can produce work of greater originality and show more ambition in language. In order to achieve the highest band scores, candidates must develop all three bullet points and demonstrate a sense of purpose and an awareness of audience through the correct use of register and style.

### **School holidays without the television**

In general, this task was well addressed. The majority of candidates engaged with the situation with enthusiasm, showing lively imagination and developing all the required points, and the writing was of an acceptable length. Many conveyed a sense of fury at the person who caused the damage to the television, as well as their initial horror at the thought of being without a television for two weeks. Some responses appeared unbalanced as at times there was too much focus on the way in which the damage was caused, with little effort to explain how the time was spent instead and the lessons to be learnt from such an experience. Weaker responses were characterised by this imbalance, with some candidates merely suggesting that they learned not to kick the ball in the house, rather than the broader lessons to be learned from doing other activities. Responses which failed to develop all three required points were limited to middle or low band marks for content. Similarly, a number of candidates misinterpreted the time reference of the scenario, with the television having just broken, and so were wondering how they could fill the time until it was repaired. These responses did not fulfil the task completely.

The best responses showed an understanding of the conventions of letter writing, with appropriate opening and closing remarks, and frequently addressed the reader, 'You can imagine how angry I was!' 'Do you know what?' It was noticeable in this session that some weaker answers simply contained a narrative account, with no attempt to involve the reader. These responses were prevented from achieving scores in the top band. The main areas of concern linguistically remain the lack of consistency of grammatical tense throughout. This question required the use of narrative tenses, particularly the simple past, and there were a considerable number of candidates who started well, but were unable to maintain accuracy to the end, mixing present with past within a sentence and throughout the whole response. Examiners give credit for attempts at appropriately ambitious or colloquial language, but candidates should be aware that over-use of such idiomatic language can detract from the overall sense and may obscure meaning. Similarly, the use of mobile phone text language, 'can u guess' should not form part of an examination answer.

### **Exercise 7**

In this exercise, candidates were required to respond in a more formal register to a topic of general interest. Additionally, four written prompts, two in favour and two against the topic were provided to serve as a springboard for candidates' own ideas and opinions. In order to achieve high marks, candidates need to show the ability to organise ideas and provide a clear and logical argument. As in Exercise 6, the more successful answers were characterised by the inclusion of candidates' own experiences and originality of thought.

### **Is there too much pressure on young people to lead a healthy life?**

Some candidates were able to respond well to the more formal tone and register required for this exercise, and engaged satisfactorily with the topic, including the idea of 'pressure' on young people from parents, the media, or their friends. The majority felt that young people themselves should bear the responsibility for their

own healthy lifestyle, although many would find this hard when surrounded by a variety of less healthy options. Other candidates adopted a balanced approach, considering both sides of the argument, with good use of paragraphs and linking words to support this. However, this question posed a considerable challenge to a number of candidates, who avoided the idea of 'pressure' in the question, and responded by writing on the need for healthy eating, rather than feeling any sense of pressure to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The best answers showed consistently clear and structured argument, with an ability to develop a particular point of view convincingly. Many produced writing with a sense of shape and form, through the appropriate use of introduction and conclusion.

Less successful answers relied entirely on the given prompts, with, in some cases, candidates merely performing a copying exercise, with a short concluding sentence. Candidates should be aware that in order to gain marks for content in the highest band, there needs to be evidence of development and presentation of opinion.

Linguistic errors were typically in the confusion of tenses, sometimes within one sentence. Additionally, although many candidates commendably attempted to use phrases to link contrasting ideas or develop the same idea further, at times these cohesive devices were misapplied, with 'on the other hand' being used in support of a previous point and 'furthermore' to introduce a contrasting idea. Candidates are encouraged to continue to practise the use of these devices in discursive writing in order to gain in confidence and accuracy.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Paper 0511/12

Reading and Writing (Core)

## Key messages

Generally there was good understanding of the rubric for each exercise. Nevertheless, where marks were lost it was often through careless reading of the instructions. Throughout the question paper words are highlighted to assist the candidates and to allow them to focus closely on the texts. This is particularly the case in Exercises 1-5.

Centres are reminded that correct spelling and precise detail are essential requirements for Exercise 3, the form-filling exercise. Words which appear in the text are often carelessly misspelled when the form is being completed. In Exercise 3D, where two sentences are to be provided, too few candidates scored full marks. These sentences must contain accurate information as well as being properly constructed. Where candidates write three sentences, only the first two will be considered. In cases where just one sentence is offered, only a maximum of half the marks can be awarded, even if all the information is correctly spelt and punctuated.

The text to Exercises 4 and 5 was well understood and consequently candidates scored quite well, particularly in the first half of Exercise 4. In Exercise 5 many candidates were able to manage an acceptable summary below the limit of 70 words, although it was a challenge for some not to lift much of the technical vocabulary from the text in achieving this.

Both Exercises 6 and 7 were found to be manageable by nearly all candidates. Exercise 6 provided some interesting and entertaining descriptions of a national celebration. Many were able to express themselves clearly, to find the correct register and to use appropriate language in what was a letter to a friend. In Exercise 7 many candidates relied heavily on the prompts offered on the question paper. It should be stressed that higher marks are given to those who are able both to use the stimuli offered and to develop them further by introducing some new ideas. Simply staying with the given prompts can only earn marks in the middle band.

## General comments

Once again the great majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level and were, therefore, able to respond well to many of the wide range of tasks set in the paper. Across the seven exercises candidates were able to display a variety of practical skills, which included short answers, form-filling, note-taking, summary writing and both descriptive and discursive writing. Each of the exercises included within them differing degrees of difficulty, so differentiation was achieved throughout the paper. Consequently the whole range of marks could be awarded.

Most candidates were able to complete all questions in the allotted time. If any exercise was omitted it was normally Exercise 3D, Exercise 5 or, if time had been a constraint, Exercise 7. It was very rare indeed that both Exercise 6 and Exercise 7 were left unanswered.

## Comments on specific questions

### Exercise 1

This exercise proved to be a relatively comfortable start to the paper and was successfully completed by a large number of candidates.

(a) It was clear to most that the director only used his bicycle at the weekend.

- (b) Two details were required and were provided by most candidates, but those who missed “Apart from speed...” in the question and began their response with the lift “...it is the quickest way of getting through the city”, could not be awarded the mark.
- (c) Those who began their response as to what was unusual about the design of Elke’s bicycle with “big, black and beautiful” did not score the mark. What was unusual was that it did not have a chain.
- (d) Most chose the correct detail here and gave the transporting of the children as the use made of the trailer. Any wrong answers usually mentioned the additional front wheel, which was there for extra stability.
- (e) The correct responses highlighted the increase in motor traffic and the resultant congestion for the fact that people had just recently started to use their bicycles. Incorrect responses wrote of the quickest way to travel through town or even the flatness and the cycle lanes, the last two of which were the answer to 1b.
- (f) There was some confusion as to what caused cyclists to waste their time on arrival at the office. It was the difficulty in finding somewhere safe to leave their cycles, not the failure to provide showers or even separate rooms for men and women.

## **Exercise 2**

The text to this exercise was again quite well understood and the questions provided a fair test for all abilities so most scored well, with questions b, c, and d being particularly well answered.

- (a) Two details were required here – “1000 trees” and “in a period of 5 years”. Common errors were candidates writing “thousands of trees” and the omission of “5 years”.
- (b) Well answered. The appropriate details were quite easily found in the text.
- (c) The key issue was that Adam, after planting his own garden, moved to plant his next few trees in his friend’s garden and in others in the immediate neighbourhood.
- (d) The answer to this question was “700”, and nearly always correct.
- (e) This was not always correctly answered. Whereas many correctly noted that fruit trees were the easiest trees to plant, very few went on to add that both Adam and other people could pick the fruit from these trees when it ripened. A careless response added the ambiguous statement “...and he could pick some”, omitting the key word “fruit”.
- (f) “Parks and gardens” were the two places the gardener later avoided. Many chose incorrectly “local government compounds” and “hospital gardens” into which, at this point, he had no permission to enter.
- (g) Well answered. He took paid work to buy more trees.
- (h) If the candidate chose to lift from the text, Examiners looked for the fact that Adam liked music, but only after his love for gardening.
- (i) The response had to explain clearly that Adam would now willingly plant trees for others, provided they bought them.

## **Exercise 3**

### **Sections A-C**

The full name, telephone number, age and the expected date of arrival in Liverpool were usually correctly transcribed. The address, however, still proves to be problematic for most candidates. More often than not it is simply lifted from the text and transposed inaccurately. All that was required here was “29, Cervantes Street, Cadiz, Spain”. The form asks for the home address (including Country). Many wrote “South West Spain” for the country, others added the preposition “in” before “Cadiz”, when it was not necessary.



It is often difficult in this exercise for Examiners to decipher upper and lower case letters, and, in an exercise where upper case letters are essential for all proper nouns, marks could possibly be lost through lack of clarity in the handwriting. Centres should emphasise to all candidates how important it is to be accurate in this exercise.

### **Section D**

Two full sentences, correctly written and containing accurate information from the text are required here. Candidates often do not write in complete sentences (beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop) and where this happens full marks cannot be awarded. If a candidate puts both pieces of information into one sentence, linking the two points with “and”, then again only half the marks can be awarded, even if the information is properly presented.

### **Exercise 4**

This exercise requires in-depth reading of the text and the ability to locate the precise information relating to the individual headings. For the most part, candidates were successful under the first heading in listing what we humans would like the robots to do for us. Under the second heading candidates had to find details on what the latest robots had managed to do using the “Clever Map” development. Under this heading, there were many long responses offered which did not fit too well into the limited space provided on the answer paper. This is a scanning exercise and candidates should pay attention to the requirements of the separate headings and highlight key words in the text for each question, in order to find matching answers.

### **Exercise 5**

This exercise was answered better than in previous sessions, possibly because the information in the text was very accessible, especially in the first three paragraphs. There were some good, entertaining answers, which would have been suitable for presentation to the technology group. Only a few candidates felt confident enough to move away from the words of the text and use their own words. Where this happened, greater reward was given. The best answers understood the failings of the early robots and compared them with the advances made under the newly developed computer program.

### **Exercises 6 and 7**

Most candidates completed both exercises showing satisfactory time management. In general, the candidates’ handwriting was clear and legible with few crossings out. The whole range of marks was used and some high quality responses were noted. There was evidence again of good classroom preparation in structuring and organisation, with many using paragraphing to good effect. There was also evidence of the ability to write at some length in answers where the prompts offered were developed accurately and intelligently. Usually candidates were more comfortable with the less formal narrative format of the letter in Exercise 6 than they were with the more discursive article in Exercise 7. In both exercises Examiners looked for a sustained sense of audience and register. Where this was found greater reward could be given.

### **Exercise 6**

#### **National Celebration**

Most responses fulfilled the task, but there was just occasionally a misinterpretation of what a national celebration is. A small number described a family event; a wedding; an anniversary or a birthday of a close relative. None of these could be regarded as an event which was celebrated at a national level.

Of the three prompts offered as a basis for the candidates, the first two were regularly used. The third, however, on what the friend would find interesting, was sometimes overlooked.

Successful candidates were able to develop all three using the appropriate informal, conversational language for a letter to a friend. Such formal conventions as “In addition” or “Furthermore” would not normally find a place in such a letter. It would include phrases like “I can’t wait for you to come” or “I know you will really love...”

From a language point of view, this question presented a few difficulties for candidates who tried to hypothesise about what they could/might do or planned to do – quite a demanding linguistic exercise. For those who related what their family usually does on those occasions or what they did last year and will do again, this presented fewer problems.

## **Exercise 7**

### **Computers to replace books**

This proved a popular and accessible topic with the majority of responses coming down in favour of keeping the books in the library. A fairly common response kept the books and added some more computers to the library.

There was scope on this exercise to write more freely and to develop the prompts offered in the question.

Unfortunately, some candidates wrote a second letter and others did not give the important information that the article was in response to – a proposal from the Principal, missing a connection to the readers and to the candidate's own school/college.

