

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/11 Reading
--

Key messages

- Candidates should read widely across a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including memoirs, personal narratives, articles, environmental journalism, emails and other transactional writing. Familiarity with these forms supports effective performance across all three questions on this paper.
- Candidates must demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of linguistic features, including vocabulary choice, figurative language, sentence structure, tense and aspect, modality, narrative perspective, paragraphing, cohesion, tone and register. Accurate and confident use of linguistic terminology is particularly important in **Question 2**.
- For **Question 1(a)**, candidates were required to write a section of an email from the perspective of Ella, the teenage daughter mentioned in the text provided, reflecting on her new life on a Spanish farm. Candidates needed to adopt an appropriate teenage voice, use first-person perspective, and demonstrate clear awareness of audience and purpose. Effective responses reshaped details from the memoir extract rather than copying language, maintained consistent tense, and balanced enthusiasm with reflection on change and adjustment.
- For **Question 1(b)**, candidates were required to compare their email section with the memoir extract, analysing form, structure and language. Strong responses adopted an integrated comparative approach, explaining how differences in narrative perspective (teenage email versus adult memoir), tone, descriptive detail and structure shaped meaning for different audiences. Candidates should ensure that comparison is sustained throughout, rather than treating the texts separately.
- For **Question 2**, candidates analysed an environmental article explaining the impact of coffee farming on migratory birds and promoting Bird Friendly certification. Candidates were expected to comment on form, structure and language, identifying how the writer blends personal anecdote, factual evidence and persuasive techniques. Effective responses explained how features such as statistics, direct address, evaluative language and calls to action contributed to the article's purpose and audience positioning.
- Across all questions, candidates should move beyond identifying features to explaining how and why these choices shape meaning. Generalised statements such as 'this persuades the reader' or 'this creates imagery' should be supported by precise quotation and clear explanation.

General comments

Overall, candidates showed secure engagement with the demands of the paper, and the rubric was followed accurately in the majority of responses. For **Question 1(a)**, most candidates produced writing of an appropriate length, allowing them to develop ideas clearly and sustain a suitable voice for the task. Where responses were less successful, this was more often due to limited development than misunderstanding of the task itself. Candidates should remain aware that the guidance on word count exists to support purposeful shaping of content, and that insufficiently developed responses may restrict achievement under AO2. Across the paper, candidates generally demonstrated adequate control of language and structure, with only a small proportion of responses lacking the linguistic range required for confident analytical discussion.

Question 1(a) required a directed response. Candidates were expected to produce an email written by the writer's teenage daughter, reflecting on her new life on a farm in Spain. Stronger responses followed the instructions closely and produced writing that clearly demonstrated the conventions of an email, including appropriate tone, register and audience awareness. As always, the task requires careful attention to the linguistic shaping of the text: candidates must recast, not reproduce, the material of the original memoir extract, and use language choices that are credible for a teenage voice addressing a friend. Clear, accurate writing, combined with relevant and purposeful content, is needed to meet the highest levels of AO2.

Question 1(b) tested candidates' comparative analytical skills. A confident working knowledge of linguistics is essential here: candidates are required to compare form, structure and language in the given memoir extract and their own directed response. They must demonstrate understanding of the characteristic features of both texts and analyse how stylistic choices relate to audience and meaning. It is crucial that candidates adopt an explicitly comparative approach rather than treating the two texts separately. Those who used a topical approach – comparing the texts by linguistic features rather than by text – produced the strongest, most coherent analysis and were more successful in discussing stylistic decisions with clarity and control.

In **Question 2**, candidates were again assessed on their ability to analyse a text, in this case an article explaining the impact of coffee cultivation on bird populations and promoting 'Bird Friendly Coffee'. Candidates were required to identify characteristic features of the writing and comment on form, structure and language, relating their observations to meaning, context and audience. The majority demonstrated a secure understanding of the text and were able to connect linguistic evidence to the writer's persuasive purpose with appropriate precision.

Less successful responses often lacked specificity. Many would have been improved by more precise identification of linguistic features and clearer explanation of their effects. Vague statements such as 'the writer is trying to persuade the reader' or 'this helps the reader imagine' are too general to constitute effective textual analysis. Candidates should be encouraged to move beyond identification to explanation, using accurate linguistic terminology and selecting concise, relevant quotations to support their points.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Directed response

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read the opening of a memoir in which an English family visit a run-down but captivating Spanish farm, and then produce an email as Ella, the writer's teenage daughter, reflecting on her new life there. The task required adherence to email conventions, a teenage voice, and clear, purposeful engagement with the details of the original text.

Most candidates engaged very well with the task of writing an email. The characteristic features and conventions of the form were clearly recognised: many responses included a subject line, an appropriate salutation ('Hey Anna', 'Hi James'), and a personal sign-off. Many candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the extract and reflected this through selective reference to distinctive features of the farm, such as the vines stretching across the terraces, the fig, walnut and olive trees, and the house's towers and balconies, creating a more personal and authentic feel by including 'the air smells like thyme' and 'after lunch I practice Spanish with my neighbour who laughs when I try to roll the letter "r".' These responses often maintained an excited tone while also acknowledging Ella's mixed feelings – her sense of wonder at Mother's Garden alongside natural homesickness for England and her friends ('not the same without you').

The best answers stayed focused on the original text and avoided irrelevant digressions. These candidates adopted a reflective tone suited to a teenager adjusting to a dramatic change, referring not only to the physical setting but also to her parents' perspective on the task ahead. Many skilfully balanced the 'beauty of the land' and 'views' with subtle acknowledgement of the 'renovations required', noting the 'holes and cracks' in the walls or the 'battered interior' but expressing optimism about what the family could make of it. Such responses often developed finer details effectively, showing discoveries at Mother's Garden, 'the stillness, the heat, the scent of rosemary', or the excitement of exploring new spaces, and suggesting a nuanced relationship with her parents as they undertook the challenge together.

Several candidates used first person and direct address consistently to create an engaging teenage voice. Declaratives and exclamatives were employed to good effect to express surprise or enthusiasm ('You would not believe the size of the vines!'), while interrogatives strengthened the conversational tone. Many of the stronger responses demonstrated a strong command of language, integrating adapted descriptions rather than lifting material, and producing clear, accurate, and appropriately expressive writing.

Less successful responses often showed misunderstanding of the context of the question. A noticeable number of candidates wrote as though the family were visiting the farm rather than having already moved, or assumed the farm was too expensive and therefore not purchased, which conflicted with the directed prompt. Such misunderstandings affected task focus and resulted in uneven voice or incorrect tenses. In some weaker responses, candidates described their previous life in England at length and made this their focus rather than focusing on their new life on the farm, or strayed into unrelated topics, thereby limiting the relevance and development required for full engagement with the extract.

Other weaker responses showed dependence on lifting phrases directly from the original text, such as 'holes and cracks in the rendering' or 'mottled walls the colour of the bleached earth,' which disrupted tone and voice. These responses often lacked reflection and instead summarised parts of the given extract. In some cases, limited written accuracy, frequent grammatical errors, insecure control of tense, or awkward phrasing impeded clarity and weakened the effectiveness of the communication. Lastly, some candidates did not write the email as Ella, which impacted the overall purpose and relevance or misinterpreted the type of farm they were living on.

Most candidates adhered to the expected word length of 150–200 words. Shorter responses typically lacked development of ideas, while significantly overlong responses tended to drift from the specified purpose, reducing control over tone and focus.

(b) Comparative analysis of the candidate's email section and the memoir extract.

Candidates were asked to compare their email section with the memoir extract, analysing form, structure and language. To do well in this task, candidates need to address all three areas clearly and directly, and to compare how different approaches and features function in the two texts. The most successful answers adopted an integrated comparative approach, moving between the two texts within each paragraph and offering analytical commentary on how the writer's choices in form, structure and language relate to audience and shape meaning. Responses that treated each text separately, or summarised content before attempting comparison, tended to be less effective.

It is recommended that candidates focus on differences in tone, register, formality and perspective, and explore how form and structure work with language to create meaning. These elements should be explicitly compared, not simply described.

Most candidates recognised the contrasting conventions of an email written by a teenager to a friend and a published memoir. They compared the salutation and valediction in their own pieces with the narrative opening and descriptive focus of the extract. Several candidates noted differences in purpose: their emails being reflective and communicative, aimed at sharing personal impressions of moving to Spain, while the memoir was written to recount a significant moment in the family's story, recording detail and shaping a reflective narrative for a wider and unspecified audience. Many understood the difference in audience clearly, an individual friend versus a broad readership, and discussed how this shaped the register and tone in both texts.

Responses often observed that both texts used first-person perspective, though for different effects. In many cases, candidates commented that their email provided direct insight into Ella's feelings in the present, while the memoir offered a retrospective adult viewpoint, blending description with internal reflection (e.g., the mantra about the house price). Candidates commented on their use of second-person address to create an intimate, conversational connection with the friend, in contrast to the memoir, which was rather descriptive.

Points about structure were generally limited. Many candidates focused primarily on paragraph lengths or on the presence of an opening and closing in the email. Some candidates observed that their email was structured around key ideas, first impressions, emotional response, and details about adjusting to life on the farm, while the memoir unfolded as a chronological narrative of discovery, moving from the approach to the farm to a detailed tour of the house and land. A few stronger responses noted how the memoir builds steadily toward emotional impact, beginning with uncertainty and culminating in the dawning realisation that the farm might become their future home. A thoughtful response was, 'The position of the text asks the reader to consider the farm as a transition instead of a mere setting...' and 'this element enhances of discovery and change' described by inner conflict. By contrast, their email tended to be organised by conversational flow, prioritising the experience of writing to a friend and allowing them to express their conflicting feelings of both excitement and the fear of the future with their new life.

Comparisons of language were often underdeveloped. Many candidates identified adjectives in their email and compared them with those in the memoir, though not always analysing effect. Some commented on the evocative descriptive language in the extract (the 'mottled walls', 'billowing fig and walnut trees', or 'the sun was high, and the air was still') and contrasted this with their own simpler or more emotive expressions, such as excitement or homesickness ('I miss you already', 'It feels weird but amazing here'). Candidates who did well explained why the memoir used richly descriptive imagery to build atmosphere, while their email aimed for a relatable teenage voice, using informal lexis and direct emotional expression.

Stronger responses showed a clear and confident distinction between the conventions of email writing and those of memoir. They treated both texts as equally important, using detailed, relevant examples and explaining how the stylistic choices related to audience and created meaning. For example, they noted the memoir's layering of descriptive and reflective tone, its gradual shift from awe to practicality (e.g., the list of features such as the well, the bedrooms, and the reservoir), or its inclusion of internal thoughts ('YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT'), comparing these with their email's spontaneous and conversational tone. Some commented insightfully on how their own writing prioritised immediacy and emotional honesty, while the memoir constructed a more measured, crafted portrayal of a pivotal family moment. Moreover, in terms of structure, some candidates commented on: 'The structure of Ella's text is cyclical: first, she expresses her disbelief about her new life, then trying to see both the positive and the negative and then acceptance – bit by bit, it is starting to seem like home. This seems like the same, simplified process described in the memoir, which alternates between one of doubt and enchantment...and expresses the process of internal adaptation.'

Limited responses tended to be brief or focused almost entirely on the memoir, neglecting meaningful consideration of their own directed response. These candidates often summarised content rather than analysing form, structure or language, and many did so without providing supporting examples from either text. They tended to make general comments about tone ('mine is informal, the memoir is formal'), without explanation or evidence. Some listed features, such as sentence length or paragraph structure, without connecting these observations to purpose or effect.

Weaker responses frequently reduced the comparison to content alone, overlooking language analysis. Some candidates simply stated that a feature was present in one text and absent in the other, rather than analysing how the features that were present created meaning. Many candidates listed differences rather than interpreting them. A significant number of candidates showed limited awareness of how stylistic choices relate to audience and purpose, or how these choices shape meaning.

Candidates should note that comparison is one of the most discriminating skills in this paper. Strong performance requires not only identifying techniques but explaining how each specific choice functions in context, for each text and for each audience.

Section B: Text analysis

Question 2

Candidates were asked to analyse an article explaining the environmental impact of the global coffee industry and introducing the Bird Friendly certification developed by the Migratory Bird Centre. Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the text and engaged confidently with its blend of scientific detail, personal anecdote and persuasive argument. Very few responses were unduly brief.

A number of candidates commented effectively on the way the introduction establishes a familial and personal connection with the reader, softening the transition into an environmental argument. Stronger responses focused on the opening aside 'besides my family, of course', noting how this parenthetical comment humanises the writer and frames the article within ordinary family life rather than abstract activism. Candidates observed that this light-hearted acknowledgement creates warmth and relatability, positioning the writer as an everyday coffee drinker rather than an expert lecturing the audience. Several responses also analysed the inclusive first-person narration ('my love of birds', 'my love of coffee', 'I'm not alone'), explaining how this shared experience fosters solidarity between writer and reader. More perceptive candidates linked this familial framing to the article's persuasive strategy, suggesting that by beginning with family and personal habit, the writer lowers resistance and invites readers to reflect on their own domestic routines before confronting them with the wider environmental consequences of coffee consumption. Weaker

responses tended to identify the personal tone without exploring how these introductory choices function strategically to build trust and emotional engagement.

Responses to form were varied. Most candidates recognised the conventions of an informational article, commenting on its dual purpose: to inform readers about the ecological consequences of sun-grown coffee and to encourage more sustainable consumer choices. Awareness of audience was mixed. Some responses offered broad statements such as ‘coffee drinkers,’ while stronger answers identified that references to ‘your backyard’ and ‘Canada’ position the audience as environmentally conscious North American consumers whose habits are implicated in habitat loss. Many candidates identified the functions of the headline and subheading, noting how they connect daily consumption habits with environmental responsibility. Some also recognised the role of the section heading ‘What is Bird Friendly coffee?’ in signalling a shift from problem towards solution.

Structural analysis showed a wide range of ability. Many candidates observed that the text is divided into clear sections, often introduced through shifts in topic or perspective. Stronger responses explained how the opening anecdote provides an accessible, relatable introduction before the argument develops into factual exposition concerning deforestation, pesticide use and water pollution. Some candidates identified the article’s logical sequencing: initial problem identification, historical context, consumer confusion over existing labels, and finally the introduction of Bird Friendly certification as a remedy. A number commented on the strategic placement of statistics, often used to anchor new paragraphs in authoritative detail. A few perceptive responses recognised the cyclical structure, noting that references to familiar backyard birds at both opening and closing create personal relevance and reinforce the final call to action. Less successful answers identified structure only in basic terms (e.g., paragraph length or presence of subheadings) without exploring the effect of these organisational features.

Analysis of language showed considerable variation. Many candidates identified the use of direct address (‘you drink’, ‘your backyard’, ‘you can help’) and commented on the inclusive, conversational tone this creates. Some explored tonal shifts, from humour (‘besides my family, of course’) to authoritative scientific commentary, and suggested this blend enhances both accessibility and credibility. Several responses analysed the cumulative effect of negative lexis describing environmental harm (‘destroyed’, ‘detrimental’, ‘wiping out’), noting how this establishes urgency. Stronger answers also recognised the contrasting evaluative vocabulary used later to describe shade-grown coffee (‘high-quality habitat’, ‘keeping the forest intact’), seeing this as central to the text’s persuasive progression from problem to solution. Additionally, some candidates discussed the article’s implicit ethos-building strategies. These include references to Smithsonian research, certification criteria, and scientific terminology, all of which subtly construct authority without overt argumentation. Stronger responses included reference to statistics, but very few explored how institutional credibility strengthens the article’s persuasiveness.

Additionally, many candidates commented perceptively on the article’s call to action and how it is shaped through language and structure to encourage reader responsibility. Stronger responses noted that the writer shifts deliberately from information to invitation, using direct address and imperative phrasing to prompt reflection and action. Candidates frequently cited the sentence ‘Just think,’ recognising this as a rhetorical pause that encourages readers to personalise the issue and reconsider their everyday habits. Several candidates observed that the repeated use of second-person pronouns (‘the coffee you drink’, ‘your backyard’, ‘you can look for’) positions the reader as an active participant rather than a passive observer of environmental damage. Some responses also highlighted how the final paragraph reinforces this call to action by naming familiar bird species (‘wood thrush’, ‘scarlet tanager’, ‘magnolia warbler’), thereby grounding the abstract issue of deforestation in the reader’s lived experience.

Stronger responses were distinguished by precise use of linguistic terminology and well-selected evidence. These candidates identified sustained lexical patterning around environmental concern (‘cleared’, ‘threat’, ‘decline’) and explained how this reinforces the gravity of habitat loss. They commented on the effect of verb-fronted sentences such as ‘Just think ...’, interpreting these as invitations for reflection. Many also examined the persuasive force of evaluative modifiers (‘really high-quality habitat’), recognising their role in establishing the credibility of the certification. A further strength of higher-level responses was their ability to analyse contrasts, for example between the destructive consequences of sun-grown coffee and the restorative potential of shade-grown practices, and to link these contrasts to the article’s broader persuasive aims. These candidates also demonstrated secure understanding of how structural sequencing leads readers from a sense of ecological guilt towards empowered consumer action.

Furthermore, the article intentionally shifts from light introductory humour (‘besides my family, of course’) to earnest environmental concern. Only the strongest responses addressed how this tonal progression

mediates reader resistance, softens the moral message, and draws the audience gently into more serious reflection and subtly persuades them.

Weaker responses, by contrast, tended to rely on paraphrase or retelling, sometimes summarising whole paragraphs without analysing how meaning is constructed. These responses often listed linguistic features ('there is alliteration', 'there are adjectives') without discussing effect, and in some cases misapplied terminology or offered overly general comments about 'positive' or 'negative' connotations. Some candidates quoted excessively long sections of the article or referred vaguely to line numbers without selecting precise evidence. Others adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach that resulted in repetition or fragmented analysis. Several weaker responses also overlooked the article's persuasive trajectory, focusing only on environmental damage and failing to address how the text ultimately offers a constructive alternative through Bird Friendly certification.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/12 Reading
--

Key messages

- Candidates should attend closely to the specified role, audience and context in **Question 1(a)**. In this paper, the task required candidates to write as a resident of Cornwall to a friend or family member. Successful responses shaped content, tone and register accordingly, adopting a friendly, personal voice rather than the impersonal style of a guide or brochure.
- Effective Directed Responses reshaped material from the source text rather than reproducing it. Candidates who selected key details from the Minack Theatre article (such as its setting, history or unique construction) and adapted them into personalised recommendation were more successful than those who relied on lifting descriptive phrases.
- Genre conventions must be consistently applied. For **Question 1(a)**, candidates were expected to demonstrate clear email conventions (subject line, greeting, appropriate closing) and maintain a conversational, persuasive tone throughout. For **Question 1(b)**, candidates needed to adopt an explicitly comparative analytical style rather than describing each text separately.
- In **Question 1(b)**, an integrated comparative approach is essential. Stronger responses compared form, structure and language across both texts within the same points, explaining how each writer's choices were shaped by purpose and audience. Responses that treated the email and article in isolation were less effective.
- Candidates should engage with structure at whole-text level, not just paragraph length. Successful responses recognised how the Minack Theatre article is organised thematically and chronologically to build heritage and significance, while the email tends to follow a more fluid, conversational structure driven by personal enthusiasm and recommendation.
- For **Question 2**, candidates must analyse form, structure and language with reference to meaning and effect. High-level responses recognised the whale shark extract as a first-person narrative blending memoir, travel writing and scientific discourse, and linked these features to the text's emotional impact and ethical reflection.
- Structural features such as shifts in perspective and reflection should be explicitly addressed. Strong responses commented on the movement from immediate experience to retrospective reflection in the whale shark text, including the significance of the structural break and the ethical turn in the final paragraphs.
- Language analysis should move beyond identification to explanation. Candidates are reminded that naming techniques (e.g. simile, metaphor, hyperbole) is not sufficient unless accompanied by clear discussion of how these choices shape tone, tension, or reader response.
- Precise quotation and accurate punctuation are essential in analytical responses. Candidates should integrate brief quotations smoothly and use correct punctuation to distinguish textual evidence from commentary.

