

Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

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ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/11 Essay
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the question and developed relevant points.
- Candidates were able to analyse different arguments and evaluate them to reach supported conclusions.
- Candidates adapted their knowledge of a topic to the question.
- Arguments were supported by a range of appropriate evidence and examples.
- Candidates communicated their ideas clearly and produced coherent, well-organised responses with appropriate paragraphing to guide the reader through their argument, as well as focused introductions and conclusions.
- Essays were written with clarity and precision, demonstrating appropriate use of register.
- Candidates used an appropriate range of topic-specific vocabulary, with some effectively using varied expressions and synonyms.
- Candidates showed a clear understanding of genre, audience, purpose, and style.
- Candidates effectively compared arguments and counterarguments and produced conclusions that summarised and evaluated their arguments.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should read the question carefully and consider its meaning and implications, rather than using a key term ('environment' or 'sports' and 'schools') to trigger unfocused discussion or narrative, with insufficient reference to the question.
- Essays needed greater use and relevance of examples to demonstrate more consistent focus on the question.
- Stronger conclusions were often needed to synthesise and evaluate the discussion rather than repeating earlier points or making a brief statement for or against the question's proposition.
- Candidates focused only on listing points, while others listed examples, without explaining their relevance to the point made.
- Essays described or narrated examples and were not analytical.
- Greater use of evaluation was needed throughout responses, rather than presenting both sides of an argument or making unsupported assertions.
- Opinions and arguments should be supported with relevant, specific examples, explanations, or evidence, avoiding vague or irrelevant references.
- Candidates should consistently use a formal academic register, avoiding informal language, colloquial expressions, and contractions, such as: *To kick off, gonna, wanna, stuff, way more, ok, kids and right?*
- Candidates should not use contractions such as *don't* and *wouldn't* as this is inappropriate register in formal essay writing.
- Candidates should check their work to avoid basic spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Candidates should manage their time effectively, including planning and proofreading, and ensure responses are fully completed.
- Essays were too brief and only considered a narrow range of points.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates used specific events and countries to illustrate their ideas.

- Candidates explored different aspects of independence including political, economic, military and cultural.
- Arguments distinguished between legal and practical independence with an exploration of globalisation, including trade, supply chains, financial markets and foreign investment.
- Candidates extended their arguments to assess the role of international organisations and agreements, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organisation and NATO, to show cooperation and limits on national freedom.
- Perceptive essays recognised that countries may retain sovereignty over domestic laws and policies while still depending on other nations economically, politically or environmentally.
- Candidates reached balanced and well-supported conclusions rather than adopting absolute positions.
- Candidates focused on assessing and exploring the idea behind what makes a country independent using specific examples such as European reliance on imported energy following the Russia-Ukraine conflict and international cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Candidates compared different countries, for example discussing how larger economies such as the United States or China may enjoy greater self-sufficiency in some sectors while still relying heavily on global markets, international finance and supply chains.
- Candidates gave examples of countries which claimed to be independent and then showed clearly why they were not through careful, structured exposition using appropriate examples.

Limited responses

- Essays were descriptive rather than analytical showing insufficient depth of knowledge, offering broad or undeveloped statements with limited exploration of alternative viewpoints, or minimal evaluation of the extent of independence.
- Responses included generalised statements such as 'countries need each other' without explaining specific forms of dependence.
- Examples were often non-specific, writing generally about rich countries buying things from poor ones or countries having different trade goods without further development or connection between that observation and the question.
- Some candidates misinterpreted the question to mean whether individuals could be independent of everyone and everything within their own country.
- Candidates explored how significant their own country was instead of exploring a global perspective related to independence.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates analysed the benefits of schools encouraging sport against the potential risks such as injuries, financial constraints, excessive pressure, and the importance of balancing encouragement with candidates' choice and well-being.
- Candidates recognised that schools play a key role in promoting the wide-ranging benefits of sport, including physical health, mental well-being, discipline, teamwork, social development, and motivation to stay active.
- Candidates' arguments recognised how school-based sports can support broader life outcomes, discussing impacts on academic performance, interpersonal skills, future opportunities, and career pathways, including examples of athletes who developed their talents through school programmes.
- Candidates explored the extent to which other agencies had a responsibility to encourage young people to do more sport, including the role of parents and the government.
- Arguments included specific examples of sports and the ways in which they can impact young people.

Limited responses

- Limited examples were used to exemplify key points, with essays often depending too much on vaguely described anecdotes or hypothetical situations.
- Some candidates wrote only about the benefits of sport overall without considering the idea of schools having a responsibility to encourage it.
- Some candidates gave undue emphasis to elite sport and its rewards often focusing on biographies of professional sports people, rather than exploring sport in schools.
- Some candidates described the different sports available in school and wrote about how some candidates like sport and some do not, which did not focus on the wording of the question.
- Conclusions were vague and candidates could not decide whether schools had a responsibility or not.
- Responses did not consider the role of parents and wider society in encouraging young people to do more sport.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates included clear and appropriate examples to support the points made about the benefits or drawbacks of holidays such as the art and culture of Paris, and the therapeutic effects of animal cafés in Tokyo.
- Essays explored how travel can reconnect travellers with their cultural backgrounds, assessing, for example, how Spanish-speaking Americans visiting Mexico or Puerto Rico *feel connected to their history, language and cultural roots*.
- Thoughtful consideration was made of the concept that holidaying abroad can *eliminate inaccurate or offensive stereotypes* about other peoples and nations.
- Candidates considered a good range of potential benefits from travelling abroad including gaining new experiences and insights into different ways of life, personal development, meeting new people, and the economic benefits of tourism for the host country.
- Essays had a balanced argument that considered benefits and also potential drawbacks, including the financial cost of travel and the potential risks of holidaying abroad, such as disease, illness, scams and physical danger, and the environmental and social impacts of tourism on the destination country.
- Candidates referred to language-learning and other educational benefits such as a candidate visiting Spain practising their language skills in authentic contexts being more effective than classroom learning alone.

Limited responses

- Candidates did not support their argument with examples of benefits or drawbacks.
- There was repetitive listing of places of interest or beauty, without adequately linking points to the question.
- The term 'holidays' was sometimes narrowly defined to mean only national or religious festivals, limiting the scope of the argument.
- Essays would have benefited from a more balanced argument, considering both sides of the question.
- Candidates did not arrive at a conclusion based upon an evaluative consideration of each point.
- Some candidates made stereotypical or unsupported claims about foreign countries, such as being *dangerous* or that *language barriers make travel difficult*.
- Candidates did not always closely address the 'To what extent ...' element of the question and focused only on examples of why travelling is beneficial or not.
- Some candidates considered the benefits of travel mostly from a personal perspective, without taking into account the broader scope of the question.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explored a range of relevant issues, including political maturity, democratic participation, the influence of parents, peers and social media, and the level of life experience needed to make informed voting decisions.
- Candidates discussed scientific evidence relating to adolescent brain development and its implications for decision-making.
- Arguments balanced evaluation of the potential risks and benefits, asking at what age one might sensibly 'draw the line', either now or in future.
- Evaluative responses engaged with the assumptions regarding younger citizens' comparatively limited life experience, recognising that political competence is not strictly correlated with age.
- There was awareness that many adults vote with limited knowledge of policy, whereas 16- and 17-year-olds may be more typically engaged in structured education, where civics can be actively taught and discussed, creating an environment in which informed participation is more likely, not less.
- Candidates debated the notion of adolescents being more susceptible to influence and misinformation, whether from peers, influencers or (social) media.
- Some candidates also explored broader implications of lowering the voting age, including the risk of elections becoming popularity contests, or political candidates formulating policies and campaigns designed to sway the younger voters.

Limited responses

- Essays showed limited knowledge requiring a closer focus on the wording of the question, rather than detailing the injustices faced by young people and how they deserve more respect.

- Candidates needed to include more relevant examples from national or international contexts which would have helped to develop and support their arguments.
- Candidates included insufficient evaluation of the benefits and risks of lowering the voting age, while some answers needed greater clarity about the potential consequences of such a change to voting rights.
- Candidates needed to attempt a balanced argument.
- *Lack of maturity* in young people was discussed without any evidence to support the argument.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates were able to analyse different viewpoints such as discussing those establishments that rescue animals and return them to the wild, the work zoos do to help endangered species and how they are useful to educate people on environmental issues.
- Essays included a range of examples evaluating a variety of zoo practices and the realities of natural habitats such as the plight of 'Punch' the monkey and the Sea World show of orcas and dolphins.
- Essays included relevant and wider discussions about the issues relating to the impacts of having animals in zoos on the food chain and the wider impact on the environment.
- Candidates explored both sides of the argument and reached an evaluative, supported conclusion.
- Candidates explored the emotive negative connotations of the term 'locked up' in the question.

Limited responses

- Candidates made simple assertions such as writing that zoos were mainly cruel and the enclosures did not reflect the animals' natural habitat, which caused stress to the animals.
- Arguments only focused on predators being trapped in zoos with little or no reference to herbivores and the wide range of reasons that animals are kept in zoos.
- Candidates lost focus on the issues of zoos and wrote about treatment of animals more generally.
- Candidates wrote in an excessively impassioned way, often directly questioning the reader about how they would feel behind zoo bars.
- Arguments relied too heavily on local examples of zoos' apparent purpose being only to entertain the public.
- Candidates did not write balanced arguments, giving one side only.
- Candidates wrote very brief, undeveloped arguments.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Arguments focused on language spoken as a reflection of a culture giving clear, specific examples from different languages and cultures.
- Candidates evaluated a range of other factors that might also influence a person's identity such as region, class, gender, ethnicity and examined how language related to this.
- Candidates explored the extent to which language is the most important feature of a person's identity.
- Essays evaluated what influences the language a person speaks, relating this to the terms of the question.
- Arguments examined a range of other types of language, such as sign language and body language.

Limited responses

- Candidates wrote about the ability to speak a second language with limited focus on the question.
- Responses did not make connections between language and identity, often writing about them separately.
- Candidates often missed the key word 'identity' and instead focused on the benefits of language as a form of communication.
- Candidates did not focus on the question by writing about the benefits of how speaking multiple languages creates career opportunities.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates presented balanced arguments which considered both lyrics and instrumental music.
- Essays explored how the melody, rhythm, tone and genre of music can be sources of meaning.

- Candidates used a range of examples of music both with and without lyrics to support their arguments such as film soundtracks, classical music, or personal experiences of music.
- Responses recognised that meaning in music can be subjective and may vary according to the experiences of different listeners.
- Candidates recognised that the meaning of music is also shaped by its social, cultural and historical context.
- More successful arguments explored the ideas that some forms of music can use instruments such as violins and/or beats to replace words and to express emotions in the same way that words can.

Limited responses

- Arguments focused solely on music with lyrics and did not fully address the possibility that instrumental music may communicate meaning through melody, rhythm or emotion.
- Candidates tended to rely on personal preference or unsupported assertions, with limited consideration of alternative viewpoints and few relevant examples.
- Essays relied on simple, generalised ideas about music without exploring how meaning is created.
- Candidates did not explore what 'meaningful' actually is and how meaning is different for different people.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Responses were balanced, considering advantages (for example, greater experience of life) alongside drawbacks (for example, pressure on healthcare, pensions, and resource allocation).
- Candidates distinguished between living longer and maintaining a good quality of life, demonstrating thoughtful evaluation of the question.
- Candidates explored the issue that living up to 100 years would lead to an aging population and potential loneliness.
- Essays assessed the idea that living up to 100 years would lead to some scientific breakthroughs to counter major health problems, especially cancer vaccines.
- Arguments considered the wider impact of people living to over 100 years old on the world including issues such as overpopulation.
- Candidates explored the importance of the extra time individuals would have to make memories with their family and friends and how it could strengthen these relationships.

Limited responses

- Candidates misread the question as asking whether living beyond 100 is possible or how to achieve it.
- Arguments focused either on benefits or on drawbacks of living for more than 100 years.
- Candidates used limited or no exemplification to support arguments.
- Essays made simple or obvious points, such as 'living longer is good' or 'it will cost more money,' without exploration.
- Some candidates missed the idea of whether it was a 'desirable' thing to live for over 100 years and thus did not explore who it might be desirable for.
- Candidates used sweeping statements and assertive arguments: for example, 'all old people...'

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates analysed a range of dangerous situations journalists found themselves in such as war zones, natural disasters and dangers from political authorities when journalists were critical of regimes.
- Arguments included a range of relevant examples with detail and interpretation including comparing journalism in the past with today, finding many parallels in the dangers of reporting.
- Essays considered the word 'dangerous' critically, exploring different levels of danger from reputational damage to potential death.
- Arguments explored issues of the dangers of press censorship, with North Korea and the USA commonly cited.
- Candidates reflected on the historical context of the dangers of journalism, for example in Nazi Germany and Putin's Russia.

Limited responses

- Essays had a limited focus on the risks journalists face.

- Arguments assumed one line of argument without balance or nuance, often asserting that journalism is always dangerous.
- Candidates did not focus on 'has become' in the question which narrowed the scope of their arguments.
- Discussions focused on 'fake news' and bias, criticising the profession, rather than potentially dangerous circumstances.
- Arguments focused only on the loss of traditional jobs in journalism.
- Candidates discussed social media influencers and podcasters rather than traditional journalists and the dangers that they faced.
- Essays had a limited range of specific examples of dangerous situations that journalists found themselves in.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explored a range of strategies to alleviate environmental problems and assessed their degree of success.
- Arguments included a range of relevant examples of particular problems such as vehicle emissions in large cities such as New York and London, plastic waste in the sea exemplified by the large floating island in the Pacific Ocean, the melting of the polar ice caps and how global warming is affecting our weather systems.
- Candidates discussed how technology could help alleviate the issues as well as to cause them, citing the amount of water that AI uses to function being a major issue.
- Candidates explored how disastrous events from the past, such as the bombing of Hiroshima and the more recent COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrated how the world can cope and work together to find solutions.
- Candidates focused on the word 'realistic' debating proposed solutions such as beach cleanups, AI integration and water conservation against the overwhelming exponential scale of global degradation, arguing why true change might ultimately be unrealistic.
- Arguments evaluated the idea that the main barrier to solving environmental problems is humanity itself, as seen in the lack of care at an individual level in behaviour and the lack of effective policies at governmental and local levels.
- Candidates often effectively used local examples to support their points, for example the changing climate in Florida and the ecological degradation of the Everglades.

Limited responses

- Candidates described the problems without examining the possible or attempted solutions.
- Arguments focused only on local environmental initiatives rather than considering the wider context.
- Essays were very short and contained very few ideas.
- Candidates did not consider the word 'realistic' in the question which led to some very descriptive and general answers with no evaluation or debate.
- Arguments had few or no specific examples to support ideas.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/12 Essay
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates generally wrote competent to good English with a range of appropriate/technical vocabulary.
- Candidates typically sustained a register appropriate to the task.
- Introductions were generally effective in identifying the key issues and establishing a clear framework for the essay.
- Most essays had an effective introduction which framed the issues within the question.
- Candidates developed arguments with specific examples and supporting information.
- Candidates stayed focused on the question and examined different perspectives.
- More candidates attempted to evaluate with varying levels of success.
- Conclusions were better used to offer opinions and judgements.

What candidates needed to improve

- Reducing grammar errors in the use of the singular and plural nouns and verbs.
- Sentence demarcation with the proper use of full stops and capitalisation.
- Checking the spelling of common words especially words that are in the question.
- Correct use of conjunctions, for instance, 'moreover' when 'however' was intended.
- 'Although' was often used in error to start sentences instead of 'However'.
- Consistent accuracy of basic grammar.
- Replacing informal expressions 'wasn't a thing', 'stuff', 'way more', 'super helpful', 'you name it', 'well, let's talk about', 'gotten', 'you see', 'majorly', 'nukes', 'in a nutshell'.
- Awareness of the correct use of articles.
- Introductions need to be more concise and not include most or all of the points and examples to be used later in the essay.
- Reliance on clichés and extremes to strengthen arguments, for instance, 'AI will leave the world crippled, deserted and powerless' or 'Young people have lost touch with reality and the ability to interact with others'.
- Carefully consider the use of absolutes such as 'completely', 'totally', 'undoubtedly' when offering opinions.
- Giving specific examples which can then be developed, analysed and evaluated.
- If quoting statistics, to make sure they are relevant to the content in that paragraph.
- In long sentences, to be aware of not mixing tenses and ensuring there is an active verb rather than relying on participle clauses.
- The formula in development or main body paragraphs of point, example, development, (attempted) evaluation, can provide a structure and equally, it can be limiting and mechanical. For example, this structure can produce 'circular' paragraphs in which the final sentence is not evaluative but a reiteration/repetition of the original point.
- If quoting a famous figure or expert, to make sure it adds value to the paragraph rather than simply interspersing quotes in an essay.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses.

- Were aware of different kinds of aid and the limitations: financial, building, and providing expertise.
- Realised the possibility that wealthy donor countries were largely motivated by their own self-interests.

