

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/11
Reading and Writing (Core)

Key messages

- In **Exercise 1**, the need to read questions carefully must be emphasised in order to recognise the key elements in each question. In this series, many candidates found some of the questions challenging. Responses which also include distracting information should be avoided, as this could affect the answer.
- In **Exercise 2**, candidates must read precisely to identify key details. These could include the writers' opinion and attitude, or information that is not explicitly stated but only implied. Overall in this series, the exercise was generally well attempted, with very few omissions.
- In **Exercise 3**, candidates should focus on writing brief answers and make sure that their answers correspond to the right question. Each response should be written on a separate line and the number of bullet points indicates the number of responses required for that question. In this series, some responses included additional details on extra lines, which could not be credited.
- In **Exercise 4**, it is essential that responses stay within the word limit of 90 words, as otherwise correct Content points included after the limit cannot be credited. In this series, many responses were too long, which affected the mark.
- In **Exercise 5**, in this series, responses were generally successful in showing awareness of the target audience by using an informal register. Awareness of the purpose of writing was less successful, as many candidates did not interpret the rubric correctly, which affected the mark. Candidates should read the rubric carefully and refer back to the task while writing, so that they do not lose sight of the purpose of their writing.
- In **Exercise 6**, many responses correctly differentiated the register of writing from **Exercise 5**, by using a more neutral or formal style and register, appropriate to the target audience. Candidates were successful to a degree in developing their ideas at appropriate length.

General comments

Almost all those who sat this paper were entered at the right level. Most were able to complete the paper in the time allowed. It is worthy of note that even those, who may have struggled with **Exercises 1-4**, were able to write an interesting email and to write a full report in **Exercises 5 and 6**. Nearly all candidates completed the whole paper. There was little evidence of the time allowed to complete all exercises being a constraint.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

The topic on dinosaurs proved very accessible. There were many good answers and many candidates were able to score well.

Questions 1, 4, 5 and 6 were generally well answered. Most candidates were able to find the correct answer to **Question 2**, however some had incorrectly given 'the sky was blue and the sun warm', but that was the weather on the day of the journalist's visit, not the usual weather Kearney experienced when searching for fossils. For **Question 3** some candidates chose the incorrect numbers, 13 and 5, which appeared in the same paragraph as the correct answer. There are, in fact, around 50 unknown species discovered each year. **Question 7** proved to be the most difficult question in the exercise. It was vital to understand the meaning of the inclusion of the word 'hardly' in reference to the discovery made by Kearney, when he looked

at books about dinosaurs ('hardly any are written for adults'). It was this fact that surprised him, not that most were written for children.

Exercise 2

This proved to be a challenging exercise, which again required careful reading of the texts, before attempting to respond. Only a few candidates scored full marks, but most managed to find four or more marks out of the eight available. **Questions 8(b)** and **8(d)** were generally well answered, while **8(a)** and **8(f)** proved to be the most difficult. In **8(d)** it is Ines (Text A), who found it hard to accustom herself to the timetable at her university. Some of her classes took place early in the morning and some in the evening. This was very different from what she had been used to at school. Some candidates incorrectly chose Jess (Text C) as the answer to **8(d)**, perhaps tempted by the distracting detail that Jess 'often avoided going to those classes'. This was not a timetable problem. Looking back, Jess regretted not going to these classes. This detail provided the correct answer to **8(a)**. For **8(f)** the correct answer was Ines (Text A), who felt that her course and her teachers prepared her well to follow a career in professions other than journalism. Both Marta (Text B) and Jess (Text C) mention other professions in their submissions, but they only researched these professions as part of the course at university.

Exercise 3

Overall, candidates performed well on this exercise, especially in answer to **Question 10** and **Question 11**.

Question 9 proved the most challenging of the three. Some responses demonstrated an apparent misunderstanding of the wording of the question, offering answers such as 'getting honey from them' and 'enjoy watching the bees'.

For **Question 10**, many gave three correct answers and all four possible answers were observed.

Question 11 was also well executed with many candidates scoring the full two marks available.

Exercise 4

This proved to be the most challenging exercise on the paper. Candidates were required to summarise the most common mistakes that people make when they are learning how to snowboard. The text contained the advice given by an expert snowboarder. The task was to rewrite this advice in the form of the mistakes that first-time snowboarders commonly make, when they first take to the snow slopes. For example, many thought it was not going to be a problem to stand on a snowboard and let gravity propel them down a hill, and, therefore, did not take any lessons before their holiday. Some do not do exercises to strengthen their legs and prepare themselves properly for the rigours of snowboarding.

Some responses included direct lifts of sections from the text, which expressed the advice given, rather than the mistakes made.

Exercise 5

Most responses addressed the prompts effectively and some stronger responses included more ambitious detail, comparing the personality of the new acquaintance with that of the friend to whom the email was sent. This then led on neatly to the final bullet point, in which an arrangement was suggested to organise a meeting between the two people. Such triangulation was an important feature of the email, which many candidates achieved successfully.

A number of responses showed evidence of a good level of familiarity with the conventions of email writing – opening with a greeting, closing with a farewell and setting an informal, conversational tone.

