

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/04
Coursework Portfolio

Key messages

In this component, candidates should aim to:

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

General comments

Moderators remarked on the high standards of much of the work and particularly on the wide range of topics that were chosen, many of them demonstrating considerable judgements and maturity.

Some of the work for Assignment 3 was well argued, and there were examples of candidates who presented an excellent overview of their chosen text and its writer's attitude towards the topic. However, this is a test of reading and requires a particular type of response. Some of the texts selected were too long and those that were informative did not give the same sort of opportunity as those that were argumentative. The marking of reading was sometimes too high in terms of the depth and breadth of reading the text. It was important to study texts and examine them, rather than as stimuli for candidates' own writing. More detail about this assignment is given later in the report.

The process of drafting gave candidates many opportunities to develop their work and to improve it. Some candidates demonstrated that they had made changes of editing and occasionally, wholesale revision. Unfortunately there were still examples of drafts that were exactly the same as the final version. There was also still a widespread misunderstanding of the rules about indication of error in drafts, and centres are reminded that this is forbidden.

Resit candidates had very little time between the end of summer and the entry date to produce entirely new folders. Where a candidate had an inconsistent folder, a good approach was to take the weakest piece, explain its shortcomings and replace it with a new assignment that would contribute to a slightly higher mark than previously submitted. This was often more successful than attempting to replace all three assignments.

Centres are asked to spend some time reading the advice given in the syllabus and in other documents, including reports for recent sessions. They are also asked to use the mark schemes, especially for reading, bearing in mind that to give a high mark in a mark band, all the strands must be achieved at the stated level.

Good practice was where:

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

- some imagination was used in suggesting unusual ideas for writing, and there was a certain amount of risk taking
- there was a strong sense of the candidate as an individual writing with conviction and enthusiasm
- drafts were considered and improved
- teachers gave clear advice about how Assignment 3 was to be attempted, and it was explained that it was a test of reading in depth and with understanding, often of subtle shades of meaning.

Less good practice was where:

- the teacher set the same topic for an assignment to everyone and gave too much guidance as to the content. The result was undue similarity between the work of candidates, and this affected the marks
- there was little imagination in task setting, and candidates wrote on well-established themes without conviction or imagination
- there was a particular problem in Assignment 2 where candidates wrote incredible and often immature stories about unrealistic topics
- in Assignment 3, candidates addressed the topic rather than the text
- the work was significantly too long or too short, which affected the quality. However, centres should remember that the word lengths are given for guidance, and there should be no automatic penalty for ignoring them.

Task setting

Many successful candidates provided evidence of writing in three distinctive registers and three distinctive genres. This indicated careful planning of the course as a whole by teachers who had clearly understood the educational advantages of taking this option. Certainly, it was better to avoid writing two similar pieces and generally better if the topic of each assignment was different. Occasionally a candidate wrote about the same sport in Assignments 1 and 2. This was not necessarily an unwise decision as it was possible to argue for the sport in the first piece and write a description of attending a match in the second.

Setting the same assignment across a whole teaching set sometimes disadvantaged specific candidates either because the challenge was insufficient for a good candidate to demonstrate quality or because it was too difficult for a candidate to manage and understand. Some candidates had no interest in the topic that was set.

A danger of giving candidates free choice was that sometimes a wrong choice was made. This was particularly so where candidates were able to choose their own text for Assignment 3. The Moderators advised that in such cases, monitoring of the process by teachers was essential.

Assessment of coursework

In many cases Moderators were able to agree the marking of writing, which indicated that centres' procedures were sound. Slight changes to centres' marks enabled them to be brought into line with the standards set by Cambridge. Centres often used a wide range of the marks available and avoided bunching on specific marks. Rank orders were generally agreed. There was also evidence of internal moderation which in some cases had changed original marks to a more realistic level. Centres are thanked for their work in assessing and moderating.

Moderators were unable to agree the marks where too much weight had been given to Content and Structure and not enough to shortcomings in Style and Accuracy. Some centres assessed too many of their candidates at a high level. Occasionally, the marking of the weakest candidates was too severe.

In some cases there was no annotation on individual assignments. The Moderator was unable to understand how marks might have been awarded. Some centres did not annotate specific errors on the final versions of assignments. The Moderator was unable to understand how much weight had therefore been given to the accuracy of the work.

Writing

The best candidates structured their work properly in developed paragraphs and avoided repetition. Some of the sequencing of sentences within paragraphs was very convincing and made the work easy to follow. They wrote with a wide range of appropriate vocabulary, that is, the right word in the right place. When candidates tried too hard to use an imposing vocabulary they ended up sounding unconvincing and occasionally unclear. A common error was to use a particular word too many times in the same or adjacent sentences.

Candidates who achieved marks in the top band wrote in a range of sentence shapes and lengths, demonstrating control of longer sentences where appropriate. Elsewhere, there were, however, many problems. The commonest was that of repetitious structures, especially double, coordinated sentences. Some candidates wrote very long, convoluted sentences that could not be understood. The habit of using single words was often too frequent within an assignment and became an irritation.

Better candidates wrote accurately. The commonest errors were those of sentence separation, in particular using pronouns to join sentences instead of conjunctions, and spelling errors including problems concerning homophones. The inability to spell was often demonstrated by a careless approach to using the spell check. Examples were:

The smell of hot motel rock filled the air
...failed on numerous equations
...more chance to live and savvies
How can I be invested in...? (interested)
Your prostration of teenagers (presentation)

Candidates lost marks because they did not proofread their work. In some cases this was very obvious.

Assessment of reading

The best candidates gave an extended overview of the text which summarised the main ideas, the writer's attitude towards what was usually a controversial topic and, briefly, the candidate's own views. They then either quoted a series of ideas and opinions from the text and evaluated them in terms of their integrity as arguments or, gave an extension of their views, assimilating material from the text into a well-structured and convincing response.