General comments

Many candidates demonstrated a secure grasp of the paper's overall demands, and some responses showed clear engagement with the tasks set. The majority completed all parts of each question, although a small number of scripts showed uneven coverage, particularly where comparative analysis was underdeveloped. In **Question 1(a)**, most candidates produced appropriately shaped responses, though a minority wrote at excessive length, which sometimes reduced control over purpose and audience. While

word count is not directly penalised, candidates should remain mindful that effective responses require selection and precision as well as fluency.

Performance across the paper suggested generally sound linguistic competence. However, a small number of candidates struggled to sustain analytical depth in **Question 2**, either through limited critical vocabulary or insufficient development of ideas. In some cases, analytical comments were made without supporting textual reference, or evidence was incorporated without clear demarcation. Candidates are reminded that close analysis depends on the accurate integration of quotation, supported by appropriate punctuation, to distinguish clearly between textual evidence and commentary.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Response task. Candidates must follow the instructions closely to produce writing that is shaped by appropriate language, style and structure for the given form, purpose and audience. In this session, the task required candidates to write an email recommending the Minack Theatre to a friend or family member visiting Cornwall. Successful responses drew selectively from the article, adapting details to create a persuasive, friendly, and informative tone. Candidates are expected to write clearly, accurately and in a manner suitable for the specified audience, showing an understanding of the conventions of email writing as well as the ability to rework source material rather than reproduce it.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is essential for **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare their directed response with the original article, analysing form, structure and language. Candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding, with reference to characteristic features and to how each writer's choices relate to audience and shape meaning. It is important that candidates employ a comparative method, most effectively achieved through a topical or integrated approach. Those who used such an approach tended to demonstrate greater control over linguistic terminology and clearer understanding of how form, structure and language operate differently in an email and in a visitor guide.

Question 2 again requires secure linguistic knowledge. Candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of the text in terms of meaning, context and audience, and to analyse how form, structure and language contribute to these. The strongest responses explored the highly descriptive, immersive style of the whale-shark encounter, commenting on structural progression, shifts in tone, figurative language, and sensory detail. These candidates made clear and precise links between selected evidence and the effects created.

Less successful responses tended to rely on descriptive statements or vague explanations. Phrases such as 'this helps the reader imagine' or 'the writer tries to make the reader feel interested' do not constitute meaningful analysis. Candidates should aim to link specific linguistic features to specific textual effects with precision and clarity. Some weaker responses adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach to analysis, which often led to repetition rather than synthesis. More coherent, whole-text approaches were characteristic of stronger work. Moreover, candidates are reminded of including evidence to support their analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Reading

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to write an email recommending the Minack Theatre to a friend or family member who planned to visit Cornwall. Most candidates engaged very well with the task, demonstrating a secure understanding of both the conventions of email writing and the content of the original article. Many responses opened with an appropriate subject line ('Subject: You MUST Visit the Minack!') and a friendly greeting, establishing a tone that was consistent with the task's purpose and audience. Some candidates made effective use of structural shaping within the email, organising their writing around a clear progression: opening with a personal greeting, moving into vivid description of the setting, and concluding with an explicit recommendation or invitation. Where this structure was evident, the email read as purposeful and coherent, reinforcing its persuasive function. Moreover, stronger responses demonstrated selective control of register, blending informal lexis and contractions ('you'd love it', 'it's honestly stunning') with descriptive language adapted from the article. This balance helped maintain a friendly, conversational tone without undermining clarity or accuracy.

Most candidates showed clear understanding of the original text and used its details effectively, selecting ideas such as the theatre's 'golden cliffs', 'turquoise sea', Greek-inspired design, and the possibility of seeing specific landmarks or marine life. Stronger responses reshaped this material into fresh description, avoiding over-lifting from the article. These candidates adopted an enthusiastic, conversational tone, expressing excitement about the theatre's dramatic views while acknowledging its unique history as the creation of Rowena Cade. Many also balanced their recommendation with personal touches such as 'I know you love outdoor places' or 'You'll adore the view on a clear day', thereby demonstrating audience awareness.

A number of the most successful emails included subtle reference to the theatre's origins, mentioning that it had been 'built largely by hand', and some referred briefly to the exhibitions without overwhelming the recommendation. These stronger answers sustained a clear sense of purpose, focusing firmly on persuading their friend or family member to visit the Minack, and maintained accuracy and fluency throughout.

Additionally, some candidates showed confident awareness of email pragmatics, including the use of rhetorical questions ('Can you imagine watching a play with the ocean behind it?') and direct address to sustain engagement. In some cases, candidates concluded with a call to action, such as suggesting a specific time to visit or encouraging the recipient to look it up, which strengthened the persuasive impact.

Weaker responses occasionally showed insecure tense control, particularly when shifting between present description of the theatre and past personal experience. In a few cases, inconsistent tense weakened the authenticity of the voice and confused the implied situation.

A small number of responses demonstrated limited awareness of audience, addressing the recipient too vaguely or failing to personalise the recommendation. These responses often read as generic descriptions rather than tailored advice, reducing their effectiveness as emails.

Less successful responses tended to drift away from the article's details, offering general descriptions of Cornwall or unrelated tourist activities. Some candidates misunderstood the task at hand, even mentioning 'movies' that they could watch at the 'movie theatre'. A small number of responses treated the task as a travel brochure rather than a personal email, adopting an overly formal tone or neglecting specific genre conventions. A few responses showed confusion about who Rowena Cade was or assumed that the theatre was ancient rather than constructed within the last century. Weaker responses also showed limited development or relied heavily on long lifted phrases, resulting in a lack of originality.

Most candidates adhered to the required length of 150–200 words, though some shorter responses restricted idea development, tone, and detail while much longer responses did not adhere to the purpose.

- (b)** Candidates were asked to compare their email with the article about the Minack Theatre, analysing form, structure and language. As in previous sessions, candidates who adopted a clearly comparative, integrated approach produced the most effective responses.

Stronger responses examined the difference in form between an online visitor guide and a personal email. They compared how the article uses subheadings, factual information and descriptive detail to inform and attract a wide audience, while their email focuses on direct address and personal connection to persuade a specific individual. These candidates commented on shifts in tone and register, noting that the article blends informative exposition with promotional language, whereas their email uses more colloquial or emotive phrasing to reflect friendship or familial closeness.

In terms of structure, stronger responses recognised that the article is organised into thematic sections (introduction, history, construction, notable performances) and discussed how this sequencing builds a sense of wonder and heritage. They contrasted this with the more fluid, conversational structure of their email, which typically followed a logical but less rigid order (establishing enthusiasm, describing scenery, highlighting attractions, and encouraging a visit). Some candidates insightfully observed that whereas the article gradually builds an impression of the theatre's significance, their email needed to be concise and direct to maintain a friendly, persuasive tone. An example of this was, 'In its indulgence in the use of adjectives and adverbs such as "an incredible place" and "blends almost seamlessly", the article threads the line between

subjectivity and measured objectivity, a balance that reflects Rowena Cade's quiet determination and perseverance.'

Comparisons of language varied in quality. Stronger responses noted the article's rich descriptive vocabulary ('craggy granite cliffs', 'crystal clear waters'), its emphasis on the extraordinary nature of the Minack, and its use of historical detail to build credibility. They compared this with their own linguistic choices, such as using informal expressions ('you'd love this place') or selecting sensory details to appeal personally to their reader. A few high-level responses also compared how each text constructs a sense of place: the article through elaborate scenic description and narrative history, the email through personalised enthusiasm and tailored recommendations. Such an example was noted by a candidate: '... creating a sense of trust and wonder towards this theatre with the promise of beauty and spectacle'.

A few perceptive candidates also commented on how each text manages persuasive balance. They noted that the article sustains persuasion through accumulation, layering scenic description, historical narrative and cultural significance to justify the Minack Theatre's importance, whereas the email relies on selective emphasis, choosing only the most appealing details to suit the reader's interests and time constraints. These candidates recognised that omission is itself a deliberate stylistic choice in the email, reflecting its informal, advisory purpose. Such responses demonstrated an advanced awareness that persuasion operates not only through what is included, but also through what is excluded, according to form, audience and context.

A small number of candidates also commented productively on differences in perspective and immediacy between the two texts. They noted that the article adopts a largely impersonal, authoritative narrative voice, often generalising experience for the reader and constructing credibility through historical detail and factual exposition, whereas the email foregrounds a subjective, local perspective rooted in personal recommendation. These candidates observed that the email's use of first-person pronouns, direct reassurance, and evaluative judgement ('I really think you'd love it'/'it feels unreal standing there') creates immediacy and trust, while the article's broader scope and temporal distance allow it to present the Minack Theatre as a cultural landmark rather than a personal discovery. Such responses demonstrated a secure understanding of how narrative stance and point of view interact with form and audience to shape meaning.

Less successful responses tended to summarise both texts instead of analysing them. Some treated the comparison as two separate commentaries with little integration. Many weaker answers were limited to general statements, such as 'the article is formal but my email is informal', without evidence. Others referred inaccurately to features of the article (e.g., calling subheadings 'bylines') or ignored their own email entirely. Over-reliance on listing ('the article uses adjectives; my email also uses adjectives') was a common weakness.

Precise textual evidence, accurate terminology, and explicit explanation of how form, structure and language relate to purpose and audience were key discriminators in higher-level responses.

Section B: Text analysis

Question 2

Candidates were asked to analyse an extract from a narrative non-fiction text describing an encounter with a whale shark. Responses were expected to address form, structure and language.

The text was generally well understood, and many candidates engaged enthusiastically with its dramatic tension and vivid descriptions. There was a wide range of achievement, with some highly perceptive responses that combined technical awareness with sensitive engagement. Some candidates were even able to distinguish between the setting and how the writer 'cleverly crafted insight into the contrast between the worlds under and above the water'.

Most candidates correctly identified that the text takes the form of a first-person extract from a book blending memoir, travel writing and scientific description. Many noted that the narrator is sharing a personal experience for reflective and expressive purposes. Some candidates also recognised that the piece includes educational aspects through references to whale shark anatomy and behaviour.

A small number of stronger responses showed recognition that the extract also encourages readers to reconsider human interactions with captive marine life. Very few candidates commented on how the writer

cultivates empathy towards the whale shark, subtly challenging readers' preconceived fears and prompting ethical reflection. Weaker responses tended to state only that the text was 'a story' without elaborating on genre features or providing further justification.

Responses to structure were varied. Stronger answers observed how the opening plunges the reader immediately into high tension ('When the dive master yelled *Flaat!*'), beginning mid-event with the dive master's shout, followed by an explanation of its meaning. Some commented on how the encounter is relived in stages, with repeated close approaches by the whale shark creating a cyclical pattern of fear and wonder. Others recognised the structural shift at the point of the asterisks (***), where the text moved from immediate experience to retrospective reflection.

A number of candidates noted how suspense is built through sequential detail, short sentences, and the use of physical reactions, e.g. 'my legs seized with terror'. A few candidates insightfully recognised the juxtaposition of the shark's immense power with the narrator's vulnerability. Weaker responses simply listed paragraph lengths or stated that 'the structure shows her feelings'. Candidates are advised to be more specific in terms of the effects mentioned and not give general or generic commentary.

Many candidates engaged thoughtfully with the rich linguistic detail of the passage, although the depth of analysis varied considerably. Stronger responses commented insightfully on the writer's use of vivid and often dramatic language, noting, for example, the hyperbolic fear of being 'swallowed whole', which captures the narrator's overwhelming terror. They also identified the effectiveness of both simile and metaphor, such as the narrator attempting to 'morph into the shape of a pancake' or the shark 'toying with' her, explaining how these images convey vulnerability and the unsettling unpredictability of the encounter. Several candidates explored the humorous exaggeration in the misheard shout ('AAABBATTTTTT!'), recognising how it lightens the tension while illustrating the narrator's panic. Additionally, some candidates recognised the narrator's humour and how it softens the tension while humanising her fear. They also noted the internal conflict between the narrator's scientific knowledge and her instinctive emotional reaction, revealing a voice that oscillates between rational observer and panicked participant. This duality is an important feature of the text and was perceptively analysed in a few scripts. Additionally, some candidates commented on the role of scientific vocabulary ('plankton', 'Ocean Voyager tank', 'hammerhead', 'preservation of nature') in grounding the narrative in factual credibility and contrasting with the narrator's heightened emotional state. More perceptive candidates also discussed the interplay between emotionally charged lexis ('terrified', 'wept', 'dread') and awe-inspiring descriptive detail ('giant eyeball, curious as a spaniel's'), noting how this juxtaposition deepens the complexity of the narrator's response to the experience.

Furthermore, the emotional trajectory of the extract could be highlighted. Stronger responses traced the narrator's journey from terror to awe, to physical depletion, and finally to sorrowful reflection about the whale shark's captivity. Some candidates also commented on the narrator's reflective tone in the final paragraphs, analysing how reflective language ('I realised', 'I certainly felt sorry') introduces ethical considerations about captivity and nature. This seemed to be an important underlying message within the text that some candidates analysed and showed understanding of by mentioning, 'for science, for spectacle, for entertainment' is a bleak reflection of the selfishness of this human action'. They furthered this by stating, 'Interpretation and preservation of nature by humans that trumps the animal's autonomy and sanctity of the natural world ... signify the shark's forced routine as the extract ends on a solemn note of tragedy and pity for such creatures despite the fear that they may evoke.'

Less successful responses tended to rely on superficial statements ('this makes the reader imagine it'). Some candidates misidentified features, calling standard description 'personification' or 'alliteration'. Others summarised the events instead of analysing language choices. Some candidates quoted excessively long passages without focusing on specific words or phrases. Formulaic references to 'ethos, pathos and logos' were common but rarely supported by detailed explanation. Moreover, some weaker responses did not recognise the dual purpose of the text, or they misunderstood 'the message' of the text.

Higher-level responses were characterised by precise quotation, accurate terminology, and clear exploration of how linguistic choices shaped meaning, tone and impact.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/13 Reading
--

Key messages

- Candidates should engage carefully with the experiential premise of Directed Response tasks. In **Question 1(a)**, candidates were required to write after having taken the climbing holiday. Strong responses demonstrated clear temporal awareness by writing in the past tense and grounding their reviews in lived experience, rather than reproducing promotional claims or describing future plans.
- Stronger responses showed a secure grasp of online review conventions. Successful candidates adopted a first-person perspective, an evaluative tone, and a clear sense of audience, often signalling an overall judgement early in the response. Reviews that balanced description with opinion were more convincing than those offering uncritical praise.
- Candidates should reshape source material rather than reproduce it. High-level responses selected relevant details from the advertisement (such as instructor expertise, route variety, accommodation, or transfers) and transformed them into personalised commentary. Over-reliance on lifted promotional language limited originality, voice, and evaluative credibility.
- Establishing reviewer credibility strengthened responses. Some candidates positioned themselves as reliable commentators by referring to prior climbing experience or comparing Orpierre with other locations. Such strategies enhanced authenticity and audience trust.
- In **Question 1(b)**, comparison must be explicit and integrated. Stronger responses compared form, structure and language across both texts within the same analytical points. A topical approach enabled sustained comparison and clearer discussion of similarities and contrasts.
- Candidates should recognise how form shapes purpose. Effective responses contrasted the advertisement's promotional, informational form with the reflective and evaluative nature of the review, explaining how each form determines tone, register and stylistic choices.
- Structural analysis should focus on organisation and progression. Strong responses explored how the advertisement is organised into clear sections using subheadings and bullet points, while the review follows a more fluid narrative structure shaped around experience, judgement and recommendation.
- Language analysis should address credibility, persuasion and voice. High-level responses examined how the advertisement establishes authority through facts, statistics, qualifications and collective voice ('we'), and contrasted this with how reviews rely on personal pronouns, anecdote and balanced evaluation to construct trust.
- For **Question 2**, strong responses identified the text as a reflective personal essay blending memoir, opinion writing and literary commentary, linking these features to its purpose of exploring memory, identity and the emotional significance of re-reading.
- Structural awareness should extend beyond paragraph length. Effective responses analysed the movement between present reflection and past experience, the recurring motif of 'dog-eared pages', and the cyclical return to earlier imagery in the conclusion.
- Language analysis should focus on imagery, tone and voice. High-level responses explored metaphor ('gentle ghosts', 'paper scars'), tactile imagery, nostalgic lexis and rhetorical questioning, explaining how these choices create intimacy and invite shared reflection.
- Exposure to a wide range of genres remains crucial. Candidates benefit from reading and analysing reviews, advertisements, personal essays and reflective journalism, enabling them to recognise conventions and adapt their writing confidently to different purposes and audiences.

General comments

The rubric was generally well understood, with only a very small number of candidates omitting a section of a question or leaving **Question 1(b)** only partially addressed. There were, however, several overlong responses to **Question 1(a)**. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words, and although there is no direct penalty for exceeding this, word count is an element of a response's relevance to purpose. Candidates should be reminded that they are marked not only for expression and accuracy but also for task focus, selective content, and appropriate shaping of their writing. Overall, the paper was handled with understanding, and most candidates demonstrated familiarity with the required text types. Only a minority of responses lacked the linguistic range necessary for secure analytical comment in **Question 2**.

Question 1(a) is a Directed Response task. Candidates must follow the instructions carefully to produce a response shaped by appropriate language, style and structure for a particular form, purpose and audience – in this session, the prescribed task was to write the opening of an online review (150–200 words) after participating in a climbing holiday. Candidates should ensure that their writing demonstrates recognisable conventions of the required form, including evaluative comment, first-person perspective, and an awareness of an implied online readership. Close attention to the supporting text is essential: effective responses reshaped details from the advertisement rather than copying or drifting into irrelevant narrative. Clear, accurate and purposeful writing is expected for full engagement with AO2.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare their own directed response with the advertisement, analysing form, structure and language. Candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of the two texts, drawing on characteristic features and examining how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning. An integrated comparative method – often achieved through a topical approach – proved most effective, as it allows continuous comparison and provides opportunities to highlight both similarities and differences in a coherent way. Candidates who adopted this approach tended to produce the strongest linguistic analysis.

Question 2 again demands a secure command of linguistics. Candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of the given text in relation to meaning, context and audience, with clear references to characteristic features and to the shaping of meaning through form, structure and language. Stronger responses offered detailed, precise analysis of the writer's reflective tone, structural progression, and figurative language.

In general, more successful scripts showed recognition of the necessity to make precise connections between selected textual evidence and the effects created. Less successful responses often relied on vague or generic explanations; phrases such as 'writer is trying to make the reader think' or 'this creates imagery' offer little analytical value. Candidates should ensure that their commentary moves beyond identification of features to articulate how and why such features shape meaning, tone, or audience response.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to write the opening of an online review of a climbing holiday in Orpierre, based on the promotional advertisement for Rock & Sun. Most candidates engaged well with the task, showing secure awareness of the conventions of online reviews. Stronger responses established an authentic voice from the outset: friendly, reflective, and offering a blend of personal experience and evaluative comment. These responses demonstrated clear understanding of the need to recount the experience after having taken the holiday, rather than advertising the company or describing plans for a future trip.

Additionally, some candidates demonstrated effective control of register and audience awareness, adjusting their tone to address a broad online readership rather than a single known individual. These responses avoided overly intimate address and instead adopted a semi-public voice typical of online platforms, often using inclusive phrasing such as 'if you're thinking of booking' or 'for climbers considering Orpierre'. This showed a secure understanding of how online reviews differ from private correspondence.

