

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/11
Reading and Writing (Core)

Key messages

- In **Exercise 1**, the need to read the questions carefully must be emphasised in order that the candidate can recognise the key element(s) required for the response in each question. In this paper, many candidates found some of the questions challenging. Responses which include overlong, additional information should be avoided, as this could affect the validity of the answer.
- In **Exercise 2**, candidates must read the text precisely to identify the key details. Such details may include the writer's opinion and attitude, or possibly information that is not explicitly stated but implied. This exercise was generally well answered with few omissions.
- In **Exercise 3**, candidates should focus on writing brief answers and be sure that their answers correspond to the right question.
- In **Exercise 4**, candidates should carefully consider whether the information they include is relevant to the summary topic. Long introductions and irrelevant details should be avoided. They should also ensure that responses do not exceed the 90-word limit, as correct Content points which are included after the limit cannot be credited.
- In **Exercise 5**, most responses were on topic and showed awareness of the target audience, using an appropriate, informal register. It is important in this exercise and in **Exercise 6** that candidates read the rubric carefully to be aware of what information the response should contain before starting to write their response.
- In **Exercise 6**, most candidates wrote in a style different from that used in the previous exercise, adopting a more formal, neutral register, suitable for an article for the school magazine. Many candidates achieved a degree of success in developing their own ideas at an appropriate length.

General comments

It is worthy of note that even those who may have found Exercises 1 – 4 challenging, were able to write successful responses for Exercises 5 and 6.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

The text on deep sea exploration appeared to have been understood by most candidates, so there were many successful responses.

Questions 1, 5 and 6 were generally well answered.

Most candidates found the answer to **Question 2**, which asked where the 'Trieste' was built. Others chose distractors for their answer, such as 'Switzerland', which was where it was developed, or 'France', where it was based.

For **Question 3**, when ‘some of the iron weights’ were released, it was ‘petrol’, which is lighter than water, that allowed the ‘Trieste’ to rise to the surface. Many gave ‘the iron weights’ as their answer.

In **Question 4**, a few candidates appeared not to identify that the Challenger Deep is the deepest part of the Mariana Trench, and that it is named after the research ship, which first measured the depth below sea level of the Mariana Trench and of the Challenger Deep. Frequently seen responses such as ‘Mariana Trench’ could not be credited.

In **Question 7**, some responses appeared to have been distracted by the times given for the descent (4 hrs. 47 mins.) and for the time spent on the sea floor (20 mins.). The correct answer for the time taken to reach the surface was 3 hours and 15 minutes.

In **Question 8**, all three distractors were given as incorrect answers, the inaccurate depth reading of 11, 521 metres, the actual depth of Challenger Deep, which is 10,914 metres below sea level and the 80 metres above the sea floor of Challenger Deep, where the ‘Trieste’ stopped its descent at 10,916 metres, which was the correct answer to the final question.

Exercise 2

In this exercise several candidates were able to achieve full marks, noticeably more than in previous series. Most scored at least half the marks available.

The first four **Questions (a) –(d)** were the most challenging.

In **Question 8(a)** it is Francesca (Text A), who can ‘make a small profit each month’.

For **Question 8(b)** it is Paolo (Text B), who rereads some of his earlier blog posts and learns from them.

In **Question 8(c)** it is Amy (Text C), whose friends convinced her to continue blogging after she received some negative comments about her reviews.

Francesca (Text A) found it hard to think of new ideas to write about in her blog posts for **Question 8(d)**.

Candidates were generally more successful in **Questions 8(d) – 8(h)**. Of these questions, **Question 8(h)** appeared to have been the most challenging. The disappointment for Paolo (Text B) is that he had hoped for a million hits on his blog posts, but achieved little more than a thousand.

Exercise 3

Overall, candidates performed well in this exercise. The text required careful reading, and several candidates were able to achieve full marks in both **Question 10** and **Question 11**. All correct responses in the Mark Scheme were used. The most common error was to write correct answers to **Exercise 11** in **Exercise 10**.

Exercise 4

For many candidates this appears to be the most challenging exercise on the paper. In this series, candidates were required to summarise an article on an English professional football club, which is ‘the world’s most environmentally friendly football club’. The summary was to contain the measures which the club was taking to help the environment.

The most common error was, at first, to concentrate on the club itself, its owner and where it is situated. This would often take a large proportion of the 90 words available, before there was even a mention of what the club does on a regular basis to help the environment, as the task required. Many candidates were successful in presenting sentences from the text in a different grammatical way and using appropriate synonyms and such responses gained marks in the higher bands.

Exercise 5

Most responses used the prompts effectively and some more successful responses included details about the problem with their purchase and how the problem might be resolved. Many responses showed evidence of familiarity with the conventions of writing an email to a friend – opening with a greeting, closing with a farewell, involving the friend throughout, and setting an informal, conversational tone.

Exercise 6

In order to achieve marks in the higher band for this exercise, the style and register of the writing should be different from that in **Exercise 5** and should show awareness of the purpose of writing and the target audience. The language used in a review will, of necessity, be more formal than in the email to a friend. In reviewing how celebrities can and do influence their followers through their demeanour and their dress a more critical style was required.

In this series, there were some thoughtful and sophisticated evaluations of the topic which went beyond the written prompts. Many good responses to the topic of how teenagers may be influenced by the attitude and behaviour of famous people were seen. Overall, these responses were written very effectively. There appeared to be less reliance on the prompts than in previous series and, as a result, more of candidates' own views were in evidence. The prompts, however, appeared to prove useful for most candidates in helping them to understand how to approach their report

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/21
Reading and Writing (Extended)

Key messages

- In **Exercise 1**, reading comprehension, it is essential that candidates locate the key requirements of each question and answer with a brief and precise phrase.
- In **Exercise 2**, the multiple matching exercise, it is recommended that candidates practise skimming and scanning reading techniques and carefully consider each question, taking into account any distracting information in the texts.
- In **Exercise 3**, note-taking, it is important that responses are suitably brief and correspond to the headings of each section. Candidates should be guided by the number of bullet points which indicate the number of responses required. There should be only one relevant note per bullet point as if candidates provide more than one, only the first one can be credited.
- In **Exercise 4**, summary writing, it is crucial that answers do not go beyond the required length, as Content points which are included after the stated word limit cannot be credited. Candidates should address exactly what is being asked in the question.
- In **Exercise 5**, email writing, responses must provide relevant information and be written in an informal style. All bullet points have to be addressed and developed in order to have access to marks in the top band for Content.
- In **Exercise 6**, candidates need to respond to the different requirements of this task, and they should adopt a suitable style and register. Ideas should be relevant and developed at an appropriate length.

General comments

Candidates should carefully read and recognise the requirements of individual questions, ensuring responses are precise and that questions are interpreted accurately.

