

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/11 Essay 11

Key messages

- Write in clear, formal English.
- Focus on the wording of the question; do not generalise on the topic.
- Write a plan before beginning the answer.
- Have a clear, focused but not over-long introduction.
- Structure the argument with clear paragraphs.
- Avoid using formulaic markers at the start of paragraphs, e.g. firstly, secondly, finally, etc.
- Make the argument balanced, considering a range of viewpoints.
- Ensure the conclusion steps back and evaluates the ideas presented in the essay.
- Include specific, named examples to support the argument.
- Proofread the essay to correct any basic errors.
- Candidates are expected to write between 600 and 700 words – short essays can be too brief and long essays may include repetition.

General comments

The majority of candidates engaged with their chosen question, although not all focused directly on the wording of the question, instead generalising on the topic. Candidates are advised to clearly focus on the wording, otherwise they are likely to produce an argument that only shows partial understanding of the question. Some learners wrote very long responses, which appeared to include everything they could think of, sometimes losing control of their argument and often repeating or contradicting themselves. Sometimes essays contained introductions that were too long, which included unnecessary definitions of terms ('First, we must state what is meant...'), and generalised page-long conclusions also detracted from, rather than enhanced, the quality of responses.

Most learners were able to clearly structure their responses, often going for a sensible introduction, argument, counterargument, conclusion structure. Formality and register were uneven, with some candidates opting for a very informalised and conversational register. Arguments should be written in formal, academic English.

The vast majority of candidates wrote sufficiently clearly to be easily understood and there were some good examples of a range of vocabulary and appropriate lexis for each of the questions. Vocabulary was a strength in many responses, including words like 'exponential,' 'innovation,' 'environmentalism' and 'exploited' with phrases such as 'societal norms', 'conformist regime' and 'revolutionary ideas.' There was also good use of technical language on more science-based tasks such as **Question 3**, e.g. 'alleles'.

However, there were many responses with inconsistent register using phrases such as 'off of', 'like', 'gonna', 'guys', 'kids', 'stuff' and 'way back'. Markers at the beginning of paragraphs were often rather informal using phrases like: 'To start off', 'To continue on', 'On the flip side', 'Lastly' and 'Conclusively'. It would be better to avoid these phrases at the beginnings of paragraphs. Some sentences started with 'Because' or 'And' leaving the sentence structure incomplete and sentences starting with 'Which' were very common in this series. Some responses used comma splicing to link clauses, rather than grammatically correct sentence structures. Many candidates used contractions, such as: 'won't', 'don't', 'doesn't', 'can't' and 'you're' (sometimes written as your). There were lots of 'its' and 'it's' errors. These are informalised structures and should be avoided in formal essays. Occasionally words in the question were spelt incorrectly, e.g. 'surveillance'. Made up words are also becoming an issue, e.g. 'comfortability' and 'overallly'. Some of the weaker responses had random capital letters scattered throughout the response or had a lack of appropriate punctuation, sentence control and paragraphing.

The best responses applied appropriate, detailed evidence to construct a developed argument that went into evaluation by stating a counter argument and then explaining why this was less powerful than the other side. Often these responses focused on developing a few ideas in detail, rather than briefly covering a wide range of ideas. Evaluation was not often seen, however, with learners generally content to give their points and move on, using a point, evidence, explanation structure. Some responses were very descriptive and did not create an argument: these seemed to be responses where the learner had picked a subject they did not know much about or had very little to write about. Weaker responses sometimes just offloaded everything they knew about the subject, often without giving an opinion that answered the question. These responses also tended to be quite repetitive.

Stronger responses had named, developed examples that supported the argument and often had a point – evidence – develop, structure to their paragraphs that created a valid argument. Some responses relied on listing pieces of evidence (e.g. film names for **Question 1**), often forgetting to explain what point they were making. Weaker responses sometimes just relied on description of the evidence or general assertion of an opinion without any supporting evidence at all.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Evaluate the view that horror movies no longer have the impact they once did.

There were a number of shorter responses, but also some that did understand the question and offered thoughts on the dynamics of film-making and how social change has influenced audiences, rather than giving opinions on individual films. There were some well-developed arguments on how modern films rely too much on gore and jump scares and also on the fact that modern audiences have become desensitised and so films have lost their shock value. Where candidates demonstrate specific knowledge of the horror genre, they are usually going to develop stronger, supported arguments. Several candidates referred to the cult classics: Frankenstein, Count Dracula, Psycho, The Shining, the Halloween movies. Weaker responses tended to argue how boring modern films are. The vast majority of learners agreed that horror films do not have the impact they once had and so there was little scope for evaluation as there was very little counter argument. Some learners struggled to come up with an argument that went beyond giving titles of older films they thought were good and then contrasting these with less successful modern versions. CGI was often disparagingly referred to in responses to this question. It is best to explain the abbreviation in full: Computer Generated Imagery.

Question 2

Assess whether travelling by aeroplane is the best form of travel.

Responses to this question tended to come up with very similar arguments: flying is fast, convenient, crosses seas, offers a good level of service and comfort and is more relaxing than driving, but flying is also expensive, no good for shorter journeys and bad for the environment. The issue of safety did offer scope for evaluation as better candidates were able to point out that flying is statistically the safest form of transport, but this is balanced by the fact that crashes tend to be fatal. Generally, the question did lend itself to lengthy and pedestrian approaches though, e.g. 'First we must define what is meant by travel' or responses that wrote a paragraph on each form of travel sometimes losing the focus on flying. To attain higher marks evaluation and comparison are required: comparing aeroplanes with other forms of transport was needed to help construct a balanced response. Limitations arose when the argument consisted of celebrating why aeroplanes were best without any reference to why or consideration of other forms of transport that might be better for a range of reasons.

Question 3

People should reduce the amount of meat they eat to protect the environment. Discuss.

Many candidates who responded to this question were knowledgeable on relevant environmental issues such as methane emissions, overuse of land and species extinction. That humans require protein was recognised by most learners and several were aware of how non-meat sources can provide protein. A few candidates considered the economic impact of reducing meat consumption especially those who come from countries reliant on meat exports. The environment angle was sometimes missed with candidates just presenting arguments on whether people should eat less meat. Arguments for included the fact that it would

be kinder to animals and reduce the environmental impact of farming and deforestation. Arguments against included the fact that meat is good for people, a lot of people work in the meat industry and that animal overpopulation would be a problem otherwise. Most learners who attempted this question did take a balanced approach and came up with conclusions suggesting that it would be helpful if everyone cut down a bit, rather than giving up. There were a small number of very weak essays which were either aggressively pro or anti-vegan.

Question 4

Improvements in society are more likely to be achieved by groups rather than individuals. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Strong candidates were able to look at the work of individuals like Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Gandhi, Jesus, Elon Musk and also groups like the slavery abolitionists and the women's suffrage movement. The best arguments argued persuasively that groups would not have existed without trailblazing individuals, but that these individuals needed a group behind them to achieve their goals. A few candidates referred to the pressure that can be exerted by trade unions, women's rights groups and those advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. Some candidates focused more on the local area and looked at examples like litter picking and supporting charities. These approaches could still work well, although a few learners did get lost in writing about different activities and did not really address the question. Perhaps less obvious local examples made for interesting reading; arguments over the sinking of a borehole and the setting up of communal agriculture projects. A few recognised the darker side of the question; the catastrophic influence of demagogues over significant numbers of people both today and in the past.

Question 5

Assess the view that comedy can never successfully deal with serious topics.

There were some interesting and well-argued essays, but a lack of examples was often a problem and very few candidates named specific comedians, comedy programmes or publications. Some learners gave lots of examples of comedians but without tying this convincingly to the question. There were some good arguments about how comedians can say the unsayable or bring attention to a cause while having to be careful not to offend. It would have been helpful if candidates had included and explored more specific examples of situations or issues/topics where it might be effective and appropriate to use comedy compared to situations where it would be unacceptable or ineffective. The general view was held that insults and hate speech could never be comic. It was assumed by several candidates that attempted this question that serious issues were off limits to comedy which was a pity as comedy and satire can often resonate powerfully when directed at serious matters.

Question 6

People who obey the law have nothing to fear from surveillance. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Arguments for surveillance included that it could protect you by catching criminals, support you against an unjust accusation and act as a deterrent to criminals and terrorists. Arguments against were that it could be used by the wrong people and a few did touch on 'Big Brother' style police state concerns. This question drew some very original responses which looked beyond the usual forms of surveillance by security personnel or cameras. The tracking of our online actions, in the words of one candidate, is leading to an 'Orwellian society', is 'tantamount to enslavement' and concludes that 'public safety is important but so are personal liberties'. Another concluded that 'being fearful of surveillance and feeling safe can both coexist'. These nuanced approaches are what distinguishes the competent from the excellent. It was definitely a question that offered scope for evaluation and a few learners did achieve this, suggesting that it was necessary to balance keeping people safe against individual freedom.

Question 7

Creative arts have no value other than as a leisure activity. Discuss.

There were several interesting, informed responses to this question which had knowledge of the topic to draw upon. A very comprehensive awareness of the range of creative arts was evident in some arguments. Several candidates lamented the sidelining of creative arts in the school curriculum. Value was rarely seen in purely monetary terms and 'leisure' was not viewed as a negative thing. The role of the arts in encouraging

critical thinking was recognised. One candidate wrote that 'society is so mathematically and science focused, the arts are no longer appreciated for what they can offer the enquiring mind'. There were unexpected additions such as carpentry, sketching and glass blowing which 'may seem mechanical but activate creativity and the development of motor skills'. The creative arts providing leisure/pleasure and income was frequently alluded to in the essays. One candidate wrote that the arts seen 'simply as a hobby may be seen to belittle the purpose of art'. Once again, this remark demonstrates an intelligent response to the question. Other essays offered examples such as Manga, ballet and even the Icelandic singer Laufey as one of the many examples of how artistic passion can lead to others' enjoyment and personal success. One memorable essay praised Banksy's street art for raising awareness of societal issues. Those in favour of the arts, which was the vast majority of candidates who attempted this question, wrote about how people could make their profession in the arts and also mentioned its value in reducing stress and aiding mental health. Arguments against tended to take the more practical view that there are not many jobs in 'art' and they are generally not well-paid.

Question 8

Schools should encourage candidates to be competitive to prepare them for adulthood. Discuss.