Candidates who examined a series of ideas and opinions and evaluated them with varying degrees of quality, without giving clear evidence of a grasp of the text as a whole, were less successful. Some candidates reflected the ideas but did not respond to them, preferring to write their own ideas on the topic. Addressing the topic rather than the text did not respond correctly to this assignment, and the reading mark in these instances was below band 3.

Some centres were too ready to give a mark of between 8 and 10 when the quality of the reading from script to script was markedly different. Some candidates, however, were under-rewarded, usually because their responses to individual ideas were well explained and completely relevant.

Administration by centres

Moderators' chief complaints were that the coursework was contained in plastic folders. These were difficult to handle. Some centres did not attach the sheets in each folder properly and securely. Centres are asked to use paper staples or, if available in their country, treasury tags. Paper clips are not secure and where folders are in a pile, individual sheets can be lost or confusingly out of order.

It was not always immediately clear which version of an Assignment was a draft and which was the final one. One draft per folder was almost always enclosed. It was not necessary for there to be a draft of all three assignments.

Moderators complimented centres on their filling in of forms and presentation of the folders. Most centres enclosed the CASF(WMS) form and indicated which of their candidates were included in the sample. The CASF was required for all entered candidates, and all changes to the marks at internal moderation should have been shown in the right hand column. This was not always the case and Moderators had to search for evidence of internal moderation in the folders themselves.

There were few examples where the text(s) used for Assignment 3 was missing from the folders. It was useful for each candidate to have a copy which showed which parts had been selected for evaluation in the response.

Internal moderation

Centres are reminded that the function of internal moderation is to bring the work of different sets into line with each other. Enough folders from each set need to be scrutinised to ensure that it has as a whole, or in part, not been leniently or severely marked. The marks of the set should be scaled accordingly so that the rank order of all candidates in the centre is sound. Where the Internal Moderator finds that the marks of a particular set teacher are bunched on a narrow range, special care should be taken to determine whether the scripts should be reassessed.

Assignment 1

This assignment was generally well completed. There was a very wide range of topics and many of these were well argued with a good deal of personal conviction, whether as speeches or as formal arguments.

Content and Structure were the strong features of this assignment. The best candidates had much to say and conviction in saying it. Careful planning ensured that repetition was avoided and there was some skilful use of a wide range of natural connectives, beyond the rather mechanical use of 'moreover', 'however', 'firstly' and 'secondly'. Less good responses often started well, but later there was a comparative weakness of content and paragraphing which suggested that the choice of topic was in fact not a good one.

Some topics were well worn. When writing about the death penalty or video games for example, the content was very similar, almost as if the ideas had come out of a text book. Topics such as euthanasia, the legalisation of marijuana, social media, abortion and Supersize me generally lacked originality. These topics have been attempted so often and for so many years, that experienced Moderators can almost predict the content before starting to read. Admittedly they are matters of concern to sixteen-year-olds, but then so are other, perhaps more personal topics such as:

Black Friday
Are youth sports too intense?
Risky sports
Arming the police
Matters of mental health
Has feminism gone too far?

A number of candidates wrote intelligent arguments supporting or criticising President Trump.

Assignment 2

There was the usual collection of well-written descriptions and original and interesting personal accounts. It is worthwhile to develop in candidates the techniques involved in turning personal experience into engaging writing. The best of this writing was never too plain in its expression. After all, this assignment was an opportunity to use vocabulary convincingly and to choose detail with some care as to its relevance. There were some good examples written to the generic themes of '*I'll never forget...*' and '*A moment when time stood still...*'. '*My garden*' was a good descriptive title, and there were excellent descriptions of a country park and '*The candy museum shop*' that could only have come from a love of the place and the imprint made on the memory. '*The school, it sings*' was a very clever and attractively written piece of description and '*Grandma's house*' was almost certain to be a moving choice. A final example of a description that touched the writers' imagination rather than recalling a real place was '*The cathedral ruins*'.

Descriptions of beaches and fairgrounds tended to be very similar and because they were stock subjects did not seem to be of real places. Very often these responses were largely in the form of lists of details rather than creations of places to which the reader could relate. Descriptions of places such as Madeira, Cordoba, Dubai and Camden Market in London were presented in better structures and demonstrated the obvious interest of candidates who visited them.

Fiction was more of a problem. There were some excellent stories, unusual in content and having some clever and unexpected endings, and a control of events and language that made the narratives seem real. Candidates who wrote stories that were unbelievable, to the extent of being immature and even silly, were less successful. These stories included accounts of trespassing in a haunted house and various stories

about aliens and zombies. If they were meant to be inspired by Gothic stories, they were almost always very weak imitations. Stories about plane crashes rarely seemed credible, especially where the writer proved to be the only survivor. Such stories should be avoided.

Stories needed titles to whet the reader's appetite. Here are some examples:

The Crimson Petal
A peculiar anomaly
The other side of the mirror
The mystery of the Ouija board
Broken paradise
Lights out
Traumatic teenager
The man you should have never met

Assignment 3

Some of the problems of the assessment of reading have already been noted. The selection of an appropriate text was not easy. It had to be one that could generate some argument on the part of the candidate. Candidates did best either with texts they disagreed with or only partially agreed. The writer's attitude towards the topic needed to be clearly addressed, and the text had to offer sufficient challenge.

In the past this report has listed a number of types of text that have caused candidates some difficulty. On this occasion, there were three main issues. Some texts were so long that it was difficult for candidates to select ideas and opinions for their responses. Texts that were entirely informative gave very little for candidates to discuss other than the topic. Some texts on serious topics were written with a sense of humour or satire; candidates found it very difficult to appreciate the humour and to separate it from what the writer actually believed. They thus missed the point and lost marks. This was particularly true of writers such as Jeremy Clarkson and Giles Coren.

Candidates also had difficulty with articles by Katie Hopkins. These were not humorous, but the strength of her views was such that arguing with them involved making points that were too obvious, and candidates often, mistakenly, attacked the writer instead of evaluating her views.

