



CONTENTS

FOREWORD	
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	2
GCE Ordinary Level	2
Papers 1115/01, 1120/01, 1123/01, 1124/01 and 1125/01 Composition	2
Papers 1115/02, 1120/02, 1123/02, 1124/02 and 1125/02 Comprehension.....	5

FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GCE Ordinary Level

Papers 1115/01, 1120/01, 1123/01, 1124/01 and 1125/01

Composition

General comments

The choice and range of questions allowed candidates to show their true ability in this component although some did experience difficulty with **Part Two**. The performance in **Part One** particularly, was well up to the standard of previous years and demonstrated the hard work that had gone into preparation for the exam. Many areas of the world continue to show significant and very pleasing improvement. Whilst there were relatively few scripts at the highest level, very poor or irrelevant **Part One** scripts were also comparatively rare. Similarly, there were very few rubric offences. It was good to see that there were few cases of candidates writing too much for **Part One** at the expense of **Part Two**, although this can still be a problem for some. Paragraph and sentence structure showed improvement, and there was less mere copying of rough drafts. Particularly pleasing was the fact that essays were reported as being much less derivative than in the past and candidates seem to be heeding the advice not to repeat material encountered elsewhere. Spelling was also considered to have improved.

Some linguistic problems persist: candidates can struggle with verb forms and tenses; there is the overuse of commas to separate sentences and the punctuation of speech still requires more thought than some candidates give it.

The use of rehearsed material has been commented on a number of times in previous reports and it has been seen less in recent years. However, there were sufficient examples this year to suggest that it is worth mentioning again. Some candidates have clearly got in mind a narrative which they are prepared to adapt to the particular question in any year. If this remains at the level of having a sequence of events which form the basis for a 'fresh' answer then there is little to say against it. However, when whole paragraphs are used, virtually word for word by a number of candidates in one Centre, then it becomes more problematic. This situation is made worse when the rehearsed material is linguistically so far above the general level of the candidate's work or entirely inappropriate to the essay that is being written. This year, sentences such as '*suddenly some footsteps violated the sepulchral silence of that house and were frayed with inexplicable fear*' and '*a fleeting retrospective recollection summons to the recess of my mind...*' tended to be rather obvious, especially when they occurred several times within the same Centre.

Comments on specific questions

Part One

Question 1

Describe a place which is pleasant during the day but which is very different at night.

This was one of the less popular questions. Those who did it successfully put full emphasis on their descriptive powers and produced contrasting pictures of areas well known to them. Very often these were not the usual tourist spots and the work had a freshness about it, the word 'place' being widely interpreted, from bus shelters to botanical gardens. Normally, the scenes were pleasant because they had a natural beauty and a conducive climate, all conveyed through effective simile and metaphor. Sometimes they were pleasant because they were a hive of activity, for example places of legitimate trade and profit. Most often, if the location was to be unpleasant, then it took on a dark and forbidding atmosphere at night when criminal acts were possible and the eerie nature of the place was close to that of a ghost story. If this question proved less than successful for some candidates, it was sometimes because there was not enough balance in the response, so that the pleasantness of the place was conveyed in great detail and for well over half the

essay. Inevitably, the contrasting picture would receive scant attention and the full potential of the contrast was lost. Another weakness seen was that often the contrasting side was not 'very different' as required, but only slightly dissimilar, for example it contained more people but otherwise was remarkably similar in structure. It cannot be stressed enough that descriptive essays often contain such contrasts and that both elements should be dealt with equally for maximum effect. Here, a lack of personal experience of night time conditions meant that for some it was difficult to create this sense of contrast. Also, a mere sequence of events was often thin on descriptive detail. Furthermore, there are still some candidates who adopt a narrative approach in such questions and they do themselves no favours.

Question 2

Write a story based on the sentence: 'It was only when I looked at the photograph that I saw just how similar we were.'

This was an extremely popular question and nearly always successful in the responses it produced. Twins separated at birth for financial or other reasons figured heavily here, and these narratives were often touchingly conveyed, the situation usually coming to light after mistaken identity and/or recently discovered photograph albums. The inclusion of properly punctuated and convincing dialogue helped enormously to convey the feelings of the first person narrator. Most essays had a competent structure and a well conceived denouement but candidates would do well always to ensure that vivid imagination and a creative response do not lead to completely incredible situations; one candidate needed a photograph so as to have the first inkling of any facial similarity with someone she had lived next door to for twenty years. Most Examiners felt the quotation worked best at the end of the essay, although many overcame this successfully by employing flashback; unfortunately, weaker candidates could then have problems choosing the right tense.