There were several arguments in favour of the fact that schools encouraging competitiveness would help learners to get into a good college and then get a good job and perform well in it. Learners also wrote about how competition could teach candidates important values. Conversely, some arguments included the fact that competition might make some candidates too aggressive and unpleasant to each other and cause mental health issues. There was the possibility of evaluation in balancing the negatives and positives and coming up with a middle ground solution like schools should only encourage candidates to be competitive if this was something they wanted to do or that schools could be competitive in some things and not others. There was also the occasional overly passionate and aggressively worded argument about how bad a particular school is. The adult world was invariably seen as a competitive jungle. Many arguments recognised the stress that candidates can suffer if schools prioritise competition. Stronger essays recognised that teamwork and competition can coexist. As one candidate put it 'skills developed through competition in school such as resilience, teamwork and goal setting are directly transferable to the demands of the workplace'. It was also recognised that an excess of competitiveness can mitigate against teamwork especially where sport is concerned. One candidate wrote that parents often urge their children to be competitive and this can lead to 'living their lives not for themselves but for the satisfaction of their parents'. Another when discussing competition and status wrote that it is 'important to undo the frightening idea that adulthood is some sort of jungle where one is prey and another is predator'.

Question 9

Essential workers are not appreciated enough in your country. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

The large majority of learners were supportive of essential workers, although a few did struggle to be clear who essential workers were. Common arguments were around poor pay and essential workers having to work long hours and sometimes risk their lives. There were lots of references to Covid-19 and medical staff in particular, although teachers often featured as well. Counter arguments included the fact that in some countries essential workers get more holidays and are able to import goods without paying tax.

A few essays had a narrow focus such as the police and teachers. Transport workers were also mentioned and the point was made that in some countries bus drivers are forced to sleep in their buses because of the lack of affordable housing. Several essays referred to the exploitation of immigrant workers who are, in the words of one candidate, 'essential to the US economy'. Very few essays considered what society would be like were it not for essential workers and their contributions. If this had happened more often an element of evaluation would have enhanced essays which were content with identifying roles and their remuneration.

Question 10

Evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment of criminals in your country.

There were some thoughtful responses to this question. Essays, irrespective of region, mentioned the lack of resources for rehabilitation and the fear and violence that plagues too many prison environments. Poor treatment by staff and a gang/drugs culture were also considered. With few exceptions, a bleak picture was painted. Better arguments focused on the need for prisons to rehabilitate offenders in order to keep society safe and wrote about how education programmes and counselling could help with this. Examples given

included art classes, creative writing classes and even the making of furniture for primary schools. Several essays pointed out the fact that the highest percentage of prison inmates come from the most disadvantaged groups in society. A few candidates pointed to the irony that some of those supposed to enforce the law are corrupt and open to taking bribes. Other learners wrote about how racism meant some people were more likely to end up in jail and less likely to get help. There was some consideration, where applicable, of countries using corporal and capital punishment and some debate on the moral implications of these methods. Weaker responses sometimes just gave examples of crimes and said how the criminals who committed these were treated but lacked a focus on effectiveness. Few candidates considered other areas that were relevant to the question, such as the strengths and weaknesses of the wider justice system in the chosen country and how the media and people in society view anyone with a criminal record negatively, which does not help with rehabilitation.

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Paper 8021/12 Essay 12

Key messages

- Read all the questions carefully.
- Make a short plan.
- Keep the introduction brief and focused on the question.
- Do not summarise the key points in the introduction.
- Do not use formulaic words and phrases to begin each new paragraph.
- Address the key words of the question throughout the response.
- Avoid sweeping statements and assertions.
- Analyse and evaluate instead of describing.
- Develop and appropriately exemplify all arguments.
- Conclude by evaluating and not summarising.
- Avoid long, complicated sentences which may make grammatical sense but are challenging for the reader to comprehend.
- Do not use slang and inappropriate idioms as they are unsuitable in formal writing.
- Use punctuation correctly and appropriately.
- Choose precise instead of verbose vocabulary.
- Maintain a consistent formal register.
- Check for grammatical errors, especially in spelling, agreement, articles and tenses.

General comments

The majority of candidates found the paper accessible and produced answers that were focused, showing at least a moderate level of understanding of the issues raised. Most candidates put in commendable effort attempting to structure answers and use the appropriate register. Their responses were full of interesting insights, backed up by examples that supported their viewpoints.

Question choice plays an essential role in enhancing answer quality. Choosing statements that candidates completely agree or disagree with can be counterproductive as it may lead to a lack of counter-argument and therefore insufficient discussion of the question. To improve answer quality, candidates should carefully consider their question choices and aim for those that challenge their perspectives or require them to engage critically with the topic at hand.

To further enhance answer quality, candidates should ensure they select questions where they can provide a range of relevant examples to support their arguments rather than merely providing information about topics they are knowledgeable in. Candidates who can provide a range of relevant examples that support their points tend to produce better answers. These specific examples serve as a strong foundation for evaluation, leading to more developed and analytical responses.

There were a number of very good answers, characterised by a willingness to engage analytically with the question, use a range of specific examples in a considered and thoughtful way and employ language skills judiciously, showing ambition and precision in their choice of vocabulary. Less effective but competent answers tended to offer explanations supported by examples but did not show a willingness to engage critically with the chosen topic. These 'safe' answers were usually relevant and focused, but development was often in the form of making the link to the question specific rather than offering anything of an analytical or exploratory nature.

It was rare to see weaker answers that struggled to maintain a focused response, digressed frequently, or offered minimal supporting examples or information. More common were those answers which offered a

focused response but had limited control of English: such responses were often littered with a large number of errors, some of which rendered the attempted argument vague and difficult to follow.

Despite the efforts put in by most candidates on this paper, poor control of grammar remains a frequently seen characteristic of their responses. To improve answer quality, it is essential for candidates to ensure proper language usage and correct register while addressing questions.

Comments on communication

While some of the communication errors below do not seriously impede communication, they tended to appear frequently in essays. Hence, if candidates were able to overcome these, they could provide themselves with the possibility of demonstrating a strong quality of communication.

- Subject-verb agreement errors are common yet rectifiable and if avoided, could significantly improve a candidate's AO3 mark.
- A frequent grammatical error was the misuse of prepositions. Examples included 'at' being used instead of 'within', 'to' being used instead of 'of' and 'on' being used instead of 'with'.
- Another frequent grammatical error was the inaccurate conjugation of the verb 'to be' with non-countable nouns. This was especially apparent in **Question 9** and **Question 4** where candidates would frequently write 'surveillance are' rather than 'surveillance is' or 'family are' rather than 'family is'.
- Candidates also had problems with the use and omission of definite and indefinite articles.
- A similarly common error was the use of adjectives to modify verbs rather than used an appropriate adverb or adverbial phrase. For instance, using the adjective 'better' in the construction 'understanding our feelings better' as opposed to using 'better' in an adverbial construction.
- Although some candidates were able to identify 'youth' as a suitable alternative for 'the young', it was common to see 'elderlies' being used to describe the older members of a population/or generation, as opposed to the grammatically-appropriate 'elders' and 'youngers' instead of 'young people'.
- Misused phrases such as 'On the contrary' regularly used to start paragraphs when 'on the other hand' would have been more appropriate. Other incorrect phrases included 'in the end of the day', 'to add on' and 'different than'.
- Punctuation was an issue for some candidates with random capital letters scattered throughout the response or a lack of appropriate punctuation, such as comma splicing.
- The distinction in use between present perfect and past perfect is an important area for improvement.
- Conjunctions were often missing in list-like structures and compound sentences.
- Another common error was the confusion about the use of a singular or pluralised form – this was an issue in questions where candidates could not decide whether to use sport or sports, art or the arts and the family or families.
- Confusion between 'whether' and 'weather'; 'you're' and 'your' as well as 'their' and 'there'.

It seems that many candidates are used to communicating or engaging in/with debate and argument through the spoken form as there are numerous times in a response where informalities in phrasing appeared. Candidates should refrain from the following in order to avoid slips in register that, while accepted in the context of spoken discourse, are informal in the context of writing an academically assessed response:

- Using words and phrases such as 'way more', 'gonna', 'kids', 'majorly', 'teens', 'back in the day', 'and more', 'bunch' and 'like'.
- Using obliques to denote choice such as 'and/or' and 'he/she'.
- Informal discourse markers such as 'well', 'no', 'of course', 'on top of that'.
- Using contracted forms of words such as 'would not', 'do not', 'does not', 'can not', 'you're' and 'I'm'.

In addition to the above, directly addressing the reader was commonly observed in a number of responses. Whilst this is an acceptable convention in the context of spoken discourse, candidates should be mindful that they are not giving advice or conversing with the reader.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

To what extent should people be proud of the nation they belong to?

Although this was not one of the more popular questions, it elicited some good answers with some astute assessments of the appeal and dangers of patriotism. The responses seen for this question were attempted by candidates with impressive historical knowledge, who were able to draw on numerous contemporary and historical examples of governments or citizens promoting or engaging in national pride in both beneficial and harmful ways. The fact that the task did not explicitly restrict candidates to 'your country' was decisive in this respect – as candidates could, if they so wished, confine themselves to what was most immediately familiar, as well as extending the focus of their discussion beyond. Accordingly, there was a good range of content presented in arguments. So, while some would focus on natural or man-made wonders, culture richness and diversity, others favoured social issues, such as welfare provision and free education entitlements.

A differentiating factor was where candidates also extended their consideration to include sources of shame, for instance, the persistence of racial biases and feelings of cultural inferiority as a legacy of colonialism. There were some good uses of historical examples such as Nazi Germany and the lengths that modern Germany has undertaken, to put this period behind it. A minority of candidates misread the question and related it only to their country which led to an unbalanced approach, focusing on praise or criticism of their government.

Less successful responses tended to list reasons for why an individual may feel pride in his or her country with little expansion offered. Weaker answers, which were few in number, sometimes listed these reasons without applying them to the question, resulting in a series of descriptions of national attributes or monuments.

Question 2

Mathematics has more importance in the classroom than in the outside world. Discuss.

This question tested the candidate's understanding of the importance and application of mathematics both in the classroom and outside world. Candidates who chose this question generally showed a working knowledge of the significance of learning mathematics, as well as its applications in various fields.

Successful answers provided a clear appreciation of maths as the starting point for techniques and principles that are applied and expanded upon in the wider world. The candidates used a range of ideas to support their arguments, with weaker responses focusing on basic arithmetic operations like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Stronger answers developed opinions about how mathematics has contributed to critical thinking, scientific discoveries, engineering, architecture, AI, and economics.

Evidence used by candidates included examples from history such as famous scientists or historical figures who made significant contributions due to their knowledge of maths (Albert Einstein, Aristotle). They also mentioned current applications like robotics and programs like Chat GPT that use mathematical principles in AI. Other examples provided were physics and nuclear physics leading to renewable energy sources.

The question allowed candidates with varying abilities to engage and develop their ideas while maintaining a balance between the two benchmarks – mathematics in the classroom and its application outside of it. This led to successful responses where both aspects were effectively reconciled. Weaker responses sometimes lost a focus on the classroom or outside world issue and simply described applications of mathematics in a non-focused way but, these were rare.