- Gave good reasons as to why countries should provide economic aid to developing countries for example, to morally atone for colonisation or to reduce global wealth inequality.
- Offered convincing counterarguments which included the dangers of corruption if recipient governments did not allocate aid appropriately; how dependency can cause exploitation and corruption and/or how a wealthy nation's main priority should be itself.
- Noted that some recipient countries might become dependent on aid and do little to improve things themselves.
- Took the view that developing countries should have better planning in place so that they could become more independent from their benefactors.
- Offered many pertinent and detailed examples which aided candidates in demonstrating stronger evaluation.
- Were clearly organised and divided the different motivations (economic, diplomatic, moral) for giving or not giving aid.

Limited responses

- Restricted to an economic viewpoint.
- Misinterpreted international trade as assistance.
- Mistook globalisation for the provision of aid to developing countries.
- Did not consider that there might be moral responsibilities for wealthy countries.
- Focused on when there had been disasters: floods, drought, landslides and the provision of financial help rather than a broader view of assistance.
- Were wish lists of what rich countries could do to help less developed countries.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Wrote about the psychological aspect of the question and the implications for the holistic development of the child.
- Discussed the pleasure for children and parents in sharing reading together.
- Appreciated the moral awareness and different perspectives available to children from seeing different characters in fiction.
- Discussed how cultural/family heritage is passed on through folk tales and anecdotal stories.
- Looked at how language development in terms of vocabulary and sentence structures is fostered through listening to stories.
- Discussed the sparking of children's imaginations and creativity and how this may encourage them to write their own stories or read for themselves.
- Gave specific examples as to how telling stories can develop empathy, improve memory skills, unlock imagination, strengthen relationships between children and parents/grandparents as stories are passed on from generation to generation.
- Gave good counterarguments such as how listening to stories prevents children from learning to read independently or how these stories can sometimes have dark content and how they need to be age appropriate.
- Considered alternative activities that can accomplish the same objectives such as playing with friends/family or going on outings.
- Discussed ways in which preschools and early learning make use of telling and showing picture books to engage young children.
- Some examined the differences between having a story read aloud or watching it in a film/video.

Limited responses

- Had few or no examples of stories such as folktales, fairy tales or popular children's stories or those that were given tended to be for teenagers upwards.
- Did not focus on the oral aspect of storytelling and instead focused on just reading stories or reading in general.
- Did not examine the role of storytelling with any aspects of parenting or educating children.
- Did not take into account the age of children being read to and often referenced much older children and even adults at times.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Discussed the question knowledgeably in relation to wars such as World War 2, the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the current US-Iran war.
- Looked at avoiding war in other ways: neutrality without having nuclear weapons, membership of international organisations like the UN and NATO, alliances with nuclear nations or diplomatic talks.
- Understood the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction and how, on the one hand, it is claimed to have underwritten international peace since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but on the other hand, can be seen as being the main reason for nuclear powers sponsoring proxy conflicts across the globe.
- Discussed the positives and negatives of nuclear weapon holding countries offering 'protection' to smaller nations who will never be able to afford these weapons.

Limited responses

- Inconsistently focused on the question and included a history of the development of nuclear weapons and the negative effects of using nuclear weapons.
- Digressed to discussing nuclear energy.
- Focused mainly on the past without applying concerns over nuclear weapons as a deterrent to the present day.
- Undermined the sense of objectivity by only discussing the question from a single political viewpoint.
- Used description to illustrate the history of the development of nuclear weapons extensively without evaluating the statement.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Gave specific examples of paintings, artists and genres and applied these to the argument.
- Considered photography to be an art form and realised that it too, as well as painting, has an element of deliberate composition.
- Were able to give examples of famous photographers (Lee Miller, David Bailey) as well as famous painters.
- Were able to write knowledgeably about the artistry and techniques involved in both media.
- More focused responses took into consideration what their interpretation of 'life' was.
- Saw the question as an opening for a discussion of reality versus the imaginary and evaluated the difference between representation and realism.

Limited responses

- Some candidates only focused on listing artworks or showcasing knowledge of art history and did not fully take on board the implications behind the question.
- Made little attempt to discuss photography as capturing life, with no awareness of famous photographs or photographers.
- Did not address the question and described the role of art, galleries and architecture.
- Many candidates mainly focused on photography produced on mobile phones therefore comparisons with painting were limited.
- Described the technical difficulties of painting.
- Only discussed photography or painting.
- Did not really consider what the question meant by 'life'.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Discussed a holistic approach to education where qualifications are only one part of education, which also involves character building, developing good citizens and moral awareness.
- Agreed that qualifications are necessary for certain professions.
- Considered that education in religious schools went beyond only acquiring qualifications.
- Argued that some people went on to have very successful careers having left school with few good or no qualifications and that qualifications in themselves are not a guarantee of success if one lacks communication/life skills.
- Considered different kinds of education such as religious education, school education, parental education, hidden curriculum or being environmentally conscious or politically aware.
- Discussed the acquisition of skills post-school.
- Acknowledged that learning is a lifelong process and therefore is not just about educational establishments.

- Questioned what 'good' qualifications might be.

Limited responses

- Some answers looked only in terms of careers and missed a wider understanding of education.
- Accepted the statement uncritically and confined responses to issues within school.
- Generalised descriptions of the purposes and different forms of education.
- Limited to a narrow definition of 'good qualifications' for example, from top academic institutions.
- Interpreted success in terms of stereotypes such as becoming a doctor or earning a large salary.
- Narrowly focused on describing family and their school's expectations.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Considered the roles of both parents in providing a stable family life which is vital in the development of children.
- Examined the role of mothers in the early years and development of the emotional lives of children.
- Considered how single mothers could be very successful parents.
- Considered the impact of both parents and how having a balance is just as important or argued that this view is outdated.
- Saw the issue in its historical context whereby women's roles have developed, and many modern women seek careers and salaries.
- Recognised that urban societies were implementing change and saw this as less pronounced in rural areas.
- Considered the pleasure that both parents feel when raising a child including shared family activities.
- Suggested that children were better off without fathers who set poor examples.

Limited responses

- Described traditional roles of mothers as housewives and fathers as breadwinners.
- Were unable to move beyond assumptions about gender roles and the traditional nuclear family and assigned 'masculine' traits to fathers and 'feminine' traits to mothers.
- Vague responses which relied on either personal anecdote or generalised remarks.
- Digressed to discussions of feminism or toxic masculinity.
- Looked at the role of fathers without considering the role of other men such as male teachers or male relatives.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- Understood that human activities can worsen the effects of natural disasters, such as poor building structures and regulations, over-population in cities, deforestation and industry.
- Understood that natural disasters have always happened and not all of them have been worsened by human activity.
- Discussed human actions which have prevented or decreased the severity of natural disasters.
- Gave a wide range of examples of different kinds of disaster in diverse geographical locations, developing them, and linking them (even indirectly) to human activity.
- Evaluated the extent of 'severity' in a historical context.

Limited responses

- Described how global warming happens and often did not link it to human activity.
- Were unclear about what constitutes a natural disaster and confused natural disasters with environmental issues such as pollution and littering.
- Could not demonstrate how examples of human activity can make natural disasters more severe or use examples of deforestation and global warming without explaining what natural disaster these contribute to.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Gave examples of experiments performed without restriction on humans with devastating consequences.
- Explained how the lifting of some restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic led to vaccines which

saved many lives.

- Discussed the issue of animal rights in experiments that have benefited or might benefit human health.
- Gave specific examples of restrictions such as government or international regulations and limits on funding and the reasons for these restrictions.
- Considered the scope given to researchers in public and private institutions.
- Explored the profit-making objectives of private pharmaceutical companies.
- Examined whether the research was to prevent or cure disease or to push medical boundaries.
- Were able to make ethical evaluations weighing practical advantages against moral and religious considerations.

Limited responses

- Looked at many examples of medical research with no consideration of restrictions.
- Were vague about diseases and medicines.
- Discussed scientific research such as nuclear weapons research.
- Argued that science must progress regardless of ethics or religion.
- Argued that no restrictions were necessary if treatments were successful.
- Seemed to assume that current procedures and medications were not subject to rigorous scrutiny in the past.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Discussed the development of advertising (billboards, newspapers, television, the internet) and how advertising has impacted society positively and negatively.
- Examined purposes of commercial advertising to sell more products and how advertisements persuade or mislead consumers.
- Discussed how advertising promotes consumerism and waste.
- Balanced arguments with the positives of public service advertising and the informative role of advertising or how advertising can support charities or sponsor events.
- Evaluated how advertising impacts the gap between classes in terms of product affordability and luxury products.
- Considered the impact on 'vulnerable' audiences such as the young.
- Considered targeted advertising on social media.

Limited responses

- Were general descriptive answers with very few examples.
- Described what advertising is and gave very few examples.
- Gave a list of examples without further discussing the ideas of the role advertising has in the continuation of consumerism and the effect this has on society in general.
- Did not include counterarguments by only considering positive or negative impacts.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Showed awareness of the advantages in many areas for instance, health, work, defence and education as well as of the disadvantages such as environmental impact and negative effects of over-use and dependence on AI.
- Offered nuanced discussion on job losses and the creation of different jobs.
- Weighed negative and positive outcomes of the same aspects of the advance of AI. For example, while AI may threaten many jobs, it also eases tedious or dangerous work.
- Evaluated how AI is in some instances both democratising as well as sharply divisive and its impact dependent on people's access to and use of it.
- Provided counterarguments such as privacy concerns, algorithmic bias and AI hallucinations.
- Had up-to-date knowledge of rapidly evolving developments in AI.
- Gave examples of specific AI systems and their uses and applied these to the argument.
- Discussed how AI algorithms analyse user behaviour and historical data to provide tailored recommendations and enhanced user experience.

Limited responses

- Provided insufficient development of valid points.

- Asserted that AI use causes widespread laziness and intellectual incapability.
- Asserted that AI can easily do every task or job that humans do and as a result, people will definitely have comfortable and easy lives.
- Presented contradictory arguments that AI is both completely beneficial while also claiming it is extremely harmful.
- Confused AI with the internet or social media.
- Made absolute statements about the benefits of AI.
- Listed numerous examples of how AI is used.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/13 Essay
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates, in most cases, made sure that their responses were legible.
- Most of the responses were structured appropriately using an introduction and conclusion.
- A clear majority of candidates constructed responses that were addressing the topic being mindful of the key words in the question chosen.
- Examples were used to illustrate points made and sustain an argument.
- Candidates chose questions that coincided with their knowledge.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates need to ensure that they do not use an informal style of expression.
- A requirement of the examination is that essays should be between 600 and 700 words; this was often not achieved.
- The views of the candidate should be made clear in the concluding paragraph.
- Rhetorical questions are best avoided and should never be addressed to the reader.
- Answers should have a clear point of view but show understanding of different points of view.
- Specific rather than general examples provide clear evidence to support an argument.
- Introductions need to be concise, indicate the shape of the essay but save examples for the paragraphs to follow.
- Allowing sufficient time to correct grammatical errors is essential.
- Limiting the use of personal anecdotes to support an argument improves the academic tone of an essay.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates showed detailed knowledge of a range of unhealthy food, drink and ingredients.
- There were interesting international references and comparisons suggesting that some regions and countries are not experiencing problems.
- Examples were offered that show the young are at risk because of how advertisers make their products desirable, for example juicy burgers or the use of cartoon characters.
- Environmental issues related to packaging and the use of plastic were made relevant.
- It was argued that a country's health services would be under less strain if the consumption of harmful products was reduced.
- Essays explored the impact of social media, influencers and the diet culture on consumption.
- There was a recognition that personal choice should be respected.
- The importance of advertising in a business's success was also recognised.
- There was the acknowledgement that unhealthy food and drink is cheap and convenient, which was seen as an advantage for busy families.

Limited responses

- Some responses concentrated on why junk foods and drinks are bad for people rather than focusing on the role of advertisement.
- Essays that did not fully explore the implications of banning products in many societies.
- There were essays that did not offer concrete examples, mentioning that chemicals are used in products but not specifying which ones.

- Answers highlighted negative effects but did not fully explore the need for self-discipline and self-control.
- Responses needed to refer to specific advertisements for those products cited as unhealthy.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Responses demonstrated an understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction.
- Candidates were able to recognise that non-fiction elements are present in science fiction and historical fiction.
- Responses explored a range of fictional and non-fictional material recognising that writing is not confined to the traditional book.
- Arguments included the difficulty of verifying the facts for non-fiction in our age of misinformation.
- Many recognised that non-fiction requires research and an intention to establish the truth.
- Other responses remarked upon the creative demands of fiction writing such as an interesting plot, a range of characters and settings.

Limited responses

- Some of these responses viewed the word 'easier' as a statement of fact and were therefore imbalanced responses.
- Those candidates that argued that there was nothing left to say of fictional interest.
- The range of examples was sometimes limited, with 'Harry Potter' and textbooks used most frequently.
- Responses that made too much of the view that there is now no need for non-fiction as you can gather any information you need on the internet.
- Those that did not recognise that writing well in either genre is what really matters.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- These offered a wide range of examples, both contemporary and historical.
- The qualities of good political role models were pointed out; personal integrity and thoughtful leadership.
- Responses acknowledged the good but also provided evidence that many politicians are more interested in wealth and power than serving the interests of others.
- Those thoughtful responses that saw that good political leaders often have to make unpopular decisions in their nations' interests.
- Several candidates showed that they were extremely well informed about their nation's politicians and those of other countries.
- Political leaders in times of war and revolution were often seen as inspiring although some of these were also seen as dangerously violent.

Limited responses

- Those that engaged in a very biased or partisan approach to the question often wrote with passion but did not engage in debate.
- Candidates referred to certain local and city politicians as being good role models but did not explain in detail what made them good role models.
- Candidates sometimes allowed their responses to become too narrow in scope by concentrating on only one or two individuals.
- Arguments which accepted that only contemporary politicians could be written about.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Those that argued that gene editing could have enormous benefits in medicine and agriculture.
- The possibility of gene editing helping to eradicate cancer was seen as a major benefit.
- Its possible contribution to food production and the reduction or eradication of world hunger was written about in positive terms.
- The word 'only' in bold in the question was taken fully into account with many candidates pointing to the ethical concerns raised by gene editing.
- Among these concerns were affordability and the temptation to create 'designer' babies.

Limited responses

- A few of these were generalised, with limited use of specific examples.
- Others painted a very bleak future for humanity, expressing the absolute view that this technology is bound to fall into the wrong hands with disastrous consequences.
- Those responses that saw only benefits and no drawbacks in gene editing.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates considered what the features of a good education might be such as the need to create equal access to education in a well-funded system.
- These engaged in a debate about what makes a country successful in both economic and social terms.
- Essays demonstrated the role of government, for good or ill, in determining the curriculum followed in different educational systems.
- Others, while giving appropriate attention to education, drew attention to environmental and economic problems that are encountered by many.
- Some of these argued that more quality educational provision could prove challenging to those in power who fear freedom of expression.
- Most candidates recognised, in a purely material sense, that countries with a well-qualified workforce are best placed to face the challenges of the future.

Limited responses

- Those that argued that success lay only in getting well-paid jobs as a result of education.
- Candidates that only referred to their own experience of education, relying upon anecdote and little else.
- A few candidates did not address the education system, arguing instead that only what is learned within the family and community contributes to a successful country.
- Other responses did not consider the broader picture of how societies are structured to meet people's needs and ambitions.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates demonstrated awareness of the global context and stressed global responsibility.
- Many relevant corporations were chosen to exemplify arguments; those that promote their own interests often donated to politicians in order to influence policymaking.
- There were examples of slave labour, manipulation of public perception and opinion and excessive drive for profit at all costs.
- Within several answers there was an acknowledgement that some corporations support communities or charities.
- Those corporations that have environmental concerns as a priority were commended for their efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Candidates' responses were comprehensive and thoughtfully argued.

Limited responses

- There were no limited responses to this question.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates argued that conventional heterosexual marriage offered stability for adults and any children that might be born.
- Stability was seen as both emotional and financial in the interests of all.
- The problems associated with loneliness were seen as being reduced if people embraced the commitment of marriage.
- These considered the authenticity of other marriage commitments, for example in the LGBTQ+ community.
- There were many responses which raised the matter of arranged marriages in different historical periods as well as contemporary ones.
- Many included references to domestic abuse in their critique of marriage.

Limited responses

- There were those candidates who did not recognise the distinction between a marriage and a wedding, focusing too heavily on the wedding itself.
- Some responses asserted that children can only thrive when parents are married.
- There were responses that dwelt upon the cost of divorce which only compounded the cost of the original marriage.
- There were too many responses that came across as one-sided rather than nuanced.
- Those responses that mainly focused on the financial benefits of being married and not on the institution of marriage itself.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Most respondents to this question pointed out that emails require a form of formality not unlike the conventional letter and were, therefore, just as respectful to those to whom the communications were addressed.
- Other responses argued that most people today use Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp to make contact with others with no loss of meaningful and personal contact.
- Others added that quality communications between candidates and teachers were more likely by email than other platforms.
- Among these was the observation that email is more secure than social media.

