

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1123/11
Writing

Key Messages

- It is essential to read the question carefully and follow all the instructions given.
- In **Section 1** tasks it is important to develop the bullet points as evenly as possible and ensure that all required information is included.
- It is important for candidates to remember that they should address both parts of a bullet point when the word **and** is in bold.
- Consider all the titles in Section 2 before deciding which topic to write on.
- Direct speech is useful in developing characters and plot, but must be punctuated properly with correct use of paragraphs.
- Care should be taken in the use of capital letters.
- Concentration on correct tenses and agreement would improve candidates' writing in both sections.

General Comments

The exam provided an opportunity for all candidates to show their abilities. There was no evidence of time being a problem and the vast majority completed the paper inside the allotted time. Some candidates did plans which is a helpful technique for giving structure. Some candidates gave word counts which is not necessary. If candidates have time towards the end of the examination, this could usefully be spent proofreading their completed tasks.

This examination was the first based on the new syllabus. **Section 2** was more structured with guidance on the writing approach to be taken, i.e. Description, Argument, Narrative. The single word question has been removed and replaced with a second argument title. This change seems to have given the candidates an opportunity to focus their answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The Directed Writing task is assessed with equal marks given to **Task Fulfilment** and **Language** criteria. Candidates had to write a report to the Principal of their school about the difficulties faced by new students when they join the school, how the school could help and explain how such actions would benefit students and the school. In general the Task Fulfilment section was dealt with very well. This was a scenario that was within the imagined or practical experience of the candidates, the majority of whom responded well to the task. The scenario allowed use of a range of real and imaginary information and this contributed greatly to the success and interest of the responses. Issues such as bullying, getting to know the layout of the new school, making new friends and homesickness in the case of boarding candidates all featured prominently as difficulties and were usually developed successfully. Solutions to the same issues were also covered well. Less successful were attempts at the third bullet point on benefits for the school and candidates. Several answers to this bullet point were rather cursory with a single sentence covering the whole bullet point.

Section 1 is Directed Writing and so involves more reading than **Section 2**. In this task candidates had to be aware that they were focusing on writing a formal and informative report for the specified audience, the Principal of their school, in addition to the content of the report. In order to satisfy the requirements of the bullet points this year, responses needed to include:

- some of the difficulties you and other students had when you joined the school
- suggestions about what the school can do to help new students
- how the students **and** the school will benefit.

In the first bullet point it was essential to outline difficulties experienced by the candidate and other students, in the second bullet point they were expected to give suggestions on how the school could help and in the third bullet point the two parts had to be addressed, i.e. the benefits for both students and the school. Therefore, all three bullet points offered scope to develop ideas and explanations.

The descriptors for **Task Fulfilment** in the syllabus make it clear that candidates will be judged on:

- clear understanding of purpose, situation and audience
- a correct format for the piece of writing
- appropriate tone and register
- the use of information to justify opinion
- the sensible development and organisation of the bullet points.

Most candidates showed a good understanding of the purpose of the task and as a result the majority scored in the top bands. The majority of candidates were familiar with the features of a report and started and finished their work in an appropriate manner. A few used a letter format. In general candidates adopted the correct tone of a student addressing a respected adult. A very small number misunderstood the purpose of the task.

Comments on language which are applicable to **Sections 1** and **2** will be made at the end of **Section 2**.

Section 2

All five questions were covered, but there were very few attempts at **Question 4** on space travel

Question 2

**Describe the most helpful person and the most unhelpful person you know.
(Remember you can describe their appearance, as well as their character and behaviour.)**

This descriptive topic produced some excellent responses. Many candidates chose teachers and parents as the most helpful person they knew, and in a few cases the most unhelpful person in their life. Mothers in particular were lauded. There were also some witty responses in descriptions of the most unhelpful person. The unhelpful person was often the writer of the passage admitting their own faults. Some candidates were over descriptive of the person's appearance suggesting the use of learned phrases and idioms and these did not always fit in easily with the topic which was more concerned with character and temperament.

Question 3

Would you prefer to live in the centre of a busy city or in a quiet neighbourhood? Give reasons and examples to support your view.

This topic, intended to introduce an argument or discussion, was also handled well. The majority of the responses gave balanced views, looking at the advantages and disadvantages as well as taking into consideration the preferences of different age groups or family profiles. Pollution, noise, overcrowding, crime and other dangers were seen as factors that might deter people from living in a busy city, while convenience, and access to facilities were seen as attractions of city life.

Question 4

What are the arguments for and against space travel to other planets? Give reasons and examples to support your view.

This second topic intended to allow a discussion was not a popular question. Candidates who chose it argued successfully, using arguments for and against. These candidates demonstrated awareness of the need to provide a balanced discussion, with facts being well used to support opinion.

Question 5

Write a story with includes the words: ‘When they did not agree with her solution, she felt angry.’

This question inviting candidates to tell a story was popular. Many narratives were entertaining, a key factor in this type of writing which needs to engage with the reader. The strongest candidates demonstrated awareness of story-telling techniques and incorporated the given sentence effectively. Some stories were rather rambling and the inclusion of the given words was not always successful.

Question 6

Write a story in which two people unexpectedly agreed to help each other.

This question was also quite popular, though less so than 5. There were many responses that were entertaining and well written. As in the case of **Question 5** candidates who choose the narrative option should bear in mind the reader of the story and aim to make their attempts as engaging as possible. Many responses did this very successfully by using devices such as flashback and cliffhangers to end their story.

Language

The comments here apply to both sections of the paper.

The level of language use is in many cases excellent. The range of vocabulary used and the use of complex structures was impressive. Many candidates showed a good awareness of writing techniques, such as punctuation, using sentences and paragraphs effectively. Spelling of complex and difficult vocabulary was also generally very competent. There were, however, a few areas where improvements could be made. In story writing in particular candidates sometimes switched tenses, from present to past or vice versa. This mixing of tenses led at times to rather confusing narratives. The use of direct speech can greatly enhance the interest in a narrative, but when using this device, candidates are advised to establish clearly who is speaking and are further advised to ensure the use of punctuation is accurate. Some responses revealed some uncertainty about the use of capital letters, especially for names and sentence openings.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1123/12
Writing

Key messages

- In **Section 1** candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the criteria for Task Fulfilment and use them as a checklist. Where a response achieves a low band mark for Language, it can still gain a good band mark for Task Fulfilment.
- Attention should be given to the **full** requirements of each bullet point in **Section 1**; often there is a word, such as **and**, in bold type, to indicate two parts to the bullet point.
- Ensuring correct tenses and agreement would improve the work of the majority of candidates.
- Direct speech raises the level of a narrative but it needs to contribute to the narrative and be carefully punctuated and paragraphed.
- The use of capital letters could be more accurate; they are often used when they are not necessary and / or omitted when they are essential.
- Candidates are advised to work on achieving more accurate use of definite and indefinite articles to improve the fluency of their responses.
- Correct punctuation (full stops, commas) and a more varied use of punctuation (colons, semi-colons, exclamation marks) would raise the level of most responses.

General comments

The overall standard of candidates this year was similar to previous years. The very best responses achieved a very high standard while many fewer fell into the lowest bands for Language. In particular, there was overall a significant improvement in the way candidates addressed the Task Fulfilment in **Section 1**. However, there is still a need for candidates to check their work thoroughly for use of capital letters, correct punctuation in titles and speech and consistent use of tenses. This year, in **Section 2**, all of the titles were popular, although the narratives continue to be the most popular choice. Time management for the vast majority was very good. The strengths and weaknesses of the linguistic ability were very much those which have featured in previous reports; vocabulary and expression are often better than the use of syntax and attention given to checking the latter would show dividends.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 – Directed Writing

In **Section 1**, candidates were asked to imagine a situation where the number of students in their school was increasing and it was becoming difficult to buy snacks in the break time. The Principal wanted to improve the situation at break time for everyone and the candidates had to write a report suggesting how to do this. Overall, candidates responded very well to the **purpose** and **situation**. In **Section 1** candidates this year had to be aware that in order to satisfy the requirements of the bullet points a perfect answer required:

- some of the difficulties that the students face at break time
- suggestions about how the school could make break time easier
- how the students **and** the school would benefit.