Question 3

To what extent is animal welfare everyone's responsibility?

This question was quite popular and prompted insightful discussions. It focused on candidates' understanding of responsibility, leading to a more profound analysis of animal welfare issues and its interconnectedness with human society. The majority of answers demonstrated an awareness of central animal rights issues and used these as the basis for discussion of where human responsibilities lie.

Stronger candidates went beyond simply listing benefits and drawbacks and considered their own role and responsibility in ensuring proper care for animals. This led to some very good responses, which were

carefully thought out and demonstrated an understanding of the importance of animal welfare within our ecosystems.

Candidates also explored a wide range of issues related to animal rights and welfare, from individual actions to international policies and corporate responsibilities.

Some weaker answers did emerge, but these tended not to be due to a lack of understanding or communication skills. Instead, they were characterized by a failure to engage with the main thrust of the question: the extent to which animal welfare is **everybody's** responsibility. Content-wise, some candidates tended to lapse into descriptive responses that focused more on recounting instances of harm to animals or the activities of animal welfare agencies rather than engaging evaluatively with the question itself.

Question 4

Evaluate how important it is for young people to spend more time with their families.

Easily the most popular question on the paper which allowed candidates of varying abilities to engage in some level of discussion. However, the nature of the content resulted in issues with register and inappropriate stylistic choice where many candidates treated this question as an invitation to advise readers instead of writing a formal, discursive essay. Exemplification also tended to be very general and scenario-based which, while not invalid as it could serve illustratively, limited the possibilities for evaluation. Most did not consider spending 'more' time, and those who did, were often distracted by the role of technology in young people's lives nowadays, which was not the focus of the question.

More successful responses considered the effects on the rest of the family rather than just the young person. The average response was relevant with formulaic examples and reasons for the importance of family time but rarely offering any analysis. A small proportion of better answers considered the issue in a more critical and nuanced way, considering different family scenarios and exploring the potentially detrimental impact of family relationships. Sometimes candidates ignored the 'time' element of the question, often just giving reasons why families were important without this focus.

Question 5

Assess whether the novel or poetry is more effective in expressing how we experience life.

This question was about the differences between novels and poetry, as well as their impact on society. Despite the question not attracting many candidates, those who did attempt it were generally able to identify and discuss the respective features of novels and poems, including relevant examples.

Some candidates provided excellent answers that demonstrated a deep understanding of literature and its various forms. They used specific examples from both novels and poems to support their arguments and demonstrate how novels or poems differed from other art forms and their impact on social change in the world. These responses were more successful because they showed an appreciation for literary works and devices, leading to insightful and original analyses.

However, some candidates attempted to answer the question without any reference to literary works or devices, which resulted in generalized and assertive responses that offered limited opportunity for development. Many of these answers relied on trite observations such as 'novels are longer' or 'poetry is too difficult', making it hard for them to provide a viable answer.

Question 6

Passengers should not have to pay for public transport in your country. Discuss.

There were some very good accounts of how public transport can benefit people in the candidate's home country, linked to reasons why free access would be beneficial. Candidates generally recognised that free public transport comes with an opportunity though some weaker candidates assumed this would simply mean buses and trains would stop running as operators went out of business. Better candidates understood the role of government subsidies and produced good cost-benefit analyses of the issue with regard to improvements to the environment and reduced crowding on roads.

There were several responses where the candidates openly admitted they had very little knowledge of the public transport situation in a particular country.

Candidates seemed to enjoy answering this question and as in **Question 4**, many felt they could call on personal experience. There were more specifics in this question, and this allowed candidates to move more easily from description to analysis. Some candidates were able to make interesting points about a 'free public transport for women' scheme which exists as a personal safety initiative in some regions.

There were some very good answers from candidates who were able to apply the rules of economics to the idealised proposition of the question. Here, the focus in the task on 'your country' offered candidates a tangible, as well as familiar and immediate reference point, and contributed to often very thoughtful and well-reasoned consideration and evaluation of the viability of the proposition within their national contexts.

Question 7

Evaluate the importance of the arts such as painting, drama and music in education.

This popular question produced a variety of responses in terms of quality, with many candidates grouping the three art forms together and offering straightforward explanations of how they could be good for candidates. Better responses looked more specifically at facets of art and how it could be beneficial. Many candidates were keen to stress the value of the arts – they were able to identify and often analyse the value that arts subjects add to the curriculum. Nearly all identified their parents or occasionally teachers as opponents to the teaching of the arts. The nature of the question allowed candidates to work through numerous specifics, for instance, how drama helps candidate development or how music offers relaxation in the classroom and many were able to relate these to the concept of personal development. Some weaker candidates suggested that the arts teach imagination or could be a distraction stopping candidates from completing work.

Better candidates explored learning differences in candidates and how the arts can help improve the mental health of candidates. There were lots of discussions about arts improving critical thinking. Some candidates explained the importance of arts as extra-curricular activities, how these were important to universities and moving onto higher education.

As with **Question 2**, candidates' own experience in education, and education in their country, proved crucial in informing their thinking. Those who also looked beyond their national context were able to weigh up the potential limitations of their experience as being very much rote-like, whilst recognising how this, in turn, reflected on social pressures. An impressive number of candidates evaluated the issue in question within a broader conceptual contextualisation of the nature and purpose of education.

Question 8

Assess the view that sport should be about enjoyment rather than winning.

Candidates who answered this question usually had a good knowledge of and interest in sport. How effectively this knowledge was deployed depended on how well the focus on enjoyment/winning was used as a basis for argument. In some cases, the argument went along a regressive route, essentially arguing that enjoyment was preferable to winning because participants who enjoyed their sport were more likely to win. Stronger responses either recognised the complementary nature of the two aims and explored the possibility that they did not need to be considered in such a polarised way. Frequently, however, the examples chosen were looked at in an over-idealistic way, such as the claim that particular successful sportspersons did not even try to win because they enjoy themselves so much whilst playing sport.

In order to achieve a more convincing answer, candidates needed to recognise the positive aspects of both concepts before making their choice. This would allow for a better understanding of how these two factors can coexist in different contexts within sports.

Question 9

To what extent is surveillance in public places essential in your country?

There were many well-expressed answers to this question which looked into the obvious advantages of high levels of surveillance in their communities but also showed awareness of possible abuses of this technology. CCTV was almost universally suggested as the primary means of surveillance, with examples given of how it had helped to deter criminals or secure convictions. A much smaller number of candidates suggested increased policing as a form of enhanced surveillance, and still fewer engaged with the idea of internet surveillance.

Many candidates focused on how surveillance could be used to reduce crime or help catch criminals. Weaker candidates used general examples such as rape, theft or knife crimes. There was also a common awareness of how surveillance could be used for criminal or hostile ends, even when the rationale for its introduction was designed to catch criminals. More successful responses considered governmental control, freedom of speech, privacy, data protection and hacking, and even the internet as a public space. Some less well-argued responses relied on simple assumptions about the relationship between surveillance and law and order but many were better, critically assessing and evaluating a range of different and very plausible scenarios.

Question 10

Examine the view that live theatre is not an accessible art form in your country?

Only a handful of candidates attempted this question. Alongside ideas about exclusivity or elitism, there were also valid ideas presented about physical accessibility due to disability. Candidates discussed different types of theatre, such as cultural and religious forms, as well as drama performances in schools, and how they contribute to the diversity of experiences that can be enjoyed by all members of society regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/13 Essay 13

Key messages

- Essays require question focused introductions and conclusions.
- It should always be clear to the reader where new paragraphs begin.
- Direct colloquial or conversational remarks addressed to the reader are rarely appropriate.
- Opinions should be conveyed using an appropriate academic register.
- Always strive to be sensitive or measured when expressing opinions.
- Examples should be specific not vague or generalised.
- Appropriate knowledge of the chosen topic is essential.
- Make sure that references to external sources are accurate and relevant.
- Avoid vague, sweeping, and assertive remarks.
- Contractions (is not, does not, could not) are best avoided
- Remember that you are advised to write between 600 and 700 words.
- Ensure that you allow sufficient time to write a concluding paragraph.
- Handwriting should be as clear and legible as possible.

General comments

While **Question 4** on truth telling and **Question 9** on the impact of music were the most popular questions, there was some interest in the other questions except for **Question 2** on the relevance of science fiction, where there was only one response... Given that there were just over 100 candidates in the 2024 winter session, it was not surprising that a few of the questions were not taken up in significant numbers.

Question 7, for example about online medical appointments proved to be of some interest and was generally answered well. Candidates, without exception, took a balanced view of this question, recognising both the advantages and disadvantages of online consultations with doctors. These candidates were aware of the potential for debate within the question. All the questions on this paper require debate, discussion, and evaluation. Responses that remain at the descriptive level, no matter how accurately written, cannot expect to attract high marks. Thoughtful responses to this question, and the other questions, selected vocabulary carefully, adopted an academic register and presented relevant examples to support arguments. These essays considered more than one point of view before reaching a conclusion. While the candidate's own point of view should be clear, the strength and persuasiveness of that view is even more compelling when other opinions are recognised.

Question 9, on the impact of music, like all the other questions required debate. The key words or phrases in a question should always be considered. In this case 'always positively' suggests that there are possible negative aspects in the world of music. Candidates, content with describing music they liked, did not grasp the full potential of the question. What was required was an argumentative thread that weighed up the beneficial and not so beneficial aspects of music.

Where a candidate struggles to write with reasonable grammatical accuracy, they will always be at a disadvantage because AO3, communication using written English, is fundamental to achieving a good mark. There were too many scripts in this session where errors accumulated, seriously affecting readability. That, allied to very poor handwriting, contributed to a number of weak answers. Nevertheless, even among these, relevant ideas and arguments could be discerned and credit was given.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

To what extent are disadvantaged people prevented from participating in sport?

This was a popular question, the common example being the Paralympics. There were a few thoughtful essays that considered factors other than physical disability with a few candidates recognising that ease of participation in sport depends upon location and material wealth.

However, an unfortunate feature of several essays was insensitivity amongst the weaker and less mature candidates. There were too many responses where the disadvantaged were simply dismissed with remarks that suggested no understanding of the many opportunities that are or could be made available to the disadvantaged.

Better essays promoted the idea that sport is for everyone and therefore requires support from schools and communities. One of the more sensitive essays concluded with the remark that: it seems that participation in sport is primarily a first-world luxury.

Apart from this essay there were very few references to other relevant contexts such as gender, ethnicity and the ways in which sport can provide an outlet for youthful energy.

Question 2

Evaluate the usefulness of science fiction in solving current problems.

There were not enough responses to this question to give meaningful feedback.

Question 3

No nation can be truly happy unless all its citizens are equal. Discuss.