Exercise 1

Precise answers are required for this comprehension exercise. Candidates should ensure they focus on the requirements of the question and locate the relevant section of the text when responding. They should read carefully around what they recognise as the correct response to check there is no further information that changes this.

Question 1

This question was well answered. The most common incorrect responses were 'Jacques Piccard' and 'Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh'. These responses suggest that candidates did not link 'The original plans for the Trieste were created by Jacques Piccard's father' with the question.

Question 2

This question was well answered. Some candidates gave other countries mentioned in the text such as France and Switzerland, and appeared not to connect the idea of 'construction' in the text with 'built' in the question to provide the correct response 'Italy'.

Question 3

Many candidates answered this question incorrectly, giving responses such as 'iron (weights)', 'air' or 'tanks'. In order to locate the correct answer 'petrol' in the relevant paragraph, candidates needed to follow the linking and reference words which were the signposts to this answer.

Question 4

Candidates who gave incorrect responses to this question tended to give the name of the deepest part of the ocean 'Marina Trench', rather than what the Challenger deep was named after, 'a research ship'.

Question 5

This question was well answered, and a significant number of candidates gained the two available marks. Unsuccessful responses such as 'lost radio', omitting the idea of losing radio *contact* or 'not enough air', which was a hypothetical problem, could not be credited.

Question 6

This question was very well answered. A few candidates gave the incorrect response 'dark brown mud', and did not focus on the 'which creature' part of the question.

Question 7

This question was quite well answered. A number of candidates gave incorrect times such as four hours forty seven minutes (the time taken to get to the sea floor), or eight hours twenty two minutes (the total of the two times mentioned in the text). Candidates may not have connected reaching 'the surface' in the question with arriving back at the support ship 'three hours and fifteen minutes later'.

Question 8

This question was well answered. There were candidates who wrote just the figure '10916' omitting 'metres', so the response could not be credited. A few candidates gave the depth that the Trieste recorded '11,521 metres', or other measurements mentioned in the text (80 metres or 10994 metres).

Question 9

This question was generally well answered, and a significant number of candidates gained the full four marks available. Some candidates provided details about Jacques Piccard that were not relevant to his *character* such as 'famous' or 'he lived in Switzerland'. Some details such as 'passionate' or 'he cared about the marine' were incomplete. It is important that candidates focus on the requirements of the question and provide key details.

Exercise 2

In this exercise, candidates should recognise the key words in the question and ensure that the text they select fully supports their choice of answer. They should look for synonyms and rephrasing of the ideas. There were candidates who provided ten correct responses. Most candidates gained at least five of the ten marks available in this exercise. Generally, candidates seemed to find **Questions b, e, f and j** the most challenging.

- (a) This question was very well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly. They needed to find someone who started their blog because they were bored, which was stated in text D: '...I only decided to have a go at blogging because I was stuck in the house with nothing to do...' A few candidates answered with text C possibly because the text states 'Some of the things I wrote when I first started seem a bit boring...'. Candidates must be reminded to read the whole paragraph carefully before choosing their answer. They are advised to avoid word spotting.
- (b) This question was quite well answered. Text D was the most commonly chosen incorrect response. Candidates may have misinterpreted or misread the sentence 'Although I'm not quite at the point where I can make a bit of money out of it ...' in text D.

- (c) This question was very well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly. It referred to someone who finds value in reading their old blog posts, which was found in text B (I occasionally look back on what I wrote in the first few months...).
- (d) Candidates gave text A as the most common incorrect choice. This question asked about someone who almost gave up writing their blog completely. Text C was the correct answer since it stated '...I would not still be blogging today if they had not convinced me to continue ...'. Candidates may have misinterpreted or misread the sentence 'Recently, I had to stop writing it for a short time ...' in text A. Candidates are reminded to read the whole paragraph carefully before choosing their answer.
- (e) This question was fairly well answered. Text C was the most common incorrect choice. Candidates were required to locate the person who finds it hard to think of ideas for blog posts. Text A was the correct answer. Text C states '... as I had no idea how to write critically about...'; candidates might have misunderstood what it means to write critically.
- (f) This question was quite well answered. Text C was the most common incorrect response. The correct answer was text D: '... that does not make what they said any easier to accept'. In text C, it states '... after I got a few negative comments...', which seemed to have been misinterpreted by some candidates.
- (g) This question was well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly.
- (h) This question was well answered. Almost all candidates answered the question correctly. Some common incorrect responses included A and C.
- (i) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates.
- (j) This question was quite well answered. Some candidates selected text D as the text states 'After what I can only describe as a disappointing start...' which was possibly misinterpreted by some candidates as a disappointing start is different from being disappointed about the number of readers generally.

Exercise 3

Candidates responded very well to this note-taking exercise, with a large number of candidates gaining the full nine marks available. Notes could not be credited when they omitted key information or were under the wrong heading. When notes were placed in the wrong section, this indicated that some candidates had not fully understood the requirements of the heading. It is important that notes focus clearly on key ideas that relate to the heading and communicate this as succinctly and accurately as possible, without omitting essential information.

What caused the growth in popularity of anime?

This section was very well attempted and there were candidates who correctly provided the five notes required from the possible six options. A few responses omitted key details, writing notes such as 'technology' or 'suit non-japanese audiences'. These responses required the idea of technology *improving* and anime being *adapted* to suit non-japanese audiences. A few responses featured unconnected answers, for example 'similarities with American animation' or 'basic film-making techniques'. These responses, although mentioned in the text, were not supported by the context. Occasionally candidates gave notes that were responses for Question 12. These included 'unique Japanese style' and 'TV stations in other countries showed little interest.'

What factors negatively affected the growth of anime?

This section was well attempted, and a significant number of candidates provided the required four correct notes out of a possible five. A few responses omitted key details. For example, 'TV stations showed little interest', 'few videos were distributed' or 'few people knew about anime'. All three of these notes needed to make it clear that this was *outside Japan*, so when this idea was omitted, could not be credited. Sometimes a note was attempted but incorrectly expressed as in 'other countries showed little interest in TV'. Some notes like 'turn towards productions' were incomplete.

Exercise 4

Candidates should be encouraged to read the requirements of the summary carefully to ensure the focus is correct. It is also important to keep within the stated word range as this will ensure that marks are not lost for both Content and Language.

Candidates were required to write a summary about what the Butterfly Highway project is doing to encourage people to help butterflies and other insects. A large number of responses described the project and its aims in general instead of focusing on the precise requirements of the summary. This meant that responses either omitted relevant points or featured these after 120 words. However, a significant number of candidates included at least five of the nine points available, with some providing the required eight or more.