The more successful pieces were those which in conclusion gave an opinion on one side or the other, following a discussion which gave the advantages and /or disadvantages of a library filled only with books or computers.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Paper 0511/21

Reading and Writing (Extended)

## Key messages

There were very few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric for each exercise, although there was evidence that some candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of specific questions, particularly in Exercises 1 and 2, and in the rubric of Exercises 5 and 7. It should be emphasised to candidates that precise reading of the wording of each question and the instructions to each exercise are vital as the first requirements to a successful answer.

There was continued improvement in the completion of *Sections A to C* in the magazine subscription form in Exercise 3, and *Section D*, the sentence writing task, was more successfully attempted than in previous sessions. More candidates are achieving the accuracy of language demanded in this exercise, combined with brief factual detail.

Exercise 4 was generally successful and answers were largely in note form, although there is still a significant number of candidates who write full sentences and exceed the space provided for the answer. Teachers should continue to use the brevity of the mark scheme as a guide to what constitutes minimal but successful answers in this exercise.

In Exercise 5, word lengths were generally well observed. The extended writing tasks of Exercises 6 and 7 were satisfactorily attempted and the topics seemed to have appealed to this group of candidates.

## General comments

Overall, the vast majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level, but a number obtained scores equivalent to F and G grades. These candidates could arguably have benefited from being entered for the Core tier, where the tasks would have been more suited to their linguistic ability.

The paper offered a range of tasks within the seven exercises, requiring the candidates to demonstrate a variety of practical skills. There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in specific questions and across the paper as a whole.

Handwriting was acceptable in the majority of cases and an increasing number of candidates used black ink. Teachers should encourage all candidates to use black or dark blue ink in future sessions. On the whole, general presentation was not as tidy as in previous sessions, with unwanted notes and, on occasion, graffiti and drawings in close proximity to the answers. In addition, candidates should not make pencil notes in the answer space and then write over these in ink. This often makes the script difficult to read. All necessary notes should be made at the side of the answer spaces and should be deleted.

Candidates generally avoided the "For Examiner's Use" column to the right of each answer page. It is permissible for candidates to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in Exercises 6 and 7, but they need to indicate clearly to the Examiners where extra work has been added. Generally candidates should be advised that throughout the paper the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required and they should not consistently exceed this.

Time management did not appear to be a problem this session and there were very few candidates who did not complete all the exercises in the paper, although some responses in Exercise 7 were brief and consisted of copying the prompts in the question.

### **Exercise 1**

This exercise was well attempted by the majority of candidates and provided a suitable introduction to the reading comprehension tasks.

- (a) This was generally well answered with the single word “annually”. Some candidates were not precise enough with the response “in the month of February”, omitting the crucial idea of “each” or “every”.
- (b) This was well attempted, although some candidates showed carelessness in their reading of the question and answered “the whole country”. The misspelling of “word” for “world” could not be credited.
- (c) This was very well answered.
- (d) This was well attempted, although some candidates omitted “theme” when referring to the performance and “quality” when referring to the music. Most chose “costumes” as one of the two details.
- (e) This was more challenging and required careful reading of the question to ensure that the correct subject was provided in the answer. There were many candidates who prefaced their response with “they cannot afford” which referred wrongly to the “samba schools”. Also, many answers did not include the essential detail of “competition”.
- (f) This question also proved to be quite challenging. Many candidates gave the brief answer “many months in advance” which did not follow the question. There needed to be some idea of “planning” or “preparation” as the subject of the answer.
- (g) This was well answered and both details were selected. Occasional misreading of the question meant that “biggest stars” was offered as an answer and this could not be given credit.
- (h) This was generally well attempted. Candidates needed to be aware that the key word of the question was “perform”. Those candidates who offered either “a square” or “sections of the city” on its own could not be awarded the mark.

### **Exercise 2**

More able candidates provided brief answers here and were able to select key detail from the text and transcribe it with precision. There are still candidates who write too much and teachers should encourage greater brevity. The answers in the mark scheme provide a good guide to the length of answer required. The interpretation of the graphical material in Question (f) was not as good as in previous sessions. Some answers in this exercise demonstrated that candidates were careless with their reading of particular questions. A range of marks was achieved on the exercise as a whole.

- (a) This was well answered overall, although “two-wheeled cart” was sometimes offered with no mention of “donkeys”.
- (b) This was generally well answered, but some candidates were imprecise when lifting “one of only a few” which did not follow the wording of the question and could not be credited.
- (c) Some candidates omitted the important detail “more than” and offered “two decades” which was factually inaccurate.
- (d) A significant number of candidates were imprecise with their reading of the question and selected “circle bookshelves with great excitement” which was not their behaviour when the stories were being read.
- (e) This question required two details with a mark for each correct answer. Many candidates were awarded both marks here but some were careless with the reading of the question and provided an example of a health factor as one of the answers and so could only score a maximum of one mark.



- (f) Candidates needed to refer to the graphical element and this question proved to be very discriminating. It clearly required an answer which referred to the “most money”. Many candidates offered “other libraries” because they selected the largest number on the diagram. This referred, however, to the number of books and not financial donations.
- (g) This required careful reading of the text and the selection of precise detail. Many candidates could not be credited here because the answer lacked the key word “almost”. The response “there were no libraries” was not correct.
- (h) This was well attempted and most candidates conveyed the idea of “training for librarians”.
- (i) This was very well attempted and both options were selected.
- (j) This question proved to be a very good discriminator. Most candidates were awarded at least one mark in the section requiring information on the children’s “appearance”. However, the concept of “attitude” was less well understood and there were many answers which gave examples of behaviour, such as “come shouting and racing down every road and path”. In addition, answers were often placed under the incorrect heading and could not be credited.

Centres are reminded that this final question in Exercise 2 is more challenging and is designed to differentiate between the most able candidates. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because key information may appear at any point in the text.

### **Exercise 3**

Candidates continue to be well prepared for the specific demands of this exercise which requires application of the conventions of form-filling and total accuracy in spelling. *Sections A, B and C* of the magazine subscription form were designed to be completed with brief details. Candidates answered these sections well, and in *Section D* there was a substantial improvement in applying the skills required for precise sentence writing.

As a general comment, candidates need to be reminded of the importance of good, clear handwriting throughout the paper. This is especially so in this exercise where correct spelling is crucial and where capital letters need to be clearly formed when using proper nouns in names and addresses.

### **Magazine Subscription Form**

Generally, candidates were precise in the first three sections of this task and scored well.

#### **Section A**

Almost all candidates were successful with circling the correct magazine title and ticking the number of issues. Various correct answers were supplied in response to where the advertisement was seen.

#### **Section B**

The majority of candidates were successful with the name of the subscriber, the email address and phone number as well as the name of the school. There continues to be uncertainty about how to delete “YES/NO” and some candidates often conveyed the opposite answer. Centres are advised to concentrate on practising this particular aspect with their candidates.

A number of candidates were careless with the reading of the text and overlooked the detail that Sven’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday was “a few weeks away”. His correct age was therefore 16 and not 17. Most candidates had problems with the address and either included extra detail or failed to remove the preposition “at” which appeared in the text.

#### **Section C**

This was a more challenging section because candidates had to pay careful attention to the detailed information on the form. The name of the person paying was generally correctly spelt and the “Other” box was successfully selected. Most candidates wrote the single word “grandmother”, which was a sufficient response, but some overlooked the need to change from the third person in the text to the first person on the form. Thus the answer “his grandmother” could not be credited. Occasionally, candidates offered the

incorrect amount payable but it was encouraging to note that most answers included the detail of “Swedish Krona” or “SK”. As a guideline, where figures are required in any exercise on this paper, they should always be qualified with detail of the unit of measurement such as “kilograms”, “dollars”, “kilometres” and so on.

### **Section D**

There was an improvement in the answers to this section compared to previous sessions. There were many candidates who composed a sentence which was well punctuated and accurately spelt. This task remains very challenging for all candidates because of the grammatical precision required. Firstly, it must be stressed that if candidates are outside the prescribed word limits for the sentence then they automatically score zero, as stated in the mark scheme. In this session, this requirement was much better observed than in the past, but there were still candidates who wrote in excess of 20 words. The majority of candidates scored 1 mark overall and there were different errors which meant that full credit could not be given. The most common mistakes were in the use of verbs. Candidates correctly used the first person pronoun but neglected to change the verb, for example “I prefers...” There were also errors of tense (“choose” instead of “chose”) and non-completion of the phrasal verb (“finding” instead of “finding out”). There was also some carelessness in the spelling of “nationalities” and “societies”. Candidates should also be reminded that they are required to end the sentence with a full-stop.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the information for writing this sentence will always be found in the stimulus text. Occasionally, candidates supply their own personal details or create fictitious answers. This section is not intended to be a creative writing task.

### **Exercise 4**

Many candidates were able to show enough understanding of the text and extract the relevant information to score well here. Overall, the exercise produced good differentiation, with maximum marks being obtained by only a few of the more able candidates. The number of candidates who continue to write full sentences is diminishing and most answers are becoming briefer and in note form. At the same time, the notes should not be so short that key words are omitted. The bullet points and the length of line should be a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers here. If candidates’ answers extend well beyond the space provided then they have arguably written too much.

### **Design features of the flying car**

Key points were well recognised. All of the six possible content details were used, with the first two points being the most popular. Less able candidates had difficulties in separating the same content point. For example, candidates often included both “wings fold up automatically” and “15 seconds to switch between flying and driving” as different ideas on different lines. In addition, there was imprecise reading of the section heading and the key detail of “design features” was overlooked on occasion. This resulted in answers which referred simply to the fact that the flying car could take off from any airfield. Other answers could not be credited because key detail was not supplied. For example, some candidates did not include the key word “cockpit” or make any reference to the “screen” when selecting the detail about weather patterns.

### **Problems faced by the potential buyer.**

There were fewer options in this section and most candidates were successful with their choices although imprecision with the wording meant that some answers could not be credited. For example, there had to be some idea of “needing” a pilot’s licence or “the difficulty of obtaining” insurance for the answer to be credited. The responses of “insurance” and “pilot’s licence” in themselves were imprecise and ambiguous. A few candidates offered “old” and “retired” which were not problems exclusive to people intending to buy the flying car. Candidates selected all possible answers in equal measure.

### **Benefits of the flying car compared to driving**

This section was more challenging because there were only two options. Most candidates were awarded 1 mark because they successfully recognised the detail about the reduction in journey times. Very few scored 2 marks here because there was repetition of the same idea, “journey times reduced” and “quicker travelling from city to city”. In addition, a number of candidates supplied answers under this heading which were examples of design features or problems for the buyer and so should have been included in earlier sections.

## **Exercise 5**

The summary proved to be a good discriminating exercise and there was a range of marks awarded. Candidates needed to write a summary of the roles and responsibilities of the keepers of elephants in a recreational park in Thailand. The majority of candidates completed the summary within the prescribed word limit. More able candidates selected precise detail and wrote with a good sense of order, firstly detailing the keepers' responsibilities in a general sense and then focusing on their role during the actual painting session. There was good use of appropriate linking words but fewer candidates considered the fact that two paragraphs, rather than one, would have given the piece a better balance.

Less able candidates wrote in excess of 120 words, often as a result of careless reading of the rubric. They concentrated initially on general statements about the Tropical Garden in Thailand and the working conditions of the elephants themselves. Additionally, there were needlessly detailed descriptions of the mechanics of the painting process, commenting on vertical lines, horizontal lines and making spots. These candidates hardly addressed the key details about the roles and responsibilities of the keepers before the 120 word limit. Candidates are advised as always to read carefully the wording of the question and to concentrate solely on those areas of the text which are relevant to the task.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range. There were some careless errors in spelling with "elephants' trucks" rather than "trunks" being one of the most common. More candidates attempted to use their own words and expressions. Centres are reminded that higher marks of three and four for language are available for those candidates who make an attempt to paraphrase with the use of noun and adjective synonyms. It must be emphasised that candidates need to exercise care when using their own words to ensure that the sense and meaning of the content is not significantly altered.

## **Exercise 6**

### **General comments**

In general, this exercise was successfully attempted. The word limit was well observed and there was little evidence of short work.