There were answers which examined what might constitute equality and happiness. A few celebrated those countries where there is increased equality across gender and racial lines. Most of the candidates argued that equal pay is both impossible and undesirable to implement. It was generally accepted that those who work hard to acquire skills deserve to be rewarded. The unequal distribution and ownership of the world's resources were also commented upon as an indication of how difficult it is to achieve equality both economically and politically. One candidate wrote: *where you are born and to whom with few exceptions sets you up for life* and another remarked that: *those with little are often the most generous*. This latter point was made to illustrate that wealth and happiness are not synonymous. Other essays revealed similarly thoughtful observations. One memorable essay challenged the question by saying: *individuals can be happy no matter how unfair the nation is*. It is worth remembering that essays which scrutinise any question's apparent assumptions can often be interesting.

Question 4

Telling the truth is always the right thing to do. To what extent do you agree with this advice.

Interesting answers to this very popular question made the point that human relationships require trust and that telling lies harms the person telling them as well as others. Examples for questions like this, which are very general in nature can be very descriptive in nature. By writing down a list of examples before starting the essay, they can be used at appropriate moments in the essay to support valid general comments.

Most of the candidates recognised that there are occasions when to avoid upsetting others it is often best not to tell the truth. In this context, there was an astute remark in one essay: *you never know what people mean if they are always polite*. However, all the candidates referred to contexts where lying is never appropriate; in close relationships, in financial matters, in political affairs and over medical matters. Most of the respondents approached the question from a strictly personal perspective. This could be limiting but a few candidates made sharp observations like: *telling lies is more about self-protection than avoiding hurt to others*.

Only a few candidates broadened out their answers to address and discuss fake news and other distortions of the truth in the arena of communications. Examples could have been found in the wider world as well as the domestic one.

Question 5

To what extent do individuals have the power to influence how your country is governed?

Candidates' own countries were the focus although the most successful answers took account of the global perspective and referred to other political and economic issues to establish the significance of the individual in how a country is governed. Distinctions were made between democratic and more autocratic forms of government although it was also pointed out that in all systems of governance specific individuals, whether elected or not, have more power than members of the general population.

There were interesting references to how protest movements can be successful in bringing about change by influencing government policy and social attitudes. The possibility in certain countries of holding a referendum on controversial matters was seen as evidence for individual power over institutional power. Others argued that individual rights are enshrined in their countries' constitutions. It was also pointed out that in certain countries local officials with legal power are not directly appointed by those in the ultimate positions of power but by individuals who have voted for them.

Question 6

It is increasingly important that we have access to frozen fruit and vegetables. Discuss.

All the responses to this question were reasonably well-informed. Many candidates held to the belief that there is no loss of vitamin intake when consuming frozen as opposed to fresh food. Many argued that the freezing of food puts less pressure on both farmers and supermarkets, that frozen food is often cheaper than fresh food, that it maintains its freshness for longer and that you only need to defrost what is needed, thus cutting down on waste.

A few candidates, quite rightly, pointed out that refrigeration was not available everywhere and that millions of people have limited access to food of any kind. These candidates recognised the benefits of refrigeration but invited the reader to consider the question and its possible assumptions in a different light.

Question 7

To what extent do online appointments with patients improve the ways doctors provide care?

This question proved to be a relatively popular choice. Nearly all the responses were developed and there were a few responses which were awarded Level 4 marks. The advice to write an essay of 600–700 words was heeded by all those who attempted this question. If the data on individual patients was kept up to date, it was felt that appropriate care could be maintained. Online appointments were seen as advantageous where there are staff shortages and limited space at clinics or surgeries. The travel difficulties facing the elderly or disabled were also seen as factors in favour of virtual appointments. Waiting rooms were often seen, in the words of one candidate: *as breeding grounds for infections*. Generally, online appointments were seen as advantageous for routine and less serious health issues.

However, all the candidates pointed out ways in which there are disadvantages; the growing evidence that seeing your own doctor ensures the continuity and accuracy of health care, for example. One candidate, arguing as many did for the face-to-face consultation, wrote that: *doctors not only need to do physical examinations but also understand patients' emotions*. An easily overlooked but important objection was also raised; the absence of internet connectivity in certain countries and in many rural regions.

Question 8

To what extent do you agree that individuals should be free to choose their work or school hours?

This question was fairly popular. The information presented was often fascinating and informative. Essays provided a range of ideas both positive and negative in reaction to the question's proposition. Some felt that choice was an individual's inherent right but this proved difficult to sustain given all the variables. It was pointed out that efficiency and production might suffer if choice was allowed and that teachers or business managers require regular and fixed hours. Self-discipline and time management skills were seen as important for people of all ages. One candidate argued that having set hours: *can bring out many latent qualities such as discipline, determination, and ethical values*. Many felt that intelligent exercise of freedom of choice depends upon the maturity of the individual.

However, there were those who referred to some of the benefits of individual choice over work hours. Where young people are concerned, it was pointed out that science supports the idea that teenagers work more productively later in the day. A few argued very successfully that women in the workplace should have more options, particularly mothers with young children.

Question 9

The impact of music on people's lives is always positive. Discuss.

This question proved to be one of the most popular of all. Some of the responses were too descriptive but several candidates while demonstrating knowledge of the topic engaged in discussion, debate and evaluation. One thoughtful essay began: *many people could argue that music has negative aspects but overall music helps to develop cultural identity and emotional sensitivity in people's lives*. Immediately the reader is alerted to the candidate's nuanced approach. The 'detrimental' aspects which candidates focused on were alluded to with most responses mentioning music genres that sometimes provoke irrational and hurtful attitudes. On a lighter note, many candidates lamented the prevalence of background music in supermarkets and advertising.

Many of the responses provided illustrations of music's cultural importance. For example, there were references to K-pop and to the Punjabi rapper, Sidhu Moose Wala. These references were particularly intriguing for the older reader! Classical music was not neglected; Vivaldi's 'The Four Seasons' was offered as an example of how music can perfectly match our mood at different times of the year.

Candidates made the point that music can inspire, console, and bring back memories both joyful and sad. One candidate wrote that: *even in tragic moments music helps to process and validate one's feelings*. This essay was not only perceptive but enriched using sophisticated vocabulary.

Question 10

To what extent is advertising a form of art?

There were not enough responses to this question to give meaningful feedback.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/21
Comprehension 21

Key messages

- In **Question 1(c)**, some candidates exhibited very good organisational and analytical skills. These candidates incorporated connectives, conjunctions and linking phrases to good effect, so that their answers were fluent and structured. However, although **Question 1(c)** requires responses to be written in continuous prose, it is worth noting that it is not an essay-style question, so candidates do not need to include an introduction or a conclusion. A number of responses matched the criteria found in Levels 1 and 2.
- Unless a question specifically requests a personal opinion or an overall view, it is essential that candidates offer responses that are precise, detailed and based on relevant material from the Insert. Broad generalisations and personalised responses attract little to no credit. It is highly recommended that if a question does not instruct the candidate to write a response in their own words or within a certain word limit, candidates copy the relevant wording from the material (for example, **Questions 1(a), 1(b)(i), 1(b)(ii), 1(b)(iii), 2(a)(i), 2(a)(ii), 2(e), 2(f)(i), 2(f)(ii) and 2(g)**).
- Responses to **2(b)** and **2(d)** should adhere to the word limit and be written in complete sentences.
- It is essential that candidates read the question carefully and respond to the focus required by that question.
- It is important that candidates refer to the section of material that they have been directed to in the question.
- It is highly recommended that candidates note when the instructions ‘Do not refer’ and ‘Do not repeat’ are included in a question. For example, some candidates did not adhere to the instruction about not referring to the other toy in **Question 1(c), 1(d) and 1(e)**, or the instruction about not repeating any material from **Section A** in **Question 1(f)**.
- It is crucial that candidates note which person mentioned in the material has been cited in the question.
- Regarding questions worth one mark (e.g., **Question 1(b)(i), 1(b)(ii), 1(b)(iii), Question 2(f)(i), 2(g), 2(d) and 2(h)**), it is important to note that only the first idea or response is marked. Some candidates offered more than one consideration.
- Some candidates offered untargeted responses, which were not creditworthy. For example, in response to **Question 1(b)(iv)**, they copied out Nils’ opening comments during the meeting in their entirety.

General comments

- It is recommended that candidates indicate clearly if their answer to a question is not in the correct response area for that question. When candidates cannot fit their response into the response area, they are advised to request an additional booklet rather than write in the margins.
- Candidates are strongly advised not to use ellipsis. Such responses are rarely creditworthy, as candidates often omit the key words or phrases necessary to gain credit.
- It is recommended that when candidates are allowed to copy words or phrases from the material, they copy them carefully. For example, the following words and phrase proved to be difficult ones to copy for some candidates: ‘*automotive*’, ‘*competitor*’, ‘*vague thoughts*’, ‘*fragrances*’, ‘*odour*’ and ‘*perform*’.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Strong responses clearly stated the age range (2– to 4–year-olds/toddlers) that Mrs Mattieu thought FunToiZ had started to be outperformed by its competitors and contrasted her statement

with the one made by the Finance Director that sales across their whole range were falling. Some responses were too vague to gain credit: 'She thought the company had started to be outperformed in this particular age range' and 'sales of their toys are falling'.

(b) (i) Most responses identified Mrs Mattieu's experience with young children, noting that she had been a nanny, that she had worked with three young children or that she was the oldest in a family of five.

(ii) Many responses identified Arno had worked in the automotive industry before and had the relevant knowledge and experience. Some responses were too vague to gain credit: 'due to his superb technological know-how and extensive engineering knowledge' (with no reference to both being acquired whilst working in the automotive industry) and 'he thought that this car would be perfect' (without reference to the reason why this might be the case). A few responses were too speculative and not evidence-based, such as 'Arno recognised that young children are not getting enough exercise and cannot swim', or cited the reason that 'One in four inhabitants have a garden'.

(iii) Having read the Profiles of the design team, many responses noted that Nils had worked for a major competitor. Weaker responses referenced Ms Shiffrin (who was not a member of the design team) or offered responses that were not convincing (such as 'Nils because he is the design director', 'Arno because he has 20 years' experience' and 'Sophie, because she came up with an innovative design').

(iv) Better responses evidenced Nils yawning during the meeting, Nils only glancing at both of the descriptions or Nils only having a few vague thoughts about his design. Alternatives responses were credited: 'He did not give any clear response to the question from Arno regarding new ideas', 'He did not give a valid answer when he was asked if he had any idea for something new at the meeting' and 'He was clueless when Arno asked him for his thoughts at the design team meeting'. Valid points beyond the mark scheme were noted: 'Two weeks ago, Nils became the father of a baby girl, so she might be keeping him up at night' and 'Two weeks ago, Nils became the father of a baby girl, so he might have lost focus'. Weaker responses were descriptive rather than analytical and copied out Nils initial words at the design team meeting, and the exchange between Arno and Nils at the end of the Extract from the design team meeting. Responses that did not gain marks included the following: 'Nils did not submit an email with the description of his new toy unlike the other two' (as he was unlikely to email a description of his new toy to himself).