Most candidates selected appropriate details from the text, such as the professionalism of the instructors, Jude Spancken's qualifications, the variety of routes in Orpierre, and the 'fun, social environment' promised by the company. Successful responses re-shaped these details into personalised commentary, for example praising Jude's guidance or referring to the satisfaction of progressing from easier slabs to more challenging overhangs. Many also incorporated atmospheric details about the medieval village, the scenic surroundings, or the sense of achievement that came from completing new routes.

The strongest responses captured a realistic review tone, mixing enthusiasm with measured critique ('the heat was intense at midday, but the climbing made it worthwhile'), showing evaluative judgement rather than pure description. These candidates also avoided lifting and used precise, controlled expression. Additionally, stronger responses demonstrated clear awareness of the evaluative nature of review writing, adopting a first-person perspective, an appropriate past tense, and a balanced tone that blended personal experience with judgement. Effective reviews reshaped details from the advertisement to support evaluation, rather than reproducing promotional language. Some candidates also demonstrated awareness of practical considerations, such as accommodation, transfers, or equipment requirements. Where these elements were mentioned, they were often used to support evaluation rather than description, for example commenting on the convenience of transfers or the value of self-catering accommodation. This contributed to a more informative and useful review for prospective climbers.

A small number of candidates also demonstrated awareness of how credibility is constructed in online reviews, positioning themselves as reliable commentators through references to prior experience, comparisons with other climbing locations, or explicit statements of expertise (for example, identifying themselves as 'seasoned climbers'). This helped establish trust with the reader and reinforced the authenticity of their evaluation. In contrast, weaker responses often relied on generic praise without anchoring their opinions in specific experience.

Less successful responses tended to summarise the advertisement or reproduce large sections of it, which limited originality and voice. Some misunderstood the context and wrote as though promoting the holiday rather than reviewing it; others wrote as if they had not yet gone on the holiday. A few weak responses lacked development, offering minimal personal experience or failing to balance description with evaluation. Linguistic inaccuracies, particularly tense inconsistency and incomplete sentences, detracted from clarity in weaker scripts.

Some candidates could have strengthened their responses by making more deliberate use of review-specific conventions, such as an engaging opening headline, a clear overall judgement early in the piece, or a brief recommendation directed at a specific type of climber. Where such features were present, responses felt more convincingly rooted in the online review genre and demonstrated a confident grasp of audience expectations.

Word count was generally respected, though some very short responses were restricted in development of ideas and tone.

- (b)** Candidates were required to compare their own online review with the original advertisement, focusing on form, structure and language. The strongest responses were those that adopted an integrated, comparative approach rather than dealing with each text separately.

Most candidates recognised the significant difference in form: the advertisement is a persuasive and informational promotional text, while the candidate's piece is a first-person review designed to reflect personal experience. Stronger responses noted that the advertisement uses bullet points, headings, and concise promotional phrasing to appeal to potential customers, whereas the review uses narrative detail, evaluative commentary, and a more subjective voice. Furthermore, many candidates compared the ways in which the conventions of an opening online review and a promotional advertisement for the Rock and Sun company were adhered to in the two texts. They explored differences in purpose, noting that the review is designed to inform, advise and provide personal opinion, whereas the advertisement aims to inform, advise and actively promote the climbing holiday. Stronger responses recognised that, although both texts share advisory elements, their communicative priorities differ, shaping choices in form, register and presentation.

Candidates who performed well examined tone and register, contrasting the advertisement's energetic, encouraging tone ('fantastic destination', 'catch some rays', 'great climbing in a fun,

social environment') with the more reflective and authentic tone typical of a review. Many correctly observed that the advertisement addresses a general audience of climbers and travellers, while the review addresses a public readership seeking honest evaluation.

In terms of structure, stronger responses identified that the advertisement is arranged in sections ('Climbing in Orpierre', 'Your Instructor', 'Accommodation', 'Type of Climbing'), each with a distinct informational purpose. They contrasted this with their review's more fluid structure, often beginning with an overview of the experience before highlighting key moments or offering recommendations. A few perceptive candidates noted that whereas the advertisement builds anticipation by listing features and credentials, the review draws credibility from lived experience and anecdotal detail.

Many candidates commented on the list-based structure of the advertisement, noting how bullet points and short sections allow information to be quickly scanned, reflecting the needs of a browsing audience. By contrast, the review typically unfolds in a linear or reflective sequence, often beginning with an overview before moving to specific experiences, mirroring the chronological nature of lived experience.

More perceptive responses might also have noted that the advertisement's structure is additive, accumulating benefits and reassurances without progression or tension, whereas the review may incorporate contrast, development or resolution (for example, initial uncertainty followed by satisfaction). This difference reflects the distinct persuasive strategies of the two forms.

Many candidates compared language choices, with varying degrees of sophistication. Effective responses explored how the advertisement uses promotional vocabulary ('world class', 'excellent food and scenery', 'great place', 'fantastic destination') and imperatives, while their review adopted expressive language to convey emotion ('I felt exhilarated', 'the views were breathtaking', 'Jude was endlessly supportive'). Some noted differences in pronouns: the advertisement frequently uses second person ('you will be staying', 'you are guaranteed'), while the review uses first person ('I climbed', 'I felt'), reflecting purpose and perspective.

Language analysis often focused on the technical and specialist lexis of climbing. Candidates compared the advertisement's use of jargon, facts, names, numerical data and dates to establish authority and credibility with the review's adapted use of such details to demonstrate personal expertise and experience. They commented on the advertisement's descriptive and persuasive language, including imagery ('bouldering forests'), evaluative adjectives ('world class') and repetition ('best'), and compared this with the more emotive or clichéd expressions found in reviews (e.g. 'jaw-dropping'), noting how these choices reflected differing communicative aims.

Less successful responses tended to summarise content or repeat points about formality without detail. Some candidates did not refer to their own review, making only isolated statements about the advertisement. Others listed features ('my review has adjectives and so does the advert') without explaining effect or purpose. Several misidentified structural elements, confusing bullet points with paragraphs or calling the strapline a 'title of a story'. A few weaker responses compared ideas rather than linguistic or structural features.

High-level responses were distinguished by precise quotation, accurate terminology, and clear explanation of how each writer uses form, structure and language to shape meaning for a specific audience.

Section B: Text analysis

Question 2

Candidates were asked to analyse an extract from a reflective article exploring the emotional and personal experience of re-reading books, focusing on form, structure and language. The text was generally well understood, and many candidates engaged thoughtfully with its 'nostalgic tone' and 'introspective themes'. A wide range of achievement was seen, with some highly perceptive responses that combined technical awareness with sensitive appreciation of the writer's reflective purpose. A small number of candidates commented on how the article subtly examines the relationship between physical books and memory, noting the 'symbolic dialogue between past and present versions of the self'.

Several candidates demonstrated a developing awareness of the article's intended audience, though at times more in-depth exploration was warranted. Some stronger responses recognised that the piece is

written for reflective adult readers or habitual book lovers, an audience likely to appreciate the tactile experience of reading and the emotional significance of physical books. These responses noted that the writer assumes familiarity with the rituals of reading, such as re-reading favourites or leaving dog-eared pages as markers of meaningful moments. References to specific titles and authors also suggest a readership that engages actively with contemporary literature, while the confiding, conversational tone invites a sense of shared experience. Explicitly addressing how the writer constructs and appeals to this audience would strengthen commentary on purpose and voice.

Most candidates correctly identified that the text takes the form of a first-person reflective essay, elements of memoir, personal commentary and literary reflection. Many noted that the writer is sharing a deeply personal experience to meditate on identity, change and the emotional significance of reading. Some candidates also recognised the article's hybrid genre, which merges personal narrative with light literary criticism through references to other works and authors. Less confident candidates tended simply to state that the text was 'about books', without detailing the broader genre conventions at play.

Analysis of structure varied. Stronger answers recognised that the essay moves from present-day habits of re-reading into recollections of earlier moments in the writer's reading life, then shifting into deeper reflection on how these experiences connect to personal development. Many noted the fluid temporal movement across the extract, observing how the writer oscillates between present reflections, past reading experiences and moments of rediscovery to create a layered sense of time. This shifting chronology reinforces the central idea that re-reading involves not only revisiting a text but also revisiting a former self. Some candidates commented on the recurring motif of 'dog ears', which links different stages of the narrative and symbolises the process of rediscovering past identities. A few perceptive responses identified a cyclical structure in the writer's return to the initial motifs of 'dog ears' and 'ghosts' in the conclusion, strengthening the theme of rediscovery and continuity. Others remarked that the metaphor of the marked pages operates as a parallel for a personal journey towards self-knowledge, culminating in the writer's acknowledgement of having become 'a slightly less anxious person' over time. Some candidates could have developed further how these structural and temporal shifts work together to shape the article's reflective and introspective purpose. Weaker responses tended merely to mention paragraph length or to assert that 'the structure shows her feelings', without providing explanation.

Many candidates engaged effectively with the rich linguistic detail of the passage, although the level of analysis varied. Stronger responses commented insightfully on the writer's use of metaphor ('gentle ghosts', 'gentle haunting', 'scars of dog ears past') explaining how these images create a delicate, almost spiritual atmosphere. Others explored the tactile imagery ('small bend in the corner', 'accordion fold'), noting how it anchors abstract ideas about memory and identity in concrete sensory detail. Candidates also examined the nostalgic tone created through references to the past ('I remember', 'I left behind') and reflective verbs ('I wonder', 'I notice'), recognising how these choices support the writer's introspective purpose.

Some candidates commented on how rhetorical questions ('What was it about this page ...?') invite the reader into a shared moment of contemplation. A few also addressed the intertextual references to books and authors, observing that these highlight the writer's passion for reading and situate the piece within a broader literary context. Several noticed the interplay between negative descriptive lexis ('scars', 'vandalising') and affectionate reflection, suggesting that this contrast deepens the writer's sense of emotional complexity. More perceptive candidates recognised the oxymoronic quality of 'gentle haunting', commenting on how it evokes the eerie yet comforting presence of one's former self.

The strongest analyses went further in interpreting language effects, identifying the writer's string of interrogatives as a means of sharing internal questioning with the reader, and analysing how the discussion of the 'gaps' in reading patterns reflects the writer's earlier dedication to reading despite fluctuating time. Awareness was shown of the article's subtle commentary on selfhood, noting that the 'ghosts' metaphor suggests that re-reading is not only an act of returning to a book, but an act of returning to a previous identity.

Less successful responses relied on generalised statements ('this creates imagery') and sometimes misidentified features, such as calling straightforward description 'hyperbole'. Some responses summarised the extract or listed books rather than analysing how meaning is shaped. Candidates often quoted excessively long passages or used vague terminology without exploring effects. A few responses referred formulaically to 'ethos, pathos and logos' without applying these concepts accurately to the text.

Higher-level responses were characterised by precise and concise quotation, accurate use of critical terminology and clear exploration of how the writer's stylistic choices shape meaning, tone and impact. These candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of how the article constructs a reflective and emotionally resonant exploration of memory, identity and the enduring significance of reading.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/21 Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Sometimes the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. Key words within the question indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the task. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions are to write the text for a **news story** for your **local newspaper** about your school winning an award for becoming **more environmentally friendly** and to focus on the **importance of schools becoming more environmentally friendly**. In order to achieve the task (one of the Level 3 criteria on the mark scheme) these instructions must be followed.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is an essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Weaker responses are often characterised by loss of grammatical control in attempts to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; other common errors were writing in sentence fragments or in very lengthy run-on sentences. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates should not be overambitious in their choice of less common lexis, unless the precise meaning of the selected word is properly understood.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or impeded by errors (possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work).

In stronger responses to **Question 1(a)**, candidates focused clearly on the question, writing the text for credible news stories in an appropriate tone. Weaker responses often lacked an appropriate tone for a newspaper and merely described what the school had done to become more environmentally friendly.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly, or entirely, on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis, by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (descriptive piece, review or magazine article), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were largely narrative rather than descriptive, some responses to **Question 3** were simply recounts of the circus show with little in the way of critique or personal opinion, and some **Question 4** responses were repetitive and in need of variety and balance.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

Your school has recently made several changes to become more environmentally friendly, and it has won an award as a result. Your headteacher has asked you to write a news story about winning this award, which will be published in the local newspaper.

- (a) Write the text for the news story, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on the importance of schools becoming more environmentally friendly.**

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and engaged well with the subject matter by showing, in many cases, a sound knowledge of the various harms caused to the environment through 'man-kind's actions and behaviour'. However, some candidates took the audience to be their schoolmates, and the publication to be their school magazine. Candidates presented a range of measures to create an environmentally friendly school: metal cutlery, solar power, electric (rather than petrol fuelled) buses and a move to digital educational resources (to save on paper). Most candidates understood the conventions of a newspaper article and frequently included structural and presentational devices such as headings, subheadings and quotations.

Stronger responses captivated their audience through meaningful headlines such as 'Our Green school wins an award;' 'Bay is graded A for award;' 'Local High school says, 'Let it grow!' and 'G. Holmes Braddock are turning over a new leaf!' They mentioned the award won during the introduction, before swiftly and succinctly detailing why the move towards eco-friendly schools is beneficial, in consistently delivered, well-organised reports. The name of the establishment in receipt of the award was included in the opening section, together with a summary of why the award had been given. Candidates included quotations from both principals and students regarding the state of both the inside and outside of their establishment, and the need for change. Responses were well organised and provided additional information about the ways in which changes had been implemented. Candidates used pluralised pronouns to convey a collective approach, as in: 'We noticed there was a lot of trash. We needed to do something about it. Our school was a mess!' Ideas were lively and credible and included: a move to paper plates at lunch time; recycling and penalties for anyone seen dropping litter; a gardening group; and a 'Ride your bike to school' scheme. The use of emotive language further helped to convey enthusiastic, credible responses, such as: 'Hundreds of millions of pounds of plastic are killing our species. WE HAVE TO ACT now.'

Some lively responses incorporated humour within the report. For example, one candidate, in a very upbeat and engaging report, shared with the community how the school's new gardening project was progressing: 'Our plants have grown taller. Our tomatoes have increased in size by 3.5 inches – we've never seen so much growth!' Other stronger responses were more formal but equally effective, for example: 'The recognition highlights a growing movement among educational institutions to prioritise sustainability. As centres of learning and influence, schools play a vital role in shaping environmentally conscious citizens. By embedding green practices into everyday routines, they help foster a culture of responsibility and resilience.'

Weaker responses either did not engage fully with the requirements of the question, for example lacking reference to the award, or included quite simple lists of changes made in the school. Some weaker responses focused almost entirely on winning the award, how it was won and the benefits of winning the actual award, such as acquiring funding which could then be reinvested back into the school. Some did not reference the importance of schools becoming environmentally friendly, or if they did, it was a final comment attached to the response, almost as an afterthought. Many weaker responses were in need of details such as school name, award name or name of the awarding body. There were also frequent errors; for example, one candidate wrote: 'Schools with a cleaner campus will most likely recieve more candidates boosting the popularity for that school, no one wants to sit around and learn in a dump, they want to feel at home which is what we aimed to do when we made our school enviromently friendly.'

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set by your headteacher.

This cohort of candidates generally struggled with this task. One approach that worked well for some candidates, however, was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They named, one by one, the techniques used, giving precise evidence from their answers and explaining the effect on the audience. However, most responses were limited in detail and evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

In most stronger responses, candidates approached this question in one of two ways, each of which proved to be successful: addressing form and structure, going through the content of the email and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. These candidates included a range of features in their responses, such as anaphora and pathos, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave examples and attempted to analyse how the writer's stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning, for example: 'Inclusive language is used to highlight collective action. References to "learners and staff", "school community" and "our entire community" emphasize that sustainability is a shared responsibility.'

Stronger commentaries employed a reflective tone, which showed a thoughtful and analytical approach, for example: 'The article positions the school as a role model. Expressions like "serves as a model" and "a blueprint for others" frame the school as a leader in sustainability. This not only celebrates the school's success but encourages other institutions to adopt similar practices, fulfilling the task's focus on the wider importance of environmentally friendly schools.' Such candidates provided specific detail, for example in this candidate's comments on their use of vocabulary: 'The use of friendly, positive language such as "momentous achievement", "excited" and "rang true" creates a truly spirited feeling, evoking the joy felt by the writer, a student, at their school's achievement. The enthusiasm helps infect the audience with similar feelings of pride for the local school.'

Weaker commentaries were often very short or general, listing lots of features without adequate analysis of their effects. Incorrect terminology was also common. Weaker responses sometimes identified some basic language and structural features but needed more in the way of analysis. Some candidates made some valid points in their commentaries but without examples to back them up, such as in this example: 'I used group of three and statistics to write an interesting story for the newspaper.' Quite frequently, candidates included obvious points such as: 'I wrote in the first person', or 'The new story has sub-headings to divide it up.' Many included the mention of linguistic devices without a clear explanation, for example: 'Longer sentences make it easier to understand opposed to short sentences which would be choppy.' Some candidates merely listed linguistic features they said they had used without any supporting evidence, for example: 'I used positive words in my report' and 'The author used repetition to convey meaning.' Often there was little attempt to explain how a technique's use furthered the writer's purpose, other than making vague assertions about keeping the reader interested or to connect with the reader.

There were also, once again, many examples of candidates merely paraphrasing their leaflets or focusing solely on their structure, with little or nothing on language.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Descriptive piece

Write a descriptive piece called *The Basement*, about the rooms below an old house which have not been used for many years. In your writing, focus on light, colour and smell to help your reader imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Some candidates used a narrative frame, which was sometimes successful, but the narrative style occasionally replaced more relevant, descriptive content. Quite a lot of candidates described the journey to the old house and other rooms in the house in detail, only moving on to describe the basement for a part of their response.

Stronger pieces kept the focus on describing the basement, rather than other parts of the house. One way that candidates achieved higher levels was using advanced vocabulary and phrasing which kept the focus on the light, colours and smells in the basement, for example: 'A staircase descended into darkness, steep and narrow, the steps warped and uneven. I hesitated, flashlight in hand, then stepped down. The air changed immediately. It was colder, heavier. My breath fogged in front of me, and the smell intensified; mildew, rust, and something sweetly rotten, like fruit left to die in a sealed jar.'

The strongest responses demonstrated rich vocabulary and figurative language throughout, with vivid imagery and striking similes. For instance, one candidate described the narrator's entry to the basement like this: 'The wooden stairs creaked under my feet as I stepped down into the basement. A chill ran through the air, brushing against my skin like the breath of something ancient. The smell of mildew and dampness grew stronger as I took each step.' Such moments elevated the work by offering the reader both imaginative flair and concrete detail, hallmarks of higher-level descriptive writing. Candidates who succeeded in this task usually demonstrated stronger technical control, particularly with grammar, spelling, and sentence variety, and were disciplined in maintaining focus on setting rather than drifting into narrative.

Weaker responses lacked cohesion, drifted into narrative, or relied too heavily on generic description. Even where some descriptive language was attempted, it was often vague, for example: 'It is really dark unless this light switch works, lighting up a lamp with a broken bulb where it sits of the floor full with dust. The light only shines half the hallway as it flickers once in a while. The doors, they all lead to rooms.' Such candidates tended to rely on basic vocabulary and struggled with sentence control, leading to repetitive phrasing and grammatical inconsistency.

Very weak responses frequently showed misinterpretation of the task, shifting into full-blown narrative mode with minimal, or superficial, descriptive content. These responses often focused on plot-driven action rather than atmosphere or setting, resulting in a loss of focus on the descriptive requirements of the task. They also changed tenses frequently and were imprecise in their direction and sense of writing style. They described how the narrator had travelled to the basement, and sometimes peopled their description with characters who had lengthy backstories and engaged in conversations, again drifting from focus on description.