Exercise 6

A small number of responses focused on shopping centres in general, rather than the one that had just opened in the locality. Others, again a small minority, related to a supermarket rather than to a shopping centre, which is larger and does often contain a supermarket. Such an approach did affect the mark achieved for content.

The language used in a review for the school magazine will be more formal than in an email to a friend and the purpose of the review is to provide a critique of the new shopping centre from the candidate's viewpoint.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/21
Reading and Writing (Extended)

Key messages

- In **Exercise 1**, reading comprehension, it is essential that candidates locate the key requirements of each question and answer with a brief and precise phrase.
- In **Exercise 2**, the multiple matching exercise, it is recommended that candidates practise skimming and scanning reading techniques and carefully consider each question, taking into account any distracting information in the texts.
- In **Exercise 3**, note-taking, it is important that responses are suitably brief and correspond to the headings of each section. Candidates should be guided by the number of bullet points which indicate the number of responses required. There should be only one relevant note per bullet point as if candidates provide more than one, only the first one can be credited.
- In **Exercise 4**, summary writing, it is crucial that answers do not go beyond the required length, as Content points which are included after the stated word limit cannot be credited. Candidates should address exactly what is being asked in the question.
- In **Exercise 5**, email writing, responses must provide relevant information and be written in an informal style. All bullet points have to be addressed and developed in order to have access to marks in the top band for Content.
- In **Exercise 6**, candidates need to respond to the different requirements of this task, and they should adopt a suitable style and register. Ideas should be relevant and developed at an appropriate length.

General comments

Candidates should carefully read and recognise the requirements of individual questions, ensuring responses are precise and that questions are interpreted accurately.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Precise answers are required for this comprehension exercise. Candidates should ensure they focus on the requirements of the question and locate the relevant section of the text when responding.

Question 1

This question was well answered. Responses which omitted key words such as 'million' or 'ago' could not be credited.

Question 2

This question was well answered with many candidates giving two correct details. A few candidates described the conditions the day of the meeting rather than those *generally* worked in, writing '*the sky was blue, the sun was warm*'. Some mentioned the ground being flat or fossil hunting, which suggested that the question had not been understood.

Question 3

The majority of candidates answered this question correctly, but a few gave the number of species that had been discovered previously rather than *now* or wrote '13' the number of species Kearney had found in the last 20 years.

Question 4

Most candidates provided the correct response to this question. A small number of candidates wrote '*inspire people to study*' which did not provide the other key idea '*study dinosaurs*'. Some appeared not to recognise the 'like most' aspect of the question and wrote '*excellent entertainment*', which was not what Kearney liked most about the films.

Question 5

This question was generally well answered and many candidates gave two correct details. A few candidates wrote '*how certain types of dinosaur interacted*', which was an earlier area of research, not a future one as required by the question.

Question 6

This question was well answered. A few candidates wrote '*computer programming*', which did not link to or answer the question. The required response was '*learn computer programming*', which fully communicated Kearney's advice.

Question 7

This question was quite well answered. A number of candidates gave incorrect responses such as '*are written for adults*', '*it's hard to write one for adults*' or '*plenty for kids*'. This suggested that they did not fully understand the meaning of '*hardly any are written for adults*', which was the correct response.

Question 8

This question was generally well answered and some candidates were able to provide four correct details. A few provided details of what scientists know now, for example '*covered in feathers*' or '*bright colours*'. Others gave incorrect details such as '*green and blue*', or did not provide enough information as in '*skin*' rather than '*scaly skin*'.

Exercise 2

Candidates are advised to read each question (a)–(j) carefully and note the key words. They should then look for synonyms or expressions in the text which convey the same idea and write the corresponding letter in the space provided.

- (a) This question was very well answered. There were some (B) responses, possibly because the text states 'maybe I didn't work as much as other students', rather than picking up on the 'one part of the course' aspect of the question, which is covered in (C), the correct text.
- (b) This question was very well answered. (B) and (D) were the most common incorrect responses. Some candidates appeared to be unable to connect 'became an expert on the place' in the correct text (A) with 'get to know the local area well' in the question.
- (c) This was answered well. There were some (B) responses, again possibly because of the reference to not working as much. Some candidates may not have connected 'not very demanding' in the text with 'an easy subject' in the question.
- (d) This question was well answered. (D) was the most common incorrect response. Candidates needed to be able to link 'this type of work' in the correct text (C) with the media work referred to in the previous sentence, and also to connect 'feels fortunate' in the question with 'I was lucky enough' in the text.

- (e) This question was very well answered. There were some (D) responses, possibly as the text states 'our classes started early', although there is no reference to this being a problem. The correct text (A) refers to early morning classes and evening classes being strange to Ines, and different to her school experience, which expresses the idea of the timetable being hard to get used to.
- (f) This question was very well answered and most candidates were able to connect 'finding it difficult to decide' in the question with 'I struggled to make up my mind' in text (B).
- (g) This question was reasonably well answered. Several candidates appeared unable to connect 'helped me develop skills that have been very relevant to what I've done since' in (A), the correct text, with the requirements of the question.
- (h) This question was quite well answered. Candidates who gave incorrect responses appeared not to have connected 'anyone who wants to study the media from an academic point of view ... should choose another subject' in (C) the correct response, with the requirements of the question.
- (i) This question was quite well answered. Some candidates gave (C) as their response, possibly thinking that 'looking back I wish I hadn't' expressed guilt. However, in text (B), Ines feeling that it was unfair doing something exciting when others were having a tough time clearly suggests guilt.
- (j) This question was very well answered. A few candidates selected (A) instead of (D) possibly because a range of jobs is mentioned in the text.