(c) Stronger responses demonstrated the ability to interpret the evidence offered in the material and read between the lines to show understanding of the advantages for Monorio as a country if the Clever Chair were to be manufactured. Relevant information from **Section A** was gathered to create three clearly expressed, cogent points. Better responses offered advantages that had been developed, whether by explanation, exemplification and/or linking two pieces of information from different parts of **Section A**, thereby highlighting their ability to present sustained and relevant analysis. These responses also understood that the most convincing responses are nuanced ones. Examples of candidates developing points well included the following: 'Young children would be likely to score higher in the cognitive ability tests because of the enthusiasm to learn that would stem from the chair's activities. The children would learn their alphabet and numbers in a constructive way'; 'The Clever Chair would allow parents to play a more effective role in their child's education because of its interactive features and the switch that parents need to slide in order to change the level. This allows for Mr Bruin's aim to be achieved since he commissioned television programmes to encourage parents to help their children learn at home' and 'Children would likely score higher in cognitive ability tests. Currently, test scores are 20 per cent lower than in other countries, but with the chair's features teaching them the alphabet and numbers, this could put children ahead in their education, and lead to the next generation being better qualified in the workforce and making Monorio more competitive'. Valid points beyond the mark scheme that were seen included the following: the advantage that children would be most likely playing indoors with this chair, so there would be fewer cases of childhood cases of skin cancer in Monorio because of its hotter climate, and the advantage that the chair has the potential to help children understand the concept of actions having consequences, which might help improve their behaviour in class which is currently worrying teachers.

Some responses would have attracted more credit if they had offered some analysis, rather than simply a list of advantages with little or no development, meaning that responses were limited to marks in Levels 1 and 2. Some responses did not note the focus of the question, offering either the advantages for parents and/or for Mrs Mattieu if the Clever Chair were to be manufactured, or the disadvantages of the Dual-Purpose Racing Car. Some disadvantages were too vague on their own

to gain any credit (e.g., 'It promotes the idea of cause and effect'), but 'It will help children understand cause and effect, which might help the levels of discipline in class' was clearly linked to the question and creditworthy. Some responses were too speculative: the Clever Chair could greatly increase Monorio's GDP (no information was provided in **Section A** regarding the size and importance of FunToiz as a company in relation to Monorio as a country and its GDP). Common misunderstandings seen in responses included the following: statements in relation to the chair solving the issue of young children achieving 14 hours of physical activity every week and/or assertions that usage of the chair would bring about a decrease in the percentage of overweight people in Monorio. Some responses included random facts, without any development, which was more of a description of the toy than an analysis. Weaker responses also repeated advantages, and/or an advantage and its development, which lacked clarity.

- (d) Strong responses focused on the advantages for Monorio as a country if the Dual-Purpose Racing Car were to be manufactured and did not refer to the Clever Chair. Examples of well-developed points included the following: 'It can be a paddling pool that would help make toddlers more confident in water so that when they start taking swimming lessons, they will be less afraid and more likely to continue learning, then more than a minority of the country will be able to swim' and 'It would increase the hours spent by children on physical activity and will incorporate more exercise into their lifestyles, reducing the number of overweight people in Monorio, as these children will grow up more likely to embrace physical activity'. Valid alternative points that were noted included the following: the car might help to improve the issue of poor discipline in Monorio's schools as children would be using up their excess energy playing with it, and the car might keep toddlers safe from the dangerous sea currents and potentially drowning as they can play in the paddling pool instead. Weaker responses referred to one in four inhabitants having a garden or referring to it possibly winning the prize for innovation.
- (e) Stronger responses referred solely to the reasons why Mrs Mattieu might choose the Clever Chair and not mentioning the Dual-Purpose Racing Car. The following examples of well-developed points were noted: 'Ms Shiffrin, as a specialist in child psychology and mental development, is probably very interested in the Clever Chair's ability to help toddlers' cognitive development, and she could convince Mrs Mattieu, her close friend since university, to choose it' and 'Sophie says that it is a really innovative toy and, as Funtoiz is still the only manufacturer in Monorio not to win the Prize for Innovation in Industry, this chair could win it for Mrs Mattieu'. Valid alternative points included the following: references to the fact that the chair will include various packs of fun surprises that will be sold separately, which is likely to improve FunToiz's sales figures, and references to the possibility that schools might buy the chair in bulk, providing another income stream that could boost FunToiz's sales figures. Responses that did not gain credit as they did not answer the question included references to Sophie winning a prize for her innovative and stylish packaging (information located in the Profiles of the design team). Some responses were too vague on their own (such as 'Sophie said that she had spent a lot of time thinking about what children love'), but this reference could gain credit when linked to the question (e.g., 'Sophie said that she had spent a lot of time thinking about what children love, so this toy is likely to appeal to them, and their sales would increase').
- (f) Better responses offered well developed explanations as to why teenagers exercise so little and did not repeat any material from **Section A**: 'Teenagers might only exercise for 30 minutes a day because they usually have a load of homework to do, giving them little time to go outside and exercise, and some teenagers prefer staying indoors and sitting while watching movies or playing video games' and 'Teenagers might only exercise for 30 minutes a day because most teenagers have a busy schedule. They wake up early, go to school, some have extra-curricular activities and/or a job and then lots of homework'. Valid alternative points included references to teenagers perhaps lacking knowledge about the health implications as a result of taking insufficient exercise. Weaker responses referred to material from **Section A**, such as it being too hot to exercise, teenagers not having a garden or teenagers having to look after younger siblings. Some responses were too assertive, such as the idea that all teenagers are lazy. Some responses offered the advantages for teenagers of only exercising for 30 minutes. Some responses were too vague, such as simple references to school, but this idea could gain credit when expanded (e.g., responses citing school becoming more demanding for teenagers).

Section B

Question 2

- (a) (i) Better responses noted the reason why Gary Marr entered the perfume trade and quoted only the relevant element, that he was *'in need of some money'*. A few responses were too vague e.g., one-word answers, such as 'Money', some referenced the answer to (a)(ii) and some thought that he needed the money for his band.
- (ii) Many responses noted the focus of the question and responded with a reference to his *'knack of remembering chemicals by their odours'*. Some responses were too vague as they had either omitted an important detail e.g., 'He had a knack of remembering chemicals' or framed their answer in their own words e.g., 'He could keep track of chemicals by their odours'.
- (b) Many responses scored well by noting lines 9 to 15 and quoting relevant elements in about 50 words. Some communicated more than five bullet points, showing excellent summarising skills. Weaker responses missed key details e.g., 'Dishwashing scents must bloom', without reference to *'when wet'*, used vague synonyms e.g., 'You make calm fragrances', or had higher word counts than the original e.g., 'build up in intensity' for *'bloom'*, or referenced lines 6 to 8.
- (c) (i) Many responses offered reasons along the lines of masking various smells within the airplane. Valid points included references to perfume's relaxing qualities for those who might be stressed/fearful about flying e.g., 'as perfume can activate dopamine which helps with someone's mood, so they enjoy the flight more'. Some responses were too vague, such as references to 'comfortable' (with no detail about in what way it would make a flight comfortable).
- (ii) Some responses offered well-phrased responses about the effect on cinemagoers: 'make them crave popcorn', 'makes their mouths water', 'to entice them to buy' and 'to subconsciously convince them to buy'. Weaker responses highlighted reasons such as 'nostalgia for the cinema' and 'popcorn is associated with the cinema'.
- (d) Better responses noted the line references, included all the key elements in the summary, and responded in continuous prose. Weaker responses offered vague responses e.g., 'He knew whether the driver was smoking', referring to 'windows rolled down' the opposite to *'closed'* or citing information found in line 22.
- (e) Stronger responses noted the focus of the question and located the references to what Marr did not enjoy, what he was obliged to do and what he hated in the material, quoting the relevant details in full. Some responses were too vague: 'no two noses are exactly alike' and 'one scent is offensive'.
- (f) (i) Strong responses noted the phrase 'economic reach' in the question, and this led them to lines 20 to 21 in the material. Some responses did not note the focus of the question, referencing the financial importance of this industry instead. A few responses were too vague e.g., 'its products reach more than half the population', so no mention of which population.
- (ii) Better responses noted the 'financial importance' aspect of the question and located the two examples in the material, quoting them in full. Some responses were too vague: '\$30 billion' instead of *'\$30 billion each year'*.
- (iii) Strong responses noted 'lengthy' in the question, identified the three references and quoted all the relevant information. Some responses missed information as it was located further on in the material.
- (g) This proved to be a difficult question for candidates. Better responses noted the two stages and quoted all the relevant details. Some responses were too vague and missed the idea of smelling in the first stage or not referring to the damp cloth stage.
- (h) A range of synonyms were noted: 'unbothered' for *'indifferent'* in (i), 'grossed out' and 'repulsed' for *'repelled'* in (ii), 'transform' for *'morph'* in (iii), and 'buzzing' and 'making a low, continuous noise' in (v). There are several ways candidates could have gained higher marks. Candidates are required to use the same grammatical form as in the question e.g., 'to disgust' is not the correct grammatical form to replace *'repelled'*. They are also required to provide only one synonym per question (as only the first response is marked) and ensure that the synonym offered matches exactly the original word (e.g., the synonym should match *'indifferent'*, rather than encompass the idea in the material of being *'indifferent to maple syrup'*). Responses offering antonyms (rather than synonyms), their own definitions of the words or their own sentences containing the words in each question did not gain any credit.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8021/22 Comprehension
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Key messages

It is good examination practice for candidates to read the material provided in the Insert, and all the questions, very thoroughly before attempting to compose any of their responses in either **Section A** (logical reasoning) or **Section B** (reading comprehension). Candidates should then be well placed to understand precisely what is expected of them for each of the varied questions set. In particular, they should ascertain:

- from which part of the material to select information for their answers, especially when specifically directed, e.g., in **Section A**, to focus only on the market research's 'Question 2' and its associated graph (**Question 1(c)**), the Additional Information (**Question 1(d)**) and the prompt for **Question 1(f)** or the methods of data collection (**Question 1(e)**). In **Section B**, candidates are generally directed to the appropriate section of the material by means of line references and/or key words from the material appearing in question stems
- how much information they should offer in response to each sub-question, considering the number of marks available, whether development of ideas is expected (e.g., **Question 1(a)**, the extended response question, and **Question 1(b)** asking for three developed advantages), and any instructions regarding the number of reasons or ideas to provide (e.g., **Questions 1(b), 1(d), 1(e) and 1(f) and 2(a)(i) and 2(a)(iii)**)
- any specific rubrics, such as 'using your own words as far as possible' (**Questions 2(c) & 2(d)**), or to summarise part of the material within a specified number of words (**Questions 2(b) and 2(f)**)
- whether use of continuous prose (full sentences) is essential for full credit (**Questions 1(a), 2(b) and 2(f)**)
- where a question demands the application of a candidate's own knowledge, interpretation or wider thinking, i.e., the answer does not (directly) appear in the material (**Question 1(e)** explanations and **Question 1(f)**).