This year, for **bullet point 1**, successful responses were able to explain that the extra numbers of students led to queues which were often not organised well or were in the full sun, and sometimes there were no queues at all. Often, break time was seen as too short and the food in the canteen ran out, or there were not enough serving hatches, leaving students hungry during the remainder of the lessons. There were not enough canteen staff and not enough seats and tables to cope with the increasing numbers of students. In some cases there was a lack of supervision. In the very worst cases there were arguments between students as they queued, often with the older students pushing in front to buy their food first. The strongest responses were able to elaborate on the difficulties which resulted from all this, such as students not having enough time to relax, communicate with each other and play, all of which should have been part of break time but which was made impossible by the increasing numbers and the difficulties of buying food. Some exaggerated a little with the word *chaos* and the expression *like a fish market* was used by a significant number of candidates.

A slight weakness with some candidates in **bullet point 1** was the presence of too much narrative (*Yesterday, there was a fight between...*) so that the difficulties became the story of one chaotic break time rather than pinpointing the problems which occur every day. A few weaker responses relied on lifting, or giving a close paraphrase of, the opening two sentences from the question. As a result, these responses mentioned that there were difficulties but did not say what they were.

Many different suggestions were given to improve this situation in **bullet point 2** and they all tended to be a direct response to the difficulties in **bullet point 1**. Nearly everyone felt that the time for break should be increased. Similarly, the staff and the amount of food in the canteen should also be increased. Responses suggested that the times for break could be staggered for the different age groups with Junior and Senior students eating separately. Proper queues and better monitoring by staff and prefects would also be an advantage. More seating was requested in most responses, as well as better play facilities. The most ambitious suggestions involved building new canteens, either entirely new ones or altering some part of the school to accommodate the new facility.

A slight weakness across both **bullet points 1** and **2** was the tendency to list large numbers of difficulties and suggestions at the expense of some elaboration on points. For example, some responses gave as many as six difficulties but gave them as bare difficulties (e.g. *There is not enough food in the canteen*), whereas the more convincing responses gave fewer difficulties but were able to elaborate so as to make the difficulty very real (e.g. *There is not enough food in the canteen and it lacks variety which means everyone is trying to buy the same snacks*).

Bullet point 3 proved to be the greatest discriminator for Task Fulfilment this year and in two ways. The better responses were very explicit in having benefits for **both** students **and** school as a result of the suggestions. For example, students who could buy food quickly then had time to eat in an unhurried way, relax, revise, finish assignments, and communicate with friends. The school would benefit because of fewer complaints from parents, better behaviour generally and therefore an enhanced reputation. These good answers stressed **how** they would benefit, as required by the question. Slightly weaker responses stated that the benefit was a mutual one but had less emphasis on **how** (*Both school and students would benefit from less confusion in the canteen*). In weaker responses the benefit was a re-writing of the difficulty (*Students would benefit by being able to buy snacks more quickly*). Some responses to this question were limited by leaving out either the benefits to the school or the students.

Generally, there was a very good awareness of **purpose** and **situation** and candidates were clear about what they had to do in this task. The correct **audience** for this task was the Principal and virtually everyone said this, although a very small number wrote to fellow students about the problem. It was quite common among weaker responses to refer to the Principal in the third person (*..the Principal has asked me to write a report*). The **register** was very well maintained and kept properly formal and polite by most. The vocabulary of education was useful in placing the report in the correct context. The proper **format** for a report is something that the better responses were very comfortable with, and most candidates were able to demonstrate some familiarity with the format. A significant number of responses used a mixed report / letter format, while weaker responses used a letter format only and signed off with informal valedictions such as 'Regards'.

Candidates followed the structure provided by the bullet points for their organisation, with a very short opening and closing paragraph. There was some merging of material between **bullets 1** and **2** when introducing a difficulty and immediately suggesting a solution which was an acceptable approach to the task. Overall, the vast majority wrote a suitable amount for **Section 1** and captured the polite, formal **tone** and approach very well. There were a few responses which were impolite, insisting the Principal acted immediately (*Be sure to put this right*). **Opinion** and **justification** arose naturally when the suggestions were made and benefits discussed in **bullets 2** and **3**. There were very few short scripts in **Section 1** and even fewer examples of no response.

Linguistically, most candidates produced a convincing piece of work. Spelling was generally satisfactory, apart from the very many variations of *queue/que/cue*. Paragraphing was also done very well. The use of capital letters, however, is becoming increasingly problematic. In this text, there was some weakness in the use of tenses when weaker responses were unsure in dealing with events which recurred rather than being single events and there was some confusion over the use of *will / would* in **bullet 3**, especially when talking about the benefits in the future. Examples of confusion over vocabulary were the use of the singular *student* for *students* and the difference between *complain* and *complaint*.

Section 2 – Creative Writing

2 Describe two different places where you would take a relative who is visiting you. (Remember you can describe the atmosphere and the surroundings, not just what you do there.)

This was a more popular question than the description usually is. When it was attempted, there were some very successful responses with very good description in the strongest of them. Most responses were successful in evoking two locations which they knew very well. Only a very small number referred to only one location. Most locations were tourist or religious sites but sometimes there was a less well known and more personal location. Trekking and shopping were very popular for providing locations. One excellent response recreated the atmosphere with the warm smiles, hospitality and friendliness of the people in the chosen locations, as well as mouth-watering delicacies, tasty street food and bargaining for hand-made jewellery. One location was beautifully evoked in another response which anticipated a road trip in a rusty old mini car: *cattle lazing and grazing in the meadows, the greenest grass ever, a cold stream to soothe numb feet* and buying kulfis from a little girl in a market town. Less successful responses were mainly narratives about the visit rather than a description of the places. The narrative thread should only ever be used as a framework in descriptive essays. Description is often best done in the present tense but the narrative element adopted by many led to a use of the past tense and the use of tenses was not consistent. This was especially true if the response emphasised the narrative and focused on the relatives arriving and visiting.

Linguistically, those candidates who could evoke an atmosphere by close description and the use of the senses did well on this topic. The word *atmosphere* occurs regularly in the descriptive question and in the responses but too many interpreted this as the weather rather than anything wider.

3 Do you think elderly people are important in the family and modern society? Give reasons and examples to support your view.

This was quite a popular question and most candidates were in favour of the elderly having an important place in both the family and society. They were highly respectful of *elderlies* or *olders* and their contribution. The elderly were seen as full of wisdom, life-experiences and advice. They were acknowledged as being tactful but also able to correct and to discipline when necessary. Perhaps their most admired contribution was in helping to carry on the traditions of their society's culture. Most of the responses focused their arguments on personal, family experience but some were more abstract. One response mentioned the large number of successful elderly politicians. Many of the responses were amusing in their affectionate approach as candidates wrote about how behind the times the elderly could be, especially when it comes to modern technical gadgets. The positive and affectionate view of elderly people was not, however, universal. Some responses balanced their view of the elderly by introducing the idea of them living longer nowadays and incurring medical and care expenses. Others were very much against their influence; one response suggested that old people impede progress and impose outdated cultural values on the young.

4 What are the arguments for and against students working at part-time jobs while they are still at school? Give reasons and examples to support your view.

As with **Question 3**, this topic was answered by a relatively small number of candidates but those who chose it had a distinct point of view which they developed with some clarity. This title offered the opportunity to argue about short-term financial gains against long-term educational prospects. A number of responses emphasised the importance of work experience when applying for jobs and implicitly recognised that academic qualifications may no longer always provide a route to well-paid professional occupations. Reference to domestic financial problems was also very common and the most frequent conclusion reached was that part-time jobs are likely to interfere with schoolwork but may be necessary to enable the individual to have an education.

Candidates are advised that they should only select the Argument essays if they have several points they can make about the topic as well as the language ability to express their views; otherwise responses can become very repetitive. One way of achieving more complexity and depth is by introducing personal anecdotes and illustrations as stated in the question and this will give depth and life to the topic.

5 Write a story which includes the words: ‘When they entered the room, we were impressed by what they were wearing.’

This was the most popular task. There were some excellent, and sometimes very funny stories, where the candidates managed to include the given sentence. The most effective responses included the sentence at the right moment in the story. However, many responses added the given sentence without regard for the rest of the essay, often changing the tense to suit what they had already written or changing the pronouns. There were many responses about school proms, fashion shows and *nerds* who were suddenly seen in a better light. Particularly impressive was the narration of the arrival at a wedding celebration of a pompous uncle and aunty, dressed to the nines, and the aunty promptly slipped and fell on top of the cake. There was also a clever and subtle story of the reality behind people who dress in order to make an impression all the time. Then there was a humorous story about a *galactic themed wedding* and the narrator’s despair at what to wear. Such responses combined a good story, clever characterisation and sophisticated language and were very impressive.