Question 3

'People are much too interested in their appearance nowadays.' Do you agree?

This was possibly the least popular question, but there were some very good answers which discussed in a mature way the pressures, mainly on young people, to take increased interest in their appearance. Few disagreed with the title, possibly persuaded by the wording that they ought to agree, but either view was welcome. The majority of candidates approached the question from the point of view of someone who had not fallen for such pressures; there was also a small number of, sometimes humorous, essays admitting total involvement in designer dressing. The very best essays tended to see both sides of the argument, an approach which, while not essential, certainly added weight and conviction to what was said. Of particular interest were essays that brought an historical slant to the discussion and could chart the steady rise of teenage spending power. It takes great skill to argue a point of view in sufficient depth without repetition of content or language. Weaker candidates had strong views but often found that their linguistic skills did not match their conviction and so resorted to endless repetitions of the title or lengthy discussions of cosmetics or surgical 'remedies'. This kind of essay should not be undertaken lightly; candidates are well advised to plan all essays (briefly) but particularly so with this kind, and only embark on it if they are sure they can develop the argument significantly with each new paragraph. A number of weaker candidates had difficulty with the word 'appearance'.

Question 4

What changes have you seen in your school since you joined it?

Given that this essay was so clearly within the personal experience of every candidate, it was surprising to find it nowhere near as popular as the two narrative choices, although it did attract a wide range of ability. It was an excellent choice for those who were attracted to it because it provided a good number of areas to be explored. So it was that the relocation of sites, changes to buildings (large and small), changes in staffing, the provision of more advanced technology, the introduction of new subjects and the widening of extramural opportunities all gave rise to fascinating insights into the education of candidates from so many parts of the world. Mostly it was physical changes, but some did consider changes in ethos. Some explored changes to rules and discipline or the move from primary to secondary education and all seemed helped by the chronological development to structure their essays. It was noticeable how loyal the majority remained to their school and how positive they were about the changes. Amongst the very weakest, the ability to talk about earlier changes and see them in relation to present conditions was taxing and led to confusion with tenses particularly.

Question 5

Write a story about someone who was wrongly accused and had to prove his or her innocence.

This was the most popular question and almost always well done, with suspense playing a major part in the best. There were many, many different scenarios ranging from fairly innocent school-based stories to infinitely more sinister underworld ones which owed much to television and film. Most were done to comply with the requirements of the question but there were a few which forgot the need for someone to prove their innocence. They were proved innocent either by someone else or by a change in circumstances. It was interesting to see the extent to which technology played an important part with hidden CCTV cameras often providing the photograph. As with **Question 2**, candidates must beware of stretching credibility a little too far. It was sometimes difficult to reconcile a legal system jailing someone for stealing sweets and then letting possible murderers out unsupervised to prove their innocence; none of this would seriously affect the linguistic assessment but some credit or otherwise is still given to content.

Part Two

In **Part Two**, candidates were asked to imagine they were writing an article for their school magazine; this article would constitute an entry into a writing competition. The majority of candidates responded well to this scenario and were able to gain all five content marks very readily. The results were often extremely good pieces of writing with appropriate register and a strong sense of audience – they were organised, engaging, and entirely convincing when done as magazine articles. As expected, the choice of someone to change places with led to many cases in which famous celebrities from the worlds of entertainment and sport were highlighted. David Beckham was a popular choice both for his sporting prowess and his lifestyle; the spending power of such celebrities was a real draw for some. The overall choice of famous people was remarkably wide with Mahatma Gandhi, Napoleon and Stamford Raffles alongside Britney Spears. What was particularly affecting was the number of family members (especially mothers) and teachers who were picked out for praise. These choices tended to highlight less materialistic reasons for admiring somebody.

A perfect answer had:

- a headline that sounded as if it could be in a school magazine rather than just the heading of an assignment
- the name or the role of the person with whom to exchange
- a genuine reason for wishing to exchange
- what the candidate would do for twenty four hours, as a result of taking the other person's place
- what lesson might be learned as a result of becoming the other person.