General comments

There was a good degree of engagement with the questions set, with the vast majority of candidates demonstrating understanding of the material in both **Sections A** and **B**. The majority of candidates were well prepared for the range of question styles they would be expected to handle. Candidates tended to perform better in their responses to questions in **Section A** than in **Section B**. However, some candidates found **Question 1(a)** more challenging.

In general, candidates were able to communicate their ideas successfully and clearly in written English, and most organised their writing in the appropriate response areas. Occasional lapses of clarity and precision were evident, and these sometimes negatively impacted the marks which could be awarded.

Candidates tended to find it more challenging to select the essential relevant points from the material, and to offer sufficient detail and precision, in questions with very specific demands. This was particularly true of those questions which imposed a word limit (**Questions 2(b) and 2(f)** this session) or which required ideas to be presented mainly in candidates' own words (**Questions 2(c) and 2(d)**).

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Section A posed a slight challenge due to its commercial scenario involving the Trimarua Times, which candidates may be less familiar with. Important information was displayed as graphs, causing uncertainty in relating it to the questions and strategies. However, many candidates effectively used the 'Background' information.

For full credit in Questions 1(a) and 1(b), candidates needed to develop points by explaining the material's relevance to the strategy and connecting information from different sources. In Question 1(a), linking a survey showing 65% of people found the printed Trimarua Times 'too expensive' with Additional Information point 9 about price increases could justify Strategy 2 (free newspaper distribution). In Question 1(b), comparing the proposed subscription price (Additional Information point 2) with the current higher cover price (Additional Information point 9) could justify Strategy 1 (online-only model). Logical reasoning, such as comparing costs to demonstrate the \$10 subscription's advantage over free printed newspapers, was essential. Simply stating the subscription cost without context was insufficient.

- (a) In this extended writing question, with its levels-based marking, responses are required to develop four points to obtain the maximum 10 marks. Most responses offered at least two or three reasons for the likely success of Strategy 2, the free distribution model. However, they often only successfully developed one or two of these, and sometimes minimally, limiting responses to low or mid-Level 3. Some responses remained in Level 2, usually evidenced by only one development being offered, even though two, three or more valid individual ideas had been presented. The key skill of analysis was not, therefore, sufficiently demonstrated to gain further marks. Some responses were placed in Level 1, which is characterised by the selection of just a couple of relevant points, by one isolated developed point, or by severe weakness of expression and clarity, though this latter instance was rare.

One issue candidates faced was being able to apply the information in the graphs to the scenario and the logic of the strategy. For example, many candidates successfully noted that around 80 per cent of older people (those aged 61 and above) currently buy the printed newspaper every week. However, when the same candidates correctly identified that 85 per cent of the same age group stated that they would read it if delivered free to their door, it was common to claim this as evidence of a *huge increase in readership*. This was inaccurate. Those who mentioned *retention* of the already biggest and most loyal group could gain credit, however. Indeed, it was only among the younger readers that there was anything like a significant potential increase in uptake (5 per cent currently buying the newspaper weekly, so a four-fold increase, to 20 per cent, to those who would read it if delivered directly to them for no cost). Even so, this was not entirely convincing, given the much greater potential take-up by those aged 30 or younger, should the online model be chosen (70 per cent daily readership).

There was significant reliance on Mr Gabriels' assertions in Question 1(a) responses. Some misunderstood his claim that older people would appreciate that 'the paper still gets printed', instead stating that the delivery model would be to their liking. However, the 80% of older people who are current weekly readers and the 85% who would read a free copy delivered to the door could support the claim about the paper copies still existing. Mr Gabriels' claims about funding the free newspapers through advertising revenue needed support from other evidence, as mere repetition was insufficient, especially given Additional Information point 3 about declining newspaper sales and advertising revenue. Many candidates effectively used Mr Gabriels' point about knowing 'how many copies to print each week', as the fixed number of homes in the region could impact paper and printing use and costs, reducing expenditure and waste.

Some responses focused on reducing paper waste or using locally sourced sustainable paper, overlooking that the online strategy used no paper. However, using local paper was occasionally seen as beneficial for supporting local businesses and increasing demand, potentially creating advertising opportunities. Similarly, candidates suggested involving Ms Gallupi's grocery delivery business for distribution or sponsorship but overemphasized the environmental benefits of her electric vehicles. This was speculative, as candidates lacked information for meaningful comparison.

Successful points highlighted the increased convenience of free delivery, saving cost and time for those not needing to go to shops. Perceptive responses noted that the larger proportion of older people in rural areas faced greater travel time and costs compared to town centre residents. Some responses mistakenly identified the older population as being primarily in Trimarua rather than the rural surroundings.

A good example of a developed point about price here (see general comments above, regarding this element in responses to **Questions 1(a)** and **1(b)**), was: *Free distribution of the newspaper will appeal to many, as 65% of the survey respondents stated it was too expensive, hence allowing the company to provide newspapers to the price-hesitant audience and make them future clients.*

- (b) Candidates were required to offer three developed advantages to gain the six available marks. A good number of responses seemed to score more than half the available marks. Examples of developed points include linking the comments in response to the survey, relating to stories being 'boring' or 'not relevant', with the proposed social media launch campaign and/or the ability for readers to comment on stories. Since these two ideas both appeared in Additional Information point 7, it was necessary to develop each separately to gain maximum credit, for example by explaining how this function might improve the tailoring of stories in light of comments made or allow for real-time correction or updating of online content. Few responses referred to the algorithms which tailor content to individual readers, based on previous and other viewing habits. This was despite many responses having picked up on the improved internet connectivity in the region and the increased smartphone ownership. Less nuanced responses merely continued that observation, from Mr Gabriels, with his following claim that 'everyone wants to access stories online', despite being asked to find evidence to refute this later (in **Question 1(c)**). Better responses linked this increased technological capacity with either the feasibility of the strategy or, more commonly, with the information presented in graph 2, i.e., the 70 per cent daily uptake of local news online among younger people, being likely smartphone users. The fact of there being more smartphone users could also be connected with the social media launch and online comments facilities, if not already credited. A good example of a well-explained point here includes: *Online-only publication will allow engagements from the readers such as via comments and the lively and extensive social media campaign. Thus, this will make the news more interesting and relevant, attracting the attention of those unwilling to read because they thought news was boring and irrelevant.*

Other correct responses explained the relatively cheaper cost to consumers, as explained above (\$10 per month, as opposed to \$6 per week). Some useful points were made about subscription models. Reference to the specific price change was, better evidence for the likely success of Strategy 1 than merely repeating Mr Gabriels' assertion, that readers 'will be only too happy to subscribe'. A few responses presented this as an advantage to the company, picking up that it was deemed sufficient to cover all but the website's set-up costs. The total elimination of paper use was also noted and linked with the likely approval of environmentally aware Ms Gallupi, on the executive committee. There were also links made to the company's image and social responsibility in this regard. Cost-cutting was also mentioned, though not always accurately. One third of the company's current costs (printing and distribution, Additional Information point 1) would be entirely removed, rather than merely reduced, thereby reducing the company's overall costs, potentially improving profitability.

Suggestions not gaining credit included the potential international reach of the *Trimarua Times*, should the online model be adopted. This lacked logic, since it is a local newspaper publication only, and therefore unlikely to be of interest to many people outside the region. There were also vague claims about multi-tasking, profitability and appeal, while occasional candidates offered reasons why they themselves like to read news online.

- (c) Candidates understood the information presented in the form of graphs well, but they did not always provide sufficient detail for the evidence they were presenting to be fully convincing. In this question, it was necessary to offer information to refute Mr Gabriels' claim that 'everyone wants to access stories online'. Responses presenting the likelihood of younger people (those under 30) accessing local news online in positive terms, therefore, were not answering the question, even though the reading of the graph was 'correct'. If presented negatively, however, this same material could be made creditworthy. An example might be: *Even among the internet-savvy younger group/those under 30, only 70% stated they would access local news online every day.* It was essential here to include both the numerical detail and the frequency, since this group was not the only one with at least some respondents doing so. Another successful response relating to the

younger age group was: *Only among the young does no single respondent state they would 'never' access local news online.* The idea about 'never' was the most often successful, though a number of candidates took the 50 per cent of older people (aged 61 or more) to suggest a majority, which was inaccurate. A straightforward route to the two marks available was to reference the 50 per cent of older people and the 30 per cent of the middle age group who claimed they would 'never' access local news online. Attempts to consider these two age groups together, or to refer to the frequencies of access between 'daily' and 'never', proved either mathematically questionable, or too vague to gain credit.

- (d) Most responses successfully identified that Additional Information point 4 (the whereabouts of the now-retired previous editor) was unlikely to be relevant when trying to decide between Strategies 1 and 2. Finding the second point proved more challenging. The correct response – Additional Information point 8, relating to the desire to offer work-experience placements – could have been adopted or rejected, whichever strategy was chosen by Mr Gabriels, so should clearly have been deemed less relevant than, for example, matters relating to the environment and paper use (points 5 and 6) or to the recent price rises and current unit cost to readers (point 9). A significant number of responses offered more than two possible responses, which is not required. In such instances, only the first two responses can be considered, in the interests of fairness. There were also several cases in which responses numbered selected points ('1' and '2') but fortunately then presented, in words, the correct responses, rather than the corresponding points 1 and 2 from the Additional Information.
- (e) A number of responses did not refer to the 'method of data collection' and instead made various observations about the data gathered, so did not answer the question set. Other responses were too generalised to credit, as they referred to potential flaws of data collection in any survey, rather than this particular one, along the lines of people not answering truthfully, lying about their age or habits, not caring about their answers, or possible issues of bias. There were also some inaccurate criticisms levelled at the figures presented in the graphs, and vague claims about the designation of the three age groupings. Given that the focus of the scenario was on a local newspaper, a certain lack of logic was evident among those who suggested that the survey should have been extended beyond the Trimarua region.

More focused responses identified that 600 respondents were too few to represent Trimarua's half a million inhabitants. Criticisms of the methodology included the limited two-day period, both working days, potentially missing active and employed people. The research location, the main shopping street, was also seen as unrepresentative of the entire region. Responses presented as percentages rather than actual numbers prevented assumptions about even distribution across age groups.

