

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/11
Reading and Writing (Core)

General comments

The great majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level and consequently were able to respond well to most of the tasks set. In the seven exercises candidates are required to show a variety of practical skills, which include brief answers, form-filling, note-taking, summary writing, descriptive and discursive writing. There were varying degrees of difficulty in each of the seven exercises, so differentiation was achieved in each exercise and throughout the paper as a whole. As a result the whole range of marks was awarded.

Most candidates were able to complete the paper within the permitted time showing good time management. If an exercise was deliberately omitted, it was usually **Exercise 3 Section D**, the two sentences, **Exercise 5**, summary writing, or the last exercise on the paper, **Exercise 7**. In general the rubric in the different exercises was well understood and observed. It is most important for all candidates to take the utmost care in reading every question. Marks were lost most noticeably through imprecision in **Exercise 1**, **Exercise 3**, **Exercise 4** and **Exercise 5**. It is worth emphasising again that whenever key words are highlighted in any question it is to guide the candidate towards the relevant section of the stimulus text. **Exercise 3**, the form-filling exercise, was not as well done as in previous sessions. In this respect Centres are reminded of the need for precision in spelling and punctuation, particularly in the transcription of proper nouns. **Exercise 3 Section D** proved again to be challenging for many candidates. This response requires two full and complete sentences. If only one sentence is offered, only half the marks can be awarded. Accurate spelling and punctuation is also essential. **Exercise 4** was generally quite well handled. Most candidates managed to score at least half the marks available. Once again the responses were brief and factual in each of the three sections. In **Exercise 5** most candidates kept well within the 70 word limit. Some even helped by noting the number of words used, although this is not required. **Exercise 6** was, on the whole, better answered than **Exercise 7**. Many seemed to enjoy writing the letter and were able to respond with a very good sense of audience and register. The outcome was a number of interesting and entertaining letters. Some of the best tended not to use the stimulus pictures offered in the question, but to use ideas of their own or called on their own experience. For **Exercise 7** most candidates stayed a little too close to the written stimuli in the question, all too often just copying them verbatim and adding a few comments of their own or of a friend. Greater reward was given to those who were able to use the ideas in the stimuli as an introduction and then develop further supporting evidence to reinforce their argument.

The presentation of answers and the handwriting were of an acceptable standard in most scripts. Centres are reminded of the need for legibility in order for candidates to achieve credit for their answer. Where candidates need to use the extra pages at the back of the answer booklet, it is helpful if the candidate indicates that the response continues on a later page. As a general rule, candidates are advised that the number of lines and the amount of space provided on a page should give an indication of the length of response required. It is recommended that these are used as a guide.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

This first exercise provided the candidates with a comfortable start to the paper. 1(a), 1(c) and 1(e) were particularly well answered.

- (a) Most answers were correct. The need for exercise to maintain good health was well understood.
- (b) Well answered. A correct response had to include the fact that personal trainers were expensive and that, therefore, most people could not afford to have one.

- (c) The key word in the question was 'doctor' and most responses contained the proper nouns from the text, quoting both 'safe' and 'appropriate' to describe the shoes and the clothes for the exercise.
- (d) This was a discriminating question and generally responses were less well written. Most candidates gave only one detail instead of two. Usually this was to mention the shoes and not often than not the difference between running shoes and dancing shoes, rather than to specify that the shoes and the clothes had to be suitable for the chosen exercise.
- (e) Mostly correct. Marks were lost when insufficient detail was given; 'they stretch' or 'stretching' was not enough. Only when 'slowly' and/or 'carefully' were added was the answer complete.
- (f) As in 1(d), two details were required and if only one was offered the mark was lost. A correct answer could be achieved by lifting the detail from the final paragraph of the text. The minimum acceptable responses were 'body recovers' and 'mind has a rest'.

Exercise 2

Although this exercise was designed to be more challenging than Exercise 1, many candidates attempted the exercise as a whole. Precise reading of the questions was required to gain high marks and once more candidates are reminded that brief correct answers will gain credit. The exercise contained four well answered questions, namely 2(a), 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e). Against this, 2(b) and 2(i) were less well answered.

- (a) The wording of the question containing 'communicate with the gods' directed a very large number of candidates to the correct sentence in the text.
- (b) The question asked for the important invention of the Egyptians, which was glass. It was not 'the glass', nor was it the 'glass bottle'.
- (c) 'Alexander the Great' was the full answer. 'Alexander' was not accepted.
- (d) Well answered.
- (e) Well answered. The great majority had correct responses to both these questions.
- (f) Many succeeded in giving the correct two details. Where mistakes did occur it was to choose the wrong lift from the text and to focus on the machinery and industry of the 19th Century for the improvements in the production of perfume rather than the advances in technology and chemistry.
- (g) A challenging question, but one which was quite well answered. A typical error here was to respond too briefly with just 'more expensive' or 'more difficult to find', without attributing these two factors to the natural ingredients. The question did seek a response relating to the advantages in using artificial ingredients. A converse answer was acceptable, but it had to be clearly worded to explain that natural ingredients were indeed more costly and more difficult to find.
- (h) Asking for 'How many perfume products...' the response had to contain a number. The correct answer was '4 million', so clearly '4' on its own was insufficient.
- (i) Good candidates located 'mass production'. Very few interpreted the idea of 'more brands available' from the sentence – 'only a few brand names available until the 20th Century'. Weaker candidates lifted from the final paragraph the idea of globalisation – buying the same product anywhere in the world. Others mentioned the improvements in advertising and the attractive packaging and price.

Exercise 3

An increasing number of candidates are attempting this exercise as a whole, and showing an understanding of the specific demands of the exercise. This is a form-filling exercise which requires strict application of the conventions of the use of upper case initial letters for proper nouns and total accuracy in spelling. Overall, selection of the key detail from the stimulus text was appropriate, although this was often negated by inaccurate spelling and the lack of distinction between upper and lower case letters in candidates' handwriting. In an exercise where there are numerous proper nouns the initial capital letter is a very important feature.

Section A

Many candidates lost marks by writing it all in lower case, when all the family names, the address, the name of the school and the name of the zoological club required an initial capital letter. Many also added unnecessary preposition to the address, such as preceding the address with 'at' or, in this case, by adding 'China'.

Section B

Weaker candidates found this section difficult. Some are still using the third person 'he' instead of the first person 'I'. The numbers 1 and 2 were often found in the wrong place or not at all. Occasionally the instruction to delete or to circle was not properly observed.

Section C

Generally this section was well done.

Section D

The final section of this exercise proves to be the most demanding for many candidates and Centres are asked to continue to provide as much practice as possible for this task. Weaker candidates sometimes choose not to answer this question.

Common errors were:-

- Use of the wrong pronoun as 'he', instead of 'I'.
- Identifying wrong part of the sentence in the text and writing about ambition (to be an actor) rather than future plans (to study Drama at university).
- Inaccurate copying of the name of the magazine.
- Misspelling of the word 'advertisement'.
- Absence of two clearly defined and accurate sentences.
- Grammatical inaccuracies, such as 'My future plans is...'.

Exercise 4

For this exercise, the requirement is to locate precise contextual information relating to the individual headings. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the information in the text in their responses and scored well.

Section 1

Those who selected and understood the fears of some parents and teachers for bilingual children managed to find two examples. Marks were lost by some candidates who incorrectly supplied 'not delay their language skills', whereas, in fact, the fear was that it would delay their acquisition of language skills.

Section 2

A good many responses here were too vague with key details missing, for example, omitting 'above average' when writing of their ability to concentrate and not adding 'with a wide group of children' to the idea of making friends.

Section 3

This was the least well done section on the paper. A large number thought that bilingualism caused dementia and as a consequence the same idea came into **Exercise 5** too. Those who kept close to the text generally managed at least one mark in this section. The most popular response concerned the increase in blood and oxygen flow to the brain.

Exercise 5

This exercise continues to present the greatest challenge for many candidates, some of whom omit it when short of time. The summary required candidates to write about bilingualism within a word limit of 70. Many candidates used the space and number of lines provided as an indication of the appropriate length of

answer. When they stayed close to their notes from **Exercise 4** and were able to sequence the points, candidates usually scored two of the available four marks. Good answers balanced the fears of the parents with the benefits to the children, but many included details from **Section 3** which they had not really understood. This meant that marks were lost through weak expression and inaccurate use of language. Those candidates who were able to summarise their notes using largely their own words and keep within the 70 word limit were rewarded with higher marks.

Exercise 6 – Letter to a friend

This was a good and familiar topic for most candidates, who addressed the reader in a familiar tone showing a good sense of audience. The second prompt about things that they had done recently was often well developed. The three bullet points offered on the question paper for guidance help to give the candidates a framework and assist towards a coherent response. For many it was an opportunity to create a paragraph for each point, which made the response easier to read.

Sometimes inappropriate expressions such as ‘you know dude’, ‘gonna’ and ‘wanna’ were used. Some candidates forgot to finish the letter properly and lapsed into the more formal ‘in conclusion’ or ‘to sum up’ which are more suited to **Exercise 7**. Common linguistic errors were:

- Verb and preposition – ‘I’m waiting you to write back’.
- Absence of simple past tense when re-telling an anecdote/event.
- Double negatives – ‘I do not have nobody to talk to’.

Exercise 7 – Is it easier for teenagers today than it was for their parents when they were teenagers?

Most candidates knew how to write an introduction, middle and an end. The best ones do this in paragraphs, making for better organisation. As always, the biggest problem is the reliance of many on the given prompts, often meaning that several points are covered superficially and without sufficient development. The inability of many candidates to use the prompts and enhance them with examples led to the occurrence of more language errors in **Exercise 7** as compared with **Exercise 6**. In this exercise many made the mistake of using only the advances in technology, specifically computers, and often stayed with this theme throughout.

The general consensus was that it is easier for teenagers now. Some of the better responses explained that both eras presented advantages and disadvantages and that because times are different now, so the stresses and strains are different too.

In both **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7** it is clear that Centres prepare their candidates well in the classroom as there is evidence of some good practice. Candidates should be encouraged in these last two exercises to attempt a level of sophistication that can be rewarded. This can be achieved by linking the ideas in the prompts with examples and ideas of their own. Examiners noted again an improvement in spelling and punctuation.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/12
Reading and Writing (Core)

General comments

The majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level and many showed a good response to the range of tasks included in the seven exercises. The paper required candidates to demonstrate a variety of practical skills, from writing short answers to comprehension questions, form-filling and writing notes, to the more complex and detailed writing necessary for a summary, a letter and a discursive article. Each exercise included degrees of difficulty, so differentiation was achieved within an individual exercise and across the paper as a whole.

Many candidates completed all exercises, showing evidence of good time management. In cases where an exercise was omitted, the most common omissions were in **Exercise 3 Section C**, the two sentences, **Exercise 5**, summary writing, or one of the extended writing questions. On occasion candidates offered over-long answers to questions in **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, which meant they were unable to complete the final exercise in the allotted time. Candidates would find it useful to write only short factual answers to **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, and to use the amount of space provided as a guideline for their answer.

Generally, there were few misunderstandings of the rubric in the different questions. Nevertheless there was some indication that candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of certain questions, noticeably, in this session, **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, which required candidates to provide a short but relevant detail as an answer. Highlighting key words in the questions will guide candidates more closely in finding the relevant sections of the text. **Exercise 3** was attempted by the majority of candidates, many of whom gave a satisfactory response, showing a good understanding of the conventions of form-filling. There were some candidates whose handwriting did not clearly differentiate between upper and lower case letters and this prevented them from achieving the highest marks. The final section of **Exercise 3**, two sentences, continues to present a challenge for some, with the more able candidates successfully completing the task by writing in accurate sentence formation and with correct spelling and punctuation. Candidates will score higher marks by limiting their answers to two sentences, as, where more than two are offered, credit will only be given for the first two. Similarly, if candidates write just one sentence, only half the marks can be awarded. **Exercise 4** was well attempted by many candidates, who offered brief, factual notes in answer. Candidates are reminded to read the section headings with care, as this will prevent correct detail being placed under the incorrect heading. On the whole, the word limit in **Exercise 5** is being observed, with the majority of those attempting this exercise offering an answer within the 70 words required. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and candidates did not take into account the notes from **Exercise 4**. Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to use these notes as the basis for the summary. Of the two extended writing exercises, **Exercise 6** was better attempted, with many interesting and entertaining responses. Many candidates clearly understood the need to address all the given prompts and wrote in an engaging style, showing an awareness of audience through use of register and idiom. Candidates seemed reluctant to use the same freedom of expression in **Exercise 7**, with most tending to adhere to the written stimuli in the question and very few developing their own ideas. Overall, however, there is a continued improvement in both types of register, less formal in **Exercise 6** to describe an event and more formal in **Exercise 7** to discuss ideas and offer a point of view.

Presentation of answers and handwriting were of an acceptable standard in the majority of scripts, with most candidates using blue or black ink. Centres are reminded of the need for legibility in order for candidates to achieve credit for their answer. Most candidates used the appropriate answer pages and in the case of a candidate needing to use the blank pages at the back of the booklet to continue or re-write an answer, this was usually clearly indicated to the Examiner. As a general rule, candidates are advised that the number of lines and the amount of space provided on a page should give an indication of the length of response required. It is recommended that these are used as a guide.

Exercise 1

This exercise was well attempted by many candidates and provided questions of varying degrees of difficulty as an introduction to the reading comprehension tasks. The key skill in this exercise is to locate precise information from a longer text. This key information may be in the form of a single word or a short phrase.

- (a) Precise understanding of the key words 'where exactly' in the question was necessary to supply details of '60 kms' and 'off the eastern coast' of Australia. Some candidates supplied an answer which was too general in content and so could not score highly. Occasionally, misspellings of 'cost' for 'coast' occurred, which could not be credited.
- (b) Many candidates were able to identify the two required details, 'meals' and 'talks from marine experts', although the incomplete answer 'meals and talks' was insufficient for the mark. Careful reading of the question was again necessary, 'apart from equipment for water sports', and those who only supplied information regarding snorkelling and scuba diving did not achieve the mark.
- (c) Most candidates offered the correct answer 'glass bottom boats'. Some copied the entire sentence from the text, which, although containing the correct detail, was unnecessary and time wasting.
- (d) The majority of candidates matched 'what is essential for coral' in the question with 'coral needs' in the text and correctly supplied the single word 'sunlight'. Centres should encourage candidates to look for a short answer, rather than writing the entire sentence.
- (e) The variety of options available meant that many candidates were able to respond appropriately and gain the mark. The majority offered 'if not a strong swimmer', but 'shallow water' was also correct as was 'float on the sea' and 'look down on the clownfish'. Again many candidates wrote over-long answers, thus reducing their time available for later exercises.
- (f) This question proved to be a good differentiator. The best candidates recognised the key idea of 'advantage' in the question and supplied 'closer to the reef' or 'full range of activities'. Marks were lost by misinterpretation of the question and selecting information about the accommodation being an alternative to staying on the mainland.