Centres are advised to avoid the Facebook article by Janet Street Porter, 'I saw a killer die', Katie Hopkins on migrants and 'Educating Essex'. These articles have been incredibly popular, but rarely provide candidates with the opportunity to respond originally, and often prevent candidates from achieving their full potential.

This assignment contributed fully to the writing marks. Good candidates wrote cohesive essays in response. Less good candidates provided an unstructured set of quotations from the text in no particular order.

These are some of the topics covered by the texts:

School has taken control of children's lives
Kneeling for the United States national anthem
Should phones be allowed in class?
Is boredom really that bad?
There should be boxing in every school
Handwriting doesn't matter
The rise of selfie accidents
Cambodian sweatshops

The topic of homosexual marriage was a good example of the increasing breadth of mature concern among teenagers.

Final comments

The general impression of work done for this session was that it was well written and presented. The standard of assessment was generally high. It is worth adding that the weakest writing was sometimes the second assignment for a variety of reasons, sometimes to do with content but chiefly with style and accuracy. In a number of cases the strongest writing was that of the third assignment, possibly because candidates were supported by the text.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0524/06
Speaking and Listening (Coursework)

Key messages

Generally, the standard of administration and accuracy of assessment continue to be of a high standard.

Where there are issues, the following guidelines are relevant:

- An **Individual Candidate Record Card** is required for each candidate entered. These cards should be treated as 'living' documents that are completed when each task is undertaken. **Specific** information about the choices made for each task is required by the Moderator. For Task 1 a comment reading 'a talk about a hobby of your choice' is not helpful but 'my interest in (explain specific hobby)' is useful for the Moderator.
- Cambridge requires a centre to provide **four different items** in the package sent to the Moderator. These are:
 - a **recorded sample** on CD, DVD or USB drive
 - the **Summary Forms** for the whole cohort entered
 - a **copy of the marks** that have already been sent to Cambridge
 - the **Individual Candidate Record Cards** for the candidates included in the sample.

Each one of these items is very important in the process of assessing a centre's performance. Centres are urged to ensure all four of these items are included in the package sent to Cambridge as the omission of any of them may cause a delay in the moderation process.

- Centres should generate audio files, where possible transferred to a single CD, DVD or USB drive, in a recognised common audio file format that can be played by standard computer software such as mp3, wav and wma. The file format AUP should **not** be used. The **quality** of the recordings should be **checked** before despatching to Cambridge.
- It is helpful if, for each candidate, a **separate track** is created and its file name is the candidate's name and examination number.
- The teacher/Examiner should introduce the recordings using the rubric in the syllabus. For paired activities, it would be helpful if **candidates introduce themselves and the roles they are playing** before beginning the task so the Moderator can clearly distinguish who is speaking and when.
- Although there is no formal requirement that activities should be of a minimum length, please consider whether the **assessment criteria can be adequately met** if the activity is very short.

General comments

Centres are reminded that there are specific forms provided by Cambridge for use with Component 6; namely the Individual Candidate Record and the Summary Form.

For Component 6, centres are encouraged to be creative in the choice of tasks but the assessment criteria should always be used as a guide to the skills being assessed. The integration of literature into the activities is encouraged.

Comments on specific tasks

The most successful tasks attempted were those where the candidates took ownership of a topic and were genuinely interested in what they were saying. Well planned and prepared responses to tasks are generally more successful but responses do not benefit from over-scripted, and seemingly ‘artificial’ performances, where spontaneity is missing, tend to do less well.

Task 1

A wide range of topics were undertaken although the task generally took the form of an individual presentation. Centres that allowed candidates to choose their own topics as opposed to dictating a generic theme often provided the opportunity for candidates to be successful. It is important to consider that this component allows differentiation by task setting so the ability of the individual candidate needs to be taken into consideration when these choices are made. More able candidates should be encouraged to choose more exacting and mature topics that extend their abilities to construct a compelling argument within a time frame of approximately 3–4 minutes that includes an element of introspection and reflection.

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

- A significant event in my life
- My love of a personal interest/hobby (that moves beyond the purely descriptive and is reflective and thought-provoking)
- Why I love a particular text/movie/work of art/etc.
- My passion for (e.g.) hypercars.
- My favourite place
- The benefits of artificial intelligence
- My hero – who and why
- The dangers of added sugar

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

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

Task 2

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

Entirely scripted responses, be they discussions or self-generated role plays, often do not allow candidates to demonstrate the skills described in the higher attainment bands.

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

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

- Arguing for and against a current affairs topic such as the benefits of modern technology or the use of GM crops
- Discussing a text or author both candidates know well
- Planning a special event – either at school or for a more personal function
- The effects of social pressures on teenagers
- Comparing the merits of two famous people where each candidate acts as a champion for one of the celebrities
- Acting as employers discussing who should be given a job from a list of prospective candidates (and variations on the theme)

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

- Should cannabis be legalised?
- Interviews where one of the candidates acts solely as the interviewer (This is limiting for the candidate)
- A single topic imposed by the centre for the whole of its cohort such as 'Room 101' in which no individual choice is allowed (Ownership of and commitment to the topic is not always evident)

Task 3

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

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

- A trial scene, possibly based on a literary text – e.g. 'Of Mice and Men', 'An Inspector Calls', 'A View From The Bridge', 'All My Sons'
- A discussion of a topical issue with each candidate having their own viewpoint
- Balloon debate – who to include/discard from a list of famous people where each candidate champions the cause of their chosen celebrity
- Planning a celebration or community event

General Conclusions

The general standard of assessment by centres is at or near the correct level. Generally, centres have become very efficient in the administration of the component and in the choice of topics. Candidates undertaking speaking and listening activities continue to be enthusiastic about the experience and clearly benefit from careful planning and practise.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0524/11
Reading Passage (Core)

Key messages

- Proof reading is essential. Marks were lost through avoidable mistakes which could have been corrected by candidates checking over their work.
- In **Question 1(g)** candidates should remember that they cannot simply repeat the same word in their answer to **(ii)** as they used in **(i)** but should elaborate on the definition given in **(i)** and focus their response on describing the effect of the whole phrase.
- Candidates need to ensure that they are writing in the correct format/narrative for **Question 2** as well as following the bullet points to construct their response to the task. They also need to ensure that they pay attention to their spelling, punctuation and grammar to assist clarity.
- Candidates must remember to deal with all three bullet points in **Question 2**, and attempt to develop ideas, both factual and inferential. The key message here is to go beyond the text for the third bullet point.
- Candidates must ensure that selected summary points for **Question 3(a)** indicate clearly their validity to the question being asked.
- Candidates should attempt to order their summary points in **Question 3(b)** through synthesis and textual links.