- (f) Most responses suggested sensible ways for Mr Gabriels to reduce costs, such as downsizing or moving to cheaper premises outside the town centre. Examples include renting a less posh office or adopting remote working to reduce rent by enabling smaller office spaces. Buying alternative commercial premises was deemed less logical due to high initial costs. Simply stating to reduce rent was insufficient without suggesting negotiating with the landlord. Other common suggestions included reducing staff salaries, staff numbers, the size or quality of the printed product, finding cheaper paper suppliers, and sourcing cheaper transport for distribution. Some responses incorrectly referred to existing strategies like the online publication or Ms Gallupi's electric vehicles, which were outside the scope of the question.

Section B

Question 2

Candidates engaged well with the material in **Section B**, on the subject of African archaeology as it relates both to historical context (development of human evolutionary theory) and the present and future (preservation and conservation). While there were occasional misunderstandings evident in some responses, such as the classification of particular branches of the hominid 'family tree' (material for **2(b)**) or who was protecting the areas originally explored (**2(d)**), these rarely impacted significantly on marks. Differentiation was mostly evident, as always in **Section B**, in how successful candidates were at locating the correct material to include in their responses and then at conveying these points precisely enough for full credit. **Questions 2(b)** and **2(f)** (word limit/summary) and **2(c)** and **2(d)** (own words) posed additional rubric requirements which some candidates inevitably found more challenging.

- (a) (i) Many responses focused on the first two of five possible responses, relating to the author's appearance and the rarity of migrants studying archaeology. The most successful responses copied answers directly, once located, rather than paraphrasing. Some correctly noted Sada Mire's lack of blond hair and blue eyes, or that archaeology is a rare choice for migrant students. Vague responses about her being from Somalia or a refugee often lacked detail. References to never having seen an archaeologist or archaeological object were also noted but often exceeded the required points for full marks.
- (ii) Most responses gained one mark here, of the two available, most often for the concept of belonging Sada Mire experienced and often including reference to the encounter appearing 'like a message'. References were also made to the sense of astonishment and/or to the axe being from her own country/Somaliland, according to its label, but these two elements were not always successfully presented together to gain credit. Few candidates looked on to the following short paragraph to offer the idea of curiosity over the axe's provenance, also a creditworthy response.
- (iii) Most responses located the correct information here, from lines 20 and 21, conveying sufficient detail to gain the single available mark was essential.
- (b) Questions testing summary skills, by means of an imposed 'word limit' – in this case, 'in about 30 words' – require responses to be precise about the material they select and how they convey it. Few responses exceeded the word limit by excessive amounts, only a few began with a lengthy introduction or repetition of the question stem, an approach which 'wastes' words without any credit being gained.

Most responses successfully conveyed that hominid discoveries reinforced Darwin's theories on natural selection and the idea that humans evolved from a single common ancestor. Many candidates found it straightforward to earn two of the three available marks. However, attempts to explain the significance of Neanderthals or Homo erectus/Java man were often confused or omitted, though some answers gained full marks by noting Neanderthals as a link between apes and humans or their relative sophistication. Some responses correctly understood Java man as the 'missing link' and additional discoveries in Asia, linking to natural selection and common evolutionary ancestry. Few candidates gained less than one mark. Examples include:

"Sophisticated Neanderthals bridged the gap between great apes and humans, reinforcing Darwin's theory of natural selection and the concept that humans evolved from a common ancestor." (27 words) Another example: "Neanderthal finds linked modern humans to great apes, reinforcing Darwin's theory about natural selection, and showed humans evolved from a common ancestor." (26 words)

- (c) When candidates are required to respond in their 'own words as far as possible', certain words, will always be permitted. These are usually either technical terms, or words for which it is otherwise difficult to provide sensible synonyms. These included, in **Question 2(c)**, names (Seton-Karr, Africa, Somaliland, London, Garden of Eden, Lund) and terms such as 'archaeologist(s)', 'museum' and 'stone'. Different verb forms from those in the material are permitted (e.g., *upon returning*, from 'returned'), as are nouns derived from verbs found in the original (*origins*, from 'originated'), and similar permutations, such as the noun *humans* from the adjectival 'human race'. However, exchanging only singular and plural forms of nouns is not deemed to demonstrate sufficient independence from the material, e.g., *discovery* (from 'discoveries').

Most responses were able to achieve at least one, a good number two marks, and a not insignificant number were awarded all three.

There were some successful confluences of the two opening points, along the lines of *It was only after Heywood Walter Seton-Karr's explorations in the nineteenth century that other archaeologists thought to search in Africa* (2) or *Before Heywood Walter Seton-Karr, no one had turned their gaze towards Africa. He opened the door for archaeological research in Africa.* (2) Other notable good rephrasing includes: *sparked interest in explorers to turn to Africa*, *Heywood Walter Seton-Karr had kickstarted the interest for archaeology in Africa* and *Africa might well have gone unexplored without him*. While 'returned' and 'hundreds of' were too often repeated from the material, credit could next be gained by means of, for example: *He came back to London with numerous...* Few responses correctly conveyed the sense of 'proclaimed to global attention' but *announced to the world* was one such valid example. Copying 'the Garden of Eden' was permitted, so a new verb needed to be provided to gain the mark there, such as *discovered* (permitted, as only the noun

'discoveries' is among those line numbers in the material), *located*, or even *seen*. An alternative route to the same mark was to explain the significance of this biblical term, i.e., rendering the concept of where 'the human race originated'. Creditworthy versions are *the starting place of humanity* [a noun] and *the original place where people began/came to be*. 'Major' museums sometimes only appeared as *many museums*, but *prominent* and *important* were sometimes offered here. Even so, responses often missed the reference to 'Lund' or recycled 'including' from later among the line references specified for this question, with *such as* being one successful alternative, e.g., *Important museums such as the Lund Museum (1) queued to obtain artefacts from Somaliland. (1)* Indeed, the concept of 'lined up to acquire...' was quite frequently expressed in terms such as *queued to get their hands on...* and *could not wait to get hold of...* The final two valid points, that 'More discoveries/(on the continent) followed' were infrequently credited, usually because the terms were copied from the original. Successful examples, however, include *Later/Further acquisitions/successful expeditions (1) (in Africa) came later on/occurred after this time (1)*.

Successful responses include: *Only after Heywood Walter Seton-Karr brought back numerous stone implements from Somaliland (1), claiming he had discovered the Garden of Eden/in addition to stating about the place of origin of the modern humans [either of these versions would gain the mark here] (1) did archaeologists stop turning a blind eye to Africa (1)*. An answer offering more material than was required for the award of all three available marks includes: *Many museums clamoured to obtain (1) the multiple native African stone tools brought home by Seton-Karr (1) and initiated further exploration projects in Africa, leading to additional finds (1) later on. (1) Essentially, Seton-Karr's finds popularised Africa's archaeological potential. (1)*

- (d) As above, terms such as 'village', 'archaeological', 'year' and 'rock' could be used in responses, since these are very difficult to re-work. While the noun 'locals' was in the original, the adjective could be offered, e.g., *local people*. Although there were several different permissible points here, and only two marks available, candidates found this 'own words' question more challenging than **Question 2(c)**.

Some responses misunderstood that it was the man, not the author, who vowed to protect the area. Others thought the newly located rock paintings were discovered by the author or had been moved. The term 'failed to tell' was sometimes misinterpreted as unsuccessful expeditions rather than concealing true intentions. Some suggested foreign visitors were actually searching for anthropological artefacts, hiding it behind a hunt for precious stones, though the reverse seemed more likely

Words which were too commonly copied from the material include 'elders', 'told', 'used to come' and/or 'come looking (for)', 'failed' and 'failed to tell', 'doing', 'chief', and 'area'. The points most commonly gaining credit were that '[Seton-Karr's] name did not ring a bell' (e.g., *Nobody recalled the man/Older villagers had no clue who Seton-Karr was/They were unable to recognise his moniker/had no recollection of him*); 'The village chief vowed to me' (such as by means of *the village leader swore/the head of the village made an oath*), and 'to protect his area' (including *to keep the region safe and to safeguard the place*). Other examples of valid points are: *The tribal leaders had conveyed to her ('I asked village elders (about him)')*; *British explorers arrived searching for precious stones ('The British used to come looking for macdan/gems here')*; *expeditions from other countries omitted/outside archaeologists not being forthcoming ('foreign archaeological missions failed')*; *to inform the villagers of their real intentions/to let the native people know what their actual activities would be/never explained the true purpose of their visit/were not completely transparent with the Somaliland inhabitants regarding their objectives and activities ('to tell the locals what they were really doing')*; *Sadly, a practice exercised by researchers to this day ('sometimes this still happens')*, and *from fifty centuries ago ('5000-year-old')*.

A successful example of a response gaining both available marks is: *Archaeologists from other countries typically did not truthfully (1) communicate to natives in that region their goals and purpose for coming there. (1)*

- (e) This question was well answered, with many offering more than the required three points. The three most common points were the unearthing of 'a wealth of art, technology and human history', modern technology making 'things of the past come alive' and feel 'more relevant to modern-day societies'. The point about 'hidden history... long forgotten in museums' often missed the 'in the west' reference, and 'major' was sometimes omitted from 'western museums holding African collections'. Responses noting 'work by local African teams' often overlooked 'digital', and 'tapping

into a new tech-savvy generation' was sometimes wrongly applied to the project's western audience instead of its African participants.

- (f) Please see **Question 2(b)**, above, for general comments relating to summary/'word count' questions. Although 'fast-growing' was often omitted from the point about 'demands for goods [putting] huge pressure on climate and resources', it was this and its continuation, in the first part of the given line numbers, which most often gained marks, i.e., 'made us forget our traditional ways of resource management/interacting with nature'. These two points, where correctly conveyed, almost always fell within the permitted 'about 40 words', even if copied in full. Another point which often received credit was the aim 'to revitalise craft technologies'. As in many other **Section B** questions, it is risky for candidates to attempt to provide synonyms for terms unless, in the case of word-limited questions, doing so reduces the number of words used. As such, those who replaced 'revitalise' with *improve* or similar gained no advantage in terms of summary skills but lost the precision of the original.

Responses using the example of the 'blind potter' often either wrote out full sentences or omitted crucial details, like skills being passed down the female line. Successful examples include: "Each female potter was trained by her mother" (8 words, 1 mark). Other lapses included omitting 'surviving many adversities' and lacking elements for the preference for 'machine-produced pottery and imported plastic goods'. A combined idea: "This lineage of potters, having overcome many challenges, will soon lose out to machine-produced pottery and imported plastic goods" (19 words, 2 marks). Final ideas about the risk of losing items 'locally neglected or forgotten in the storage departments of major museums' were often omitted or exceeded the word count. Example for all marks within 40 words: "Our fast-growing consumerism puts pressure on climate and resources, making us forget traditional ways of managing resources and nature interaction. The museum aims to revitalise craft technologies as heritage is at risk for the first time in history."