Some responses attempted to add variety to the narrative by including dialogue but two points are worth remembering here. First, if dialogue is added it should be meaningful. There is little point in a character responding with the word ‘Yes’ if this is the only speech in the essay. Second, dialogue should be properly punctuated in order to make the communication clear.

There was some confusion between the words *dressing* and *cloth / clothes / clothing* and confusion of *on the other hand* for *meanwhile*.

6 Write a story about someone who lost all his possessions while he was helping other people.

There were some very successful narratives in response to this title, although it was not as popular as **Question 6**. A particularly memorable story told of three friends who were brought up in poverty, with two of them reaching the highest positions in society and returning to rescue the third one, left abandoned, friendless and penniless in his village. There were a number of stories of con-men (and con-women – one with a sick baby) tricking their way into the victim’s affections. There was also a dramatic and exciting one about how ‘Baba’, the village watchman, saved everyone from a devastating storm, but lost his property and all his belongings. The saddest story was about an old couple hoodwinked by apparently charming tenants who stole everything, affecting the son who had to leave university with his fees unpaid. There were a number of stories about people helping others at airports, only to find their possessions were missing afterwards.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1123/21
Reading

Key messages

- Candidates adapted well to the updated syllabus, but they are reminded that in the summary **Question 1** it is necessary to focus on the selection and expression of only the main points within the text. Irrelevant examples and extensions of those points, if included, often spoil otherwise competent responses in **Question 1(a)**.
- In **Question 1(b)**, although use of English is no longer one of the assessment criteria, there should still be a focus on clear expression; this will ensure a well-organised piece of writing which is easy to follow. Practice in the appropriate use of linking devices is advised to ensure coherence.
- In **Section 2**, the vocabulary question, with its multiple-choice format, should be approached methodically. Candidates have the opportunity to consider, within the context, each of the alternatives offered; they should take their time to select the most appropriate word for that context.
- The final questions of **Section 2** concentrate on appreciation of the writer's craft. Although the format of these questions may appear to be 'new', the requirements are not. Candidates are still asked to recognise the literal meaning of a given section of the text, and to comment on what they see as the effectiveness on the reader of the writer's use of particular words or images. Further practice in the approach to these questions is advised.

General comments

The demands of the paper were very similar to previous series. The passages were generally accessible to all.

In **Question 1(a)** almost all candidates presented their selected information under bullet points, a practice which allows for clarity, and there were very few instances of ideas being written in the wrong section.

While the majority of candidates attempted every question, there were a number who did not respond to the final section on the writer's craft.

Candidates were asked to answer a range of questions on two passages, the first being non-fiction and the second being fiction. The variety of subject matter allowed for some questions which all were able to deal with; others, being more challenging, differentiated between candidates and this was reflected in scores across the mark range. Candidates seemed to engage with both texts, the first appearing to be more accessible than the fiction passage, which requires understanding not only of literal meaning but also of implied meaning and some aspects of imagery and writer's craft, as well as comprehension of vocabulary in context.

The first passage, *Elephants*, was a familiar subject for candidates. However, some of the historical facts were probably new to them and required careful reading to show understanding of the information presented and recognition of the important points. 22 marks were available for the summary question, with 12 of these awarded for selection of the main content points from the text, and a further 10 marks for assessment of the ability to bring these main points together in a relevant and coherent piece of writing. A further question, carrying 3 marks, also tested the ability to read for ideas, candidates having to select 3 opinions from the text, one from each of Paragraphs 1, 3 and 6.

In **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)**, many candidates were successful, with a significant number achieving 10, 11 or 12 marks in **Question 1(a)**. In **Question 1(b)** a number of responses exhibited a sound understanding of the task which was presented with fluency. Less successful responses to both parts of **Question 1** blurred the focus of the essential points inherent in the nature of a summary, concentrating instead on examples or extensions of those points. Examples supporting a main point are unnecessary and should be avoided. If

they are used, they must be clearly defined as such and there are various words and phrases which could be used: 'for example', 'e.g.', 'for instance', 'such as', 'like'.

The second passage told the story of *Emma* and her difficulties when left in charge of a younger brother and the family home, in their parents' absence. Narrative passages require not only careful reading but also thoughtful consideration by candidates to show their understanding of the writer's meaning. **Section 2** of the paper focused on literal and inferential comprehension, the understanding of vocabulary in context, the use of own words and the appreciation of the writer's craft. Section 2 carries 25.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 Reading for Ideas

Question 1(a) was the first part of the summary question, where candidates were asked to identify and write down the information in the passage which described the importance of elephants throughout history, and the reasons for the decline in the elephant population today and what is being done to stop this decline. Selecting information from the whole passage, they could use either the words of the text or their own words, in note form, to present their points. One content point under each heading of the rubric was given by way of illustration, although these points were not rewarded with a mark. Where marks were not awarded it was usually because candidates gave examples and / or details instead of or in addition to main points. The use of brackets, which were sometimes seen around part of a point, was ignored. At times, this is to the benefit of a candidate, as in: *They have a good impact (on the environment)* – without mention of the environment, the point would not have been fully made. If a candidate gave the main point and added a neutral extension within brackets, as in: *They are killed by farmers (who do not want to lose their grazing ground)* there was nothing within the brackets which denied the mark. However, *used in religions (to lead processions)* did not score as the bracketed words limited the precise idea with an example. The use of brackets is, therefore, best avoided.

The given content points showed how succinctly further points might be noted – sometimes even in a single word or very short phrase; some candidates recognised this.

Excluding the provided content points, which were not rewarded with marks, there were 15 content points, of which candidates could identify any combination up to a maximum of 12 points, carrying one mark each. Almost all candidates followed the suggested use of bullets.

Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 described the importance of elephants throughout history and (excluding the given point) there were 8 points which candidates could make under the first section. Of these, 3 were in Paragraph 1: their use as working animals and their use in both ancient and modern warfare. For the first 'work' or 'working animals' would have been sufficient, but many responses went on to use one or more examples, giving the impression that these were the only ways in which elephants were put to work; the text clearly stated that they were '... working animals, *for example* in the logging industry...'. Responses which gave that they 'worked *in the logging industry*' limited the correct answer and could not be credited. However, if they had acknowledged that this was an example, the point would have been awarded the mark, e.g. 'Worked, *for example* in the logging industry'. The use of elephants in warfare during 'ancient times' was often seen, but only the better responses recognised that mention of their use in 'modern' warfare was also important when considering their role 'throughout history'. Some included both under one bullet: *Used in ancient and modern warfare*. This was acceptable for the 2 points. Weaker responses offered 'warfare' alone; such excessive contraction meant that neither of the two marks available could be awarded as the distinction between the 'ancient' and 'modern' eras was not made.

A further 2 points were in Paragraph 2, where 'religion' and 'good luck' were the main ideas. Weaker responses limited the points with their use of examples: processions, festivals and other specific religions for the first, and concentration on the elephants' trunk position in the second.

Paragraph 3 included two more references to the importance of elephants: first, the use of ivory in creating art and religious objects in ancient times and piano keys and cutlery handles more recently. As long as they were made from ivory, or elephant tusks, candidates could mention items created in either period as the rubric covered the whole of history and the text dealt with them together. The second point was the description of elephants as a keystone species, or the definition of that as having an impact for good on the environment. Many responses referred only to the given 'behaviour' – digging for water during drought – but this was insufficient. The passage tells us that this was only 'one' of the behaviours which contribute to the elephant's identification as a keystone animal; there were 'other behaviours' too, and this example alone did not adequately define that unique importance.

The last available point in the first section was in Paragraph 5: the use of elephants for entertainment, or in circuses or displays; many responses successfully used the one word 'entertainment'. Reference to specific dates and to 'the USA' limited the suggested importance in terms of the rubric 'throughout history'; their use for entertainment, in circuses or displays was important in itself and not just in those years and in that place.