Limited responses

- Some had no time for email, asserting that it was completely outdated compared to group chats and instant messaging.
- There were assertions that nobody checks their emails and that people should use other platforms if immediate attention and responses are required.
- Candidates could have broadened their answers by analysing other communication methods in comparison to emails and phone calls.

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- These emphasised that only wealthy countries could afford desalination technology.
- There were several examples of drought-stricken regions of the world and their continued suffering.
- Those that addressed the question of international cooperation often concluded with evidence that it was difficult to come to any agreement in the world today.
- Candidates were able to identify those organisations that advise governments and those that support water projects.
- These included references to climate change, conflicts and natural disasters, all of which reduce access to clean water.

Limited responses

- A few candidates did not address the 'international cooperation' element of the question.
- There were those that digressed into discussion about pollution and the plight of the oceans.
- Others commended those activists who form 'clean-up' groups of people in order to help beaches recover.
- Those candidates that did not look beyond their own localities had ideas about run-off from farms, polluting rivers for example.
- Examples such as those above were acknowledged but had their limitations in terms of the question set.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates demonstrated their considerable knowledge of a variety of genres; dance music, jazz, punk rock, country music and classical music, to name but a few.
- Several candidates pointed out that musical expression can combine both pleasure and meaning.
- All of these responses were aware of the messages conveyed through music including the political and the emotional.

- Many singled out those performers that highlight current concerns such as discrimination, war and climate change.
- Historical awareness was demonstrated by references to the Blues, folk music and forms of global music that often express facets of national identity.
- A few candidates enhanced what they had to say by focusing on the word 'intended' in the question by pointing out that how an individual interprets music need not be what the composer or performer wanted to communicate.
- There were references to 'elevator music' and other places where background music is heard but these experiences were seen as neither pleasurable nor meaningful.

Limited responses

- These were from candidates who simply offered prolonged descriptions of various songs and artists.
- There were a few candidates who offered biographies of their favourite singers or groups and nothing else.
- Some responses focused on examples of how music made individuals feel rather than evaluating the question.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/17 Digital Essay
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the question and developed relevant points.
- Candidates were able to analyse different arguments and evaluate them to reach supported conclusions.
- Candidates adapted their knowledge of a topic to the question.
- Arguments were supported by a range of appropriate evidence and examples.
- Candidates communicated their ideas clearly and produced coherent, well-organised responses with appropriate paragraphing to guide the reader through their argument, as well as focused introductions and conclusions.
- Essays were written with clarity and precision, demonstrating appropriate use of register.
- Candidates used an appropriate range of topic-specific vocabulary, with some effectively using varied expressions and synonyms.
- Candidates showed a clear understanding of genre, audience, purpose, and style.
- Candidates effectively compared arguments and counterarguments and produced conclusions that summarised and evaluated their arguments.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates should read the question carefully and consider its meaning and implications, rather than using a key term ('environment' or 'sports' and 'schools') to trigger unfocused discussion or narrative, with insufficient reference to the question.
- Essays needed greater use and relevance of examples to demonstrate more consistent focus on the question.
- Conclusions needed to synthesise and evaluate the discussion more effectively, rather than repeating earlier points or offering a brief statement for or against the proposition.
- Some candidates focused only on listing points, while others listed examples without explaining their relevance to the point made.
- Essays described or narrated examples and were not analytical.
- Greater use of evaluation was needed throughout responses, rather than presenting both sides of an argument or making unsupported assertions.
- Opinions and arguments should be supported with relevant, specific examples, explanations, or evidence, avoiding vague or irrelevant references.
- Candidates should consistently use a formal academic register, avoiding informal language, colloquial expressions, and contractions, such as: *To kick off, gonna, wanna, stuff, way more, ok, kids, and right?*
- Candidates should avoid contractions such as *don't* and *wouldn't*, as these are inappropriate in formal essay writing.
- Candidates should check their work to avoid basic spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Candidates should manage their time effectively, including planning and proofreading, and ensure responses are fully completed.
- Essays were too brief and only considered a narrow range of points.
- Essays should be clearly structured using paragraphs instead of one block of writing or two or three very long paragraphs.
- Candidates should take time to check for typos and missing punctuation to enable the quality of their written communication to be clear to the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates used specific events and countries to illustrate their ideas.
- Candidates explored different aspects of independence including political, economic, military and cultural.
- Arguments distinguished between legal and practical independence with an exploration of globalisation, including trade, supply chains, financial markets and foreign investment.
- Candidates extended their arguments to assess the role of international organisations and agreements, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organisation and NATO, to show cooperation and limits on national freedom.
- Perceptive essays recognised that countries may retain sovereignty over domestic laws and policies while still depending on other nations economically, politically or environmentally.
- Candidates reached balanced and well-supported conclusions rather than adopting absolute positions.
- Candidates focused on assessing and exploring the idea behind what makes a country independent using specific examples such as European reliance on imported energy following the Russia-Ukraine conflict and international cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Candidates compared different countries, for example discussing how larger economies such as the United States or China may enjoy greater self-sufficiency in some sectors while still relying heavily on global markets, international finance and supply chains.
- Candidates gave examples of countries which claimed to be independent and then showed clearly why they were not through careful, structured exposition using appropriate examples.

Limited responses

- Essays were descriptive rather than analytical showing insufficient depth of knowledge, offering broad or undeveloped statements with limited exploration of alternative viewpoints, or minimal evaluation of the extent of independence.
- Responses included generalised statements such as 'countries need each other' without explaining specific forms of dependence.
- Examples were often non-specific, writing generally about rich countries buying goods from poorer countries or countries having different trade goods without further development or connection between that observation and the question.
- Some candidates misinterpreted the question to mean whether individuals could be independent of everyone and everything within their own country.
- Candidates explored how significant their own country was instead of exploring a global perspective related to independence.

Question 2

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates analysed the benefits of schools encouraging sport against the potential risks such as injuries, financial constraints, excessive pressure, and the importance of balancing encouragement with candidates' choice and well-being.
- Candidates recognised that schools play a key role in promoting the wide-ranging benefits of sport, including physical health, mental well-being, discipline, teamwork, social development, and motivation to stay active.
- Candidates' arguments recognised how school-based sports can support broader life outcomes, discussing impacts on academic performance, interpersonal skills, future opportunities, and career pathways, including examples of athletes who developed their talents through school programmes.
- Candidates explored the extent to which other agencies had a responsibility to encourage young people to do more sport, including the role of parents and the government.
- Arguments included specific examples of sports and the ways in which they can impact young people.

Limited responses

- Limited examples were used to exemplify key points, with essays often depending too much on vaguely described anecdotes or hypothetical situations.
- Some candidates wrote only about the benefits of sport overall without considering the idea of schools having a responsibility to encourage it.

- Some candidates gave undue emphasis to elite sport and its rewards often focusing on biographies of professional sports people, rather than exploring sport in schools.
- Some candidates described the different sports available in school and wrote about how some candidates like sport, and some do not, which did not focus on the wording of the question.
- Conclusions were vague and candidates could not decide whether schools had a responsibility or not.
- Responses did not consider the role of parents and wider society in encouraging young people to do more sport.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates included clear and appropriate examples to support the points made about the benefits or drawbacks of holidays such as the art and culture of Paris, and the therapeutic effects of animal cafés in Tokyo.
- Essays explored how travel can reconnect travellers with their cultural backgrounds, assessing, for example, how Spanish-speaking Americans visiting Mexico or Puerto Rico feel connected to their history, language and cultural roots.
- Thoughtful consideration was made of the concept that holidaying abroad can eliminate inaccurate or offensive stereotypes about other peoples and nations.
- Candidates considered a good range of potential benefits from travelling abroad including gaining new experiences and insights into different ways of life, personal development, meeting new people, and the economic benefits of tourism for the host country.
- Essays had a balanced argument that considered benefits and potential drawbacks, including the financial cost of travel and the potential risks of holidaying abroad, such as disease, illness, scams and physical danger, and the environmental and social impacts of tourism on the destination country.
- Candidates referred to language-learning and other educational benefits for example, candidates visiting Spain could practise their language skills in authentic contexts being more effective than classroom learning alone.

Limited responses

- Candidates did not support their argument with examples of benefits or drawbacks.
- There was repetitive listing of places of interest or beauty, without adequately linking points to the question.
- The term 'holidays' was sometimes narrowly defined to mean only national or religious festivals, limiting the scope of the argument.
- Essays would have benefited from a more balanced argument, considering both sides of the question.
- Candidates did not arrive at a conclusion based upon an evaluative consideration of each point.
- Some candidates made stereotypical or unsupported claims about foreign countries, such as being dangerous or that language barriers make travel difficult.
- Candidates did not always closely address the 'To what extent ...' element of the question and focused only on examples of why travelling is beneficial or not.
- Some candidates considered the benefits of travel mostly from a personal perspective, without taking into account the broader scope of the question.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explored a range of relevant issues, including political maturity, democratic participation, the influence of parents, peers and social media, and the level of life experience needed to make informed voting decisions.
- Candidates discussed scientific evidence relating to adolescent brain development and its implications for decision-making.
- Arguments balanced evaluation of the potential risks and benefits, asking at what age one might sensibly 'draw the line', either now or in future.
- Evaluative responses engaged with the assumptions regarding younger citizens' comparatively limited life experience, recognising that political competence is not strictly correlated with age.
- There was awareness that many adults vote with limited knowledge of policy, whereas 16- and 17-year-olds may be more typically engaged in structured education, where civics can be actively taught and discussed, creating an environment in which informed participation is more likely, not less.
- Candidates debated the notion of adolescents being more susceptible to influence and misinformation, whether from peers, influencers or (social) media.

- Some candidates also explored broader implications of lowering the voting age, including the risk of elections becoming popularity contests, or political candidates formulating policies and campaigns designed to sway the younger voters.

Limited responses

- Essays showed limited knowledge requiring a closer focus on the wording of the question, rather than detailing the injustices faced by young people and how they deserve more respect.
- Candidates needed to include more relevant examples from national or international contexts which would have helped to develop and support their arguments.
- Candidates included insufficient evaluation of the benefits and risks of lowering the voting age, while some answers needed greater clarity about the potential consequences of such a change to voting rights.
- Candidates needed to attempt a balanced argument.
- *Lack of maturity* in young people was discussed without any evidence to support the argument.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates were able to analyse different viewpoints such as discussing those establishments that rescue animals and return them to the wild, the work zoos do to help endangered species and how they are useful to educate people on environmental issues.
- Essays included a range of examples evaluating a variety of zoo practices and the realities of natural habitats such as the plight of 'Punch' the monkey and the Sea World show of orcas and dolphins.
- Essays included relevant and wider discussions about the issues relating to the impacts of having animals in zoos on the food chain and the wider impact on the environment.
- Candidates explored both sides of the argument and reached an evaluative, supported conclusion.
- Candidates explored the emotive negative connotations of the term 'locked up' in the question.

Limited responses

- Candidates made simple assertions such as writing that zoos were mainly cruel and the enclosures did not reflect the animals' natural habitat, which caused stress to the animals.
- Arguments only focused on predators being trapped in zoos with little or no reference to herbivores and the wide range of reasons that animals are kept in zoos.
- Candidates lost focus on the issues of zoos and wrote about treatment of animals more generally.
- Some responses were written in an excessively impassioned way, often directly questioning the reader about how they would feel behind zoo bars.
- Arguments relied too heavily on local examples of zoos' apparent purpose being only to entertain the public.
- Candidates did not write balanced arguments, giving one side only.
- Candidates wrote very brief, undeveloped arguments.

Question 6

Comprehensive responses

- Arguments focused on language spoken as a reflection of a culture giving clear, specific examples from different languages and cultures.
- Candidates evaluated a range of other factors that might also influence a person's identity such as region, class, gender, ethnicity and examined how language related to this.
- Candidates explored the extent to which language is the most important feature of a person's identity.
- Essays evaluated what influences the language a person speaks, relating this to the terms of the question.
- Arguments examined a range of other types of language, such as sign language and body language.

Limited responses

- Candidates wrote about the ability to speak a second language with limited focus on the question.
- Responses did not make connections between language and identity, often writing about them separately.
- Candidates often missed the key word 'identity' and instead focused on the benefits of language as a form of communication.
- Candidates did not focus on the question by writing about the benefits of how speaking multiple languages creates career opportunities.

Question 7

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates presented balanced arguments which considered both lyrics and instrumental music.
- Essays explored how the melody, rhythm, tone and genre of music can be sources of meaning.
- Candidates used a range of examples of music both with and without lyrics to support their arguments such as film soundtracks, classical music, or personal experiences of music.
- Responses recognised that meaning in music can be subjective and may vary according to the experiences of different listeners.
- Candidates recognised that the meaning of music is also shaped by its social, cultural and historical context.
- More successful arguments explored the ideas that some forms of music can use instruments such as violins and/or beats to replace words and to convey emotions in the same way that words can.

Limited responses

- Arguments focused solely on music with lyrics and did not fully address the possibility that instrumental music may communicate meaning through melody, rhythm or emotion.
- Candidates tended to rely on personal preference or unsupported assertions, with limited consideration of alternative viewpoints and few relevant examples.
- Essays relied on simple, generalised ideas about music without exploring how meaning is created.
- Candidates did not explore what 'meaningful' actually is and how meaning is different for different people.

Question 8

Comprehensive responses

- Responses were balanced, considering advantages (for example, greater experience of life) alongside drawbacks (for example, pressure on healthcare, pensions, and resource allocation).
- Candidates distinguished between living longer and maintaining a good quality of life, demonstrating thoughtful evaluation of the question.
- Candidates explored the issue that living up to 100 years would lead to an ageing population and potential loneliness.
- Essays assessed the idea that living up to 100 years would lead to some scientific breakthroughs to counter major health problems, particularly through developments such as cancer vaccines.
- Arguments considered the wider impact of people living to over 100 years old on the world including issues such as overpopulation.
- Candidates explored the importance of the extra time candidates would have to make memories with their family and friends and how it could strengthen these relationships.

Limited responses

- Candidates misread the question as asking whether living beyond 100 is possible or how to achieve it.
- Arguments focused either on benefits or on drawbacks of living for more than 100 years.
- Candidates used limited or no exemplification to support arguments.
- Essays made simple or obvious points, such as 'living longer is good' or 'it will cost more money,' without exploration.
- Some candidates missed the idea of whether it was a 'desirable' thing to live for over 100 years and thus did not explore who it might be desirable for.
- Candidates used sweeping statements and assertive arguments: for example, 'all old people...'

Question 9

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates analysed a range of dangerous situations journalists found themselves in such as war zones, natural disasters and dangers from political authorities when journalists were critical of regimes.
- Arguments included a range of relevant examples with detail and interpretation including comparing journalism in the past with today finding many parallels in the dangers of reporting.
- Essays considered the word 'dangerous' critically, exploring different levels of danger from reputational damage to potential death.
- Arguments explored issues of the dangers of press censorship, with North Korea and the USA commonly cited.

- Candidates reflected on the historical context of the dangers of journalism for example in Nazi Germany and Putin's Russia.

Limited responses

- Essays had a limited focus on the risks journalists face.
- Arguments assumed one line of argument without balance or nuance, often asserting that journalism is always dangerous.
- Candidates did not focus on 'has become' in the question which narrowed the scope of their arguments.
- Discussions focused on 'fake news' and bias, criticising the profession, rather than potentially dangerous circumstances.
- Arguments focused only on the loss of traditional jobs in journalism.
- Candidates discussed social media influencers and podcasters rather than traditional journalists and the dangers that they faced.
- Essays had a limited range of specific examples of dangerous situations that journalists found themselves in.

Question 10

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explored a range of strategies to alleviate environmental problems and assessed their degree of success.
- Arguments included a range of relevant examples of particular problems such as vehicle emissions in large cities such as New York and London, plastic waste in the sea exemplified by the large floating island in the Pacific Ocean, the melting of the polar ice caps and how global warming is affecting our weather systems.
- Candidates discussed how technology could help alleviate the issues as well as to cause them, citing the amount of water that AI uses to function being a major issue.
- Candidates explored how disastrous events from the past, such as the bombing of Hiroshima and the more recent COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrated how the world can cope and work together to find solutions.
- Candidates focused on the word 'realistic', debating proposed solutions such as beach cleanups, AI integration and water conservation against the overwhelming exponential scale of global degradation, arguing why true change might ultimately be unrealistic.
- Arguments evaluated that the main barrier to solving environmental problems is humanity itself, as seen in the lack of care at an individual level in behaviour and the lack of effective policies at governmental and local levels.
- Candidates often effectively used local examples to support their points, for example the changing climate in Florida and the ecological degradation of the Everglades.