Question 3 – Review

You recently went to see a circus show. You decide to write a review of the show, which will be published on an entertainment website. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates who chose this topic showed understanding of the review form, using the correct conventions to indicate their response as such. Some candidates wrote from the point of view of a relevant reviewer, like a parent taking their children to the circus. Typical reviews focused on a variety of aspects of the circus show such as the tent, the cleanliness of the site, the food options, the level of comfort, the performers and the most thrilling acts. They also commented on the suitability for a family, in terms of cost and by giving an overall rating or recommendation. After an introduction, reviews were often structured chronologically, which was generally successful. The majority managed reasonably well to balance recounting their experience with the evaluative comments required in a review. Some candidates opted to use subheadings.

Writers of stronger reviews engaged their audience from the outset, often making their opinion clear in the title. For example, review opened with the arresting title, 'Cirque Lumina: Where Wonder Happens.' This was followed by an opening sentence which immediately engaged the audience: 'When the lights first dimmed inside the grand tent of Cirque Lumina, a hush blew like wind through the crowd. The air smelled faintly of popcorn and sawdust, that familiar carnival scent that promised both nostalgia and excitement.'

Stronger responses often included subheadings to focus clearly on areas for review, while some included a comments section, with associated email address, for readers to write into, thereby fulfilling form and stylistic

aspects of real-world reviews of this type. Such candidates also used appropriate less common lexis, such as 'aesthetically' and 'mesmerising.' They often started with some contextual information, such as: 'I must say, when I heard about this circus show coming to town, it sounded like quite an outing for my family of four. My kids love to explore new things.' They described the circus action vividly, often with a sense of awe, as in this example: 'The first stunt was amazing. From my perspective it seemed like the main purpose of the stunt was to try to wake up the audience. It was night time and everyone was yawning and stretching. The stunt involved a man with a beaten up shirt in flames, juggling what it seemed like fire proof balls with a metallic look to them. Talk about turning up the heat!'

Weaker responses displayed a less confident control of grammar, with limited features of a review. In weaker responses the review often started with details of the journey, which led to a disproportionate amount of time spent on further details involving ticket prices and food – the latter dominating as much as two thirds of some responses. One candidate discussed some relevant aspects of the circus but provided only limited details: 'Animals from the circus shows will often be showing off tricks that you will never imagine. Most of them knowing how to balance on a single string of rope or having to balance balls on their heads. The seating is comfortable and fresh including fine leather seats.'

Weaker responses often reviewed the facilities – such as parking and food – in some detail, with less commentary on the acts. Many used inaccurate expression with little or no paragraphing and minimal description or critique of the show itself. For example, one candidate wrote: 'So I booked the hotel, I booked a room that accommodated six people, it had two queen size beds with a sofa that turns into a bed. So me, my husband, my two boys and my two girls. Ages 45, 43 12, 9, 6 and 7. It provided free breakfast, lunch and dinner which I thought was a steal since my kids are always hungry.'

Question 4 – Magazine article

In class, you have been discussing whether designer clothes are a waste of money. You decide to write an article on the topic, which will be published in your school magazine. Write between 600 and 900 words.

This question provided a range of responses, some quite engaging and well-planned but some lacking organisation and demonstrating general ideas about designer clothes. As this was an article, many candidates created suitable headings, such as: 'Designer Clothes: Yay or Nay?'; 'Are designer clothes worth it? Or are they a waste of money?' There was a degree of acceptable informality across responses, given that the audience was readers of a school magazine. Most responses were paragraphed appropriately and some used discourse markers and subheadings. Most candidates wrote using a register that was appropriate to an audience of their peers, with many mentioning well-known brands and exploring a range of reasons why designer clothes were a waste of money.

Stronger responses had a strong personal voice used more complex language. They were structured clearly and effectively and addressed both sides of the issue, considering the social pressure associated with fashion, and used clear, article-style features such as subheadings and rhetorical questions. One successful piece used the sub-headings 'Limited Batches', 'Popularity', 'It's the same designs' and 'Ecological Impacts' and strictly adhered to them. Such writing demonstrated a clear awareness of purpose and readership, and their arguments were well supported. In stronger responses, candidates gave clear and sometimes enthusiastic opinions, often citing cost and fashion trends as reasons to avoid buying designer clothes; such responses were objective, with occasional anecdotes. Stronger responses consistently embraced their audience, posing questions such as 'Are you willing to support these insanely high prices-waste your money?' There were quite passionate claims of designer brands affecting teenagers' morale, such as in this example: 'Designer clothes provide sway to those without confidence but offer no help to anything other than the self-esteem of those wearing them.'

There were signs that some candidates were underprepared for a discursive task, and many responses lacked ideas, vocabulary and a clear argumentative framework, showing little sense of writing for the school magazine. Such responses often relied on assertion and repetition rather than developed reasoning. Quite a lot of weak responses to this question were notably short of 600 words, so points lacked development. Some candidates wrote without clear control of the English language, such as in this section of one candidate's article: 'How many times do you need to wear it in order it to "Get your moneys worth" beause, you can only wear it periodically to fit in to todays society while with, bags, shoes, an jewelry, it is a different story.'

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/22 Writing

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Sometimes the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. Key words within the question indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the task. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions are to write the text for a **leaflet** to advise **new candidates** about **ways to reduce spending** and to focus on the idea that university candidates **can live well without much money**. In order to achieve the task (one of the Level 3 criteria on the mark scheme) these instructions must be followed.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is an essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Weaker responses are often characterised by loss of grammatical control in attempts to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; other common errors were writing in sentence fragments or in very lengthy run-on sentences. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates should not be overambitious in their choice of less common lexis, unless the precise meaning of the selected word is properly understood.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or impeded by errors (possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work).

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger candidates focused clearly on the question, writing the text for engaging leaflets, in an appropriate tone. Weaker responses often merely listed advice to new students.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly, or entirely, on content of their piece of writing and therefore only provided minimal analysis, by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (story, speech or review), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** lacked in sense of drama or suspense, some responses to **Question 3** needed to be more clearly situated in the form of a speech, while some **Question 4** responses were simply recounts of the beach clean-up event, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

Question 1

You belong to a group at university which advises new students on how to manage their money. You have offered to produce a leaflet which explains how students can live well without much money.

- (a) **Write the text for your leaflet, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, give advice about ways to reduce spending, and focus on the idea that university students can live well without much money.**

Candidates generally understood the target audience and wrote with an advisory tone appropriate to new students. Advice was given on many aspects of student life, often from a first-person viewpoint, and covered practical areas such as diet, budgeting, social life, transport, accommodation and accessing academic resources. Most responses were well organised and demonstrated a clear awareness of the conventions of a leaflet, including headings, concise bullet points and persuasive language. However, the quality of advice varied: some answers lacked a clear focus on the idea of *living well* rather than simply *saving money*.

In stronger pieces, candidates effectively managed pacing by creating short, succinct and thought-provoking questions or viewpoints, which alternated between longer expanses of detailed and informative text. The result was an engaging, immersive and expansive response to the question prompt, not only giving advice on ways to reduce spending, but also focusing on the second aspect of the question, that students can live well. Stronger responses often included named groups which formed part of the university set up to help and advise new students. The opening section of the leaflet not only used language to welcome new students but provided information regarding the group. For example, one candidate wrote: 'We at Money Managers understand your pain as a new candidate – broke, penniless and that's just for starters! Do not worry, we are here to help.' Imagined groups included: 'The Broke Candidates' Foundation', 'Savers Club', 'Finance Candidate Division' and 'New U Candidate Council.' Clear and effectively structured responses accurately employed first-person, first-person plural and second-person pronouns in the opening section of the leaflet, for example: 'Are you finding it hard to manage funds? We're here to help. As candidates ourselves, we understand the struggles.'

Stronger responses often consistently used sub-headings to clearly delineate each piece of advice, began paragraphs with topic sentences and clearly prioritised two or three pieces of useful advice to concentrate on. Stronger responses effectively employed emotional and comforting language, resulting in more detailed advice. Imperatives and exclamatory sentence types were frequently employed: 'Do not succumb to peer pressure'; 'Worry Not!'; 'Prioritise essentials. Limit luxuries.' Such candidates used a variety of sentence structures, typically simple structures followed by compound/complex structures where advice was more developed. There were examples of conscious crafting of language, where precise language choices entertained the reader: 'We do not need ephemeral dopamine boosters to live well. Instead of partying, eating out every day, learn how to cook; embrace the beauty of nature with a walk in the park.'

Weaker leaflets introduced the topic with overlong paragraphs, detailing how students' lives would change in general. They often lacked in topic sentences or paragraphs and made suggestions that lacked credibility. Others listed the benefits of being thrifter without clearly suggesting how this could be achieved. Expression was inaccurate in many responses, while some candidates wrote quite accurately but with a limited range of language, as in this example: 'No matter how small amount you have, a good life on campus is guaranteed, just do not waste money on unnecessary stuff. Whenever you wanna use your money ask yourself 'IS IT A WANT OR A NEED'.

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.

One approach that continued to work well for candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They named, one by one, the techniques used, giving precise evidence from their answers and explaining the effect on the audience. However, many responses were limited in detail and provision of evidence from their **Question 1(a)** response in their commentaries.

In most stronger responses, candidates approached this question in one of two ways, each of which proved to be successful: addressing form and structure by going through the leaflet's content and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. Stronger responses included a range of features, such as an inverted triangle structure and pathos, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave precise examples and analysed how the writer's stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning, using terminology to enhance their analysis, for example: 'Firstly, as the target audience is new students I decided to create a conversational but confident tone, whilst maintaining a formal air throughout. I did this successfully by using cliché phrases, for instance, "easier said than done". This keeps the leaflet accessible and relaxed. I also used imperative verbs to ensure a formal air is kept up. For instance, "use items" and don't panic!" Stronger responses did not include lengthy pre-ambls but started analysing the news report from the very beginning, as in this example: 'To present myself as a fellow young adult, I used irony and sarcasm regularly throughout the leaflet, such as punchy, humorous subheadings like "Loco for Local", as well as playful jabs, such as "check first with the backbone of our economy, yeah?". My sarcastic tone further disarms the reader, painting myself as their friend, which ensures that not only the entire text remains interesting but that they also trust in my advice.'

Weaker responses were often very short or general, listing lots of features without adequate analysis of their effects. Incorrect terminology was also common. In weaker responses, candidates sometimes identified some basic language and structural features but seemed to struggle more with analysis. Some candidates made some valid points in their commentaries but without examples to back them up, such as in this example: 'I used similes and statistics to write an interesting leaflet.' Quite frequently, candidates included fairly obvious points, such as: 'I wrote in the first person', or 'The leaflet has headings to divide it up clearly.' Many included the mention of linguistic devices without a strong explanation, for example: 'I used a rhetorical question "You wouldn't want to end up broke do you?" as to show that this question is not meant to be asked as the reader already knows the answer.' Some candidates merely listed linguistic features they said they had used without any supporting evidence, for example: 'My text contained figures of speech such as alliteration'; 'I used persuasive tone to convince the young candidate to try sport and personification, similie, metaphor, simple sentence were used.' Often, responses were in need of explanation of how a technique's use furthered the writer's purpose, beyond vague assertions about keeping the reader interested or to connect with the reader.

There were also, once again, many examples of candidates merely paraphrasing their leaflets or focusing solely on their structure, with little analysis of language. Many weaker responses were filled with generalisations, such as in these two examples: 'Punctuations are heavily used throughout my text like commas and question marks and! These punctuations make the text look more presentable.'

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Story

Write a story called *Freedom?* about a prisoner who has a chance to escape. In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates were able to provide some sense of drama and suspense, often by employing emotive language or withholding information. However, many candidates shifted the narrative perspective throughout the text, and many 'cliff-hanger' endings did not effectively conclude the narrative arc of the story. Most of the stories referred to escape from prison, by a variety of methods, sometimes using a flashback structure. Quite often, the escape was organised by a friendly cellmate or kindly guard who recognised that the prisoner was innocent of their crime, had done enough time and was a good person. A few wrote about the prison of the mind, weight issues and the prison of a body. Successful candidates created a sense of drama and suspense, providing detailed descriptions of the characters, setting and general atmosphere. However, some stories were incomplete.

In stronger responses, candidates crafted suspense through controlled pacing, sensory detail and a focus on internal conflict, which enhanced the drama of the escape scenario. They demonstrated some planning, an awareness of the narrative arc, along with an effective use of backstory and a convincing resolution. They produced effective and well-executed stories with some evidence of conscious crafting of language, integrating atmospheric details confidently, and created interesting characters with crimes that ranged from shoplifting and murder to being wrongfully accused. One effective piece of imagery described a prisoner's tattoos: 'An ink snake coils around the man's shaven head before its fangs slither underneath the bright orange jumpsuit.' Some candidates set the scene inside the prison at the outset, quickly centring attention on a character who was either bullied, isolated or feared. One candidate structured the entire response around a singular, quiet male whose movements, including facial expression, puzzled prisoners, guards and the reader. Authorial voice was strong, with the writer positioning themselves in the dark, like the reader: 'Davidson. A sharp grin on his wrinkled face; cracked blood-stained lips which mirrored a dry river that has a lot of secrets beneath the surface. Waiting. What was he waiting for? You will soon find out.'

Stronger stories successfully introduced drama by detailing the prisoner's physical reactions to events, thereby *showing*, rather than simply *telling* the story: 'A rustling sound. His head whipped to the right, and not even a flinch emerged when the glare of white light fell onto him, illuminating his foreboding expression,' and, 'Time ceased to be measured by the clock, replaced by the rhythm of the wind and the flashes of lightning that briefly illuminated the cell in stark, white light.'

Weaker stories lacked narrative cohesion and plot development strategies, and many were lacking in terms of drama or suspense. Many candidates wrote with limited control of their writing, which impacted on their clarity of expression. Common issues included shifts of narrative viewpoint, incoherent storylines and inconsistent tense control, often along with frequent errors of other kinds. For example, one candidate wrote: 'His biggest regret was getting into the drug-filled car with his gang "brothers", the car that brought him to a ten-year prison sentence for possession and plan to distribute. As he lifts the weights over his body, that's all he thinks about, that and his family, he has a daughter back home that is now 6 years old, all he does is thinks about reuniting with her outside the walls, but that would not be for another six years.'

There was a tendency for candidates to reproduce the plot or structure of streamed miniseries, action films or television dramas. This approach often leads to formulaic storytelling with limited originality and reduced opportunity for crafted language. There were also many cases of short work and many cliff-hanger endings which did not effectively conclude the narrative arc of the story.

Question 3 – Speech

You are going to take part in a debate at school about whether competitions are good or bad for those taking part. Your headteacher has asked you to open the debate by giving a speech on the topic. Write the text for your speech, discussing both points of view and creating a sense of interest in the debate. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Candidates explored the merits or otherwise of competitions by presenting the audience with factors for consideration. In terms of structuring their opening, many candidates referred to individual experiences of failure, including the disappointment of failing an exam, which was seen as part of the competitive educational environment they had to navigate. In terms of style, most candidates opted for a degree of informality in the opening section of their address.

Stronger responses demonstrated understanding and application of the context of a debate opening. They provided both perspectives before handing over to the debate teams to continue the discussion. They also indicated a strong understanding of the intended audience: 'Good evening parents, teachers, fellow students

and all invited guests. I was advised by the headteacher to open up today's debate.' Stronger responses included a variety of discourse markers to separate ideas, including 'However/on the other hand/Although', and provided logical reasons for the advantages and disadvantages of competition, for example: 'Have any of you ever felt this way? This utterly disheartening feeling of inferiority, that could lead to disinterest in the competition or even confidence problems in oneself, is one of the main topics we are going to discuss in this debate.' Some candidates used hooks to create an interesting opening for the debate, such as: 'I am sure that we have all heard the saying, "A little competition never hurt anyone." But what if it did?' Some used personal anecdotes to create relatability: 'It is a day I will forever remember in my life, the day I decided to participate in a national spelling bee competition.'

Stronger responses showed evidence of planning and fully explored both sides of the argument, in a neutral or objective manner. Competition was viewed by some as a phenomenon shaped by history and culture. One candidate referenced the value of discoveries such as the moon landing and the invention of the light bulb, 'born out of a competitive streak in someone's nature.' Counter arguments included the ideas of motivation, building resilience and inspiration, for example in this candidate's thoughtful comment: 'The point is, competitions test the abilities that will help you in real life. They do not test memory, they test precision and accuracy. This trains you for the future as there will be some pressuring situations that you will need to handle as soon as possible.'

Weaker responses tended to include subjective and highly specific (therefore limited) practical examples without further development or elaboration, and they often provided a summative and conclusive opinion, which was not required by the question prompt. In such responses, candidates often focused on one or two elements of competition only, or they were in need of greater audience engagement. Many were essay-type responses which put forward arguments, thus missing the intended purpose of the task. Other weaker responses were hindered by poor control of language, for example: 'Due to many students entering a competition with only an idea to win this had led to many candidates going through depression if they do not win. Therefore, as much as competitions encourage candidates to work hard some results may end up leading some children to fall into depression.'

Question 4 – Review

You recently took part in a one-day beach clean-up event which was organised by an environmental group. You decide to write a review of the event, which will be published in your local newspaper. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Some candidates struggled to balance the evaluative requirements of a review with a description or narrative based on the event. Often, peripheral matters were fixated upon, or the register was diluted and became narrative. Some spent too much time considering one aspect of the event, such as the lunch (or lack thereof) provided on the day. Such candidates, who relied heavily on an anecdotal style, sometimes gave rather lengthy preambles at the start, covering details regarding meeting on the beach with commentary on the appearance of the event leader and other participants.

Stronger responses typically demonstrated several effective strategies. They began with an engaging heading that captured attention and clearly stated the review's purpose, for example: 'Community's way of giving back' and 'SAVE OUR OCEAN.' Candidates who planned their responses were able to structure their reviews with effective subheadings, such as: 'The Plastic Plague', 'Mans's Mass Murder on The Beach' and 'Key Takeaways (not a burger wrapper in sight!).' They used language to reflect the participant's sense of horror at the scale of the problem, with words and phrases which helped to produce both a very realistic picture and a serious mood: 'Plastic bottles assaulted the sand'; 'Bottle caps blended with ancient shells etched a mosaic of man-made destruction.' In such clear and effective responses, candidates integrated their feelings about the issues and the organisation of the event at various points of the response.

Stronger responses described the event in a paragraphed, chronological structure and provided clear recommendations. They used an engaging, informative tone and focused on reviewing key elements of the clean-up such as the setting, the organisation, the equipment provided and the event leader. Concluding sections were often personal in terms of the reviewer's change in attitude and desire to continue with the work, as seen in this example: 'It was poignant for me to see how the plastic crisis has turned our beautiful beaches into a dumping ground. I discovered the value in living and striving for a greater cause.'

Weaker responses were often purely anecdotal, with details such as numbers in the group, the weather, the equipment provided and the importance of forging friendships. Food often featured, but details about the state of beaches and environmental issues were scant. The review portion was sometimes tacked on at the end in a rather ad hoc fashion, which detracted from achievement of the task's purpose. Weaker responses

were generally basic, with many simply describing the tasks performed during the clean-up without providing reflection or personal insight. Key points for improvement would be: use of more complex language, less repetition of ideas, greater awareness of the intended audience and reader engagement, and inclusion of an evaluative perspective.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/23 Writing
--

Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Sometimes the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. Key words within the question indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the task. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions are to write the text for a **news report** for your **local newspaper** about **a plan to close a local food market in your town** and to focus on the **opinions of local people** about the plan. In order to achieve the task (one of the Level 3 criteria on the mark scheme) these instructions must be followed.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is an essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Weaker responses are often characterised by loss of grammatical control in attempts to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; other common errors were writing in sentence fragments or in very lengthy run-on sentences. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates should not be overambitious in their choice of less common lexis, unless the precise meaning of the selected word is properly understood.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

General comments

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some **Section B** responses were appreciably short of the minimum word limit and a few candidates did not answer **Question 1(b)**. Some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was either short or impeded by errors (possibly indicating that they had run out of time to check their work).

