

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8004/11

Paper 11

General comments

The best essays were written in a fluent style and demonstrated the use of appropriate idiom. They were grammatically correct, with good paragraphing and few shortcomings in punctuation and spelling. There was welcome evidence that candidates in some Centres had edited their English thoroughly and systematically before handing in their work. This avoids the loss of marks for careless, avoidable errors.

The improvement in the structuring of essays has been maintained by the majority of Centres. Introductions now usually prepare the ground for what is to follow with clarity and without unnecessary detail. Conclusions are, however, less well written. They are inclined to repeat the main points of the essay, often in the style of a shopping list, without sufficient reference to major points and without pulling the threads of the argument together. This often leads to the personal view of the candidate being glossed over or even omitted.

The following points embracing Use of English, essay technique and content are presented in bullet points style in the hope that this will make them more accessible to candidates and therefore easier to remember.

- take time to read **all** questions very carefully **before** making your choice
- scrutinise the **wording** of the chosen questions
- If you are not **absolutely** sure of the **precise** meaning of the question, do **not** attempt it
- do **not** write all you know about the topic - **answer** the question
- prepare an essay plan which remains **focused** on the question as set
- ensure the plan shows that you have sufficient/knowledge to meet the **requirements of the question**
- check and edit the essay **structure** regarding introduction, main body and conclusion
- illustrate your **major** points with appropriate **examples** (local/national/international)
- leave **enough** time to check your work
- ensure you have answered the question **as set** without superfluous **digression**
- check your English **systematically** correcting any **careless** errors.

Examiners saw a number of poorly presented scripts. Deficiencies included scarcely legible handwriting and no question numbers being provided. Rough work was sometimes not crossed out.

Use of time

Most candidates coped well with the time allowance. That said, a number of candidates spend too much time on one essay to the detriment of their second essay. The second essay is often hurried and sometimes incomplete. Both essays should contain about 500 words. Essays of fewer than 375 words have marks deducted proportionally for the Use of English. Poor apportionment of time also means that little or no time is left to check for careless errors in the English. A minority of candidates do not plan properly. They write chunks of prose and then cross it out if they are unhappy with it or they start questions and then change their minds and start again on a different question. This is obviously very poor utilisation of precious time

Use of English

Some candidates have virtually full operational command of the language and therefore score highly in the Use of English mark, but the weakest candidates are unable to express themselves with any real accuracy which often means that the content can be obscured.. In most cases, even if the English is not totally accurate or the idiom is sometimes not fully appropriate, there is no real problem following the points that the candidate is attempting to make.

Some candidates often have a wide range of vocabulary at their disposal but are not always able to use these words appropriately in the correct context.

Use of English Marks can be lost all too easily through basic errors, examples of which are listed below.

- subject/verb non-agreement
- missing endings on plural nouns because of carelessness and/or poor checking
- the pronoun 'one' can not be followed by 'they'/'their'
- frequent incorrect use of definite and indefinite articles
- confusion between their/there, to/too, here/hear, crisis/crises and practice/practise
- incorrect use of apostrophes
- incorrect comparative forms such as more easier/more richer/more harder
- incorrect use of commas leading to loss and/or ambiguity of meaning
- words not separated e.g. 'alot' 'infact' 'aswell'
- use of 'etc.'
- misused idiom such as 'fingercounted'
- 'in a nutshell' is colloquial and not suitable as the opening of the concluding paragraph
- e.g. incorrectly rendered as 'for e.g.'

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a fairly popular question. Stronger answers took the cost of wars into account but were also able to point out the errors made in the sub-prime and banking sectors and the failure of regulatory bodies to control the amount of debt being incurred. Weaker answers failed to mention irresponsible lending and borrowing at individual, corporate and governmental levels but focused on the cost of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Question 2

A popular question and usually well answered. Candidates were aware of the various benefits e.g. inflowing foreign currency, employment creation, and gains in local and national income. They were also conscious of environmental degradation caused by crowds of visitors to some natural attractions. Most candidates responded to the key words 'your country' and did not digress into a general discussion on tourism.

Question 3

Not very popular and not done particularly well. Many made scant reference to religion and those that did were unable to provide much in the way of convincing examples to support their main points. A minority lost their way on this question and tended to be repetitive rather than developing a logical argument.

Question 4

There were few responses to this question. Better responses were aware of the deficiencies of planned economies and referred to the current economic problems in the few remaining socialist countries such as Cuba and North Korea. Weaker answers often were not historically accurate and overlooked the economic shortcomings of communist countries which contributed to their ultimate downfall.