General comments

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

Responses to the sub-questions in **Question 1** revealed that the main points in the passage had been clearly understood and many responded well to the more straightforward questions. In general, the questions enabled all candidates to produce some correct answers while at the same time challenging those who were more perceptive to gain higher marks. Overall, the standard of performance of most candidates was of a satisfactory to very good level, with only a very small number performing at a less than satisfactory standard.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Which one word (in line 3) tells you that the train is having difficulty moving?

The majority of candidates were able to identify the word 'faltered' successfully although a few believed 'effort', 'vibrating', or 'grind' indicated problems for the train. Clearly these three words could be applied to a train which is moving quickly or easily as well as experiencing problems with moving. Candidates who misspelled 'faltered' such as 'flatered' were not penalised.

(b) Give two reasons from paragraph one for the train having difficulty in moving.

Many candidates were not precise enough when answering this question and answers such as 'snow accumulating' or 'thick snow' were not clear enough to gain marks. Responses were often incomplete, mentioning a gathering of snow but failing to say where the snow was. The key to the train's difficulty in moving was of course the depth of snow in front of it on the tracks and the weight of snow being carried on the roofs of the carriages. Answers which managed to identify these two factors gained both marks. Quite a number of candidates wrote that the train 'entered a dip' which it did, but it was not the dip which prevented the train from moving, it was the deep snow which had fallen into the dip. Other candidates merely referred to 'two banks of snow' giving no explanation as to how high the banks were. Candidates who referred to 'a metre of snow' were awarded a mark because the measurement indicated depth. A few candidates lost focus on this question by describing the difficulty the train was having moving by referring to it 'vibrating' or 'faltering' rather than the reasons for this. It is important that candidates read the question carefully in order to establish what is being asked for.

(c) Explain, using your own words, what the writer means by the phrase: 'a strip of shadow lost in a field of sparkling whiteness' (lines 9–10).

Candidates as a whole found it difficult to answer this question because of its focus on language and explanation. Many answers were merely lifts of the phrase or a paraphrase that the train was lost in a field of snow. A number of candidates believed that the train was camouflaged or completely covered by the falling snow, thereby ignoring the reference to 'a strip of shadow'. The better responses to this question pointed to the contrast between the 'dark' train and the brilliant, snowy background or field. Answers which focused on the difficulty of seeing the small train, or the fact that it seemed to be a long, thin train, were also credited and gained at least one mark. As with **Question 1(g)(ii)**, it is important that candidates try to show understanding of the whole phrase and how its effect is achieved by the writer rather than simply paraphrase it or simply list a figure of speech used by the writer without further comment.

(d) Using your own words, state three things Jack does when the train stops moving (paragraphs 3 and 4).

Candidates generally gained at least one mark on this question with many scoring two or three marks. Quite clearly in the passage Jack, the train driver, 'stays at the controls with his hand on the wheel'; talks to himself and swears; opens every valve; and 'shuts down the accelerator'. Candidates were able to gain marks with different combinations of these actions and those who included more than one point on a single line were not penalised for this. A number of candidates believed that Jack 'pushed' the accelerator, which he may have done, but the word 'pushed' could also mean he was accelerating rather than stopping the train so no mark was awarded for such a response. Some candidates stated that Jack was 'angry' – which he was – but anger does not constitute an action as required by the question. Other candidates believed that Jack 'shouted angrily to himself' when it was quite clear in the passage that he 'muttered angrily to himself'. The question asked candidates to use 'own words' when answering this question but because the material had to be identified within paragraphs three and four, selected lifting was credited.

(e) Re-read paragraph seven:

(i) Why did Jack not reply to the conductor?

Most candidates realised that Jack was so angry that he found it hard to speak or reply to the conductor. A number of candidates, however, thought that Jack was merely angry as opposed to furious, and therefore did not gain a mark on this question. Answers which included an intensifier such as 'so', 'too (to)', or 'very' gained a mark.

(ii) What is the reason for this reaction?

A few candidates repeated that 'he was very angry' for this question and therefore failed to distinguish between Jack's reaction and the reason for his. The majority of candidates, however, understood that Jack's anger arose from his never having been prevented from completing a train journey before owing to the weather. Candidates who did not fully explain this and simply maintained that he had never been stopped or affected by the weather before did not gain the mark because this reason could be applied to any circumstance rather than the train journey in question.

(f) Explain why the conductor 'clenched his hands nervously' (line 47).

The majority of candidates realised that the conductor 'clenched his hands nervously' because he was uncertain or worried about whether the train would be able to continue either sooner or later, in spite of his confident reassuring replies to the equally concerned passengers. However, candidates who mistakenly believed that the conductor 'knew' the journey wouldn't continue did not gain the mark because he clearly didn't know one way or the other. Some candidates answered that the conductor was lying to or deceiving the passengers when asked about the train's problems and such answers were credited if there was some explanation about his uncertainty regarding the train. A number of candidates believed that the conductor was frightened by the passengers' reactions to the train stopping but there is no evidence in the passage to support the idea that he is cowed by their questioning. It is, however, reasonable to argue that the conductor is worried about the passengers' reactions if the train cannot continue its journey, based, for example, on the 'elderly gentleman's' threat to complain to the transport manager if the former should miss 'an important meeting' because of the delay. Such answers gained a mark as long as they explained the 'uncertainty' or 'if' of what would happen next. Responses which included the word 'nervously' or 'nervous' did not gain the mark.