Exercise 2

Although this exercise was designed to be more challenging than **Exercise 1**, many candidates attempted the exercise as a whole. Precise reading of the questions was required to gain high marks and once more candidates are reminded that brief correct answers will gain credit. The full range of marks was awarded across the exercise.

- (a) There were many good answers to this question, with the correct detail 'saliva hardens' being supplied. Marks were lost through candidates transferring the second part of the key sentence in the text, 'make a small nest shaped like a cup'.
- (b) This was well answered by the majority who connected the key information in the question 'why take risks' with the contextual reason given 'they can be sold for thousands of dollars'. Candidates are advised to pay attention to the first word of the question, as this will help to locate the relevant information. Answers such as 'it is these nests for which the hunters are prepared to risk their lives' could not be awarded a mark, as the reason was not supplied in the response.
- (c) This question required the name of the country 'China' as the answer. Many candidates lost the mark through imprecise reading of the question and offering 'Chinese' as the answer. 'Thailand' was also an incorrect response, as this was the country where the nests were found, rather than the country which bought them.
- (d) This was confidently answered by most, who matched the key item 'why' in the question with 'because' and transferred the complete sentence from the text. Marks were lost through incorrect spelling of 'status' for 'statues' and in some cases where the idea of 'temple' was missed and the location of the nests, 'high above the statues, is where the nests can be found' was supplied.

- (e) This was a more demanding question. Candidates needed to select two details from the text to support their answers. There were many correct answers from candidates who transferred the detail from the sentence 'They rarely use safety equipment and if they fall, they will die instantly'. Others were more general, generally about 'climbing barefoot up bamboo poles', without relating the answer to the specific danger in the question.
- (f) The graphic required candidates to compare the price of birds' nests in two years, 1968 and 2008. The best answers supplied the detail 'it increased', 'it doubled', which included the idea of comparison.
- (g) This question proved to be a good discriminator. The key requirement of the question was to provide two ways in which the hunting could be controlled. Words such as 'armed guards' and 'strict laws' were key contextual items and needed to be included as part of the answer to score two marks. The best responses addressed these requirements and supplied full and appropriate answers. Many candidates achieved one mark, but lacked sufficient precision to be awarded two.
- (h) Most candidates located the paragraph in the text relating to 'health', and many correctly understood that doctors prescribed the soup for certain illnesses. Good answers included the whole detail for the mark, whereas some could not be credited if the answer merely listed the illnesses by name. The additional correct answer 'it is said to have a value in prolonging life' was also selected by a good number of candidates.
- (i) There was a mixed response to this question, with a number of candidates confusing the idea of how the soup tastes with how the soup gets its taste. The best answers quoted the Chinese chef, 'it's the other ingredients which give the soup its flavour', or supplied examples of the other ingredients, 'mixed with meat and coconut'. Less able candidates incorrectly offered the method of preparation, 'they are washed, soaked and boiled', 'remove all traces of the bird', or the opinion that 'it has no taste' or 'it is soft and crunchy'.

Exercise 3

An increasing number of candidates are attempting this exercise as a whole, and showing an understanding of the specific demands of the exercise. This is a form-filling exercise which requires strict application of the conventions of the use of upper case initial letters for proper nouns and total accuracy in spelling. Overall, selection of the key detail from the stimulus text was appropriate, although this was often negated by inaccurate spelling and the lack of distinction between upper and lower case letters in candidates' handwriting. For some candidates the difference between upper and lower case letters is extremely small or even invisible, so when completing answers requiring names and addresses, the use of block capitals is recommended.

Section A

The personal details were confidently identified in many cases, particularly in the email address and the phone number. Centres are asked to remind candidates that marks cannot be awarded for the inclusion of prepositions as part of the address, 'at 172, Dongshan Plaza' or 'in Shenzhen'. Similarly, candidates needed to read the text more closely in order to transcribe 'Shenzhen Public School', and 'Zoological Club' accurately. Candidates should also be aware of the need to be specific about age, as 'Ling will soon be 17', means that his age is 16.

Section B

This section was well attempted by the majority of candidates, who correctly used the circle and tick method of completion where required. Most selected the correct preferred date, although occasionally candidates underlined the detail, thus losing the mark. Marks were also lost through supplying two answers to the second question, 'photography' and 'painting', these being his hobbies, without the focus on painting as the method chosen for his presentation for the competition. In many cases the name of the referee was well recognised, although again the lack of distinction between upper and lower case initial letters meant that credit could not always be given. The misspelling of 'principle' for 'principal' could not be given credit. To find the key detail for the final question in this section, candidates needed to look in the first paragraph of the text and select 'zoo'. Marks were awarded for the extra detail of 'visitors' centre' or 'in a leaflet', provided that the required location was supplied. Weaker answers included details of the prize to be awarded to the winner of the competition. Candidates are encouraged to select information relating to the context for their answers and reminded that an answer such as 'in the third paragraph' can receive no credit.

Section C

The final section of this exercise proves to be the most demanding for many candidates and Centres were asked to continue to provide as much practice as possible for this task. The best answers are those who select the key points from the stimulus text and transfer them in a clearly defined and well-written sentence form, starting with a capital letter and not forgetting a full-stop to end the sentence. Many candidates understood the need to write as Ling Pan and made a good attempt at writing in the first person, 'I'. The required information for both sentences was well recognised by many who transferred the relevant wording from the text. Marks were lost through the inconsistency of grammatical accuracy in transcription, 'I believes strongly...', or 'I gives about 20% of the money I earns'. Marks were similarly lost through misspelling 'belive' for 'believe', despite the word being written as part of the question and the spelling confusion of 'conservation' with 'conversation'. Nonetheless, in this session most candidates understood the requirement to relate their answer to the context and fewer candidates than in the past used this section to provide personal information in a creative way.

Exercise 4

A good many candidates were able to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the text to make a satisfactory attempt at this task. The requirement is to locate precise contextual information relating to the individual headings. Overall, candidates found it easier to select items for the second section of the exercise than the first. Many candidates needed to read the heading for the first section more closely, as answers relating to multi-tasking activities outside the home could not be credited. There was an increase in the number of brief answers, with most candidates using the length of the line as a guideline for their answers. Additionally, candidates are recognising the bullet points at the beginning of each line as an indication of the type of note-form answers required in this exercise. Candidates should be advised to supply one key detail on each response line. In a few cases, candidates felt that the required information should be supplied in their own words and attempted to paraphrase the given detail in the text. This is not necessary in this exercise, as the objective is for candidates to demonstrate the skills of scanning, selecting and organising information.

Examples of multi-tasking activities at home

The key points were well identified by many candidates, with 'texting friends', 'surfing the computer' and 'conversations with family' as the most popular. Marks could not be awarded for answers that were too generalised, as 'using the computer' or 'listening to music'. Occasionally, candidates misspelled 'conservation' for 'conversation', following from the previous exercise, and this could not be awarded a mark. Candidates must be advised to read the headings with care as a number extended the multi-tasking activities to those used in the car or at work, 'make a phone call with a hands-free set' or 'a blizzard of emails', thereby not achieving full marks for this section. This did not seem to be fully understood.

What was different ten years ago

Full marks could be awarded for most candidates in this section. The majority of candidates successfully identified the key differences, with the most popular points being the different email system and the mobile phones in use at that time. Many also recognised that the way of life was different, with people having more time and more personal contact. Very few answers could accurately transfer the idea that time-saving machines in use nowadays enable people to do in 24 hours what would have taken 31 hours ten years ago.

Exercise 5

This exercise continues to present the greatest challenge for candidates, some of whom omit it when short of time. The summary required candidates to write about multi-tasking within a word limit of 70. Many candidates used the space and number of lines provided as an indication of the appropriate length of answer. Candidates need to use their own notes from **Exercise 4** in order to supply some of the information required. In this session, the notes from the first heading section were the most useful. It was expected that candidates would include some of the examples of multi-tasking, 'read text messages while making toast', or 'a driver makes a phone call while listening to the radio'. Good answers fulfilled the task and connected the ways in which time can be saved by the use of these gadgets. Many answers, however, showed that candidates thought that multi-tasking was simply using modern technology, and listed the time-saving machines and gadgets without any reference to the ways in which using several together might save time in our busy lives, 'examples of multi-tasking are: text messaging, internet activities, having a conversation with

their family', showing little attempt at linking the ideas into a cohesive paragraph. These less than satisfactory answers prevented candidates from achieving the highest marks for this exercise.

Although many candidates feel less grammatically secure when using their own words and rely on copying from the text, Centres are reminded that limited marks are available for these answers. It would be helpful for candidates if Centres can continue to encourage the use of synonyms and alternative phrases, as well as practising connecting simple sentences together with the use of appropriate linking words.

Exercise 6 and Exercise 7

General Comments

Many candidates attempted both extended writing exercises at an appropriate word length, indicating a good use of time throughout the paper as a whole. Few were unable to provide any answer at all, although some candidates spent over-long on **Exercise 6**, and were therefore unable to spend sufficient time on the last exercise and complete it within the allocated time. Candidates are reminded that **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7** carry equal weight and so are encouraged to try to divide their time equally between the two pieces of writing. The whole range of marks was awarded, reflecting some high quality work and some less confident writing.

Exercise 6

In **Exercise 6**, in addition to the three bullet points which form part of the question, there is a visual guide to help candidates select a theme for their writing. These visual stimuli act as a guide only in the planning stage and more successful answers were those in which candidates developed to some depth one or more of these picture prompts with the inclusion of their own ideas. Weaker responses were characterised by an attempt to cover all three pictures, resulting in an answer which appeared disjointed and needed more focus and cohesion.

Short visit to a city as a competition prize

In general, this task was well addressed. Many candidates made satisfactory attempts to include all three bullet points, including the city of their choice and the reason for choosing it; what they felt was the best part of the weekend, and their feelings about the visit. Overall, candidates used the appropriate style and register for letter writing, with suitable opening and closing remarks.

High marks were scored by candidates who wrote with interest and enthusiasm about their visit, engaging the reader, and developing their ideas to a satisfactory length. Weaker responses were marked by an over-long introduction and ending, with minimal development of the required points. In this session, very few candidates introduced ideas beyond the visual prompts and Centres are asked to encourage candidates to do this in order to gain higher marks. Responses which attempted to include all the pictorial detail of boat trips, excursions, monuments and statues left the reader confused. In some instances the question was not adequately addressed by candidates who wrote about going away to take part in a competition, rather than going away as a result of winning one. Marks were lost by candidates digressing from the topic, and incomplete answers were limited to low band marks.

Linguistically, consistency of tense throughout the writing proved to be difficult to sustain for many candidates. In this exercise, the topic related to an event which happened in the past. Thus it was necessary for candidates to use the past tense in order to make the narration clear. Many started well, but found it hard to maintain the use of the past tense in a paragraph or even in a sentence. Further common errors included the verb and noun confusion of 'choose' and 'choice', as 'I choice to visit Paris' or 'I'd like to tell you about my visited to Paris', and the spelling of 'prize' and 'price'.

Centres are advised that whereas in conversation it might be acceptable to use the idiomatic items 'gonna', 'wanna' and 'gotta', these should not form part of an examination answer.

Exercise 7

In this exercise, candidates are presented with four written prompts on a particular topic. These usually take the form of two in favour and two against a given topic and are intended to serve as a springboard for candidates' own ideas and opinions. As in **Exercise 6**, the more successful contributions were those in which candidates used the stimuli to good purpose, with the inclusion of their own experiences and ideas. Weaker responses were characterised by answers which focused entirely on the given stimuli, with little or no development or opinion. Some candidates needed to focus more on the content of the topic and show some independence of thought in order to gain marks in the top band for this piece of writing.

To begin work immediately after finishing school or to continue studying to a higher level?

Many candidates made a satisfactory attempt at the more formal tone and register required for this discursive exercise. Many engaged well with this familiar topic and responded by providing thoughtful answers. A considerable number of candidates adopted a balanced approach, providing reasons in support of both sides of the argument. Other candidates adopted a position on one side and considered the question from this side, with relevant supporting arguments. The best responses showed consistently clear and logical argument, with an ability to develop a particular point of view. The topic gave rise to many and varied opinions, with the majority of candidates taking the view that continuing to study would provide the best employment opportunities for the future and therefore the greatest security. Others felt that finding a job immediately after finishing school would enable them to have a steady income and be financially secure.

A good number of candidates used paragraphing to create a sense of balance and order throughout their writing and overall, many produced writing with a sense of shape and form, through the appropriate use of introduction and conclusion.

Weaker responses concentrated entirely on the given prompts, with in some cases, candidates merely performing a copying exercise. Candidates should be aware that in order to score high marks there needs to be evidence of development of argument and presentation of opinion.

Linguistic errors were again in the confusion of tenses, often within one sentence. In discursive writing, candidates often attempt to write longer and more complex sentences. This can be achieved through the careful use of relative clauses and connecting words and phrases, such as 'furthermore', 'besides', 'in contrast to'. Candidates should be encouraged to continue to practise short exercises of this kind, in order to gain in confidence and accuracy.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/13
Reading and Writing (Core)

General comments

The majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level and many showed a good response to the range of tasks included in the seven exercises. The paper required candidates to demonstrate a variety of practical skills, from writing short answers to comprehension questions, form-filling and writing notes, to the more complex and detailed writing necessary for a summary, a letter and a discursive article. Each exercise included degrees of difficulty, so differentiation was achieved within an individual exercise and across the paper as a whole.

Many candidates completed all exercises, showing evidence of satisfactory time management. In cases where an exercise was omitted, the most common omissions were in **Exercise 3 Section C**, the two sentences, **Exercise 5**, summary writing, or one of the extended writing questions. On occasion candidates offered over-long answers to questions in **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, which meant they were unable to complete the final exercise in the allotted time. Candidates would find it useful to write only short factual answers to **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, and to use the amount of space provided as a guideline for their answer.

Generally, there were few misunderstandings of the rubric in the different questions. Nevertheless there was some indication that candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of certain questions, noticeably, in this session, **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, which required candidates to provide a short but relevant detail as an answer. Highlighting key words in the questions will guide candidates more closely in finding the relevant sections of the text. **Exercise 3** was attempted by the majority of candidates, many of whom gave a satisfactory response, showing a good understanding of the conventions of form-filling. There were some candidates whose handwriting did not clearly differentiate between upper and lower case letters and this prevented them from achieving the highest marks. The final section of **Exercise 3**, two sentences, continues to present a challenge for some, with the more able candidates successfully completing the task by writing in accurate sentence formation and with correct spelling and punctuation. Candidates will score higher marks by limiting their answers to two sentences, as, where more than two are offered, credit will only be given for the two. Similarly, if candidates write just one sentence, only half the marks can be awarded. **Exercise 4** was attempted in a satisfactory manner by many candidates, who offered brief, factual notes in answer. Candidates are reminded to read the section headings with care, as this will prevent correct detail being placed under the incorrect heading. On the whole, the word limit in **Exercise 5** is being observed, with the majority of those attempting this exercise offering an answer within the 70 words required. Sometimes the question was not adequately addressed and candidates did not take into account the notes from **Exercise 4**. Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to use these notes as the basis for the summary. Of the two extended writing exercises, **Exercise 6** was better attempted, with many interesting and entertaining responses. Many candidates clearly understood the need to address all the given prompts and wrote in an engaging style, showing an awareness of audience through use of register and idiom. Candidates seemed reluctant to use the same freedom of expression in **Exercise 7**, with most tending to adhere closely to the written stimuli in the question and very few developing their own ideas. Overall, however, there is a continued improvement in both types of register, less formal in **Exercise 6** to describe an event and more formal in **Exercise 7** to discuss ideas and offer a point of view.