Exercise 3

Candidates generally responded very well to this note-taking exercise, providing six to eight correct notes, with several candidates gaining the full nine marks available. Notes could not be credited when they were repeated, omitted key information or were under the wrong heading. When notes were placed in the wrong section, this indicated that some candidates had not fully understood the requirements of the heading. It is important that notes focus clearly on key ideas that relate to the heading and communicate this as succinctly and accurately as possible, without omitting essential information.

What students at Abbey High school learn from keeping bees

This section was very well attempted and many responses featured the three notes required from the possible four options. A few responses omitted words or phrases expressing key ideas, for example 'why bees are important' instead of 'important for environment', or 'make delicious dishes' rather than 'use honey to make dishes'. Sometimes a point was repeated as with 'make things with wood' and 'make hives', which were given as separate bullet points, but which express the same idea. A few candidates made notes under this heading about what surprised Maria, such as 'bees gentle'.

What can be difficult about introducing beekeeping in a school

This section was very well attempted and a significant number of responses featured three correct notes out of a possible four. A few responses did not make the difficulty clear. They referred to safety without focusing on the key idea that persuading parents was a problem. Other insufficient notes mentioned cost generally rather than the cost of equipment. A few responses merely gave 'location' as a note when 'finding location' was the difficulty.

What surprised Maria when she first started beekeeping

This section was well attempted and a significant number of responses featured three correct notes. Some omitted key ideas as in 'when she put her hand into the hive'. This was how Maria knew that 'bees are gentle', the required note, but not what surprised her. A few responses referred to there being a lot of trees and flowers in London, but this did not communicate the idea that bees can do well in a city.

Exercise 4

Candidates should be encouraged to read the requirements of the summary carefully to ensure the focus is correct. There were two aspects to this summary (for and against video gaming in the Olympics). For candidates to access the full range of language marks, the summary should include Content points for both aspects. Many candidates could not achieve top marks on this task because the summary was over 120 words. Candidates should carefully consider whether or not the information included is relevant to the summary topic and be aware there is no need to make the same point twice or to expand upon it unnecessarily.

Most responses addressed both aspects of the summary. Some responses were not awarded full content marks because they expressed an argument 'for' including video gaming in the Olympics as an argument 'against', or vice versa. However, many responses gained the full eight marks for content. A significant number of responses successfully featured five or more of these, whilst others provided between three or four points. Unfortunately, there were also a few responses that were unable to include any creditable content points as they simply expressed candidates' own opinion on the inclusion of e-sports in the Olympics. A significant number of responses were over the 120-word limit because of a longer than necessary introduction, expansion of points, or irrelevant information. They included information unrelated to the summary topic such as the background of the Olympics or the Olympics Committee, or when competitive gaming first became popular and how it has grown.

Sometimes responses attempted to make points but expressed them inaccurately or imprecisely. For example, they mentioned that competitive gaming is a \$1.5 billion industry, but not that it is popular internationally or watched worldwide. Sometimes responses attempted to include the point that the Olympic Games are too big but expressed it as a positive reason for including video gaming. Similarly, some responses expressed the idea of electrical power being new element to the Olympics positively instead of negatively. In this case, the point could not be awarded. There was also some confusion between video games and events at the Olympics as some responses did not make it clear whether they were referring to the Olympics or e-sports. Unfortunately, sometimes an attempt to paraphrase had an adverse effect on the language used, and prevented the mark being awarded.

Candidates are encouraged to use their own words appropriately, so should choose vocabulary and expressions that fit the context. There were a number of candidates who demonstrated a good awareness of the summary writing skills required, keeping within the 120-word limit and organising points skilfully, whilst attempting to express this to some extent in their own words.

Language marks were awarded across the whole range with the majority of responses gaining three to six marks. In order to achieve seven or eight marks (top band) for language, candidates must attempt to use their own words and organize the content points. A number of candidates copied the wording of the content points directly from the text and attempted to link these copied points in various ways. The extent to which they used their own words well impacted on the language mark.

It is very important that content points remain clear when re-expressed since marks cannot be awarded if the meaning changes. Practice with verb, noun and adjective synonyms, along with practice in forming alternative grammatical structures is beneficial to enable candidates to attain the higher language bands.

Exercise 5

The extent to which the bullet points are addressed and developed within the context will determine the band achieved for content. If any bullet point is not addressed, this has a significant effect on the content mark. For a mark in the higher bands, candidates should demonstrate a good or excellent sense of purpose whilst developing and effectively communicating the content.

Content

In general, candidates responded to this task successfully. Some fulfilled the task skilfully and effectively. There were candidates whose emails were less than 150 words, so there was not sufficient development for higher band Content marks. Most candidates addressed all three bullet points but these were sometimes lacking in detail. Candidates generally used an informal register, though this was not always consistent. For example, phrases such as 'I would like to *inform* you' or 'In conclusion' are quite formal and tend not to be appropriate in this kind of email.