Question 5

Reasonably popular with some good answers comparing public and private transport in their respective countries. Due attention was paid to economic and social issues with cost being a major factor. There was a tendency in a few answers to confuse 'efficiency' and convenience and a rather naïve assumption that public demand will always produce the best service.

Question 6

A popular choice, with most candidates able to tackle successfully the concepts of diets, junk foods and obesity. A minority of the advocates of 'eat to live' discussed good health at length but did not always make the obvious link to a balanced diet. A few, who did elaborate on a balanced diet, overlooked the significance of drink of any kind in their daily intake.

Question 7

A moderately popular topic, but not always well answered. A sizeable minority of candidates were content to state at length everything they had heard about global warming which they saw as an incontestable truth.

These candidates did not make any convincing link to population growth. Better responses focused on how population growth, particularly in developing countries, could cause such things as poverty, depletion of resources and destruction of habitats. It was emphasised that all these negative aspects potentially become a greater problem if substantial climate change should take place.

Question 8

There were very few answers to this question and good responses were rare. Most essays lacked detail and illustrative examples and therefore tended towards superficiality. The focus on 'language' in the question was ignored by most. Very few demonstrated that mathematicians can understand and communicate with colleagues through equations and formulae even if they are unable to communicate in their respective native languages.

Question 9

Quite a popular question and reasonably well answered. Most presented the more obvious but relevant points about saving time and money and they rightly stressed the immediacy of the contacts avoiding all the stressful aspects of international travel. The best answers showed how video conferencing works best when the participants have already established a personal, social relationship emanating from mutual trust.

Question 10

There were very few takers for this question, but a number of very good answers were read. These successful candidates gave a variety of relevant examples on valuable knowledge that had been gained thanks to observatories and telescopes e.g. the nature of black holes, the nature of matter and energy, and the more detailed information gleaned from the images recorded by the Hubble telescope.

Question 11

The few who attempted this wrote good/very good answers. They explained carefully the appeal of poetry to them and showed how life would be incomplete and colourless without it. They illustrated their responses from a range of poets and poems demonstrating good knowledge and appreciation of the genre.

Question 12

This question was quite popular. Weaker responses were largely descriptive of what was on offer in their particular country without developing any critical analysis leading to a judgement on the quality of the TV programmes, which the set question was requiring. They were generally not well illustrated. Better answers focused on the question and points were illustrated by apt examples. They expressed personal opinions based on the range of choice with a sensible balance between such elements as light entertainment, educational and informative programmes sport, soaps and unbiased, uncensored news reporting.

Question 13

The few answers to this question were of a high standard. The best featured 'art' in the widest sense to include music, graphics, photography and story-telling. Points were well developed and supported by memorable examples. The majority succeeded in arguing that advertising really can be an art form.

Question 14

This was very popular. Good responses gave the reader a real feel for the qualities of the chosen composer and selected relevant examples to demonstrate the nature of the often emotive appeal. Unfortunately, quite a few candidates did not seize the chance to probe deeply into why they favoured a certain composer. They provided few illuminating examples although this question cries out for relevant examples.

Question 15

This was not too popular, but the percentage of satisfactory to good answers was high. Most candidates identified a number or reasons for the growing popularity of digital photography. These included steadily falling purchase prices for digital cameras despite ever improving technical specifications, cost effectiveness/ease of use, compatibility with computers for storage and cropping/reshaping, instant previews of pictures with delete facility and easy transmission by email.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8004/12

Paper 12

General comments

The best essays were written in a fluent style and demonstrated the use of appropriate idiom. They were grammatically correct, with good paragraphing and few shortcomings in punctuation and spelling. There was welcome evidence that candidates in some Centres had edited their English thoroughly and systematically before handing in their work. This avoids the loss of marks for careless, avoidable errors.

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Examiners saw a number of poorly presented scripts. Deficiencies included scarcely legible handwriting, no margins on the answer paper and no question numbers being provided. Rough work was sometimes not crossed out.

There were few incidences of rubric infringement, mostly where two questions were attempted from one section.

Use of time

Most candidates did not encounter problems coping with the time allowance on this syllabus. However, a number of candidates spend too much time on one essay to the detriment of the second essay. In such cases, the second essay is often hurried and sometimes incomplete. This also means that little or no time is left to check for careless errors in the English.

A minority of candidates do not plan properly. They write chunks of prose and then cross it out if they are unhappy with it or they start questions and then change their minds and start again on a different question. This is obviously a grave misuse of precious time.