Presentation of answers and handwriting were of an acceptable standard in the majority of scripts, with most candidates using blue or black ink. Centres are reminded of the need for legibility in order for candidates to achieve credit for their answer. Most candidates used the appropriate answer pages and it was uncommon for a candidate to need to use the blank pages at the back of the booklet to continue or re-write an answer. As a general rule, candidates are advised that the number of lines and the amount of space provided on a page should give an indication of the length of response required. It is recommended that these are used as a guide.

Exercise 1

This exercise was well attempted by many candidates and provided questions of varying degrees of difficulty as an introduction to the reading comprehension tasks. The key skill in this exercise is to locate precise information from a longer text. This key information may be in the form of a single word or a short phrase.

- (a) Three different activities, 'swim', 'bike' and 'run' were required for the mark, and many candidates achieved this. The idea of taking part in a relay could not be credited alone, without the named activities.
- (b) This question proved to be a good discriminator. Candidates needed to identify the key words in the question 'how...become members' and scan for the relevant contextual information 'encourage them to join...by holding their own event.' Answers which described how to hold an event 'invite your friends and neighbours', or an example of an event, 'a picnic, lunch or barbecue' did not contain sufficient relevance to the question to achieve the mark.
- (c) Candidates can be helped by highlighting key words in the question, and although this question asked 'how much', candidates also needed to locate the detail 'booklet', which would then lead to the correct answer 'free'. Sometimes candidates did not take into account all the key details of the question and incorrectly supplied amounts of money unrelated to the information required. Centres are advised that answers to the questions in this exercise are generally in text order, and that candidates should closely follow the order of paragraphs when scanning for information.
- (d) Many candidates were able to recognise the correct information in the text and supplied the answer 'a range of resources' or 'music and words'. Candidates should be encouraged to save time in the first two exercises by writing brief, factual answers, often only a short phrase, rather than copying long sentences from the text.
- (e) This was well answered by the majority of candidates, who correctly matched 'why' in the question with 'because' in the text and offered the two key points relating to the time spent and the purpose. Both details were required for the mark.
- (f) This question was a good differentiator. The best responses recognised the need to look for the 'purpose for contacting Fiona Blake' and supplied ideas such as 'support WaterAid', or 'promote the WaterAid lottery'. Marks were lost through misinterpretation of the question by candidates who offered the email or web address as a means of contact.

Exercise 2

Although this exercise was designed to be more challenging than **Exercise 1**, many candidates attempted the exercise as a whole. Precise reading of the questions was required to gain high marks and once more candidates are reminded that brief correct answers will gain credit. The full range of marks was awarded across the exercise.

- (a) There were many good answers to this question, with the correct detail 'transport pollen' being identified in the first paragraph. Candidates need to understand that at times answers can be found by looking for information written conversely in the text, as in this question 'how do ants help flowers', correlating with 'plants would disappear with no creatures to transport their pollen'.
- (b) The variety of options meant that the majority of candidates were able to achieve the mark, with the most popular answers being 'they appear in sugar bowls' and 'they crawl over shoes'. The idea of 'irritate' in the question was successfully linked with 'annoying' in the text.
- (c) Many candidates answered this question accurately and located the appropriate section of the text, supplying the comparison between human and ant populations. The requirement was to make a comparison and weaker responses were characterised by no mention of one.
- (d) This was confidently answered by most, who matched the key question word 'when' with the time word 'before' in the text and transferred the wording from the text. Some copied the entire sentence from the text, which, although containing the correct detail, was unnecessary and time wasting.

- (e) The majority of candidates selected the correct surprising detail that 'ants make groups without having a leader' and achieved the mark. In some cases the idea of something being missed and incorrect answers offered information referring to the way this study may affect our understanding of the behaviour of groups of individuals.
- (f) Most candidates located the paragraph in the text relating to the importance of ants to life on earth. There was a variety of possible answers, enabling the majority to achieve full marks. Many transferred the complete sentence, 'They capture and feed on other small insects and remove dead creatures such as small birds, mice and rats', which contained all the required points. The idea that 'ants are the principal collectors and clearers of waste' was also correctly selected by some. Answers which compared the importance of earthworms with that of ants prevented candidates from achieving full marks.
- (g) This question proved to be more demanding. Candidates needed to identify the difference between Antarctica and other continents. The detail could be found contained in the sentence 'insects have colonised every continent except Antarctica', indicating that ants have not colonised Antarctica. Successful answers recognised this detail. Vague answers concerning the origin and evolution of ants could not be credited.
- (h) The graphic compared the body length of a variety of different types of ant and candidates were asked to identify two species with a length of between 30 mm and 40 mm. A fair number of candidates correctly selected 'Army Ants' and 'Leaf-Cutter Ants'. However, there were many inaccurate choices made, and Centres are asked to encourage candidates to continue to practise this type of exercise. Through continued practice, improvement will be noticeable.
- (i) There was a mixed response to this question. Good answers matched 'the largest' in the question with 'the biggest' in the text and accurately selected 'having a deadly sting'. Weaker answers were characterised by a confusion between 'the largest ants are dangerous' in the question and the idea at the end of the text that 'they are driven out of the nest and killed', which could not be credited as an answer.

Exercise 3

An increasing number of candidates are attempting this exercise as a whole, and showing an understanding of the specific demands of the exercise. This is a form-filling exercise which requires strict application of the conventions of the use of upper case initial letters for proper nouns and total accuracy in spelling. Overall, selection of the key detail from the stimulus text was appropriate, although this was often negated by inaccurate spelling and the lack of distinction between upper and lower case letters in candidates' handwriting. For some candidates the difference between upper and lower case letters is extremely small or even invisible, so when completing answers requiring names and addresses, the use of block capitals is recommended. Candidates are reminded that the information for the completion of the form is found in the text, and that candidates should not include their own personal details or experience.

Section A

The majority of candidates were successful with the name and the details of the address. On occasion, prepositions were inserted into the address, 'in Mexico City', which was not credited. The correct differentiation between the mobile number and the home telephone number was also noted by most candidates and the age was accurately identified by many. The convention of form-filling requires names to be written in full, which meant that candidates needed to include the parents' surname in addition to the first names in order to gain the mark. A number of candidates did not seem to understand this.

Section B

This section was well attempted by the majority of candidates, who correctly used the tick, circle and deletion method of completion where required. Most candidates recognised the 'last' expedition as being in the South, and her preference for staying in a hostel, helped by the extra money from her father. On occasion candidates read the text imprecisely and circled both campsite and hostel, as both were mentioned. Supplying two options prevented full marks from being awarded. There were instances in which candidates inadvertently overlooked the question relating to previous archaeological experience, and Centres are asked to remind candidates that precise and careful reading is necessary to gain full marks. There was a mixed response to the last two points in this section, with the most successful being those in which the candidates selected simply the detail of the course at university, 'Ancient History' and the career, 'Archaeologist'.

Candidates are reminded that in completing a form, long sentences are unnecessary. Although the stimulus text contains two long sentences, 'I would like to study Ancient History at the National University of Mexico' and 'I would like to make a future career as an Archaeologist' contain completely correct information, the length of answer suggests that candidates are more open to errors in grammar and spelling caused in the transfer of such a long sentence. Supplying shorter answers will reduce the number of errors likely to occur. Additionally, in some cases the name of the country and profession were well recognised, although the lack of distinction between upper and lower case initials and letters meant that credit could not always be given.

Section C

The final section of this exercise proved to be the most demanding for many candidates and Centres are asked to continue to provide as much practice as possible for this task. The best answers are those which select the key points from the stimulus text and transfer them in a clearly defined and well-written sentence form, starting with a capital letter and not forgetting a full-stop to end the sentence. There were many good attempts at the first sentence, although the second sentence was less successful and few candidates achieved more than two marks. Many candidates understood the need to write as Marimin and made a good attempt at writing in the first person, 'I'. Most candidates recognised the required information for the first sentence and transferred the relevant wording from the text. Marks were lost through the inconsistency of grammatical accuracy in transcription, 'My favourite subject is History, especially investigations into the ancient civilisations of her own country'. Locating the detail to answer the second sentence proved more difficult, but successful answers included 'I want to learn more about the culture of the Mayan people'.

Exercise 4

A fair number of candidates were able to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the text to make a satisfactory attempt at this task. This exercise requires close reading of the text and the ability to locate precise information relating to the individual headings. At times candidates supplied superfluous detail or the correct answers under the wrong headings. Candidates can improve by focusing more on the separate headings and highlighting key words for each section of the notes, in order to find matching information in the text. There was an increase in the number of brief answers, with most candidates using the length of the line as a guideline for their answers. Additionally, candidates are recognising the bullet points at the beginning of each line as an indication of the type of note-form answers required in this exercise. Candidates should be advised to supply one key detail on each response line. In a few cases, candidates felt that the required information should be supplied in their own words and attempted to paraphrase the given detail in the text. This is not necessary in this exercise, as the objective is for candidates to demonstrate the skills of scanning, selecting and organising information, rather than creative writing. Overall, candidates who can select precise examples of the required point will be more successful than those who write in general terms.

Reasons for illiteracy in rural Laos

Some candidates correctly recognised the key paragraph in the text and the best responses supplied examples of the causes of illiteracy, the most popular being 'very few authors in the Lao language' and 'books are expensive and hard to obtain'. 'The difficulty of getting books into people's hands' because 'many villages can only be reached by boat' was seldom selected by candidates. There were instances of candidates selecting the idea that there are libraries in towns, but without the comparison with the lack of libraries in rural villages, this did not answer the question. Marks were lost through the general answer 'caused by local conditions', as specific examples of the local conditions were required.

Anna Dahl's fundraising efforts

The points required in this section related to the actions of Anna Dahl in trying to raise money. The best answers identified the '500 km bike ride' and the attempt to 'sail along the river Thames in a small boat'. A small number also noted the plan to 'run in the London Marathon'. Candidates needed to focus more on these activities as part of 'fundraising', rather than on the aim of the charity which was to use the money to provide a floating mobile library to ferry books to the villages. Precise reading of the last sentence of the relevant paragraph provided the words 'by these means she hopes to earn enough money...' Many candidates did not take into account the key words in the heading to this section.

Disadvantages of illiteracy

There were some good attempts to select examples of the disadvantages of illiteracy contained in a paragraph of the text, notably 'you cannot read your school textbooks', 'unable to read signs, notices and instructions' and 'unable even to write your own name'. A few correctly connected the disadvantage of being unable to read and write with the inability to send emails or text messages. Weaker answers confused the reasons for illiteracy ('expensive books' and 'no libraries') with the disadvantages and thus placed the correct answers under the wrong heading.

Exercise 5

This exercise continues to present the greatest challenge for candidates, some of whom omit it when short of time. The summary required candidates to write about literacy in Laos within a word limit of 70. Many candidates used the space and number of lines provided as an indication of the appropriate length of answer. Candidates need to use their own notes from **Exercise 4** in order to supply some of the information required. In this session, the notes from the first and last heading sections 'Reasons for illiteracy' and 'Disadvantages of illiteracy' were the most useful. It was expected that answers would include a brief summary of the situation in Laos, using the information from the first section heading and a short analysis of the problems caused by this situation, selecting the examples under the third section heading. Good answers fulfilled the task and accurately portrayed the difficulties of Laos, connecting the points with a series of linking words to create a cohesive paragraph. Many responses, however, related a description of Anna Dahl's plans to raise money, without any reference to the situation in Laos, as the question required. These less successful answers prevented candidates from achieving the highest marks for this exercise.

Although many candidates feel less grammatically secure when using their own words and rely on copying from the text, Centres are reminded that limited marks are available for these answers. It would be helpful for candidates if Centres can continue to encourage the use of synonyms and alternative phrases, as well as practising connecting simple sentences together with the use of appropriate linking words.

Exercise 6 and Exercise 7

General Comments

Many candidates attempted both extended writing exercises at an appropriate word length, indicating a good use of time throughout the paper as a whole. A small number were unable to provide any answer at all, although some candidates spent over-long on **Exercise 6**, and were therefore unable to spend sufficient time on the last exercise and complete within the allocated time. Candidates are reminded that **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7** carry equal weight and so are encouraged to try to divide their time equally between the two pieces of writing. The whole range of marks was awarded, reflecting both high quality work and some less confident writing.

Exercise 6

In **Exercise 6**, in addition to the three bullet points which form part of the question, there is a visual guide to help candidates select a theme for their writing. These visual stimuli act as a guide only in the planning stage and more successful answers were those in which candidates developed to some depth one or more of these picture prompts with the inclusion of their own ideas. Weaker responses were characterised by an attempt to cover all three pictures, resulting in an answer which appeared disjointed and needed more focus and cohesion.

End-of-term performance

In general, this task was well addressed. Many candidates made satisfactory attempts to include all three bullet points, including the type of performance and the role being played; the preparations being undertaken, and an invitation to a friend to see the performance. Overall, candidates used the appropriate style and register for letter writing, with suitable opening and closing remarks.

High marks were scored by candidates who wrote with interest and enthusiasm about the performance, with a wide variety of examples including musicals, Shakespeare and ballet, engaging the reader and developing their ideas to a satisfactory length. Weaker responses were marked by an over-long introduction and ending, with minimal development of the required points. In this session, very few candidates introduced ideas beyond the visual prompts and Centres are asked to encourage candidates to do this in order to gain

higher marks. In some instances, the question was not adequately addressed, and marks were lost due to candidates digressing from the topic. Incomplete answers were limited to low band marks.

Linguistically, consistency of tense throughout the writing proved to be difficult to sustain for many candidates. In this exercise, the topic related to an event which was about to happen, with information regarding preparation already made. Thus candidates could make full use of the past, present and future grammatical forms in order to attain high marks. Many started well, but found it hard to include variety of grammar in a paragraph and accuracy in a sentence. Further common errors included subject/verb agreement 'I has been preparing' and spelling confusion of 'practise' with 'practice'.

Centres are advised that whereas in conversation it might be acceptable to use the idiomatic items 'gonna', 'wanna' and 'gotta', these should not form part of an examination answer.

Exercise 7

In this exercise, candidates are presented with four written prompts on a particular topic. These prompts generally take the form of two in favour and two against a given topic and are intended to serve as a springboard for candidates' own ideas and opinions. As in **Exercise 6**, the more successful contributions were those in which candidates used the stimuli to good purpose, with the inclusion of their own experiences and ideas. Weaker responses were characterised by answers which focused entirely on the given stimuli, with little or no development or opinion. Some candidates needed to focus more on the content of the topic and show some independence of thought in order to gain marks in the top band for this piece of writing.