The main area of concern was in the ability to sustain a whole piece in the correct tense. The main tense for the story was the simple past but there were many instances of mixing present and past tenses within paragraphs and even within sentences. These are areas that need to be improved in order to raise the language mark above the "satisfactory" band. Basic punctuation was sound, although there are still many candidates who substitute commas for full stops throughout the whole piece. There were some candidates who did not use capital letters, thus making one uninterrupted sentence on occasion.

There are three prompts in Exercise 6 and, arguably, each one deserves a paragraph to give the whole piece appropriate balance. More able candidates used paragraphs to good purpose and they provided an effective division between the different ideas that the candidates needed to address in the bullet points. There was often a good attempt to supply a suitable introduction and brief concluding statement, in an informal register. Overall there was a good sense of form and shape to these letters. Less able candidates wrote one continuous paragraph, with little attempt to supply detail about the activity or what they learnt from the experience.

Examiners welcome the use of more ambitious and unusual language, but candidates need to be aware that pre-learnt phrases and expressions do not always work in certain contexts. Some candidates fill their writing with a wide array of inappropriate and poorly chosen idioms. Stock phrases and proverbs should not be included for their own sake. Colloquialisms need to fit the situation and should be chosen with care and not used excessively. In an attempt to use extravagant language, meaning is sometimes obscured.

There were also some examples of abbreviated text language and offensive language in this particular exercise. Both are considered inappropriate for inclusion in a piece written for an examination and Centres should make candidates aware that their use can have a detrimental effect on the mark awarded for language.

## **Exercise 6**

### **Life without television**

In Exercise 6, in addition to the bullet prompts, there is a visual guide to help candidates when selecting content for their writing. It must be emphasised that candidates are always free to choose their own material and those that do often produce pieces which have greater originality and ambition. Candidates must, of course, address and develop the three bullet prompts to achieve the higher bands on the grade criteria for content. In addition, candidates should convey a good sense of purpose and engage the reader's interest. Examiners are looking to reward those candidates who can demonstrate a more vital style and provide some innovative detail.

In this exercise, most candidates made a satisfactory attempt to cover all three bullet points and work was of a good length. Examiners were looking to credit candidates who initially explained their reaction to the problem of the breakdown of the television, and then used their imagination to supply detail about how they spent their time away from the TV. Finally, there was a requirement to comment on what they learnt from the experience. More able candidates wrote with a sense of frustration and anger when they learnt that they would be deprived of their television for two weeks, and there was a good variety of adjectives and expressions to convey their feelings. However, many of the descriptions of how the television broke down were very predictable and often involved a sibling playing with a ball in the house. There was also evidence that some candidates did not understand fully the significance of "broken down" as opposed to simply "broken". Some candidates gave lengthy descriptions of the incident, which meant that the second and third bullet prompts were covered in far less detail, resulting in an unbalanced piece of writing. In general, both the second and third prompts were safe but not exceptional. Less successful candidates made little attempt to describe their alternative activities in any detail, tending to rely on simple statements about joining football clubs and playing chess without any development.

## **Exercise 7**

### **General comments**

Most candidates were able to adopt a more formal tone and register for the final discursive exercise. There was a selection of four prompts – two for and two against the proposal in the title – to guide candidates. Less able candidates tended to stay very close to these cues, at worst copying them directly with little or no development or personal contribution. More able candidates expanded on the prompts and showed some independence of thought. They also achieved some variety of style by, for example, the use of rhetorical questions. It is recommended that candidates are selective in their choice of prompts, perhaps one for and one against, and attempt to develop those in some depth rather than giving superficial coverage to all four. There needs to be evidence that candidates can develop arguments and persuade the reader of their convictions in order to gain access to the higher mark bands. Many candidates gave a balanced view and considered both sides of the argument with good use of paragraphs and linking words to support this. Word limits were well observed and it appears as though time constraints at this stage of the paper were not a problem for the majority of candidates. There were a few candidates who had obviously left themselves short of time and resorted to copying the prompts with little or no individual comment.

## **Exercise 7**

### **There is too much pressure on young people to lead a healthy life nowadays.**

More able candidates responded with a range of ideas on this topic and there was a good balance of argument, both for and against. They were able to expand convincingly on the subject and produced pieces that were persuasive. Generally, there was agreement that young people are under a good deal of pressure, particularly from the media and their portrayal of certain role models, to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The opinion of the majority was that young people can learn from others, especially the older generation, and should accept advice rather than reject it where it is a matter of healthy living. There were many commendable attempts to intersperse the writing with rhetorical questions and to provide an introduction and concluding opinion. This gave a sense of cohesion to many of the pieces.

A number of candidates were careless in their reading of the rubric heading and produced pieces which were largely off the topic. They considered stress in general terms, with particular reference to examinations and parental and peer group pressure. Less able candidates made no mention of the pressure applied to young people to stay healthy and tended to offer general advice about health, in particular the importance of a balanced diet with fruit and vegetables and regular exercise. This interpretation missed the real point of the



argument and there was a sense that certain candidates had reproduced a previously written piece about health issues in general. This approach should be avoided because such pieces do not address the question directly and are often of limited relevance.

From a language point of view, more able candidates used paragraphs effectively to divide their argument, especially when offering two different approaches to the topic. On the other hand, many candidates had difficulty in distinguishing between “health”, “healthy” and “healthily” and often used the adjective instead of the noun.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Paper 0511/22

Reading and Writing (Extended)

## Key messages

It is vital that candidates apply precision in their reading of specific questions. This was necessary particularly in Exercises 1, 2 and 3c, and the rubric and prompts of Exercises 6 and 7. It is important that candidates read the wording of each question and the instructions to each exercise carefully as the first requirement for a successful answer.

In the completion of the form in Exercise 3, most candidates adhered to the conventions, using capital letters. A number of candidates did not provide the address in the correct format. In *Section C*, a few candidates did not abide by the word limit. Many fulfilled the requirements of sentence construction.

In Exercise 4 most answers were sufficiently brief. Very occasionally necessary detail was omitted and sometimes a repeat answer was given for the second or third bullet point. This is something candidates should consider when giving their responses.

In the summary for Exercise 5, quite a number of candidates exceeded the word limit. Many candidates attempted to use their own words and give a more coherent, cohesive summary-style piece of writing, whilst referring sufficiently closely to the salient points in the original text. Sometimes points were repeated.

The extended writing tasks of Exercises 6 and 7 were well attempted generally and of appropriate length. Candidates were able to respond well to the topics, which seemed to interest them.

## General comments

Most candidates were correctly entered at this level. A few candidates for whom the extended tier was very challenging might have found the core paper more appropriate to their linguistic ability.

The paper offered a range of tasks within the seven exercises, requiring the candidates to use a variety of practical skills. There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in specific questions and across the paper as a whole. There were only a few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric for each question.

Handwriting and general presentation were acceptable in the majority of cases. Candidates should be encouraged to use black or dark blue ink. Generally they should also be advised that the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required. It is permissible for them to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in Exercises 6 and 7, but it is important that they indicate clearly to the Examiner where extra work has been completed. On the whole, time management did not appear to be a problem and very few candidates were unable to complete all the exercises in the paper.

## Exercise 1

In this kind of exercise, candidates need to answer precisely and after locating the relevant section of text, should read enough to ensure they have found the full, correct answer. Exercise 1 was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates, providing an appropriate introduction to the reading comprehension tasks.

- (a) This was well answered by nearly all candidates.
- (b) Many candidates generally gave appropriate answers, supplying two distinct details from the possible seven available. A few did not read the question carefully enough and lifted 'it is the



quickest way of getting through the city', when the question stipulated 'apart from speed'. Some gave 'healthy' instead of 'healthy exercise', thus not supplying the detail required.

- (c) This was well answered. A small number of candidates focused on Jan's, rather than Elke's bike and gave 'an additional front wheel'.
- (d) This was well answered by nearly all candidates.
- (e) A number of candidates responded correctly. Some candidates gave 'it is very flat' or 'there are cycle lanes almost everywhere'. They did not notice 'recently', one of the key words in the question, and connect it to 'within the last few years' in the text.
- (f) This was well answered by nearly all candidates.
- (g) Most candidates attempted to provide two details and nearly all of them gave 'showers'. For the second possible detail, many lifted, 'separate rooms for males and females', omitting the important information, 'where all of them can change'. This altered the meaning and could not be credited.

## **Exercise 2**

Some of the questions in this exercise were challenging for candidates. Answers given were generally of appropriate brevity. The graphical material was well interpreted. A full range of marks was achieved on the exercise as a whole and it proved good for differentiation. As in Exercise 1, candidates need to be precise in their answers and to ensure that responses follow on from the question. When the relevant section of the text has been located, it is important that candidates read enough to satisfy themselves that they have found the correct answer and understand reference words such as pronouns correctly. This was generally the case, with a few exceptions.

- (a) This question was generally well answered. A few candidates omitted 'in five years', which was essential, and others lifted incorrect ideas such as 'all the gardeners in the world work together' or 'plant a rain forest'.
- (b) This question was very well answered by nearly all candidates.
- (c) This question was well answered. Occasionally, candidates gave 'all over town', which did not respond to the part of the question referring to 'the next few trees'.
- (d) Nearly all candidates read the graph accurately. A few gave the 2011 figure of 400.
- (e) This question was quite well answered and most candidates selected at least one correct detail. In a number of instances, candidates' responses did not connect appropriately with the question. They lifted 'he can pick some for himself', which would in fact refer to fruit trees rather than fruit, making this an incorrect answer.
- (f) This was well answered by the majority of candidates. A few candidates either did not understand 'avoid' in the question or the information in the text as their response included 'local government compound' or 'hospital garden'.
- (g) This was very well attempted by most candidates.
- (h) Most candidates gave a correct response to this question.
- (i) This question was quite well answered. Some candidates were too brief in their answers, giving 'plant trees' and omitting the idea that other people had bought/owned them or that Adam was not providing them.
- (j) Many candidates scored well on this question, specifying at least three or four relevant details. A few candidates did not read the rubric with sufficient care and gave details unconnected with Adam's home life, referring more to his tree planting activities and what he does generally to help the environment.



It may be helpful for Centres to be aware that this final question in Exercise 2 is global and is designed to differentiate. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because the answers may appear at any point in the text.

### **Exercise 3**

Candidates had been generally well prepared for the particular demands of this exercise, which requires the application of the conventions of form-filling and total accuracy in spelling, the use of capital letters and punctuation, where appropriate. *Sections A* and *B* of the application form are designed to be completed with brief answers, and there are instructions to tick, circle or delete as necessary. Candidates generally covered these sections well. A few candidates did not follow the instructions and underlined, deleted or circled inappropriately. Nearly all candidates completed the form appropriately as Alphonse Gaillard.

#### **Accident Report Form**

##### ***Section A***

Most candidates successfully provided the details required. There were occasional spelling mistakes and incorrect entries. For example, 'Mont' was sometimes spelt 'Mount'. It is important that candidates check their spellings against those in the text to avoid losing marks in this way. A number of candidates gave the address in the incorrect format and were unaware that the use of prepositions such as 'at' and 'in' are inappropriate and cannot be credited. Capital letters as in the stimulus text are required and a few candidates did not use these.

##### ***Section B***

This section was generally well answered. Overall, many candidates used ticks, circles and deletions as specified. This has not always been the case and crosses have been used. If one answer has been deleted, it is not necessary to circle the alternative, though marks are not lost for this. A few candidates misspelt 'April' as 'Aprill' and gave the number of people involved as 'one'. For details of the injury, it was necessary to specify 'leg' rather than 'limb', which might have referred to an arm, and not all candidates did this. An indication that the injury was severe was also required, so 'injured leg' was insufficient. The cause of the injury was generally correct but misspellings such as 'severly' or 'montain' meant that the answer could not be credited. A few candidates ticked 'up to 3 hours', giving the journey time rather than the seven and a half hours necessary to complete the rescue operation.