Use of English

Some candidates have virtually full operational command of the language and therefore score highly in the Use of English mark, but the weakest candidates are unable to express themselves with any real accuracy which often means that the content can be obscured.. In most cases, even if the English is not totally

accurate or the idiom is sometimes not fully appropriate, there is no real problem following the path the candidate is attempting to make.

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Use of English Marks can be needlessly lost through basic errors, examples of which are listed below:

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- incorrect comparative forms such as more easier/more richer/more harder
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- words not separated e.g. 'alot' 'infact' 'aswell'
- use of 'etc.'
- misused idiom such as 'fingercounted'
- 'in a nutshell' is colloquial and not suitable as the opening of the concluding paragraph
- e.g. incorrectly rendered as 'for e.g.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The main differentiator was how well candidates explored what contributed towards the financial crises and how this affected their own country. There were some interesting local examples of how a country had either been affected quite badly, or not at all. One candidate even suggested that their country had actually benefited from the crises (although they did not then offer any convincing reasons why this was the case. Some responses ranged around other countries while some spent too long describing what had happened.

Question 2

Moderately popular. There were some strong answers to this question which focused on National Parks and National Heritage sites, naming them and exploring how they had been and were being developed. Several answers showed a lack of understanding of eco-tourism and produced answers on tourism in general. The "Eco" of "Ecotourism" was misunderstood by some candidates to mean "economic tourism", which led to answers which explored "business travellers" which was difficult to make relevant. Other answers examined "holiday tourism" which frequently contained tangential material.

Question 3

Many answers lacked a clear focus on the phrase 'opium of the people' and explored religion in general. Those who explored what the phrase meant and related it to examples were much more successful. Only a small number were able to attribute the phrase to Karl Marx, which, although not essential, tended to enhance the quality of argument as answers were more informed on what Marx was trying to establish. The word 'opium' has many implications which led to some interesting explorations in several answers. Few answers focused on the word 'accusation' in the question.

Question 4

A reasonably popular question. There was evidence of a good understanding of the question, but there was often either a failure to define "civilisation". A number saw the question as an opportunity to discuss all the elements where equal opportunities are not evident in their society and what can be done about this. This approach did not directly focus on the key terms of the question.

Question 5

This did not attract many candidates. This question allowed candidates to explore the idea of democracy, although many answers used this as an opportunity to write about democracy compared to dictatorships and did not explore the concepts of democracy being 'imposed' or growing 'naturally' and what exactly this could

mean. Many explored how democracy can affect society in a positive and a negative manner, the role of the media and the lengthy process of getting anything done.

Question 6

This was a popular choice, with most candidates able to tackle the concepts of diets as a way of losing weight and becoming fit. There were some useful explorations of how certain diets which focus on losing weight do not help you to get fit and can, in fact, damage your health. Certain named diets, e.g. the Atkins diet, were explored. Less convincing answers tried to look at various diets and just assessed their effectiveness without exploring the terms of the question.

Many candidates found it difficult to differentiate between 'diet', 'diets' and 'dieting' - thinking that dieting meant starving themselves; others saw the word 'diet' simply as an alternative to 'food'. A lot of assertions were made and some failed to link their answers to fitness or even, in some cases, to losing weight.

Question 7

This question was very popular and produced a wide range of answers, some of which were excellent in detail and quality; others lacked real understanding of what the question was asking. The more successful answers explained the typical characteristics of developing countries, including China and Pakistan, and gave some good examples of what industries they had which were contributing to the current worldwide environmental concerns. These answers assessed clearly 'to what extent' these countries could limit their industrial output and how fair this was compared to what the so-called developed countries, such as the US and the UK, were doing. Candidates sometimes struggled with the concept of 'developing countries', with one even suggesting USA as an example. A number of candidates missed the moral and ethical issues underlying this topic and did not raise the question of the controversial stance of western developed countries which generate very high levels of pollution per capita and more subtly, "export" high levels of pollution by buying manufactured products from less developed countries, whilst preaching economy and prudence. This somewhat limited responses to frequently well informed essays on the methods available to limit environmental damage, often failing to examine "to what extent" and "should".

Question 8

There were very few answers to this question. Successful responses explored more than one mathematician and their contribution, not only to mathematics, but answered the question which focuses on how they have 'greatly influenced the modern world'. Favourite choices included Galileo and Pythagoras. The less successful answers chose one mathematician and merely narrated vague details of what they did, with some unclear examples of how this affects our world today.