Buying local food

Many candidates made a satisfactory attempt at the more formal tone and register required for this discursive exercise. Many engaged well with this familiar topic and responded by providing thoughtful answers. A considerable number of candidates adopted a balanced approach, providing reasons in support of both sides of the argument. Other candidates adopted a position on one side and considered the question from this side, with relevant supporting arguments. The best responses showed consistently clear and logical argument, with an ability to develop a particular point of view. The topic gave rise to many and varied opinions, with the majority of candidates taking the view that buying local food would provide the best and healthiest food and in addition would help the local farmers to make a living, thereby improving the local economy for everyone. Others felt that buying local food meant spending more and that there was insufficient variety of produce in the local area, so importing food would give people a wider range of taste and enable them to spend less.

A good number of candidates used paragraphing to create a sense of balance and order throughout their writing and overall, many produced writing with a sense of shape and form, through the appropriate use of introduction and conclusion.

Weaker responses concentrated entirely on the given prompts, with, in some cases, candidates merely performing a copying exercise. Candidates should be aware that in order to score high marks there needs to be evidence of development of argument and presentation of opinion.

Linguistic errors were again in the confusion of tenses, often within one sentence. In discursive writing, candidates often attempt to write longer and more complex sentences. This can be achieved through the careful use of relative clauses and connecting words and phrases, such as 'furthermore', 'besides', 'in contrast to'. Candidates should be encouraged to continue to practise short exercises of this kind, in order to gain in confidence and accuracy.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/21

Reading and Writing (Extended)

General comments

Most candidates were correctly entered at this level. The Core tier paper would have been more appropriate to the linguistic ability of a few candidates who found the Extended tier very difficult.

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

There were only a few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric for each question. A small number of candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of individual questions, particularly in **Exercise 1**, **Exercise 2** and **Exercise 3 Section C**, and the rubric and prompts of **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7**. It is important that candidates read the wording of each question and the instructions to each exercise carefully because this is the first requirement of a successful answer. There was continued general improvement in the completion of the application form in **Exercise 3**. In **Section C**, some candidates still exceeded the word limit. Many fulfilled the requirements of sentence construction. In **Exercise 4** most answers were sufficiently brief. Very occasionally necessary detail was left out and sometimes a repeat answer given for the second bullet point. This is something candidates should pay attention to when writing their responses. In the summary for **Exercise 5**, most candidates kept within the word length. In this exercise, more candidates are attempting to use their own words and give a more coherent, cohesive summary-style piece of writing, whilst adhering closely enough to the key ideas in the original text. The extended writing tasks of **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7** were well attempted generally and the topics seemed to interest the candidates.

Handwriting and general presentation were acceptable in the majority of cases. Generally candidates should be advised that the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required. It is permissible for them to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7**, but it is important that they indicate clearly to the Examiner where extra work has been added. Time management did not appear to be a problem and most candidates completed all the exercises in the paper.

Exercise 1

This exercise was well attempted by the majority of candidates and was an appropriate introduction to the reading comprehension tasks.

- (a) This was well answered by nearly all candidates.
- (b) Candidates generally gave appropriate answers. It was necessary to focus on the cost of having a personal trainer, so if a candidate gave 'it's a luxury' without reference to the cost, this was not sufficient. A few candidates focused on the benefits of having a personal trainer, which did not respond to the question.
- (c) This was well answered and generally candidates conveyed the key idea of making sure exercising was safe and appropriate.
- (d) Most candidates answered correctly, providing both details. A few lifted 'running shoes', which was specific only to a certain type of exercise. 'Jewellery' was occasionally given instead of 'the right clothes'. A few candidates provided only one detail, usually concerning the shoes.
- (e) Nearly all candidates responded correctly. Occasionally 'stretching' on its own was given and this was not a specific enough response.

- (f) This was usually well answered and candidates offered two of the three possible reasons. 'Performance would not improve' was given rarely. A few candidates lifted 'you do not depend on it' which made the answer incorrect.
- (g) Most candidates provided two details. Occasionally, the idea of the body 'recovering' was replaced with resting, which was not an adequate synonym.

Exercise 2

A full range of marks was achieved on the exercise as a whole and it proved to be an effective differentiator. Answers were generally of appropriate brevity. The interpretation of the graphical material was very good. Candidates need to be precise in their answers and to ensure that responses follow on from the question. When the relevant section of the text has been located, it is important that candidates read enough to satisfy themselves that they have found the correct answer and understand reference words such as pronouns correctly. This was generally the case, with a few exceptions.

- (a) This question was very well answered.
- (b) Most candidates understood that the invention was glass and that this was used to make perfume bottles. A small number did not make this distinction and gave 'glass perfume bottles' as their response.
- (c) This question was very well answered. Occasionally 'Alexander' on its own was given and this was insufficient as it did not specify the Alexander in question.
- (d) The majority of candidates answered this well. A few candidates omitted 'after' in their answer, which was vital to the response as 'the fall of the Roman Empire' was not sufficiently precise. A small number gave the 12th Century, which was incorrect.
- (e) This question was very well answered. Occasionally water was given as one of the main ingredients, which was not in the text.
- (f) Many candidates gave a full correct answer, supplying the two details required. Occasionally, reference was made to industry and machinery instead of 'modern chemistry and advanced technology', when these details could only be provided as additional information and not as a correct answer on their own.
- (g) This was generally well attempted. Some candidates lifted the text describing the disadvantages of using natural ingredients, which did not follow on from the question.
- (h) This was very well answered and candidates clearly understood the graph. A very small number of candidates gave 'Germany' as if the question had not been carefully read, or '4' on its own, which was incorrect.
- (j) Many candidates scored well on this question, specifying three or four purposes. Two of the purposes were sometimes repeated. For example 'to improve/maintain health' and 'to make people feel/smell good' were sometimes split into two discrete points.

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

Exercise 3

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

Section A

Almost all candidates were successful with the candidate's name, date of birth, address, telephone and email details. There were occasional spelling mistakes. It is important that candidates check spellings against those in the text to avoid losing marks in this way. Most candidates gave the address in appropriate format and were aware that the use of prepositions such as 'at' and 'in' cannot be credited. Initial capital letters for proper nouns are required and a few candidates did not use these. For example, 'September' was occasionally written with a lower case 's'.

Section B

The first half of this section was generally very well answered. Overall, many candidates used ticks and circles as specified. This has not always been the case and crosses have been used. In the second half, a few candidates gave Martino's choice of project 'space travel' as their answer instead of the area of work, which was the project. Many candidates gave only one skill for the question 'Which skills did you improve the most?', when the two skills of writing and speaking provided the appropriate response. A few candidates seemed to miss the deletion question and gave no response to this. Most responses given were correct. If one answer has been deleted, it is not necessary to circle the alternative, though marks are not lost for this.

Section C

In this section, candidates are required to be within the prescribed word limit, use proper sentence construction with no errors of punctuation, grammar or spelling and give relevant details according to information in the stimulus text. This section of the form proved challenging for some candidates as they were required to provide two aspects in one sentence. Some candidates either gave only one aspect and/or made an error in the language they used. A few candidates answered with two sentences and in this case no marks can be awarded. Candidates should also be aware that the information for writing this sentence will always be found in the stimulus text. In their responses, some candidates did not convey the idea of not being bored or needing to be occupied in the holiday and focused on inappropriate information in the text, which could not be credited, and a few candidates gave personal details which were not relevant to the task.

Exercise 4

Most candidates responded well to this note-making exercise and many gained five points or more. Occasionally, points which would have been relevant if correctly placed were made in the wrong section. For example, a few candidates could not always distinguish between the advantages for children and the effects on the brain. Responses tended to be of appropriate length. Brief notes are required and it is important that essential details such as verbs or adjectives that add to or clarify meaning are included.

Fears about encouraging young children to be bilingual

Many candidates offered all three bullet points correctly. A few candidates gave 'become confused' instead of 'become confused in their use of language' thus omitting an essential part of the point.

Advantages for children of becoming bilingual

Many candidates scored well in this section, making two correct points. Occasionally, the idea of being 'good at focusing on a task' was reduced to just 'focusing on a task' and could not be credited. A few candidates gave the point 'slows down dementia', which should have been in the next section.

Effects of bilingualism

This section was quite well answered but proved the most challenging. A number of candidates split 'may increase blood and oxygen flow to the brain and keep nerve connections healthy' into two separate points. A few candidates gave answers that implied that bilingualism could cause dementia, not fully understanding the text.

Exercise 5

Most candidates performed well on this exercise and had been generally well prepared in the summary skills. Many had clearly read the rubric and the requirements of the exercise carefully. Candidates needed to write a summary about the causes of the expansion of deserts. There were ten possible content points. Most candidates were able to identify at least four key content points and a significant number gained full marks for the content aspect of the exercise. A few candidates lifted indiscriminately so that in places their summary lacked coherence and a particular content point could not be awarded. Most candidates were aware of the 120 word limit. There were some summaries in which this was not adhered to.

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

Exercise 6 and Exercise 7

General Comments

In general, candidates produced letters and articles which were satisfactory or better in terms of both language and content in these exercises. Length was generally within the prescribed word limits and rarely fell short of this. Candidates are not penalised for exceeding the recommended word length but short answers are unlikely to be awarded a satisfactory mark for content, and the language mark may also be affected since the range of language will be limited. Many candidates had a general understanding of how to structure and organise their work. Paragraphing, an appropriate introduction and ending were often in evidence. Good organisation is crucial to the quality of what is produced. The degree of cohesion and coherence affects the extent to which ideas are well developed and the reader's interest is engaged. There were a number of candidates who wrote with a good sense of purpose and audience using turn of phrase and precise vocabulary, where meaning was clear despite making some fairly basic grammatical errors. Such candidates are credited for the positive aspects of their writing but their work would be enhanced by improved accuracy with regard to subject/verb agreement and the ability to sustain a piece of writing using correct tenses throughout. Some candidates inaccurately combined present and past tenses within paragraphs and within sentences. Improvement in these areas would raise the language mark above the 'satisfactory' band. Basic punctuation was generally sound, although sometimes commas were substituted for full stops and accompanied by a lack of capital letters, sometimes confusing the reader.

Exercise 6

In this exercise, candidates must address and develop the bullet point prompts and the extent to which this is done will determine which band is achieved in the criteria for content. For a mark in a higher band, candidates should convey a good sense of purpose and engage the reader's interest. Examiners are looking to reward those candidates who can demonstrate a more vital style and provide some innovative detail.

Writing a letter to a friend giving news about home

This was well attempted and candidates generally responded using a satisfactory or effective register and tone. There was an attempt to make the letter interesting and well organised. The task seemed to be appropriate for candidates and they were able to express their feelings about their friend's absence and give an account of recent events in their lives. In terms of content generally, coverage of all three bullet prompts was achieved. A few candidates did not ask about their friend's life. For many candidates the focus was on missing the friend and what they had done recently, while the interest in the friend's life was addressed more briefly. With regard to language, many candidates did their best to use a range of connectives and include more idiomatic words and phrases. On occasion, these were not quite appropriate.

Exercise 7

In this exercise, candidates discuss a topic for a particular target audience. Prompts are provided to stimulate the candidate's thoughts on the subject. For a mark in a higher band, candidates should use the prompts by expanding upon them, expressing the ideas in their own words and they can also include other perspectives on the topic. There needs to be evidence that candidates can develop arguments and persuade the reader of their convictions. They should also use an appropriate tone and register which will interest their readers in the topic.

Comparing life for present day teenagers with life for teenagers in the past

There was a selection of four guiding prompts – two for and two against the consideration in the title. A number of candidates expanded on the prompts and showed some independence of thought. A few candidates were inclined to stay very close to these cues, sometimes copying them directly with little or no development or personal contribution, which meant the content and language mark could not be in the higher bands. Some candidates made use of rhetorical questions, emphasis and other devices to achieve a more precise and engaging style. Generally candidates had strong views about teenagers' lives and responded well to the topic. A few candidates focused on the effects technology on teenagers or did not compare their lives to those of teenagers in the past, which meant what they wrote was only partly relevant and therefore placed in one of the lower bands for content. There was often good use of paragraphs and linking words to organise ideas. Word limits were well observed and it appears as though time constraints at this stage of the paper were not a problem for the vast majority of candidates.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/22
Reading and Writing (Extended)

General comments

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

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

There were very few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric for each exercise. However, there was some evidence that candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of individual questions, particularly in **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**, and the rubric of **Exercise 6**. It should be emphasised to candidates that precise reading of the wording of each question and the instructions to each exercise are vital as the first requirements to a successful answer. There was continued improvement in the completion of the form in **Exercise 3**, particularly in **Section A** and **Section B**. More candidates are achieving the accuracy of transcription demanded in this exercise, combined with brief factual detail. **Exercise 4** was generally attempted successfully. More candidates are displaying the results of good classroom preparation and answering with brief notes rather than in sentences. Teachers should continue to use the brevity of the mark scheme as a guide to what would constitute minimal but successful answers in this exercise. In **Exercise 5**, word lengths were generally well observed. The extended writing tasks of **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7** were satisfactorily attempted and the topics seemed to have appealed to this group of candidates.

Handwriting and general presentation were acceptable in the majority of cases and an increasing number of candidates used black ink. It is permissible for candidates to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7**, but they need to indicate clearly to the Examiners where extra work has been added. Generally candidates should be advised that the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required and they should not consistently exceed this. Time management did not appear to be a problem this session and there were very few candidates who failed to complete all the exercises in the paper.

Exercise 1

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

- (a) This was generally well answered. Some candidates were not precise enough and only offered 'Australia' as an answer. Others could not be credited because of carelessness in spelling 'cost' instead of 'coast'.
- (b) Occasionally the word 'experts' was omitted from the answer, 'marine experts', and could not be credited. Candidates also offered details about 'water sports equipment' although the wording of the question clearly stated that this was not required.
- (c) This was very well answered.
- (d) This was well answered, often with additional information about the 'coral growing near the surface'.
- (e) Most candidates either selected the options 'not a strong swimmer' or 'float on the sparkling sea'.

- (f) This question proved a little more challenging. Some candidates copied the detail 'happy to do this' with no reference to the laying of the eggs. Many other candidates missed the important idea of 'human habitation'.
- (g) Most candidates scored one out of a possible two marks here. They recognised the idea of the 'range of activities' but offered 'accommodation' as the second detail instead of 'closer to the reef'.

Exercise 2

More able candidates provided brief answers here and were able to select the detail from the text and transcribe it with precision. The interpretation of the graphical material in **Question (f)** was generally good, although the wording of the answers was often poor grammatically. Some answers in this exercise demonstrated that candidates were careless with their reading of particular questions. A full range of marks was achieved on the exercise as a whole.