With regard to Content, some responses attempted to make points but expressed them imprecisely or with key information omitted. For example, a number of responses featured 'working with businesses', when it was the idea of working with *local* businesses that was required. They also mentioned the idea of the project 'keeping a website' but did not stipulate the purpose of this, which was *to map feeding locations*.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range with the majority of candidates gaining three to six marks. In order to achieve seven or eight marks (top band) for Language, candidates must attempt to use their own words and organize the content points. A significant number of candidates made little attempt to use their own words when giving content points, copying directly from the text and connecting the ideas with linking words. This reliance on language from the text meant responses could only be awarded a Language mark from the lower bands. Some responses successfully re-phrased the content ideas, referring, for example to 'posting informative notices at eating places', rather than 'providing notices to be put up at feeding locations' as stated in the text. Points were skilfully linked as in 'Not only do they have notices at feeding sites, but they also have online information to show those sites'.

It is important that Content points remain clear when re-expressed as marks cannot be awarded if there is a change to the stated meaning. Practice with verb, noun and adjective synonyms, along with practice in forming alternative grammatical structures is beneficial to enable candidates to attain marks from within the higher bands.

Exercise 5

In this exercise, candidates complete an email task based on fulfilling the requirements specified in three bullet points. It is also important that candidates relate the email to the context set in the exercise, in this case buying something with which there was a problem. The extent to which the bullet points are addressed and developed within the context will determine the band achieved for content. If any bullet point is not addressed, this has an effect on the Content mark.

Content

There were a number of candidates whose emails were less than 150 words, so there was not sufficient development for higher band content marks. Candidates should attempt to write a minimum of 150 words. In general, candidates responded to this task successfully. Some fulfilled the task skilfully and effectively and developed the email to include a range of information and ideas. Most candidates addressed all three bullet points, but these were sometimes lacking in detail, especially if the response was slightly short.

Responses generally featured an informal register, though this was not always consistent. For example, phrases seen in a number of responses such as 'I would like to inform you' or 'In conclusion' are too formal and may not be appropriate in this kind of email. Responses mentioned various purchases, and often about higher-value technical ones like mobile phones or cars. Others mentioned buying food or clothing. The content was often developed by describing a special occasion for which the item had been bought (often for some kind of celebration). Some responses did not provide much description of the purchase beyond what it was, while others who provided more development could access the higher content bands and gave details of the functions of the phone, or the colour and style of the clothing. The problem with the item was often the most fully developed bullet point, ranging from a phone not charging to torn or stained clothes. The third bullet point was often covered by just a sentence such as 'I'm going to take it back to the shop and ask for a refund', which was acceptable. Some candidates developed this aspect of the email more by planning to report the problem to another body, as well as returning it. They sometimes also asked for advice on what to do from their friend.

Effective emails connected the content of the email to the recipient with references to shared experiences or the target reader's interests, writing for example, 'You remember that dress we saw when we went to the mall...' Such emails were cohesive in how the three bullet points were integrated and began with natural openings that contain interest in some aspect of the recipient's life, family or a reference to a shared recent experience, leading into the body of the email. The email ending should provide appropriate concluding comments.

Language

Most responses featured a good range of well-organised language. There were some which used mainly simple structures and were more limited in range and accuracy. Some responses demonstrated accurate sentences of different lengths, which included more complex structures and a range of appropriately used, less common vocabulary.

Language deserving of the higher bands should demonstrate the requirements of the mark scheme. There should be an evident range of appropriate vocabulary. An example of such language is, 'I considered visiting you last week but my tight schedule did not allow this visit to materialize.' and 'This fault got me very angry because it meant I'd been duped the shop assistant acknowledged that the hard drive was corrupt'. In this example, complex language is used accurately and effectively. There were responses which attempted more complex language, but tended to lack accuracy in terms of tenses, punctuation or spelling as in 'The t shirt is perfect but on the back there are some lines. So I try to wash it but they would not disappear.' Some emails included mainly very short sentences (subject + verb + object), which were accurate but did not demonstrate a sufficient range of language for the higher bands.

Exercise 6

In this exercise, candidates may be required to write an article, a review or a report for a particular target audience. It is important that they read the task carefully and consider the two prompts, which are given in order to help form ideas on the subject. For a mark in one of the higher bands, candidates might include other points and ideas relevant to the task, along with developing the views in the prompts if they choose to, expressing these in their own words. The style and register should be appropriate for the type of task.

Content

Candidates were required to write an article for the school magazine about their views on teenagers copying the appearance and behaviour of famous people.

Most candidates fulfilled the task with a generally good sense of purpose and audience, sometimes referring to the ideas in the prompts and also introducing some of their own. Some candidates wrote in such a way as to really connect with the reader and communicate their views effectively and skilfully.

Effective responses tended to provide examples of how taking certain celebrities as role models could positively influence, inspire and motivate young people. They also considered the negative consequences of copying bad behaviour. Examples of the perceived right and wrong kinds of actions and attitudes to emulate were given and discussed. Responses featured different famous people such as film stars, musicians and scientists and their ability to influence. They also linked the article to the power of social media, often in terms of apps and influencers.

Language

The full range of marks was awarded for Language, with most responses attempting some more complex structures and some less common vocabulary. There were some which demonstrated a good range of complex structures with only occasional non-impeding errors, enabling them to achieve the precision required for marks in the top band. Responses included accurate, varied sentence structures, good punctuation and paragraphing, along with ambitious vocabulary. This quality of language is exemplified in 'At this age, teenagers experience an identity crisis, meaning they are still not sure about who they are.' Some candidates attempted more complex language which included errors as in 'Famous people are often a nice example to achieve your goal. The right things to do is just to avoid copy their bad behaviour.' In general, the majority of responses featured language with a good level of accuracy that included non-impeding errors when attempting more complex structures.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0991/31
Listening (Core)

Key messages

- Candidates should be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. Candidates should use a pen, not a pencil, and simply cross out responses which need to be altered. Candidates should not write over, or try to erase, their initial answers. Attempts which cannot be read may not be credited.
- Candidates should be reminded to write their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- Candidates' awareness should be raised of the importance of using the appropriate singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing spelling attempts, the intended meaning of the attempted word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. son/sun).
- More pronunciation awareness activities, particularly of connected speech (e.g. assimilation of sounds, omission of sounds), would be beneficial to candidates. Candidates should also be made aware of the importance of transcribing voiced and unvoiced consonants accurately as these may change meaning (e.g. t/d as in 'tends' and 'tents').
- Some questions involve transcribing various numbers and these should therefore be practised. For example, it is useful to help candidates to distinguish between the pronunciation of sixty and sixteen. Candidates would benefit from more practice in writing larger numbers correctly and the standard form of abbreviations of common units (e.g. 'hrs' for hours, 'min' for minutes, 'km' for kilometres).
- Candidates should be encouraged to read and listen to the rubric for each part of the paper very carefully to ensure they meet the exact requirements of each question.
- In **Exercise 1, Questions 1 to 4** candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for, by highlighting the question words, e.g. how, why, when, and the key words in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful. In cases where candidates supply extra information, in addition to the expected key answer, and where that extra information is incorrect, the whole answer cannot be credited. For this reason, candidates should be encouraged to provide concise answers.
- In gap-filling **Exercise 2**, candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name, etc.). Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercise 2** candidates should be reminded not to include words which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In multiple-matching **Exercise 3** and multiple-choice **Exercise 4** candidates should be encouraged to make it very clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. It needs to be emphasised that, where crossing out of a rejected selection is not clear, this will be seen as ambiguous and, if there is any uncertainty, it will not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it will not be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4**, if two boxes are ticked rather than one, then no marks can be given.