Effective responses connected the content of the email to the recipient with references to shared experiences or the target reader's interests, writing for example, 'Let's meet at our favourite spot' or 'I was thinking we could go and see a concert. Our favourite band is in town'. Such emails were cohesive in how the three bullet points were integrated.

Language

Most candidates wrote using a good range of well-organised language. There were a few who used mainly simple structures, and were more limited in range and accuracy. Some candidates were able to construct accurate sentences of different lengths, which included more complex structures and a range of appropriately used, less common vocabulary.

Responses in the higher bands demonstrated good cohesion and were grammatically correct. There should be an evident range of appropriate vocabulary. An example of such language is, 'He's also an electrical engineering student and got excited when I told him that you took the same course as him just about two years ago, which is probably why you never met him.' In this example complex language is used accurately and effectively. Some responses featured more complex language, despite being less accurate: 'Anyway, while I was going to school, I saw her on the floor and I asked her what was happened and she told me that she was felt down.' Some emails included mainly very short sentences (subject + verb + object), which were accurate, but did not demonstrate a sufficient range of language for the higher bands. There were a few candidates who often used comas instead of full-stops.

Exercise 6

In this exercise candidates may be required to write an article, a review or a report for a particular target audience. It is important that they read the task carefully and consider the two prompts, which are given to help form ideas on the subject. For a mark in one of the higher bands, candidates might include other points and ideas relevant to the task, along with developing the views in the prompts if they choose to, expressing these in their own words. The style and register should be appropriate for the type of task.

Content

Most responses fulfilled the task with a generally good sense of purpose and audience, referring to the ideas in the prompts and introducing some of their own. A small number of responses discussed opinions of shopping centres generally or wrote about the environmental damage/the effect of the centre on the town, focusing more on advantages/disadvantages. Others reviewed just one shop and few also reviewed a different kind of centre. A few responses were written in a narrative style, recounting the story of a day out in a shopping centre. When the task is only generally or partially fulfilled in such ways, this restricts the content mark to the lower bands. It is important that candidates take time to read the question and its requirements carefully. Successful reviews conveyed clear and relevant detail that provided interesting information and gave some opinion and evaluation. The target audience (peers in the school) was addressed using an appropriate, consistent style and register, which was often semi-formal and different from the informal email. The topic of review was introduced often with a reason for visiting the shopping centre. Responses mentioned a variety of aspects regarding the centre such as the location, design, restaurant facilities, range of shops, children's play areas, the air conditioning, the staff and security. More successful responses closed with an overall evaluation and gave recommendations.

Less successful responses were limited to some development of the two given prompts and tended to be repetitive as in 'Clothes are quite expensive, but it is very beautiful and helpful... I think is very beautiful and the decoration is very well but the price of thinks is very expensive... believe me is very beautiful.' A descriptive element should provide sufficient detail to lead into evaluative comments and inferences.

Language

The full range of marks was awarded for language, with most responses featuring more complex structures and some less common vocabulary. Some responses demonstrated a good range of complex structures with only occasional non-impeding errors, which gained marks in the top band. Responses included accurate, varied sentence structures, good punctuation and paragraphing, along with ambitious vocabulary. This quality of language is exemplified in 'Many have fallen in love with the retro theme the shopping centre has taken on. The colourful decorations surely make the old feel young again.' In general, the majority of candidates used language with a good level of accuracy that included non-impeding errors when attempting more complex structures. In order to access top band marks, candidates should include a wide range of accurate language that is well organised and sequenced.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/31
Listening (Core)

Key messages

- Candidates should be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. Candidates should use a pen, not a pencil, and simply cross out responses which need to be altered. Candidates should not write over, or try to erase, their initial answers. Attempts which cannot be read may not be credited.
- Candidates should be reminded to write their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- Candidates' awareness should be raised of the importance of using the appropriate singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing spelling attempts, the intended meaning of the attempted word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. son/sun).
- More pronunciation awareness activities, particularly of connected speech (e.g. assimilation of sounds, omission of sounds), would be beneficial to candidates. Candidates should also be made aware of the importance of transcribing voiced and unvoiced consonants accurately as these may change meaning (e.g. t/d as in 'tends' and 'tents').
- Some questions involve transcribing various numbers and these should therefore be practised. For example, it is useful to help candidates to distinguish between the pronunciation of sixty and sixteen. Candidates would benefit from more practice in writing larger numbers correctly and the standard form of abbreviations of common units (e.g. 'hrs' for hours, 'min' for minutes, 'km' for kilometres, etc.).
- Candidates should be encouraged to read and listen to the rubric for each part of the paper very carefully to ensure they meet the exact requirements of each particular question.
- In **Exercise 1, Questions 1 to 4** candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for, by highlighting the question words, e.g. how, why, when, and the key words in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful. In cases where candidates supply extra information, in addition to the expected key answer, and where that extra information is incorrect, the whole answer cannot be credited. For this reason, candidates should be encouraged to provide concise answers.
- In gap-filling **Exercise 2**, candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name, etc.). Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercise 2** candidates should be reminded not to include words which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In multiple-matching **Exercise 3** and multiple-choice **Exercise 4** candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. It needs to be emphasised that where crossing out of a rejected selection is not clear this will be seen as ambiguous and, if there is any uncertainty, it will not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it will not be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4**, if two boxes are ticked rather than one then no marks can be given.