In stronger responses to **Question 1(a)**, candidates focused clearly on the question, writing the text for credible news reports in an appropriate tone, making use of quotes from local people. Weaker responses often lacked an appropriate tone for a newspaper.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** were from candidates who maintained a close focus on their linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses focused mostly, or entirely, on content of their piece of writing and therefore only provided minimal analysis, by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task (review, story or essay), a clear focus on the question, and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** generally contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example, some responses to **Question 2** were simply recounts of the visit to the restaurant, with little in the way of critique or personal opinion, some responses to **Question 3** lacked in sense of drama or suspense, while some **Question 4** responses were repetitive and in need of variety and balance.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary

You have just heard that there is a plan to close a local food market in your town. You decide to write a news report about this, which will be published in your local newspaper.

- (a) **Write the text for the news report, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, focus on the opinions of local people about the plan to close the market.**

Most candidates demonstrated control of the newspaper form, opening with a suitable headline, such as: 'Town folk left reeling in wake of New Mayor's Legislation' or 'Closing Of Beloved Market.' They provided convincing reasons for potential closure of local food markets, including unaffordable increases in rent, poor food hygiene standards, increased and unsustainable traffic due to popularity of the market, or competition from larger supermarkets and stores. Most candidates included contrasting opinions on the closure from a variety of local people. Some candidates also used effective subheadings to organise information clearly. Most candidates wrote in the third person and adopted an appropriately objective tone, showing an awareness of the typical style of a news report.

Stronger responses included thoughtfully crafted headlines, with candidates often coming up with some alliteration, as in this example: 'Catastrophe Strikes Clevedon'. They also opened their news reports effectively, as in this example: 'The Old Packhouse market has been long considered the soul of KeriKeri. Every week, hundreds of locals gather to buy and sell fresh produce, meats and other goods. Alas, it seems that this is to be the case no more, as plans to close it have been given the green light.' They were particularly effective in addressing the second element of the prompt, consistently incorporating a range of local residents' opinions and presenting them through varied language choices and balanced perspectives. For example, one candidate wrote: "This market has been nothing but a blessing to our community," says George Brett, a local vegetable farmer who often sells his produce at the market. "People come from all over the region to buy their food here. It puts more money into our community than out, if you ask me." Another detailed report included opinions from people who supported change and displayed a degree of informality in the style of writing to add authenticity, as in these two examples: 'This place is past its sell by date' and 'How that Mayor has the gall I do not know. It's a right hullabaloo!' Some candidates used emotive backstories to create pathos for the audience: 'As a father of 5 children, Santiago had opened Santiago's Cheaps to support his growing family. Over the course of many years, he had cemented his store in the minds of the locals as the go-to food market.'

Weaker news reports tended to show reliance on recycled phrasing, resulting in repetitive quotations and limited development. Weaker responses often employed an inappropriate register, for example: 'Once a month, the food market gives local people a chance to collab and know each others.' A number of news reports were short. Many demonstrated a struggle with linguistic control, with errors throughout, as in this example: 'Our goverment decided to close local food market in the town, the reasons of this decision are first, these food market's food not healthy enough and there is no standard. And second one is there is no need for us to have little food markets.'

(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set.

One approach that continued to work well for candidates was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse the form, structure and language of their responses to **Question 1(a)**. They named, one by one, the techniques used, giving precise evidence from their answers and explaining the effect on the audience. Two main improvements to be made would be to ensure that adequate detail is provided and that evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response is used to support commentary.

In most stronger responses, candidates approached this question in one of two ways, each of which proved to be successful: addressing form and structure by going through the news report's content and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. Such candidates included a range of features in their responses, such as an inverted triangle structure and pathos, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave precise examples and analysed how stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning, using terminology to enhance their analysis, for example: 'Emotive language is used through the appeal of pathos of "point of tears" to indicate that the loss of the market is so great that people began to cry, allowing those who may not attend this market to empathise with those who did, or to provide relatability to those who did attend.' More successful responses eschewed lengthy pre-ambles, instead starting with analysis of the news reports from the very beginning, as in this example: 'Immediately in the title of the news report, "Bye-bye Food Saver?", that rhetorical question gives the impression to the audience of a potential mystery as it is not a solid "yes" or "no" which is going to leave the audience curious about the contents in the news report, making the audience persistent in reading the news report.'

Weaker responses were often very short or general, listing lots of features without adequate analysis of their effects. Incorrect terminology was also common. Such candidates sometimes identified some basic language and structural features, but seemed to struggle more with analysis. Some candidates made some valid points in their commentaries, but without giving examples to back them up, such as in this example: 'I used statistics to deliver a reliable and trustworthy news report.' Quite frequently, candidates included fairly obvious points, such as, 'I wrote in the third person' or, 'The report is structured in short paragraphs to make it easy to understand.' Many responses would have been improved with the provision of stronger explanations for linguistic devices, e.g. 'I also use the metaphor such as "the kids going around waving their paper" and "did not bear any fruits". The purpose is to engage the reader without directly addressing it.' Candidates should be reminded that, to do well in this item, they need to explain how a technique's use furthers the writer's purpose, beyond vague assertions about keeping the reader interested or to connect with the reader.

There were also, as in previous years, many examples of candidates paraphrasing their news stories, or focusing solely on structure without addressing language. Many weaker responses were filled with generalisations, such as in these two examples: 'I used the phrase "sad faces" to create an image in the reader's mind' and, 'I have used a lot of quotations to paint a picture of the scene in the reader's mind.' Other responses were extremely short, and in a few cases the question was not attempted.

Section B: Extended writing

Question 2 – Review

The winner of a well-known TV cookery show recently opened a restaurant which you have just visited. Write a review of the restaurant, which will be published on a local entertainment website called *What's On*. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates showed engagement with the task and many wrote enthusiastic reviews, offering opinions on the restaurant's décor, service, food and atmosphere. Most showed an awareness that this was a review and that there needed to be some balance expressed with a final verdict. The majority of candidates included an overall rating and recommendation and most wrote in an entertaining, lively style, appropriate for a local entertainment website.

Stronger engaged the attention of the reader from the outset, sometimes utilising a range of linguistic features: 'Ever wanted to be in the vicinity of a celebrity? Well, do that and enjoy the food prepared by the

winner of Hell's Kitchen, Maria Evelyn, at the Bahamas Brew.' A strong sense of voice was often a feature of a successful and sustained critique. One candidate incorporated humour in the review because of a disappointing experience with Spanish Tortilla de Patatas: 'The anticipation in tasting the dish was high as the reviewer stated Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay had raved over the dish. The reviewer's hopes were dashed as there were only two slices! This is false advertising so watch out!'

Stronger reviews focused on various elements that make up a fine dining experience, with comments well integrated into the account of the experience. Some demonstrated excellent immersion into the culinary world in highly realistic reviews, as in this example: 'The next four dishes were truly an explosion of flavour in my mouth. Each bite was as if you threw everything delicious in my mouth and washed it down with msg. He has done it again; he turned something everyone in the culinary world despised into something dream-like.' Not all reviews were positive, although this negative approach was also effective in stronger responses: 'The loaded nachos came soggy and cold; all the cheese had solidified and the chips were stale. The quesadilla came cold as well so the family each had one bite before leaving it. The "birria tacos of hope" were, disappointingly, more like the birria tacos of doom and despair.'

In weaker reviews, a disparaging perspective combined with a lack of structure resulted in a response resembling a stream of consciousness rather than a traditional review. Sometimes review comments were left to the very end or were absent altogether.

Question 3 – Story

Write a story which begins with the following sentence: *The third time he heard the noise, he knew he had to do something about it.* In your writing, create a sense of drama and suspense. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Stronger responses were written with control and development. These responses were focused on characterisation and setting to enhance their narratives and to build the appropriate atmosphere. A number of stories started with imaginative noises, often waking a character in the night. Stronger responses had evidence of atmospheric details with a degree of emotional tension, as in: 'It started as a whisper, faint and intermittent, like the scratch of fingernails against the glass.' Stronger responses also created places of danger which the central character unknowingly at first inhabited: 'the interior of the house sat cold, angry.' Such responses used imagery and linguistic techniques to achieve drama and suspense effectively, such as in: 'The heavy clouds, grey and dense, smothered the stars leaving the land nearly pitch black on this dreary night.' Additionally, showing the character's feelings and reactions rather than merely stating them made for a more engaging response: 'With timid steps he made his way from room to room again. Investigating this mysterious sound was the only way to ease his mind. But was easing his mind worth the potential danger? Was easing his mind going to be the cause of death on his tombstone? He sure did not hope so.'

Stronger stories successfully built drama and suspense through effective description of small details, such as in this example: 'The third time he heard the noise, he knew he had to do something about it. He would simply go insane if he did not. He would stand there in the shower, water trickling down his skin like cold tendrils, raising goosebumps and pooling on the white tiles pressing against his damp feet. He would simply stare and stare at the dirty white shower curtain, heart hammering in horror as the unknown noises taunted him just beyond the curtain.'

Weaker responses tended to be limited in terms of narrative characteristics, with more of a focus on a series of events, some not entirely connected to the opening prompt. These could have been improved with in-depth planning and development of detail. Such candidates struggled to create strong characterisation and setting: 'A 25-year-old male living in the 2 bedroom house in the dingy apartment building. The floor covered in rundown greyish-black grout stuck between the tiles, wallpaper peeling to reveal the textured moldy wall.' With improved planning, candidates would be more successful in developing their plots and building tension. Often, these responses consisted of an opening or fragment rather than a full narrative.

Grammatical weaknesses and poor sentence demarcation were common, especially in weaker scripts that combined multiple issues, including lack of cohesion, inaccurate punctuation, and inconsistent tenses. A typical example read: 'He reluctantly awoken, eyes wide open now ready to deal with whatever it was banging on on his entrance. It has kept him up all night. At first it was just light taps which was easy to ignore.' These errors disrupted the reader's engagement and impeded meaning. Additionally, candidates should be encouraged to make good use of the required word count to achieve character and plot development.

Though candidates consistently opened with the sentence, at times it still felt like an add-on. The requirement to write with a sense of drama and suspense had not been internalised by many candidates. Many stories toppled over into horror, a life spent as a hospital guinea pig for experimental operations, or melodrama and gore, such as: 'He let out a scream. Blood, blood, and more blood'. Other responses showed an attempt to write with 'drama and suspense', but did not manage to sustain this.

Question 4 – Essay

Your class has just had a debate on whether having a daily routine is good for you, or whether routine is boring. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay on the topic, giving your opinion. Write between 600 and 900 words.

Most candidates attempted to present both sides before offering an opinion. Many would have been more successful with increased formality, as required for an essay, with some more speech-like responses including phrases like: 'Let's look at ...'. Other responses were more like magazine articles. Most candidates explored the topic to some degree but struggled to present a solid and well-reasoned opinion, as required by the task. In several cases, arguments presented were contradictory, which undermined the quality and coherence of the writing.

Stronger essays presented balanced arguments with clear examples, sometimes making effective use of statistics, for example: 'A recent survey by the University of Chicago showed that 78 per cent of meticulous planners were growing bored with their routine. Unless something unexpected occurs, these people experience the same monotonous day repeatedly. What kind of a life is that?' Such responses used some cohesive devices and maintained a suitably formal tone, for example: 'Daily routines are a vital part of our lives. They have a positive effect on the brain in the sense that routine decreases decision fatigue, leads to less overthinking, procrastinating and indecisiveness, and builds discipline.'

Stronger work was structured logically, using discourse markers such as 'On the other hand', 'furthermore,' and 'it is not always as simple as that' to clearly link and contrast points. These candidates also used a range of language to craft a persuasive and reflective tone, with well-developed ideas that went beyond surface-level reasoning. One wrote: 'A daily routine, when designed by yourself and adjusted after feedback, is not a prison.' It continued with detailed examples of how the candidate has used such routines to streamline their learning. One such example referred to their desire to improve their reading of English: 'Instead of promising myself to read "a lot" at weekends, I added one rule to my mornings: read 10 pages every day while eating breakfast. Ten pages seemed too small to matter, but after three months I had read three books. The small, daily step became automatic and the total result was big. This is how routines work: they turn motivation, which goes up and down, into behaviour, which continues.'

Weaker responses often showed misunderstanding of the task. Sometimes, candidates launched straight into argument without introduction. For instance, one candidate began by writing: 'Daily routine allows the structure of important tasks and responsibilities. It allows you to make sure everything in your day is managed. I like the idea of not stressing over whether or not I have forgotten something. It would let me get everything I need done. Making every day just as productive as the last.' Others were characterised by vagueness and unclear line of argument: 'Social media is very addicting and you do not get much out of you just scroll on your phone endlessly like your half Zombie. Which makes you feel even worse compared when you wake up. Your daily routine is allowed to be flexible and does not need to be timebound base it off of your day to day life.' Errors in sentence construction, grammar, and spelling were frequent, often impeding meaning. In order to achieve highly in this exam, candidates need to show awareness of appropriate structure and form, and to write with clarity and cohesion.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/31 Language Analysis
--

Key messages

Paper 3 presents candidates with two compulsory questions: **Question 1** in **Section A** requires analysis of three texts from which candidates needed to present their analytical findings in respect of *Language change*. **Question 2** in **Section B** requires analysis of a transcription of conversation which exemplifies aspects of *Child language acquisition*.

Each question requires candidates to select data from the stimulus material, to develop ideas gained from their findings and to support their analysis with reference to their wider study of the relevant language topic. Moreover, candidates are required to produce sustained responses, carefully crafted in terms of organisation of ideas and clarity and control of expression.

General comments

In November 2025, there were some sustained, detailed and thoughtful responses and, in general, responses to both sections of the question paper had been given equal division of the examination time. Where this approach had been taken, candidates had been able to maximise their potential to achieve marks.

However, a small number of responses demonstrated loss of focus on the overall requirement of Paper 31, *Language Analysis*, in that they provided only an historical or theoretical overview of the relevant language topic together with long descriptions of models and approaches from language theorists. Candidates are reminded that Paper 3 is an opportunity to demonstrate keen analytical skills using the stimulus material as evidence for ideas throughout.

However, overall, responses were organised clearly into logical sequences of paragraphs, and control and clarity of expression were clear to effective with some sophisticated and insightful work seen at times.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Question 1 requires candidates to refer to all three texts – A, B and C – and to analyse how they exemplify the various ways in which the English language has changed over time.

This session, Text A comprised entries from the *Travellers' Directory Through Ireland* written by William Wilson (1786), Text B was a word table which provided six of the top collocates for 'handsome' and 'beautiful' from the British National Corpus (1980s – 1990s) and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the words 'clothing' and 'cloathing' (1700 – 1860).

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Writing – Assessment Objective 2

Most, although not all, candidates observed the requirement to analyse each of the three texts, although some briefer responses provided fewer details from Text A than from the other two texts. However, in

November 2025 fewer responses than in previous sessions explored Texts B and C separately from Text A, meaning that there was more of a sense of overall cohesion to the complete response.

Responses generally maintained an appropriate register throughout, although there were occasional lapses into colloquialism in work which was more limited. In sustained responses, discourse markers were used appropriately to separate or develop ideas, resulting in paragraphing which was fluently and logically sequenced. Technical terminology was used with accuracy and precision in effective or sophisticated responses, whilst those described as limited used only general descriptors to label selected data.

Clear, effective and sophisticated analyses were developed through a series of linguistic frameworks such as graphology, lexis, orthography, grammar or morphology which were those particularly pertinent to Text A. This approach is not prescribed, although where it was used an assured linguistic standpoint was maintained. Limited responses were more generalised, with simple descriptions of changes in words or spelling which provided lower tone and register.

In November 2025, fewer responses began with lengthy generalised introductions than had been seen in previous sessions, instead demonstrating immediate focus on the stimulus material in line with the genre of analytical writing. Moreover, fewer repetitious conclusions were seen, indicating well-controlled writing skills.

Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

Limited responses were often constructed around conceptual referencing instead of using citation of theoretical models and approaches to support analysis. Candidates are reminded of the weightings of the Assessment Objectives for **Question 1**, which offers 5 marks for Assessment Objective 4 and 15 marks for Assessment Objective 5. Therefore, although there is a requirement for responses to reference wider study of the language topic, it is analysis of data which carries considerably more weight in this question.

All responses discussed Text A in relation to the process of standardisation over time, including references to Johnson's dictionary or Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar, both of which had been published shortly before Text A. Also generally secure were references to Jespersen's notion of the Great Vowel Shift which were relevant to 'cloathing' as seen in Text C. As Caxton had introduced the printing press two centuries prior to the publication of Text A, specific reference to that was not always plausible, although Text A did evidence continuing evolution of printing technology. The concepts of compounding, broadening, narrowing and levels of formality were frequently explored, usually accurately, to items from Texts A and B.

Pejoration and amelioration were also introduced in discussions of Text B, although with less relevance. Further theoretical referencing which was not always made relevant to the stimulus material were those to the concepts of random fluctuation or cultural transmission, lexical gap filling, Crystal's tide metaphor or vague descriptions of 'Halliday's functional theory'.

In explorations of Text C, responses often referred to Chen's S-Curve although usually without a full explanation. However, where Aitchison's PIDC model was introduced, there were some effective explanations of where potential, implementation, distribution and codification of orthographical change was evident in the graph. Insightful responses also provided possible reasons for such change.

Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

In November 2025, it was clear that there was more detailed understanding of the use of the long S in early writing than there had been in previous sessions. Most responses had selected items from Text A which demonstrated how the grapheme appeared in initial or medial but not final positions, as was the convention of the time of publication of Text A.

Graphological analysis explored the columnised presentation of Text A and how paragraphs were distinct and clearly spaced. Limited responses demonstrated some confusion about the inclusion of the asterisks in Text A which were there to indicate omission in line with publication convention where only selected entries are presented. As it was clear in the preamble to Text A that it comprised 'Entries', candidates are reminded to read all parts of the question paper before beginning their response.

Selection of lexical items included 'rere', from which plausible analysis of orthographic development was detailed. However, limited responses identified lexis such as 'commodious', 'unimproved', 'plantations' and 'superb' as being obsolete. This was a common error and these items would have been better described as low frequency.

Text A included multiple instances of abbreviation, including R., L. and N.E., which enabled discussion of similarities between Early Modern and contemporary English in terms of the preference for open rather than closed punctuation, which was also seen in the abbreviation 'Visc.' in Text A.

At times, some confusion was demonstrated in limited responses where the collocates had been understood to be synonyms. Attempts were made, for example, to define a new meaning of 'features', which was said to have become 'gardens' in a basic error of misreading.

All responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how linguistic data is presented in the form of an *n*-gram graph, with percentages and dates being keenly observed. However, candidates are reminded that analysis of Text C should not rely only on describing decreases and increases over time: further ideas should be introduced as to how and why the graph data ties in to what is presented in either or both of the other two texts. In November 2025, the graph demonstrated clear indication of the progress towards standardisation of spelling and the influence of the Great Vowel Shift, using 'cloathing' as a primary example.

As in previous sessions, limited responses tended to rely on attempted translation of syntactical or grammatical constructions seen in Text A into what might appear in contemporary English. However, overall responses to **Question 1** showed a keen level of engagement with all three texts and a clear level of synthesis was achieved.