The second section of the rubric asked for the reasons for the decline in the elephant population today, and what is being done to stop this decline. The remaining 8 points were in Paragraphs 5 and 6 and candidates could select up to 7 of these. The first reason for the decline – that elephants are losing their habitats – was the given point from Paragraph 5, and there were 2 further reasons in that paragraph, which candidates usually recognised: their being killed by farmers and the poaching or killing of elephants for their ivory, or tusks. The reason why farmers are killing them – to protect their agricultural land – was often added as an extension, unnecessarily, but it is a specific reason and was therefore acceptable. In offering the poaching idea, many responses did not recognise the difference between succinctness and over-conciseness. In these cases, the point was given as 'poaching' or 'elephant poaching', without essential reference to ivory, the principle reason for which this poaching was carried out.

In Paragraph 6 there were 5 more points, which explained what is being done to stop the decline in the elephant population. The first, which was missed by all but the stronger candidates, concerned their official classification as either threatened or endangered. The second was that the 'cruel and barbaric' ivory trade is being banned in some countries; most candidates attempted this point, some missing it because they contracted the idea too much, saying that 'ivory' is banned, rather than emphasising the 'trading' of it. A few responses suggested that 'poaching' is being banned; by definition, poaching is an illegal activity and, thus, has always been 'banned'. The following 2 points focused on organisations which work with or for elephants as part of their role. The first of these concerned zoos and / or circuses which are now refusing to display elephants; the extension of this fact into the reason for them doing so (i.e. that it is cruel to keep them in captivity) was not necessary for the mark but mention of it did not deny the mark. The alternative reference to zoos or circuses was also acceptable for this mark: the fact that some groups publicly criticise them for their treatment of elephants. An example of such a group was given (In Defence of Animals) and in the next point, the World Wide Fund for Nature was mentioned. It, too, was referenced as an example of the point: some *organisations* or *groups* or *charities* raise funds to equip anti-poaching patrols. The two charities named, having been identified in the passage as examples, could not be the specific subjects of the points, as they are not the only groups involved in such action. The final effort being undertaken to help to stop the decline was the establishing of elephant refuges or orphanages; this was often correctly selected.

In **Question 1(b)** candidates were asked to use their notes to write a summary of the importance of elephants throughout history, and the reasons for the decline in the elephant population and what is being done to stop this decline. They were to use between 150 and 180 words in a piece of continuous writing which was to be 'relevant, well organised and easy to follow.' Most answers were of the recommended length and very few candidates omitted the question completely.

Under the revised syllabus there are 10 marks for this question. The strongest responses re-phrased and synthesised the content points fluently and coherently. Other responses used parts of the passage, rearranging and adding to them to ensure a coherence of their own, to suit their organisation of the content; adverbial connectives as well as other skilful linking devices such as punctuation and their own structures were used to some effect. Weaker responses had less relevant summaries but were sometimes able to organise the ideas selected. While the best responses used the common adverbial connectives such as 'nevertheless', 'however' 'furthermore' etc. appropriately but not excessively, weaker responses used them throughout their summaries with little understanding of whether they were appropriate in relation to what had gone before. Elsewhere, the repeated use of 'and' or 'also' was noticeable to string points together; in better responses, however, these words were used only now and then for the skilful synthesis of ideas.

Question 2 asked candidates to identify an opinion from each of Paragraphs 1, 3 and 6 with 3 marks available for this final question in Section 1. Only the strongest responses successfully offered all three opinions.

The first opinion came at the very start of Paragraph 1: *Elephants are magnificent creatures*. This was recognised by many as a superlative description with which not everyone might agree; an opinion rather than a fact. Many others, unable to quite distinguish between fact and opinion, however, spoiled the correct answer by quoting in excess, adding the indisputable fact that they are 'the largest animals on earth'. Others chose statements in the rest of the paragraph, ranging from 'kings and emperors were carried' on elephants to the fact that they were able to 'haul wagons' or 'carry trees with minimum damage to surrounding forest areas'.

The opinion in Paragraph 3 was more frequently identified: 'the ivory from which elephants' tusks are made is really beautiful'. The occasional error was seen when candidates referred only to the tusks as being beautiful. If candidates used their own words they had to make clear that it was 'elephant ivory' which was beautiful; that was acceptable without reference to the tusks.

Instead of identifying the opinion in Paragraph 6, that '...keeping elephants in captivity is obviously cruel', a large number of candidates opted for 'the ivory trade is often perceived as being cruel and barbaric'. The suggestion implied by the words 'is *often perceived as* cruel' should have signalled that the writer is making a statement of fact: some people think it cruel; others do not. No subjective opinion is given here.

Section 2 Reading for Meaning

Many candidates seemed to find this narrative text more challenging than the non-narrative Passage 1. Questions required interpretation and appreciation of the writer's skill and candidates are advised that regular reading and discussion of fiction will help with all types of question in this section.

Question 3(a) was a literal comprehension question, asking why Emma was 'staggering'. This was answered correctly by the vast majority, who said she was 'carrying', or had with her, heavy bags. A few candidates made general references to bags of groceries in a way which might suggest that she had tripped over them. Those who attempted to lift from the passage sometimes implied, incorrectly, that Emma was 'under' the groceries.

Question 3(b) asked what Emma's 'huge responsibility' was, and most responses were: that she had to look after her brother. This was sufficient for the mark, though some candidates added that her parents had given her this charge, or that she was responsible for looking after the house as well; these additions were acceptable.

The clue to answering **Question 3(c)**, 'What was the most unpleasant change which Emma found in the house when she came home?', was in the words 'even worse'. They signalled something more unpleasant than the other changes she had noticed (the shifted tea bags and the open drawer) and led directly to the answer: 'muddy footprints'. If candidates added that it was 'James', or 'her brother', who had left these muddy footprints this was acceptable as Emma clearly assumed it was his fault. As the question required 'the most' unpleasant change, only one thing was needed and inclusion of any reference to tea bags or drawer spoiled the answer. Most candidates understood this and selected only the muddy footprints.

Question 3(d) was the first question which required candidates to answer in their own words and they had to explain how Emma was feeling at that point. The sentence to be paraphrased was given within the question; it told them that Emma was 'feeling justifiably aggrieved'. A variety of suitable synonyms for 'aggrieved' were given, including 'angry', 'annoyed', 'upset' and 'irritated', but in many cases they were linked to the result of her anger and repeated the rest of the quotation: that she was going to tell James off when he got back. 'justifiably' was paraphrased only in stronger responses which recognised that she felt *rightfully angry*, that she *had reason to be annoyed* or she felt *understandably upset*. Although a little ambiguous, *reasonably angry* was credited as showing the correct idea in this context. Occasionally candidates offered synonyms of the key words, without a context, as in: 'justifiably' = *right to be*; 'aggrieved' = *angry*. The question required candidates to 'explain' how Emma was feeling; the sort of answer above should be discouraged as not offering a paraphrase of the ideas in the quotation and therefore not answering the question.

Question 4(a) was a discriminating one, the available mark being gained in only the strongest responses. The previous question asked about Emma feeling angry with her brother because she thought he had made a mess of the house. Immediately after this, we are told that 'A cloud crossed her mind and gradually became a storm of doubt' and candidates had to say what her feelings were at this point. Some recognised that there had been a change in Emma's feelings and that she was now unsure that James was the culprit. 'Cloud' was understood by many as 'suspicion', 'worry' or 'uncertainty' – though others repeated 'doubt'. A few candidates repeated their answer to the previous question, i.e. that she was 'angry'; candidates are advised that it is not likely that the same answer will be required for more than one question. Answers such as *She was confused*, or *She was having doubts about whether it was her brother who had messed up the house* were frequent. What was missing from most answers, however, was the idea that this 'suspicion' was growing; that it had become much worse. Candidates had to make the link between clouds and storms and infer that there was an increase in her feelings of 'doubt'. The best responses did this, e.g. *She was feeling uncertain and her uncertainty kept on increasing with time*.

Question 4(b), a literal comprehension question, was answered correctly by almost all candidates. Asked why their parents wanted James to leave the house in the morning before Emma, candidates identified the text words: '... to ensure that he was never at home alone'; they either quoted these or re-phrased them slightly, e.g. *Because they didn't want him to be home alone*. The very few who were not awarded the mark suggested that it was *to make sure he went to school*. The passage did not support this assumption.