- (a) This was well answered overall.
- (b) This was generally well answered, but some candidates were careless with the reading of the question and lifted the comment about the 'bravest and most skilled climbers'.
- (c) This was not well attempted mainly due to the candidates' inability to change 'Chinese' in the text to 'China' in the answer. Several other candidates overlooked the key word 'buys' in the question and answered with 'Thailand', which referred to the location of the nests.
- (d) This was well answered overall, although some candidates could not be credited because of the misspelling 'status' instead of 'statues'.
- (e) This was well answered. Candidates provided two examples as required, although on occasion whole sentences were copied without precise selection of key detail.
- (f) This question required candidates to refer to the graphical element and proved to be more discriminating. Candidates had to make a comparison between prices in 1968 and 2008. On occasion, this comparative idea was not always well expressed; for example, 'it increased to 2000 dollars' rather than 'it increased by 2000 dollars'. In addition, the word 'dollars' was sometimes omitted or there was no idea of a comparison.
- (g) This was pleasingly attempted. More able candidates provided succinct answers here, identifying the two separate ideas. Others were less precise and omitted the key word 'laws' and offered the incomplete answer 'prevent illegal hunting'.
- (h) This was generally well attempted but careless reading of the text meant that some candidates supplied only 'suffering from skin conditions' without any idea of doctors 'prescribing' the soup for health problems. More able candidates were able to select the alternative answer of 'prolonging life'.
- (i) A number of responses to this question illustrated imprecise reading of the question. Many answers made reference to 'removing all traces of the bird such as bones or feathers'.
- (j) A full range of marks was awarded here. There were several candidates who scored full marks. Some, however, were wide of the mark and included details which often repeated the answers to previous questions. Candidates should always check to confirm that they have not duplicated answers. Other candidates wrote solely about the cooking of the soup and its value as a delicacy. Many overlooked the key word 'birds' in the question. Others wrote about the birds' nests, although the wording of the question made it clear that Examiners did not require these details. Centres are reminded that this final question in **Exercise 2** is more challenging and is designed to differentiate between the most able candidates. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because key information may appear at any point in the text.

Exercise 3

Candidates continue to be better prepared for the specific demands of this exercise which require the application of the conventions of form-filling and total accuracy in spelling. **Section A** and **Section B** customer satisfaction form were designed to be completed with brief answers. Candidates answered the sections well and in **Section C** there was evidence of continued improvement in applying the skills required for precise sentence writing. In **Section A** and **Section B**, there were fewer spelling errors than in previous sessions and transcription from the stimulus text was largely accurate.

Generally, candidates were successful with the first two sections of this task and scored well.

Section A

Almost all candidates were successful with the name, age and contact details. Candidates were less successful with the address, often omitting the house number or including it after the name of the district or the town. Centres are reminded that the use of prepositions such as 'at' are not part of the convention of address writing and cannot be credited.

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

Section B

The majority of candidates were successful in applying the conventions of ticking and circling, but many candidates were confused about how to delete 'YES/NO' and often conveyed the opposite answer. Centres are advised to concentrate on this particular aspect with their candidates. There was occasional confusion about how often Vijay ate in the restaurant, with some candidates offering 'one dish and a drink', which demonstrated imprecise reading of the question. The method of payment was well answered.

Section C

Overall, there was an improvement in the answers to this section compared to previous sessions. However, this task remains challenging for some candidates. Firstly, it must be stressed that if candidates are outside the prescribed word limits for the sentence then they automatically score zero, as stated in the mark scheme. In this session, this requirement was much better observed than in the past, but there were still candidates who wrote in excess of 20 words. Some candidates offered only one example of how the restaurant could be improved and could only be credited with a maximum of one mark. Other less frequent errors included the writing of two sentences instead of one, the use of the imperative when giving ideas on how the restaurant could be improved and misspelling of 'vegetarian', 'restaurant' and 'menu'. Those who observed the rubric requirements composed a sentence which was generally well punctuated and accurately spelt, with two clearly differentiated details.

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

Exercise 4

Most candidates were able to show enough understanding of the text and extract the relevant information to score very well here. Overall, the exercise was very successfully attempted. The number of candidates who continue to write full sentences is diminishing and most answers are becoming briefer and in note form. At the same time, however, the notes should not be so short that key words are omitted. The bullet points and the length of line should be a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers here. If candidates' answers extend beyond the space provided then they have arguably written too much.

Examples of multi-tasking activities at home

Key points were well recognised. All of the six possible content points were used and candidates showed a good understanding of the relevant sections in the text. Less able candidates had difficulties in separating the same content point. For example, candidates often included both 'texting friends' and 'reading text messages' as different ideas on different lines. In addition, there was imprecise reading of the section

heading and the key detail of 'at home' was overlooked on occasion. This resulted in answers to the hands-free set and the satellite navigation system in the car and they could not be credited.

What was different ten years ago

This section proved a little more challenging. Candidates selected all possible answers in equal measure, but on occasion omitted the comparative idea in the answers. Many offered 'talking face to face' or 'time spent over dinner' without the key word 'more'. Similarly, 'life' was occasionally overlooked and candidates wrote the incomplete answer 'it was much simpler'.

Disadvantages of multi-tasking

There was general recognition of all possible answers, and the section was very well attempted with most candidates scoring the maximum two marks here.

Exercise 5

The summary proved to be a good discriminating exercise and there was a range of marks awarded. Candidates needed to write a summary of the main difficulties that tourists face when climbing Mount Kinabalu in South-East Asia and the rewards when they reach the top. Most candidates complied with the rubric requirements and attempted to write about both aspects of the question. The majority of candidates also completed the summary within the prescribed word limit. More able candidates selected precise detail and wrote with a good sense of order, firstly detailing the problems and then the sense of achievement, using two paragraphs and appropriate linking words. Less able candidates wrote in excess of 120 words, often as a result of careless reading of the rubric. They concentrated on the first three paragraphs of the passage which covered the description of the guide and his equipment, and general details about the mountain itself. In addition, there was too much emphasis on the same point, repeating the details about the 'thin air', 'breathlessness' and 'altitude sickness'. Consequently other key content points were not addressed until after the 120 word limit and could not be credited.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range, with the majority scoring two. A greater number of candidates than in previous sessions attempted to use their own words. It was evident from responses that Centres have been practising the use of alternative words and expressions. Centres are reminded that higher marks of three and four for language are available for those candidates who make an attempt to use their own words, so practice with verb and adjective synonyms would help here.

Exercise 6

General Comments

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

The main area of concern was in the ability to sustain a whole piece in the correct tense. The main tense for the story was the simple past but there were many instances of mixing present and past tenses within paragraphs and within sentences. These are areas that need to be improved in order to raise the language mark above the 'satisfactory' band. Basic punctuation was sound, although there are still many candidates who substitute commas for full stops throughout the whole piece. This is accompanied by a lack of capital letters, thus making one uninterrupted sentence on occasion. More able candidates used paragraphs to good purpose and they provided an effective division between the different ideas that the candidates needed to address in the bullet points. There was often a good attempt to supply a suitable introduction and brief concluding statement, in an informal register. Overall, there was a good sense of form and shape to these letters. Less able candidates wrote one continuous paragraph, with little attempt to supply detail about the visit or provide a sense of excitement for the recipient of the letter.

Examiners give due credit where ambitious and unusual language is appropriately used, but candidates need to be aware that pre-learnt phrases and idioms do not always work in certain contexts. Colloquialisms need to fit the situation and should be chosen with care and not used excessively. In some attempts to use extravagant language, meaning is occasionally obscured.

Visit to a city for a weekend

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

In this exercise, overall, candidates made satisfactory attempts to cover all the three bullet points and work was of a good length. Examiners were looking to credit candidates who used their imagination and developed a story line which was enjoyable to read. More able candidates wrote with a sense of enthusiasm. They gave lengthy descriptions of why they chose a particular city and the best event of the weekend. There was good use of interesting adjectives to convey their delight in winning the first prize. The most popular places were Paris, London and the Taj Mahal and more successful candidates concentrated solely on one event in their chosen city. Many provided an appropriate ending, inviting their friend to accompany them on their next visit. Less successful candidates made little attempt to describe their visit in any detail, tending to repeat expressions such as 'it was awesome', 'it was fantastic' and 'it was marvellous' without any development.

In addition, there was some careless reading of the rubric. Firstly, the visit was extended to one or two weeks rather than just a weekend, and some candidates interpreted the requirements of the task incorrectly and wrote about taking part in a competition in their chosen city, with athletics or swimming events often described. Once again, it must be emphasised that candidates should read the rubric carefully and underline key words.

Exercise 7

General Comments

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

Is it better to start full-time work or continue studies?

Candidates were able to respond with a range of ideas on this topic and there was a good balance of argument, both for and against. There were many commendable attempts to introduce the piece with some rhetorical questions and to provide a concluding opinion. This gave a sense of cohesion to many pieces of writing. Although there was a good deal of reliance on the prompts, more able candidates managed to expand convincingly on these ideas and produced pieces that were persuasive. They provided good examples of independent thought and introduced some original ideas into the argument. These thoughts were often broadened to include topics such as the difficulty of finding employment in times of economic recession, and the whole question of whether further study is advantageous if there is a shortage of work possibilities locally and globally. Less able candidates tended to interpret the topic in terms of working part-time in the evenings or at the weekend whilst continuing to study and so missed the real point of the question.

There was a variety of conclusions to the argument and opinion was divided for and against the topic.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/23
Reading and Writing (Extended)

General comments

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

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

There were very few misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the rubric for each exercise. However, there was some evidence that candidates needed to apply greater precision in their reading of individual questions, particularly in **Exercise 1** and **Exercise 2**. It should be emphasised to candidates that precise reading of the wording of each question and the instructions to each exercise are vital as the first requirements to a successful answer. There was continued improvement in the completion of the claim form in **Exercise 3**, particularly in **Sections A** and **B**. More candidates are achieving the accuracy of transcription demanded in this exercise, combined with brief factual detail. **Exercise 4** was generally attempted successfully. More candidates are displaying the results of good classroom preparation and answering with brief notes rather than in sentences. Teachers should continue to use the brevity of the mark scheme as a guide to what would constitute minimal but successful answers in this exercise. In **Exercise 5**, word lengths were generally well observed. The extended writing tasks of **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7** were satisfactorily attempted and the topics seemed to have appealed to this group of candidates.

Handwriting and general presentation were acceptable in the majority of cases and an increasing number of candidates used black ink. It is permissible for candidates to use the blank pages at the end of the booklet as a continuation of their answers, especially in **Exercise 6** and **Exercise 7**, but they need to indicate clearly to the Examiners where extra work has been added. Generally, candidates should be advised that the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required and they should not consistently exceed this. Time management did not appear to be a problem this session and there were very few candidates who failed to complete all the exercises in the paper.

Exercise 1

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

- (a) This was generally well answered. Some candidates were not precise enough and offered 'relay team' as one of the three activities.
- (b) This question proved a little more challenging. More able candidates continued to read to the end of the relevant paragraph in the text and find the key expression 'holding their own event'. Less able candidates were not precise enough with their reading of the question and offered 'make a donation'.
- (c) This was well answered.
- (d) This was well answered, often with both possible answers supplied.
- (e) This was a discriminating question and required candidates to include two ideas, namely the search for water and the amount of time spent on it. Many candidates offered only one of these ideas.

- (f) This was well attempted with the idea of 'promoting the lottery' as the most popular answer.
- (g) Most candidates scored the maximum two marks here, recognising both possibilities for money and successfully lifting and transcribing the two relevant sentences from the text.

Exercise 2

More able candidates provided brief answers here and were able to select the detail from the text and transcribe it with precision. The interpretation of the graphical material in **Question (h)** was good. There were, however, some answers in this exercise which demonstrated that candidates were careless with their reading of particular questions. A full range of marks was achieved on the exercise as a whole.

- (a) This was well answered overall.
- (b) This was well answered, with all three possible correct details selected in equal measure.
- (c) This was generally well attempted, with candidates conveying the comparative idea clearly, either by expressing that the human population weighed less than the ants or that the ant population weighed more than the humans.
- (d) More able candidates interpreted the text well and simplified the answer to 'millions of years ago'. Less able candidates were not precise enough and omitted the important detail about humans 'walking on two legs'.
- (e) This was well answered although some answers were longer than required, many candidates lifting the whole sentence when a much briefer response would have been sufficient. On occasion, candidates were careless with their reading of the question and offered the detail about the 'superorganism'.
- (f) Most candidates offered examples of how ants keep the Earth's surface free of waste, giving details of capturing and feeding on insects and removing small dead animals, and were awarded the maximum two marks.
- (g) This was a more challenging question. A significant number of candidates extracted the incorrect detail 'they have acted as hunters, scavengers or farmers'.
- (h) This question required candidates to interpret the graphical element, and it was well answered. On occasion, there was carelessness in reading the precise wording of the diagram and the detail about the body length was overlooked. As a result, some candidates answered with 'Bulldog Ants'.
- (i) This was well attempted and most candidates recognised the importance of the word 'deadly' in the answer. Some candidates only offered 'sting' and could not be credited.
- (j) A full range of marks was awarded here. There were several candidates who scored full marks. Most candidates had taken care when reading the question and supplied both the category and the function of the different types of ant in the colony. On occasion, some candidates included details which often repeated the answers to previous questions. Candidates should always check to confirm that they have not duplicated answers. Centres are reminded that this final question in **Exercise 2** is more challenging and is designed to differentiate between the most able candidates. Candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole because key information may appear at any point in the text.

Exercise 3

Candidates continue to be better prepared for the specific demands of this exercise which requires application of the conventions of form-filling, such as circling, deleting and underlining, and total accuracy in spelling. Candidates answered both **Sections A** and **B** well, although there was some carelessness in reading the requirements of **Section C**. In **Section D** there was evidence of continued improvement in applying the skills required for precise sentence writing. In **Sections A** and **B**, there were fewer spelling errors than in previous sessions and transcription from the stimulus text was largely accurate.

Section A

Almost all candidates were successful with the name, telephone number and occupation details. Candidates were less successful with the address. Centres are reminded that the use of prepositions such as 'at' and 'in' is not part of the convention of address writing and cannot be credited. There were also some candidates who overlooked the need to delete 'Home/Work' after the telephone number.

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

Section B

The majority of candidates were successful with the selection and transcription of the discovered item, its value and the place where it was found. The convention of box-ticking was also well observed. Some candidates used the third person, 'he handed it in at the police station', and could not be credited. The details of other valuable items were well recognised and generally spelt correctly.

Section C

Most candidates supplied the names of the two referees and circled their relationship to Vikram. Some candidates overlooked the requirement to provide email addresses.

Section D

There was overall an improvement in the answers to this section compared to previous sessions. However, this task remains challenging for some candidates. Firstly, it must be emphasised that if candidates are outside the prescribed word limits for the sentence then they automatically score zero, as per the mark scheme. In this session, this requirement was much better observed than in the past, but there were still candidates who wrote in excess of 20 words. Most candidates were aware of the need to provide two details for this task and attempted to explain both what they would do with the discovered item and why. Those who observed the rubric requirements composed a sentence which was generally well punctuated and accurately spelt, with two clearly differentiated details.