(g) Complete parts (i) and (ii) to answer Question 1(g).

(i) Re-read paragraphs 3 and 4. Explain, using your own words, what the writer means by the words in *italics* in each of the following phrases:

The question asked candidates to explain in their own words what the writer meant by the words in italics. Many candidates produced 'catch all' phrases which were more akin to a **(g)(ii)** type explanation of the whole phrase. Only the more successful responses showed real understanding of the italicised words and only a small number of candidates gained all three available marks for this question.

(a) 'He felt the engine shuddering *pathetically* ...' (lines 12–13)

Candidates struggled to explain the meaning of 'pathetically' in the context of the 'engine shuddering' and very few gained a mark for this question about phrase '**(a)**'. There were a few responses which correctly identified the idea of 'hopelessly', 'weakly', or 'feebly' with the most common synonym being 'uselessly'. Some candidates attempted to explain the wrong word, such as 'shuddering'.

(b) '... exhausted, with all its wheels *clogged* with snow' (line 14)

Candidates were more successful with explaining the meaning of 'clogged', usually describing the train wheels as being 'full of' or 'stuffed' with snow. Responses which described the wheels as being 'covered' with snow were also awarded a mark. A few candidates explained the meaning of 'exhausted' instead of 'clogged'.

(c) '...the engine settled and ceased its *straining* efforts' (line 19)

Very few candidates were able to explain 'straining' in terms of 'struggling' but a reasonable number were able to focus on the concept of the train having tried its hardest or having made a 'huge' attempt to continue moving through the snow and in doing so gained a mark.

- (ii) Explain **how** the language **in each of the phrases in Question (g)(i)** helps to suggest the difficulty that the train encounters moving in the snow.
- (a) *'He felt the engine shuddering pathetically...'* (lines 12–13)
- (b) *'...exhausted, with all its wheels clogged with snow'* (line 14)
- (c) *'...the engine settled and ceased its straining efforts'* (line 19)

Many candidates achieved marks on this question by showing some understanding/offering a partial explanation of individual phrases as a whole. Most commented successfully on some of the difficulties encountered by the train such as its weakness, loss of strength, and eventual defeat by the snow. Only a small number showed any real appreciation of how the vocabulary was used to contribute to the writer's purpose.

Less successful responses made general comments about 'the wheels being stuck' or 'the train coming to a halt' without demonstrating a clear understanding of the individual phrases. As in previous sessions, the marks gained from this question often totalled fewer than for **g(i)**. Sometimes this was because answers to **g(ii)** did no more than repeat those given for **g(i)** or because a misunderstanding was carried through from **g(i)**. It seems that quite a number of candidates fail to consider other significant words in the phrases and merely focus on the effects of the word selected in **g(i)**.

A small, but significant, number of responses attempted explanations of the phrases by simply reiterating them or lifting the language from the phrase and therefore produced a circular explanation. For example, instead of attempting to find own words for 'shuddering pathetically' candidates merely repeated it. It is worth pointing out as in previous reports, that the explanations of the phrases should be grounded in the context of the question as opposed to mere simple interpretations of the words used. The key focus of explanations here was 'the difficulty the train encounters moving in the snow' but many responses did not relate their explanations to the focus of the question, ignoring the implications, for example, of a train which 'shudders' or is 'exhausted'.

Question 2

Imagine that you are the conductor from **Passage A**. After the train has reached its destination, you write a journal entry recording the events of the day.

Write the words of the journal entry. In your journal you should comment on:

- what the weather was like that day and how it affected the journey
- the problems you faced with the passengers and how you dealt with them
- how the train eventually started moving again.

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

Begin your journal: 'We had a very difficult journey on the express train this morning...'

Write about 200 to 300 words.

Most responses followed the requirement to view the situation in hindsight, i.e. after the journey had ended with very few merely describing the events of the 'actual' journey as it unfolded. Most candidates wrote responses which addressed the three bullet points, although not always in 'journal entry' register. A significant number of candidates wrote the journal from the point of view of Jack, the driver of the train, as opposed to the conductor, and as a result were unable to attain Reading marks for Bands 1 and 2. Quite a number of candidates wrote the journal from the point of view of both the conductor and Jack, often switching from one to the other depending on the series of events being covered. For example, the snowy weather and its effect on the train might be described from Jack's point of view as he angrily responded to the train's grinding halt, followed by the conductor's account about how he tried to placate the worried and frustrated passengers, before a subsequent return to Jack finding a solution to getting the train up and running. Clearly, candidates must determine what the question asks them to do if they are to achieve higher Reading marks on this question.

It is important that candidates attempt to develop ideas related to the three prompts which are grounded in the passage, and such development should be predominantly in their own words as opposed to frequent lifting of phrases and even sentences from the original. Less successful responses either contained almost word for word accounts of what was said, for example, by passengers, or used lifted phrases from the passage to describe the plight of the train, or the anxiety of the conductor with his 'hands ... clenched nervously'. Some candidates barely mentioned the awful weather conditions and the train stopping, preferring to go straight to the narrative between the conductor and the passengers. As always, it is important that candidates adopt a balanced approach to the three prompts.