Limited responses

- Candidates described the problems without examining the possible or attempted solutions.
- Arguments focused only on local environmental initiatives rather than considering the wider context.
- Essays were very short and contained very few ideas.
- Candidates did not consider the word 'realistic' in the question which led to some very descriptive and general answers with no evaluation or debate.
- Arguments had few or no specific examples to support ideas.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/21 Comprehension
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Most candidates demonstrated some level of engagement with the material. **Section A** (logical reasoning) referred this session to Mr Perez, the owner of a company manufacturing sports shoes, who was looking to improve the security arrangements at his business premises. **Section B** (reading comprehension) focused on the potential re-commissioning of a mothballed nuclear power station in the Philippines.
- Candidates almost always attempted most or all sub-questions, writing an appropriate amount relative to the mark tariffs of each. For example, **Question 1(a)** was worth a single mark, so candidates presented only one piece of material, from the Additional Information. Responses to **Question 1(c)**, worth 10 marks, required a more extended piece of writing, and for ideas to be explained, connected and developed.
- Many candidates adhered to the instructions in the rubric for each sub-question. They recognised the specific requirements, such as to write using mainly their own words, or to limit their responses to an approximate number of words, or to select only from a particular part of the material.
- Most responses were written within the correct response areas in the answer booklet.
- The vast majority of answers were easy to read and clearly expressed.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates are advised to check carefully the exact command words and any specific instructions contained in the question stem and rubric. For example:
 - **Question 1(a)** directed candidates to the Additional Information only.
 - **Questions 1(c)** and **1(e)** specifically prohibited making reference to Watch My Office (WMO) and Hi-Tech Secure (HTS) respectively.
 - **Question 2(b)** required the use of 'own words as far as possible'.
 - **Questions 2(c), 2(e)** and **2(g)(i)** involved demonstration of summary skills, so candidates were asked to answer in about 40 words (for **2(c)**), or 'in about 30 words' (for **2(e)** and **2(g)(i)**).
 - **Questions 2(a)(i), 2(a)(ii), 2(b), 2(c), 2(e)** and **2(g)(i)** directed candidates to specific line references.
 - **Question 2(h)** asked for candidates' own ideas, instructing them not to repeat any information already found in **Section B**.
- A times responses or whole papers needed to be more clearly presented, with ideas organised more carefully within and – where necessary – beyond the response areas in the booklet.
- Some answers would have benefited from improved clarity and precision, avoiding ambiguity. Unless otherwise directed by the question rubric, this is usually best achieved by identifying and then copying the **relevant** material from the insert. Nothing is to be gained by attempting to re-word or summarise in such cases.
- Some candidates needed more detail or a wider range of points in response to higher-tariff questions (for example, **Question 1(c)**).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates correctly identified and presented a single piece of the Additional Information, with a good number selecting point 7, relating to Mr Perez's retirement plans. This was best achieved either by copying it out or by stating its number.

Limited responses

- Point 9 of the Additional Information was a common distractor. Candidates who selected this as 'least relevant' had not recognised that there was a potential connection to be made between the 'increase in mindless vandalism by teenagers' (Background) and the closure of the youth club. Its former operating hours (18:00 until 20:00) also fell in the gap in evening coverage by WMO's patrolling guards. (Fit Shoes closes at 13:00 on Wednesday and 16:00 on other days, with the guards not arriving until 21:00.) As such, this could have formed part of an answer to **Question 1(e)**, although very few candidates chose to include this.
- Some less frequent incorrect selections included Additional Information points 4, 8, 10, 11 and 12.
- Occasional responses featured information not taken from the Additional Information, such as the length of time HTS or WMO had been operating, the costs of their services, or another feature of either proposal.

(b)(i) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates correctly identified one or two correct responses, almost universally from Additional Information points 1 and 6.
- Occasional responses made a neat and explicit link between these two, with the 'high-value but easily portable electronic equipment' and Mr Perez's recently acquired 'top-of-the-range tablet computers' matching this description.

Limited responses

- Some candidates presented only one answer for this 2-mark-tariff question, most usually Additional Information point 1.
- Some responses did not include sufficient detail for clarity in response to the question, such as by mentioning only 'thieves' or 'high-value' items from Additional Information point 1.
- The most common incorrect selection was Additional Information point 11, perhaps because the word 'commercial' appeared here in relation to the port, as well as in the thieves' targeting of 'commercial premises', from Additional Information point 1.
- Occasional responses featured information not taken from the Additional Information. Examples include general points about the crime rates in Port-Francis (Background), or the suggestion that the manufactured *sports shoes* (also from the Background) *might attract thieves*.

(ii) **Comprehensive responses**

- The vast majority of responses selected two points of information from Mr Perez's notes taken at the local business meeting.
- Most candidates were able to select the correct two points, explaining why his concerns over security might not be warranted.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not express the points clearly. Examples included losing the sense of 'business owners' in *businesses*, or stating *He is confident the thieves will be caught*. In the latter case, it was unclear whether Mr Perez or the senior police detective was the intended subject of the sentence.
- Occasional responses featured information not from Mr Perez's notes taken at the local business meeting.
- Another common distractor was that Hanif Ahmed, Head of Security at the port, had recently installed HTS systems. It is possible that some candidates were confused by the reference to the large commercial port (Additional Information point 11), which was only one part of the overall location of Port-Francis (Background).

- The detective's support for technological security systems/cameras and the poor performance by WMO at the regional government buildings were also occasionally chosen.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates were able to suggest at least two or three valid advantages of Hi-Tech Secure, making it more likely Mr Perez would choose this option to improve security at Fit Shoes' premises.
- The presentation of HTS's key features in the format of a table in the **Section A** material provided a clear and obvious starting point for candidates' observations in this extended-writing task. Since two of the features – the alerts to client devices and the triggering of the emergency services – were both connected with the idea of the 'alarms' and the movement sensors, this was a straightforward single developed point available to the large number of candidates who had only taken material from the table.
- Some responses offered further developed points, either in the form of more detailed explanations of a feature's significance, or by making a connection to information found elsewhere in the material. Examples include:
 - The '24/7' coverage by the security cameras (table) offers Mr Perez peace of mind, since his main aim was to 'improve the out-of-hours security of Fit Shoes' premises' (Background).
 - The CCTV images can be viewed online/The alarms link to smartphones/tablet computers (table), *which Mr Perez and his employees would be able to access on their new top-of-the-range tablet computers* (Additional Information point 6).
 - HTS having 'been operating nationwide since 2016' (table) meaning they were likely to be reliable and successful, with *other companies clearly trusting their systems, and not having gone out of business in ten years* (own explanation).
 - The 'top quality images' provided by the security cameras (table) *make it more likely the gang of thieves' faces can be recognised, so the police have a better chance of catching the suspects* (own explanation).
 - Mr Perez's insurance company being prepared to offer a 30 per cent discount on his current premium (Additional Information point 12) meant *he would save a hefty \$3000 per year* (accurate calculation involving his current payment of \$10 000, from Additional Information point 5). Occasional perceptive responses also noted that *this discount implies a level of confidence from the insurance company regarding the perceived reduction in risk of theft at Fit Shoes, should Mr Perez choose to install HTS's systems*.
- Occasional responses made perceptive and logical use of the material, strengthening the arguments presented. They mentioned:
 - the status of the senior police detective (meeting notes) and *his knowledge/experience in the field*, meaning that *Mr Perez would be wise to listen to his endorsement of technological solutions* (own explanation).
 - the importance of Hanif Ahmed, Head of Security at the port (meeting notes), given that the port is 'huge' and 'the world's fifth busiest' (Additional Information point 11). *If HTS is good enough for such a prestigious operation, Mr Perez can feel sure that it will serve him well in his much smaller premises* (own explanation).
 - Mr Ahmed's recommendation, based on the ease of contacting HTS to arrange maintenance (meeting notes), suggests that *Mr Perez can be similarly assured that he will receive prompt service and attention to the security equipment, should anything go wrong in the future* (own explanation).
- Responses employed nuance in suggesting possibilities, rather than relying on assertive claims. An example included:
 - HTS offers a 'state-of-the-art security system' (table) *which Mr Perez might appreciate, since he can be assumed to be keen on computers and technology* (own explanation), *having recently upgraded his system at work and given all 160 of his employees top-of-the-range tablet computers* (Additional Information point 6). (This is an example of a very well-developed point.)

Limited responses

- As noted above, it was possible to gain some credit simply by listing features of HTS as they appeared in the table. Some candidates limited their responses to such an approach, without explaining why they might be advantageous to Mr Perez.
- Occasional responses used bullet points or note form, despite the instruction to write 'in continuous prose'.
- Some answers demonstrated misunderstanding of the material. Examples included:
 - Mr Perez already being retired, or that he would still be keeping an eye on the premises when retired. For example: *having access to the alarm systems and CCTV footage on his devices will be an advantage in retirement, as he can look at it from his garden or while on holiday with his wife* (reference to Additional Information point 7)
 - the proposed discount available on his insurance being *30 cents*, rather than 30 per cent (of \$10 000) (Additional Information points 12 and 5)
 - 'nationwide' operation of HTS taken to mean *global* or *international* business
 - Mr Ahmed at the port being involved in contacting HTS or even undertaking system maintenance on Mr Perez's behalf, rather than merely reporting that the company was easy to contact in such instances (meeting notes).
- Attempted connections or developments were sometimes rather vague or speculative, including suggestions that Mr Perez himself might try to identify and catch the perpetrators, rather than handing over evidence to the police.
- Some responses repeated an idea in different words, rather than explaining or making connections with other information. Examples included:
 - *The cameras cover the business 24/7. This is a benefit because the buildings are monitored all day long/continuously.*
 - *HTS has been operating since 2016, meaning it has been in business a long time/for many years/for 10 years.*
- Answers would often have benefited from fuller development. An example was: *HTS has been in business for 10 years, so is reliable*. A less assertive response might have suggested that reliability is implied by this, that is, *Mr Perez might view the company as reliable*. A stronger explanation would have been to propose that *HTS has other companies across the country who have been using it, suggesting Mr Perez can trust their security arrangements for his own business premises*.
- Responses sometimes chose material that was not obviously connected with Mr Perez's business or choices. For instance, the rising crime rate and increased instances of theft and vandalism (Background) would affect most businesses in the Port-Francis area. This was usually too general to be a convincing development, although was sometimes successfully linked with the 24/7 nature of the CCTV coverage and the quality of the resulting images, in connection with the police being likely to apprehend the thieves, or as a deterrent.
- Other examples of information which needed context to demonstrate relevance were the initial installation cost and ongoing annual fees, for data storage and maintenance checks, and the length of the contract at 36 months. Respectively, HTS was the cheaper option, while the relatively long contract might suggest some level of expected quality from the equipment and commitment from HTS personnel. Since a large set-up fee and being locked into a contract for three years might also be seen by some as disadvantages, these ideas needed careful explanation to become clear benefits to Mr Perez and his business.

(d) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates correctly identified Additional Information point 10 and included either or both the 'spelling and grammatical errors' and 'hyperlinks which either did not work at all, or which brought up out-of-date content'.
- Many responses also explained the significance of these observations, justifying why Mrs Perez might not recommend HTS to her husband. Popular valid suggestions included that the company is *sloppy, not trustworthy, sketchy, does not care about a potential customer's first impressions*, or even that *it might be a scam*.
- A few perceptive responses connected the hyperlinks problems with potential doubts about the effectiveness of HTS's apparently high-quality technology in its security systems.

Limited responses

- Some responses were vague, stating only that the website *has errors* or is *out of date*.
- Candidates sometimes demonstrated limited focus on the features mentioned in Additional Information point 10, despite its opening with 'When Mr Perez's wife looked at HTS's website', which the question wording clearly mirrored.
- Such responses focused instead on the fact that *HTS is very expensive* or proposed that *she might not want the alarms and notifications disturbing them at night*. There was also some level of mistrust expressed regarding how and where the CCTV images and data from Fit Shoes might be stored.
- Occasional answers contained features of WMO or made vague assertions about Mr Perez's own company website, which had not been mentioned in the **Section A** material.

(e)

Comprehensive responses

- As with **Question 1(c)**, most candidates were able to use the various features of WMO listed in the table in **Section A** to give them a starting point for their responses. Four disadvantages of choosing WMO needed then to be explained or connected with information found elsewhere in the material.
- Successful developed responses included:
 - *Regional government buildings are no longer patrolled by WMO, since the guards often were not there when they were supposed to be, meaning WMO personnel may be unpredictable and will not provide the level of consistent security Mr Perez thinks he is paying for* (meeting notes and own explanation).
 - *Watch-My-Office is a new company, which opened only three months ago. Their staff could be prone to mistakes or errors which come from the lack of experience and teething problems of running a new business* (table and own explanation).
 - *According to his solicitor, Mr Perez may be subject to financial and legal obligations if anyone were to be injured on duty at Fit Shoes. With just two guards and a gang of thieves at large, this is a likely outcome* (Additional Information point 13, table and Background).
- There were some very perceptive developed disadvantages offered. Examples included:
 - *The security team would be on site from 21:00 to 06:00 Monday through Friday. Now that the youth club has closed down, the teenagers who have been engaging in vandalism are free to do whatever they please between 18:00 and 20:00, because security would not yet be there.* This is a very full answer, combining information from the table, Background and Additional Information points 2 and 9, as well as employing the candidate's own reasoning.
 - *At the business meeting, Mr Perez learned that the guards were frequently absent from their posts when they were supposed to have been patrolling the regional government buildings. This shocking level of unreliability and slack behaviour is even more likely to be replicated at Mr Perez's relatively unimportant shoe business.* This is a well-phrased and well-reasoned developed disadvantage, combining information from the meeting notes and Background.
 - *Should the guards be injured on duty, Mr Perez could be sued for huge damages, which could ruin or even bankrupt his business, and would certainly damage its reputation.* This response makes good use of Additional Information point 13 and the candidate's own knowledge and reasoning.

Limited responses

- In contrast with responses to **Question 1(c)**, candidates who relied upon listing features of WMO from the table tended not to show a sufficiently negative sense to gain credit for disadvantages. Candidates needed more focus on the question to use such information appropriately.
 - For example, merely citing that 'WMO is a new local company, established three years ago' is not necessarily a disadvantage, as it could instead suggest it is a forward-thinking operation, with fresh ideas. The simple addition of 'only' would make the negative sense immediately clearer.
 - This observation applies equally to most of the features listed in the table.

- Similarly, Additional Information point 8, relating to the employment of 'former local police officers or military personnel', with their work 'subject to frequent checks', was not necessarily a disadvantage, unless explained.
- If using Additional Information point 12, with the reduction to Mr Perez's insurance premiums, candidates again needed 'only' or similar to highlight that '10 per cent' was a smaller reduction than he would receive if choosing HTS. (As with **Question 1(c)**, some candidates here also referred to a *10-cent reduction*, rather than '10 per cent'.)
- The question sought disadvantages for Mr Perez, were he to choose WMO, rather than reasons why he might decide against this in the first place. As such, a common distractor was the non-attendance of personnel from WMO at the local business meeting. There were also misunderstandings evident here, with a number of candidates claiming that *Mr Perez had invited WMO/organised the meeting*, hence his disappointment and the company's perceived *lack of reliability*.
- Candidates sometimes offered an identical development or explanation for more than one feature of WMO, usually along the lines of *reliability*, *trustworthiness*, *poor attitude* or *laziness*.
- Some responses were vague, for example by claiming that *the guards did not show up*, without stating where this had happened or how it had become known to Mr Perez.
- Monthly payments sometimes featured as a disadvantage, without clear explanation. Candidates could have focused instead on the far more expensive overall costs involved, or the necessity to negotiate and pay further sums (\$30 per hour) for any additional time the guards might work. This could have been linked with the clear gaps identified between their prospective hours on duty and the start and close of business at Fit Shoes, especially on Wednesdays.
- There were occasional misunderstandings evident.
 - In responses which mentioned Mr Perez's habit of sometimes working later than 4 pm (Additional Information point 2), some candidates implied that this would require more hours' coverage by the guards.
 - Similarly, a number of candidates were critical that the WMO proposal did not cover the premises 24/7, or *all day and night*. This reversed the benefit of the service offered by HTS and did not sufficiently focus on the gaps in coverage, nor on Mr Perez's desire 'to improve the out-of-hours security' (Background), that is, times when nobody else was present at Fit Shoes.
 - The WMO guards' work being 'subject to frequent checks' was seen by some as an *unnecessary and time-consuming* disadvantage. This point could be used to question the veracity of WMO's claim, given what is said at the local business meeting about their previous record at the regional government buildings.
- A number of candidates also asserted that *the guards would not be present at the weekends*, whereas there would be hourly inspections.
- Occasional responses were speculative as to the honesty of the guards, particularly regarding their possession of the keys to Fit Shoes. More focused responses suggested *there are only two guards, who might be overcome by the gang*, or that the security guards might be *bribed* or *coerced* into handing the keys to would-be thieves.