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

Exercise 4

Most candidates were able to show enough understanding of the text and extract the relevant information to score very well here. Overall, the exercise was very successfully attempted. Most answers were brief and in note form. The bullet points and the length of line are a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers here. If candidates' answers extend beyond the space provided then they have arguably written too much.

Reasons for illiteracy in rural Laos

Key points were well recognised. All of the four possible content points were used and candidates showed a good understanding of the relevant sections in the text. Less able candidates had difficulties in separating the same content point. For example, candidates included 'books were expensive' and 'hard to obtain' as different ideas on different lines. Fewer candidates recognised the detail about the lack of libraries in the villages in Laos.

Anna Dahl's fundraising efforts

This section proved straightforward and was well attempted. Most candidates selected the bike ride across Laos and sailing a small boat along the River Thames in London as the main fundraising events. On occasion, candidates omitted the key detail of 'small boat' and could not be credited.

Disadvantages of illiteracy

There was general recognition of all possible answers, and the section was very well attempted with many candidates scoring the maximum three marks here. The four main disadvantages quoted in the text were carefully differentiated.

Exercise 5

The summary proved to be a good discriminating exercise and there was a range of marks awarded. Candidates needed to write a summary of good advice for students before they go abroad to study and what to do when they start their course there. Most candidates complied with the rubric requirements and attempted to write about both aspects of the question. The majority of candidates also completed the summary within the prescribed word limit. More able candidates selected precise detail and wrote with a good sense of order. Some less able candidates did not comply with the rubric instruction and wrote in excess of 120 words. They concentrated on the first paragraph of the passage which covered the feelings and expectations that students have in general rather than detailing specific advice. In addition, there was too much emphasis on the same point, for example, repeating the points about meeting other students and going to parties.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range, with the majority scoring two. A greater number of candidates than in previous sessions attempted to use their own words. It was evident from responses that Centres have been practising the use of alternative words and expressions. Centres are reminded that higher marks of three and four for language are available for those candidates who make an attempt to use their own words, so practice with verb and adjective synonyms would help here.

Exercises 6

General Comments

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

From a language point of view, basic punctuation was sound, although there are still many candidates who substitute commas for full stops throughout the whole piece. This is accompanied by a lack of capital letters, thus making one uninterrupted sentence on occasion. More able candidates used paragraphs to good purpose and they provided an effective division between the different ideas that the candidates needed to address in the bullet points. There was often a successful attempt to supply a suitable introduction and brief concluding statement, in an informal register. Overall, there was a good sense of form and shape to these letters. Less able candidates wrote one continuous paragraph, with little attempt to supply detail about the performance or the preparation for the event. There was good variety in the choice of performance with candidates expressing preference for plays, dance and musical concerts.

Examiners give due credit where ambitious and unusual language is appropriately used, but candidates need to be aware that pre-learnt phrases and idioms do not always work in certain contexts. Colloquialisms need to fit the situation and should be chosen with care and not used excessively. In an attempt to use extravagant language, meaning is sometimes obscured.

School annual end-of-term performance

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

In this exercise, overall, candidates made satisfactory attempts to cover all three bullet points and work was of a good length. Examiners were looking to credit candidates who used their imagination and developed a story line which was enjoyable to read. More able candidates wrote with a sense of enthusiasm. In particular, they gave lengthy descriptions of the part they were playing in the performance. The preparation for the event was the major part of the essay and there was a variety of approach here. Some candidates concentrated on a description of the rehearsals, on the attempt to learn their lines or a musical score. Other

candidates adopted a different approach and expressed annoyance that rehearsals were not given. Some candidates expressed how they felt ill-prepared for the performance. For the final bullet point, most candidates were able to write and express the invitation to the friend in natural and informal language.

Overall, the rubric was well observed and all candidates attempted to write the piece in the appropriate register and tense.

Exercise 7

General Comments

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

Locally produced food versus imported food

Candidates were able to respond with a range of ideas on this topic and there was a good balance of argument, both for and against. Although there was a good deal of reliance on the prompts, more able candidates managed to expand convincingly on these ideas and produced pieces that were persuasive. They introduced some original opinions into the argument, which were often broadened to include topics such as the difficulty of affording more expensive produce in times of economic recession, and the moral dilemma of balancing the desire to support local businesses and the need to save money. Less able candidates sometimes confused the concepts of 'locally produced' and 'imported' and produced arguments and opinions which were contradictory. As a result, the line of thought was often hard to follow. In addition, some candidates merely lifted the prompts with little or no attempt at development.

There was a variety of conclusions to the argument and opinion was divided for and against the topic.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/31
Listening (Core)

General comments

There was a fair range of marks achieved by the candidates this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively. Even the weaker candidates were able to attempt all the questions, with very few questions being left blank. This suggests that the candidates generally were comfortable with the examination paper and had been sufficiently prepared.

As in previous sessions, spelling was not taken into account in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' ethos of the component. Phonetic attempts at the answer could therefore be rewarded unless these resulted in a difference of meaning.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1-6

Generally candidates responded well to this section of the paper.

Question 1

Question 1 was answered well by many candidates, who correctly gave the answer 'wall'.

Question 2

Question 2 required the candidates to identify the information about local clubs and 'addresses' was a commonly given correct answer; many incorrectly wrote it as 'dresses', thereby creating a difference in meaning and so could not be awarded the mark. The alternative answer, 'meeting times' was less frequently given. Both 'meeting' and 'times' were required for proper sense and for the mark.

Question 3

This was generally well answered, with most candidates giving 'orange' and 'water', though some candidates negated their responses by adding 'lemonade' to the water instead of 'a slice of lemon'. Careful listening is required as much in these early, short items, as in the later sections.

Question 4

This question posed some difficulty for those candidates who omitted 'travellers', if offering the answer 'change travellers' cheques' or 'he has travellers' cheques'. A common error was to repeat the question, e.g. 'to get some cash'. The alternative answer, 'bank is closed', was also seen; a few candidates gave converse answers such as 'the bank will be open there' and were awarded the mark.

Question 5

Question 5 could be answered in several ways ('end of the road'; 'on the promenade' or 'facing the sea'). It was answered correctly by many candidates, often by transcribing the whole list of directions and including irrelevancies. Candidates often gave information about Sea Road itself, instead of focusing on the actual question asked, i.e. 'Where exactly in Sea Road is the Youth Hostel?' It would be helpful to remind candidates of the need to read the question carefully and be precise in their responses.

Question 6

This was generally answered well. A significant number of candidates wrote the correct answer in wrong spaces, suggesting that they were uncertain of the meanings of the key question words 'when' and 'why'; revision of these key words would be helpful to some candidates. Another common error was to give 'early' or 'morning' instead of 'early morning', for 'When', showing that not enough attention had been given to the complete meaning of the answers. 'Why' was answered more successfully, with four possible answers being accepted: 'long way'; '200 kilometres'; 'traffic'; 'spend day'. A few candidates did not qualify the distance with 'kilometres'; 200 on its own did not merit a mark.

Question 7: Bicycle Polo

This question required candidates to complete the notes on an interview by inserting missing words. It was generally well done, with most candidates being well prepared for the examination and understanding exactly what was required. As explained below, certain items proved challenging for some.

7(i) proved to be the hardest question for many candidates. Many had not absorbed the sense of 'traditional' in the question, and thus wrongly gave 'bicycle' as an answer. Others gave 'hoses' or 'houses' for what should have been a reasonably familiar word, 'horses'. The detail 'sticks' was also required for the mark to be awarded here.

7(ii) was generally well answered, with many offering acceptable spellings for 'helmet'. 'Hell Mate' appeared several times and was not allowed as it created a difference in meaning with two new words.

7(iii) elicited a wide variety of responses and proved challenging for some candidates who struggled to express the idea grammatically that 'feet must not *touch* the *ground*'. Synonyms for 'touch' and 'ground' were allowed. Common errors were to confuse the prepositions 'in' and 'on' ('feet must not put in the ground'); to make no allowance for the words given in the paper ('feet must not put a foot on the ground'); and to omit the verb ('feet must not on the ground'). Perhaps the most helpful advice for candidates here is that they should check their answer makes proper sense when they read it through, paying particular attention to the correct use of prepositions such as 'in' and 'on'.

7(iv) required the answer '2012' and was well answered.

7(v) was generally well answered, with either 'year' or 'December' being accepted.

Question 8: Career Profile: Stonemason

This question again required candidates to complete notes on an interview by inserting missing words. It was also generally well done, with most candidates understanding exactly what was required. Overall, this was a slightly more challenging question than the previous one, as is appropriate for this stage of the examination. As detailed below, some items posed particular challenges.

8(i) proved to be a challenging item. Some candidates gave acceptable phonetic renderings for 'apprentice', e.g. 'aprendis' (sic), or offered paraphrases or alternatives, e.g. 'training to be'. Candidates could be reminded that they should attempt a phonetic rendering of a word, even if they are not totally familiar with it, since marks are awarded for this. They could also be reminded that paraphrases are also usually acceptable, if they understand the word but do not feel confident enough about its spelling.

8(ii) was generally well done, with the majority of candidates offering 'languages' and 'history' for the mark.

8(iii) was usually well answered, though a common error was to omit 'years', and just give 'three'. Candidates could be usefully reminded that any numbers need to be qualified with the units of measurement as appropriate.

8(iv) was generally well answered. There were three possible answers – '400 years'; 'very'; and 'big'.

8(v) was slightly more difficult for candidates as again they had to remember to qualify their answer, this time with 'days', i.e. '6 days'.

8(vi) required the word 'hammer'. Candidates sometimes struggled to offer an acceptable phonetic attempt, the most common offering being 'harmer' which was phonetically incorrect as well as creating a word with a different meaning.

8(vii) Some candidates offered both website and phone number here, instead of the phone number 969511 – alone. The website address was ignored as unnecessary additional detail, but the correct number was required for the mark. Candidates often misheard the number, and common errors were to add a 0, or to assume the order would be 02345... instead of 02357. Close listening was needed for success on this item.

Question 9 and Question 10

These questions require candidates to indicate whether a statement is true or false by ticking the appropriate box. The great majority of candidates were well practised, understood what was required and attempted this task satisfactorily. **Question 10** proved to be slightly harder than **Question 9**, a progression which is to be expected in this examination. Examiners reported that some candidates left boxes blank. Candidates should be encouraged to attempt a response at all questions on the paper. There were also a few cases where candidates did not make it clear which box they had ticked. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of making their answers absolutely clear for Examiners.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/32
Listening (Core)

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8 (vii) Some candidates offered both website and phone number here, instead of the phone number 02357 969511 – alone. The website address was ignored as unnecessary additional detail, but the phone number was required for the mark. Candidates often misheard the number, and common errors were to omit 0, or to assume the order would be 02345... instead of 02357. Close listening was needed for success in this item.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/33
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General comments

There was a fair range of marks achieved by the candidates this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively. Even the weaker candidates were able to attempt all the questions, with very few questions being left blank. This suggests that the candidates generally were comfortable with the examination paper and had been sufficiently prepared.

As in previous sessions, spelling was not taken into account in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' ethos of the component. Phonetic attempts at the answer could therefore be rewarded unless these resulted in a difference of meaning.

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Question 1 was answered well by many candidates, who correctly gave the answer 'wall'.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/41
Listening (Extended)

General comments

A wide range of marks was seen for the entry this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively. A number of stronger candidates achieved almost full marks. At the other end of the ability range, there were candidates who did not seem to understand what was required by many of the questions. These candidates would arguably have benefited from being entered for the Core tier.

As in previous sessions, spelling was not taken into account in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' ethos of the component. Phonetic attempts at the answer are always considered and, in many cases, lead to marks being awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Question 1 was generally answered well. Examiners needed to be sure that candidates had understood that traveller's cheques needed to be changed for money, or that the bank was closed. The international spelling of 'cheque' – 'check' – was seen often, and was accepted. Incorrect responses included: 'to get traveller's cheques' and 'change to travelled cheque'. 'Change cash' was not accepted as sufficient to convey full understanding.

Question 2

This question was, on the whole, well attempted. Examiners were looking for precise information, in response to the 'exactly' requirement in the question. Some candidates offered superfluous detail in arriving at a correct response, and this was disregarded unless it led to a change in meaning. An example of an over-complicated response was: 'end for the promyard face for the sea' (sic). This was not given credit. In cases where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised to avoid adding or listing connected detail. The more detail included, the greater the possibility of negating a correct response which might be embedded. For example, 'a 2 km run at the end', was seen and this could not be given credit.

Question 3

This was also very well answered, with most candidates recognising that an early morning drive was planned and needed, and that the reason for this was the long distance, the potential for traffic or so that the day could be spent with the friend. Examiners saw relevant use of own words here, for example, 'to avoid the traffic', and rewarded this where the answers were synonymous with the mark scheme. Some candidates lost the mark for 'when' if they did not convey *early* morning.

Question 4

The majority of candidates recorded accurate responses to this question. Some candidates not obtaining the mark did not realise that two places were required (and offered only one) or offered a spelling of 'garage' which was not close enough. Examiners accepted phonetic attempts such as 'garaj', and 'garridge', but did not accept 'carage' or 'garash' (sic).

Question 5

There were a high proportion of accurate responses to Question 5. Candidates were required to omit 'meat' or 'fish'. Where candidates had not heard 'meat' and offered responses such as 'meetle fish', 'meete fish', 'neato fish', 'needle fish', 'metal fish', 'metre fish', the mark was not allowed as the response re-qualified 'fish' and made understanding questionable. 'Fish' was certainly known by many more candidates than 'meat'.

Question 6

This question asked for two items, both needed on entering the examination room. The mark scheme required that one of these was the 'candidate number', and that the other could be a 'form of identification', including specifically, a 'passport' or a 'college card'. The majority of candidates scored one mark here, with the stronger candidates realising that two different items were required to obtain the two marks. This question proved to be a useful discriminator.

Question 7

7(i) required candidates to supply two items: 'horses' and 'sticks'. This was answered reasonably well, but a number of candidates offered 'bicycles' rather than 'horses' and thus lost the mark.

7(ii) saw a variety of attempts at 'helmets'. Responses that were accepted as close enough included: 'halmets' (sic), and 'halemets' (sic). Responses that were not accepted included: 'hamlets' and 'helmeasts' (sic). Many candidates who made a phonetic attempt received the mark.

7(iii) involved explaining one of the rules of bicycle polo; that a foot must not touch the ground while striking the ball. Examiners were instructed to accept responses which were clear in conveying this idea, and this usually occurred where candidates utilised an action verb in the first space. As with all similar gap-filling exercises, what is offered as a response must make sense, and should not contradict the over-arching idea. Omitting the verb was the likely cause of candidates not receiving the mark. Incorrect responses included: 'allowed the foot', 'foot the ground', 'be the ground'. Examiners noted many alternative verbs being used – 'touch', 'hit', 'reach' and 'step on' being the most common – and allowed these as synonymous with 'be on the ground'.