Many candidates attempted to cover the three prompts in a balanced approach but a significant number, having described the awful weather conditions and the subsequent problems for both train and its passengers, barely mentioned **how** the train was restarted, if at all. Comments such as 'the weather improved' or 'the snow melted' tagged onto the first two prompts were far from convincing and showed little thought about or development of events in the passage. Better responses described such actions as collective digging of snow by train staff and passengers; melting of the snow clogging up the wheels through hot coals or hot water from the engine; and rescue parties arriving on another shunting train or even helicopters. Some candidates described open hostility between the passengers and the conductor, sometimes resulting in violence, but generally emotions and feelings evident in the passage were dealt with sensitively and credibly, with a satisfactory ending for all concerned at the successful conclusion of the interrupted journey. Some candidates believed the train had stopped because of the 'snow on the road'.

Most candidates wrote correct, though relatively simple, sentences, with an adequate range of vocabulary and tried to use an appropriate register. The most successful responses – a significant minority – achieved Band 1 marks for both Content and Language. The least successful responses were not well-controlled and lacking structure and organisation, although the chronological nature of events helped candidates develop their accounts.

Question 3

Read carefully Passage B, Swiss Train Travel, in the Reading Booklet Insert and then answer Question 3(a) and (b).

Answer the questions in the order set.

(a) Notes

What did the writer enjoy about Swiss railways and the holiday according to Passage B? Write your answers using short notes. Write one point per line. You do not need to use your own words.

This question gave candidates the chance to boost their total score by appropriate selection. It was answered relatively well with many candidates making one point per line as instructed, and focusing on the topic and the question. However, there were a significant number of candidates who (largely by selective lifting) included several points on the same line thereby self-penalising. The most frequent limitations included the repetition of the 'amazing views' (point 1) observed from the train. This repetition often comprised separate lines for 'lush green valleys' or 'steep cliffs' or 'mountains dusted with snow'. Some candidates successfully differentiated between point 1 with its emphasis on enjoying the ride and point 3 with its emphasis on enjoying watching the scenery. As in previous sessions some candidates lost marks by abbreviating their answers to such an extent that it became unclear as to what point was being made. For example, 'punctuality' could refer to people, buses, trains or all of them. Some candidates identified the writer as having enjoyed the lunch at the Waldhaus Hotel whereas closer reading would indicate he might well have done but the enjoyment in the text is linked to the pianist and his playing of local music. Many candidates stated that the writer enjoyed the 'engineering challenges' which of course is not true because firstly, he wasn't an engineer, secondly, they had already occurred prior to his holiday, and thirdly, more accurately, he appreciated the results of such engineering such as the extraordinary architecture and the comprehensive nature of the train routes. In respect of the train network being 'comprehensive' a number of candidates wrongly interpreted this as the train routes being understood. Most candidates were able to identify features of the buses relating to condition and efficiency, as well as point 6 about honesty and not checking the bus tickets of passengers. A number of candidates believed that the journey from London to Brig was an enjoyable part of the holiday rather than the 'four glorious days in the lovely town of Chur'. Surprisingly perhaps, very few candidates identified the 'hot September sunshine' as being an enjoyable aspect of the holiday.

(b) Summary

Now use your notes to write a summary of what Passage B tells you about what the writer enjoyed about Swiss railways and the holiday.

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

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

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

Clearly candidates would do well to group similar factors together when planning their summaries. For example, features of the railway and buses; features of the landscape; details about the places visited, and so on. Some candidates wrote the summary in the first or second person, and occasionally, produced a brief persuasive article about Swiss railways and holidays by unnecessarily emphasising through repetition how enjoyable it was or could be.

Concluding Comments

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

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0524/21
Reading Passages (Extended)

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- used examination time efficiently to address all parts of the three questions equally carefully
- read the instructions for each task closely, paying attention to key words and guidance
- considered the evidence of the skills and understanding they needed to demonstrate in each response
- planned and organised their ideas before beginning their answer
- selected only the material appropriate for the response to the question
- avoided repetition
- used their own words carefully, appropriately and precisely
- avoided copying and/or lifting whole sentences or sections from either text
- edited their response to amend any careless slips, incomplete or unclear ideas
- adapted their writing style to suit each task, taking account of voice, audience and purpose.

General comments

Candidates' responses largely demonstrated familiarity with the general demands of each task and at least some understanding of the need to adapt and use relevant material from the passages in order to answer the questions. Most had paid attention to the guidance regarding word limits and had attempted all parts of all three questions. Answers which focused on the detail of the task as set were best able to target higher marks. Candidates appeared to find both passages equally accessible and better answers avoided the copying and/or over-reliance on the language of the text that featured in less successful responses to all three questions.

In **Question 1**, successful responses included a range of relevant ideas, effectively developed and supported by appropriate detail, and were able to draw conclusions about the mission and the safety features of the suit. The strongest responses were able to adopt and maintain the perspective of the Commander of Satellite Control, as distinct from that of the narrator, to offer convince advice on a range of additional measures that needed to be taken to ensure astronauts' safety. Some mid-range answers missed opportunities to develop and interpret the material, and often produced uneven responses which sometimes included the addition of extraneous material, for example, related to an invasion by aliens.

For **Question 2**, candidates need to make specific and detailed comments in relation to appropriate choices. To gain marks in the higher bands candidates need to consider and explain the effects, connotations and associations of their identified choices, demonstrating an understanding of the writer's purpose. In most responses, there were a sufficient number of appropriate choices selected from the relevant paragraphs to allow for a range of comment and many contained some accurate explanations of meanings. In order to target higher marks, most responses needed to go further in considering and explaining the specifics of the examples they had chosen. Weaker responses tried to explain the selected language in the same or similar words as the language choice – 'hubcap of a wheel' was often explained as wheels have hubcaps or 'blue-green glory' as blue and green are glorious, for example. A number of answers repeated similar, often generalised, explanations when attempting to deal with different choices, diluting the evidence of understanding.