Section B

Question 2

Question 2 required candidates to analyse a transcription of a conversation between Oliver (age 3 years) and his father. They were at home and Oliver was playing with play dough, a type of modelling clay for children. Responses were required to demonstrate ways in which Oliver and his father were using language during their conversation, as well as selecting and analysing specific details from the transcription. Candidates were further asked to support their ideas and examples from their wider study of *Child language acquisition*.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

Understanding – Assessment Objective 1

Not all candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription, and therefore some responses provided irrelevant commentary on the lack of capitalisation and punctuation seen in the utterances. Furthermore, candidates are reminded that a transcription presented in **Question 2** of Paper 3 does not have an intended external audience, therefore the transcription is not designed with an ideal reader in mind. Basic responses frequently commented on how 'the reader' might be assisted if the interlocutors 'used more punctuation' and how they had made 'spelling errors'. However, these basic misconceptions as to the genre of conversation analysis were not seen in more confident responses, which acknowledged the interactive and dynamic nature of the conversation with features such as fulfilled adjacency pairs, interrogative mood clauses, turn-taking, paralanguage and deictic references being identified.

As in previous sessions, in November 2025 basic or limited responses tended to rely on the transcription key to assist feature-spotting instead of close reading of the individual utterances. Candidates are reminded that, in relation to Assessment Objective 1, feature-spotting may be creditable to a basic or limited extent where features are accurately labelled. However, clear, effective or sophisticated responses will always provide evidence of understanding of how and why features are used by each interlocutor according to age, stages of acquisition, levels of linguistic competence and performance, and degrees of caretaking responsibility.

Developed understanding was demonstrated in responses which included a wider range of characteristic features, such as the father's successful encouragement towards near accuracy of Oliver's pronunciation, the varying pitch level in his questioning technique, his extended utterances which exemplified cause and effect as seen in 'so if you have too many cookies before breakfast you'll get really sick' and his use of recasting rather than overt correction as in 'yeah play dough'.

Characteristic features which were identified in Oliver's utterances included sentence fragments as in 'have cookie', his facility with volume control in 'YEAH' as well as repetition for emphasis in '/wɪəli:/ /wɪəli:/ SICK', and some mimicry of his father's utterance, for example in 'he has /gwi:n/ hair'. At times, responses

demonstrated a deficit approach, commenting on what might have been expected in Oliver's utterances but which did not appear, including negation, contraction and lack of fluency with the copular verb 'to be'.

Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

In general, responses began by positioning Oliver in a specific stage of language acquisition. Differential diagnoses included the holophrastic and post-telegraphic stages, neither of which were fully accurate as there were signs of Oliver transitioning from the telegraphic to the post-telegraphic stage, for example in 'this is /pwaɪvɪt/' which included deixis in the demonstrative pronoun and a loaded lexical choice. Other responses merely looked at Oliver's age, only just three years, as an indication of the telegraphic stage without close reading of his utterances.

Most responses accurately placed both children in Piaget's preoperational stage, using perceived egotistical utterances as evidence for such claims. However, though the main focus of the transcription was on Oliver, his age, birthday, and his play activity – transferred to Oliver by the father – Oliver's own use of the singular personal pronoun was infrequent.

Clear to effective responses cited Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System in reference to the father's use of scaffolding with open and closed questioning together with micropause and timed pause, for example in 'what have you been making'. Effective and insightful responses developed by identifying the father as the More Knowledgeable Other (according to Vygotsky) and the way in which he attempted to bring Oliver into a Zone of Proximal Development in 'we rolled it out and made a puppy' to extend his vocabulary and expose him to use of past tense to aid in understanding a sequence of actions.

A number of Hallidayan functions of language were evidenced in the transcription. These were seen, for example, in 'turn this round' (Regulatory) and 'we /meɪkeɪn/ puppy' (Representational). Labelling of the identified functions was generally accurate and precise.

Positive reinforcement as outlined by Skinner was explained in most responses which had selected, for example, the father's encouragement of Oliver's cognitive development in 'thats probably (2) probably a good thing to know'. Some insightful responses distinguished between the notion of classical conditioning as seen in Oliver recognising 'have cookie (.) and maked me /wɪəli:/ /wɪəli:/ SICK' and the operant conditioning of his father's positive reinforcement, to develop explanations of the behaviourist approach.

The transcription provided a number of opportunities to analyse virtuous errors in Oliver's utterances, as well as possible evidence of Chomsky's notion of Universal Grammar. Clear to effective responses selected Oliver's near accurate use of tense in 'we /meɪkeɪn/ puppy' and compared it to his less successful attempt at the future aspect in '/æ/ come /waɪt/ back', where the utterance was interpreted as 'I will come right back'. Limited responses, although keen to cite Chomsky, made only brief mention of the Language Acquisition Device without selecting evidence from the transcription.

Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

In November 2025, more responses than in previous sessions attempted phonological analysis. The main evidence from the transcription selected for this purpose was Oliver's substitution of the glide /w/ for the rhotic phoneme /r/ in '/gwi:n/' and omission of the initial nasal phoneme /m/ in '/eɪk/'. Effective responses analysed further the consonant cluster reduction together with the substitution in 'pay low' where Oliver had transferred the /l/ from 'play' into 'low' to approximate the father's 'play dough'.

Oliver's paralinguistic of holding up three fingers to correctly express his new age was frequently selected in terms of his cognitive development being in advance of his production of language. Effective responses developed such discussion by selecting Oliver's fragmentary 'see (.) take this /geʔ/ off (.) see stuck', in which he was seen to use commands ('see' and 'take this') and supply a reason ('stuck') for the command but could not yet produce the full sentence fluently.

Overall, because a reasonably wide range of characteristic features had been selected in terms of Assessment Objective 1, some keen analytical skills were enabled when discussing how and why such features exemplified the father's caretaker approach and Oliver's linguistic competence and performance in relation to Assessment Objective 5. Ultimately, where responses were detailed in this manner and supported by relevant theoretical models and approaches, clear, effective or insightful analysis was presented.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/32 Language Analysis
--

Key messages

Paper 3 presents candidates with two compulsory questions: **Question 1** in **Section A** requires analysis of three texts from which candidates needed to present their analytical findings in respect of *Language change*. **Question 2** in **Section B** requires analysis of a transcription of conversation which exemplifies aspects of *Child language acquisition*.

Each question requires candidates to select data from the stimulus material, to develop ideas gained from their findings and to support their analysis with reference to their wider study of the relevant language topic. Moreover, candidates are required to produce sustained responses, carefully crafted in terms of organisation of ideas and clarity and control of expression.

General comments

In November 2025, candidates engaged well with the stimulus material in both sections of the question paper. As in previous examination sessions, some responses were more sustained and with a deeper level of detail in **Section A** than **Section B**, indicating that candidates had not always left sufficient time for a full analysis of the transcription presented in **Question 2**. Candidates are reminded that there are 25 marks available for each question, therefore equal division of the examination time will help them to maximise their potential to achieve marks.

In general, the level of detailing seen in **Question 1** compared to **Question 2** was due not only to keener analytical skills but also to the depth of theoretical referencing which was sometimes only at surface level in responses to **Question 2**. However, candidates should bear in mind that in **Question 1** there are 5 marks available for Assessment Objective 4 compared with 15 marks available for the same Assessment Objective in **Question 2** – therefore the requirement for effective theoretical referencing is weighted more heavily in **Question 2**.

A small number of responses provided only an overview of the relevant language topic. Although these accounts were specific, precise and accurate in terms of the way the English language has changed over time or how children acquire language from birth onwards, in such responses there was little or no mention of the stimulus material, therefore any theoretical referencing could not be made relevant to the question.

However, overall, responses were organised clearly into logical sequences of paragraphs, and control and clarity of expression were clear to effective with some detailed development of ideas.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Question 1 requires candidates to refer to all three texts – A, B and C – and to analyse how they exemplify the various ways in which the English language has changed over time.

This session, Text A was an extract from a handbook for travellers to Switzerland which had been published in 1864, Text B was a word table illustrating five of the top collocates for 'clothing' and 'costume' from the Google Books corpus (1980s–2000s) and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for 'excursion on foot' and 'walking holiday' (1840–2000).

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Writing – Assessment Objective 2

All candidates observed the requirement to analyse each of the three texts. In November 2025, fewer responses than in previous sessions explored Texts B and C separately from Text A, meaning that there was more of a sense of overall cohesion to the complete response. Nonetheless, some responses engaged to a deeper level with Texts B and C despite the many opportunities for analysis offered by Text A.

Most candidates maintained an appropriate register throughout their response, with only occasional lapse into colloquialism. In sustained responses, discourse markers were used appropriately to separate or develop ideas, resulting in paragraphing which was fluently and logically sequenced. Technical terminology was used with ease and accuracy in effective or sophisticated responses, whilst those described as limited used only general descriptors to label data selected from the text.

In November 2025, analyses clearly progressed through a series of linguistic frameworks, such as graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, syntax or etymology, which were those particularly pertinent to Text A. This approach, although by no means compulsory, maintained a linguistic standpoint. Weaker responses were more generalised, with simple descriptions of changes in words or spelling, which provided a lower, often chatty, register.

Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

In November 2025, fewer responses introduced analyses with lengthy historical accounts than had been seen in previous sessions. Instead, immediate focus on the stimulus material was evident, which meant that candidates had observed the requirement in Paper 3 for analysis rather than discussion. This approach led to careful use of examination time and avoidance of material becoming irrelevant.

Almost all responses discussed Text A in relation to the process of standardisation over time, including references to Johnson's dictionary. Less secure were references to Jespersen's notion of the Great Vowel Shift or Caxton's introduction of the printing press, as these did not sit easily alongside the publication date of Text A. The concepts of broadening and narrowing were frequently applied, usually accurately, to the items from Text B. Pejoration and amelioration were also introduced in discussions of Text B, although with less relevance.

Most responses identified Text A as Late Modern English, recognising also how technological and sociological advancements around the time of Text A's publication (1864) led to lexical development. Responses frequently acknowledged that the Industrial Revolution had enabled more frequent and widespread travel opportunities for a broader section of society which in turn meant that the English language had increased its overall lexicon by borrowing (for example from French in 'gibeciere') and by the introduction of neologism or lexical gap filling following the emergence of new modes of transportation such as the 'steamboat'.

Analyses of the level of formality in Text A led appropriately to references to Goodman's Informalisation, Aitchison's notions of Progress or Decay or Romaine on sociological change. In weaker responses, such theoretical references appeared to be understood but were not always tied to the selections from the stimulus material. This approach was also seen in explorations of Text C where candidates were keen to cite Chen's S-Curve or Aitchison's PIDC model. Effective or insightful responses provided fuller descriptions of how and why citations were appropriate support for ideas gained from all three texts.

Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

A common error which was seen in many responses in discussion of lexis from Text A was to label 'shouldering' or 'fortnight' as obsolete, with the simplified spelling in the term 'Fortnite' only now used in computer gaming. Candidates are reminded that just because a certain lexical item is not used by themselves, it does not mean that the item is obsolete. In fact, 'shouldering' could perhaps be described as low frequency, but 'fortnight' remains a high frequency contemporary term. Further terms which drew attention were 'worsted' and the other items which appeared with definitions at the base of Text A. Basic responses did not take account of the definition provided for 'worsted', those candidates attempting instead to say that the term was used to describe something which had become worse, which was incorrect.

Graphological analysis took the form of exploration of how the heading and subheadings were presented in bold, using closed punctuation and the Roman numeral 'V', and how paragraphs were distinct but not clearly spaced. Comparisons were frequently drawn to contemporary presentations of travel writing and how contemporary literature usually incorporates only Arabic and not Roman numerals to assist text organisation.

Analysis of grammatical items usually focused on the lengthy sentences of Text A, where clauses were separated by comma or semicolon. Effective or insightful responses developed such grammatical analysis with exploration of the text producer's use of rhetorical questioning by way of enhancing tenor in a text which could be seen as largely formal. Where analysis of syntax was attempted, the phrase 'substantial meal may be partaken of' was useful, as was 'will best dictate'.

The data in Text B was interpreted well although some confusion was demonstrated in weaker responses where the collocates had been understood as synonyms. Candidates are reminded to read all of the stimulus material closely, including the preambles to each of the three texts. Such candidates attempted to say that the meaning of 'footwear' had become 'drama'. However, clear to effective responses demonstrated understanding of how in Text A 'clothing' and 'costume' could be used interchangeably whereas there were degrees of specificity presented in each item in Text B.

All responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how linguistic data is presented in the form of an *n*-gram graph. In Text C, percentages and dates were keenly observed. However, in analysis of Text C it is important not only to describe decreases and increases over time by reproducing statistics, but to give further ideas which tie into any data which may be presented in either or both of the other two texts. In November 2025, travel for recreation is termed in Text A as an 'excursion', which is notably different from the way in which it is termed as a 'holiday' in Text C. This difference was only explored in effective or insightful responses. Basic responses frequently described the term 'excursion' as obsolete, which is incorrect as exemplified in Text C. However, more developed responses often included the term 'Pedestrian' from Text A in discussions of Text C's 'on foot' and 'walking', with some close morphological analysis being produced.

Overall, responses to **Question 1** demonstrated a clear level of engagement with the stimulus material and some keen analytical skills were seen. However, limited responses relied on attempted translation of lexical or grammatical items seen in Text A into what might appear in contemporary English.

Section B

Question 2

Question 2 required candidates to analyse a transcription of a conversation between Elsa (age 7) and Coco (age 5) and their adult neighbour, Laura, who was looking after them in their home during the school holidays. Responses were required to demonstrate ways in which Elsa, Coco and Laura were using language during their conversation. As well as selecting and analysing specific details from the transcription, candidates were asked to support their ideas and examples from their wider study of *Child language acquisition*. Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

Understanding – Assessment Objective 1

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription, although it was clear that some had not been familiar with these conventions with irrelevant commentary on the lack of capitalisation and punctuation. However, the interactive and dynamic nature of the conversation was generally understood well, with features such as fulfilled adjacency pairs, turn-taking and interruption being identified.

In general in November 2025, fewer characteristic features were selected, which led to limited responses mainly relying on the transcription key to assist feature-spotting instead of deep reading of the utterances. In Paper 3 in respect of Assessment Objective 1, feature-spotting is creditable to a basic or limited extent if features are accurately labelled. However, clear, effective or sophisticated responses will always provide evidence of understanding of how and why features are used by each interlocutor according to age, stages of acquisition, levels of linguistic competence and performance, and degrees of caretaking responsibility.

Developed understanding was demonstrated in responses which selected a wider range of characteristic features, such as the way in which Laura used a variety of interrogatives and declaratives, the ways in which Coco's volume was raised and lowered, use of raised and lowered intonation, micropause and timed pause,

varied pronoun use, emphatic stress, use of tenses, negation, and paralinguistics including laughter and pointing.

Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

Most responses began by identifying the stages of acquisition of the two children. Although recognition that Elsa and Coco could be positioned in two different stages, Coco (age 5) was often incorrectly stated to be in the telegraphic stage and that Elsa (age 7) was in the post-telegraphic stage. Effective responses more accurately identified Coco as operating within the post-telegraphic stage and that Elsa's utterances provided evidence for continuing development.

This was similar to the way in which responses placed both children in Piaget's preoperational stage without reference to any analytical findings from the transcription. In basic or limited responses, the labels of Piaget's stages themselves demonstrated confusion, with inaccuracies such as 'post-operational' or the undeveloped and incorrect statement that the children were in the formal operational stage. However, effective responses made a clear selection of Coco's perceived egotistical utterances as evidence that she could be positioned in the pre-operational stage as well as Elsa's metalinguistic play and humour in 'your needle is looking at you coco', which provided evidence for the concrete operational stage.

Laura was seen as a Language Acquisition Support System according to Bruner in most responses. Evidence from the transcription included her scaffolding technique in 'now hold the thread and try to slot it through the needle'. Clear and effective responses developed ideas on scaffolding with reference to Vygotsky, with Laura being seen as the More Knowledgeable Other. However, only insightful responses described the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development in relation to how Laura not only taught Coco the physical action of threading a needle but introduced polysemy in the new lexical term 'the eye of the needle'.

Most clear or effective responses correctly identified a number of Hallidayan functions which were evidenced in the transcription. These were seen, for example, in 'show us laura' (Regulatory), 'i like them all really' (Personal), 'its in there' (Representational) and 'shall i get it to show you v' (Heuristic). Basic or limited responses confused the names of the individual functions, sometimes describing them as 'levels' or 'layers', or misapplied named functions to the selection being made from the transcription.

Most responses also demonstrated understanding of how Laura used both positive and negative reinforcement as outlined by Skinner, for example in 'well done elsa (.) thats exactly how its done' which aimed to encourage Elsa in the activity and in 'ugly is a pretty strong word' to promote more precise lexical choice. Some insightful responses distinguished between the notion of classical conditioning and the operant conditioning evident in the transcription to develop explanations of Skinner's behaviourist approach.

Overall, in November 2025, fewer theories and theorists were referenced than in previous sessions. Moreover, support from conceptualisation was often brief, although there was some effective reference to Bellugi, Snow, Nelson, Aitchison or Tomasello at times.

Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

In November 2025, more responses than in previous sessions attempted phonological analysis. The main evidence from the transcription selected for this purpose was Coco's mispronunciation of 'remember' in which she transposed the rhotic and nasal phonemes /r/ and /m/. A common inaccuracy described this feature as consonant cluster reduction, which was incorrect, although substitution of the plosive /g/ for /d/ in Coco's 'needle' was generally more precisely identified.

Because some responses to **Question 2** were briefer than those to **Question 1**, and therefore fewer selections of characteristic features had been made, analysis of the selected data tended to be underdeveloped. Candidates are reminded that features identified in the transcription form the initial evidential findings (Assessment Objective 1), whereas the analysis of them is achieved through consideration of the impact that the findings have in the conversation (Assessment Objective 5). Thus, the two discrete ways in which to explore the transcription should interweave tightly to maximise overall achievement.

For example, close exploration of Coco's utterance, 'no im going to make mine for mummy' was made in effective responses which commented on the way that the phrase not only contained negation by way of contradiction, but also contraction, personal and possessive pronouns, and future aspect including two different verb forms. Insightful responses developed analysis of this utterance further to show how Coco had

imitated Elsa's declarative 'im going to make mine for mummy' but had altered it to suit her own purposes, the interruption possibly being indicative of early sibling rivalry.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/33 Language Analysis
--

Key messages

Paper 3 presents candidates with two compulsory questions: **Question 1** in **Section A** requires analysis of three texts from which candidates needed to present their analytical findings in respect of *Language change*. **Question 2** in **Section B** requires analysis of a transcription of conversation which exemplifies aspects of *Child language acquisition*.

Each question requires candidates to select data from the stimulus material, to develop ideas gained from their findings and to support their analysis with reference to their wider study of the relevant language topic. Moreover, candidates are required to produce sustained responses, carefully crafted in terms of organisation of ideas and clarity and control of expression.

General comments

In November 2025, there were some sustained, detailed and thoughtful responses and, in general, responses to both sections of the question paper had been given equal division of the examination time. Where this approach had been taken, candidates had been able to maximise their potential to achieve marks.

However, a small number of responses demonstrated loss of focus on the overall requirement of Paper 33, *Language Analysis*, in that they provided only an historical or theoretical overview of the relevant language topic together with long descriptions of models and approaches from language theorists. Candidates are reminded that Paper 3 is an opportunity to demonstrate keen analytical skills using the stimulus material as evidence for ideas throughout.

However, overall, responses were organised clearly into logical sequences of paragraphs, and control and clarity of expression were clear to effective with some sophisticated and insightful work seen at times.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Question 1 requires candidates to refer to all three texts – A, B and C – and to analyse how they exemplify the various ways in which the English language has changed over time.