General comments

- Candidates were required to use a set number of words for **Exercises 1** and **2**. A large number of candidates, although with correct responses, could not be credited as they exceeded the required number of words.
- Successful responses were those which were clear and concise, and which adhered to the word limit required.
- Candidates should be reminded that the answer will be heard; they must not make up an answer.
- Candidates should be reminded that no two questions will have the same answer.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Questions 1–4

Overall, this section was well answered. There were few omissions, and responses could not be credited when more than the required words were written.

Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the correct response 'aunt'. Several candidates went for the distractor 'cousin' while some wrote 'uncle'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'hunt' and 'ante'.
- (b) There was a very mixed response here with the main problem appearing to be the spelling of 'thriller'. A few candidates selected 'comedy' or 'romance'.

Question 2

- (a) This was very well attempted and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. Some candidates went for the distractor 'mountains' and others incorrectly wrote the plural 'rivers'.
- (b) This was well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Incorrect responses included 'basket class' and 'base ball'.

Question 3

- (a) This question appeared to cause difficulty for most candidates. Many gave the distractor 'cheaper' and others wrote 'better' or 'more popular'.
- (b) This question was not well attempted, with many candidates omitting the comparative and just writing 'stylish'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'more styleless' and 'more styling'.

Question 4

- (a) This question was extremely well attempted by most candidates. Others wrote 'books' or 'technology', which could not be credited.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. Some candidates added extra detail such as 'culture of geography', which meant that their answer could not be credited.

Exercise 2

Question 5

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. Responses containing repetition of words, either preceding or following the gap, were not credited as they lead to an incorrect grammatical fit. In some cases, wrong singular and plural nouns meant that responses could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

- (a) There was a mixed level of success here, with quite a few candidates writing the distractor '2200' or '18'.
- (b) On the whole, this question was well attempted by most candidates. Some went for the distractor '2017' and others wrote 'June 2018'.
- (c) There was a mixed level of success here – responses were fairly evenly divided between the key 'USA' and the distractors 'Barcelona' and 'Spain'.
- (d) This was well attempted by the majority of candidates due to the wide range of acceptable responses. Some candidates wrote 'neighbours', which could not be credited, while others unsuccessfully wrote the singular 'neighbourhood'.
- (e) This was well attempted by the majority of candidates. However, some wrote 'waterside' or 'slide' instead of 'waterslide'.
- (f) This was well attempted. Some candidates wrote 'conventional sports' or 'basketball', which could not be credited.
- (g) There was a very mixed level of success here. Some incorrect responses were 'head spray' and 'air spray' while some went for the distractor 'dare to dream'.
- (h) There was a very mixed level of success here. The distractor, 'plants', was selected as much as the expected response. Some responses that could not be credited were 'art wax' and 'art gallery'.

Exercise 3

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates need to ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

Exercise 4

Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates did not clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be absolutely no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/41
Listening (Extended)

Key messages

- Candidates need to be reminded to provide clear and legible responses. The formation of individual letters must be clear. Also, candidates should use a pen, not a pencil, and simply cross out responses which need to be altered. Candidates should not write over, or try to erase, their initial answers. Attempts, which cannot be read, may not be awarded.
- Candidates should be reminded to write their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- Candidates' awareness should be raised of the importance of using the right singular/plural form of nouns as these can alter the key meaning.
- When providing spelling attempts, the intended meaning of the attempted word should not be in doubt. Spelling attempts that create a homophone are not accepted (e.g. son/sun).
- Candidates should be encouraged to read and listen to the rubric for each part of the paper very carefully to ensure they meet the exact requirements of each particular exercise.
- In **Exercise 1, Questions 1 to 4** candidates should try to establish what a question is asking for, by highlighting the question words, e.g. how, why, when, and the key words in the question. In most cases, a short, direct response is most successful. In cases where candidates decide to supply additional information, in addition to the expected key answer, and the extra information is incorrect, the whole answer cannot be credited. For this reason, candidates should be encouraged to provide concise answers.
- In the gap-filling **Exercises 2, 5A and 5B** candidates should be encouraged to try and predict the answers in the gaps (e.g. a number, a name). Candidates should not only listen for the correct meaning of the targeted detail, but also for the correct form used in the recording. At the end of each listening section, candidates should also check their responses carefully and make sure the word forms used fit each gap on the question paper.
- In **Exercises 2, 5A and 5B** candidates should also be reminded not to include words, or ideas, which are already printed on the question paper before or after each gap, as part of their answer.
- In the multiple-matching **Exercise 3** and the multiple-choice **Exercise 4** candidates should be encouraged to make it absolutely clear which option they wish to be taken as their final answer. If there is any uncertainty about which option is intended as the candidate's definitive choice, such attempts may not be credited.
- It is also important to emphasise that if two boxes are filled in with the same letter in **Exercise 3** then, even if one of the responses given is correct, it cannot be credited. Similarly, for each item in **Exercise 4**, if two boxes are ticked rather than one then no marks can be given.
- Some questions involve transcribing numbers and these should therefore be practised. For example, it is useful to help candidates to distinguish between the pronunciation of eighty and eighteen.
- Candidates would benefit from more practice in writing larger numbers correctly and the standard form of abbreviations of common units (e.g. 'min' for minutes, 'km' for kilometres). Candidates should practise a range of listening skills (e.g. listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for grammatical/lexical detail) in various formats (e.g. announcements, informal dialogues, formal talks).