In **Question 3**, many candidates managed to achieve a good number of the marks available through identifying a reasonable number of points. Candidates do not need to use their own words in **Question 3(a)**, although some did to good effect. In **Question 3(a)** short notes, identifying each separate idea precisely, are required, rather than whole sentences or imprecise selections from the passage. In **Question 3(b)** own words must be used and ideas need to be organised to address the focus of the question and not simply offer a paraphrase or précis of the original text. A significant number of responses missed opportunities to target higher bands by relying on lifted phrases and sections from the passage. Candidates should use their own words as far as possible in this summary task, otherwise it suggests that they do not understand the wording of the original and limits the evidence of their own writing skills. It is not a requirement that every word is altered, though ideas need to be communicated clearly and fluently – the best responses showed an engagement with the task, demonstrating competence in the real-life skill of selective summary. They were able to produce informative, assured writing, helpfully organised for the benefit of their reader. The least effective responses attempted a cut-and-paste approach, working through the passage to lift and then reassemble phrases – an approach indicating little focus on the task.

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

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Imagine you are the Commander of Satellite Control. After this incident, you decide to write a letter to all satellite stations about safety issues for astronauts who go on missions.

Write the letter from the Commander of Satellite Control to all satellite stations.

In your letter you should:

- **briefly describe what happened to Astronaut A while out on the mission and why it is a matter of concern**
- **explain the existing safety features of the spacesuits and how they are adapted to perform missions**
- **provide advice on additional measures that need to be taken to ensure astronauts' safety.**

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

Begin your letter:

'Dear Colleagues,

Last week we had a serious incident involving Astronaut A who had been sent out on an important mission ...'

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

The task invited candidates to demonstrate their skills and understanding by using and modifying ideas from Astronaut A's narrative account; then to develop and present them as a convincing and appropriate letter regarding safety issues for astronauts who go on missions following the incident. The question encouraged candidates to show that they could do more than just repeat or retell events from the text, as details of events needed to be interpreted from the viewpoint of someone with an overview of and/or responsibility for what had happened – the Commander of Satellite Control. Good responses were able to reflect on events as narrated and utilise the passage, selecting relevant information and using it to draw conclusions about future missions, whilst maintaining a clear sense of voice. Most candidates started and ended as a letter, though formal letter protocols were sometimes overlooked, and many forgot to sign off as the Commander and used

their own names instead; a few did not sign off at all. There were a pleasing number of outstanding responses from candidates meeting and/or going beyond requirements for Band One. These responses showed evidence of close reading - moving beyond surface meaning and irrelevant material - and homing in on more subtle ideas and useful details in order, for example, to identify precise problems with existing missions and consider how these could be remedied. Where responses were less successful in targeting higher bands, there was often the sense that rather than returning to the text to identify and plan content for their answers in advance of writing, candidates had either attempted to write a more general letter to other satellite stations, with limited focus on the details of the passage, or had undertaken to work back through the passage repeating and replaying events, losing sight of the task in doing so. Some of the weakest responses misinterpreted the incident, for example reporting that the astronaut had died. A few were too basic and/or confused to offer evidence of more than a very general grasp at best.

In response to bullet one, most candidates were able to include some details about what happened to Astronaut A once the target had been identified, though some missed development opportunities, for example, by not mentioning use of the jet control. The sounds that the astronaut heard were often described by using lifted language, such as 'the gentle hiss of oxygen, the faint whirr of motors, the susurration of your own breathing', without recognising that the focus needed to be on the actual change in sounds of which the astronaut became aware. Many candidates became embroiled with detailed descriptions, at times lifted, of the failure of the suit. The explanation that 'the oxygen regulator had run wild and sent the pressure soaring' was often copied in its entirety. Details needed to be modified to address both parts of the bullet point – the best answers set details of events within the context of why these were a matter for concern, avoiding the simply narrative offering of less secure responses.

The second bullet was sometimes addressed thinly and/or relied heavily on lifting from the text. Most candidates managed to describe the gauges, internal lockers, safety harness and the helmet's external sunshade. Some less well-focused responses lifted extraneous details, such as 'two metres long' and 'softly chattering'. Development was often limited as candidates concentrated on simply naming the parts of the spacesuit and did not address the second part of the bullet. Others diluted evidence of close reading by misinterpreting details, for example suggesting that the safety harness and/or conveyor attached the astronaut to the station.

When addressing the third bullet of the question, most candidates were able to offer at least one or two recommendations. Stronger responses were able to respond thoughtfully to the problems outlined in bullet one and the information provided in bullet two to make plausible and relevant recommendations for improvement in safety procedures. Less successful responses did not pick up prompts from the text and wrote from their own observations of space travel. Other than offering the idea that the suits should be checked more frequently, these responses did not provide accurate or concrete suggestions. Some drifted too far from the text to offer fanciful suggestions based on television space programmes and did not fully address the requirements of the question concerning safety advice on future missions.

Good responses focused on all three bullet points and displayed the ability to select material relevant to each part of the task. They contained a range of ideas that were developed and closely related to the passage and carefully integrated detail. Responses which relied on a mechanical use of the passage, simply repeating details, demonstrated at best a reasonable level of understanding. Where responses were less successful in targeting higher bands, there was often the sense that, rather than returning to the text to identify and plan content for their answers in advance of writing, candidates had focused on generic points. The least successful answers were often thin, simple or short. They offered a very general view of the situation but few ideas and details in response to the bullet points, and often did not move beyond the first bullet.

The Writing mark reflected the clarity, fluency and coherence of the response. Stronger responses adopted and maintained a suitably formal style, producing clear and often fluent responses. Most candidates had at least some awareness of the need to address an audience, although weaknesses in expression arising from a restricted range of secure vocabulary affected meaning in some responses. Better responses adopted a convincing and consistently appropriate style and were clearly well-planned and structured. Lapses into narrative, often accompanied by copying chunks of the passage, indicated an inconsistency of style in less assured responses; copying directly from the text was often the most frequent feature of the weakest writing.

Advice to candidates on Question 1:

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

Question 2

Re-read the descriptions of:

- (a) the space station and what Astronaut A saw in paragraph 1, beginning ‘When Satellite Control called me...’
- (b) the spacesuit in paragraph 4, beginning ‘Hastily, I clambered into my spacesuit...’.