Question 9

This was a very popular question and there were many adequate answers that explored the kind of technology that facilitates the transmission of news, with the focus being on speed and the debate of how accurate such information was. 'News' meant many different things from international affairs, to more localised stories to family news and even issues such as music. Some answers began to include irrelevant material about Internet pornography and illegal activities such as terrorists communicating using Twitter, Facebook and mobile phones.

A small number of candidates chose to argue about the pros and cons of technology, which was not what the question was asking. A number of other responses did not focus on the 'news' aspect of the question at all, which led to vague and irrelevant answers.

Question 10

This was a very popular question. Those candidates who responded well had a good knowledge of recent disasters. Candidates from Pakistan, for example, discussed the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods and many others discussed recent tsunamis, hurricanes and landslides.

Some responses misunderstood the question and explored the "impact of the greenhouse effect on global warming and the subsequent effect on climate, weather and subsequent natural disasters", rather than all types of natural disaster, thus limiting their responses.

Question 11

This was not a popular choice. More successful answers explored the terms 'special appeal' and exemplified it with a number of good examples of specific poets and actual poems. The less successful candidates chose a very generalised approach which did not name any poets or their works. One candidate chose to criticise all poetry, which might have been a successful approach if they had illustrated their response with actual examples. Better candidates tried to define exactly what poetry was and explored its various forms and how appealing they were to readers and audiences today and in the past.

Question 12

Better answers explored a variety of contexts where it is important to write and speak using good grammar, such as in formal situations, whilst more 'chatty' grammar was seen as more appropriate when speaking to friends. Some answers merely looked at the written word and not at spoken grammar and vice versa. Many answers lacked specific examples to illustrate the valid points being made.

Question 13

Few chose this question, and those that did found it difficult to name any specific examples of works of art that are worth large amounts of money which was specifically asked for in the question. The same, very obvious examples of works of art were often mentioned by candidates, in particular the Mona Lisa. There was quite a lot of uncertainty as to what constituted a 'work of art' with often little focus on the product itself. Some candidates explored music and other forms of expression such as poetry that could not be justified as 'art'. Several candidates wrote about the value of works of art, but did not mention their monetary worth.

Question 14

This was a very popular choice. There were a good number of successful responses which were full of examples. A number of less successful answers did not mention any specific examples of artists or pieces of music/songs, and tended to range through a vast array of different genres of music, which defeated the purpose of the question which was to focus on the 'most appealing' type of music. Many answers were about the general appeal of music and not the candidates own personal choice. Those that did focus on 'slow music' or 'rock' hardly mentioned any artists or songs. Some choices were so wide as to be meaningless; one candidate had chosen the genre 'classic' and included Schoenberg and Michael Jackson. Few candidates seemed able to give reasons beyond 'relaxing', 'relieved stress', 'made them feel like dancing'. A number of more successful answers selected one genre of music and offered detailed, personal insight, perception with a well-informed exploration of illustrations which were selected in support of their argument.

Question 15

There were only a small number of answers to this question. Some successfully explored what traditional crafts were still practised in their society, such as basket weaving, pottery and rug making, whilst others only generally mentioned 'crafts' without specifically exploring what these were and ignored the second part of the question completely. Almost all candidates who answered this question did focus on their own society, but not all answers looked at how these crafts were being 'maintained and supported' either by the government or by the public in general. Those that did explore how tourism affects this industry and how the government provides subsidies were more successful.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8004/13

Paper 13

General comments

The entry for this paper was relatively small and the quality of the responses was high. Introductions were usually clear and succinct with an informative steer towards the areas to be covered in the main body of the essay. Conclusions reflected a personal view based on the main points made and were not simply repeated comments in a list-like fashion. In most cases, candidates made an apt choice of the two questions to be answered and could therefore demonstrate good topic knowledge. Candidates did not often wander off the topic and stayed tuned to the requirements of the wording of the question. They seldom ventured into irrelevance and digression. The very best answers were mature and sophisticated. Appropriate examples were chosen to support major points being made which made the argument all the more convincing. Instances of vagueness, generalisation and assertive statements, unsupported by evidence, were rare.

The standard of English was largely good, although a minority sometimes had difficulties with spelling. There were also occasionally instances of carelessness with grammar, idiom and expression which would have been detected and corrected had the English been systematically checked and edited before handing in the essays.

Use of time

Virtually all candidates experienced no problems coping with the time allowance on this syllabus. Second essays were very rarely substantially different in length and quality from the first essays.