The vast majority of candidates provided the correct answer to **Question 4(c)**. This was another literal comprehension question, and candidates had to show understanding of the decision Emma made 'when the full force of her suspicion hit her'. Now realising how unlikely it was that James had been responsible for the muddy footprints, the shifted tea bags and the open cutlery drawer, the only remaining possibility was that someone else had got into the house and done these things. When the full force of that 'storm' of suspicion mentioned in **Question 4(a)** dawned on her, she decided 'she would have to look in all the other rooms' to 'dispel' or get rid of it. She searched the whole house, room by room, and most candidates gave this idea as the answer. Others suggested a somewhat more casual approach, saying that she would *...look in other rooms*; she had to do more than go into one or two; it had to be *all the other rooms* or *the whole house*, otherwise she could not have been sure whether an intruder was there or not.

As Emma looked in all the rooms, obviously frightened, the passage mentions two physical signs of fear which she shows. In **Question 5(a)** candidates were asked what those two physical signs were and most candidates were able to recognise that her heart was 'pounding' and, from later in the paragraph, that 'she was sweating'. Various versions of the first, in the candidates' own words, were also acceptable, e.g. *her heart was beating fast* or *her heart was racing*. The second sign was almost always given in the words of the text. Very occasionally some responses quoted *She arrived at her bedroom door inundated with fear*; that gives only the emotion of fear without the physical signs of it. Another infrequent lift was: *managing to ignore the fact that she was sweating*; those who offered this response should have focused on her 'sweating'.

Question 5(b) was an inferential one, asking candidates to say why they thought Emma's mother 'had left three pairs of shoes lying on the bedroom floor'. While such questions require candidates to explain what they 'think' about a situation, a person, or perhaps an action, their answers should be based on the information within the passage. A few suggested that the mother had forgotten them, that she was in a hurry, or that she wanted to see how well Emma tidied the house in her absence. The writer tells us that 'no doubt' the shoes were 'considered ultimately to have been too much for her already bulging suitcase'. Some responses re-worded the text to create a sensible reason: *They / the shoes were too much for her bulging suitcase*. Most other responses gave the accurate answer: *she couldn't fit them in her suitcase*, or *her suitcase was already full*.

Question 5(c) began with the statement that 'Emma was 'inundated with fear' and asked candidates to select the one word used in the paragraph which continued the idea of 'inundated'. The only possible word was 'flooded', but it proved challenging for many candidates who did not understand the link between the two words. 'Sweating' was the most common incorrect response, with 'presumably' and 'dismally' both frequently offered, and other choices such as 'convinced', 'odd' and 'ominous'. There were some responses which did not follow the instruction in the rubric for one word, giving more than one word, and so could not score with answers such as *relief flooded* or *dismally familiar features*.

With reference to the quotation 'James stared at his sister with a look of undisguised puzzlement, which made her realise that what he was about to say was true', **Question 6(a)** required candidates to explain in their own words how Emma knew that James was about to tell the truth. The idea of 'puzzlement' was usually correctly explained, with candidates saying that James was confused or that he didn't understand, or know, what Emma was talking about. 'Undisguised' caused greater difficulty and in some cases a paraphrase of this idea was not attempted. In such cases, the response was limited to *He was puzzled*. Many responses understood that his confusion was '*not hidden*' and this was awarded the mark. Responses which suggested that he had *clearly faked his expression* were not correct. The best answers expressed the complete idea in the quotation, e.g. *Because James looked at her in obvious and unconcealed confusion suggesting that he truly had not come back from school* or *He looked at her in a confused way which was clear on his face*.

Question 6(b) was another inferential question which asked candidates to explain who they thought was knocking on the cupboard door and, secondly, why. From the point when Emma realised that the muddy footprints and other mess in the kitchen were not the fault of her brother, the story suggested that an intruder was hiding in the cupboard and wanted someone to let him out. The majority of candidates recognised the hints, including Emma's fears, and correctly thought that *an intruder, a stranger, a thief* or *a robber* was in there. Most also understood the inference of the final words, that this cupboard was 'the one which could be opened only from the outside' and gave the reason why this person was knocking as: *Because he couldn't*

get out, or *Because he needed help to get out*, or *Because he was stuck inside*. Some of these accurate responses included the fact that the cupboard door could only be opened from the outside, but that alone was not the right answer. It needed an explanation for the intruder's reason for knocking, and not simply a statement about the cupboard door. Very occasionally, candidates explained only why they thought the stranger was in the cupboard at all, with answers such as *He was looking for valuables to steal* or *He hid there when he heard Emma come home*. As additions to the correct answer, these ideas would have been acceptable but they did not explain what was needed. There were a number of other suggestions as to who was knocking which showed that the candidates were not using the passage as a basis for their thoughts, e.g. *It was their parents who were hiding to check up on them when they were left alone*; another seen more than once was *a small animal*; or *James's friends playing hide and seek*. None of these had any basis in the text.

Question 7 was the test of vocabulary in a multiple choice format. Candidates were offered four alternative meanings for each of five given words from the passage and they were to circle the one which they felt had the same meaning as the word had in the passage. Candidates are advised to re-read each word in its context, trying all the possible synonyms in turn to find the most appropriate alternative. It is important not to circle more than one of the four alternative words; even if one of them happens to be correct, it cannot be credited unless the candidate has obviously deleted the incorrect ones.

The first word, 'irritated', was almost invariably correct, with the circling of *annoyed*. The second, 'unremarkable' was also frequently rewarded for the selection of *normal*, although a number chose the antonym *noticeable*, or the word *perfect*. *Look curiously* was a popular wrong answer as a synonym for 'peek' instead of the accurate 'look quickly'. The passage told us that Emma 'stopped *briefly* to peek into the bathroom' and that 'brief' action should have given a clue to the speediness implied in 'peek'. It was noticeable that on a few occasions the correct word was circled, only to be crossed out, and 'look curiously' indicated in its place. While it appeared to be quite a challenging word, 'surreptitiously' was very well attempted, with the correct alternative – *secretly* – being the most frequent response, while *thoughtfully* was the most popular wrong answer. The last word to be substituted was 'derision'. Quite a few candidates chose the accurate synonym, *scorn*, but many opted for *doubt* or, occasionally, *surprise*.

Question 8 was the new section dedicated to the writer's craft.

For both parts of **Question 8**, candidates were asked to give the 'meaning' of a given phrase and, secondly, the 'effect' of this phrase, as used in the passage. The focus of **Question 8(a)** was taken from the section describing Emma's search of the house: 'The closed door of her parents' bedroom creaked open ominously.' As Emma is looking into every room, she had to open this particular door because it was 'closed'; the way in which it opened needed to be explained. The best responses recognised that the 'ominous' sound of its opening was threatening, that it opened frighteningly, scarily or creepily. The next part of the question required the candidates to say what 'effect' this gave. In a past paper, this question might have asked: 'What effect does the word 'ominously' give that the word 'slowly' would not have done?' The answer would be the same: that it adds tension, suspicion, suspense or a feeling that something is wrong, or that someone might be hiding in there. A typically good response was clear:

- *Meaning: The shut door to her parent's room opened with a rather suspicious sound.*
- *Effect: There was tension as the door opened.*

Or, again:

- *Meaning: The door slowly creaked open mysteriously.*
- *Effect: It creates the effect of anticipation and suspense.*

Many gave the 'effect', correctly, as *creating tension*, or *giving a scary feeling* or a *dramatic effect*. The 'meaning' caused more difficulty with a common misconception being that *The door opened by itself*. Others suggested that the door opened *slowly* or *noisily*, but neither of these took the word 'ominously' into account. One or other of the marks – usually for the 'effect' – was seen often but full marks were gained only by the best responses.

Question 8(b) proved more challenging but there were a number of ways of achieving the marks. The quoted lines focused on James's behaviour when he and Emma sat down to eat: 'Oblivious to his sister's mood, James rattled on to her about the runs he had scored in the cricket match at school.' Explanations of the meaning needed to include reference to either his lack of awareness that his sister was upset or that he kept talking to her about the cricket match. A response such as *James didn't notice how Emma was feeling* did not adequately explain that Emma was upset. Some correct responses focused on the second part of the

quotation with *James kept on talking to her about the cricket match* or *He went on at her about the runs he had scored* or *James was unaware of his sister's feelings and chattered on about his cricket runs*.