7(iv) required candidates to recognise that the 'gold medal' had been won, and in '1908'. Variants of 'gold medal' were seen: 'Olympic championship', 'first place', 'competition', and these were allowed. It did prove difficult, however, for many candidates to get both items correct. In many cases, the year was given incorrectly as '1998', and in some cases, as '2008'.

7(v) asked for the year '2012' to be given and was supplied accurately by a high proportion of candidates. This proved to be one of the most accessible items on the paper.

7(vi) required 'low gear' and this not well answered on the whole. Phonetic attempts included 'geer' and this was accepted, but, in many cases, candidates simply provided responses which indicated that the question had not been understood.

7(vii) This question generated some unusual responses. It was expected that candidates would offer 'each year in December'. Stronger candidates recognised that the event was annual and just wrote 'December' in the first gap. Examiners accepted this. Some candidates chose to fill in the second gap with phrases such as 'different countries' and 'different venues'. This was regarded as superfluous information and was ignored. Incorrect responses were generally because candidates had offered 'in Argentina' and/or 'in 2008'. This proved to be the most challenging item in **Question 7**.

Question 8

8(i) required the recognition that the stonemason was an 'apprentice'. Examiners reported synonyms such as 'trainee', 'a learning', 'training to become' and 'a practice', and these were all accepted. 'A practice' as a stonemason was not accepted as this implies a very different meaning, and neither was 'trainer' accepted. Where candidates offered 'apprentice', a wide range of phonetic attempts were seen, and many were given credit.

8(ii) was not well answered overall. 'Awareness' was a common error in the first gap. Examiners reported a wide variety of attempts, but many of these appeared to be random guesses rather than carefully thought out efforts.

8(iii) required 'languages' and 'history' and many candidates scored the mark with a good proportion of correct and straightforward responses. 'Language' was often offered in the singular and this was accepted. Some weaker candidates offered 'university' as one of the items, and this led to the mark being lost.

8(iv) was very well answered with most candidates gaining the mark. 'Three years' was required. Incorrect responses included '3-4 years' and '4 or 3 years'.

8(v) was also answered very well, and correctly, by the majority of candidates. Some incorrect responses included: 'on the roof of', 'inside', '400', 'full hundred'.

8(vi) This question required candidates to write that the task had taken 'six days', and this detail was provided by many candidates. Where the mark was not awarded here, it tended to be because no response was offered.

8(vii) produced a wide range of phonetic attempts at 'hammer'. Attempts that were allowed included 'hama' and 'hammar' (sic). Responses which were not accepted (such as 'harmer' and 'humor') either created words of different meaning or sounds which were too far away from the standard pronunciation of 'hammer'. This question proved to be a useful discriminator and illustrated candidates' willingness to make phonetic attempts.

8(viii) proved to be quite demanding for some candidates who were unable to comprehend 'master craftsmen'. Stronger candidates offered synonyms such as 'master carvers' and 'master masons' and these were accepted.

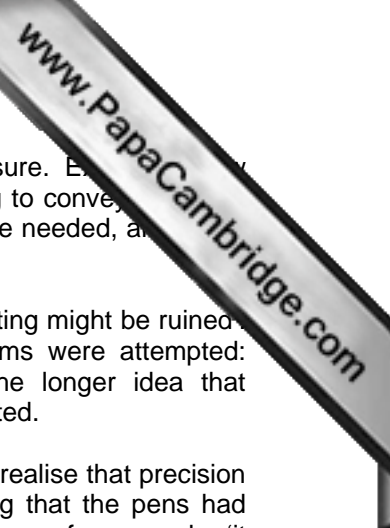
8(ix) involved hearing and transcribing a telephone number. There was a greater degree of inaccuracy here than observed in previous similar examination questions. Some candidates did not transcribe the zero at the beginning of the number; others added a '4' to record '023457'. Additional numbers were often seen in the middle. Where a web address was also given it was ignored. Many candidates chose to offer only the web address and these could not be given credit.

Question 9

9(a) There were three correct ideas in answer to this question: that the computer would negate the need for pens, that there has been a (surprising) 2% increase in sales or that there is more demand for pens than ever. Examiners saw examples of attempts at conveying all three ideas, but with varying degrees of success. A common incorrect response was '15 million sold worldwide', which does not convey the element of surprise.

9(b) This question provided a good number of successful responses. The single idea of 'seeing ink dry quickly' was what was required. There were some responses where candidates attempted to put this into their own words and the meaning became unclear. Examples seen included: 'saw dry ink on a printer', 'when dry ink dropped on a paper', and 'took something from the road and put quick drying ink in it'. Some candidates offered 'he kept breaking his nibs' but this was not what actually inspired the inventor.

9(c) required two items of information – a date and a cost. Candidates scored well overall. Common incorrect responses included the use of 'pence' instead of 'pounds', 'dollars' instead of 'pounds', and, in some cases, just one detail provided rather than two.



9(d) needed the idea that pens were required to write at high altitude and/or under pressure. Even though there was a wide range of attempts by candidates some of whom were clearly stretched in trying to convey the idea, Candidates wrote that the air force was under pressure, that 'under pressure' pens were needed, and that the reason was the 'high order pressure' that was the reason.

9(e) This question was generally well answered with the correct response that 'handwriting might be ruined'. However, 'ruined' was an unfamiliar word to some candidates and various synonyms were attempted: 'destroyed', 'spoiled', 'damaged', 'affected'. These were all accepted, as was the longer idea that handwriting would not be as good as it used to be. Many phonetic attempts were accepted.

9(f) was answered well by stronger candidates, but weaker candidates did not seem to realise that precision was required. Some candidates simply repeated the detail in the question by saying that the pens had complex parts. Candidates were unable to score if they provided very general responses, for example, 'it has a small diameter', or 'it is hard like a diamond'. Examiners accepted responses which conveyed the idea that it 'takes a *long* time to make a pen', but not just that it 'takes time'. Common incorrect responses suggested '6' or '16 hours' of manufacturing time.

Question 10

10(a) required recognition of one idea – that by using an island, future construction(s) would not obscure the original building. Candidates performed well here, but where the mark was lost it was usually because the word 'hidden' was not known. Examiners saw 'hit' or 'hitten' frequently used and, in these cases, the mark could not be allowed. Another common incorrect response was 'so as not to be hidden by *feature* buildings'. Synonyms for buildings – such as 'constructions' – were allowed.

10(b) saw the widest range of phonetic attempts, with many versions of 'cellist'. Many of these attempts were allowed, with the exception of 'cheerlist', or attempts which changed the sound of the two syllables too much. Many candidates omitted 'famous' and did not receive the mark.

10(c) It was important that 'research' into 'building styles' or 'architecture' had been recognised in responses to this question. Some responses did not include the 'research' element, or if this had been heard, did not include the 'building styles' detail. Examiners also reported seeing 'building sites' and this was not allowed.

10(d) was answered well, with the majority of candidates writing that it was 'during the last 20 years' that the works had been collected. However, errors occurred where '20 years ago' or similar misunderstandings of the 20 year idea were offered. Some candidates wrote 'last 20 years in India' adding more information than was needed.

10(e) presented a challenge for some candidates. Incorrect responses included 'in Turkey', 'in Iran', 'in India', 'in Spain', 'bronze fountain head', 'shape of a deer', all of which could not be awarded the mark.

10(f) This question was not, on the whole, well answered. Many candidates offered only one detail, or assumed that mentioning two museums equated to two ideas. Stronger candidates were able to find the connections.

Advice to Centres

- Examiners reported a surprising number of gaps being left and it is suggested that it is always worthwhile making attempts, even if candidates lack confidence in spelling.
- Candidates should be careful when using pronouns that they refer clearly to their antecedents.
- Candidates should avoid using the idea being investigated in the question and repeating it or re-phrasing it. Questions are set so that answers do not lie within them.
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A sensible general approach for candidates is to try to establish an understanding of what is being asked for and provide a clear and concise response. Examiners report instances where the correct response is embedded in a longer response, but that it is clear from the response that candidates are choosing to cover additional options. Examiners are unable to reward responses which include several attempts at the correct answer.



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/42
Listening (Extended)

General comments

A wide range of marks was seen for the entry this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively. A number of stronger candidates achieved almost full marks. At the other end of the ability range, there were candidates who did not seem to understand what was required by many of the questions. These candidates would arguably have benefited from being entered for the Core tier.

As in previous sessions, spelling was not taken into account in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' ethos of the component. Phonetic attempts at the answer are always considered and, in many cases, lead to marks being awarded.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Question 1 was generally answered well. Examiners needed to be sure that candidates had understood that traveller's cheques needed to be changed for money, or that the bank was closed. The international spelling of 'cheque' – 'check' – was seen often, and was accepted. Incorrect responses included: 'to get traveller's cheques' and 'change to travelled cheque'. 'Change cash' was not accepted as sufficient to convey full understanding.

Question 2

This question was, on the whole, well attempted. Examiners were looking for precise information, in response to the 'exactly' requirement in the question. Some candidates offered superfluous detail in arriving at a correct response, and this was disregarded unless it led to a change in meaning. An example of an over-complicated response was: 'end for the promyard face for the sea' (sic). This was not given credit. In cases where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised to avoid adding or listing connected detail. The more detail included, the greater the possibility of negating a correct response which might be embedded. For example, 'a 2 km run at the end', was seen and this could not be given credit.

Question 3

This was also very well answered, with most candidates recognising that an early morning drive was planned and needed, and that the reason for this was the long distance, the potential for traffic or so that the day could be spent with the friend. Examiners saw relevant use of own words here, for example, 'to avoid the traffic', and rewarded this where the answers were synonymous with the mark scheme. Some candidates lost the mark for 'when' if they did not convey *early* morning.

Question 4

The majority of candidates recorded accurate responses to this question. Some candidates not obtaining the mark did not realise that two places were required (and offered only one) or offered a spelling of 'garage' which was not close enough. Examiners accepted phonetic attempts such as 'garaj', and 'garridge', but did not accept 'carage' or 'garash' (sic).

Question 5

There were a high proportion of accurate responses to Question 5. Candidates were required to offer either 'meat' or 'fish'. Where candidates had not heard 'meat' and offered responses such as 'meetle fish', 'neetle fish', 'neato fish', 'needle fish', 'metal fish', 'metre fish', the mark was not allowed as the response re-qualified

fish and made understanding questionable. 'Fish' was certainly known by many more candidates than 'meat'.

Question 6

This question asked for two items, both needed on entering the examination room. The mark scheme required that one of these was the 'candidate number', and that the other could be a 'form of identification', including specifically, a 'passport' or a 'college card'. The majority of candidates scored one mark here, with the stronger candidates realising that two different items were required to obtain the two marks. This question proved to be a useful discriminator.

Question 7

7(i) required candidates to supply two items: 'horses' and 'sticks'. This was answered reasonably well, but a number of candidates offered 'bicycles' rather than 'horses' and thus lost the mark.

7(ii) saw a variety of attempts at 'helmets'. Responses that were accepted as close enough included: 'halmets' (sic), and 'halemets' (sic). Responses that were not accepted included: 'hamlets' and 'helmests' (sic). Many candidates who made a phonetic attempt received the mark.

7(iii) involved explaining one of the rules of bicycle polo; that a foot must not touch the ground while striking the ball. Examiners were instructed to accept responses which were clear in conveying this idea, and this usually occurred where candidates utilised an action verb in the first space. As with all similar gap-filling exercises, what is offered as a response must make sense, and should not contradict the over-arching idea. Omitting the verb was the likely cause of candidates not receiving the mark. Incorrect responses included: 'allowed the foot', 'foot the ground', 'be the ground'. Examiners noted many alternative verbs being used – 'touch', 'hit', 'reach' and 'step on' being the most common – and allowed these as synonymous with 'be on the ground'.

7(iv) required candidates to recognise that the 'gold medal' had been won, and in '1908'. Variants of 'gold medal' were seen: 'Olympic championship', 'first place', 'competition', and these were allowed. It did prove difficult, however, for many candidates to get both items correct. In many cases, the year was given incorrectly as '1998', and in some cases, as '2008'.

7(v) asked for the year '2012' to be given and was supplied accurately by a high proportion of candidates. This proved to be one of the most accessible items on the paper.

7(vi) required 'low gear' and this not well answered on the whole. Phonetic attempts included 'geer' and this was accepted, but, in many cases, candidates simply provided responses which indicated that the question had not been understood.

7(vii) This question generated some unusual responses. It was expected that candidates would offer 'each year in December'. Stronger candidates recognised that the event was annual and just wrote 'December' in the first gap. Examiners accepted this. Some candidates chose to fill in the second gap with phrases such as 'different countries' and 'different venues'. This was regarded as superfluous information and was ignored. Incorrect responses were generally because candidates had offered 'in Argentina' and/or 'in 2008'. This proved to be the most challenging item in **Question 7**.

Question 8

8(i) required the recognition that the stonemason was an 'apprentice'. Examiners reported synonyms such as 'trainee', 'a learning', 'training to become' and 'a practice', and these were all accepted. 'A practising' stonemason was not accepted as this implies a very different meaning, and neither was 'trainer' accepted. Where candidates offered 'apprentice', a wide range of phonetic attempts were seen, and many were given credit.

8(ii) was not well answered overall. 'Awareness' was a common error in the first gap. Examiners reported a wide variety of attempts, but many of these appeared to be random guesses rather than carefully thought out efforts.

8(iii) required 'languages' and 'history' and many candidates scored the mark with a good proportion of correct and straightforward responses. 'Language' was often offered in the singular and this was accepted. Some weaker candidates offered 'university' as one of the items, and this led to the mark being lost.

8(iv) was very well answered with most candidates gaining the mark. 'Three years' was required. Responses included '3-4 years' and '4 or 3 years'.

8(v) was also answered very well, and correctly, by the majority of candidates. Some incorrect responses included: 'on the roof of', 'inside', '400', 'full hundred'.

8(vi) This question required candidates to write that the task had taken 'six days', and this detail was provided by many candidates. Where the mark was not awarded here, it tended to be because no response was offered.

8(vii) produced a wide range of phonetic attempts at 'hammer'. Attempts that were allowed included 'hama' and 'hammar' (sic). Responses which were not accepted (such as 'harmer' and 'humor') either created words of different meaning or sounds which were too far away from the standard pronunciation of 'hammer'. This question proved to be a useful discriminator and illustrated candidates' willingness to make phonetic attempts.

8(viii) proved to be quite demanding for some candidates who were unable to comprehend 'master craftsmen'. Stronger candidates offered synonyms such as 'master carvers' and 'master masons' and these were accepted.

8(ix) involved hearing and transcribing a telephone number. There was a greater degree of inaccuracy here than observed in previous similar examination questions. Some candidates did not transcribe the zero at the beginning of the number; others added a '4' to record '023457'. Additional numbers were often seen in the middle. Where a web address was also given it was ignored. Many candidates chose to offer only the web address and these could not be given credit.