This session, Text A comprised entries from the *Travellers' Directory Through Ireland* written by William Wilson (1786), Text B was a word table which provided six of the top collocates for 'handsome' and 'beautiful' from the British National Corpus (1980s – 1990s) and Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the words 'clothing' and 'cloathing' (1700 – 1860).

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Writing – Assessment Objective 2

Most, although not all, candidates observed the requirement to analyse each of the three texts, although some briefer responses provided fewer details from Text A than from the other two texts. However, in

November 2025 fewer responses than in previous sessions explored Texts B and C separately from Text A, meaning that there was more of a sense of overall cohesion to the complete response.

Responses generally maintained an appropriate register throughout, although there were occasional lapses into colloquialism in work which was more limited. In sustained responses, discourse markers were used appropriately to separate or develop ideas, resulting in paragraphing which was fluently and logically sequenced. Technical terminology was used with accuracy and precision in effective or sophisticated responses, whilst those described as limited used only general descriptors to label selected data.

Clear, effective and sophisticated analyses were developed through a series of linguistic frameworks such as graphology, lexis, orthography, grammar or morphology which were those particularly pertinent to Text A. This approach is not prescribed, although where it was used an assured linguistic standpoint was maintained. Limited responses were more generalised, with simple descriptions of changes in words or spelling which provided lower tone and register.

In November 2025, fewer responses began with lengthy generalised introductions than had been seen in previous sessions, instead demonstrating immediate focus on the stimulus material in line with the genre of analytical writing. Moreover, fewer repetitious conclusions were seen, indicating well-controlled writing skills.

Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

Limited responses were often constructed around conceptual referencing instead of using citation of theoretical models and approaches to support analysis. Candidates are reminded of the weightings of the Assessment Objectives for **Question 1**, which offers 5 marks for Assessment Objective 4 and 15 marks for Assessment Objective 5. Therefore, although there is a requirement for responses to reference wider study of the language topic, it is analysis of data which carries considerably more weight in this question.

All responses discussed Text A in relation to the process of standardisation over time, including references to Johnson's dictionary or Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar, both of which had been published shortly before Text A. Also generally secure were references to Jespersen's notion of the Great Vowel Shift which were relevant to 'cloathing' as seen in Text C. As Caxton had introduced the printing press two centuries prior to the publication of Text A, specific reference to that was not always plausible, although Text A did evidence continuing evolution of printing technology. The concepts of compounding, broadening, narrowing and levels of formality were frequently explored, usually accurately, to items from Texts A and B.

Pejoration and amelioration were also introduced in discussions of Text B, although with less relevance. Further theoretical referencing which was not always made relevant to the stimulus material were those to the concepts of random fluctuation or cultural transmission, lexical gap filling, Crystal's tide metaphor or vague descriptions of 'Halliday's functional theory'.

In explorations of Text C, responses often referred to Chen's S-Curve although usually without a full explanation. However, where Aitchison's PIDC model was introduced, there were some effective explanations of where potential, implementation, distribution and codification of orthographical change was evident in the graph. Insightful responses also provided possible reasons for such change.

Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

In November 2025, it was clear that there was more detailed understanding of the use of the long S in early writing than there had been in previous sessions. Most responses had selected items from Text A which demonstrated how the grapheme appeared in initial or medial but not final positions, as was the convention of the time of publication of Text A.

Graphological analysis explored the columnised presentation of Text A and how paragraphs were distinct and clearly spaced. Limited responses demonstrated some confusion about the inclusion of the asterisks in Text A which were there to indicate omission in line with publication convention where only selected entries are presented. As it was clear in the preamble to Text A that it comprised 'Entries', candidates are reminded to read all parts of the question paper before beginning their response.

Selection of lexical items included 'rere', from which plausible analysis of orthographic development was detailed. However, limited responses identified lexis such as 'commodious', 'unimproved', 'plantations' and 'superb' as being obsolete. This was a common error and these items would have been better described as low frequency.

Text A included multiple instances of abbreviation, including R., L. and N.E., which enabled discussion of similarities between Early Modern and contemporary English in terms of the preference for open rather than closed punctuation, which was also seen in the abbreviation 'Visc.' in Text A.

At times, some confusion was demonstrated in limited responses where the collocates had been understood to be synonyms. Attempts were made, for example, to define a new meaning of 'features', which was said to have become 'gardens' in a basic error of misreading.

All responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how linguistic data is presented in the form of an *n*-gram graph, with percentages and dates being keenly observed. However, candidates are reminded that analysis of Text C should not rely only on describing decreases and increases over time: further ideas should be introduced as to how and why the graph data ties in to what is presented in either or both of the other two texts. In November 2025, the graph demonstrated clear indication of the progress towards standardisation of spelling and the influence of the Great Vowel Shift, using 'cloathing' as a primary example.

As in previous sessions, limited responses tended to rely on attempted translation of syntactical or grammatical constructions seen in Text A into what might appear in contemporary English. However, overall responses to **Question 1** showed a keen level of engagement with all three texts and a clear level of synthesis was achieved.

Section B

Question 2

Question 2 required candidates to analyse a transcription of a conversation between Oliver (age 3 years) and his father. They were at home and Oliver was playing with play dough, a type of modelling clay for children. Responses were required to demonstrate ways in which Oliver and his father were using language during their conversation, as well as selecting and analysing specific details from the transcription. Candidates were further asked to support their ideas and examples from their wider study of *Child language acquisition*.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

Understanding – Assessment Objective 1

Not all candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription, and therefore some responses provided irrelevant commentary on the lack of capitalisation and punctuation seen in the utterances. Furthermore, candidates are reminded that a transcription presented in **Question 2** of Paper 3 does not have an intended external audience, therefore the transcription is not designed with an ideal reader in mind. Basic responses frequently commented on how 'the reader' might be assisted if the interlocutors 'used more punctuation' and how they had made 'spelling errors'. However, these basic misconceptions as to the genre of conversation analysis were not seen in more confident responses, which acknowledged the interactive and dynamic nature of the conversation with features such as fulfilled adjacency pairs, interrogative mood clauses, turn-taking, paralanguage and deictic references being identified.

As in previous sessions, in November 2025 basic or limited responses tended to rely on the transcription key to assist feature-spotting instead of close reading of the individual utterances. Candidates are reminded that, in relation to Assessment Objective 1, feature-spotting may be creditable to a basic or limited extent where features are accurately labelled. However, clear, effective or sophisticated responses will always provide evidence of understanding of how and why features are used by each interlocutor according to age, stages of acquisition, levels of linguistic competence and performance, and degrees of caretaking responsibility.

Developed understanding was demonstrated in responses which included a wider range of characteristic features, such as the father's successful encouragement towards near accuracy of Oliver's pronunciation, the varying pitch level in his questioning technique, his extended utterances which exemplified cause and effect as seen in 'so if you have too many cookies before breakfast you'll get really sick' and his use of recasting rather than overt correction as in 'yeah play dough'.

Characteristic features which were identified in Oliver's utterances included sentence fragments as in 'have cookie', his facility with volume control in 'YEAH' as well as repetition for emphasis in '/wɪəli:/ /wɪəli:/ SICK', and some mimicry of his father's utterance, for example in 'he has /gwi:n/ hair'. At times, responses

demonstrated a deficit approach, commenting on what might have been expected in Oliver's utterances but which did not appear, including negation, contraction and lack of fluency with the copular verb 'to be'.

Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

In general, responses began by positioning Oliver in a specific stage of language acquisition. Differential diagnoses included the holophrastic and post-telegraphic stages, neither of which were fully accurate as there were signs of Oliver transitioning from the telegraphic to the post-telegraphic stage, for example in 'this is /pwaɪvɪt/' which included deixis in the demonstrative pronoun and a loaded lexical choice. Other responses merely looked at Oliver's age, only just three years, as an indication of the telegraphic stage without close reading of his utterances.

Most responses accurately placed both children in Piaget's preoperational stage, using perceived egotistical utterances as evidence for such claims. However, though the main focus of the transcription was on Oliver, his age, birthday, and his play activity – transferred to Oliver by the father – Oliver's own use of the singular personal pronoun was infrequent.

Clear to effective responses cited Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System in reference to the father's use of scaffolding with open and closed questioning together with micropause and timed pause, for example in 'what have you been making'. Effective and insightful responses developed by identifying the father as the More Knowledgeable Other (according to Vygotsky) and the way in which he attempted to bring Oliver into a Zone of Proximal Development in 'we rolled it out and made a puppy' to extend his vocabulary and expose him to use of past tense to aid in understanding a sequence of actions.

A number of Hallidayan functions of language were evidenced in the transcription. These were seen, for example, in 'turn this round' (Regulatory) and 'we /meɪkeɪn/ puppy' (Representational). Labelling of the identified functions was generally accurate and precise.

Positive reinforcement as outlined by Skinner was explained in most responses which had selected, for example, the father's encouragement of Oliver's cognitive development in 'thats probably (2) probably a good thing to know'. Some insightful responses distinguished between the notion of classical conditioning as seen in Oliver recognising 'have cookie (.) and maked me /wɪəli:/ /wɪəli:/ SICK' and the operant conditioning of his father's positive reinforcement, to develop explanations of the behaviourist approach.

The transcription provided a number of opportunities to analyse virtuous errors in Oliver's utterances, as well as possible evidence of Chomsky's notion of Universal Grammar. Clear to effective responses selected Oliver's near accurate use of tense in 'we /meɪkeɪn/ puppy' and compared it to his less successful attempt at the future aspect in '/æ/ come /waɪt/ back', where the utterance was interpreted as 'I will come right back'. Limited responses, although keen to cite Chomsky, made only brief mention of the Language Acquisition Device without selecting evidence from the transcription.

Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

In November 2025, more responses than in previous sessions attempted phonological analysis. The main evidence from the transcription selected for this purpose was Oliver's substitution of the glide /w/ for the rhotic phoneme /r/ in '/gwi:n/' and omission of the initial nasal phoneme /m/ in '/eɪk/'. Effective responses analysed further the consonant cluster reduction together with the substitution in 'pay low' where Oliver had transferred the /l/ from 'play' into 'low' to approximate the father's 'play dough'.

Oliver's paralinguistic of holding up three fingers to correctly express his new age was frequently selected in terms of his cognitive development being in advance of his production of language. Effective responses developed such discussion by selecting Oliver's fragmentary 'see (.) take this /geʔ/ off (.) see stuck', in which he was seen to use commands ('see' and 'take this') and supply a reason ('stuck') for the command but could not yet produce the full sentence fluently.

Overall, because a reasonably wide range of characteristic features had been selected in terms of Assessment Objective 1, some keen analytical skills were enabled when discussing how and why such features exemplified the father's caretaker approach and Oliver's linguistic competence and performance in relation to Assessment Objective 5. Ultimately, where responses were detailed in this manner and supported by relevant theoretical models and approaches, clear, effective or insightful analysis was presented.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/41 Language Topics
--

Key messages

In November 2025, candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics by providing sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to two compulsory questions. Candidates were requested to respond in the form of discursive essays which were required to be supported by evidence from the stimulus material provided as well as relevant reference to wider study of the relevant language topic.

The two compulsory questions presented in Paper 41 concerned *English in the world*, presented in **Section A** and *Language and the self*, presented in **Section B**. There were 25 marks available in each section indicating that candidates should demonstrate examination technique by dividing their writing time equally between the two questions. In November 2025, responses were usually appropriately sustained although some brief work was seen at times.

As in previous sessions, at times in November 2025 there was evidence that candidates had attempted to analyse the writing of the stimulus material, particularly in **Question 2**. Analysis is not required in Paper 41 and such material became irrelevant content and was therefore not rewardable.

General comments

In some responses there was an enthusiastic engagement with the language topic overall, particularly in **Question 1**, but rather less engagement with the specific focus determined by the stimulus material and the question frame. As in previous sessions, a further limiting approach was a tendency to name as many theories and theorists as possible in an effort to address AO4 with little reference to the text provided. This tendency was particularly marked in responses to **Question 2**.

Candidates are reminded that throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the specific context provided; a demonstration of knowledge gained from wider reading is not sufficient to gain marks across all three assessment objectives. Conversely, some basic responses made no reference to theoretical ideas gained from wider study of the language topic. Both of these approaches led to loss of marks either in AO1 or AO4.

At times, basic or limited responses provided long introductions which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of historical or sociological events not directly tied into any specific context. Supplying such introductions had clearly eaten into the examination time leaving little time left for writing the main body of the essay. A further common writing error was seen in attempts to provide a conclusion which comprised either clear repetition of previous discussion or the introduction of new ideas which, as these new ideas were part of the concluding paragraph, remained undeveloped.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

In November 2025, the stimulus material provided for **Question 1** was an extract from an article titled 'As it spreads across the world, who owns English?' which had been published on the website of the British weekly

newspaper, *The Economist*, in 2023. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English around the world, and to refer to specific details from the texts together with ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Responses generally demonstrated sound awareness of debates surrounding linguistic ownership and how these issues intersect with histories of colonisation and contemporary patterns in the global spread of English as a Second Language. Many were able to relate the text's provocation - 'Who owns English?' - to wider sociolinguistic concerns, including identity, power and linguistic autonomy.

Points for discussion included how English may have established global hegemony with examples of how the English language has changed more recently through broadening of lexicon and altered syntactic construction due to normalised influence of non-native speakers, taking up the text originator's point of view that 'new generations of native speakers contribute not just words but their own grammar'.

The concept of English as a lingua franca was widely discussed, as were attitudes to its reception globally, which led to some developed exploration of why non-native speakers of English 'are going to be less keen to sound British or American' and why such speakers 'should feel free to ignore British or American norms'.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

Organisation of clear or more effective responses was structured in a logical and fluent sequence of developed ideas which made an immediate selection of points from the text rather than, as in basic or limited responses, providing lengthy and unfocused introductions. Appropriate discourse markers signposted development of an idea or introduced a new discussion point. Basic responses tended to be brief and therefore remained undeveloped. Some responses were limited in their use of clear paragraphing, even in lengthy work. This approach can imply lack of writing control and candidates are reminded of the necessity for clarity in respect of Assessment Objective 2.

A further trend in limited responses was to embed extended quotes from the text, possibly in an effort to add length to the overall response. Such an approach led to fewer specific points being made overall because writing out lengthy quotes had clearly taken up a considerable amount of the examination time.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation

Crystal was frequently cited, although often in a formulaic way. As noted in previous sessions, simply invoking Crystal rarely contributes meaningfully to the discussion unless his work is used with specificity. Effective responses, however, drew on Crystal's prediction that up to 50 per cent of the world's population may be competent in English by the end of the century, using this to interrogate the notion of 'ownership' of English. This application demonstrated how statistical forecasting can support arguments concerning linguistic plurality.

Kachru's Circles of English model was one of the most thoroughly applied conceptual references. Effective responses used it to explore tensions between inner, outer and expanding circle nations, relating these directly to the text's questioning of whether English can meaningfully be said to 'belong' to any one group of speakers. However, there was not always development of this to state how the model could illustrate the shifting demographic centre of English and to problematise the authority traditionally associated with inner circle norms.

Citation of Schneider's Dynamic Model also demonstrated an understanding of the later stages of the model, with some clear discussion of how the text implicitly illustrated the endonormative stabilisation and even differentiation phases in various post-colonial Englishes resulting in hybrids such as Singlish or Chinglish.

Further conceptual referencing included linguistic revitalisation policies such as those operating in New Zealand and Wales. However, such references were often under-developed or tangential in limited responses where frequent struggles to explain how revitalisation movements might relate to global ownership of English were evidenced. To make responses clearer or more effective when referencing linguistic revitalisation, responses would need to connect the issue to broader concepts of linguistic power, demonstrating how minority language empowerment complicates the dominance - and perceived 'ownership' - of English in the world.

Section B

Question 2

In November 2025, the stimulus material for **Question 2** was the opening of an article published in 2022 on a business communications company website titled 'Forget the 'female email' rules'.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

Candidates engaged well with the stimulus material, finding a number of points which were useful as a springboard for discussion. Responses demonstrated secure understanding of how gendered expectations shape both personal and social identity. Many showed awareness of how linguistic behaviour is scrutinised differently across genders which indicated a generally sound understanding of the text.

Points for discussion outlined in the stimulus material included whether female workers should refrain from specific writing habits in order to 'be taken seriously at work', often, but not always, in agreement with the text originator that 'it's all nonsense'.

Effective responses challenged the opinion that *it's good to be assertive at work from time to time* but that it is also *important to build relationships and create emotional connection* through language with the counterargument that assertive language should continue to be used in the workplace to establish and maintain professionalism. A further challenge was also put to the author's implication that male workers should become less assertive in the language they use at work.

Most responses, however, were in general agreement that 'giving someone reams of rules to remember just makes them less confident' with some clear discussion relating the author's statement to other aspects of life which may detract from attempts to establish either one's own personal identity or to fit into communities of practice other than the workplace.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

In **Question 2**, some candidates had begun to analyse the text originator's stylised use of language, for example in relaxed choices such as 'the important stuff'. Candidates are reminded that it is the ideas in Paper 41 which need to be discussed and that language analysis should be reserved for Paper 33.

Limited responses presented simple paraphrasing of the text presented and some basic responses sought to lift sections of paragraphs direct from the stimulus material. However, clear or more effective responses had made a careful selection from the text to develop discussions which included demonstration of critical engagement with the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity.

Clear or effective responses maintained an appropriate register and paragraphs generally formed a logical sequence. Accurate technical terminology was used in effective responses and, at times, there was a sophisticated level of clarity and directed control, resulting in presentation of a firm linguistic standpoint.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation

Conceptual referencing in **Question 2** was generally thorough, accurate and precise which was a further indication of the level of engagement with the stimulus material when citation was tied closely to ideas selected from the text.

Limited responses tended to work through a list of linguistic models and approaches relevant to study of genderlect although these were not explained well and, at times, names of theorists were unclear. For example, the first name of both Cameron and Tannen is Deborah yet their studies consider different aspects of genderlect study. Where responses introduced a linguistic concept by saying, for example, 'According to Deborah ...' the reference became muddled. Candidates are reminded to use the second name of theorists to avoid any confusion and to maintain an academic register. Nonetheless, in clearer or more effective responses citation was more thorough.

Robin Lakoff's study on Features of Women's Language was cited in most responses to some extent, using it to explain the pressure perceived by women to soften tone, hedge, or apologise - linking these patterns to identity construction and possible power imbalances in the workplace.

Tannen's distinction between Rapport and Report Talk styles was also cited effectively, allowing candidates to frame the text's critique of masculine assertiveness norms versus feminine relational styles as competing identity performances rather than hierarchies of competence. Such referencing was specific to the idea in the stimulus material that questioning can be 'a handy tool'. In effective responses there was also presentation of Tannen's view that gendered language is built on two separate cultural dialects neither of which are correct nor incorrect in any given situation but only that there are distinct differences which emerge as natural features of spoken language used by different genders.

Further, thorough referencing was to Cameron's concept of Verbal Hygiene, with effective responses recognising that prescriptive advice about 'female emails' could reflect societal attempts to regulate women's linguistic identities rather than any genuine communicative deficiencies.

Goffman's concept of face and its subsequent development by Brown and Levinson was explored to an extent in responses, typically to discuss how mitigation strategies function as tools to manage interactional face needs rather than indicators of insecurity. Limited responses discussed generalised ideas of how issuing face threatening acts could mark out an employee as one who was destined to climb a career ladder whereas clearer or more effective responses viewed the corporate sphere as a situation in which it may become necessary to mitigate threats to personal and social identity to maintain a professional equilibrium.