Where candidates failed to gain the content marks they were usually guilty of simply omitting the mark or misreading the question or the scenario. Too many candidates failed to put a headline at all, usually the candidates who assumed too quickly that they were writing a letter. The name or role of the person was always given, as was the reason for admiration. The final two marks gave most cause for concern. It is difficult to understand anyone leaving either out but the lesson learned was omitted by some and it is worth stressing the need to see each point as a possible paragraph to help with the structure of the piece. Of equal concern were candidates who had not understood the idiom and therefore misread the scenario. A significant number interpreted 'change places' too literally, either suggesting that they simply exchanged desks/seats or they simply exchanged houses or they went somewhere *with* the person. In such cases credit could usually be given for the first three content marks but it was impossible to give credit for the last two unless some exchange of lifestyle was involved. Candidates had to do something for a day in the shoes of the other person and similarly lessons had to be learned in the other person's shoes and from having experienced the other person's lifestyle. Balance is also a vital ingredient in this **Part Two** question. It is impossible to give equal time to each aspect of the question but to turn the answer into an essay about a person one admires is to overload one aspect of the work.

The overall approach to this answer proved difficult for some candidates. Too many assumed that **Part Two** would be a letter and could not be anything else. There were cases this year of candidates starting with letter addresses and then introducing titles for magazine articles and then reverting at the end to signing off the letter. Candidates would do well to make the identification of what kind of writing is required a central part of their strategy, as important as trying to visualise the scenario.

As far as the linguistic mark was concerned this was very much tied to the linguistic mark given. However, those candidates who entered into the spirit of the magazine article and had the ability to use their language accordingly were rewarded. For example, some candidates made good use of narrative questions which helped to involve the reader. Some even managed a linguistic mark above the **Part One** as their enthusiasm for the character emerged. A careful use of verb forms was particularly important this year. When writing about what was to be done on the day the confusion between 'will' and 'would' hampered weaker candidates.

Guidance for teachers preparing candidates for future examinations

Much of the advice for improved performance is the same as that given in previous years and previous reports are recommended. However, this year it is felt necessary to stress that candidates can improve their marks if they give due attention to the inclusion of dialogue where appropriate, especially in **Part One** essays. This will serve to add welcome variety to the texture of the script but it is essential to add that this is only worthwhile if it is accurately written. This means particularly obeying the rules regarding the setting out of the dialogue on separate lines as required. Inappropriate vocabulary surfaces a little too often for comfort and it is difficult to condone even on the grounds of accurate characterisation. Candidates may need reminding that it is best avoided. Candidates have to be careful with the idiom they use. Some of it can sound archaic and some of it is faulty. Expressions this year such as '*I found a photo we took together*' and '*I took a photograph with him*' are reminders that idiom needs to be certain otherwise the end product sounds less natural than desired. The **Part Two** exercise this year is an indication that the directed writing will not always be a letter. In fact, there will be a need to be aware of various possibilities: accounts, newspaper reports, speeches to the class, statements and so on.

On a practical note candidates could be reminded that double spacing of work is considered distracting by most Examiners, as much as very small writing in pale blue ink.

Final Comment

As always, the marking of this component was a pleasure because of the many insights it allowed and Examiners overwhelmingly commend the achievement of the candidates who took the examination.

Papers 1115/02, 1120/02, 1123/02, 1124/02 and 1125/02

Comprehension

General comments

Examiners reported that candidates in the main seemed to be familiar with the layout of the paper and the types of questions the paper required them to answer. Almost without exception, candidates completed the paper and the layout of answers was clear, with scripts written neatly and legibly, with good spelling and punctuation, a credit to the quality and preparation of their teachers. As is normal, the first twenty five marks were allocated to questions testing literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, vocabulary, use of own words and appreciation of writer's craft. Questions requiring own words answers continue to be difficult for many candidates. As in previous years, the paper had twenty five marks allocated to the summary question, divided between marks for content and marks for style. The topic of the paper seemed to engage candidate interest and it was obvious from some summary responses that many of them could relate the passage to their own country or their own experience or knowledge. Almost the entire possible range of marks was seen, and there were no questions which did not elicit a correct answer from at least some candidates.

Some Centres provided examination booklets for their candidates. As most candidates were able to complete the examination on four or five sides of paper, perhaps in some cases smaller booklets would be preferable to those already in use, in order to save expense to the Centre and expense involved in postage when the scripts arrive in Cambridge.