General comments

- Candidates were required to use a set number of words for **Exercises 1** and **2**. Many responses could not be credited as they exceeded the required number of words.
- Successful responses were those which provided short, clear answers and which adhered to the word limit required.
- Candidates should be reminded that the answer will be heard; they should not make up an answer.
- Candidates should be reminded that no two questions will have the same answer.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Overall this section was well answered. There were few omissions, but responses could not be credited when more than the required words were written. Most marks were lost where candidates selected the distracting detail or the spelling attempts put the intended meaning in doubt.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates identified the correct response 'computing'. Several candidates wrote 'computing and maths' and lost the mark. Other responses that could not be credited were 'compute' and 'computer set'.
- (b) The expected answer was 'freedom' and there was a mixed level of success for this question. Many candidates selected the distractor 'meeting new people' which could not be credited.

Question 2

- (a) This question was very well attempted, and most candidates were able to score a mark. The plural 'noises' was also accepted. Some candidates lost the mark by writing 'noise and queue'. Unrecognisable spelling attempts were not credited.
- (b) This question was quite well attempted. 'Sugar' was often included as the extra negating detail. Very few candidates included 'fat' with the correct response 'salt'. 'Soy' and 'soul' could not be credited.

Question 3

- (a) The expected answer was 'bathroom' and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. However, the plural 'bathrooms' could not be credited. Some candidates wrote 'living room', 'lounge' or 'bar room' and lost the mark.
- (b) This question proved to be very challenging for many candidates. Some candidates correctly identified 'guest' but included the distractor 'neighbour' with their answer. Others wrote 'guess', 'guesting' and 'ghost' and lost the mark. Some wrote 'neighbour's guest' or 'robot' which could not be accepted.

Question 4

- (a) This question was extremely well attempted by most candidates. However, unrecognisable spelling attempts could not be credited. Very few candidates chose distractors as their answer.
- (b) This question was less well attempted. Many spelling issues lost candidates the mark. 'Like view' was often given in error. Other responses that could not be credited were 'lack view', 'late view' and 'lay view'.

Exercise 2

Question 5

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. Responses containing repetition of words, either preceding or following the gap, were not credited as they lead to an incorrect grammatical fit. In some cases, incorrect singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

- (i) This question was generally well attempted but quite a few candidates lost the mark by writing 'document' or 'documented'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'TV programme', 'news' and 'TV show'.
- (ii) On the whole, this question was very well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing 'meal' while some wrote 'surprise' or 'premis' that could not be credited.
- (iii) There was a mixed level of success here. Many candidates gave the correct response '1990'. '1919' and '1989' were the most incorrect responses. Other responses that could not be accepted were 'early 1990' and '1990s'.
- (iv) This question was very well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing the distractors 'China' or 'India'. Some spelling attempts could not be accepted.
- (v) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates who gave the correct answer 'floods'. 'Flooding' was also acceptable. However, some candidates wrote the singular 'flood' and lost the mark. Quite a few candidates chose the distractor 'carbon dioxide' while some candidates wrote 'pollution'. Some incorrect spellings were not credited.
- (vi) There was a very mixed level of success here. Some candidates chose the distractors 'tea plants', 'food' and 'wood'. Some candidates had difficulties with spelling and lost the mark.
- (vii) This was quite well attempted, and many candidates gave the correct answer 'fences'. A few candidates chose the distractor 'shelter'. Other responses that could not be accepted were 'defense', 'offences' and 'fancies'.
- (viii) This was less well attempted. 'Money' and 'earnings' were also credited. The distractor, 'nuts', was selected frequently.

Exercise 3

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded, even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates should ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

The expected responses for speakers 2 and 3 were often swapped around.

Exercise 4

Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates failed to clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (SPEAKING ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0991/41
Listening (Extended)

Key messages

- Candidates should be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. Candidates should use a pen, not a pencil, and simply cross out responses which need to be altered. Candidates should not write over, or try to erase, their initial answers. Attempts which cannot be read may not be credited.
- Candidates should be reminded to write their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- Candidates' awareness should be raised of the importance of using the appropriate singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing spelling attempts, the intended meaning of the attempted word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. son/sun).
- More pronunciation awareness activities, particularly of connected speech (e.g. assimilation of sounds, omission of sounds), would be beneficial to candidates. Candidates should also be made aware of the importance of transcribing voiced and unvoiced consonants accurately as these may change meaning (e.g. t/d as in 'tends' and 'tents').
- Some questions involve transcribing various numbers and these should therefore be practised. For example, it is useful to help candidates to distinguish between the pronunciation of sixty and sixteen. Candidates would benefit from more practice in writing larger numbers correctly and the standard form of abbreviations of common units (e.g. 'hrs' for hours, 'min' for minutes, 'km' for kilometres).
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- In gap-filling **Exercise 2**, candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name, etc.). Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercise 2** candidates should be reminded not to include words which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In multiple-matching **Exercise 3** and multiple-choice **Exercise 4** candidates should be encouraged to make it very clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. It needs to be emphasised that, where crossing out of a rejected selection is not clear, this will be seen as ambiguous and, if there is any uncertainty, it will not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it will not be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4**, if two boxes are ticked rather than one, then no marks can be given.

General comments

- Candidates were required to use a set number of words for Exercises 1, 2 and 5. Many responses could not be credited as they exceeded the required number of words.
- Successful responses were those which provided short, clear answers and which adhered to the word limit required.
- Candidates should be reminded that the answer will be heard; they should not make up an answer.
- Candidates should be reminded that no two questions will have the same answer.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Overall this section was well answered. There were few omissions but responses could not be credited when more than the required words were written. Most marks were lost where candidates selected the distracting detail or the spelling attempts put the intended meaning in doubt.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates identified the correct response 'computing'. Several candidates wrote 'computing and maths' and lost the mark. Other responses that could not be credited were 'compute' and 'computer set'.
- (b) The expected answer was 'freedom' and there was a mixed level of success for this question. Many candidates selected the distractor 'meeting new people' which could not be credited.

Question 2

- (a) This question was very well attempted, and most candidates were able to score a mark. The plural 'noises' was also accepted. Some candidates lost the mark by writing 'noise and queue'. Unrecognisable spelling attempts were not credited.
- (b) This question was quite well attempted. 'Sugar' was often included as the extra negating detail. Very few candidates included 'fat' with the correct response 'salt'. 'Soy' and 'soul' could not be credited.