##### ***Section C***

In this section, candidates are required to be within the prescribed word limit, use proper sentence construction with no errors of punctuation, grammar or spelling and give relevant details according to information in the stimulus text. Candidates lost marks if these conventions were not adhered to. A few candidates answered with two sentences and in this case no marks could be awarded. Occasionally, the pronoun 'they' instead of 'we' was used inappropriately to refer to the team of which Alphonse Gaillard was a member. This made the answer incorrect. Candidates should also be aware that the information for writing this sentence will always be found in the stimulus text. In their responses, some candidates referred to action before reaching the scene of the accident, which could not be credited, and a few candidates gave details which were not relevant to the task.

### **Exercise 4**

Most candidates responded well to this note-taking exercise and many gained five points or more. Responses tended to be of appropriate length. Brief notes are required, although it is important that essential details such as verbs or adjectives that add to or clarify meaning are included, and that points are completed. Under the last two headings, some candidates gave repeat points which could not be credited

#### **What we would like robots to do for us**

Most candidates offered all three bullet points correctly. A few gave 'guide us to our destinations' omitting 'holiday', which was considered essential information.

### **Weaknesses of the older generation of robots**

A number of candidates scored well in this section, making two correct points. Occasionally, candidates wrote 'confused by changes', omitting the 'minor' or 'insignificant' idea. Some candidates also repeated this point by giving the alternative 'unable to function properly', so this could not be credited a second time. Candidates who offered the point 'unable to distinguish between permanent and temporary features' sometimes omitted 'and temporary', thereby making the answer incorrect.

### **What the latest robots have managed to do using *Clever Map***

This section was quite well answered but proved challenging. There were six possible details for candidates to choose from but some only gave one or two correct points. Some gave 'accept the movement of objects' and 'can dismiss the absence of vehicles or objects' as two distinct points when they are the same idea. Sometimes a point was not completed, for example, 'use a set of rules' instead of 'use a set of rules to deal with changes'. Candidates need to ensure that the notes they give supply different points, and the points are clear and make sense in relation to the heading.

### **Exercise 5**

Many candidates performed quite well on this exercise and had been generally well prepared in the required summary skills, reading the rubric and the requirements of the exercise carefully. Candidates were asked to write a summary of what advice candidates are given in order to stay happy and healthy at exam time. There were eleven possible content points. There were some candidates who lost marks because they exceeded the word limit significantly. They also focused initially on the academic preparation for exams, giving a number of repeated points, so some relevant points could not be awarded because they were not within the 120 word limit. A few candidates did not pick up sufficiently on the language of advice in the text, expressed through the imperative, which denoted a number of relevant points. Many candidates were able to identify at least four key content points and a number of candidates gained full marks for the content aspect of the exercise.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range. It was encouraging that many candidates attempted to use their own words, which suggested that Centres have been practising the use of alternative words and expressions. Higher marks of three and four for language are available for those candidates who make an attempt to use their own words, so practice with verb, noun and adjective synonyms is recommended.

### **Exercises 6 and 7: general comments**

In general, a number of candidates produced letters and articles which were satisfactory or better in terms of both language and content in Exercises 6 and 7. Length was generally within the prescribed word limits and rarely fell short of this. Candidates are not penalised for exceeding the recommended word length but short answers are unlikely to be awarded a satisfactory mark for content, and the language mark may also be affected since the range of language will be limited.

Many candidates had a general understanding of how to structure and organise their work. Paragraphing, an appropriate introduction and ending were often in evidence. Good organisation is crucial to the quality of what is produced. The degree of cohesion and coherence affects the extent to which ideas are well developed and the reader's interest is engaged.

There were a number of candidates who wrote with a good sense of purpose and audience, using turns of phrase and precise vocabulary but who made some fairly basic grammatical errors. Such candidates are credited for the positive aspects of their writing but their work would be enhanced by improved accuracy with regard to subject/verb agreement and the ability to sustain a piece of writing using correct tenses throughout. Improvement in these areas would raise the language mark above the 'satisfactory' band. Some candidates demonstrated good control of language, showing variety of structure and length, which meant their mark for language was in the higher bands. Basic punctuation was generally sound, although occasionally commas were substituted for full stops and accompanied by a lack of capital letters, sometimes confusing the reader.

### **Exercise 6**

In this exercise, candidates must address and develop the bullet point prompts and the extent to which this is done will determine which band is achieved in the criteria for content. For a mark in a higher band, candidates should convey a good sense of purpose and engage the reader's interest. Examiners are



looking to reward those candidates who can demonstrate a more vital style and provide some innovative detail.

### **National celebration**

This was well attempted as the subject seemed to appeal to candidates, and they were able to supply quite detailed descriptions. A few candidates focused on more local or occasionally family celebrations but most referred to a national festivity. Many candidates responded using a satisfactory or effective register and tone. Most candidates addressed all three bullet points, often expanding well on the celebration and the family's involvement. What the friend might find interesting was sometimes implicit and it would have been more effective to make direct reference to the bullet point, addressing it more fully. In terms of language, many candidates did their best to use a range of connectives and include more idiomatic words and phrases. Sometimes these were not quite appropriate. Candidates are keen to demonstrate their repertoire of language and it is important that this is appropriate to the context.

### **Exercise 7**

In this exercise candidates discuss a topic for a specific target audience. It is essential that candidates read the rubric carefully and then refer to the prompts, which are there to provide a stimulus for the candidates' thoughts on the subject. The argument should make reference to the situation, assisted by the prompts. To obtain a mark in one of the higher bands, candidates should use the prompts by expanding upon the ideas and expressing these in their own words, including other perspectives on the topic. There needs to be evidence that candidates can develop arguments and persuade the reader of their convictions. They should also use an appropriate tone and register which will stimulate their readers' interest in the topic.

### **Computers to replace books**

The candidates were expected to write an article for their school magazine discussing the impact of replacing all the books in their school library with a suite of computers. There was a selection of four guiding prompts - two for and two against the topic under consideration in the exercise. Many candidates discussed the question fully, elaborating on their ideas and views and providing examples and evidence to support these, thus demonstrating some independence of thought. They expressed strong opinions about how the library might be changed or organised. A number of candidates did not fully explore the advantages of computers over books in the library context, so the argument was not as effective. Some focused on the internet versus books. A few candidates relied more heavily on the cues, occasionally copying them directly and contributing few of their own ideas, which meant the content and language mark could not be in the higher bands. Use was made of rhetorical questions, emphasis and other devices to achieve a more precise and engaging style. There was often good use of paragraphs and linking words to organise ideas. Word limits were well observed and it appears that time constraints at this stage of the paper were not a problem for the vast majority of candidates.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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**Paper 0511/31**  
**Listening (Core)**

## **Key messages**

Teachers should continue to stress to candidates the need to keep answers brief and relevant. Most candidates gave the required, brief answers with only a few candidates trying to 'play it safe' by offering lengthy responses; on many occasions this proved an unsuccessful tactic, since they sometimes gave incorrect answers first, which negated the mark. If the extra information was merely irrelevant, it was ignored, but of course this meant the candidate had wasted valuable thinking time during the exam.

Teachers should also encourage candidates to attempt all questions and have an informed guess at spelling, even if they are not very familiar with the words they want to use. They could also try to express the ideas in their own words, if they cannot attempt to spell the required answer but understand its meaning.

As in previous sessions, totally accurate spelling was not demanded, in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' principle underlying this component. Phonetic attempts at the answer were accepted, unless these resulted in a new word with a different meaning being created. In addition, candidates were allowed the mark if the new word they had created was unusual or highly unfamiliar.

## **General comments**

There was a good distribution of marks achieved by the candidates in this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively between them. All candidates, including the weaker ones, were able to attempt nearly all the questions, with very few spaces being left blank. This suggests that the candidates were mostly familiar with the paper and what was expected of them, had been sufficiently well prepared and had found it, on the whole, accessible.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Questions 1 – 6**

Candidates generally responded well to this first section on the paper.

#### **Question 1**

Nearly all candidates found this a straightforward opening question, with most giving 'website' as the answer, but some offering the actual website address correctly. 'Webside' was accepted as a reasonable phonetic attempt at the word. If 'website' was given correctly, but was followed by an incorrect attempt at the website address, the mark was still awarded.

#### **Question 2**

This question also appeared to be straightforward for most candidates who were familiar with the word 'heavy'. A common error was to give 'heave' which was another word and, anyway, was not an acceptable phonetic attempt.

#### **Question 3**

This question posed the most difficulty in this first section. Many candidates were not able to recognise the phrase 'first aid'; the most common error was to give the phrase 'first day training', which did not really make any sense. Only the most able candidates gained this mark, and as such the question proved a fair discriminator.

#### Question 4

Question 4 was reasonably straightforward for most candidates, who offered either one of the correct responses – ‘ice on line’ or ‘(using) a different route’. Examiners were flexible here, allowing ‘different line’ and accepting ‘rout’ or ‘roud’ for ‘route’. The words ‘road’ and ‘root’ were not allowed, nor any vague response such as ‘because of ice’.

#### Question 5

This question was found to be quite challenging by many candidates, and again it tended to be the most able who could access the mark. It was made more challenging by the need for both elements to be correct for one mark. Thus, some candidates gave either ‘band practice’ or ‘concert’, but could not be awarded a mark. Perhaps surprisingly, ‘band’ posed considerable problems, with ‘bam’, ‘ban’, ‘bang’ and ‘bound’ being the most common offerings. ‘Concert’ also posed difficulties, as it did not seem to be a familiar word for some candidates, but phonetic attempts such as ‘conssert’ were allowed.

#### Question 6

The final question in this section was accessible, and discriminated well, with the less able candidates often being able to pick up one mark for ‘before 8 am’, as this could be accepted as an answer for either part of the question. It was to the candidates’ advantage that each part was allocated one mark. The most common errors were to mishear the time, perhaps offering ‘before 8 pm’, or ‘at 8 am’. ‘8’ alone was not enough as it was ambiguous – there had to be some reference to ‘morning’ or ‘am’. ‘Express’ was unfamiliar to many, but again phonetic attempts were allowed, such as ‘exprest’. ‘Experts’ was occasionally given but not credited.

#### Question 7: Orchard Keeper

This exercise required the candidates to complete notes after listening to an interview, by inserting missing words into blank spaces. It was generally competently done, with most candidates being well prepared for the examination and understanding exactly what was needed.

**7(i)** This question required both elements, ‘fruit’ and ‘nut’ to be correct for the mark to be awarded. Less able candidates often got only one of the two correct, the most common error being to mishear ‘nut’ as ‘not’, which could not gain credit, being another word with a very different meaning.

**7(ii)** This was another question which required two correct answers for the mark to be awarded. This proved slightly easier than 7(i), possibly because although ‘owls’ was unfamiliar, candidates often gave acceptable phonetic alternatives.

**7 (iii)** The third item also required two correct responses for the mark, and it proved to be the most challenging item in this section. Many did not know the word ‘mushrooms’ but Examiners were lenient, accepting reasonable phonetic attempts. ‘Snakes’ also proved difficult for some candidates, so that the most common misspellings were ‘snaks’ or ‘sneaks’ or ‘snicks’ – none of which could be allowed the mark.

**7 (iv)** This was reasonably well answered, with phonetic attempts at ‘community’ receiving credit. ‘Communité’ was not allowed, however, as the ‘ee’ sound at the end of the word was a requirement.

**7 (v)** The final item was fairly well answered. Examiners allowed synonyms for both ‘local’ (‘village’) and ‘maintain’ (‘run’, ‘care for’, ‘look after’). They did not accept ‘plant’ or ‘support’, as these were actions of the orchard keeper, not of the local people who just had to keep the orchards going after the orchard keeper had set them up.

#### Question 8: Steam Car Challenge

This question also required the candidates to complete notes after listening to an interview, by inserting missing words. It was generally well done. As in Question 7, most candidates showed they had been well prepared for the examination and understood exactly what was needed. Overall, this question proved slightly easier for the candidates than Question 7.

**8 (i)** This proved to be a highly accessible opening item. Candidates mostly understood they had to give a date and correctly gave the year 1906. Very few attempted to write it in words.