General comments

- Candidates were required to use a set number of words for **Exercises 1, 2 and 5**. A large number of candidates, although with correct responses, could not be credited as they exceeded the required number of words.
- Successful responses were those which were clear and concise, and which adhered to the word limit required.
- Candidates should be reminded that the answer will be heard; they should lift the response from the text rather than use their own words.
- Candidates should be reminded that no two questions will have the same answer.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

Questions 1–4

Overall, this section was well answered. There were few omissions, but responses could not be credited when more than the required words were written.

Question 1

- (a) The majority of the candidates identified the correct response 'aunt'. Several candidates went for the distractor 'cousin' while some wrote 'uncle'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'hunt' and 'ante'.
- (b) There was a very mixed response here with the main problem appearing to be the spelling of 'thriller'. A few candidates selected 'comedy' or 'romance'.

Question 2

- (a) This was very well attempted and the vast majority of candidates were able to score a mark. Some candidates went for the distractor 'mountains' and some candidates lost the mark by writing the plural 'rivers'.
- (b) This was well attempted by the vast majority of candidates. Incorrect responses included 'basket class' and 'base ball'.

Question 3

- (a) This question appeared to cause difficulty for most candidates. Many gave the distractor 'cheaper' and others wrote 'better' or 'more popular'.
- (b) This question was not well attempted, with many candidates omitting the comparative and just writing 'stylish'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'more styleless' and 'more styling'.

Question 4

- (a) This question was extremely well attempted by most candidates. Others wrote 'books' or 'technology', which could not be credited.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. Some candidates added extra detail such as 'culture of geography', which meant that their answer could not be credited

Exercise 2

Question 5

Large parts of this question were answered well by a lot of candidates. Responses containing repetition of words, either preceding or following the gap, were not credited as they lead to an incorrect grammatical fit. In some cases, wrong singular and plural nouns meant that candidates could not be credited. Some parts of the question were left blank by a few candidates.

- (a) There was a mixed level of success here, with quite a few candidates writing the distractor '2200' or '18'.
- (b) On the whole, this question was well attempted by most candidates. Some candidates went for the distractor '2017' and others wrote 'June 2018'.
- (c) There was a mixed level of success here – responses were fairly evenly divided between the key 'USA' and the distractors 'Barcelona' and 'Spain'.
- (d) This was well attempted by the majority of candidates due to the wide range of acceptable responses. Some candidates wrote 'neighbours', which could not be credited while others lost the mark by writing the singular 'neighbourhood'.
- (e) This was generally well attempted by the majority of candidates. However, some candidates wrote 'waterside' or 'slide' instead of 'waterslide'.
- (f) This was well attempted. Some candidates wrote 'conventional sports' or 'basketball', which could not be credited. Other incorrect responses were 'surving' and 'safing'.
- (g) There was a very mixed level of success here. Some incorrect responses were 'head spray' and 'air spray' while some went for the distractor 'dare to dream'.
- (h) There was a very mixed level of success here. The distractor, 'plants', was selected as much as the expected response. Some responses that could not be credited were 'art wax' and 'art gallery'.

Exercise 3

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and obtained full marks.

A few candidates used the same letter more than once. In this case, no marks were awarded even if one of those letters was the correct response in the intended box. Candidates need to ensure that they cross out inaccurate responses clearly to avoid the duplication of letters for each response.

Exercise 4

Question 7

Generally, candidates responded very well to this question.

A few candidates did not clarify their final response, thus giving two answers. It should be noted that if a candidate changes their mind about their original intended response, they should clearly cross out their first answer. There should be absolutely no ambiguity regarding which answer is intended as the candidate's definitive response.

Exercise 5

Question 8

There was a mixed response to this question. Some responses provided were not always a grammatical fit, and incorrect singular and plural nouns meant that some candidates could not be credited. There were a few questions that were not attempted by some candidates.

Part A

- (a) This was generally well attempted by most candidates. The distractor, 'sale', was selected as much as the correct response.
- (b) This was well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Some responses that could not be credited were 'cretcule' and 'curticle'.
- (c) There was a very mixed level of success here. The responses were evenly divided between the key 'dense' and the distractor 'hard'. Some responses that could not be credited were 'denise' and 'dents'.
- (d) The vast majority of candidates picked out the correct detail and scored a mark. Attempts that could not be credited were, for instance, 'origan' and 'colour'.
- (e) This was really well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Incorrect responses included 'help' and 'heat'.