Question 3

- (a) The expected answer was 'bathroom' and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. However, the plural 'bathrooms' could not be credited. Some candidates wrote 'living room', 'lounge' or 'bar room' and lost the mark.
- (b) This question proved to be very challenging for many candidates. Some candidates correctly identified 'guest' but included the distractor 'neighbour' with their answer. Others wrote 'guess', 'gusting' and 'ghost' and lost the mark. Some wrote 'neighbour's guest' or 'robot' which could not be accepted.

Question 4

- (a) This question was extremely well attempted by most candidates. However, unrecognisable spelling attempts could not be credited. Very few candidates chose distractors as their answer.
- (b) This question was less well attempted. Many spelling issues lost candidates the mark. 'Like view' was often given in error. Other responses that could not be credited were 'lack view', 'late view' and 'lay view'.

Exercise 2

Question 5

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. Responses containing repetition of words, either preceding or following the gap, were not credited as they lead to an incorrect grammatical fit. In some cases, wrong singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

- (i) This question was generally well attempted but quite a few candidates lost the mark by writing 'document' or 'documented'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'TV programme', 'news' and 'TV show'.
- (ii) On the whole, this question was very well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing 'meal' while some wrote 'surprise' or 'premis' that could not be credited.
- (iii) There was a mixed level of success here. Many candidates gave the correct response '1990'. '1919' and '1989' were the most incorrect responses. Other responses that could not be accepted were 'early 1990' and '1990s'.
- (iv) This question was very well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates lost the mark by writing the distractors 'China' or 'India'. Some spelling attempts could not be accepted.
- (v) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates who gave the correct answer 'floods'. 'Flooding' was also acceptable. However, some candidates wrote the singular 'flood' and lost the mark. Quite a few candidates chose the distractor 'carbon dioxide' while some candidates wrote 'pollution'. Some incorrect spellings were not credited.
- (vi) There was a very mixed level of success here. Some candidates chose the distractors 'tea plants', 'food' and 'wood'. Some candidates had difficulties with spelling and lost the mark.
- (vii) This was quite well attempted, and many candidates gave the correct answer 'fences'. A few candidates went for the distractor 'shelter'. Other responses that could not be accepted were 'defense', 'offences' and 'fancies'.
- (viii) This was less well attempted. 'Money' and 'earnings' were also credited. The distractor, 'nuts', was selected frequently.

Exercise 3

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates should ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

The expected responses for speakers 2 and 3 were often swapped around.

Exercise 4

Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates failed to clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

Exercise 5

Question 8

There was a mixed response to this question. Some responses provided were not always a grammatical fit, with incorrect singular and plural nouns not being credited. There were a few questions that were not attempted by some candidates.

Part A

- (i) This was well attempted by candidates. 'Memory' was often given with no preceding verb, so the mark could not be given. Other incorrect responses were 'memorize', 'remember' and 'process learning'.
- (ii) This was generally well answered by most candidates. Spelling attempts where the intended meaning was in doubt could not be credited. Other incorrect responses were 'cells' and 'messages'.
- (iii) This was quite well attempted. Some candidates wrote 'pressure' on its own and lost the mark while some candidates gave the answer as 'health'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'blood level' and 'blood pleasure'.
- (iv) There was a mixed level of success here. Many candidates gave examples of minerals which could not be credited. Quite a few candidates wrote 'vitamins' and lost the mark. Other incorrect responses were 'minimals', 'minols' and 'menirows'.
- (v) There was a very mixed level of success here with a large number of candidates often giving the wrong form (adjective) i.e. intelligent. Incorrect responses were 'intelligents', 'life expectancy' and 'effect'.

Part B

- (i) There was a mixed level of success here. Some candidates heard it as 'China' while others wrote distractors such as 'white fish' and 'salmon'. 'Tuna' was often misspelt.
- (ii) This was reasonably well answered by the candidates. Many lost the mark by giving examples of processed foods i.e. 'cakes' and 'crisps' while others wrote 'sweet'. Some wrote 'pressed', 'prosets' or 'unhealthy' which could not be credited.
- (iii) This question was very well attempted. However, 'assurance' and 'insureness' could not be accepted. Some candidates wrote 'insurance police' which could not be credited as it changed the meaning.
- (iv) There was a mixed level of success here. Some candidates wrote 'weigh' which could not be accepted. Many candidates chose the distractor 'recovery'. Other incorrect responses were 'waight', 'weighth' and 'wage'.
- (v) This was the best attempted question in this part of the test. Most candidates gave the correct response 'quality'. However, 'equality' and 'sleeping time' could not be credited. Some unrecognisable spelling attempts could not be credited.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/51
Speaking

Key messages

- In general, the tests were conducted well, and timings were followed accurately by most centres.
- Centres should check the sound quality of recordings when they set up the test room, concentrating on how the candidate's voice is picked up and whether there is any sound distortion.
- Examiners should read the topic cards before the test so that they can quickly find a suitable card for the candidates to talk about.
- The best examiners encouraged candidates to go beyond simple answers and develop their responses by talking about personal anecdotes or future predictions, where applicable, thus giving candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills.
- Examiners should read the prompts as they appear on the card and rephrase them only when asked for clarification.

General comments

Part A

Most examiners read out the instructions at the beginning of each test. These instructions were usually delivered quite slowly so that candidates could fully understand. Some examiners rephrased the instructions, which sometimes led to information being missed, such as the fact that only **Part D** is assessed. Very occasionally, examiners omitted **Part A**, or read the instructions after **Part B**.

Part B

Most examiners used the warm-up period effectively to put candidates at ease and followed the recommended timings. They asked appropriate questions, such as '*Tell me a little about yourself/your ambitions/hobbies/goals/family*', '*What do you like doing in your free time?*' Many examiners chose a topic card related to the interests expressed by the candidates during the warm-up. However, in some cases, examiners asked questions that were closely related to the prompts on the assessment cards as a means of trying to identify a suitable card, rather than listening and responding to what the candidates were saying about themselves. On some occasions, it seemed that the topic card may have been chosen randomly or prior to the test.

Part C

Most examiners announced the title of the cards and allowed candidates to keep them, though some candidates were given the choice of keeping the card or giving it back. When clarification of prompts was needed, examiners were able to grade language accordingly and paraphrase the prompts. Most of the preparation periods followed the recommended timings, with examiners advising the candidates when the preparation period had ended. Where there was a timing issue, it was usually because the candidate said they were ready to start. In such situations most examiners told candidates how much more time they had to prepare, rather than letting them begin **Part D** straightaway.