Section B

Question 2

(a) (i) – (ii) Comprehensive responses

- Both of the sub-questions in **Question 2(a)** required candidates to select a word or phrase from a given part of the **Section B** material, identified with line numbers. Successful answers included no additional material either before or after their chosen word or phrase.
- A significant majority of candidates answered **Question 2(a)(i) and (ii)** correctly.
- The term offered should have the exact meaning of the prompt provided in the question. The word or phrase should fit in the sentence in the same way, both semantically and grammatically.

Limited responses

- Responses sometimes included material which distracted from the correct term. Some candidates needed to consider how the replacement of one term by the other might work, in the context of the sentence found in **Section B**.
- Some incorrect answers did not have the same grammatical form as the prompt, so would not have made sense as replacements. For example, the prompt for **Question 2(a)(ii)** was an adjective, so candidates needed to offer an adjective in response, rather than a noun or verb.
- Occasional responses had confused this task with **Question 2(f)**, in which candidates were asked to provide their own synonyms or re-workings of terms, rather than finding these in the material. As such, responses sometimes included *not where it should be*, *not in the correct position* or *in the wrong location* (for 'out of place', **Question 2(a)(i)**) and *strange to the point of being funny or bizarre* (for 'ridiculous', **Question 2(a)(ii)**).
- The adjective *ambitious* was a frequent incorrect answer in **Question 2(a)(ii)**.

(b)

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates recognised the importance of confining their responses to information found between lines 5 and 9, as stated in the question.
- Of the four points to convey in own words for a maximum of two marks, the most often achieved were points 1 and 4.
- Some successful re-workings using candidates' own words included:
 - *an increasing cost of power and higher electricity payments* (for 'rising energy bill')
 - *the current risk and the imminent danger* (for 'the ever-present threat (of climate change)')
 - *in an economy yet to reach its peak, electricity is needed; electricity is highly necessary in an evolving economic climate, and with economic growth ongoing, electric power is a must* (for 'a developing economy, where electricity is essential') and
 - *carbon-heavy and filthy* (for '(often) dirty', which was also successfully reversed and conveyed by terms such as *clean(er)* and *more environmentally friendly*).

Limited responses

- Not all candidates recognised the need to render their selected ideas 'using (their) own words as far as possible'.
- Key terms for which candidates needed to provide synonyms were, therefore, often reproduced. These were: *rising energy bill*, *(ever-present) threat*, *developing*, *essential*, *expensive* and *(often) dirty*.
- Question terms, such as 'growing', were sometimes included. These could not be credited.
- The term 'bill' was occasionally taken to refer to government legislation, rather than a demand for payment, while the figurative 'turning the tide in favour of nuclear power' was sometimes seen as a more literal reference to tidal energy generation.
- Occasional answers included material from outside the stated line numbers, or referred to increasing *demand* for energy, rather than the correct focus on financial and environmental angles.

(c)

Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates answered within 'about 40 words', as specified in the question rubric, thereby demonstrating summary skills.
- Answers were almost always focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material, as indicated by the line numbers in the question.
- The majority of candidates wrote in continuous prose, as directed in the question rubric.
- There was understanding of some of the key points in many responses. The six creditworthy points were all attempted, with most candidates attempting to convey three or four ideas for the available four marks.
- Some responses successfully conflated more than one idea within a sentence, respecting the word limit. An example of conflation of two valid ideas in only 13 words was: *He says Bataan's welds are the Philippines' best and better than the United States'*.
- An example of a succinct response conveying five creditworthy points – for a maximum of four marks – within the stipulated 40 words, included:

- *The electrical wires are good quality and neatly presented. The walls are 1.5m-thick concrete. 100 per cent of the welds were X-ray inspected, so have better quality than in the US. The welding is nicer than elsewhere in the Philippines.*

Limited responses

- Some candidates would have benefited from not repeating the question stem or introducing 'Congressman Mark Cojuangco'. In this way, they would have reduced the number of words not directly related to features of the nuclear power plant.
- A degree of precision is required in summary-skills responses, even while seeking to convey only the most essential ideas. Examples included:
 - Candidates needed to give accurate measurements and units (*1.5 metres* and *30 millimetres*) of the concrete walls and the containment structure's steel respectively, and to refer to the *thickness* of the walls, as opposed to their height, for instance.
 - References to the percentage of welds subject to X-ray inspection were not always clear, suggesting a qualitative judgement, rather than a numerical one. As in **Questions 1(c)** and **1(e)**, some candidates also misunderstood the term 'per cent' (per cent) and made reference to relative costs in *cents*.
 - It was sometimes implied that Mr Cojuangco himself had constructed the power plant.
- Questions testing summary skills always ask candidates to write in continuous prose. Some candidates needed to write their answers in complete, grammatical sentences.

(d)(i) Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates correctly located the correct part of the material from which to identify their responses. They nearly all attempted to make two separate points, although there was some repetition when including both *unfinished family business* and *revive his father's dream*.

Limited responses

- Some responses would have benefited from more detail, given that there was no word limit imposed. For example: *The project would have made the Philippines a pioneer of nuclear energy* required the crucial context 'in Asia'.
- Greater clarity was sometimes needed as to who (which President Marcos; father or son) had originally aimed to bring nuclear power to the Philippines, while the timing of the 'oil price shock' in the 1970s was viewed as still current by some candidates.
- As with Congressman Mark Cojuangco, in **Question 2(c)**, it was sometimes assumed that either President Marcos – more usually the Senior – had personally built the Bataan power plant. Comments such as *it was his father's business* and *the Marcos family owned the business which originally constructed the plant* suggested that the term 'unfinished ... business' was not always understood to be partly figurative.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates correctly located the correct part of the material from which to identify their responses. They usually attempted to make two separate, valid points; the political change which removed Marcos Senior from power, and (fear caused by) the news of the Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union.

Limited responses

- Some responses demonstrated limited precision as to what exactly had occurred politically, or which President Marcos was involved, shortly after Bataan's construction had been completed. Examples of vague statements included: *There were protests in Manila*, and *people wanted a new government*.
- Candidates sometimes implied that the Bataan power plant had suffered damage, in such answers as: *There was a serious accident at the power plant*. Vaguer still were suggestions that *an accident occurred at a nuclear power plant*, with no reference to location.
- Some responses offered their own suggestions, such as the power plant being incomplete or ineffective.
- There was occasional confusion between Bataan and the accidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima. It was evident from a number of responses that the location and significance of Chernobyl were not universally understood.

(e) **Comprehensive responses**

- Many candidates answered within the stipulated 'about 30 words'.
- Answers mostly focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material, as directed by the line numbers in the question.
- The majority of candidates wrote in continuous prose, as instructed.
- Candidates who copied the scientific terms, reducing other elements of the text for the necessary concision, tended to be more successful than those who attempted to re-work the more technical aspects of the material.
- An example of a successful response, conveying three of the possible six creditworthy points within 30 words, was:
 - *He states that people use the analogy of cars or motorcycles, but nuclear reactors age from neutron bombardment. Other mothballed nuclear plants have successfully been reopened.*

Limited responses

- Some candidates would have benefited from not repeating the question stem. This would immediately reduce the number of words unrelated to Mr Cojuangco's objections.
- Some responses unnecessarily included the objections the congressman did concede, relating to time and money. These did not answer the question and yet used up some of the available words.
- There were some misunderstandings of the material. Examples included:
 - *Mr Cojuangco uses the analogy of cars and motorcycles*, rather than his citing of other people who use this comparison
 - 'effectively brand new' being rendered as *effective and brand new*
 - claims that *the Bataan power plant is not the first to be 'mothballed'* or *is not the only example of a nuclear power plant being made operational*, when the sense was of 'the first mothballed nuclear plant to be put into operation'
 - the significance of the Tennessee example.
- Questions testing summary skills always ask candidates to write in continuous prose. Some answers needed to be written in complete, grammatical sentences.

(f) (i) – (iii) **Comprehensive responses**

- Almost all candidates understood the requirement to use their own words to state the meaning of the given terms from the material.
- Of the three sub-questions, **Question 2f(ii)** proved most accessible, followed by **Question 2f(iii)**.
- Successful examples included:
 - *fighting for something difficult; constantly battling* (different grammatical form from the prompt); *fighting against overwhelming pushback; fighting with the odds stacked against you; trying to overcome a disadvantage; going through (many) obstacles; going against the majority view, and desperately trying to achieve something (Question 2f(i))*
 - *delayed; temporarily stopped; cancelled; left hanging; deferred, and abandoned to resume later (Question 2f(ii))*
 - *state similarities; indicate correlations; compare* (different grammatical form from the original), and *make connections between two things (Question 2f(iii))*.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote too long a phrase or sentence, or merely cited the context from the material in which the given term(s) had appeared.
- Responses sometimes missed an essential part of the concept expressed in the question prompt, such as:
 - *a difficult fight* suggests 'uphill battle' but omits 'waging', while *fighting* does not convey the original idea of futility or struggle (**Question 2f(i)**)
 - *waiting to resume the call* implied the context of a telephone call (**Question 2f(ii)**)
 - *similarities* or *the same things* both omit the sense of 'draw' from 'draw comparisons', while *relate* needed something more to match the context (**Question 2f(iii)**).

- The figurative sense of 'draw' (**Question 2f(iii)**) was not always understood, with alternatives offered along the lines of *sketch*, *design* and similar.
- Incorrect or insufficiently precise attempts included:
 - *trying, arguing (for) or fighting to get something done* (**Question 2f(i)**)
 - *indefinitely*, which follows 'put on hold' in the material, and *not used* (**Question 2f(ii)**)
 - *contrast, differentiate* and *identify differences* (**Question 2f(iii)**).

(g)(i) Comprehensive responses

- A number of candidates answered within the stipulated 'about 30 words'.
- Answers generally focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material, as indicated by the line numbers.
- The majority of candidates wrote in continuous prose, as directed.
- The most frequently attempted points related to the long timescale for re-commissioning, the merits of investing in renewable alternatives and the minimal contribution to the country's power.
- An example of a response conveying three creditworthy points within 30 words was: *The plant would take years to re-commission and would only provide 2.5 per cent of the country's power. Solar and wind projects would take less money and time.*

Limited responses

- Some candidates would benefit from practising summarising short passages of text, especially remembering that they should not risk changing the original key terms unless it benefits the answer's concision. For example:
 - Although changing 'easier' or 'quicker' to 'better' or 'safer' uses the same number of words, it alters the meaning.
 - While replacing 'are cheaper' with 'will cost less money' conveys the correct idea, more words are used than appear in the original, doing the opposite of what a summary task is testing. The same applies to using 'will take less time to build' for 'are... much quicker', and to 'get the plant up and running again' for 're-commissioning the plant'.
- Answers sometimes lost the precision of the original material by generalising the points. An example includes: *It will take too long*, with no definition of 'it'. (Unlike in **Question 2(e)**, the sense could not be inferred by reading the answer as a continuation of the question.)
- Similar examples included: *The anti-nuclear groups would prefer different sources of energy* (no reference to 'cheaper' or 'quicker', nor to 'solar' or 'wind' projects) and *The limited amount of power it would generate* (without the specific '2.5 per cent').
- Relatively few candidates included the points about the earlier fight to stop the plant in the 1980s, nor the current generation's determination to prevent its opening.
- Some candidates offered their own objections to the plant or used information from the material better suited to **Question 2(g)(ii)**.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates recognised that the geographical reason was linked to the features 'two dozen active volcanoes', regular 'earthquakes' and vulnerability to 'tsunamis'.
- Some candidates correctly attributed these to the Philippines' location on the 'Pacific Ring of Fire'.
- A few candidates included the third creditworthy point, that the plant in Fukushima, Japan – another country on the Pacific Ring of Fire – had previously been destroyed by a tsunami.

Limited responses

- Most candidates listed one, two or three of the specific prevalent features (volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis) as their entire answer.
- Occasional responses adopted the wrong focus and referred to material more relevant to earlier questions, such as **Question 2(g)(i)**.
- The term 'two dozen' was sometimes misunderstood, with candidates stating the Philippines have *two active volcanoes*.
- Some candidates offered their own ideas, rather than seeking information from the text. They mentioned, for example, the Philippines being an island nation. This, in the event of a nuclear disaster, might make escape difficult, or result in the pollution of ocean water.

- Candidates sometimes shortened the specific tectonic features – volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis – to the more general term ‘natural disasters’, or included erroneous weather events, such as tornadoes.

(h) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates were able to draw on their own knowledge to propose such concerns as the spread of radiation and its potential impact on human bodies, agriculture, water quality and similar. Although nuclear accidents had been mentioned in **Section B**, their consequences had not, and so were acceptable responses here. Occasional mention was made of the potential for a refugee crisis following such a disaster, with all the attendant pressures on the neighbouring nation(s).
- Other sensible suggestions included:
 - difficulties inherent in nuclear waste disposal, in particular into neighbouring/shared bodies of water
 - development of nuclear weapons capabilities and the resulting political tension or prospect of hostilities
 - the end of current trading of fossil fuels and the ensuing economic impact on the neighbouring country
 - potential fear and disquiet among a population unable to influence or control events they may face
 - a country unable to reap the benefits of its installation but being almost sure to bear the brunt of any negative consequences
 - the very long-term nature of the impact of any radioactive materials transported to another country.

Limited responses

- A number of candidates repeated material from **Section B**, despite the rubric instruction. Such responses mentioned accidents and disasters – sometimes even the specific Chernobyl and Fukushima ones – and tectonic activity, as well as issues relating to cost, public opinion, and renewable alternative energies.
- These latter points, as well as some other suggestions, did not clearly relate to the perspective of ‘neighbouring countries’. Indeed, some responses did not make it entirely clear whether they referred to the country building the nuclear power plant or to its neighbours.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/22 Comprehension
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates responded well to the command words and followed instructions carefully.
- Responses were of an appropriate length for the number of available marks.
- Guidance was used effectively in the word count questions.
- Candidates noted the guidance to not refer to other contestants and routes in **Section A**.
- The line reference guidance was correctly followed in **Section B**.
- Candidates used their own words in **Question 2(j)**.
- Candidates used continuous prose and communicated their ideas clearly.
- Responses were well organised.
- Candidates answered all the questions.

What candidates needed to improve

- Material needed to be selected more precisely to ensure the correct amount of detail was provided.
- Candidates needed to note the focus of the question.
- The signposting in the question wording needed to be followed.
- Candidates needed to follow word count guidance.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates stated that Miriam's fiancé comes from Tasket and she may have prior knowledge of the local area.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote that Miriam's fiancé lives in Tasket and he will help her when she arrives.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses identified that Carmen is fluent in the language of Dora and will have an easier time communicating with local people.

Limited responses

- Some responses stated that Carmen would have an advantage.

(c) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates stated that Lars competes in marathons and will have the stamina to endure the physically demanding work at the bus station.

Limited responses

- Some candidates noted that Lars is physically fit and would be required to clean buses. We can presume that the other two contestants are also physically fit if they are taking part in the competition.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses stated that Miriam had already shown she was able to survive with little sleep in earlier stages of the competition so the night job would suit her well.

Limited responses

- Some candidates noted that the job did not require any previous experience and Miriam has recently graduated from university so would not have had a job before.

(d) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates offered three developed points by connecting information from different places in the Insert material.
- The most common response focused on the ferry's diverse food options and Carmen's desire to sample new flavours. Other common responses included the TV access on the ferry, with Carmen looking forward to catching up on her favourite TV programmes as well as the Rie Bay Reading support job appealing to Carmen as a retired teacher.
- Some candidates linked the ferry route alongside the bird sanctuary to Carmen's interest in wildlife conservation.
- Some candidates were able to note four developed points.

Limited responses

- Some candidates needed to develop their points by linking the material in the Insert.
- Some candidates focused on the route through Beko and New Boisin.
- Some responses noted the issues regarding rockfalls and landslides. Others discussed the other two contestants.

(e) Comprehensive responses

- Most responses noted that there are traffic delays or rockfalls and landslides.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about the difficulty in getting tickets for the New Boisin Express. Others mentioned the times of the buses leaving Gaston.

(f) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates demonstrated an ability to link the points within the Insert material.
- The most common response focused on the difficulty in purchasing tickets for the New Boisin Express and the likelihood of being stranded or significantly delayed. Other responses linked the issue of limited budgets and the high cost of hotels in Beko. Another common response was that the bus to Beko would arrive at 22:00 and contestants would be forced to stay the night there.

Limited responses

- Some candidates discussed difficulties in crossing the border.
- Some responses were too generalised and focused on waiting for buses or missing the buses entirely.

Comments on specific questions

Section B

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates noted all of the required elements of the response.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided some of the essential elements of the response.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses included all of the essential elements.