Comments on specific questions**Question**

- (a) This was intended to be a relatively easy opening question designed to ease candidates into examination by seeing that coral reefs are glorious sights because they are beautiful, colourful and teeming with life. One word answers, such as 'beauty' or 'colour' were acceptable here and almost all candidates scored the mark. However, many candidates wasted their own time by giving lengthy lifts from the passage instead of making the point and moving on.
- (b) Likewise in (b) most candidates scored the mark for writing that the similarity between rain forests and coral reefs is that each supports a huge number of plants and/or animals. Where the mark was not gained, it was usually because the candidates made a bald statement about either rain forests or reefs, and lost the comparison idea, or because they failed to underpin the 'huge' number required for a correct answer.
- (c) This was a question which differentiated candidates. There was an easy first mark available for writing that coral animals make large structures; the second, much more difficult mark was scored only by candidates who made the comparison between the relative sizes of coral animals and their creations, by writing that they make these structures although, or in spite of the fact that, they are so small. Fewer than 10% of candidates made this vital comparison; mere lifting of the text at line 5 ('these remarkable little creatures') was insufficient as the point had to be separately made with understanding of the comparison between small creatures and large creations.

Question 2

This was also a relatively easy question, carrying two marks for making the point that the two most important uses of coral, apart from food, are tools and building materials. The majority of candidates scored these marks; the few who failed to do so brought in the wrong ideas of decoration or jewellery, which were not permissible answers because of the word 'basic' in the text at line 10. Candidates who added the idea of decoration or jewellery to an otherwise correct answer were denied the mark for the limb in which such a reference occurred. If candidates offered more than two reasons, the first two only were credited, as to offer more than two answers was an infringement of the rubric which asked specifically for two answers.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates gained the mark for showing they understood that the common benefit accruing from coral plants and rain forest plants is medicine. Where they failed to score it was, as in **Question 1 (b)**, usually because they had referred to only one limb of the comparison, viz. either coral or rain forests, but not both. The mark could be scored merely by the use of the pronoun 'they', as the obvious agent coming from the question wording, but if the candidates chose to spell out the ideas of coral reefs and rain forests, they had to refer to each, as the question asked for a 'common' benefit.
- (b) This was the first of the two questions on the paper which required candidates to answer in their own words. As such, the level of difficulty was increased here, either because candidates were unaware of the necessity of avoiding lifting of the text in such questions, or because they were unable to render the relevant part of the text into their own words because of insufficient vocabulary. In this question, candidates needed first of all to see the paradox that plants with medicinal qualities can also contain poisonous substances. Having noticed the paradox, the candidate then had to find synonyms for these key words, 'poisonous' (harmful, toxic, inflicting injury etc.) and 'substances' (material, chemicals, liquids, fluids etc.). This proved to be a question which differentiated between more and less able candidates, with a minority scoring the mark for 'poisonous' and even fewer scoring the mark for 'substances'. Unfortunately, many candidates seemed to understand the paradox, but were simply unable to express it in their own words.

Question 4

- (a) This proved to be difficult for many candidates because it asked for an attitude and not a fact. Very many candidates merely paraphrased 'stolen away' into 'stealing' or 'theft', which concerned only the action of the drug companies, and not their attitude towards the local people of contentment, exploitation, disregard etc.
- (b) This required candidates to make the point that the discoveries are not discoveries at all, or that the local people have the knowledge already. This was reasonably well answered; a popular wrong answer was to say that the discoveries were not proven.
- (c) The vast majority of candidates were successful with this straightforward question, where the mark was scored by reference to the financial benefits which the local people are denied by the drug companies.

Question 5

This was a vocabulary question testing understanding of the word 'custodian' as protector or keeper, but more than a bald vocabulary test in that candidates needed to link the essential protection idea to the coral itself, as the question asked for a comment about the local people. Thus the mark could be scored only by those who claimed that the local people took care of the coral. Many candidates seemed to confuse the word 'custodian' with 'custom' and gave erroneous answers based around the idea of tradition or habit.

Question 6

The level of difficulty of the paper was consciously stepped up at this question.