Part D

Most examiners used the prompts appropriately and asked open follow-up questions effectively, engaging in a natural conversation with candidates. Many examiners encouraged candidates to go beyond simple

answers and develop their responses. In some cases, examiners interrupted with their own responses, which did not enable the candidates to fully demonstrate their ability. Where examiners waited for the candidate to initiate the conversation in **Part D**, this sometimes had a negative impact on the candidate's performance. In some cases, examiners adopted a rather rigid 'question-and-answer' format instead of using the prompts to develop a conversation between themselves and the candidate. Some examiners also ran through the prompts too quickly and did not ask any additional questions, which either resulted in a very short **Part D** or resulted in improvised off-track questions to fill up time.

Application of the marking criteria

Structure – This was generally marked accurately. Candidates were given credit for their ability to use a range of complex structures such as conditional sentences, relative clauses and passive structures. The least accurate marking occurred in the higher mark range.

Vocabulary – Most centres accurately marked candidates' performance in this area. Candidates were credited for using vocabulary to express their ideas with precision and for making effective use of synonyms and idiomatic language. However, there was a slight tendency for severe marking as perhaps examiners did not credit lexical structures such as phrasal verbs, collocations or other fixed expressions, but focused on isolated thematically related words (e.g. scientific terms).

Development and Fluency – This was generally marked accurately. Candidates were credited for extending their ideas, providing original contributions and clear pronunciation. Some examiners were slightly severe in cases where a candidate paused but then gave a full answer.

Administration

Some of the recordings were difficult to hear. Examiners should consider the position of the microphone to ensure the candidate can be heard clearly. In some recordings, background noise was evident and occasionally distracting.

Most centres sent the correct number of samples and included recordings across the full range of marks.

Internal moderation

When more than one examiner was used, centres conducted internal moderation to ensure a correct rank order for all candidates. A few centres carried out internal moderation when it was not required (i.e. when only one examiner had been used). Where internal moderation had been conducted appropriately, it was not always clearly indicated on the Speaking Examination Summary Form which marks were adjusted as a result of this process.

Comments on specific topic cards

A – Protecting the environment

This card was frequently selected. In response to Prompt 1, candidates gave examples of how they help the environment, usually by recycling and reducing water usage. Stronger candidates attempted more complex structures: *'Our house was built by considering the impact that it could have on the environment.'*; *'Mum is trying to get us to eat less meat.'* For Prompt 2, candidates talked about being able to reuse things for different purposes, for example using a plastic bottle to collect water or to use glass bottles to store dry goods. Responses to Prompt 2 were usually linked well with Prompt 1, with stronger candidates using a range of modal verbs to explore how costs could be reduced if we recycled and reused. Clothes were given as an example where recycling could be helpful, but also a disadvantage where there might be some reluctance to wear family hand-me-downs. Prompt 3 saw candidates expand confidently using subject-specific vocabulary, such as *'pollution'*, *'carbon dioxide emissions'*, *'erosion'*, *'biodegradable'* as well as effective collocations, e.g. *'negative effects'*, *'chemical waste'*. Prompt 4 elicited strong personal responses, with examples given of masks and plastic water bottles disposed of carelessly. Most candidates agreed that most people leave the protection of the environment to the government and industry, and that this is wrong. Some candidates extended this by mentioning a generational divide. Stronger candidates used conditional structures: *'If each one of us did something, it could...'*, *'If you were never really taught about protecting the environment from the outset, it is ...'*. For Prompt 5, strong responses included comments about the political

climate and impact of *'multinationals'*. Many mentioned that some businesses are developing eco-friendly technology such as *'solar panels'* or *'hydro-electricity'*.

B – Beauty

This was a popular topic. Responses to Prompt 1 included descriptions of places candidates had visited or a piece of art they had seen. Many candidates used effective sentence starters, e.g. *'From my perspective'* or *'My first impressions were...'*. Confident responses to Prompt 2 expanded ideas around fitness and gym routines as well as the use of make-up and cosmetics. There was often development here into ideas of obsession and addiction to cosmetic surgery, caused by media and the desire to emulate celebrities or influencers. For Prompt 3, most candidates were able to respond with relevant ideas about the advantages, often using conditionals in either the past or present, but found it more challenging to discuss the disadvantages of living in a beautiful place. Stronger candidates were able to elaborate on the pros and cons of tourism for a beautiful area, highlighting the *'overcrowding'* and *'traffic jams'*, but contrasting this with the *'benefits to the economy'*. In response to Prompt 4, candidates were mostly of the opinion that inner beauty is more important than external beauty. The final prompt elicited a lot of discussion, with past tenses and relative clauses used to give examples of the effect the media has on the idea of beauty. Stronger candidates responded with analysis of how beauty is represented with phrases such as *'pretty toxic'* or *'filtered images'*.

C – Being a guest

This card was frequently selected. Most candidates used the present simple tense to talk about cooking special dishes and cleaning to prepare for guests. Stronger candidates gave more specific examples of what they normally do when they expect visitors, e.g. *'spray air freshener'*, *'change the bed sheets'*. Occasionally, candidates continued speaking generally about when they visited other people, linking Prompt 1 with Prompt 2. In response to Prompt 2, many candidates spoke of hospitality with phrases such as *'a warm welcome'* and *'they made me part of the family'*. Others spoke about challenges they faced when visiting family or friends: *'the food that they offered me was not very good'*, *'I was stuck in the bathroom...'*. Prompt 3 elicited plenty of ideas and effective phrasing, e.g. *'have to be on best behaviour'*, *'adapt to their daily routine'*, as well as idiomatic expressions, e.g. *'everything has to be spot on'*. Most candidates were able to respond relevantly to the idea of having guests for a long time, speaking generally or specifically, often using conditionals. In response to Prompt 4, almost all candidates preferred staying with friends rather than in a hotel, as hotels were thought to be too restrictive and expensive, whereas friends offered more freedom and comfort. Strong responses used conditional structures and relative clauses to explain the differences, with some candidates using hotel-specific vocabulary such as *'room service'* or *'elevator'*. Candidates fully agreed with Prompt 5, and many made a convincing case expanding on ideas of experiencing traditions, cultures and food of a particular place leading to a better understanding. Examples were provided to illustrate the differences between gathering information about a place from online sources and actually experiencing it through the senses.

D – Plans for the future

For Prompt 1, some candidates missed the idea of 'near future' and spoke about more long-term plans. This then overlapped with their next response. Prompt 2 explored ideas around greater independence and freedom, while acknowledging that the future can be uncertain. Candidates used future structures to talk about their life as an adult, with many referring to their future careers. Some candidates talked about having a partner and children, and many spoke about having more *'responsibilities'*. Many responses to Prompt 3 included a range of modal verbs and discussed the need to plan for the future despite uncertainty. Phrases such as *'seize opportunities'* and vocabulary exploring feelings such as *'anxiety'*, *'need for reassurance'* were used. Many candidates talked about having a *'backup plan'* or preparing for the *'worst case scenario'*. In response to Prompt 4, most candidates thought that it was necessary to plan for the future, with stronger candidates providing reasons: *'Some people are scared of disappointing themselves'*. However, some talked about Covid-19 upsetting people's plans and that there could possibly be other unexpected events. For Prompt 5, most candidates said that there was going to be a lot of change in the next hundred years, but not necessarily for the better. Responses to this prompt often included future tenses, conditional sentences and relative clauses. Many candidates spoke of environmental issues and their consequences, with phrases such as *'global temperature increase'*, *'pollution rate'* and *'homeless people'*. Others referred to more optimistic ideas, such as *'mind-blowing technology'* and *'time travelling'*.