**8 (ii)** Another straightforward question, the only difficulty for some being the spelling of ‘tons’ / ‘tonnes’. There was some flexibility here, with both ‘tuns’ and ‘tones’ being allowed, despite being new words with different meanings. ‘Tunes’, ‘tans’ were not allowed though they appeared quite often.



**8 (iii)** The third item posed few problems, apart from the occasional misspelling of 'carbon'.

**8 (iv)** This was more challenging, but it appeared to be a good discriminator, with more able candidates being able to identify and write down both the target words – 'average' and 'opposite'. Examiners accepted many unusual but convincing phonetic attempts, e.g. 'avveridge' and 'obbosit'.

**8 (v)** 'Desert' appeared to be a familiar word for most candidates and this proved to be probably the easiest question for them in this section; the most common error was to spell it as 'dessert'. 'Dessert' and 'desert' were considered words which candidates of this examination should be familiar with, so no mark was awarded for 'dessert'.

**8 (vi)** Another straightforward item for most candidates who listened out for the correct number – 231. Other numbers were sometimes given, suggesting the candidates needed to listen very carefully to details in the interview in order to select the correct number.

**8 (vii)** Candidates found this item straightforward. Examiners were again flexible with the spelling of 'museum', accepting phonetic approximations such as 'mueseam' and 'muzeum'. Examiners needed to see an attempt to include the extra syllables at the end in '...eum'.

### **Question 9 and Question 10**

These questions required candidates to indicate whether a statement is 'True' or 'False' by ticking the appropriate box. The two questions had very similar results: nearly all candidates were well practised and attempted the questions satisfactorily. Many of the most able scored full marks, and even many weaker candidates were able to score half marks or more. This suggests that the candidates were able to understand the interviews and access the questions reasonably well. A few candidates left blank boxes when they would have had a chance of being correct by just guessing. There were a few instances where candidates had not been clear about amendments to their answers, or had left both boxes ticked. Candidates need to be reminded of the need to make their answers absolutely clear for the Examiners.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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**Paper 0511/32**  
**Listening (Core)**

## **Key messages**

Teachers should continue to stress to candidates the need to keep answers brief and relevant. Most candidates gave the required, brief answers with only a few candidates trying to 'play it safe' by offering lengthy responses; on many occasions this proved an unsuccessful tactic, since they sometimes gave incorrect answers first, which negated the mark. If the extra information was merely irrelevant, it was ignored, but of course this meant the candidate had wasted valuable thinking time during the exam.

Teachers should also encourage candidates to attempt all questions and have an informed guess at spelling, even if they are not very familiar with the words they want to use. They could also try to express the ideas in their own words, if they cannot attempt to spell the required answer but understand its meaning.

As in previous sessions, totally accurate spelling was not demanded, in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' principle underlying this component. Phonetic attempts at the answer were accepted, unless these resulted in a new word with a different meaning being created. In addition, candidates were allowed the mark if the new word they had created was unusual or highly unfamiliar.

## **General comments**

There was a good distribution of marks achieved by the candidates in this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively between them. All candidates, including the weaker ones, were able to attempt nearly all the questions, with very few spaces being left blank. This suggests that the candidates were mostly familiar with the paper and what was expected of them, had been sufficiently well prepared and had found it, on the whole, accessible.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Questions 1 – 6**

Candidates generally responded well to this first section on the paper.

#### **Question 1**

Nearly all candidates found this a straightforward opening question, with most giving 'website' as the answer, but some offering the actual website address correctly. 'Webside' was accepted as a reasonable phonetic attempt at the word. If 'website' was given correctly, but was followed by an incorrect attempt at the website address, the mark was still awarded.

#### **Question 2**

This question also appeared to be straightforward for most candidates who were familiar with the word 'heavy'. A common error was to give 'heave' which was another word and, anyway, was not an acceptable phonetic attempt.

#### **Question 3**

This question posed the most difficulty in this first section. Many candidates were not able to recognise the phrase 'first aid'; the most common error was to give the phrase 'first day training', which did not really make any sense. Only the most able candidates gained this mark, and as such the question proved a fair discriminator.



#### Question 4

Question 4 was reasonably straightforward for most candidates, who offered either one of the correct responses – ‘ice on line’ or ‘(using) a different route’. Examiners were flexible here, allowing ‘different line’ and accepting ‘rout’ or ‘roud’ for ‘route’. The words ‘road’ and ‘root’ were not allowed, nor any vague response such as ‘because of ice’.

#### Question 5

This question was found to be quite challenging by many candidates, and again it tended to be the most able who could access the mark. It was made more challenging by the need for both elements to be correct for one mark. Thus, some candidates gave either ‘band practice’ or ‘concert’, but could not be awarded a mark. Perhaps surprisingly, ‘band’ posed considerable problems, with ‘bam’, ‘ban’, ‘bang’ and ‘bound’ being the most common offerings. ‘Concert’ also posed difficulties, as it did not seem to be a familiar word for some candidates, but phonetic attempts such as ‘conssert’ were allowed.

#### Question 6

The final question in this section was accessible, and discriminated well, with the less able candidates often being able to pick up one mark for ‘before 8 am’, as this could be accepted as an answer for either part of the question. It was to the candidates’ advantage that each part was allocated one mark. The most common errors were to mishear the time, perhaps offering ‘before 8 pm’, or ‘at 8 am’. ‘8’ alone was not enough as it was ambiguous – there had to be some reference to ‘morning’ or ‘am’. ‘Express’ was unfamiliar to many, but again phonetic attempts were allowed, such as ‘exprest’. ‘Experts’ was occasionally given but not credited.

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**7(ii)** This was another question which required two correct answers for the mark to be awarded. This proved slightly easier than 7(i), possibly because although ‘owls’ was unfamiliar, candidates often gave acceptable phonetic alternatives.

**7 (iii)** The third item also required two correct responses for the mark, and it proved to be the most challenging item in this section. Many did not know the word ‘mushrooms’ but Examiners were lenient, accepting reasonable phonetic attempts. ‘Snakes’ also proved difficult for some candidates, so that the most common misspellings were ‘snaks’ or ‘sneaks’ or ‘snicks’ – none of which could be allowed the mark.

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**7 (v)** The final item was fairly well answered. Examiners allowed synonyms for both ‘local’ (‘village’) and ‘maintain’ (‘run’, ‘care for’, ‘look after’). They did not accept ‘plant’ or ‘support’, as these were actions of the orchard keeper, not of the local people who just had to keep the orchards going after the orchard keeper had set them up.

#### Question 8: Steam Car Challenge

This question also required the candidates to complete notes after listening to an interview, by inserting missing words. It was generally well done. As in Question 7, most candidates showed they had been well prepared for the examination and understood exactly what was needed. Overall, this question proved slightly easier for the candidates than Question 7.

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**8 (ii)** Another straightforward question, the only difficulty for some being the spelling of ‘tons’ / ‘tonnes’. There was some flexibility here, with both ‘tuns’ and ‘tones’ being allowed, despite being new words with different meanings. ‘Tunes’, ‘tans’ were not allowed though they appeared quite often.

**8 (iii)** The third item posed few problems, apart from the occasional misspelling of 'carbon'.

**8 (iv)** This was more challenging, but it appeared to be a good discriminator, with more able candidates being able to identify and write down both the target words – 'average' and 'opposite'. Examiners accepted many unusual but convincing phonetic attempts, e.g. 'avveridge' and 'obbosit'.

**8 (v)** 'Desert' appeared to be a familiar word for most candidates and this proved to be probably the easiest question for them in this section; the most common error was to spell it as 'dessert'. 'Dessert' and 'desert' were considered words which candidates of this examination should be familiar with, so no mark was awarded for 'dessert'.

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**8 (vii)** Candidates found this item straightforward. Examiners were again flexible with the spelling of 'museum', accepting phonetic approximations such as 'mueseam' and 'muzeum'. Examiners needed to see an attempt to include the extra syllables at the end in '...eum'.

### **Question 9 and Question 10**

These questions required candidates to indicate whether a statement is 'True' or 'False' by ticking the appropriate box. The two questions had very similar results: nearly all candidates were well practised and attempted the questions satisfactorily. Many of the most able scored full marks, and even many weaker candidates were able to score half marks or more. This suggests that the candidates were able to understand the interviews and access the questions reasonably well. A few candidates left blank boxes when they would have had a chance of being correct by just guessing. There were a few instances where candidates had not been clear about amendments to their answers, or had left both boxes ticked. Candidates need to be reminded of the need to make their answers absolutely clear for the Examiners.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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**Paper 0511/41**  
**Listening (Extended)**

## Key messages

In an examination which tests listening skill, Examiners allow benefit of doubt to candidates, particularly in cases where understanding appears to have been conveyed but with limited ability in spelling, grammar or structures. Nonetheless, it is important for candidates to attempt to provide clear, legible and logical responses.

- Examiners reported a surprising number of gaps being left and it is suggested that it is always worthwhile making attempts, even if candidates lack confidence in spelling.
- In responses where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised not to list more than one response. This follows for two items i.e. two responses only.
- In longer responses, candidates should be careful to convey their ideas clearly. It is better to enhance a response by adding a few words to ensure clarity.
- Examiners report instances where the correct response is embedded in a longer response, but that it is clear that candidates are choosing to cover additional options. This is unfortunate as Examiners would be able to reward such responses had they been more selective.
- Candidates should write legibly. In many cases, Examiners need to see the formation of individual letters and where untidy handwriting is present this can be extremely difficult. It is not in a candidate's interest to provide responses which are difficult to read.
- It is suggested that pencil is not used to provide initial or 'draft' responses. It is better to use a pen from the outset and simply cross out responses which need to be altered.

## General comments

Successful responses to short-answer questions were those which provided the detail required and chose to do this by using note-form responses. Some candidates wrote too much and in doing so made it difficult for Examiners to ascertain the answer being suggested, or indeed, which of the responses should be considered.

The most successful answers which required longer responses were those where the response had clear meaning as a phrase. Some candidates should re-read their longer responses to ensure clarity and that the idea is being conveyed as succinctly as possible. Examiners are not able to reward responses which do not make sense.

Regarding spelling, phonetic attempts are always considered and in many cases lead to marks being awarded. Where candidates offer an alternative spelling comprising the correct number of syllables and accurate vowel and consonant sounds, it is more likely that credit can be given. Some candidates could practice phonetic attempts by focusing on the number of syllables required and by re-creating the sounds of the key letters.

## Comments on specific questions

Questions 1 to 6 were based on six separate brief conversations or short announcements.

### **Question 1**

This question was generally answered well. Both responses on the mark scheme were seen in about equal amounts: 'using different routes' or 'ice on the line' were the most common correct responses. A variety of spellings of 'route' were offered and many were accepted, including 'rute' and 'roote'. Examiners did not allow 'root', however, as this creates another word. 'Ice on road' could not be allowed as it conveys a

different meaning, or 'ice in the area' as this was not specific enough. 'Ice on the rude' was also disallowed because the meaning is not intact.

### Question 2

Many candidates did not gain the mark for this question because they failed to include 'band' as the type of practice that was occurring. A surprising number of variants were offered: 'ballet', 'bank', 'badminton', 'ballad', 'bowl' and 'ball' were all seen. It was unfortunate that some candidates who did manage to spell 'band' accurately went on to prefer 'courses' rather than 'concert', and therefore lost the mark. Weaker responses included 'because he has not had time' and this was not precise enough. This proved to be quite a challenging question.

### Question 3

This required two linked ideas with one mark available for each. Many candidates performed well on this question, providing two correct responses. 'Express delivery' appeared to be heard and re-produced accurately. The second idea – why the express service was chosen – was often answered well, with candidates showing that they had thought this through. Answers that were not given credit included 'will arrive by 8 pm' and 'will arrive at 8 am' ('before 8 am' was required to convey full understanding).

### Question 4

The majority of candidates recorded accurate responses to this question. Examiners needed the idea of either 'staying at school' or 'being late at school' to award credit. Responses which simply stated that the speaker was at school were not allowed. Some weaker responses did not include 'school'; omitting this provided only a partial response and was not accepted.