Part B

- (a) There was a mixed level of success here – responses were fairly evenly divided between the key 'tools' and the distractor 'course books'. Some responses that could not be credited were 'tolls' and 'tooled'.
- (b) This was generally well answered and there was a wide range of recognisable attempts at the correct response. The most common errors were 'qualification' and 'patience'.
- (c) This was not very well attempted, with most candidates going for 'glass beads'. Other responses that could not be credited included, for example, 'medal' and 'wine'.
- (d) There was a mixed level of success here as some candidates selected the distractor 'space travel'. Some incorrect responses were 'nature' and 'nature conversation'.
- (e) This question was not well attempted. Many candidates wrote 'jewellery workshop'. Other responses that could not be credited were 'trait fair' and 'fair trade'.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 0991/51
Speaking

Key messages

- Administration and conduct of the test were generally of a high standard.
- It is recommended that in advance of the test window, examiners watch the Speaking Test Demonstration Video on the School Support Hub, familiarise themselves with the Examiner's/Teacher's Notes and Topic Cards, as well as engage with the online training for the component.
- It is recommended that candidates are given practice tests using topics from previous years.
- Centres are advised not to stick labels on the CD or write the list of recordings on it.
- Background noise should be kept to minimum as far as possible. This is a formal examination and a quiet, secure room should be used.
- Centres need to ensure that documentation is accurate and follows the guidance, and that recordings are of suitable quality before sending to Cambridge International.
- The examiner name should be announced at the beginning of the test (especially where there are two examiners).
- Candidates are reminded that mobile phones are not allowed into the examination room.
- Candidates are encouraged to use the full allocated time for **Part C** and to look for clarification if needed before they start **Part D**.
- Examiners are reminded to pay close attention to timings for all parts and consider the use of timers.
- Examiners should explore the individual prompts in **Part D** in more detail and use open questions to encourage candidates to talk more about personal anecdotes or future predictions, where applicable, to help them use a wider range of grammatical structures.
- Teachers and examiners benefit from reading the Moderation Report sent to the centre which gives advice on assessment, administration and the conduct of the test.

General comments

Part A

Most examiners read the explanation of the test as instructed. A few continue to paraphrase, sometimes resulting in the omission of important information. Some examiners, having read out the entire introductory script, then do not follow the instructions they have just given.

Part B

The warm-ups were generally conducted well, with most examiners putting candidates at ease and eliciting suitable topics for the discussion section. However, there are still some who treat it purely as a warm-up while choosing card topics at random. Some of the warm-ups were either too short or too long. When they were too short, this tended to be because the examiner had matched a topic card with something the candidate had said. Some examiners are reminded not to spend most of the allocated time talking about school subjects and exams.

Part C

Overall, a wide selection of cards was used, selected after the warm-up phase, and most examiners provided clear explanations of the words and phrases on the occasions when clarification was needed. Some candidates are still indicating that they are ready to begin early. However, when this is the case, most examiners tell the candidate that they have more time. A few examiners are still saying '*when you are ready, please let me know*' which is the most common reason for this section being too short. There are still a few examiners who do not announce the card.

Part D

Generally, all five prompts were used and in the correct order with helpful follow-up questions presented in a natural way. In some cases, examiners did not develop the discussion based on ideas arising out of each of the prompts. Examiners should not rely on candidates going through the prompts on their own as this leads to monologues or long turns. This part of the test is most successful when examiners strike the right balance between guiding the candidate through the prompts on the topic card, giving the candidate time to respond, and intervening with open questions that help the candidate to develop their response. Some of the discussions were either too short or too long.

Application of the marking criteria

Structure – There was a slight tendency to severity; especially in the upper range. Examiners should credit attempts at complex structures such as passives, conditionals and relative clauses. Candidates performed better when examiners asked questions which covered a range of structures. On the other hand, a smaller number of centres marked generously, especially with more able candidates.

Vocabulary – This was generally accurate with a slight trend towards generosity in the top range and severity in the lower and middle range. Where marked generously, examiners may do so because of the use of a few technical or scientific terms specific to a particular field; where marked severely, it may be that examiners are overlooking the use of collocations or idioms which should be rewarded.

Development and Fluency – in this category, there is still a tendency for centres to be severe towards less able candidates and generous towards the more able candidates. Some candidates tend to be a bit repetitive or speak very fast; this may not mean that they are fluent. At times, candidates who were given lower marks were not encouraged by the examiner to develop the conversation. Examiners should take into account topic development and the ability to express original or sophisticated ideas.

Overall, the marking criteria were applied well by most centres.

Administration

Most centres administered the tests well, sometimes under difficult circumstances arising from the pandemic.

Internal moderation

It is still very rare for this to be carried out when required. When it is carried out, it is rarely applied correctly. Centres must internally moderate candidates when more than one examiner is used in order to allow accurate external moderation to take place.