E – Air travel

This topic tended to be given when candidates had talked about foreign travel during the warm-up. There were many well developed answers to Prompt 1 which demonstrated good use of descriptive language. Most candidates used past tense verb forms appropriately to provide their own anecdotes. Some focused on the negative and talked about being afraid of heights. Candidates used present structures in response to Prompt 2. Many thought the training would be challenging and were worried about being responsible for so many lives. Prompt 3 used a range of past tenses to explore ideas of a simpler life with closer connections to our surroundings. Different forms of transport and the length of time taken to travel great distances were also discussed. Stronger candidates elaborated on how much less we knew about life outside our area. In response to Prompt 4, most candidates did not think it was necessary to ban flying for holidays. Stronger candidates referred to *'global warming'* and *'greenhouse gases'*. In response to Prompt 5, candidates used future tenses and conditional sentences to comment that flying to other planets would probably happen as people were smart, while others said they thought this was unlikely or would have to wait a long time. Some questioned *'for what purpose'* or whether it would happen *'in this lifetime'*. Strong collocations included *'beyond our wildest dreams'* and *'wonders of the universe'*.

F – Changes

This card was infrequently chosen. In response to Prompt 1, candidates used adverbs of frequency to describe their routines: *'I often do different things on Fridays and on Mondays I usually go to the gym'*. Many talked about enjoying having a schedule, e.g. *'I like to be organised'* and *'It's good to keep to a timetable'*. Prompt 2 elicited future tenses and modal verbs as well as vocabulary linked to work, study and, with some candidates, relationships and family. Many candidates mentioned the possibility of travelling or taking on more responsibility: *'I imagine myself studying or working and maybe having a family'*. For Prompt 3, many candidates thought that changing schools gave them the opportunity to make new friends while moving meant they could help decorate the new house. Disadvantages included the difficulty of making friends if you were shy and the need to get on with new neighbours. In Prompt 4, there was a focus on communication: online classes during the pandemic and access to information. Many strong responses included precise vocabulary, e.g. *'change your mindset'*, *'perspective'*, *'more facilities'*, *'upgrade'*. Candidates agreed that technology changed how we live, study, communicate and work, offering opportunities to work from home: *'It's easy to get information on the internet instead of going to the library.'* The final prompt elicited responses which discussed protecting the natural environment by recycling and reducing pollution.

G – Decisions

This card was frequently chosen. Many candidates used complex past tenses when discussing their decisions about choosing school, university or future career. A range of appropriate vocabulary was used in strong responses, e.g. *'procrastinate'*, *'impact'*, *'productive'*. Prompt 2 often built on ideas from Prompt 1, using vocabulary connected to advice, ideas and independence. In response to Prompt 3, all candidates were able to name at least one job (e.g. doctor, pilot and nurse, president during a pandemic, firefighter, judge) and link it to ideas about responsibility and consequences. Stronger candidates were able to develop their ideas using conditional sentences: *'If you make a single mistake, it might cost someone's life'*. Most candidates agreed with Prompt 4. Stronger answers explored the consequences of choosing the wrong career using appropriate vocabulary, e.g. *'responsibilities'*, *'under pressure'*, *'regret'*, *'follow your heart'*. Most candidates disagreed with the statement in Prompt 5 and were able to give examples of adults making mistakes. Some sophisticated responses talked about life as a learning process and included phrases such as *'we're all human'* and *'owning up to making a mistake'*. Strong responses included a range of structures such as the passive voice, past tenses and conditional sentences.

H – New products

In responses to Prompt 1, many candidates talked about wanting to have new products such as computer games with improved graphics, smart phones that provided games and books to read, and faster computers or up-grades. Sports enthusiasts chose new equipment or shoes, and fashion-conscious candidates wanted new clothes to *'make a statement'*. Candidates used suitable adjectives and technical terms to describe their favourite products. Some strong responses included second conditional to speculate on products they might like to have. Most used comparatives, e.g. *'it's cheaper'*, *'it'd make my work easier'*, as well as relevant vocabulary, such as *'trending'*, *'aesthetic'*, *'newly released'*, *'exclusively available'*, *'fake'*, *'time consuming'*. Prompt 2 gave an opportunity to use vocabulary linked to clothing and also to introduce ideas about the cost

of clothes and reusing old garments. Many candidates were able to justify their options, e.g. *'you need to change'*, *'you do not have to buy new clothes'*. Prompt 3 allowed candidates to expand on the ideas in Prompt 1 and use language related to skills and qualities. Some stronger responses used phrasal verbs, e.g. *'hard to come up with new ideas'*. Some candidates said they did not have the imagination or had a fear of being criticised, while others said that they would like to be an interior or fashion designer. In response to Prompt 4, most candidates were able to draw on personal experience and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of online shopping using appropriate language, e.g. *'does not fit'*, *'scams'*, *'conned'*, *'saves time'*, *'have more options'*, *'get discounts'*. There were often interesting discussions about ordering products from across the world and having to order online due to Covid-19. Some candidates mentioned not receiving the product they expected: *'it did not reflect the description'*; *'appearances can be deceptive'*. Modal verbs and conditional sentences were frequently used. Many candidates agreed with the final prompt and some mentioned fidget spinners as an example. Many responses focused on recycling and reusing and not wasting, suggesting a strong awareness of issues linked to environmental protection. Some strong responses discussed advertising techniques using relevant vocabulary, e.g. *'billboards'*, *'eye-catching'*, *'creative ability'*, *'the latest trends'*.

I – Sharing ideas

In response to Prompts 1 and 2, candidates talked about sharing ideas with friends and family. Prompt 2 was sometimes partially answered while discussing Prompt 1. Many candidates gave examples of school group-work they had completed, and some commented on their classmates and being on similar *'wavelengths'* or being *'judged'*. All candidates were able to find examples for Prompt 3, such as teachers, artists, scientists, businesspeople and architects. Stronger responses included discussions about collaboration and creativity. The main reason given in Prompt 4 for not sharing ideas with older people was that they did not understand computers. However, trusted parents and even teachers were considered to be supportive. In response to Prompt 5, some candidates talked about not sharing business ideas, otherwise people might steal them and *'they will succeed, and you will fail.'* Some candidates disagreed with the final prompt stating that *'a problem shared is a problem solved'*, and others explored ideas of appropriate behaviour and sharing knowledge.