Overall, in November 2025, conceptualisation in response to **Question 2** was seen to be clear to effective where references were fully relevant to the discussion in hand.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/42 Language Topics
--

Key messages

In November 2025, candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics by providing sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to two compulsory questions. Candidates were requested to respond in the form of discursive essays which were required to be supported by evidence from the stimulus material provided as well as relevant reference to wider study of the relevant language topic.

The two compulsory questions presented in Paper 42 concerned *English in the world*, presented in **Section A** and *Language and the self*, presented in **Section B**. There were 25 marks available in each section indicating that candidates should demonstrate examination technique by dividing their writing time equally between the two questions. In November 2025, although there was evidence of this approach, some very lengthy work was seen in which candidates had not always exercised control according to the requirements of Assessment Objective 2. It is important to note that although AO2 offers fewer marks than AOs 1 and 4, it is not only the clarity of expression, for example spelling, punctuation, grammar and paragraphing, which is rewarded. This assessment objective also considers the extent to which ideas are developed and whether they are relevant to the direct focus which is presented in the question.

As in previous sessions, at times in November 2025 there was evidence that candidates had attempted to analyse the writing of the stimulus material, particularly in **Question 2**. Analysis is not required in Paper 42 and such material became irrelevant content and was therefore not rewardable.

General comments

In some otherwise sound responses there was an enthusiastic engagement with the language topic overall, particularly in **Question 1**, but there was less engagement with the specific focus determined by the stimulus material and the question frame. A further limiting approach seen in November 2025 was a tendency to name as many theories and theorists as possible in an effort to address AO4 with little reference to the text provided. This tendency was particularly marked in responses to **Question 2**. Throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the specific context provided; a demonstration of knowledge gained from wider reading is not sufficient to gain marks across all three assessment objectives.

Candidates should also be aware that lengthy responses do not always mean that the work is fully creditable. Any theoretical reference should support points made: such references are there to support ideas and evidence; ideas presented in the stimulus material are not there to support explanations of theoretical models and approaches. Conversely, some basic responses made no reference to linguistic theoretical examples. Both of these approaches led to loss of marks either in AO1 or AO4.

At times, basic or limited responses provided long introductions which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of historical or sociological events which were not tied into any specific context. Supplying such introductions had clearly eaten into the examination time leaving little left for writing the main body of the essay. A further common writing error was seen in attempts to provide a conclusion which comprised either clear repetition of previous discussion or the introduction of new ideas which, as these new ideas were part of the concluding paragraph, remained undeveloped.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

In November 2025, the text provided for **Question 1** was an extract from an article published in 2022 in *Language Magazine* titled 'English Hegemony as an Issue of Justice', with the subtitle 'Multilingualism is the birthright of all Americans'. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the texts relating to the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world, to refer to specific details from the texts and to ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Clear or more effective responses made a careful selection from the text relating them directly to the specific focus of the question, with critical engagement concerning the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world. However, some limited responses worked through a series of points in the order in which they appeared in the text with only basic development or paraphrase.

The majority of candidates were able to understand the main thrust of the text, identifying the causes of hegemony and making clear reference to specific points in the text, questioning why and how power and prestige is held by English in America over other native US varieties. Further points for discussion included the marginalisation and exclusion of native speakers from foreign language classes, the potential that some Americans would effectively ban languages other than English from the public sphere and the importance of recognising the multilingual heritage of the US.

At times, responses focused more heavily on language death as a result of hegemony than the importance of multilingualism which was indicated at the end of the stimulus material. Discussion of how multilingualism not only promotes diverse linguistic experience but also wellbeing and communal justice tended to be limited.

A number of weaker responses were drawn by references to online videos of presenters demeaning speakers of other languages which led to discussions of the influence of the internet on language although such discussions tended to focus more on written than on spoken forms, for example texting and writing on X which were perhaps more in line with candidates' own experiences.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

Clear or more effective responses were structured in a logical, fluent sequence of developed ideas which made an immediate introduction of ideas from the text. Discourse markers were generally used appropriately to signify development or to introduce a new discussion point. Basic responses tended to be brief and therefore remained undeveloped. Some responses were limited in their use of clear paragraphing, continuing for more than a page without a break. This approach can imply lack of writing control and candidates are reminded of the necessity for clarity in their discursive responses.

As in previous sessions, some responses used rhetorical questioning in an attempt to stylise work. This approach can only be successful where questions are followed by the candidate's own ideas and is not advised as it can result in loss of register, decreasing the required discursive quality.

A further trend in limited responses was seen in November 2025 which was to use long quotes from the text, which added length to the response. Such an approach led to fewer specific points being made overall because writing out lengthy quotes had clearly taken a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, clear, effective or sophisticated writing skills were demonstrated in the selection of succinct evidence and use of low frequency lexis, appropriate discourse markers and accurate linguistic terminology inside logically sequenced structural frameworks.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation

Most candidates made mention of Crystal in relation to language and power. In basic responses, there was brief or simplistic inclusion of a quote from Crystal which was not tied closely to a selection from the text. However, linguistic imperialism as noted by Phillipson was more fully discussed than had been seen in previous sessions. Moreover, 'English as a killer language' was widely attributed to Pakir and Graddol in most responses which featured language death as a main discussion point. Diamond's steamroller effect and

Crystal's snowball metaphor were also frequently cited. Seen less often were references to the concept of linguisticism as coined by Skutnabb Kangas which was also relevant to discussions on language death.

Jenkins' notion of English as a Lingua Franca was cited in relation to the stimulus material as was Kaplan's Thought Pattern and Intercultural Communication approach, and – to an extent – Kramarae's Muted Group Theory and Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory.

The concepts of prescriptivism and descriptivism were widely discussed with further citations of Crystal or references to Aitchison's Crumbling Castle metaphor. Such discussion often led to ideas of linguistic prestige, some of which were plausibly relevant, although inclusion of the British received pronunciation was often inaccurately cited as the 'British standard' rather than, more precisely, as used by the acrolectal minority.

Kachru's Concentric Circles model was handled more confidently than in previous sessions. Many candidates used the inner, outer and expanding circle distinctions to explore tensions raised in the text between native English speakers and those for whom English is an additional language. Some effective responses considered how and why the author challenged the privileged status of inner circle norms and implicitly called for a rebalancing of linguistic power, demonstrating critical engagement with Kachru's model.

Overall, a clear but not always detailed variety of linguistic concepts, methods and approaches was discussed.

Section B

Question 2

In June 2023, the stimulus material for **Question 2** comprised two texts. Text A, titled 'Why TikTok is poised to change how we speak' was an extract from an interview with linguist Nicole Holliday. It was published in 2021 in *Futurity*, an online magazine. Text B was a list of some commonly used slang terms which had emerged on, or been amplified by, TikTok. The list was published in 2022 in *The Daily Mail*, a British newspaper.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the texts relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

Candidates engaged well with both texts and found a number of points which were useful as a springboard for discussion. These included the ways in which TikTok might influence 'our vernacular in a different way than other mediums' with the text originator's view being that the influence was because 'it's audio' rather than the written text seen in other social media.

Responses included discussion of the impact of being able to 'share a community' comprising 'people we have never been in touch with before'. The 'hyperspecialized' nature of TikTok as advised by the text originator was frequently discussed at length and, in effective responses, in depth.

The author's notion of the ways in which technology might influence 'the speed of trend uptake' was discussed in most responses with clear explanations of how slang was implemented and diffused among communities of practice, notably those shared by young people. Effective responses developed such ideas with reference to the author's statement that language change is brought about by young people because 'the youth are cool', noting also, however, that some language change can be unintentionally exclusionary to some.

Basic responses tended mainly to refer to the list provided in Text B and to add further examples from their own personal experience, although it was clear from most responses that candidates were extremely conversant with the TikTok platform. This digital familiarity allowed many to offer confident observations about language practices within online communities. However, anecdotes from personal experience were only made relevant when tied explicitly to the stimulus material. Limited responses relied on descriptive commentary rather than conceptualising TikTok discourse as a source for linguistic scholarship.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

Most responses to **Question 2** were appropriately sustained although there were some which were either very brief or very long. Brief responses can only ever be described as basic or limited due to lack of development. On the other hand, some responses which are very long can run the risk of loss of tone and, although they may appear sustained, often evidence loss of focus.

There was some simple paraphrasing of the text presented and some seemingly hurried responses in which the points from the text were discussed briefly in the order in which they appeared in the stimulus material. However, clear or more effective responses had made a careful selection from the text to develop discussions which included demonstration of critical engagement with the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity.

In clear or effective responses an appropriate register was maintained and paragraphs formed a logical sequence. Low frequency lexis and accurate technical terminology was used in effective responses and at times there was a sophisticated level of clarity and directed control. Where this was evident, there was an elevated register and a linguistic point of view was maintained.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation

Most responses explored linguistic convergence and divergence, referencing Giles' Accommodation Theory. At its most effective, this was used to explain how TikTok users adjust their speech styles - lexically, phonetically, and pragmatically - in order to affiliate with particular communities of practice. However, limited responses used the theory in a formulaic way, without extending the concept to the multimodal nature of TikTok or the algorithm's role in reinforcing homogenised language use. More effective responses incorporated examples of slang from Text B - indexing identity or in-group affiliation according to Tajfel and Turner, and shared cultural capital as noted by Bourdieu - to illustrate convergence. Few, however, interrogated why slang is such a productive example of convergence, and only infrequently was it linked to notions of covert prestige and the symbolic value of youth vernaculars.

Cheshire's (1982) Reading Teen study was used effectively in some responses. Such discussion made explicit comparisons between adolescent peer group norms in Cheshire's research and the identity-performing behaviours of TikTok communities. Discussion argued effectively that, just as peer group-determined linguistic norms influenced syntactic and morphological choices in Cheshire's study, TikTok users similarly align their language practices with influential creators or subcultures to construct social belonging. Limited responses occasionally named the same study without explaining its relevance, however.

Milroy's Social Network theory was referenced to an extent in a number of responses. More confident responses recognised that TikTok complicates the traditional distinction between strong and weak ties: although interactions are largely between weak-tie individuals, the rapid circulation of linguistic forms can create the illusion of shared intimacy and belonging. However, many did not explore how TikTok's algorithmic clustering effectively fabricates strong-tie network effects, reinforcing language norms that become central to identity performance. Insightful responses provided full and thoughtful discussion of how and why network density, multiplexity, and linguistic innovation intersect in digital spaces.

There was widespread evidence of awareness of Goffman's theory of face, though conceptual accuracy varied. Some responses conflated face with generalised notions of reputation. Others, however, demonstrated strong understanding, linking Goffman to the curated self-presentation embedded within TikTok. Effective responses analysed how linguistic choices - slang, humour or performative exaggeration - function strategically to maintain positive face or mitigate threats to social identity.

Overall, in November 2025, conceptualisation was clear to effective where references were fully relevant to the discussion in hand.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 9093/43 Language Topics
--

Key messages

In November 2025, candidates were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics by providing sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive responses to two compulsory questions. Candidates were requested to respond in the form of discursive essays which were required to be supported by evidence from the stimulus material provided as well as relevant reference to wider study of the relevant language topic.

The two compulsory questions presented in Paper 43 concerned *English in the world*, presented in **Section A** and *Language and the self*, presented in **Section B**. There were 25 marks available in each section indicating that candidates should demonstrate examination technique by dividing their writing time equally between the two questions. In November 2025, responses were usually appropriately sustained although some brief work was seen at times.

As in previous sessions, at times in November 2025 there was evidence that candidates had attempted to analyse the writing of the stimulus material, particularly in **Question 2**. Analysis is not required in Paper 43 and such material became irrelevant content and was therefore not rewardable.

General comments

In some responses there was an enthusiastic engagement with the language topic overall, particularly in **Question 1**, but rather less engagement with the specific focus determined by the stimulus material and the question frame. As in previous sessions, a further limiting approach was a tendency to name as many theories and theorists as possible in an effort to address AO4 with little reference to the text provided. This tendency was particularly marked in responses to **Question 2**.

Candidates are reminded that throughout each response, focus should be maintained on the question and the specific context provided; a demonstration of knowledge gained from wider reading is not sufficient to gain marks across all three assessment objectives. Conversely, some basic responses made no reference to theoretical ideas gained from wider study of the language topic. Both of these approaches led to loss of marks either in AO1 or AO4.

At times, basic or limited responses provided long introductions which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of historical or sociological events not directly tied into any specific context. Supplying such introductions had clearly eaten into the examination time leaving little time left for writing the main body of the essay. A further common writing error was seen in attempts to provide a conclusion which comprised either clear repetition of previous discussion or the introduction of new ideas which, as these new ideas were part of the concluding paragraph, remained undeveloped.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

In November 2025, the stimulus material provided for **Question 1** was an extract from an article titled 'As it spreads across the world, who owns English?' which had been published on the website of the British weekly

newspaper, *The Economist*, in 2023. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English around the world, and to refer to specific details from the texts together with ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

Responses generally demonstrated sound awareness of debates surrounding linguistic ownership and how these issues intersect with histories of colonisation and contemporary patterns in the global spread of English as a Second Language. Many were able to relate the text's provocation - 'Who owns English?' - to wider sociolinguistic concerns, including identity, power and linguistic autonomy.

Points for discussion included how English may have established global hegemony with examples of how the English language has changed more recently through broadening of lexicon and altered syntactic construction due to normalised influence of non-native speakers, taking up the text originator's point of view that 'new generations of native speakers contribute not just words but their own grammar'.

The concept of English as a lingua franca was widely discussed, as were attitudes to its reception globally, which led to some developed exploration of why non-native speakers of English 'are going to be less keen to sound British or American' and why such speakers 'should feel free to ignore British or American norms'.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

Organisation of clear or more effective responses was structured in a logical and fluent sequence of developed ideas which made an immediate selection of points from the text rather than, as in basic or limited responses, providing lengthy and unfocused introductions. Appropriate discourse markers signposted development of an idea or introduced a new discussion point. Basic responses tended to be brief and therefore remained undeveloped. Some responses were limited in their use of clear paragraphing, even in lengthy work. This approach can imply lack of writing control and candidates are reminded of the necessity for clarity in respect of Assessment Objective 2.

A further trend in limited responses was to embed extended quotes from the text, possibly in an effort to add length to the overall response. Such an approach led to fewer specific points being made overall because writing out lengthy quotes had clearly taken up a considerable amount of the examination time.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation

Crystal was frequently cited, although often in a formulaic way. As noted in previous sessions, simply invoking Crystal rarely contributes meaningfully to the discussion unless his work is used with specificity. Effective responses, however, drew on Crystal's prediction that up to 50 per cent of the world's population may be competent in English by the end of the century, using this to interrogate the notion of 'ownership' of English. This application demonstrated how statistical forecasting can support arguments concerning linguistic plurality.

Kachru's Circles of English model was one of the most thoroughly applied conceptual references. Effective responses used it to explore tensions between inner, outer and expanding circle nations, relating these directly to the text's questioning of whether English can meaningfully be said to 'belong' to any one group of speakers. However, there was not always development of this to state how the model could illustrate the shifting demographic centre of English and to problematise the authority traditionally associated with inner circle norms.

Citation of Schneider's Dynamic Model also demonstrated an understanding of the later stages of the model, with some clear discussion of how the text implicitly illustrated the endonormative stabilisation and even differentiation phases in various post-colonial Englishes resulting in hybrids such as Singlish or Chinglish.

Further conceptual referencing included linguistic revitalisation policies such as those operating in New Zealand and Wales. However, such references were often under-developed or tangential in limited responses where frequent struggles to explain how revitalisation movements might relate to global ownership of English were evidenced. To make responses clearer or more effective when referencing linguistic revitalisation, responses would need to connect the issue to broader concepts of linguistic power, demonstrating how minority language empowerment complicates the dominance - and perceived 'ownership' - of English in the world.

Section B

Question 2

In November 2025, the stimulus material for **Question 2** was the opening of an article published in 2022 on a business communications company website titled 'Forget the 'female email' rules'.

Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

Candidates engaged well with the stimulus material, finding a number of points which were useful as a springboard for discussion. Responses demonstrated secure understanding of how gendered expectations shape both personal and social identity. Many showed awareness of how linguistic behaviour is scrutinised differently across genders which indicated a generally sound understanding of the text.

Points for discussion outlined in the stimulus material included whether female workers should refrain from specific writing habits in order to 'be taken seriously at work', often, but not always, in agreement with the text originator that 'it's all nonsense'.

Effective responses challenged the opinion that *it's good to be assertive at work from time to time* but that it is also *important to build relationships and create emotional connection* through language with the counterargument that assertive language should continue to be used in the workplace to establish and maintain professionalism. A further challenge was also put to the author's implication that male workers should become less assertive in the language they use at work.

Most responses, however, were in general agreement that 'giving someone reams of rules to remember just makes them less confident' with some clear discussion relating the author's statement to other aspects of life which may detract from attempts to establish either one's own personal identity or to fit into communities of practice other than the workplace.

Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

In **Question 2**, some candidates had begun to analyse the text originator's stylised use of language, for example in relaxed choices such as 'the important stuff'. Candidates are reminded that it is the ideas in Paper 43 which need to be discussed and that language analysis should be reserved for Paper 33.

Limited responses presented simple paraphrasing of the text presented and some basic responses sought to lift sections of paragraphs direct from the stimulus material. However, clear or more effective responses had made a careful selection from the text to develop discussions which included demonstration of critical engagement with the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity.

Clear or effective responses maintained an appropriate register and paragraphs generally formed a logical sequence. Accurate technical terminology was used in effective responses and, at times, there was a sophisticated level of clarity and directed control, resulting in presentation of a firm linguistic standpoint.

Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation

Conceptual referencing in **Question 2** was generally thorough, accurate and precise which was a further indication of the level of engagement with the stimulus material when citation was tied closely to ideas selected from the text.

Limited responses tended to work through a list of linguistic models and approaches relevant to study of genderlect although these were not explained well and, at times, names of theorists were unclear. For example, the first name of both Cameron and Tannen is Deborah yet their studies consider different aspects of genderlect study. Where responses introduced a linguistic concept by saying, for example, 'According to Deborah ...' the reference became muddled. Candidates are reminded to use the second name of theorists to avoid any confusion and to maintain an academic register. Nonetheless, in clearer or more effective responses citation was more thorough.

Robin Lakoff's study on Features of Women's Language was cited in most responses to some extent, using it to explain the pressure perceived by women to soften tone, hedge, or apologise - linking these patterns to identity construction and possible power imbalances in the workplace.

Tannen's distinction between Rapport and Report Talk styles was also cited effectively, allowing candidates to frame the text's critique of masculine assertiveness norms versus feminine relational styles as competing identity performances rather than hierarchies of competence. Such referencing was specific to the idea in the stimulus material that questioning can be 'a handy tool'. In effective responses there was also presentation of Tannen's view that gendered language is built on two separate cultural dialects neither of which are correct nor incorrect in any given situation but only that there are distinct differences which emerge as natural features of spoken language used by different genders.

Further, thorough referencing was to Cameron's concept of Verbal Hygiene, with effective responses recognising that prescriptive advice about 'female emails' could reflect societal attempts to regulate women's linguistic identities rather than any genuine communicative deficiencies.

Goffman's concept of face and its subsequent development by Brown and Levinson was explored to an extent in responses, typically to discuss how mitigation strategies function as tools to manage interactional face needs rather than indicators of insecurity. Limited responses discussed generalised ideas of how issuing face threatening acts could mark out an employee as one who was destined to climb a career ladder whereas clearer or more effective responses viewed the corporate sphere as a situation in which it may become necessary to mitigate threats to personal and social identity to maintain a professional equilibrium.

Overall, in November 2025, conceptualisation in response to **Question 2** was seen to be clear to effective where references were fully relevant to the discussion in hand.