- The most common responses noted that Schranz did not need to put down a deposit and his contract is unlimited.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided incomplete responses.
- Some candidates noted that Schranz had not won the lottery.
- Some responses stated that Maz only paid \$650 without adding further details.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates noted that other cities have spiralling rental prices due to apartments being kept vacant or used as short-term holiday rentals.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated that Vienna's inner-city housing is affordable without noting that this is because it is owned by the city.
- Some responses did not specifically refer to Vienna or other cities. It was not clear which city was being referred to.

(d)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates noted 'awash'.

Limited responses

- Some candidates stated 'enormously'.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates stated, 'capture the imagination'.

Limited responses

- Most responses added 'yet' to the beginning of the correct response.
- Some candidates noted 'uprooted'.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Most responses stated 'stigma'.

Limited responses

- Some responses noted 'stigma of poverty and crime'.

(e) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates observed the word count guidance.
- Common responses included 'avoid creating ghettos and social conflicts' and 'mixing different backgrounds and incomes in the same estate'.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote in note form or provided incomplete sentences.
- Some candidates used the wording of the question in their response, for example, 'Vienna's approach is social sustainability'.
- Some responses noted different backgrounds and incomes. A reference to the mixing of the different backgrounds and incomes was needed.

(f) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates followed the word count guidance.
- Some candidates noted all of the necessary elements of the response.

Limited responses

- Some responses were incomplete.
- Some candidates wrote an incomplete sentence or in note form.

(g) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates followed the word count guidance.
- Most candidates noted the maximum amount of earnings applied per household.
- Some candidates stated that earnings were not checked again.

Limited responses

- Most candidates wrote more than 20 words.
- Some candidates noted that candidates or properties were not checked again.

(h)(i) Comprehensive responses

- The most common response was that rental prices are hard to contain therefore the model is more necessary than ever.
- Some candidates noted that Heinz had lived in the estate for seven decades.

Limited responses

- Some responses provided some of the essential information. These responses needed further details.
- Some candidates noted that Heinz Barnerth had built the block himself.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates noted that repairs take a very long time.
- Some responses stated that residents fix the issues themselves instead of waiting for the management company to come.

Limited responses

- Some candidates noted that repairs take time. These responses were vague and a reference to a long amount of time or huge delays was needed.

(i) Comprehensive responses

- The most common responses were the exclusion of a large proportion of the population and the need to have resided in Vienna for two years in order to apply for social housing.
- Most candidates provided the essential details in their responses.

Limited responses

- Some candidates noted that 60% of residents are accepted for the social housing. Without the word 'only', this response sounds positive and was not an obvious problem.
- Some candidates noted more than one problem. Only the first response can be credited.

(j) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates noted a correct synonym.
- Common responses included: at the top, prime and the highest point.

Limited responses

- Some responses were too vague, for example, 'the most important time'.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates noted a correct synonym.
- Common responses included: caused by, influenced by and promoted by.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided synonyms relating to fuel. One common response was 'filled'.

(iii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates provided a correct synonym.
- Common responses included: started, built and created.

Limited responses

- Some candidates copied the word 'came' from the question which could not be credited.

(iv) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates stated a correct synonym.
- The most common response was displaced.

Limited responses

- Common responses were 'affected', 'brought up' and 'destroyed'.

- Some candidates made references to trees.

(v) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates provided a correct synonym.
- The most common responses included: basic, simple and not luxurious.

Limited responses

- Some candidates copied 'fancy' from the question.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/23 Comprehension
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates demonstrated understanding of the material.
- Responses were of an appropriate length, relative to the number of available marks.
- The requirements of the various question styles were clearly understood.
- Question-specific rubric instructions were followed. This included referring only to specified parts of the **Section A** material (for example, the Additional Information in **Question 1(b)** or to numbered lines from **Section B**).
- Candidates used continuous prose, organising their writing in the appropriate response areas.
- Candidates answered all the questions.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some responses demonstrated misunderstandings of parts of the material or made assumptions which could not clearly be supported from the information available in the material (for example, **Questions 1(d)(i) and (ii)**).
- Some candidates needed to offer more detail or development of points in response to the higher-tariff, **Question 1(a)**.
- Responses to lower-tariff questions sometimes needed to be refined, as these required careful selection of relevant information.
- Some responses to the three summary questions would have been strengthened by closer adherence to the specified word count. This might be achieved by omitting repetition of the question, or being more selective with the details conveyed.
- Some answers would have benefited from improved clarity and precision, avoiding ambiguity. Unless otherwise directed by the question rubric, this is usually best achieved by identifying and then copying the relevant material from the insert.
- Response areas were occasionally left blank.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to suggest at least two or three advantages of choosing Hacienda Reddale as a holiday home.
- Responses often attempted to make a connection between each point and something from elsewhere in the material or gave an explanation of its significance.
- Examples of popular choices of advantages with developed reasons included:
 - 'Hacienda Reddale has five bedrooms so there are enough for all the family as well as a spare room for Romia to use as an office when she has to work at the weekend.'
 - 'The town the holiday home is located in is known for its art gallery. Romia's interest in art would lead her to enjoy visiting the art gallery and seeking inspiration for her own paintings.'
 - 'The town is well connected by railway links to Likoto where the couple live. This is especially convenient for Davide who does not have a driving licence meaning that if

Romia was unable to go to Hacienda Reddale one weekend, Davide could travel independently.'

- 'Boatby has a second-hand bookshop, and Davide is a lecturer specialising in international literature. He can source some books from here for his courses.'
 - 'The house is close to where summer music festivals are held. Davide and Romia are both musical and will enjoy attending to listen to the music or even performing there.'
 - 'The house is open plan and spacious, creating the perfect backdrop for Romia's modern art.'
- Some responses employed nuance in suggesting possibilities, rather than relying on assertive claims. Examples included:
 - 'The house is very spacious. Romia is a gifted pianist, and she may have her own piano which could easily be accommodated here.'
 - 'Davide could use the comfortable and air-conditioned basement for choir practice since the acoustics will probably be very good.'
 - 'As Romia is the only one with a driver's licence, she will probably appreciate the journey being only 50 km from Likoto.'
 - 'Romia might be able to source art materials for her painting hobby from the crafters' markets.'
 - 'According to one online review, Boatby has a lot of retired residents. This means it is likely to provide the relaxing environment Romia and Davide are hoping for.'
 - 'This would most likely be perfect for Davide as he is very mindful of the family budget. Hacienda Reddale is a short commute so less gas money and it needs no renovations.'

Limited responses

- Some answers demonstrated slight misunderstanding of the material. Examples included:
 - 'Hacienda Reddale is renowned for its classic architecture.'
 - 'Romia can hang her paintings in the art gallery in the hacienda.'
 - 'When Romia needs to work at the weekends, she can easily get back to Likoto City.'
 - 'Romia and Davide like aquatic sports and they can do this at the harbour.'
 - 'Davide has worked on extensions in the past; he can get his building materials from the crafters' markets.'
- Some answers offered mitigation regarding Romia wanting to live in a house with history suggesting that Boatby's classic architecture would fulfil this purpose.
 - Responses sometimes needed more precision. Examples included:
 - 'Hacienda Reddale has five rooms so Romia can use one as her office.'
 - 'The house has three floors so Romia can easily work from home.'
- Some candidates offered responses which focused on Tansay and Noella. Examples included:
 - 'Boatby is a perfect location for food lovers. This speciality in food can help Noella to see the different gastronomy and improve her cooking.'
 - 'Most teenage girls enjoy shopping and Boatby has plenty of shops for Tansay and Noella.'
- Some responses were very general, stating that there were a variety of shops, markets and cafes for the family to visit.
- A small number of responses offered a checklist of features of Boatby without an attempt to develop any of them.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Many responses made clear and logical use of the material, making appropriate connections across the Additional Information points.

Limited responses

- Responses sometimes needed greater precision. For example, some candidates referred to 'trails' when identifying where horse riding or dog walking could take place without specifying which kind of trail, such as riding trails or hiking trails, respectively.
- Some answers demonstrated slight misunderstanding of the material. For example, that Tansay could buy materials for her jewellery making from the convenience store, rather than sourcing natural materials.
- Attempted connections were sometimes speculative such as stating that Tansay could sell her jewellery at the convenience store, or that Tansay could use the barn in the garden as a base to set up her jewellery making business, or that the barn could be used to accommodate Tansay's friend Janna's birthday party.
- Responses were sometimes based on a misreading of the material. For instance, in Additional Information Point 1 the word 'horse' was mistaken for the word 'house' leading candidates to say that the barn could be converted into a house for Tansay.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates clearly identified the single required piece of least relevant information from the Additional Information, either by copying it out or by stating the number.

Limited responses

- Many responses offered a piece of information which did have some relevance to the choice of holiday home. Candidates could have focused more closely on determining which piece of information would not influence the choice of holiday home.

(d)(i) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates were able to offer clear explanations, making good use of the review of Boatby written by 17-year-old Kallum. Popular standalone points included the community centre having shut down, or the music festivals not including pop or rock bands. Alternatively, some candidates offered developed points. For example, suggesting that as most of the residents of Boatby were retired, Noella would potentially find it difficult to make friends her own age, especially as most young people tended to leave Boatby for Likoto as soon as they were able.

Limited responses

- Some candidates misread the material in the online review, stating that the town centre had shut down so there were no shops or restaurants to go to.
- Responses were sometimes speculative. For example, stating that Noella would not like Boatby because it had good restaurants which meant the family would eat out and she would not be able to practice her cooking.
- Some candidates offered comments which could have applied to either option of holiday home. For example, they said that Noella might prefer to stay in Likoto because she was 'probably going to university soon anyway.'
- Some responses would have benefited from more linguistic precision. For example, a number of candidates referred to Noella's hobby as 'tennis' rather than table tennis.
- A closer reading of the text would have helped some candidates. For example, regarding the claim that Noella would not be able to practise table tennis at the weekend. Candidates needed to recognise that if Hacienda Reddale had a snooker table in the basement, it could easily be replaced with a table tennis table. Responses would have thus benefited from more precision and/or nuance, for example, stating that it would be unlikely Noella would be able to play table tennis competitively in Boatby, or that playing anywhere other than the house itself seemed improbable since the community centre had shut down.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates were able to offer clear explanations, drawing upon the relevant online review. Points most frequently developed included the heavy traffic on a Friday night and the difficulty of parking. Many candidates stated that the limited parking had resulted in people parking their cars in others' driveways leading to homeowners being greatly inconvenienced.

Limited responses

- Some responses were assertive, stating that the type of activities offered in Marly Forest Park such as aquatic sports were very energetic and would therefore not be relaxing. Other examples related to excessive noise, either from the traffic on a Friday night causing residents

annoyance, or from the birds and the wildlife in the area disturbing their peace. In terms of the traffic noise, candidates would have benefited from a closer reading of the material in order to grasp the isolated nature of the property and its proximity to fields, making any noise from traffic unlikely.

- Some responses would have benefited from a closer focus on the key words of the question. Whilst candidates correctly pointed out that the property needed renovating, this point was often unsuccessfully developed by referring to Davide being mindful of the budget. Candidates needed to develop the point by referring to Additional Information Point 6 and stating that renovating a property oneself would be tiring and/or time-consuming.

(e) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates were able to suggest two reasons or offer one developed reason. The most popular ideas offered included the stress of the working week and the opportunity the weekend provided to 'decompress', as well as the need to rest in order to clear one's mind and be energised and productive in the week ahead. Some candidates gained credit by saying that the weekend was often the only opportunity to rest, pursue one's interests or socialise with friends.

Limited responses

- Some candidates referred to material from **Section A**, either by talking explicitly about Davide and Romia, or by saying that the weekend provided people with 'family time'.

Section B

Question 2

(a) Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates answered **Question 2(a)** correctly.

Limited responses

- Some responses were more general, for example, suggesting the air smelled different or unfamiliar.
- Some responses were long and convoluted. The correct information could not be identified because it was not the first response.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates recognised the significance of the backpack as bringing the author a sense of comfort or familiarity.

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Limited responses

- Some responses would have benefited from more precise expression. For example, a significant number of responses implied the author liked the weight of the rucksack, rather than the sense of reassurance the weight gave her.
- Responses were sometimes assertive claiming that the author was holding her bag close to avoid items being stolen, or that she was nervous and suffering from anxiety.

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(c) (i) – (v) Comprehensive responses

- Each of the five sub-questions in **Question 2(c)** required candidates to select a word or phrase from a given part of the **Section B** material, identified with line numbers. Successful answers included no additional material either before or after their chosen word or phrase.
- A significant majority of candidates answered **Question 2(c)(iii)** correctly.

Limited responses

- Many candidates missed the preposition 'to' at the end of the phrase 'bring my attention to' in response to **Question 2(c)(i)** or copied the phrase incorrectly as 'bring to my attention'.
- A significant number of candidates included additional material. This was most common in **Question 2(c)(iv)**, usually by including 'helps me' before the verb phrase 'find my bearings'.
- The majority of candidates did not identify the correct synonym for **Question 2(c)(ii)**, offering a wide range of incorrect words, phrases or sentences in its place.

- Some incorrect responses did not have the same grammatical form as the prompt, so would not have made sense as replacements. For example, the prompt for **Question 2(c)(v)** was an adverb, so candidates needed to offer an adverb in response, rather than an adjective or noun.

(d) Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates answered within 'about 40 words', as specified in the question rubric, thereby demonstrating summary skills.
- Answers were usually focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material, as indicated by the line numbers in the question.
- The majority of candidates wrote in continuous prose.
- There was understanding of the key points in many responses. The most popular ideas related to:
 - the need for commitment
 - not having the option to give up
 - the requirement to show physical, mental, emotional and spiritual strength
 - discovering what one is capable of
- Some responses successfully conflated more than one idea within a sentence, respecting the word limit. An example of a comprehensive response within the stipulated 40 words included:
 - 'It makes you advance yourself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. And when you do, you cannot quit because you have to fully commit to it. It's your choice now to survive or thrive here.'

Limited responses

- Some candidates would have benefited from not repeating the question stem. In this way they would not have exceeded the word count when presenting their ideas.
- A significant number of candidates offered very generalised responses about needing to challenge oneself, presenting their own ideas, or ideas assimilated from elsewhere in the material. While such observations may demonstrate engagement with the topic, candidates are reminded that with summary questions the information required is to be found within the exact lines specified in the material, and own opinion or ideas are not pertinent here.
- Examples of this included:
 - 'Solo adventure can be described as a special and unique opportunity because breaking out of your comfort zone and exploring the world can be scary but is an opportunity to grow into an independent person. That's why I think it's important to go on a solo adventure.'
 - 'A solo adventure can be an opportunity to get to know new things, foods and cultures, but the main opportunity this offers is to reveal yourself, a truer version of you.'

(e) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates used the line reference in the question as a prompt to select material from the fourth paragraph and focused correctly on the given ideas such as meeting one's potential.

Limited responses

- Occasional responses needed greater precision in conveying the identified information.
- Responses sometimes conflated two points into one sentence, omitting required details of one or both points.
- Candidates are advised to copy their answer from the material, unless the rubric specifically precludes this approach.

(f) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates used the line references provided in the question to identify the correct answers.
- Some candidates communicated their two points within the stipulated 'in about 20 words'. Two examples included:
 - 'At home she is in control of her feelings, whilst travelling her emotions shift erratically.'

- 'She felt trapped at home, but when travelling she feels less stable in her emotions but also free.'

Limited responses

- Some responses would have benefited from greater clarity of expression and precision. For example, 'out of control' was frequently used to describe the author's emotions when travelling. This does not mean the same as 'less stable' which suggests struggling to maintain balance but capable of being corrected.
- Some candidates offered the correct ideas but the wrong way round in relation to home and travel.
- A number of candidates needed to identify their chosen points within the 20 words indicated.

(g)

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates identified the correct ideas to include in their answers, using the line references provided.
- Most candidates wrote in continuous prose.
- A small number of candidates were able to communicate their ideas within the word limit of 'about 20 words'. Examples included:
 - 'When you stay at home, you develop a sense of comfort, but you never learn to adapt to life's hardships.'
 - 'Staying at home embraces familiarity while travelling pushes you into new places out of your bubble to experience new opportunities.'
 - 'There is no benchmark or reference point to go back to to look at to show how far you can push yourself.'

Limited responses

- Some candidates offered circular responses which repeated the key words from the question.
- Responses were sometimes provided that related to the line references stated for **Question 2(f)**.
- Some candidates needed to communicate their chosen points within the 20 words indicated. They would have benefited from omitting any repetition of the question.

(h)

Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates located the correct part of the material from which to identify their responses. Nearly all attempted to make two separate points.

Limited responses

- A small number of responses repeated material from **Questions 2(f)** and **2(g)**.
- A number of responses as in **Question 2(d)**, offered candidates' own ideas. Candidates are reminded that the command word 'identify' almost always suggests that the information required is to be found in the material.