J – Social media stars

In response to Prompt 1, many candidates were able to give names of social media stars. Most responses included topic-specific vocabulary, such as *'influencer'*, *'follow somebody'*, *'subscribers'*. For Prompt 2, all candidates were able to comment on how popular people on social media have influenced them. The stars mentioned ranged from footballers to singers, dancers and rap stars. Most candidates agreed that some media stars performed for fame and fortune, while others wanted to raise money for good causes, and that young people copied their behaviour and clothes. In response to Prompt 3, candidates who wanted to be a star thought they would get to know a lot of people and become rich and famous, while a positive use of popularity could be to help with global issues. Candidates who did not want to be a star were concerned for their privacy and safety. Many candidates responded to Prompt 4 by saying that some stars were good role models because of the work they did to fight for human rights and to improve the natural environment. Many responses included phrases such as *'perfect image'*, *'build popularity'*, *'being fake'*, *'raising awareness'*, *'good ethics'*. Greta Thunberg was mentioned in many responses. Most candidates agreed with Prompt 5 that it was possible to become famous without talent and that this could be achieved by working hard, buying people's support or by copying others.

K – Your area

This card was frequently selected. In response to Prompt 1, most candidates were able to offer a description of their area and its *'places of interest'*. Strong responses featured specific terms to identify places, e.g. *'food court'*, *'amusement park'*, *'apartment blocks'*, *'mini-supermarkets'*. Responses to Prompt 2 included many examples of relevant nouns, e.g., *'peace'*, *'nature'*, *'vibe'*. Prompt 3 elicited a range of collocations, e.g. *'familiar neighbourhood'*, *'whole community'*, and some balanced discussions of positive and negative aspects of living in the same place, e.g. *'you'll know if something suspicious is happening'*, *'a closed mindset'*, *'socialising with the same people'*. Most candidates expressed an opinion on working together when discussing Prompt 4: *'people advise each other'*, *'raise awareness among people'*, *'it's a must for everyone to work together'*. Prompt 5 enabled candidates to use a variety of grammar structures to give their views on the future of personal interactions, e.g. *'it is going to'*, *'it definitely would not'*, *'it might be'*. Many candidates agreed that the technology had already impacted on people's lives, especially during the pandemic, e.g. *'if you look at the past year...'*, *'I do not see it happening because it has already happened'*. Most candidates were able to discuss differences between face-to-face interactions and socialising online.

L – Talking

This card was frequently selected when there had been reference to talking and chatting with friends in **Part B**. Prompt 1 enabled candidates to use present tenses and relate to their daily interactions with relatives and friends: *'I text my friends on a daily basis', 'I ask for advice', 'I need help with homework'*. Not all candidates grasped that Prompt 2 might apply to video conferencing and focused more on physical proximity when interacting with others face-to-face. However, it did allow many candidates to compare alternatives effectively. Some candidates were able to expand well on Prompt 3, e.g. *'I can get to know them better than while texting', 'through talking you can convey emotion', 'see their reactions', 'feel their pain'* and included references to *'tone'* and *'body language'*. Candidates took the opportunity to use linking devices when addressing Prompt 4: *'even though you can end up arguing, you avoid upsetting him'*. Prompt 5 elicited some philosophical discussion about whether staying silent means suppressing feelings and the impacts this could have, e.g. *'eventually it is going to come out as an outburst', 'being silent has many disadvantages', 'it might end up hurting me', 'you may give a wrong impression'*.

M – Throwing things away

Although chosen fairly infrequently, this card elicited some thoughtful responses, and often had strong personal resonance with candidates. In response to the first prompt, some candidates identified a variety of reasons for throwing things away such as items being *'out of date', 'keeping up with the trend'* or not wanting to use. They often contrasted these with reasons for keeping an object in Prompt 2, e.g. *'a strong personal attachment', 'takes me back to my childhood', 'I'm a bit of a hoarder', 'reduce my carbon footprint'*. Strong response to Prompt 3 included vocabulary such as *'turn it into', 'transform', 'donate to people in need', 'better to give it away'*. When it came to the final prompts, some candidates showed awareness of schemes which support recycling by encouraging and incentivising people (*'accept used glass bottles', 'trade in', 'give you a discount'*) as an alternative to throwing things away, although it was still generally felt that fines, CCTV and *'imposing regulations'* were the best ways to stop this happening. Some candidates linked Prompt 5 with the idea of moral responsibility, e.g. *'we could lead by example and as a result, they could be positively influenced'*.

N – Going for a walk

The card was often chosen for candidates who had previously referred to walking as one of their interests outside school in **Part B**. Prompt 1 gave candidates the opportunity to use a range of past tenses (e.g. *'I was walking when I bumped into...'*) when relating an anecdote about walking somewhere, which in some cases turned out to be something they had to do because of circumstances such as missing a bus. Prompt 2 often drew comparisons between being able to talk to others when walking in company on the one hand, and on the other being better able to appreciate things like *'hearing birds sing'* when walking alone. In response to Prompt 3, many candidates felt that walking in the city was relatively safe but presented difficulties in terms of having to deal with crowds and traffic, while walking in the countryside was perceived as more dangerous, but offered other rewards, such as *'breathing fresh air', 'helps me think', 'calming'*. Stronger candidates supported their responses to Prompt 4 with personal anecdotes of an enjoyable walk and used a range of appropriate vocabulary, e.g. *'you can wander off', 'take your mind off'*. Prompt 5 elicited future tenses and encouraged candidates to speculate: *'the future will see more electric cars although there may be a huge loss of jobs'*.

O – Water sports

This card was often chosen for candidates who had expressed an interest in other sports such as football in **Part B**. Most candidates were able to relate anecdotes about trying sports such as jet-skiing, sailing or scuba diving in response to Prompt 1. There were examples of specific language connected with water sports and some information regarding the equipment needed, e.g. *'rope', 'goggles', 'a board'*. In response to Prompt 2, lack of facilities or simple geographical facts were often quoted as reasons why water sports were not popular in some countries. Water sports were often perceived as dangerous, e.g. *'rocks all over the place', 'have a panic attack', 'could have an accident', 'scared I was going to hurt myself'*, but advantages included features of the location such as *'beautiful scenery'* or *'artificial beaches'* as well as benefits for physical and mental health. For the last two prompts, most candidates took the opportunity to talk about other sports with which they were often more familiar, pointing out that water sports are often harder to televise than other land-based sports. Candidates with a personal involvement in competitive sports tended to disagree most strongly with the final prompt, citing how competition can help to sharpen and develop skills, but others found

a variety of reasons for agreeing, stressing the need for enjoyment rather than a single-minded focus on coming out on top, e.g. *'only think about winning'*, *'put other people down'*, *'show off'*, *'erased the fun'*, *'wrong mentality'*, *'sport should be a fun way of meeting people and getting fit'*.