To gain the mark for effect, candidates needed to ask themselves: 'What effect does his non-stop talking create?' The answer was that Emma was not really listening to what James was saying or was too preoccupied with her own worries to take any notice of his chattering. A typical correct answer was: *That James seems to be rather arrogant and selfish* or *James was very excited about what he had been doing* or *This gives the effect that she didn't seem to be listening*.

Very occasionally, a candidate looked at the overall 'effect' of the whole sentence and expressed this more generally:

- *Meaning: James was unaware of how Emma was feeling, so he just chattered on about his cricket.*
- *Effect: James was relaxed and excited, while Emma was tense so we see conflicting emotions.*

This sort of response showed good understanding of what the writer was trying to create and was a full and correct answer.

Several answers suggested, as the 'effect', that James 'rattled on' in an attempt to cheer Emma up. However, this took no account of the fact that he was 'oblivious to his sister's mood' and so could not score.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1123/22
Reading

Key messages

- Candidates adapted well to the updated syllabus, but they are reminded that in the summary **Question 1(a)** it is necessary to focus on the selection and expression of only the main points within the text. Irrelevant examples and extensions of those points, if included, often spoil otherwise competent responses in **Question 1(a)**.
- In **Question 1(b)**, although use of English is no longer one of the assessment criteria, there should still be a focus on clear expression; this will ensure a well-organised piece of writing which is easy to follow. Practice in the appropriate use of linking devices is necessary to ensure the necessary coherence. Linking devices were frequently included, but did not always demonstrate understanding and logic.
- In *Section 2*, in the vocabulary question, with its multiple-choice format, candidates should consider, within the context, each of the alternatives offered; they should take their time to select the most appropriate word for that context.
- In the final question of *Section 2*, candidates are advised to concentrate on appreciation of the writer's craft. Although the format of these questions may appear to be 'new', the requirements are not. Candidates are still being asked to recognise the literal meaning of a given section of the text, and to comment on the effect on the reader of the writer's use of particular words or images. Further practice in the approach to these questions is advised.
- Candidates should try to gain an overall picture of both the given texts *and* all questions, before they begin to answer; this is especially important with reference to questions on the second passage. Closer reading of the whole text before attempting the questions would help to clarify the narrative described in the text. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the summary passage but experienced more difficulty in responding to the detailed demands of the questions on the second passage.
- Candidates could be encouraged to highlight or underline key words in the question, e.g. in **Question 4(a)** 'what is the **other** reason', or in **Question 6(a)** 'the stallholder's **character**', or pay closer attention to words already highlighted in the question.
- Many candidates experienced difficulties with questions in which they were required to answer in their own words, e.g. 'reciprocate' in **Question 4(b)** and 'entertainment' in **Question 5(a)**. These questions now give the section of text to be paraphrased and responses need to go beyond definitions of individual words to paraphrase the *ideas* in the given context.
- Candidates should be able to write their answers within the parameters of the question paper answer booklet. Where this is not possible they should write on official additional paper. They should not write on the front page of the booklet as this is reserved for their centre and candidate numbers.
- Candidates are advised not to refer to additional material which does not exist; a few candidates, particularly in **Question 1(a)**, indicated that they written more in another part of the question paper answer booklet when there was no additional material.
- Candidates are advised to practise recognising the difference between opinion and fact in the first, non-fiction passage. In general, there has been much improvement in candidates' ability over the years to answer such questions correctly, but further practice would lead to even greater improvement. They should understand that an authorial opinion might well form only part of a sentence; this would help candidates to avoid giving excess information which turns an opinion into a statement.

General comments

While the majority of candidates attempted every question, there were a number who did not respond to the final section on the writer's craft.

This was the first Paper, apart from the Specimen Paper, which was written to reflect changes made to the syllabus as from 2018.

Section 1

In **Question 1(a)** 12 marks were allocated to content points in summary writing.

In **Question 1(a)** the focus was the selection of main, or overarching, points, and to separate these main points from supporting detail or examples. Candidates needed to focus on the universal rather than the particular here, and stronger responses expressed the points succinctly.

The number of marks allocated for writing up the content points into a piece of writing which was relevant, well-organised and easy to follow was increased from 5 to 10. The assessment criteria for the summary writing also changed to reflect relevance and coherence, i.e. the ability to be easily understood.

Although there are no longer specific marks for the use of own words, the rubric says that candidates should use them as far as possible. This suggestion, and the explanation that credit would be given for relevant information presented in an easy-to-follow manner, encouraged the strongest candidates to re-phrase and synthesise their content points fluently and coherently. There were others who used parts of the passage, rearranging and adding to them to ensure a coherence of their own, to suit their organisation of the content; adverbial connectives as well as other skilful linking devices such as punctuation and their own structures were used to some effect.

Weaker responses to **Question 1(b)** sometimes produced less relevant summaries by focusing on examples or supporting detail instead of main points but were often able to organise the ideas which they selected.

Common irrelevant inclusions in **Question 1(a)** were:

- the importance of needles
- details of animal tasks in wartime
- inclusion of reference to medicines and cosmetics
- a general lack of understanding regarding therapy.

In both **Question 1(a)** and **Question 1(b)**, many candidates included the reference to bone needles, with 'slivers' appearing frequently as 'silver'. 'Hunted' was sometimes written as 'haunted' and some did not understand the expression 'had a role to play' in relation to animals and warfare.

Section 2

In own words questions, candidates would be expected to re-phase part of the text by using the context to do so, to capture the meaning of the ideas and re-cast it into their own words.

The vocabulary question which asked candidates to give synonyms from their own knowledge for five words or phrases in the text was replaced by five multiple choice questions.

There was an increase in the number of marks allocated to writer's craft questions, and these questions came at the end of the Paper rather than in sequence according to their position of their answers in the text.

Candidates were asked to answer questions based on two passages of around 700 words each, the first being non-fiction and the second being fiction, with answers written in a common answer booklet. As in previous sessions, Passage 1 seemed to be more accessible than Passage 2.

All candidates seemed to engage with the tasks and the texts. There were very few incomplete scripts.

Both passages, the first entitled 'People and Animals' and the second entitled 'Nizam', seemed to engage the interest of the candidates and to stretch and discriminate amongst them. The first passage explored the candidates' ability to read for ideas and the second tested their reading for meaning. 22 marks were available for the summary question, with 12 of these marks being awarded for the assessment of the

candidates' ability to select content points from the text of 'People and Animals' and 10 marks for the assessment of their ability to express these points in piece of writing which was relevant, well-organised and easy to follow. (See above.) A further question tested candidates' ability to read for ideas, in this case to distinguish fact from opinion in three of the seven paragraphs of the text.

The second passage, 'Nizam', tested the candidates' literal and inferential comprehension, their ability to deduce the meaning of vocabulary in context, their ability to select appropriate quotations, their use of own words and their appreciation of the writer's craft.

Almost all candidates wrote to the required length for the summary **Question 1(b)**.

Both spelling and punctuation were generally good.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1(a) was the first part of the summary question, carrying 12 marks; candidates were asked to identify people's uses of animals in former times, and the uses made of animals today, as outlined in the passage. The summary was based on the whole text, and candidates were asked to write their answers in note form, where they were free to use either the words of the text or their own words. One content point under each heading of the rubric was given by way of illustration, although these given points were not rewarded with a mark. Where marks were not awarded it was usually because examples rather than main points were given. The exercise was a discriminating one as almost the whole range of marks could be found.

Excluding the provided content points, which were not rewarded with marks, there were 15 content points, of which candidates could identify any combination up to a maximum of 12 points, carrying one mark each. Most candidates expressed the points either in note form or in short sentences lifted from the text; some responses presented long, verbatim copies of the text for each content point which included examples of content points. Such responses were not awarded the mark as the task requires candidates to distinguish main points from examples and / or supporting details. Candidates were not instructed to use bullet points, although the rubric suggested that they might, and the sample points given to assist them used bullets; in fact, most candidates used bullet points, seeming to realise that it would help them to focus more clearly on identifying content points if they were presented in this way.