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

Write about 200 to 300 words.

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

Responses to **Question 2** should take the form of continuous prose to allow candidates to explore their choices fully in the context of the passage. Having selected relevant examples to discuss, the focus needs to be on the quality of the analysis rather than the use of vague expressions, such as ‘created a vivid picture’, ‘showed what it was like in space’ or ‘made you really see how they were doing their work’. Better responses showed evidence of close reading, and an ability to relate to subtleties of language beyond explicit meaning. Choices that were most commonly well explained were ‘giant jigsaw-puzzle’ and ‘performing their slow-motion ballet’, which showed a clear understanding of the precision and complexity of the activities taking place in space.

The most successful responses to **Question 2** showed specific focus at word level and were engaged and assured in their handling of their appropriate choices. They selected carefully, including images, put the choices in context, and answered both parts of the question equally well. A few candidates picked up on the sense of wonder created by the experience of being in outer space in **part (a)**, and the general effect of reassurance created through images associated with comfort and protection in **part (b)**. The best responses considered meaning and effects throughout the response, without repeating generalised effects. The weakest responses had very few language choices, or offered few explanations beyond the very general, such as referring to the size of the spacesuit without reference to the spaceship. Often the words of the original were repeated, for example ‘it was chatting softly’ or ‘it was like being looked after by a friend’, which could not gain any marks. Less successful responses sometimes adopted a ‘technique spotting’ approach by simply identifying literary techniques. This approach often led to rather generic comments about the effects of the techniques rather than the words themselves. Some candidates offered single word choices only, not always selecting the most appropriate words, for example, offering ‘space-ships’ instead of ‘baby space-ships’. Generally, vocabulary in these passages was understood by candidates, though there were some misinterpretations, particularly with ‘accordion sleeves’ and ‘gentle contours’, which were sometimes taken literally rather than considered in the context of the passage.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- re-read the whole paragraph before making selections; ensure that the choices you select for comment are relevant to the question and not those which happen to come first
- do not write out whole sentences, or offer only one word if it is part of a descriptive phrase

- remember to put quotation marks around your choices – it makes it easier for you to focus on the exact wording
- avoid presenting your choices as a list; treat each choice separately to avoid generalised comments
- avoid general comments such as ‘it makes you want to read on’, or ‘this creates a powerful image in the reader’s mind’ which will not gain any marks
- avoid repeating the wording of the text in your explanation
- aim to give a meaning, in context, for each of your choices, even if you are unsure of effects
- try to include and explain images from each paragraph.

Question 3

What challenges would a person face if they became a Mars One astronaut, according to **Passage B**?

To answer the summary task successfully, candidates must first identify fifteen points from Passage B relevant to the specific focus of the question and list them, one per numbered line, in note form on the grid in **part (a)**. Candidates are reminded that they are only credited with a maximum of one point per line and similarly that each point needs to evidence their understanding clearly. Any points added after line 15 are not credited unless replacing an answer crossed out earlier on. On the whole, candidates understood that in a question testing their ability to ‘select for specific purposes’ they should not go beyond line 15, or include groups of ideas on each line. The need to identify and select points carefully meant that candidates had to read and plan their answers both to avoid repetition and to organise their ideas sensibly. The second part of the task requires candidates to use their notes, adapting and organising them to write a summary in their own words.

The question focused on the challenges a person would face if they became a Mars One astronaut and better responses organised their points to clearly address this. Weaker, less-focused responses, did not fully address the task. A number relied on working through the passage – often with limited modification of the original – repeating ideas and/or offering incomplete ideas as a result. Others simply transferred their answers from **3(a)** still in the words of the passage. Better responses were careful to be clear and unambiguous in the ideas they presented, for example recognising shifts in focus from the period of training, the experience on the journey, to life on Mars itself.

Where candidates had not engaged fully with the task and/or adopted a more mechanical approach, paraphrasing the material, repetitions were common. Where candidates had not focused precisely on the text, they often presented incomplete or inexact ideas – for example, ‘daily exercise’, ‘electrical repairs’ or ‘freeze-dried food’. Where points were imprecise and/or unclear in **part (a)** they could not be credited. For example, one word answers such as ‘noise’ were insufficient to communicate an understanding that the astronauts had to endure the noise all the time or constantly.

Weaker responses often lifted excessively from the passage, limiting their Writing mark in **part (b)**. Own words needed to be used where appropriate – recasting, reorganising and representing ideas helpfully for the benefit of the reader. It is not necessary to change every word – the idea needs to be clear to the reader and there may not be a suitable replacement for the word in the text. There was no need for example to replace the words ‘solar storm’ and attempts to do so were often awkward and unclear.

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

Question 3(b) responses that did well had used their points from **3(a)** carefully, by organising them purposefully into a concise, fluent prose response rather than relying on repeating points in the order or language of the passage. They had avoided redundant introductory statements and unnecessarily long explanation. Candidates who had edited and refined points in **3(a)** with their audience in mind were best able to offer efficient and well-focused summary responses in **3(b)**.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

- re-read the passage after reading the question, in order to identify potential content points
- reflect on the ideas you have highlighted to establish and select 15 complete and distinct points
- list your points – one complete idea per numbered line
- do not include illustrative examples of the same point or unnecessary detail
- plan your response in **3(b)** to organise and sequence content helpfully for your reader
- write informatively and accurately, avoiding errors which affect meaning
- you can choose to use your own words in **3(a)** and must use your own words in **3(b)**
- avoid repetition of points
- check that you understand the point you are trying to communicate
- when checking and editing your answers to **Question 3(a)**, consider whether each point you are making could be easily and precisely understood by someone who has not read the passage
- do not leave lines in the grid without answers
- do not add further numbered points in **3(a)** in addition to the 15 required as they will not be marked
- leave sufficient time to check back through your **3(b)** answer – for example, to correct errors which affect meaning.