### Question 5

This question allowed three equivalent responses and Examiners saw a good proportion of each. Answers to this question were generally correct and candidates scored well. As long as the main ideas were conveyed with accuracy – i.e. '10% less', a 'group discount' or 'cheaper by £1' – the mark was given. Answers that did not gain credit included 'they are cheaper' and 'costs £9 only'. Phonetic attempts at discount provided 'discont', 'discownt' and 'discant' – and these were allowed as the main idea had clearly been understood. Some candidates are reminded that short responses to these types of questions are encouraged. Sentence length answers are often not necessary and can be counter-productive with candidates losing pertinence.

### Question 6

The final question in this section proved to be quite challenging and required candidates to recognise that one immediate solution was doing the homework by hand and the other was asking a friend to check the computer. Many candidates gained the mark for 'write homework', although on occasions 'right homework' was seen and was not allowed. Stronger candidates realised that an immediate solution was required and offered a range of variants equating to mending the computer straight away e.g. 'checking it', 'fixing it', 'looking at it', to gain the second mark. Weaker responses did not spot *immediate* in the question and offered 'take it to the computer shop'. Responses which did not convey in full the idea that the friend was required to look at the computer – e.g. 'phone a friend', 'ask a friend' – were not given credit as these were incomplete responses.

**Question 7** was based on an interview with an orchard keeper.

**7 (i)** required candidates to have heard that trees had been planted to produce fruit. Examiners only allowed a response therefore that provided *planted*, though 'grown' was accepted in place of 'planted'. Candidates who wrote 'plant' or 'planting' were not given reward as the subsequent phrase failed to convey accurate meaning. Candidates are reminded therefore that words which are inserted in these types of exercises must allow the larger phrase to make sense. This being said, more than half of the responses to this question were indeed accurate.

**7 (ii)** saw the weakest response in this section, with a surprising number of blank spaces. Examiners expected 'fruit' and 'nut' to be relatively easy terms, well within the range of IGCSE English as a Second Language candidates. Some candidates misunderstood the second item, suggesting that a type of fruit was required.

**7 (iii)** produced a wide array of spellings of 'owls'. Attempts which Examiners accepted included: 'awls', 'owles', 'owels', 'ouls', but Examiners could not accept responses which did not include the consonant 'l'. 'Bees' and 'insects' was not sufficient to gain the mark and this was seen in a number of cases.

**7 (iv)** produced a variety of spellings of 'mushrooms' and 'snakes'. Weaker responses provided completely different suggestions such as 'ducks' and 'pigs'. 'Mushrooms' was generally known; 'snakes' presented a greater challenge with many attempts seen – 'snacks', 'snicks' and 'snaks' being disallowed for the different vowel sounds; 'nakes' and 'neaks' disallowed because the 's' was missing. Candidates are also reminded that using alternative words is not likely to gain credit unless these are synonymous with the expected words. It is not sufficient to fill in the gaps so that they make sense, the words in the gaps must relate accurately to what was said on the transcript.

**7 (v)** was answered very well. Variants of 'ecology' that were allowed included 'ecologie' and 'ekology'. Not allowed were 'college' (often seen) or 'collegy', as these lacked the beginning vowel sound. The second part of this item was generally answered well with candidates either opting for 'experience' or 'assistant', depending upon which they felt they could spell most accurately.

**7 (vi)** was answered very well, with most candidates being successful at hearing and reporting 'community'. Weaker responses tended to offer completely different words or ideas.

**7 (vii)** was, on the whole, well-answered, though candidates who had either not heard or not understood 'local' offered words and ideas which seemed to fit – e.g. 'all', 'poor', 'normal', 'any', 'some' and 'common' – and these could not be rewarded. The idea of 'maintaining orchards' was usually offered but with interesting spellings of maintain – e.g. 'mentain', 'maintaine', 'mainten' – and these were all allowed. Where candidates opted for a different idea such as 'develop', 'plant' or 'establish', Examiners were not able to give credit.

**Question 8** was based on an interview with the inventor of a motor car powered by steam.

**8 (i)** required the year that the land speed record was set. Most candidates were able to provide '1906' as the correct answer. However, '1996' was seen quite often as an incorrect response.

**8 (ii)** was also answered well by most candidates, with some good phonetic attempts at 'tons' where the spelling was not known. Where the item had been misunderstood, Examiners saw 'towels', 'tallest' and 'towns', and also 'metres' and 'pounds' as incorrect measurements. '3000 kg' was seen on a number of occasions and this was, of course, allowed.

**8 (iii)** generated mainly accurate responses, with many candidates properly identifying that 'carbon' was the material required. Acceptable phonetic attempts included 'karbon' and 'carben'. A number of candidates guessed at other elements e.g. 'copper', 'cobalt', and also other objects that were similar sounding: 'carpet', 'cardboard', 'cable' and 'cover' were also seen.

**8 (iv)** allowed only one response for the initial item – the average speed – and one response for the second item: opposite directions. Candidates scored reasonably well here. Some candidates wrote '204 km/h' for 'average'.

**8 (v)** was answered very well with 'desert' being supplied as the location of the new record.

**8 (vi)** tested candidates' skill in listening for a number. '231' was required and this was generally provided. Some candidates wrote '213' or '2031', however.

**8 (vii)** required candidates to supply the detail 'engineers' which most were able to transcribe accurately, confirming that this was a word generally known by the candidature. Where phonetic attempts were seen, they were generally correct as candidates had clearly spelled out their efforts, providing the correct number of syllables and the correct consonant sounds.

**8 (viii)** saw a good number of accurate responses. Examiners were presented with a variety of spellings of 'charities' and as long as these contained three syllables and the initial 'ch' sound, they were allowed.

**8 (ix)** presented problems only in the spelling of 'museum', and many phonetic attempts were allowed. It was felt that the vowel sounds needed to be correct before an answer could be considered. Candidates were more comfortable in providing 'old' or 'famous' for the second item. Where responses were wrong, 'New Zealand' was often seen as the location of the exhibit.

**Question 9** was based on an interview about the transport of salt across a desert.

**9 (a)** sought two details relating to benefits for the drivers: an 'income' and a 'way of life'. The first item was usually provided, though in some cases it was given as 'funds' or 'money'. There were some variants for 'way of life' and Examiners needed to be sure that the basic idea had been understood and conveyed.

**9 (b)** required candidates to convey the ideas that the two benefits of the caravan were people 'helping each other' and 'safety in numbers'. The mark scheme allowed 'safety' and 'help' and correct responses usually featured these two words. Incorrect responses often misunderstood 'benefits' as purposes or advantages and provided responses such as 'large blocks of salt can be carried' or 'helped the cutting up of salt'. 'Help' proved to be a challenging word for some candidates, who offered 'health' instead.

**9 (c)** required candidates to understand that it was 'engine problems caused by sand' that could slow down the transportation. Short or partial responses often caused difficulty for Examiners in allowing the mark – e.g. 'engine problems', or 'desert sand' – and candidates are reminded therefore that questions such as these require the main idea to be conveyed fully. There were some synonymous phrases, nonetheless, which Examiners were able to give credit for – e.g. 'sand getting into the engine' – as they showed that the main idea had clearly been understood. Unsuccessful candidates tended to guess here at responses which seemed to make sense but which were not actually supplied at the appropriate place in the transcript – e.g. 'no rain in the desert' or 'camels get very thirsty and tired'.

**9 (d)** allowed three potential details: a quicker journey, more money to be made, and more could be transported. Many candidates were able to provide one detail, but then went on to offer 'more efficient' as the second detail. As this was incorporated into the question, it was not allowed. Stronger candidates were able to provide two different details, where unsuccessful candidates provided two responses which were actually the same idea – e.g. 'takes less time' and 'it is quicker'. The response which saw the most correct marks was 'more can be carried and it is quicker'.

**9 (e)** invited candidates to offer the main consequence of using trucks. 'Doubled' proved to be a challenging word for some candidates. Responses such as 'the price of salt increased' were not given credit as the idea of doubling was important. 'The price of salt has increased by two' was allowed therefore. Some candidates guessed at potentially viable responses – e.g. 'camels will disappear' or 'traders will lose their jobs' – but it was specific information that was required.

**9 (f)** allowed several ways for candidates to express what the speaker thought might happen to the transport of salt in the future. Correct responses included 'all traders will use trucks' and 'the use of camels will disappear'. Responses which stated broadly that the traditional way of life would disappear were not allowed as it was felt that these had not engaged with the transportation element in the question. The question was intended to elicit a specific inference as to what would happen to *salt* transport and not to people in general.

**Question 10** was based on a talk about an underwater museum.

**10 (a)** was very straightforward and tested candidates' understanding of a large number – '12 million'. Many candidates were successful here but those who were not usually offered '20 million', '12,000' or '2 million'.

**10 (b)** assessed the candidates' understanding of 'submerged', and while this was a challenging word, many candidates clearly understood the meaning of submerged in the context of the museum site. Phonetic attempts were generally accepted here as were responses which conveyed the idea that the site had 'sunk' or been 'immersed in water'. Candidates who offered 'emerged' did not receive the mark. Some unsuccessful responses focused on the damage done by the earthquake and did not recognise that the island had been sunk.

**10 (c)** proved to be a challenging question with very few candidates able to recognise that the main purpose of the tunnel was as a viewing point or as a means to pass through to the museum itself. Examiners were not able to reward responses which were too general. Responses which sought to explain that the artefacts could be viewed *from* the tunnel were allowed, but responses which suggested that the artefacts were *inside* the tunnel could not receive credit.

**10 (d)** could have been answered much more successfully had some candidates read the question thoroughly and realised that either 'tunnel' or 'glass' needed to be in the response. 'Reinforce it' is not sufficient as it is not the water pressure that needs reinforcing. Some candidates wrote that the glass should be 'toughened' or 'thickened' or 'made stronger' and duly received credit.

**10 (e)** asked what people who were against the project thought. It was important therefore that candidates conveyed people's thoughts in their responses, thereby answering the question directly. Candidates who did



not do this often provided confused or over-long responses. Two ideas were required for two marks and many candidates were able to obtain one mark, but found it difficult to secure the second mark. 'People doubt that the project will actually happen' was the most common correct response, and this was sometimes followed by the idea that 'people think it sounds like a theme park'. Some candidates preferred to explain that the funds should be used instead to restore buildings.

On the whole, Questions 9 and 10 worked very well as differentiators. Stronger candidates scored very well in both and were able to understand the nuances in the questions and respond with specific information and convey the main ideas or elements accurately. Less successful responses either missed the main points completely or lacked specificity. Examiners felt that both questions provided a similar degree of accessibility.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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**Paper 0511/42**  
**Listening (Extended)**

## Key messages

In an examination which tests listening skill, Examiners allow benefit of doubt to candidates, particularly in cases where understanding appears to have been conveyed but with limited ability in spelling, grammar or structures. Nonetheless, it is important for candidates to attempt to provide clear, legible and logical responses.

- Examiners reported a surprising number of gaps being left and it is suggested that it is always worthwhile making attempts, even if candidates lack confidence in spelling.
- In responses where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised not to list more than one response. This follows for two items i.e. two responses only.
- In longer responses, candidates should be careful to convey their ideas clearly. It is better to enhance a response by adding a few words to ensure clarity.
- Examiners report instances where the correct response is embedded in a longer response, but that it is clear that candidates are choosing to cover additional options. This is unfortunate as Examiners would be able to reward such responses had they been more selective.
- Candidates should write legibly. In many cases, Examiners need to see the formation of individual letters and where untidy handwriting is present this can be extremely difficult. It is not in a candidate's interest to provide responses which are difficult to read.
- It is suggested that pencil is not used to provide initial or 'draft' responses. It is better to use a pen from the outset and simply cross out responses which need to be altered.

## General comments

Successful responses to short-answer questions were those which provided the detail required and chose to do this by using note-form responses. Some candidates wrote too much and in doing so made it difficult for Examiners to ascertain the answer being suggested, or indeed, which of the responses should be considered.

The most successful answers which required longer responses were those where the response had clear meaning as a phrase. Some candidates should re-read their longer responses to ensure clarity and that the idea is being conveyed as succinctly as possible. Examiners are not able to reward responses which do not make sense.