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 described the uses of animals in former times and there were 7 points (excluding the first, which was given) which the candidates could make. In Paragraph 1, there was 1 content point, (excluding the provided first point) which was that animals were used to move objects. This followed on from the given point that animals were used to move, or transport, people. The examples of animals which moved objects were harness animals, which moved objects by pulling them, and pack animals, which moved objects by carrying them. As the general point was about animals moving objects, referring only to either pack or harness animals was insufficient; as the question asked for uses of animals, referring only to specific animals such as oxen or horses was not sufficient.

Paragraph 2 contained 3 content points. The first was that people used animals to make clothes or clothing. The point could also be made by writing that people used the fur, or the hide, of animals to keep themselves warm, the implication being that they made clothes out of them. Many candidates incorrectly gave the examples of mammoths and / or bears and /or deer; this was too narrow a focus to be described as a general point about people's uses of animals. A similar problem arose in the next content point in the paragraph, which was that people hunted or domesticated animals for food; some candidates gave the examples of goats and / or sheep being food for people. The third point in this paragraph was that animals were used to hunt other animals. Making that point was sufficient, and correct answers were often spoiled by referring to cats or cheetahs as the main point and not the example of the main point. Many candidates focused in this paragraph on the reference to needles; this was not a separate point but was one which was subsumed into the point about using animals to make clothing.

In Paragraph 3, there were three further uses of animals in former times, the first of these being that they were used in warfare or battles. Making that point was sufficient, but many candidates spoiled their answer by giving an example as if it were the main point, examples such as 'horses pulled wagons' or 'elephants charged the enemy'. A majority of candidates made the next point available in this paragraph, which was

that animals were sacrificed to gods or a god. The final point in the paragraph was that animals were used in sports; offering an example either of an animal or of an agent, such as 'horses were used in chariot races', or 'the ancient Greeks used horses for chariot races' was too specific.

In the second section of the summary, the rubric asked for the uses made of animals today, as outlined in the passage. From Paragraph 4 candidates could make 1 point (excluding the provided first point): animals were used for entertainment, with the specific examples of lions and elephants being insufficient.

In Paragraph 5 there were 2 content points, the first of these being that horses could find people lost or trapped in dangerous terrain; the idea of 'dangerous terrain' had to be included, either lifted from the text or re-phrased in the candidate's own words. Moreover, this was the only content point which required a single type of animal, namely the horse, rather than the generalised idea of 'animals' required to make content points elsewhere. The second content point in the paragraph lay in writing that animals could be used to forecast or predict earthquakes; the specific example of the puma or the specific location of Peru being offered as the point were insufficient.

In Paragraph 6, there were three more content points, the first being that animals can sniff out or detect drugs or explosives; responses such as only rats could do this (too specific) or animals were used in the fight against crime (too general) were incorrect. The second content point in the paragraph was that animals can be used in scientific research. Many candidates, although working in the correct area, did not make the general content point because they brought in one or more of the examples used in the text and presented these examples as if they were the main point. Therefore, to write that animals were used in scientific research on medicines or cosmetics was incorrect, and to write that rats and / or rabbits and / or monkeys were used in scientific research was incorrect too, unless it was specified that these were examples. The final content point in the paragraph was that animal products could be sold; the link to paying for education was not necessary, as this was the purpose of the use of animals and only the use of animals was asked for. Some responses offered examples of animal products; that milk, eggs, wool and / or meat were sold was too specific a response to be awarded the mark.

Two content points were found in the final paragraph, Paragraph 7. Animals are (i) kept as pets and (ii) are used in therapy. Many responses gave a specific example, such as 'cats provide companionship,' or 'swimming with dolphins is good for health'. Such narrow examples were not enough to make the overarching general points.

In **Question 1(b)** candidates were asked to use their notes to write a summary of people's uses of animals in former times, and the uses made of animals today, as outlined in the passage. They were advised to write between 150 and 180 words (the first ten of which were given), within the space available in the answer booklet. They were asked to write up their note form content points into a piece of writing which was relevant, well-organised and easy to follow; the most commendable responses were relevant and coherent. Such responses adhered to the points of the text which were relevant to the question, avoiding the over-use of supporting details and examples, and also avoiding non-specific topic sentences, such as 'In this way we can see that animals have always been useful to people' or 'But it was not only in former times that people found very many ways to use animals.' Under coherence, the better responses demonstrated writing which was fluent, with points linked in a way which aided fluency and moved the answer on in a natural and helpful way through the use of devices such as connectives and adverbial phrases. While the best responses used the common adverbial connectives such as 'nevertheless', 'however' 'furthermore' etc. appropriately but not excessively, weaker responses used them throughout their summaries with little understanding of whether they were appropriate in relation to what had gone before. Elsewhere, the repeated use of 'and' or 'also' was noticeable to string points together; in the better responses, however, these words were used only now and then for the skilful synthesis of ideas. Very few answers were shorter than the recommended length and hardly any candidates omitted the question completely.

In **Question 2** candidates were to select and write down three of the writer's opinions, one from Paragraph 4, one from Paragraph 6, and one from Paragraph 7. The key to answering this type of question is to focus on words or phrases which are subjective rather than objective, and in this case the words were 'cruel and unnatural' for the first opinion, 'outweigh' for the second opinion and 'most exciting' for the third.

These words supplied the opinion in Paragraph 4 that '(although) using animals (solely) for entertainment is cruel and unnatural'; this opinion was emphasised by the subjective 'definitely', which did not need to be included in the response, but which was intended to draw the attention of candidates to its subjectivity.

In Paragraph 6, the opinion was '(although) the medical benefits for humans (certainly) outweigh animal suffering', again emphasised by the word 'certainly', which did not need to be included in the answer, but which drew the attention of candidates to its subjectivity. Many responses included the rest of the sentence namely that 'opponents take the view that alternative testing methods should be implemented' and could not be awarded the mark. Other responses included 'perhaps the most surprising of these being rats'; this was a common incorrect answer with the word 'surprising' being taken as indicating an opinion, but the word 'perhaps' made this a statement and not an opinion.

In Paragraph 7, the opinion was 'the most exciting innovation in modern medicine is animal assisted therapy'; some responses included excess from the text with reference to the examples such as 'swimming with dolphins' which could not be awarded the mark. Common incorrect responses here were references to a cat providing companionship, or people deriving emotional benefits from keeping animals as pets; the inclusion in these sections of the text of 'many people derive' and a cat can' made these statements and not opinions.

A small number of candidates offered their own opinions rather than the writer's opinion as required by the rubric, e.g. 'in my opinion people should not take animals out of their habitat and capture them'.

Section 2

Most candidates seemed to find the narrative text more challenging than the non-narrative Passage 1, as is usually the case.

Question 3(a) was a literal comprehension question asking for the two reasons why Nizam was happy on the day that he qualified as a teacher. The first reason was that he had made his parents proud, but the second one that he had achieved a lifelong ambition or dream, proved more challenging. Most candidates gave at least one correct answer, with the most common incorrect response being that Nizam was young when he qualified as a teacher, a misunderstanding arising from 'as a young teacher' in the text. Weaker responses suggested, incorrectly, that he was happy because it was Saturday.

Question 3(b) was another literal comprehension question asking candidates why Nizam's weekend was less relaxing than it normally was, the answer being that he had to produce a topic for the school's story-writing competition. Where the answer was incorrect, it tended to be because of an omission of the word 'school'. There was occasional omission of other key words such as 'competition' or 'story', as well as very occasionally candidates saying that Nizam had to write the story.

In **Question 4(a)** candidates were asked, for 'the other reason' why Nizam found the newspaper article 'infuriating'; the 'other' reason had to be separated from the given reason, which was that 'the young students Nizam taught were not lazy, inconsiderate or impolite' as stated in the wording of the question. A majority of candidates answered by lifting the text at 'it was an unjustified tirade against the younger generation'; however, this was a re-wording of the question which stated that young people were not lazy, inconsiderate or impolite. The answer to the question lay in understanding that Nizam himself was young, or that he took it personally because he was in that age group himself. Lifting of the rhetorical question 'was he not able to count himself as being in that age group?' was enough to be considered a correct answer, although there were candidates who by turning the question into a statement and writing 'he was not able to count himself as being in that age group' could not be awarded the mark.