(i) (i)-(v) **Comprehensive responses**

- For **Question 2(i)(i)**'s '(to) reveal' a single-word synonym was sought. Valid responses retained the grammatical form of the original, offering an alternative which would fit in the sentence. Creditworthy examples included 'show', 'reveal', 'uncover', 'to bring to light', 'expose', 'unveil' and 'to bring forth'.
- The phrase '**(a)** truer version' (**Question 2(i)(ii)**), was successfully rendered in candidates' own words to convey both elements. Examples included: 'a more accurate depiction', 'a more accurate rendition', 'a more correct or pure form', 'a more realistic copy' and 'a more authentic, honest or genuine representation'.
- Valid alternatives offered for **Question 2(i)(iii)**'s 'change in perspective' were 'altered viewpoint', 'to go from one mindset to another', 'shift in opinion', 'different way of seeing things', 'new view' and 'flip how you see and interpret things'.
- Correct synonyms for '(the) entirety of myself' (**Question 2(i)(iv)**) were 'all of me', 'every part of me', 'whole of my being', 'you as a whole', 'complete version of you', 'each and every part of yourself', 'the whole of oneself', 'every aspect of my being' and 'everything that you are'.
- Regular correct synonyms for the phrase 'fraught moments' in **Question 2(i)(v)** included: 'troublesome times', 'stress-filled times', 'tense times', 'anxious instances', 'challenging occasions' and 'tough situations'.

Limited responses

- Some suggested synonyms for the single-word term in **Question 2(i)(i)** adopted a different grammatical form. Responses could often have been improved by retaining the infinitive verb form.
- In response to **Question 2(i)(ii)**, there was heavy reliance on copying 'version' from the question prompt. Candidates needed to use their own words for both elements.
- **In response to Question 2(i)(iii)**, a small number of candidates replaced the original phrase with one which suggested the outcome of a change in perspective, for example 'more enlightened' rather than the change itself.
- Many responses omitted a synonym for 'entirety' in **Question 2(i)(iv)**, offering instead a specific aspect or aspects of a person's being such as 'personality', 'emotions' and 'the good and the bad'.
- Many candidates repeated the word 'moments' from the original phrase in **Question 2(i)(v)**. Again, candidates are reminded to use their own words for both elements.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/27 Digital Comprehension
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Key messages

What candidates did well

- Most candidates demonstrated some level of engagement with the material. **Section A** (logical reasoning) referred this session to Mr Perez, the owner of a company manufacturing sports shoes, who was looking to improve the security arrangements at his business premises. **Section B** (reading comprehension) focused on the potential re-commissioning of a mothballed nuclear power station in the Philippines.
- Candidates almost always attempted most or all sub-questions, writing an appropriate amount relative to the mark tariffs of each. For example, **Question 1(a)** was worth a single mark, so candidates presented only one piece of material, from the Additional Information. Responses to **Question 1(c)**, worth 10 marks, required a more extended piece of writing, and for ideas to be explained, connected and developed.
- Many candidates adhered to the instructions in the rubric for each sub-question. They recognised the specific requirements, such as to write using mainly their own words, or to limit their responses to an approximate number of words, or to select only from a particular part of the material.
- Many candidates made good use of the word-counting function in the digital examination to limit their answer to the number of words specified in the relevant questions in **Section B**.
- In the digital component, many responses to questions seeking specific pieces of information from the material – **Question 1(a)**, for example – made use of the ‘copy and paste’ function. This had the benefit of speed and ensured that all the relevant detail was included.
- The vast majority of answers were clearly expressed.

What candidates needed to improve

- Candidates are advised to check carefully the exact command words and any specific instructions contained in the question stem and rubric. For example:
 - **Question 1(a)** directed candidates to the Additional Information only.
 - **Questions 1(c)** and **1(e)** specifically prohibited making reference to Watch My Office (WMO) and Hi-Tech Secure (HTS) respectively.
 - **Question 2(b)** required the use of ‘own words as far as possible’.
 - **Questions 2(c), 2(e)** and **2(g)(i)** involved demonstration of summary skills, so candidates were asked to answer in about 40 words (for **2(c)**), or ‘in about 30 words’ (for **2(e)** and **2(g)(i)**).
 - **Question 2(h)** asked for candidates’ own ideas, instructing them not to repeat any information already found in **Section B**.
- Some answers would have benefited from improved precision, avoiding ambiguity. Unless otherwise directed by the question rubric, this is usually best achieved by identifying and then copying the **relevant** material from the insert. Nothing is to be gained by attempting to re-word or summarise in such cases.
- Some candidates exceeded the specified number of words by a considerable margin in **Section B** (**Questions 2(c), 2(e)** and **2(g)(i)**), despite the digital examination’s provision of the word-counting tool.
- In the digital examination, a number of candidates’ answers were in bullet-point format. The instruction to respond ‘in continuous prose’ needed to be observed, where relevant (**Questions 1(c), 2(c), 2(e)** and **2(g)(i)**).
- Other candidates needed to demarcate their sentences more carefully in the digital component, particularly in longer responses, such as to **Question 1(c)**.
- Candidates often made typing errors. Where these occurred more frequently, or were more extreme, these occasionally rendered the intended meaning unclear.

- Some candidates too frequently and extensively used the ability to copy and paste material from the insert. The copied sections sometimes included line numbers and the asterisks used for glossing in the original. Such an approach did not benefit candidates and was especially detrimental in **Section B**, in response to questions which sought candidates' own words (**Question 2(b)**) or which asked for answers to be conveyed 'in about ... words' (**Questions 2(c), 2(e) and 2(g)(i)**). Such responses did not, by definition, use 'own words', and almost always far exceeded the stated word limits in the summary questions, since too much erroneous material was included.
- Occasional digital papers copied the entire **Section B** material in each answer. While the correct responses for **Questions 2(d)(i), 2(d)(ii) and 2(g)(ii)** were included, and did not require re-working or impose a word limit, it was not in the spirit of the examination to include material so unselectively.
- Some candidates needed more detail or a wider range of points in response to higher-tariff questions (for example, **Question 1(c)**).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates correctly identified and presented a single piece of the Additional Information, with a good number selecting point 7, relating to Mr Perez's retirement plans. This was achieved either by copying it out in full, or by stating its number.

Limited responses

- Point 9 of the Additional Information was a common distractor. Candidates who selected this as 'least relevant' had not recognised that there was a potential connection to be made between the 'increase in mindless vandalism by teenagers' (Background) and the closure of the youth club. Its former operating hours (18:00 until 20:00) also fell in the gap in evening coverage by WMO's patrolling guards. (Fit Shoes closes at 13:00 on Wednesday and 16:00 on other days, with the guards not arriving until 21:00.) As such, this could have formed part of an answer to **Question 1(e)**, although very few candidates chose to include this.
- Some less frequent incorrect selections included Additional Information points 4, 8, 10, 11 and 12.
- Occasional responses featured information not taken from the Additional Information, such as the length of time HTS or WMO had been operating, the costs of their services, or another feature of either proposal.

(b)(i) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates correctly identified one or two correct responses, almost universally from Additional Information points 1 and 6.
- Occasional responses made a neat and explicit link between these two, with the 'high-value but easily portable electronic equipment' and Mr Perez's recently acquired 'top-of-the-range tablet computers' matching this description.

Limited responses

- Some candidates presented only one answer for this 2-mark-tariff question, most usually Additional Information point 1.
- Some responses did not include sufficient detail for clarity in response to the question, such as by mentioning only 'thieves' or 'high-value' items from Additional Information point 1.
- The most common incorrect selection was Additional Information point 11, perhaps because the word 'commercial' appeared here in relation to the port, as well as in the thieves' targeting of 'commercial premises', from Additional Information point 1.
- Occasional responses featured information not taken from the Additional Information. Examples include general points about the crime rates in Port-Francis (Background), or the suggestion that the manufactured *sports shoes* (also from the Background) *might attract thieves*.

(ii) **Comprehensive responses**

- The vast majority of responses selected two points of information from Mr Perez's notes taken at the local business meeting.

- Most candidates were able to select the correct two points, explaining why his concerns over security might not be warranted.

Limited responses

- Some candidates did not express the points clearly. Examples included losing the sense of 'business owners' in *businesses*, or stating *He is confident the thieves will be caught*. In the latter case, it was unclear whether Mr Perez or the senior police detective was the intended subject of the sentence.
- Occasional responses featured information not from Mr Perez's notes taken at the local business meeting.
- Another common distractor was that Hanif Ahmed, Head of Security at the port, had recently installed HTS systems. It is possible that some candidates were confused by the reference to the large commercial port (Additional Information point 11), which was only one part of the overall location of Port-Francis (Background).
- The detective's support for technological security systems/cameras and the poor performance by WMO at the regional government buildings were also occasionally chosen.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates were able to suggest at least two or three valid advantages of Hi-Tech Secure, making it more likely Mr Perez would choose this option to improve security at Fit Shoes' premises.
- The presentation of HTS's key features in the format of a table in the **Section A** material provided a clear and obvious starting point for candidates' observations in this extended-writing task. Since two of the features – the alerts to client devices and the triggering of the emergency services – were both connected with the idea of the 'alarms' and the movement sensors, this was a straightforward single developed point available to the large number of candidates who had only taken material from the table.
- Some responses offered further developed points, either in the form of more detailed explanations of a feature's significance, or by making a connection to information found elsewhere in the material. Examples include:
 - The '24/7' coverage by the security cameras (table) offers Mr Perez peace of mind, since his main aim was to 'improve the out-of-hours security of Fit Shoes' premises' (Background).
 - The CCTV images can be viewed online/The alarms link to smartphones/tablet computers (table), *which Mr Perez and his employees would be able to access on their new top-of-the-range tablet computers* (Additional Information point 6).
 - HTS having 'been operating nationwide since 2016' (table) meaning they were likely to be reliable and successful, with *other companies clearly trusting their systems, and not having gone out of business in ten years* (own explanation).
 - The 'top quality images' provided by the security cameras (table) *make it more likely the gang of thieves' faces can be recognised, so the police have a better chance of catching the suspects* (own explanation).
 - Mr Perez's insurance company being prepared to offer a 30 per cent discount on his current premium (Additional Information point 12) meant *he would save a hefty \$3000 per year* (accurate calculation involving his current payment of \$10 000, from Additional Information point 5). Occasional perceptive responses also noted that *this discount implies a level of confidence from the insurance company regarding the perceived reduction in risk of theft at Fit Shoes, should Mr Perez choose to install HTS's systems*.
- Occasional responses made perceptive and logical use of the material, strengthening the arguments presented. They mentioned:
 - The status of the senior police detective (meeting notes) and *his knowledge/experience in the field*, meaning that *Mr Perez would be wise to listen to his endorsement of technological solutions* (own explanation).
 - The importance of Hanif Ahmed, Head of Security at the port (meeting notes), given that the port is 'huge' and 'the world's fifth busiest' (Additional Information point 11). *If HTS is good enough for such a prestigious operation, Mr Perez can feel sure that it will serve him well in his much smaller premises* (own explanation).
 - Mr Ahmed's recommendation, based on the ease of contacting HTS to arrange maintenance (meeting notes), suggests that *Mr Perez can be similarly assured that he*

will receive prompt service and attention to the security equipment, should anything go wrong in the future (own explanation).

- Responses employed nuance in suggesting possibilities, rather than relying on assertive claims. An example included:
 - HTS offers a 'state-of-the-art security system' (table) *which Mr Perez might appreciate, since he can be assumed to be keen on computers and technology* (own explanation), *having recently upgraded his system at work and given all 160 of his employees top-of-the-range tablet computers* (Additional Information point 6). (This is an example of a very well-developed point.)

Limited responses

- As noted above, it was possible to gain some credit simply by listing features of HTS as they appeared in the table. Some candidates limited their responses to such an approach, without explaining why they might be advantageous to Mr Perez.
- A number of responses used bullet points or note form, despite the instruction to write 'in continuous prose'.
- Some answers demonstrated misunderstanding of the material. Examples included:
 - Mr Perez already being retired, or that he would still be keeping an eye on the premises when retired. For example: *having access to the alarm systems and CCTV footage on his devices will be an advantage in retirement, as he can look at it from his garden or while on holiday with his wife* (reference to Additional Information point 7).
 - The proposed discount available on his insurance being *30 cents*, rather than 30 per cent (of \$10 000) (Additional Information points 12 and 5).
 - 'Nationwide' operation of HTS taken to mean *global* or *international* business.
 - Mr Ahmed at the port being involved in contacting HTS or even undertaking system maintenance on Mr Perez's behalf, rather than merely reporting that the company was easy to contact in such instances (meeting notes).
- Attempted connections or developments were sometimes rather vague or speculative, including suggestions that Mr Perez himself might try to identify and catch the perpetrators, rather than handing over evidence to the police.
- Some responses repeated an idea in different words, rather than explaining or making connections with other information. Examples included:
 - *The cameras cover the business 24/7. This is a benefit because the buildings are monitored all day long/continuously.*
 - *HTS has been operating since 2016, meaning it has been in business a long time/for many years/for 10 years.*
- Answers would often have benefited from fuller development. An example was: *HTS has been in business for 10 years, so is reliable*. A less assertive response might have suggested that reliability is implied by this, that is, *Mr Perez might view the company as reliable*. A stronger explanation would have been to propose that *HTS has other companies across the country who have been using it, suggesting Mr Perez can trust their security arrangements for his own business premises*.
- Responses sometimes chose material that was not obviously connected with Mr Perez's business or choices. For instance, the rising crime rate and increased instances of theft and vandalism (Background) would affect most businesses in the Port-Francis area. This was usually too general to be a convincing development, although was sometimes successfully linked with the 24/7 nature of the CCTV coverage and the quality of the resulting images, in connection with the police being likely to apprehend the thieves, or as a deterrent.
- Other examples of information which needed context to demonstrate relevance were the initial installation cost and ongoing annual fees, for data storage and maintenance checks, and the length of the contract at 36 months. Respectively, HTS was the cheaper option, while the relatively long contract might suggest some level of expected quality from the equipment and commitment from HTS personnel. Since a large set-up fee and being locked into a contract for three years might also be seen by some as disadvantages, these ideas needed careful explanation to become clear benefits to Mr Perez and his business.

(d) **Comprehensive responses**

- Most candidates correctly identified Additional Information point 10 and included either or both the 'spelling and grammatical errors' and 'hyperlinks which either did not work at all, or which brought up out-of-date content'.
- Many responses also explained the significance of these observations, justifying why Mrs Perez might not recommend HTS to her husband. Popular valid suggestions included that the company is *sloppy, not trustworthy, sketchy, does not care about a potential customer's first impressions*, or even that *it might be a scam*.
- A few perceptive responses connected the hyperlinks problems with potential doubts about the effectiveness of HTS's apparently high-quality technology in its security systems.

Limited responses

- Some responses were vague, stating only that the website *has errors* or is *out of date*.
- Candidates sometimes demonstrated limited focus on the features mentioned in Additional Information point 10, despite its opening with 'When Mr Perez's wife looked at HTS's website', which the question wording clearly mirrored.
- Such responses focused instead on the fact that *HTS is very expensive* or proposed that *she might not want the alarms and notifications disturbing them at night*. There was also some level of mistrust expressed regarding how and where the CCTV images and data from Fit Shoes might be stored.
- Occasional answers contained features of WMO or made vague assertions about Mr Perez's own company website, which had not been mentioned in the **Section A** material.

(e) **Comprehensive responses**

- As with **Question 1(c)**, most candidates were able to use the various features of WMO listed in the table in **Section A** to give them a starting point for their responses. Four disadvantages of choosing WMO needed then to be explained or connected with information found elsewhere in the material.
- Successful developed responses included:
 - *Regional government buildings are no longer patrolled by WMO, since the guards often were not there when they were supposed to be, meaning WMO personnel may be unpredictable and will not provide the level of consistent security Mr Perez thinks he is paying for* (meeting notes and own explanation).
 - *Watch-My-Office is a new company, which opened only three months ago. Their staff could be prone to mistakes or errors which come from the lack of experience and teething problems of running a new business* (table and own explanation).
 - *According to his solicitor, Mr Perez may be subject to financial and legal obligations if anyone were to be injured on duty at Fit Shoes. With just two guards and a gang of thieves at large, this is a likely outcome* (Additional Information point 13, table and Background).
- There were some very perceptive developed disadvantages offered. Examples included:
 - *The security team would be on site from 21:00 to 06:00 Monday through Friday. Now that the youth club has closed down, the teenagers who have been engaging in vandalism are free to do whatever they please between 18:00 and 20:00, because security would not yet be there.* This is a very full answer, combining information from the table, Background and Additional Information points 2 and 9, as well as employing the candidate's own reasoning.
 - *At the business meeting, Mr Perez learned that the guards were frequently absent from their posts when they were supposed to have been patrolling the regional government buildings. This shocking level of unreliability and slack behaviour is even more likely to be replicated at Mr Perez's relatively unimportant shoe business.* This is a well-phrased and well-reasoned developed disadvantage, combining information from the meeting notes and Background.
 - *Should the guards be injured on duty, Mr Perez could be sued for huge damages, which could ruin or even bankrupt his business, and would certainly damage its reputation.* This response makes good use of Additional Information point 13 and the candidate's own knowledge and reasoning.