- (g) Responses which identified the correct material in answer to this question, were often successful in conveying at least two pieces of material, as required for full credit. A good number presented three, or even all four. There were, however, some responses which gave the wrong context or sense, for example in attempting to render the idea of 'not [risking] losing sight of humanity' in their own words or reversing it. Other responses sometimes missed credit by omitting a detail or changing the sense of the original. It was not uncommon to see elements included here which would have been correct responses to **Questions 2(e)** and/or **2(f)**.
- (h)(i) In questions requiring the location of a synonym for a word or phrase from the material, precision is important, in particular in not providing more words than necessary. The principle is that the two terms should be 'interchangeable', i.e., it should be possible to read the sentence with either version of the selected word or phrase in place, and this would make sense, both grammatically and in terms of meaning. In the first of these three sub-questions, the least successfully answered, some candidates erroneously included 'was' before the correct answer ('taking shape'), which does not conform to this ruling. Others gave even longer run-ins, i.e., (*when the idea of*) (*human*) *evolution was taking shape*. Answers which presented nouns (*evolution*, *implements*), adjectival designations (*Palaeolithic*), or past tense versions of verbs (*bombarded*, *evolved*) similarly would be wrong grammatically, as well as not having the sense of the prompt in the question stem.
- (ii) Most responses correctly identified 'came into the picture' as the correct synonym. By a very small margin, this proved the most accessible of the three sub-questions in **Question 2(h)**. Occasional responses offered only *picture* or incorrect terms, such as *discovered*, *came to be known*, *found*, *bombarded*, *Palaeolithic* and *evolution* (the latter two also being grammatically impossible).
- (iii) Comparable in accessibility with **Question 2(h)(ii)**, the majority of responses correctly selected 'gained more ground'. Again, ungrammatical responses were not uncommon, such as *discoveries* (a noun) and *extraordinary* or *sophisticated* (adjectives). Attempts such as *labelled*, *reinforced*, *evolved* and *came to be known* all had the wrong sense.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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Comprehension 23

Key messages

- Candidates should ensure they identify the key words and instructions for each question. For example, in 1(c), candidates needed to note the guidance to not refer to The Beauville Hotel. In 2(i), candidates were asked to not repeat material from **Section B**.
- In questions which do not give a word limit or ask for the candidate to use their own words, it is strongly advised that candidates copy the language from the insert material in order to ensure the necessary detail is contained in their responses.
- Candidates are encouraged to use full sentences in word count questions and to avoid writing an introduction to their response.

General comments

- The vast majority of candidates were fully engaged with the questions.
- A pleasing number of **Section A** responses made successful links across the material to justify and explain their points.
- The majority of candidates were able to keep within the word limits in 2(c) and 2 (e).
- In the own words questions, a good proportion of candidates made clear efforts to avoid using the words in the original material.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This question required candidates to explain the one reason why a wedding reception at The Beauville Hotel could be difficult for Jasmine, Carla's sister. Candidates gaining the highest credit were able to link Jasmine's fear of heights to the location of the wedding reception. For example, 'Jasmine has a fear of heights and the wedding reception is located on the 10th floor, so it is very likely that, at that height, she will feel uncomfortable.'

Those gaining some credit were able to note Jasmine's fear of heights or the location of the wedding reception. Some candidates referred to the wrong sister and focused their answers on Trudy and her pregnancy.

- (b) In this question, candidates were asked to explain two reasons why Lydia might prefer a wedding reception at The Beauville Hotel. A range of successful responses were given. For example, 'The entertainment at The Beauville is a professional string quartet and Lydia used to be a violinist in an orchestra.' 'Orangemount is a seven-hour drive from Greystone City. Lydia lives in the capital city of a neighbouring country, meaning her travel time would be even longer than that. The Hotel has a nearby airport, so Lydia could easily fly in.' 'Lydia is afraid of large animals, making the wedding venue at the farm far from ideal as there will be cattle and horses' and 'Lydia lives in a luxury apartment so she might prefer to go to The Beauville Hotel that is a fashionable and exclusive hotel.'

Candidates gaining some credit were able to note a valid point but were unable to explain the point by linking it to another idea in the material. For example, 'Lydia has inherited a massive fortune from her husband.'

- (c) This question assessed candidates' ability to explain two reasons why Lydia might prefer a wedding reception at the family farm. Again, a range of successful responses were noted: 'Lydia is a deeply religious woman, attending church regularly. The location of the wedding ceremony is a local church, which she would clearly enjoy' and 'Lydia regrets not having been able to visit her Orangemount relatives as she would have liked and the farm is in Orangemount so she would be able to see those relatives again.'

Common misunderstandings included references to the large animals on the family farm and Lydia's preference for the Orangemount Country and Western Band.

- (d) Here, candidates were asked to explain why Henry and Matilda might prefer to host the wedding reception on their family farm. Candidates gaining the highest credit were able to make connections across the **Section A** material and fully develop four valid points. For example, 'Henry and Matilda will be paying for all the food and entertainment of the guests at the wedding reception. The estimated cost per wedding guest for the reception's food and entertainment is \$30 which is cheaper to afford and will not put a huge monetary burden on the two. Matilda will also be preparing local specialities if the wedding is held at the family farm. Since she holds monthly supper clubs for food lovers and her blogs have gone viral, she definitely has the confidence to prepare delicious food for her daughter. Also, they would prefer for it to be on the farm because Trudy is expecting a baby within the next month and medical guidelines advise women to limit their travel within the last six weeks of their pregnancy. I do not think Matilda and Henry will be comfortable leaving Trudy alone when she is expecting so soon, so they would want the reception at the farm. Henry and Matilda also never go on holiday as the farm needs constant attention, so having the wedding reception at the farm would mean they are still able to give the farm attention'.

Weaker responses lacked developed points. Valid points were often cited but candidates did not provide analysis. Furthermore, some candidates made references to the wedding option in Greystone City which were unable to gain credit.

- (d) Candidates gaining credit noted that Lydia is frightened by large animals.
- (f) Candidates were asked to explain one reason why a wedding reception at The Beauville Hotel might be Carla and Max's preferred option. Candidates gaining the highest credit were able to make connections across the material. The most common successful responses were 'Carla and Max love fine dining and the Beauville Hotel provides a four-course meal created by an award-winning chef' and 'They are planning to invite 100 guests to their wedding and the hotel has fifty double rooms, making it suitable for the number of guests they are inviting.'
- (g) This question required candidates to explain why Henry might be having doubts about Carla's engagement. Successful candidates noted the guidance in the question which directed them to the conversation in the material. Creditworthy responses included: 'Henry paid a massive non-refundable deposit for Carla's previous wedding and he lost the money', 'Carla has been quick to marry other guys and jump into relationships', 'it is not the first time Carla has been engaged' and 'Henry has never heard of Max before'.

Vague responses which lacked adequate detail and focus were unable to gain credit. For example, 'she was getting married but it did not work out', 'Henry is not sure if Carla is sure herself' and 'Carla's last partner did not work out.'

Section B

Question 2

- (a) The most common correct response was 'rhetorical question'. Some candidates also gained credit for 'personal examples like 'my family' and 'our evenings' or 'writing in the first person to make the reader feel included'.

Vague responses, such as 'questions' could not gain credit as they lacked the required detail. Furthermore, some candidates made lists of language features which were not present in lines 1 – 5 of the material, and those responses were unable to gain credit.

- (b) Candidates were generally very successful in their approach. The vast majority of candidates read the guidance in the question and noted a single word in the response area.
- The most common misunderstanding was seen in (iv) where a number of candidates noted 'idea', 'reason' or 'scenario'.
- (c) Candidates were required to explain how using fire transformed life for early humans in about 30 words. In word count questions, candidates are advised to avoid introductions and repetition of the question. Candidates gaining full credit were able to note all three valid points within the word limit. For example, 'The advent of fire usage allowed for cooking food, making digestion easier. It also acted as a source of heat and light as night fell. This led people to gather around.'
- Weaker responses lacked detail. For example, some responses mentioned nightfall but did not include gathering or getting together.
- (d) In this question, candidates were instructed to answer using their own words as far as possible. Candidates gaining credit were able to offer some excellent synonyms. For example, in (i), 'The subjects of discussion were rather bland.' In (ii), the following responses gained credit: 'used their discussions purely to insult or whine about other people's actions' and 'part of the discussion was allocated for people to rant and voice their frustrations about other hunter-gatherers.' In (iii), 'a few stories told were hilarious, while the rest were exhilarating to listen to' and 'many were humorous or thrilling' gained credit. In (iv), the following successful responses were noted: 'The conversations held data about human interactions', 'comprised of details concerning the actions and interactions of others' and 'The stories held insight into the people's mindset, actions and emotions.' In (v), the following responses gained credit: 'who they could go to for support or assistance when they were struggling' and 'met, when needed, in life's toughest moments.'
- (e) Candidates were asked to explain how having a campfire encouraged cooperation between early humans in about 30 words. Candidates gaining the highest credit were able to note all three points within the word limit. For example, 'Fire was a resource that was gathered from the environment, therefore, it was difficult to maintain the fire, and people had to cooperate to keep the fires burning day and night.'
- (f) Here, candidates were instructed to suggest one way fire could occur naturally in the environment of early humans. Common misunderstandings included references to hot weather, glass and bush fires.
- (g) In (i), candidates were required to contrast the effects on volunteers when they watched a video of a campfire and a static upside-down image of a fire. Candidates gaining credit were able to give the required level of detail. In this style of question, candidates are encouraged to locate and copy the answer directly from the material to ensure they have included the necessary detail. For example, 'Their blood pressure dropped significantly when watching a video of a campfire, whereas there was no such effect on people who watched a static upside-down fire.'
- In (ii), candidates were asked to identify another factor that affected blood pressure. Once again, candidates needed to provide a response with the required level of detail which was given in the material.
- (h) Candidates were asked to explain the possible link between watching flickering flames and dramatic scene-cuts in movies. Those gaining the highest credit were able to note three valid points which contained the required level of detail. Some candidates referred to the 'what is it' reaction, however, 'orienting response', 'a reaction of curiosity' and 'intriguing reaction' also gained credit for this point. The following alternatives for 'no cause for alarm' were also noted: 'when you realise you're safe', 'once deemed harmless' and 'no real danger'.
- (i) Candidates gaining the highest credit successfully noted the guidance in the question and avoided the repetition of material from **Section B**. Some particularly insightful responses were noted. For example, 'Watching television can expose humans to misleading information in today's digital age. People are unable to judge the legitimacy of the information which increases the likelihood of being scammed by television' and 'Television can reduce the empathy of the viewer. Watching horrible, realistic scenarios can cause a numbing of empathy. That can be unconsciously mirrored in real life.'