Question 9

9(a) There were three correct ideas in answer to this question: that the computer would negate the need for pens, that there has been a (surprising) 2% increase in sales or that there is more demand for pens than ever. Examiners saw examples of attempts at conveying all three ideas, but with varying degrees of success. A common incorrect response was '15 million sold worldwide', which does not convey the element of surprise.

9(b) This question provided a good number of successful responses. The single idea of 'seeing ink dry quickly' was what was required. There were some responses where candidates attempted to put this into their own words and the meaning became unclear. Examples seen included: 'saw dry ink on a printer', 'when dry ink dropped on a paper', and 'took something from the road and put quick drying ink in it'. Some candidates offered 'he kept breaking his nibs' but this was not what actually inspired the inventor.

9(c) required two items of information – a date and a cost. Candidates scored well overall. Common incorrect responses included the use of 'pence' instead of 'pounds', 'dollars' instead of 'pounds', and, in some cases, just one detail provided rather than two.

9(d) needed the idea that pens were required to write at high altitude and/or under pressure. Examiners saw a wide range of attempts by candidates some of whom were clearly stretched in trying to convey this idea. Candidates wrote that the air force was under pressure, that 'under pressure' pens were needed, and that it was the 'high order pressure' that was the reason.

9(e) This question was generally well answered with the correct response that 'handwriting might be ruined'. However, 'ruined' was an unfamiliar word to some candidates and various synonyms were attempted: 'destroyed', 'spoiled', 'damaged', 'affected'. These were all accepted, as was the longer idea that handwriting would not be as good as it used to be. Many phonetic attempts were accepted.

9(f) was answered well by stronger candidates, but weaker candidates did not seem to realise that precision was required. Some candidates simply repeated the detail in the question by saying that the pens had complex parts. Candidates were unable to score if they provided very general responses, for example, 'it has a small diameter', or 'it is hard like a diamond'. Examiners accepted responses which conveyed the idea that it 'takes a *long* time to make a pen', but not just that it 'takes time'. Common incorrect responses suggested '6' or '16 hours' of manufacturing time.

Question 10

10(a) required recognition of one idea – that by using an island, future construction(s) would not obscure the original building. Candidates performed well here, but where the mark was lost it was usually because the word ‘hidden’ was not known. Examiners saw ‘hit’ or ‘hitten’ frequently used and, in these cases, the mark could not be allowed. Another common incorrect response was ‘so as not to be hidden by *feature* buildings’. Synonyms for buildings – such as ‘constructions’ – were allowed.

10(b) saw the widest range of phonetic attempts, with many versions of ‘cellist’. Many of these attempts were allowed, with the exception of ‘cheerlist’, or attempts which changed the sound of the two syllables too much. Many candidates omitted ‘famous’ and did not receive the mark.

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Advice to Centres

- Examiners reported a surprising number of gaps being left and it is suggested that it is always worthwhile making attempts, even if candidates lack confidence in spelling.
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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/43
Listening (Extended)

General comments

A wide range of marks was seen for the entry this session, suggesting that the paper discriminated effectively. A number of stronger candidates achieved almost full marks. At the other end of the ability range, there were candidates who did not seem to understand what was required by many of the questions. These candidates would arguably have benefited from being entered for the Core tier.

As in previous sessions, spelling was not taken into account in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' ethos of the component. Phonetic attempts at the answer are always considered and, in many cases, lead to marks being awarded.

Comments on specific questions

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Question 1 was generally answered well. Examiners needed to be sure that candidates had understood that traveller's cheques needed to be changed for money, or that the bank was closed. The international spelling of 'cheque' – 'check' – was seen often, and was accepted. Incorrect responses included: 'to get traveller's cheques' and 'change to travelled cheque'. 'Change cash' was not accepted as sufficient to convey full understanding.

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This question was, on the whole, well attempted. Examiners were looking for precise information, in response to the 'exactly' requirement in the question. Some candidates offered superfluous detail in arriving at a correct response, and this was disregarded unless it led to a change in meaning. An example of an over-complicated response was: 'end for the promyard face for the sea' (sic). This was not given credit. In cases where one idea or item is required, candidates are advised to avoid adding or listing connected detail. The more detail included, the greater the possibility of negating a correct response which might be embedded. For example, 'a 2 km run at the end', was seen and this could not be given credit.

Question 3

This was also very well answered, with most candidates recognising that an early morning drive was planned and needed, and that the reason for this was the long distance, the potential for traffic or so that the day could be spent with the friend. Examiners saw relevant use of own words here, for example, 'to avoid the traffic', and rewarded this where the answers were synonymous with the mark scheme. Some candidates lost the mark for 'when' if they did not convey *early* morning.

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The majority of candidates recorded accurate responses to this question. Some candidates not obtaining the mark did not realise that two places were required (and offered only one) or offered a spelling of 'garage' which was not close enough. Examiners accepted phonetic attempts such as 'garaj', and 'garridge', but did not accept 'carage' or 'garash' (sic).

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There were a high proportion of accurate responses to Question 5. Candidates were required to omit 'meat' or 'fish'. Where candidates had not heard 'meat' and offered responses such as 'meetle fish', 'meete fish', 'neato fish', 'needle fish', 'metal fish', 'metre fish', the mark was not allowed as the response re-qualified 'fish' and made understanding questionable. 'Fish' was certainly known by many more candidates than 'meat'.

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9(f) was answered well by stronger candidates, but weaker candidates did not seem to realise that a specific detail was required. Some candidates simply repeated the detail in the question by saying that the building was 'made of a material that has a small diameter', or 'it is hard like a diamond'. Examiners accepted responses which conveyed the idea that it 'takes a *long* time to make a pen', but not just that it 'takes time'. Common incorrect responses suggested '6' or '16 hours' of manufacturing time.

Question 10

10(a) required recognition of one idea – that by using an island, future construction(s) would not obscure the original building. Candidates performed well here, but where the mark was lost it was usually because the word 'hidden' was not known. Examiners saw 'hit' or 'hitten' frequently used and, in these cases, the mark could not be allowed. Another common incorrect response was 'so as not to be hidden by *feature* buildings'. Synonyms for buildings – such as 'constructions' – were allowed.

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/05

Oral Test

General comments

Moderators reported considerable improvement in many aspects of conducting the oral tests, and in applying the assessment criteria. An increasing number of Examiners are utilising the warm-up phase of the test to attempt to elicit candidates' areas of interest. It was also noted by Moderators that the conversations are becoming much more focused and that they are generally being developed around the main topic, utilising the five prompts.

More Examiners are recognising that the five prompts on the topic cards should be used, and should be used in sequence. It is no longer possible to ignore the prompts; they are critical to the success of the test. However, it is expected that Examiners will also give candidates the opportunity to expand on the prompts to enable them to demonstrate the extent of their ability.

Assessment was generally more accurate. There were fewer adjustments to Centres' marks than in previous sessions.

Comments on specific aspects of the Oral Test

Part A – Brief explanation of the test format

Moderators note that some Examiners prefer to conduct this part of the test at the **Part C** stage. This is acceptable, as long as candidates are aware that **Part B** is not assessed and that there is some indication that they have knowledge of the format of the test.

Part B – The warm-up

The warm-up should be used to try to select an appropriate topic card for a candidate to discuss further. Examiners should not miss an opportunity to present a suitable topic for discussion, particularly when a candidate has expressed an interest in an area in which one of the topic cards might generate a productive conversation.

Please therefore aim to draw out candidates' hobbies and interests and avoid talking about school matters, anything which might make candidates uneasy (such as other examinations being taken) or anything which might not be helpful in informing **Part D**.

A sensible approach is to stay within the 2-3 minutes allowed for the warm-up but to gain an early idea of a topic which you anticipate will work well. Please also use the warm-up to relax the candidate, to get to know a little about him or her, and to prepare the candidate for **Part D** and formal assessment.

Part C – Selecting the topic, handing out the topic card, and allowing preparation time

Please note that the Examiner chooses the topic card. Under no circumstance should a choice be offered to the candidate.

The selection of topic cards should not be random or prepared beforehand; it is not fair to candidates to choose cards in this manner. Topics should be selected to try to match each candidate's interests and ability and Moderators are listening to see how, and how well, this is done by Examiners.

Part D – The conversation

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

Examiners are reminded that development of the conversation is now an integral part of the assessment criteria. What is expected is that Examiners will help guide candidates through the levels of the discussion. The supplied prompts on the topic cards increase in sophistication and move from the personal through the general to the more abstract and challenging, thereby allowing stronger candidates to illustrate higher level speaking skills.

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

Moderators expect to hear discussion/conversation from the outset. There is no need for an introductory speech by the candidate about the topic.

The Topics

Card A: Dreams

Most candidates were able to give vivid and interesting accounts for the first and second prompts. Discussion of Prompt 3 invariably made reference to the classroom situation and also gave rise to further anecdotes. Prompt 4 presented a step up in terms of challenge and certainly proved to be a good discriminator. This tended to be the trigger for repetition of accounts of dreams for the weaker candidates. Stronger candidates made an attempt to go beyond the factual. Prompt 5 led to some candidates putting forward the more sophisticated idea that certain elements of society could be subjected to professional investigation as a way to reform character. It is fair to say that, for many of the less able candidates, Examiners tended to approach the final two prompts differently by simplifying the subject matter. This is acceptable; indeed, this is good examining.

Card B: Addiction

Prompts 1 and 2 were well answered. Most candidates purported to be addicted to chocolate (real or imaginary) followed in popularity by video games and social networking sites. There were very good attempts at a definition of addiction and subsequent discussion presented the idea that, although on the surface addiction would appear to be a negative trait, there could well be people who are addicted in positive ways. In many cases Prompt 3 was concentrated on drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, and the fact that many addicts resort to crime to fund their addiction. Prompt 4 was a useful discriminator and stronger candidates responded to this successfully. Prompt 5 was well attempted and there was general agreement that large companies encourage nicotine and alcohol addiction. There was also interesting and varied discussion on the ban on cigarettes in public places.

Card C: Water

There was a good deal of time spent on the first two prompts, which were often considered together. Candidates explained at length their daily (personal) routine to preserve water usage. There were references also to hydro-electric power, cooling systems for machinery, swimming pools and water festivals. Prompt 3 was more difficult and candidates had to be encouraged to go beyond the idea of just saving water in the home and consider the bigger picture of water conservation, such as the use of reservoirs. Prompt 4 was well attempted and many candidates drew on experiences in their own countries or regions of floods and droughts. There was universal agreement in Prompt 5 about how water should be free, and stronger candidates went on to talk about the difficulties of providing clean and accessible water in certain parts of the world.

Card D: Live performance

Prompt 1 was a good introduction and many gave detailed accounts of their own experiences. Most candidates and Examiners explored music and drama, but some candidates took it upon themselves to introduce sporting events. A few candidates regrettably announced that they had no experience of live performance, which illustrates why it is important to use the warm-up to secure an appropriate topic. Prompt 2 tended to stay at the simplistic level – a 'bad' performance was, for example, one where someone forgot their lines. The best discussions followed Prompt 3 and there were interesting and mixed views here, ranging from the idea that recorded material is of better quality, to the appeal of the greater spontaneity of

the live performance. Prompt 4 discriminated well; some weaker candidates struggled with responses which mirrored those in the second prompt. There was good discussion generally around 5 and many candidates showed a maturity of ideas, introducing AIDS, unemployment and the campaigns of politicians.

Card E: Freedom to travel

This topic had very direct connection to many of the candidates who were studying away from their native land. Hence Prompt 1 resulted in a detailed personal discussion and was well covered. Prompt 2 was largely affirmative: that almost all countries were accessible, though some more difficult to enter than others. Prompt 3 was well attempted with a range of ideas promoted, including work, tourism and study. This was followed up in Prompt 4 with topical discussion on terrorism and the need to ensure safety. The final prompt was an effective discriminator and most candidates rejected the suggestion on the grounds of safety and security.

Assessment criteria

Centres who allow candidates to offer speeches or monologues are reminded that they are not allowing those candidates to engage in a genuine and spontaneous discussion. In such cases, it is unlikely that a mark above Band 4 for the *Development and Fluency* criterion would be acceptable, because little or no conversation has taken place. A mark of 4 will be considered as a maximum, but, in many cases, it will be determined by the external Moderators that a Band 5 mark (1 or 2) is more appropriate. Please do not therefore allow or encourage monologues or speeches.

Administrative procedures

An increasing number of Centres are now submitting samples on CD; this is how CIE prefers to receive the recordings. It is strongly recommended that Centres use digital equipment to create audio tracks, which can then be transferred as individual [candidate] tracks to the CD. The use of cassettes is now discouraged.

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

However, there are several procedural matters that still require attention:

- Please conduct a final check of the total mark awarded to each candidate as recorded on the Summary Form(s). Moderators still have to complete an unacceptable number of Amendment Forms each session to correct Centres' inaccurate addition of the three criteria marks.
- Please ensure that the Summary Forms are included in the package. This is the most important document for the external Moderator, as it records the marks broken down by each of the three criteria as well as the total mark. The Examiner *who conducts the tests* is responsible for completing the Summary Form and he or she should sign the form and date it. The form also records the topic cards given to each candidate. In effect this is the form which is the working record of the examining undertaken.
- The use of more than one Examiner should be seen only at large Centres i.e. those with a large number of candidates. The syllabus defines a large Centre as having more than 30 candidates. It is assumed, therefore, that a single Examiner should be in a position to conduct up to 30 oral tests over a period of one week.

Main advice to Centres:

- Please ensure that a two-way, spontaneous and developed conversation occurs in **Part D**, utilising the last two prompts to explore the depth of the topic so that more able candidates can illustrate their higher-level speaking skills.
- Note that the warm-up is an essential part of the examination. Candidates should be given the full 2-3 minutes to settle themselves. An Examiner should try to use the warm-up phase to ascertain a candidate's area of interest and select an appropriate topic for discussion.
- Send in samples on CD, collating the recordings using separate tracks in a recognised audio file format that can be played on common computer software (e.g. mp3, wav). There is no need to use the blue cassette inserts in these cases. A list of candidates and their numbers on the CD itself is fine. Where possible, the individual tracks on the CD should be re-named to those of the candidates themselves (instead of track 1, track 2, etc.).

- Moderators found an increased number of errors made this session in the addition of the marks from the internal moderation to the final mark sheet. On several occasions the Centres would have led to candidates receiving incorrect grades had the Moderators not spotted the discrepancies. Some Centres need to take much more care, and carry out thorough checks to ensure that such mistakes are not made.
- Where internal moderation is carried out (in Centres using more than one Examiner) please include a letter with the sample materials informing CIE how the process of internal moderation was conducted.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/06

Oral Communication (Coursework)

General comments

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

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

Assessment

This session saw some leniency in the higher mark ranges. Please remember that before a Band 1 mark is issued, the candidate must demonstrate secure structures, wide vocabulary and the ability to develop dialogue with others in a variety of contexts.

Advice to Centres

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

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

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

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

CIE encourages sample work to be sent in using CDs. It is preferable for all of the candidate recordings in the sample to be collated onto a single CD. The use of modern, digital recording equipment is strongly recommended.