Limited responses

- In contrast with responses to **Question 1(c)**, candidates who relied upon listing features of WMO from the table tended not to show a sufficiently negative sense to gain credit for disadvantages. Candidates needed more focus on the question to use such information appropriately.
 - For example, merely citing that 'WMO is a new local company, established three years ago' is not necessarily a disadvantage, as it could instead suggest it is a forward-thinking operation, with fresh ideas. The simple addition of 'only' would make the negative sense immediately clearer.
 - This observation applies equally to most of the features listed in the table.
 - Similarly, Additional Information point 8, relating to the employment of 'former local police officers or military personnel', with their work 'subject to frequent checks', was not necessarily a disadvantage, unless explained.
 - If using Additional Information point 12, with the reduction to Mr Perez's insurance premiums, candidates again needed 'only' or similar to highlight that '10 per cent' was a smaller reduction than he would receive if choosing HTS. (As with **Question 1(c)**, some candidates here also referred to a *10-cent reduction*, rather than '10 per cent'.)
- The question sought disadvantages for Mr Perez, were he to choose WMO, rather than reasons why he might decide against this in the first place. As such, a common distractor was the non-attendance of personnel from WMO at the local business meeting. There were also misunderstandings evident here, with a number of candidates claiming that *Mr Perez had invited WMO/organised the meeting*, hence his disappointment and the company's perceived *lack of reliability*.
- Candidates sometimes offered an identical development or explanation for more than one feature of WMO, usually along the lines of *reliability*, *trustworthiness*, *poor attitude* or *laziness*.
- Some responses were vague, for example by claiming that *the guards did not show up*, without stating where this had happened or how it had become known to Mr Perez.
- Monthly payments sometimes featured as a disadvantage, without clear explanation. Candidates could have focused instead on the far more expensive overall costs involved, or the necessity to negotiate and pay further sums (\$30 per hour) for any additional time the guards might work. This could have been linked with the clear gaps identified between their prospective hours on duty and the start and close of business at Fit Shoes, especially on Wednesdays.
- There were occasional misunderstandings evident.
 - In responses which mentioned Mr Perez's habit of sometimes working later than 4 pm (Additional Information point 2), some candidates implied that this would require more hours' coverage by the guards.
 - Similarly, a number of candidates were critical that the WMO proposal did not cover the premises 24/7, or *all day and night*. This reversed the benefit of the service offered by HTS and did not sufficiently focus on the gaps in coverage, nor on Mr Perez's desire 'to improve the out-of-hours security' (Background), that is, times when nobody else was present at Fit Shoes.
 - The WMO guards' work being 'subject to frequent checks' was seen by some as an *unnecessary and time-consuming* disadvantage. This point could be used to question the veracity of WMO's claim, given what is said at the local business meeting about their previous record at the regional government buildings.
- A number of candidates also asserted that *the guards would not be present at the weekends*, whereas there would be hourly inspections.
- Occasional responses were speculative as to the honesty of the guards, particularly with regard to their possession of the keys to Fit Shoes. More focused responses suggested *there are only two guards, who might be overcome by the gang*, or that the security guards might be *bribed* or *coerced* into handing the keys to would-be thieves.

Section B

Question 2

(a) (i) – (ii) Comprehensive responses

- Both of the sub-questions in **Question 2(a)** required candidates to select a word or phrase from a given part of the **Section B** material. Successful answers included no additional material either before or after their chosen word or phrase.
- A significant majority of candidates answered **Question 2(a)(i) and (ii)** correctly.
- The term offered should have the exact meaning of the prompt provided in the question. The word or phrase should fit in the sentence in the same way, both semantically and grammatically.

Limited responses

- Responses sometimes included material which distracted from the correct term. Some candidates needed to consider how the replacement of one term by the other might work, in the context of the sentence found in **Section B**.
- Some incorrect answers did not have the same grammatical form as the prompt, so would not have made sense as replacements. For example, the prompt for **Question 2(a)(ii)** was an adjective, so candidates needed to offer an adjective in response, rather than a noun or verb.
- Occasional responses had confused this task with **Question 2(f)**, in which candidates were asked to provide their own synonyms or re-workings of terms, rather than finding these in the material. As such, responses sometimes included *not where it should be*, *not in the correct position* or *in the wrong location* (for 'out of place', **Question 2(a)(i)**) and *strange to the point of being funny* or *bizarre* (for 'ridiculous', **Question 2(a)(ii)**).
- The adjective *ambitious* was a frequent incorrect answer in **Question 2(a)(ii)**.

(b) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates recognised the importance of confining their selected information to the relevant part of the material.
- Of the four points to convey in own words for a maximum of two marks, the most often achieved were points 1 and 4.
- Some successful re-workings using candidates' own words included:
 - *an increasing cost of power* and *higher electricity payments* (for 'rising energy bill')
 - *the current risk* and *the imminent danger* (for 'the ever-present threat (of climate change)')
 - *in an economy yet to reach its peak, electricity is needed; electricity is highly necessary in an evolving economic climate, and with economic growth ongoing, electric power is a must* (for 'a developing economy, where electricity is essential') and
 - *carbon-heavy* and *filthy* (for '(often) dirty', which was also successfully reversed and conveyed by terms such as *clean(er)* and *more environmentally friendly*).

Limited responses

- Not all candidates recognised the need to render their selected ideas 'using (their) own words as far as possible'.
- Key terms for which candidates needed to provide synonyms were, therefore, often reproduced. These were: *rising energy bill*, *(ever-present) threat*, *developing*, *essential*, *expensive* and *(often) dirty*.
- Question terms, such as 'growing', were sometimes included. These could not be credited.
- The term 'bill' was occasionally taken to refer to government legislation, rather than a demand for payment, while the figurative 'turning the tide in favour of nuclear power' was sometimes seen as a more literal reference to tidal energy generation.
- Occasional answers included irrelevant material, or referred to increasing *demand* for energy, rather than the correct focus on financial and environmental angles.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates answered within 'about 40 words', as specified in the question rubric, thereby demonstrating summary skills.
- Answers were almost always focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material.
- The majority of candidates answered in continuous prose, as directed in the question rubric.

- There was understanding of some of the key points in many responses. The six creditworthy points were all attempted, with most candidates attempting to convey three or four ideas for the available four marks.
- Some responses successfully conflated more than one idea within a sentence, respecting the word limit. An example of conflation of two valid ideas in only 13 words was: *He says Bataan's welds are the Philippines' best and better than the United States'.*
- An example of a succinct response conveying five creditworthy points – for a maximum of four marks – within the stipulated 40 words, included:
 - *The electrical wires are good quality and neatly presented. The walls are 1.5m-thick concrete. 100 per cent of the welds were X-ray inspected, so have better quality than in the US. The welding is nicer than elsewhere in the Philippines.*

Limited responses

- Some candidates would have benefited from not repeating the question stem or introducing 'Congressman Mark Conjuangco'. In this way, they would have reduced the number of words not directly related to features of the nuclear power plant.
- A degree of precision is required in summary-skills responses, even while seeking to convey only the most essential ideas. Examples included:
 - Candidates needed to give accurate measurements and units (*1.5 metres* and *30 millimetres*) of the concrete walls and the containment structure's steel respectively, and to refer to the *thickness* of the walls, as opposed to their height, for instance.
 - References to the percentage of welds subject to X-ray inspection were not always clear, suggesting a qualitative judgement, rather than a numerical one. As in **Questions 1(c)** and **1(e)**, some candidates also misunderstood the term 'per cent' (per cent) and made reference to relative costs in *cents*.
 - It was sometimes implied that Mr Cojuangco himself had constructed the power plant.
- Questions testing summary skills always ask candidates to write in continuous prose. Some candidates needed to write their answers in complete, grammatical sentences.

(d)(i) Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates correctly located the correct part of the material from which to identify their responses. They nearly all attempted to make two separate points, although there was some repetition when including both *unfinished family business* and *revive his father's dream*.

Limited responses

- Some responses would have benefited from more detail, given that there was no word limit imposed. For example: *The project would have made the Philippines a pioneer of nuclear energy* required the crucial context 'in Asia'.
- Greater clarity was sometimes needed as to who (which President Marcos; father or son) had originally aimed to bring nuclear power to the Philippines, while the timing of the 'oil price shock' in the 1970s was viewed as still current by some candidates.
- As with Congressman Mark Conjuangco, in **Question 2(c)**, it was sometimes assumed that either President Marcos – more usually the Senior – had personally built the Bataan power plant. Comments such as *it was his father's business* and *the Marcos family owned the business which originally constructed the plant* suggested that the term 'unfinished ... business' was not always understood to be partly figurative.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- The majority of candidates correctly located the correct part of the material from which to identify their responses. They usually attempted to make two separate, valid points; the political change which removed Marcos Senior from power, and (fear caused by) the news of the Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union.

Limited responses

- Some responses demonstrated limited precision as to what exactly had occurred politically, or which President Marcos was involved, shortly after Bataan's construction had been completed. Examples of vague statements included: *There were protests in Manila*, and *people wanted a new government*.

- Candidates sometimes implied that the Bataan power plant had suffered damage, in such answers as: *There was a serious accident at the power plant*. Vaguer still were suggestions that *an accident occurred at a nuclear power plant*, with no reference to location.
- Some responses offered their own suggestions, such as the power plant being incomplete or ineffective.
- There was occasional confusion between Bataan and the accidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima. It was evident from a number of responses that the location and significance of Chernobyl were not universally understood.

(e) Comprehensive responses

- Many candidates answered within the stipulated 'about 30 words'.
- Answers mostly focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material.
- The majority of candidates answered in continuous prose, as instructed.
- Candidates who copied the scientific terms, reducing other elements of the text for the necessary concision, tended to be more successful than those who attempted to re-work the more technical aspects of the material.
- An example of a successful response, conveying three of the possible six creditworthy points within 30 words, was:
 - *He states that people use the analogy of cars or motorcycles, but nuclear reactors age from neutron bombardment. Other mothballed nuclear plants have successfully been reopened.*

Limited responses

- Some candidates would have benefited from not repeating the question stem. This would immediately reduce the number of words unrelated to Mr Cojuangco's objections.
- Some responses unnecessarily included the objections the congressman did concede, relating to time and money. These did not answer the question, and yet used up some of the available words.
- There were some misunderstandings of the material. Examples included:
 - *Mr Cojuangco uses the analogy of cars and motorcycles*, rather than his citing of other people who use this comparison
 - 'effectively brand new' being rendered as *effective and brand new*
 - claims that *the Bataan power plant is not the first to be 'mothballed' or is not the only example of a nuclear power plant being made operational*, when the sense was of 'the first mothballed nuclear plant to be put into operation'
 - the significance of the Tennessee example.
- Questions testing summary skills always ask candidates to write in continuous prose. Some answers needed to be written in complete, grammatical sentences.

(f) (i) – (iii) Comprehensive responses

- Almost all candidates understood the requirement to use their own words to state the meaning of the given terms from the material.
- Of the three sub-questions, **Question 2f(ii)** proved most accessible, followed by **Question 2f(iii)**.
- Successful examples included:
 - *Fighting for something difficult; constantly battling* (different grammatical form from the prompt); *fighting against overwhelming pushback; fighting with the odds stacked against you; trying to overcome a disadvantage; going through (many) obstacles; going against the majority view, and desperately trying to achieve something (Question 2f(i)).*
 - *Delayed; temporarily stopped; cancelled; left hanging; deferred, and abandoned to resume later (Question 2f(ii)).*
 - *State similarities; indicate correlations; compare* (different grammatical form from the original), and *make connections between two things (Question 2f(iii)).*

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote too long a phrase or sentence, or merely cited the context from the material in which the given term(s) had appeared.

- Responses sometimes missed an essential part of the concept expressed in the question prompt, such as:
 - *a difficult fight* suggests 'uphill battle' but omits 'waging', while *fighting* does not convey the original idea of futility or struggle (**Question 2f(i)**)
 - *waiting to resume the call* implied the context of a telephone call (**Question 2f(ii)**)
 - *similarities* or *the same things* both omit the sense of 'draw' from 'draw comparisons', while *relate* needed something more to match the context (**Question 2f(iii)**).
- The figurative sense of 'draw' (**Question 2f(iii)**) was not always understood, with alternatives offered along the lines of *sketch*, *design* and similar.
- Incorrect or insufficiently precise attempts included:
 - *trying*, *arguing (for)* or *fighting to get something done* (**Question 2f(i)**)
 - *indefinitely*, which follows 'put on hold' in the material, and *not used* (**Question 2f(ii)**)
 - *contrast*, *differentiate* and *identify differences* (**Question 2f(iii)**).

(g)(i) Comprehensive responses

- A number of candidates answered within the stipulated 'about 30 words'.
- Answers generally focused on the correct section of the **Section B** material.
- The majority of responses were in continuous prose, as directed.
- The most frequently attempted points related to the long timescale for re-commissioning, the merits of investing in renewable alternatives and the minimal contribution to the country's power.
- An example of a response conveying three creditworthy points within 30 words was: *The plant would take years to re-commission and would only provide 2.5 per cent of the country's power. Solar and wind projects would take less money and time.*

Limited responses

- Some candidates would benefit from practising summarising short passages of text, especially remembering that they should not risk changing the original key terms unless it benefits the answer's concision. For example:
 - Although changing 'easier' or 'quicker' to 'better' or 'safer' uses the same number of words, it alters the meaning.
 - While replacing 'are cheaper' with 'will cost less money' conveys the correct idea, more words are used than appear in the original, doing the opposite of what a summary task is testing. The same applies to using 'will take less time to build' for 'are... much quicker', and to 'get the plant up and running again' for 're-commissioning the plant'.
- Answers sometimes lost the precision of the original material by generalising the points. An example includes: *It will take too long*, with no definition of 'it'. (Unlike in **Question 2(e)**, the sense could not be inferred by reading the answer as a continuation of the question.)
- Similar examples included: *The anti-nuclear groups would prefer different sources of energy* (no reference to 'cheaper' or 'quicker', nor to 'solar' or 'wind' projects) and *The limited amount of power it would generate* (without the specific '2.5 per cent').
- Relatively few candidates included the points about the earlier fight to stop the plant in the 1980s, nor the current generation's determination to prevent its opening.
- Some candidates offered their own objections to the plant, or used information from the material better suited to **Question 2(g)(ii)**.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Most candidates recognised that the geographical reason was linked to the features 'two dozen active volcanoes', regular 'earthquakes' and vulnerability to 'tsunamis'.
- Some candidates correctly attributed these to the Philippines' location on the 'Pacific Ring of Fire'.
- A few candidates included the third creditworthy point, that the plant in Fukushima, Japan – another country on the Pacific Ring of Fire – had previously been destroyed by a tsunami.

Limited responses

- Most candidates listed one, two or three of the specific prevalent features (volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis) as their entire answer.
- Occasional responses adopted the wrong focus and referred to material more relevant to earlier questions, such as **Question 2(g)(i)**.
- The term 'two dozen' was sometimes misunderstood, with candidates stating the Philippines have *two active volcanoes*.
- Some candidates offered their own ideas, rather than seeking information from the text. They mentioned, for example, the Philippines being an island nation. This, in the event of a nuclear disaster, might make escape difficult, or result in the pollution of ocean water.
- Candidates sometimes shortened the specific tectonic features – volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis – to the more general term 'natural disasters', or included erroneous weather events, such as tornadoes.

(h)

Comprehensive responses

- Some candidates were able to draw on their own knowledge to propose such concerns as the spread of radiation and its potential impact on human bodies, agriculture, water quality and similar. Although nuclear accidents had been mentioned in **Section B**, their consequences had not, and so were acceptable responses here. Occasional mention was made of the potential for a refugee crisis following such a disaster, with all the attendant pressures on the neighbouring nation(s).
- Other sensible suggestions included:
 - difficulties inherent in nuclear waste disposal, in particular into neighbouring/shared bodies of water
 - development of nuclear weapons capabilities and the resulting political tension or prospect of hostilities
 - the end of current trading of fossil fuels and the ensuing economic impact on the neighbouring country
 - potential fear and disquiet among a population unable to influence or control events they may face
 - a country unable to reap the benefits of its installation but being almost sure to bear the brunt of any negative consequences
 - the very long-term nature of the impact of any radioactive materials transported to another country.

Limited responses

- A number of candidates repeated material from **Section B**, despite the rubric instruction. Such responses mentioned accidents and disasters – sometimes even the specific Chernobyl and Fukushima ones – and tectonic activity, as well as issues relating to cost, public opinion, and renewable alternative energies.
- These latter points, as well as some other suggestions, did not clearly relate to the perspective of 'neighbouring countries'. Indeed, some responses did not make it entirely clear whether they referred to the country building the nuclear power plant or to its neighbours.