- (a) Candidates were required to make the point that people hope for an improvement in their standard of living, but that this improvement is rarely achieved. Although the mark could be scored by the lift of lines 62-65, very many candidates merely lifted a section of the text here and consequently gave an incomplete answer; both ideas, viz. the hope and the failure to achieve it, were needed to answer the question fully. Sometimes candidates failed to score the mark because they focused on individual details (chiefly the destruction of villages) rather than the overall picture.
- (b) Many candidates missed the mark for this question because they gave the second limb of the answer to (a), viz. that an improvement in standard of living is rarely achieved. However, the question asked for evidence that there is no improvement in the standard of living, not merely the statement that this is the case. The correct evidence which scored the available mark here was either that villages are destroyed or that ships dump sewage on to the reefs. Some correct answers were spoiled here because candidates gave additional wrong information that docks or jetties are built, or that the shape of the coast is altered; such answers were rubric infringements because the question specifically asked for one piece of evidence and so the mark was denied in such cases.
- (c) This was probably the worst done in the entire paper. The candidate needed to appreciate the implication of the word 'monstrosity' as being an offence against the aesthetic. Consequently, the successful candidate had to point out that tourist hotels are ugly, or out of place, or that they spoil the natural beauty of the environment, or, more simply, that the writer does not like or approve of them. Some candidates confused the real meaning of the word with its looser, inaccurate meaning as 'huge' or 'big'. Other popular wrong answers focused on hotels destroying villages or on the untreated sewage the hotels poured out onto the reefs as being the reason that they were described as 'monstrous'.

Question 7

- (a) This was the second of the own words questions and was generally better answered than **Question 3 (b)**, the first of the own words questions. Here the key words which needed to be re-cast in the candidates' own words were 'disregarded' and 'views'. There was a wealth of possible synonyms here, which is probably why candidates tended to do better than in **Question 3 (b)**, as well as the fact that the answer to **Question 7 (a)** was sitting more on the surface of the text, without the paradox search in **Question 3 (b)**. For 'disregarded' answers such as 'overlooked', 'ignored', 'neglected', 'did not care about' were only some of the acceptable responses, whereas for 'views', acceptable answers were 'opinions', 'ideas', 'suggestions', 'feelings', 'thoughts' and indeed many others.

- (b) This required two responses from candidates for one mark each. Many made the point that government plans would fail, and judicious lifting meant that some candidates possibly stumbled upon this late stage of the paper. While it was not necessary to give an agent here, as the agent, whose plans, was implicit because of the question wording, candidates who chose to offer an incorrect agent were denied the mark. The most popular wrong agents given were 'the government' and 'local people'. The second mark could be scored only by candidates who inverted the text at lines 89-90; lifting was not possible. The candidate had to write that the wealth of expertise will be lost if government plans are not controlled by local people.

Question 8

This was the usual vocabulary question, where candidates were required to show their understanding, not necessarily by offering direct synonyms, for five from a choice of eight words or phrases. The best scoring words were 'adorn' (with possible correct answers being 'decorate', 'make beautiful', 'ornament'), 'inevitable' (with possible correct answers being 'unavoidable', 'bound to happen', 'cannot be stopped') and 'boom' (with possible correct answers being 'increase', 'expansion', 'growth'). Less well done were 'fundamental' (where the required answer was 'very important' or equivalent, and not merely 'important', as was often offered) and 'in turn' (where the correct answer was consequence-based, e.g. 'as a result' or equivalent, and not time-based, e.g. 'eventually', as was sometimes offered). Candidates scored reasonably well on 'depriving' (with synonyms such as 'taking away', 'denying'), on 'disturb' (with synonyms such as 'change', 'upset', 'disturb' but not derogatory ideas such as 'damage' or 'spoil'), and on 'abundantly' (with synonyms such as 'very', 'extremely', 'positively', 'absolutely').

Question 9

As is usual, the final question on the paper was the summary question, and, as is normal, it carried half the marks available for the paper. The rubric asked candidates to summarise the ways in which tourism threatens coral reefs and the people living near them. As is also usual, the candidates had to search an area of around half of the original text, and write their summary in 150 words. There were twenty three available content points, from which candidates could score almost any combination up to a maximum of fifteen marks. The final ten marks on the paper were allocated to a mark for the style of writing used by the candidate. Examiners reported that candidates in the main dealt with the text sensibly and, in general, there was little straying into irrelevant areas of the text, showing candidates well prepared by their teachers for this section of the paper. However, there were some candidates who failed to restrict their summarising to the parameters clearly indicated in the question; these candidates included material from paragraph 10 and some referred to the paragraphs preceding line 32. Some also personalised the argument and even augmented it with views of their own, a clear infringement of the rubric. Such candidates need to be aware of the need for precise detail in the summary question so that their English skills may be properly rewarded.