Question 4(b) was the first of the questions on the Paper which required candidates to answer in their own words. They were asked to explain the waiter's reaction to Nizam: instead of reciprocating his smile, he gave him a stony look. The key lay in explaining the idea that the waiter did not respond in the same manner, instead giving Nizam an unfriendly look. Responses could focus on re-casting 'reciprocating' and 'stony' provided this re-casting demonstrated understanding of the context, so answers such as: *Reciprocate - give back; Stony - cold* were not acceptable. The vast majority of candidates attempted a relevant context with very few giving only synonyms. Acceptable answers were responses such as 'instead of smiling back / returning the smile, the waiter gave Nizam an unfriendly / cold / sullen look'. There were many incorrect attempts at 'stony' such as 'blank' or 'expressionless'; these were incorrect as they implied that there was nothing to be seen in the look, whereas 'stony' suggests antipathy. Other common incorrect attempts were 'serious', 'angry', 'rude' and 'stubborn'. Many responses did not capture the idea of 'reciprocate', e.g. 'he didn't smile back, he didn't return the smile, as opposed to 'he didn't smile'. Many candidates focused, incorrectly, on the waiter's dislike of his job; the text makes clear his dislike of his job, but the question asked for his 'reaction' to Nizam's smile'. Other incorrect responses referred to the careless way in which the tea was served by the waiter.

Question 5(a) was the second of the questions on the Paper which required candidates to answer in their own words and, with reference to the stallholders' 'apparent hostility', they were asked to explain what seemed to be happening (thus drawing on the words 'apparent' and 'hostility') and what was really going on, which they needed to find in the text at 'good-natured part of the morning's entertainment'. Therefore, what seemed to be happening was that the stallholders disliked each other or were arguing or fighting; some responses incorrectly suggested that the stallholders were arguing with the customers. They were in fact providing fun for each other or for the customers, or the unfriendliness was an act, or a pretence. Some responses confused this situation, saying that the stallholders were pretending to be having fun but really disliked each other. Some candidates understood the idea of 'entertainment' but relied solely on that word, which was insufficient. Others wrote that they were trying to attract customers to their stalls away from other stalls. Some responses described what was happening, e.g. 'stalls were set up' or 'florists coaxed husbands to buy flowers for their wives', but did not address the 'apparent hostility'.

In **Question 5(b)** candidates were to identify a single word used in Paragraph 3 which showed that the stallholders' sales talk never varied, the answer being 'routine'. Many candidates offered 'cacophonous'. Other common wrong choices included 'merely', 'good-natured' and 'hostile'.

In **Question 6(a)** candidates, with reference to 'the stallholder showed the woman a scarf. Then another. Then another' were to infer a characteristic of the stallholder and then a characteristic of the woman. For the stallholder there were many possibilities: for example, he was patient, helpful, persistent, hard-working. For the woman, answers could focus on her true character, although focusing on what she was pretending to be was also acceptable. Her true character was that she was clever or cunning, while what she was pretending to be was choosy or selective or difficult to please. As the question asked for characteristics, reference to behaviour only was incorrect, e.g. 'she couldn't make up her mind', or 'she was choosing a scarf'. Answers which described only what all salespersons do, as opposed to the character of the stallholder, were also incorrect, e.g. 'he was trying to sell something', or 'he wanted to make a sale'.

Question 6(b) was a literal comprehension question asking for the two aspects of Nizam's behaviour which showed that he was 'shocked', and there was much success here. The key lay in identifying in the text at line 35: 'Nizam gasped in outrage' and at line 39: 'Nizam was rooted to the spot'. Incorrect answers tended to be those which repeated 'he shot out of the café'; although that was an aspect of behaviour, it was the aspect which was subsumed into the question wording at 'ran after the woman'. Some responses suggested that he bumped into people, or that he took two steps at a time, or that the elderly woman resembled Nizam's grandmother. Some responses were incorrect because they focused on reasons why he was shocked. These answers included reference to the woman's actions (stealing the scarf) or to her age (it was shocking that an older person would steal).

Question 7(a) was an inferential question which asked candidates who they thought laid a 'heavy hand' on Nizam's shoulder. The most obvious inference was that it was the waiter, but other individuals were taken as being correct provided there was a link to the café, such as 'the manager of the café' or 'the security guard' or 'another café customer'. Some responses gave 'the elderly man' which was incorrect as the identity of the elderly man needed to be specified, i.e. that he was the waiter. Popular incorrect responses were 'the stallholder' or 'the thief'. Sometimes the hand of Nizam himself, representing Nizam's guilty conscience, was offered as a response.

In **Question 7(b)** candidates were asked to explain the irony in Nizam's situation at the end of the text. A significant number of candidates showed understanding of irony and explained it clearly. There were two main ways of approaching this question, one based on the contrast between theft and innocence and the second being based on the contrast between youth and age. Full correct responses were answers such as 'he was accused of theft but it was the woman who had stolen something' or 'he ran after a thief but in so doing stole something himself'. ('Running out without paying for his coffee' was taken to mean the same as 'theft'.) Alternatively, correct answers could be answers such as 'the newspaper article denounced all young people and yet it was old person who was the thief'. There were many ways in which these correct contrasts could be captured, and there was much success with this question. Although strictly speaking an explanation of irony relies on showing two sides of a contrast, it was possible for candidates to gain one mark for partial answers, such as 'he was accused of theft but he was innocent' (reference to the woman is needed to bring out the irony), or 'he wanted to help the salesman but the waiter thought he was a thief'. (Reference to the woman being the thief is needed to bring out the irony, and 'he wanted to help the salesman' is irrelevant.) Weaker answers were those which gave only some narrative from the text, such as 'he saw a woman who stole a scarf', or 'the woman dropped a scarf into her bag'. Less secure responses repeated the text at lines 47-48, referring to the 'possible consequences of his actions bring misinterpreted'. Some had difficulty in putting their understanding into a clear explanation.

Question 8 was the multiple-choice synonym question. The most successful attempts were with **Question 8(a)** where 'variety' was correctly chosen as the synonym for 'riot', and with **Question 8(d)**, where 'bumped into' was correctly chosen as the synonym for 'collided with'. Less successful were: **Question 8(b)** where the correct answer was 'persuaded' for 'coaxed', with 'motivated' being the most popular incorrect answer; **Question 8(c)**, where 'invisibly' was the correct synonym for 'imperceptibly' with 'gradually' being the most popular incorrect answer; **Question 8(e)**, where the correct answer was 'probability' for 'likelihood'.

Question 9 was the new-style question on writer's craft. In each section, **Question 9(a)** and **Question 9(b)**, candidates were asked to give the meaning of a phrase as used in the text, followed by the effect of this phrase.

Question 9(a) directed candidates to the phrase 'her conveniently voluminous handbag' and asked for its meaning and its effect. Most candidates identified the idea that the bag was big, or huge, or spacious, thus covering the idea of 'voluminous', but fewer captured the idea of 'conveniently', namely that the bag was suitably big, or big enough. The effect of the phrase was the link between the adequate space and the idea of theft or deception. Responses which gave only that the bag carried a lot were insufficient as this is what all big bags do. Therefore, correct answers had to be that the bag was big enough to hide stolen goods, or that nobody would see stolen goods or a stolen scarf in it; the effect might also have been that the phrase showed the woman had come prepared to steal, or that she had other stolen goods in the bag. There was more success with the effect than with the meaning in this question, although for 'effect' weaker responses reiterated the size of the bag without relating it to the woman's pre-planned theft.

Conversely in **Question 9(b)** there more success with the meaning than with the effect. There were many ways in which the meaning could be expressed, e.g. that Nizam ran, or dashed, or sprinted out of the café. 'Going as quickly as possible' was a relative idea and considered too weak to be correct, as was 'hurried'. The effect of the phrase was that it showed the suddenness or explosiveness of Nizam's reaction, or that it showed that Nizam was angry, or agitated or desperate to catch the thief, or that it showed a sense or urgency, or emergency, or immediacy. Responses which compared Nizam's reaction to a bullet from a gun repeated the context of the image rather than de-coding it and therefore were not considered to be correct. Many responses repeated the meaning of the phrase or gave the reason why he shot out of the café rather than the effect of the phrase, by saying, for example, that he didn't want the thief to escape. A small minority of candidates confused 'shot' with 'shout'. Many referred to Nizam's speed or the fact that he took the stairs two at a time or nearly collided with another customer.