Regarding spelling, phonetic attempts are always considered and in many cases lead to marks being awarded. Where candidates offer an alternative spelling comprising the correct number of syllables and accurate vowel and consonant sounds, it is more likely that credit can be given. Some candidates could practice phonetic attempts by focusing on the number of syllables required and by re-creating the sounds of the key letters.

## Comments on specific questions

Questions 1 to 6 were based on six separate brief conversations or short announcements.

### **Question 1**

This question was generally answered well. Both responses on the mark scheme were seen in about equal amounts: 'using different routes' or 'ice on the line' were the most common correct responses. A variety of spellings of 'route' were offered and many were accepted, including 'rute' and 'roote'. Examiners did not allow 'root', however, as this creates another word. 'Ice on road' could not be allowed as it conveys a

different meaning, or 'ice in the area' as this was not specific enough. 'Ice on the rude' was also disallowed because the meaning is not intact.

### Question 2

Many candidates did not gain the mark for this question because they failed to include 'band' as the type of practice that was occurring. A surprising number of variants were offered: 'ballet', 'bank', 'badminton', 'ballad', 'bowl' and 'ball' were all seen. It was unfortunate that some candidates who did manage to spell 'band' accurately went on to prefer 'courses' rather than 'concert', and therefore lost the mark. Weaker responses included 'because he has not had time' and this was not precise enough. This proved to be quite a challenging question.

### Question 3

This required two linked ideas with one mark available for each. Many candidates performed well on this question, providing two correct responses. 'Express delivery' appeared to be heard and re-produced accurately. The second idea – why the express service was chosen – was often answered well, with candidates showing that they had thought this through. Answers that were not given credit included 'will arrive by 8 pm' and 'will arrive at 8 am' ('before 8 am' was required to convey full understanding).

### Question 4

The majority of candidates recorded accurate responses to this question. Examiners needed the idea of either 'staying at school' or 'being late at school' to award credit. Responses which simply stated that the speaker was at school were not allowed. Some weaker responses did not include 'school'; omitting this provided only a partial response and was not accepted.

### Question 5

This question allowed three equivalent responses and Examiners saw a good proportion of each. Answers to this question were generally correct and candidates scored well. As long as the main ideas were conveyed with accuracy – i.e. '10% less', a 'group discount' or 'cheaper by £1' – the mark was given. Answers that did not gain credit included 'they are cheaper' and 'costs £9 only'. Phonetic attempts at discount provided 'discont', 'discownt' and 'discant' – and these were allowed as the main idea had clearly been understood. Some candidates are reminded that short responses to these types of questions are encouraged. Sentence length answers are often not necessary and can be counter-productive with candidates losing pertinence.

### Question 6

The final question in this section proved to be quite challenging and required candidates to recognise that one immediate solution was doing the homework by hand and the other was asking a friend to check the computer. Many candidates gained the mark for 'write homework', although on occasions 'right homework' was seen and was not allowed. Stronger candidates realised that an immediate solution was required and offered a range of variants equating to mending the computer straight away e.g. 'checking it', 'fixing it', 'looking at it', to gain the second mark. Weaker responses did not spot *immediate* in the question and offered 'take it to the computer shop'. Responses which did not convey in full the idea that the friend was required to look at the computer – e.g. 'phone a friend', 'ask a friend' – were not given credit as these were incomplete responses.

**Question 7** was based on an interview with an orchard keeper.

**7 (i)** required candidates to have heard that trees had been planted to produce fruit. Examiners only allowed a response therefore that provided *planted*, though 'grown' was accepted in place of 'planted'. Candidates who wrote 'plant' or 'planting' were not given reward as the subsequent phrase failed to convey accurate meaning. Candidates are reminded therefore that words which are inserted in these types of exercises must allow the larger phrase to make sense. This being said, more than half of the responses to this question were indeed accurate.

**7 (ii)** saw the weakest response in this section, with a surprising number of blank spaces. Examiners expected 'fruit' and 'nut' to be relatively easy terms, well within the range of IGCSE English as a Second Language candidates. Some candidates misunderstood the second item, suggesting that a type of fruit was required.

**7 (iii)** produced a wide array of spellings of 'owls'. Attempts which Examiners accepted included: 'awls', 'owles', 'owels', 'ouls', but Examiners could not accept responses which did not include the consonant 'l'. 'Bees' and 'insects' was not sufficient to gain the mark and this was seen in a number of cases.

**7 (iv)** produced a variety of spellings of 'mushrooms' and 'snakes'. Weaker responses provided completely different suggestions such as 'ducks' and 'pigs'. 'Mushrooms' was generally known; 'snakes' presented a greater challenge with many attempts seen – 'snacks', 'snicks' and 'snaks' being disallowed for the different vowel sounds; 'nakes' and 'neaks' disallowed because the 's' was missing. Candidates are also reminded that using alternative words is not likely to gain credit unless these are synonymous with the expected words. It is not sufficient to fill in the gaps so that they make sense, the words in the gaps must relate accurately to what was said on the transcript.

**7 (v)** was answered very well. Variants of 'ecology' that were allowed included 'ecologie' and 'ekology'. Not allowed were 'college' (often seen) or 'collegy', as these lacked the beginning vowel sound. The second part of this item was generally answered well with candidates either opting for 'experience' or 'assistant', depending upon which they felt they could spell most accurately.

**7 (vi)** was answered very well, with most candidates being successful at hearing and reporting 'community'. Weaker responses tended to offer completely different words or ideas.

**7 (vii)** was, on the whole, well-answered, though candidates who had either not heard or not understood 'local' offered words and ideas which seemed to fit – e.g. 'all', 'poor', 'normal', 'any', 'some' and 'common' – and these could not be rewarded. The idea of 'maintaining orchards' was usually offered but with interesting spellings of maintain – e.g. 'mentain', 'maintaine', 'mainten' – and these were all allowed. Where candidates opted for a different idea such as 'develop', 'plant' or 'establish', Examiners were not able to give credit.

**Question 8** was based on an interview with the inventor of a motor car powered by steam.

**8 (i)** required the year that the land speed record was set. Most candidates were able to provide '1906' as the correct answer. However, '1996' was seen quite often as an incorrect response.

**8 (ii)** was also answered well by most candidates, with some good phonetic attempts at 'tons' where the spelling was not known. Where the item had been misunderstood, Examiners saw 'towels', 'tallest' and 'towns', and also 'metres' and 'pounds' as incorrect measurements. '3000 kg' was seen on a number of occasions and this was, of course, allowed.

**8 (iii)** generated mainly accurate responses, with many candidates properly identifying that 'carbon' was the material required. Acceptable phonetic attempts included 'karbon' and 'carben'. A number of candidates guessed at other elements e.g. 'copper', 'cobalt', and also other objects that were similar sounding: 'carpet', 'cardboard', 'cable' and 'cover' were also seen.

**8 (iv)** allowed only one response for the initial item – the average speed – and one response for the second item: opposite directions. Candidates scored reasonably well here. Some candidates wrote '204 km/h' for 'average'.

**8 (v)** was answered very well with 'desert' being supplied as the location of the new record.

**8 (vi)** tested candidates' skill in listening for a number. '231' was required and this was generally provided. Some candidates wrote '213' or '2031', however.

**8 (vii)** required candidates to supply the detail 'engineers' which most were able to transcribe accurately, confirming that this was a word generally known by the candidature. Where phonetic attempts were seen, they were generally correct as candidates had clearly spelled out their efforts, providing the correct number of syllables and the correct consonant sounds.

**8 (viii)** saw a good number of accurate responses. Examiners were presented with a variety of spellings of 'charities' and as long as these contained three syllables and the initial 'ch' sound, they were allowed.

**8 (ix)** presented problems only in the spelling of 'museum', and many phonetic attempts were allowed. It was felt that the vowel sounds needed to be correct before an answer could be considered. Candidates were more comfortable in providing 'old' or 'famous' for the second item. Where responses were wrong, 'New Zealand' was often seen as the location of the exhibit.

**Question 9** was based on an interview about the transport of salt across a desert.

**9 (a)** sought two details relating to benefits for the drivers: an 'income' and a 'way of life'. The first item was usually provided, though in some cases it was given as 'funds' or 'money'. There were some variants for 'way of life' and Examiners needed to be sure that the basic idea had been understood and conveyed.

**9 (b)** required candidates to convey the ideas that the two benefits of the caravan were people 'helping each other' and 'safety in numbers'. The mark scheme allowed 'safety' and 'help' and correct responses usually featured these two words. Incorrect responses often misunderstood 'benefits' as purposes or advantages and provided responses such as 'large blocks of salt can be carried' or 'helped the cutting up of salt'. 'Help' proved to be a challenging word for some candidates, who offered 'health' instead.

**9 (c)** required candidates to understand that it was 'engine problems caused by sand' that could slow down the transportation. Short or partial responses often caused difficulty for Examiners in allowing the mark – e.g. 'engine problems', or 'desert sand' – and candidates are reminded therefore that questions such as these require the main idea to be conveyed fully. There were some synonymous phrases, nonetheless, which Examiners were able to give credit for – e.g. 'sand getting into the engine' – as they showed that the main idea had clearly been understood. Unsuccessful candidates tended to guess here at responses which seemed to make sense but which were not actually supplied at the appropriate place in the transcript – e.g. 'no rain in the desert' or 'camels get very thirsty and tired'.

**9 (d)** allowed three potential details: a quicker journey, more money to be made, and more could be transported. Many candidates were able to provide one detail, but then went on to offer 'more efficient' as the second detail. As this was incorporated into the question, it was not allowed. Stronger candidates were able to provide two different details, where unsuccessful candidates provided two responses which were actually the same idea – e.g. 'takes less time' and 'it is quicker'. The response which saw the most correct marks was 'more can be carried and it is quicker'.

**9 (e)** invited candidates to offer the main consequence of using trucks. 'Doubled' proved to be a challenging word for some candidates. Responses such as 'the price of salt increased' were not given credit as the idea of doubling was important. 'The price of salt has increased by two' was allowed therefore. Some candidates guessed at potentially viable responses – e.g. 'camels will disappear' or 'traders will lose their jobs' – but it was specific information that was required.

**9 (f)** allowed several ways for candidates to express what the speaker thought might happen to the transport of salt in the future. Correct responses included 'all traders will use trucks' and 'the use of camels will disappear'. Responses which stated broadly that the traditional way of life would disappear were not allowed as it was felt that these had not engaged with the transportation element in the question. The question was intended to elicit a specific inference as to what would happen to *salt* transport and not to people in general.

**Question 10** was based on a talk about an underwater museum.

**10 (a)** was very straightforward and tested candidates' understanding of a large number – '12 million'. Many candidates were successful here but those who were not usually offered '20 million', '12,000' or '2 million'.

**10 (b)** assessed the candidates' understanding of 'submerged', and while this was a challenging word, many candidates clearly understood the meaning of submerged in the context of the museum site. Phonetic attempts were generally accepted here as were responses which conveyed the idea that the site had 'sunk' or been 'immersed in water'. Candidates who offered 'emerged' did not receive the mark. Some unsuccessful responses focused on the damage done by the earthquake and did not recognise that the island had been sunk.

**10 (c)** proved to be a challenging question with very few candidates able to recognise that the main purpose of the tunnel was as a viewing point or as a means to pass through to the museum itself. Examiners were not able to reward responses which were too general. Responses which sought to explain that the artefacts could be viewed *from* the tunnel were allowed, but responses which suggested that the artefacts were *inside* the tunnel could not receive credit.

**10 (d)** could have been answered much more successfully had some candidates read the question thoroughly and realised that either 'tunnel' or 'glass' needed to be in the response. 'Reinforce it' is not sufficient as it is not the water pressure that needs reinforcing. Some candidates wrote that the glass should be 'toughened' or 'thickened' or 'made stronger' and duly received credit.