The opening ten words, not included in the 150 words available to candidates, were, as usual, designed to lead candidates into the opening content point, and worked well, with most candidates making the first point, namely that hotel developers push up the price of land. The rest of paragraph 5 contained three content points: local people are forced out of their homes, hotels built on ancient burial sites offend religious feelings, and local culture is exploited. Alternatively, this last point could be made by use of the specific example in the text about dances demanded on the wrong day upsetting religious feeling. Examiners reported that most candidates, as well as scoring the easy opening point, made a good attempt at the other three in the paragraph.

Five content points were available in paragraph 6. The first three of these concerned golf courses: their construction prevents people from fishing, the water used by golf courses is drained out onto coral reefs and this water contains pesticides and chemicals. Many candidates failed to realise that it is the drainage of water and chemicals from golf courses onto the reefs which damages them; without this information, mere reference to the use of water or chemicals by golf courses was insufficient to score. Furthermore, a golf course context had to be established. Two content marks were available in the second section of the paragraph, this time in the context of airports or runways: airports are built on coral reefs and their construction produces waste which harms coral. Many candidates failed to establish the location of the airports, or to complete the point that the construction waste damages coral. These points had to be underpinned in response to the rubric. Throughout the summary, candidates were free to use the terms 'coral', 'reefs' or 'rock' interchangeably.

Paragraph 7 also contained five content points. Coral rock is removed to build hotels and this is a source of building materials for their own homes. These two points were generally successfully made by candidates. The mark for the next point was not gained so often because the point was made only if the deepening of lagoons to make way for pleasure boats destroys fish breeding areas. All the limbs of this point were necessary to gain the mark. There was frequent confusion about the meaning of the expression 'areas where fish breed'. The link to the next point could, however, be successfully made even if the previous point had been unsuccessfully made: locals are deprived of food. Most candidates gained the available mark here. The next point also concerned food, this time that tourist demand for particular fish pushes up the price and makes it inaccessible for local people. Again, this point was often incompletely made and so rarely scored the available mark.

To score the three content marks in paragraph 8, candidates had to make the point that villages are destroyed, either by pollution, roads, noise or hotels. Then they had to say that jetties or docks built over coral destroy it or affect water circulation, and finally that hotels or ships dump sewage onto reefs. Most candidates made these points successfully, although some made reference to the dumping of sewage without establishing its location.

Paragraph 9 contained six content points, all of which concerned tourist activities in the sea around coral reefs. Candidates scored a mark for making reference to either diving, marine activities or sailing damaging coral. The next two points concerned anchors, viz. that they damage coral and that they stir up sediment which also has a destructive effect. There was a reasonable degree of success for candidates in these first three content points of the paragraph. However, the next three points were less successfully made: dive boats anchor on reefs, make repeated visits to reefs and visit remote reefs and spoil them. Many candidates were unsuccessful here because they failed to differentiate between the general idea of ships and marine activities at the start of the paragraph and the specific mention of divers in the second section of the paragraph.

As in previous examinations, the final ten marks on the paper were allocated to the style of writing in the summary question, where style was assessed according to how well the candidate used own words, the extent to which the summary was written in error-free sentences, and the extent to which the candidate employed a variety of sentence structures. Examiners reported that attempts at use of own words varied from Centre to Centre, with some candidates making real efforts to re-cast the original text, others playing safe by substituting a single word or phrase here and there, and very weak candidates merely copying sections of the passage, sometimes in a random fashion. In the case of weak or average candidates, attempts at use of own words is often at the expense of content points, and so weaker candidates might be better advised to stick more closely to the text in order to obtain more content points. Examiners reported that general punctuation and spelling were good, even among otherwise weak candidates. Where errors occurred in use of English, they tended to be errors of verb tenses, agreement of singular and plural, and wrong use of prepositions, e.g. 'deprived for' instead of 'deprived of'. The top range of marks for style could be scored by candidates who recast the text in original complex sentence structures. Once again, the full range of marks was scored for style.