Use of English

The standard of English was good (and excellent in a fair number of instances). These candidates had virtually full operational command of the language and therefore scored high up the scale in the Use of English mark. They wrote with commendable fluency and used a good range of appropriate vocabulary. Where marks were lost, it was generally for spelling or careless errors such as incorrect agreements and misuse of the apostrophe. Hardly anybody received a really low mark for English. A few candidates wrote in an inappropriate racy and chatty tone with occasional use of slang.

Typical spelling errors included:

- occurred, preferred and referred instead of occurred, preferred and referred
- received, committed and accessible instead of received, committed and accessible
- there/ their and to/too were sometimes confused

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Not many candidates picked this question, but those who did answered well. The need for more stringent monitoring and regulation of credit provision for private individuals and commercial enterprises, as well as better financial budgeting by the state was duly stressed. Apt illustration from recent crises strengthened the case.

Question 2

Quite a popular question and generally well answered. Candidates were well aware of both macro- and micro-economic benefits. They knew how tourism contributed to GDP and realised the benefits of obtaining foreign currency. They also recognised and evaluated the positive effects on employment, infrastructure and seasonal income in rural areas.

Question 3

This attracted few responses but answers were strong and well illustrated with historical examples, from Nazi Germany and the USSR. The difference between persuasion as practised by most non-extremist religions and indoctrination which is a vital characteristic of totalitarian regimes, irrespective of their political direction, was effectively demonstrated.

Question 4

This was quite a popular question, with quite a few answers showing pride in their country's pioneering achievements with regard to voting rights for women. A good case was usually made highlighting further progress over the years towards equal rights in other spheres such as employment, education and in politics. The very best answers gave an accurate account of what still remains to be done. An interesting cameo in one essay examined a recent clash in New Zealand with Maori beliefs.

Question 5

This was a topic which was quite popular, particularly with candidates who suffered daily uncertainty with the unpunctual and irregular bus service in Auckland. The train service was also heavily criticised for its lack of track and thus for its unsuitability for commuters. By contrast, the ferry service was praised for its reliability although it was generally considered as not cheap. The role of the private car was thus considered as pivotal. Quite a few candidates fear chaos when the transport system will be even more crowded during the forthcoming rugby World Cup.

Question 6

Understandably, this was the most popular question. The candidates emphasised the instant availability, easy access, comparative cheapness, long opening hours, handy meeting place and multi-locational aspects of fast food establishments. They also identified the marketing strategies, the targeting of children and the warnings of nutritional experts regarding calories, fat and sugar content. Nevertheless, the majority liked the taste, indeed some were virtually addicted to it, and were not prepared to do without, despite the warnings. The best answers were focused on appreciating all the positive aspects and consuming such food in moderation.

Question 7

Not an overly popular question, but good responses were seen with clear understanding shown of the topic. Candidates understood that the developed countries would impede progress and consequently, prosperity in developing countries by attempting to force them to limit carbon emissions. This was seen as being basically unfair as the richer, developed countries have been responsible, and in some cases still are, for significant pollution.

Question 8

There were few answers to this question, but the candidates who picked it showed how mathematics is central to a wide range of scientific disciplines and how its various applications are omnipresent and essential in the everyday life of the individual and decision making authorities.

Question 9

The few who answered the question were able to distinguish between circumstances requiring travel for business transactions and circumstances where telephone, email and video conferencing were adequate for purpose.

Question 10

Responses dealt with the global reaction to recent pandemics in various parts of the world and considered predicted pandemics which turned out to be far less widespread and thus less threatening than expected. The need for global cooperation was rightly stressed and it was acknowledged that the imbalance between developed and developing countries regarding speed, extent and efficiency of response was still a major difficulty.

Question 11

Not one responded to this question.

Question 12

Very few picked this question, but the handful who did answered it well.

Question 13

This question produced some knowledgeable answers. Candidates were able to point to films that had been shot entirely or for the most in their country. They found international appeal to be focused on two main features. First, the splendour and magnificence of the local landscape. Second, the know-how and expertise in special effects of local companies. A further consideration was the relatively low cost of producing films there compared to other places.

Question 14

Quite a popular question which produced some well explained answers. Candidates followed the requirements of the question, offering credible reasons for their choice of what they disliked. These explanations were then fully supported by relevant examples. 'Screamo' music seemed to be the most unpopular genre.

Question 15

This question proved to be very popular. The best responses showed great insight into the various reasons for the popularity of social networking sites. They showed clearly how these sites have a different appeal to individuals with different personalities, who have a variety of reasons for being active on these sites. These reasons include shyness, lack of confidence and a desire for contact at a distance but also keeping in touch with old friends, the need for public self expression and competing with peers in the popularity stakes.