**10 (e)** asked what people who were against the project thought. It was important therefore that candidates conveyed people's thoughts in their responses, thereby answering the question directly. Candidates who did

not do this often provided confused or over-long responses. Two ideas were required for two marks and many candidates were able to obtain one mark, but found it difficult to secure the second mark. 'People doubt that the project will actually happen' was the most common correct response, and this was sometimes followed by the idea that 'people think it sounds like a theme park'. Some candidates preferred to explain that the funds should be used instead to restore buildings.

On the whole, Questions 9 and 10 worked very well as differentiators. Stronger candidates scored very well in both and were able to understand the nuances in the questions and respond with specific information and convey the main ideas or elements accurately. Less successful responses either missed the main points completely or lacked specificity. Examiners felt that both questions provided a similar degree of accessibility.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Paper 0511/05

Oral

## Key messages

The main advice to Centres regarding conduct of the oral tests is:

- **Preparation**  
Please read and become familiar with the *Teacher's/Examiner's Notes* booklet. This contains detailed guidance on how to conduct the tests, assess candidates' performance, and prepare the samples to be returned to CIE.
- **Part A**  
Conduct Part A at the beginning of the test so that candidates know the format of the whole test and are aware that Part B is not assessed.
- **Part B**  
Try to use the warm-up to select an appropriate topic card for the individual candidate.
- **Part C**  
Pause the recording during Part C while the candidate considers the topic.
- **Part D**  
Please begin Part D by utilising the first two prompts on the topic card rather than the Examiner's own 'opening' questions. This ensures that the flow of conversation remains focused and that candidates begin in a confident manner. Ensure that a focused discussion develops in Part D by utilising the last three prompts to explore the depth of the topic so that candidates can illustrate their higher-level speaking skills.
- **Timing**  
Remain within the allowed timings: 2-3 minutes for Part B and 6-9 minutes for Part D. Tests which are too short or too long are likely to be counter-productive.

## General comments

### **Part A: Brief explanation of the test format**

There are still some Centres at which no explanation of the test format is given before Part D begins. Centres are reminded that Examiners should explain briefly what is going to happen in the course of the test just after the candidate has taken his/her seat and been introduced. It is better if Part A is conducted at the beginning so that candidates are immediately aware that Part B, the warm-up, is not assessed.

### **Part B: The warm-up**

The warm-up should be used to try to select an appropriate topic card. Examiners should endeavour to present a suitable topic for discussion, particularly when a candidate has expressed an interest in an area in which one of the topic cards could generate a productive conversation.

Please therefore aim to draw out candidates' hobbies and interests and avoid talking about school matters, or anything which might make candidates uneasy e.g. nervousness, or other examinations being taken. There are Centres at which the warm-up focuses too much on school life, and some Centres where the Examiner is incorporating informal discussion of the topics into the warm-ups. Neither of these approaches is acceptable.

A sensible approach is to stay within the 2-3 minutes allowed but to gain an early idea of a candidate's interests. Please also use the warm-up to relax the candidate, to get to know a little about him or her, and to prepare the candidate for Part D and for formal assessment.

***Part C: Selecting the topic, handing over the topic card, and allowing preparation time***

Please note that the Examiner chooses the topic card and under no circumstances should a choice be offered to the candidate.

Topics should be selected to try to match each candidate's interests and ability and Moderators are listening to see how, and how well, this is done by Examiners. Examiners should therefore avoid selecting topic cards randomly or in a pattern prepared beforehand.

***Part D – The conversation***

Moderators reported that more Examiners are recognising that the five prompts on the topic cards should be used, and should be used in sequence to help promote developing discussions. When the first two prompts on the topic card are utilised from the outset, the discussions tend to be successful, with the candidates growing in confidence.

The best discussions are relaxed and allow a natural conversation to flow, with skilful Examiners picking up on points made by candidates, and returning to the topic card at appropriate times to ensure focus. Examiners should certainly work through the five bullet point prompts in the given order but should remember to extend the discussions beyond the prompts to ensure a full (6-9 minutes) and rounded discussion takes place.

Examiners are reminded that development of the conversation is an integral part of the assessment. What is expected is that Examiners will help guide candidates through the levels of the discussion. The supplied prompts on the topic cards increase in sophistication and move from the personal through the general, to the more abstract and challenging; thereby allowing stronger candidates to illustrate higher level speaking skills. Less able candidates are not necessarily expected to engage fully or successfully with Prompts 4 and 5, and Examiners will need to adjust their approach to differentiate and support these candidates.

A few Examiners are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that candidates do not offer speeches or monologues. This is still happening at some Centres. In such cases, the Examiner should intervene quickly and begin a conversation.

**Comments on the Topic Cards**

The introduction of five extra topic cards proved successful. Moderators reported that all ten topics had been deployed among the cohort as a whole, with Examiners responding well to the availability of more topics.

*Card A: Giving a speech*

Some candidates were able to draw upon speeches given by famous people that they had learned about in school or perhaps seen on television. It would have been inappropriate to select this card for a candidate who was rather shy and who had never delivered a speech. This illustrates the need for the Examiner to try to ascertain likes and dislikes in Part B, the warm-up.

*Card B: Greed*

There were some interesting and productive conversations on the topic of greed. Less effective management of this topic resulted in deviation from the main idea and discussions about other negative characteristics or discussions that remained rooted in money and possessions only.

*Card C: Life in 100 years' time*

This topic proved accessible to most candidates. Less able candidates were able to use popular culture as a reference point – e.g. films they had seen – and to use this as a springboard to portray life in the future. Examiners needed to be careful that familiar territory, such as technology, could be covered here, sometimes resulting in movement away from the topic itself.

*Card D: Talent*

This topic was generally well managed. Again, less able candidates could draw upon talent shows seen on television, while stronger candidates commented on the relationship between talent and professions such as



medicine and sport, drawing out contrasts between 'pure' talent and rewards that society offers to successful (though not necessarily talented) people. The third prompt therefore worked on two levels: the simplistic 'trophies and prizes' level, and the more sophisticated responses which recognised that talent often goes unrewarded.

*Card E: Where people live*

This was a very popular topic and generated lots of relevant discussion. It was a particularly useful topic to offer to candidates who are living and studying in a culture which is not their own indigenous culture.

*Card F: An active and healthy life*

Many candidates displayed a sound understanding of what constitutes an active and healthy life and were able to discuss ways in which this aspect of people's lives could be improved. Interestingly, responses to Prompt 4 seemed to imply that governmental matters do not play a major role in many candidates' lives.

*Card G: A windfall*

This topic was handled well by many Examiners, and brought forth some of the best discussion of all the topics. Family, good causes and charities would seem to be the main beneficiaries of the money in the conventional responses, but there were some amusing admissions of how such a large amount of money could be spent. The final prompt worked well to open up a divergence of views as to whether society could function without money.

*Card H: Relaxing and dealing with stress*

Where relaxation was discussed, the resulting conversation was generally strong, flowing and positive. On occasion, where dealing with stress was discussed, the concept of stress became the discussion point rather than how to manage stress in practical terms.

*Card I: Safety*

The intention of this topic was for Examiners and candidates to engage in a themed discussion of aspects of safety and how society in general could be made safer. In general, conversations on safety were successful when managed well by the Examiner.

*Card J: Living with authority*

This topic was met with interest by candidates who had an understanding of how societies are structured from a sociological perspective. Discussions of how authority treats men and women differently were interesting, as were discussions of how authority changes with age.

### **Application of the Assessment Criteria**

Centres are reminded that a focused discussion should occur from the beginning of the test, and that, where candidates are allowed to offer speeches or monologues, they are not engaging in a genuine and spontaneous discussion. In such cases, it is unlikely that a mark above the Band 4 Level for the *Development and Fluency* criterion would be acceptable, as little or no conversation has taken place. In some cases it will be determined by the external Moderators that a Band 5 mark (1 or 2) is more appropriate.

Examiners need to be sure that the appropriate objectives have been met in the *Development and Fluency* criterion before issuing 9 or 10 marks i.e. to contribute at length to the discussion, to respond successfully to changes of direction brought about by the Examiner, and to sustain a focused discussion. Moderators reported having to reduce marks because of the inappropriate placement of some candidates in Band 1.

### **Administrative procedures**

In this examination session, more samples on Compact Discs were received, which is to be welcomed. This is how CIE prefers to receive the recordings, and it is strongly recommended that more Centres use digital equipment to generate audio files which can then be transferred to a CD. When transferring the files, Centres are requested to re-name each track with the candidate's name and number, and to create a separate track for each candidate.

Many Centres are clearly aware of the tasks and duties that need to be carried out by the external Moderators and the moderating team are very grateful to the Examiners at these Centres.

Please note that if a Centre chooses to divide its entry across the two syllabuses; that is, enter some candidates for syllabus 0510/05 (oral endorsement) and other candidates for 0511/05 (count-in oral) in the

same examination session, a full sample and the accompanying paperwork (as specified in the syllabus) is required for each component entry.

***Guidance relating to administrative matters***

Moderators found a number of numerical errors made this session in the addition of criteria marks and the transcription of these to the final mark sheet. On several occasions the Centre's errors would have led to candidates receiving incorrect grades had the Moderators not spotted the discrepancies. Centres are reminded of the need to carry out thorough clerical checks to ensure that the mark sheets provided are accurate and consistent with each other. The marks on the Summary Form should be identical to those presented to CIE.

Please ensure that the Summary Forms are included in the package. This is the most important document for the external Moderator, as it records the criteria marks in addition to the total mark. The form also records the topic card given to each candidate. The Examiner who conducts the tests is responsible for completing the Summary Form. He or she should sign the form and date it.

Where internal moderation is conducted (in Centres using more than one Examiner) please include a letter with the sample informing the Moderator of how Examiners were prepared to conduct the tests in a consistent manner, and how the process of internal moderation took place.

Centres are reminded to verify the quality of the recordings before sending them to CIE. Moderators had to request a number of replacement samples from Centres due to poor quality recordings. In some cases, it was simply a matter of the candidate or the Examiner needing to move closer to the microphone. Also, Centres are asked to use appropriate protective cases or wrapping to ensure CDs do not get damaged in transit.

If at all possible, please do not use analogue recording and audiocassettes. Send in samples on CDs, using recognised audio file formats that can be played on common computer software (e.g. mp3, wav, wma). There is no need to use the blue cassette inserts in these cases. A list of candidates and their numbers on the CD or CD cover is fine.

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Paper 0511/06

Oral Communication (Coursework)

## Key messages

Centres are reminded of the ethos of coursework, which is to provide the candidates with a broad range of activities and a variety of ways for their second language speaking skills to be demonstrated, and assessed. Evidence of this should be presented on the Individual Candidate Record Cards, which should contain full descriptions of the activities and tasks undertaken.

It is important for English as a Second Language that the oral activities are designed to accommodate and illustrate second language English competence. Please remember that the assessment criteria test language skills and not presentational or performance skill.

## General comments

This session saw a good range of coursework activities in those Centres where it was recognised that coursework should form an integral part of the learners' weekly activities. Examples of productive coursework included candidates making individual presentations, working with a partner and then also taking part in group discussions. A balance of role playing and authentic material was present in stronger work, and it was good to see literature included in some activities.

If a teacher is not completely confident, however, in designing and implementing three different and productive activities comprising relevant tasks then it is advisable to opt for component 5, the Oral Test.

## **Assessment**

When setting coursework tasks, it is important to remember that candidates need to be given the opportunity to demonstrate higher-level speaking skills. This session saw a number of candidates placed in Band 1 who had not met any of the three Band 1 criteria. Coursework tasks need therefore, on occasion, to be rigorous.

## **Advice to Centres**

A Moderator is seeking to fulfil two main duties when moderating a Centre's coursework: initially to confirm the Centre's interpretation and application of the assessment criteria, but also to confirm that a variety of appropriate tasks and activities has been completed.

For the moderation process to be completed efficiently, Centres need submit only a recording of candidates engaged in a discussion or a conversation. This might be with a Teacher/Examiner or it might be with another candidate.

CIE encourages sample work to be sent in on Compact Disc. Indeed, it is preferable for all of the candidate recordings in the sample to be collated onto a single CD. The use of modern, digital recording equipment is strongly recommended.