Comments on specific topic cards

A – Visiting somewhere

This card was frequently chosen. Candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of travel related vocabulary in the first prompt, using words such as '*hiking*', '*monuments*' and '*dialect*' and used past tense forms. Prompts 2 and 3 enabled candidates to use present tenses, modals, comparatives and conditionals. In the second prompt, some candidates distinguished between different types of visitors ('*if the guests are friends of my parents ...*') and used complex structures ('*Being from an African family, we always believe that food is the way to a person's heart*'). In the fourth prompt, some explained why it was beneficial to learn about a place beforehand ('*or you will feel disorientated.*'). Some candidates said that it was important to know whether you needed to have any vaccinations before going. Candidates were able to use future tenses. The final prompt worked well some candidates as they were able to expand on different religions and

cultures, and were encouraged to use modals. Some good vocabulary used included 'outgoing', 'bustling', 'hang around with', 'at ease', 'check in', 'comfort zone', 'loosen up'.

B – Climbing

This topic was popular and almost always chosen when the warm-up revealed an interest in outdoor fitness. For Prompt 1, candidates used past tenses to explain climbing local mountains with parents or friends. Some candidates were able to talk at length about dreams and ambitions of climbing big mountains in response to Prompt 2. Here and in the third prompt, they used collocations including 'dislocated shoulder', 'extreme temperatures' and 'adrenaline rush'. The third prompt enabled candidates to use present tenses and conditionals. Prompt 4 provoked the most interest and enabled use of some complex structures, with successful candidates using conditional tenses ('If you really want to help people, you can do it.'). Candidates had a lot to say for Prompt 5, talking about the positives of peace and quiet of mountainside living and the negatives of having no amenities. Some good vocabulary used included: 'expert', 'grip', 'balance', 'stumble', 'isolated', 'endurance', 'incredible', 'my cup of tea', 'had a blast', 'once in a life time', 'a life-changing experience'.

C – Inspiration

'Inspiration' is a familiar word and concept and this card was frequently chosen. Candidates generally answered enthusiastically and at length, generating good discussions on a range of topics including drug addiction, education, celebrities, struggles of life, how to prosper in life and peer pressure. The first prompt enabled candidates to use past tenses and relative clauses, and the second prompt to use present tenses and comparatives to talk about how people are influenced by people on social media and wanted to copy them. Candidates were unanimous in the view that it is better to be original in Prompt 3 and that you should 'show your uniqueness, have your own mind set, not follow what people do'. For Prompt 4 most candidates were of the view that it is not necessary to be successful to be an inspiration and used a variety of tenses ('People who fail are an inspiration, too. They learn from their mistakes. Before being successful you need to be a failure. Everyone can be inspiring just as long as you have the right opinion.'). Candidates were able to develop the last point really well, talking about the amount of influence social media has on young people. Some good vocabulary used included: 'toxic', 'unique', 'invented', 'influencer', 'ethical', 'brag', 'psychology', 'degrading', 'self-motivated', 'bring to the table', 'too much of the same thing'.

D – Sight

This was well chosen by examiners who had already ascertained that the candidate had an interest in art. For Prompt 1, candidates talked about the natural world, using present tenses and a lot of adjectives. Some candidates were able to use some technical language to describe pictures, such as 'acrylic', 'portrait' and 'perspective'. For Prompt 3, strong responses included conditionals and comparisons. Most candidates thought that, out of all the senses, sight would be the most difficult to live without. Prompt 4 enabled candidates to use past tenses and present perfect to talk about past examples of when they had needed visual proof. The final prompt point elicited quite strong reactions, with candidates talking about the need to experience a place through all five senses, using future tenses, modals and conditionals. Most disagreed with the statement and explained that we would not be able to experience different cultures and try new food if we stop travelling. Some good vocabulary used included: 'landscapes', 'braille', 'guide dogs', 'disability', 'inspiration', 'perfection', 'perception', 'creating memories', 'seeing is believing', 'material proof'.

E – Fruit and Vegetables

This card was frequently chosen. The first prompt encouraged use of some common expressions ('an apple a day keeps the doctor away'). Often candidates included health related vocabulary ('diabetes', 'high in cholesterol', 'essential vitamins') whilst others talked about tastes ('Peaches are so succulent.'). Prompt 2 encouraged adverbs of frequency and time phrases, and Prompt 3 the use of comparatives, modals and conditionals. Stronger responses elaborated on the economy and included pros and cons of import and export. The idea of cookery classes at school was put forward as an alternative to biology-style classes, as 'you're more inclined to eat them that way if you know how to make them taste good.' Many candidates used future forms in response to the final prompt, with some able to elaborate on the benefits of home cooking and the negative effects on health of fast food ('obesity' and 'heart conditions'). Some good vocabulary used included: 'protein', 'carbohydrates', 'calcium', 'vegetarian', 'junk food', 'stamina', 'street vendors', 'financial aspect', 'processed food'.

F – Listening to music

All candidates were able to describe occasions when they listened to music using the language of feelings (*'it makes me happy/relaxed'*, etc.) and name some specific artists. Stronger answers described the sound of the music (*'blasting'*, *'vibe'*, *'vibrant'*, *'enthusiastic'*). Many candidates said that they listened to music to relax or when they felt sad. One candidate said that when feeling depressed, the song lyrics make *'the words from your heart come out.'* Prompt 2 encouraged them to use comparison and contrast, bringing in ideas like *'atmosphere'*, *'choice'* and *'convenience'*. Several candidates expressed their disappointment at not currently being able to attend live concerts. Prompt 3 brought in lexis to do with noise, hearing damage and sound quality; candidates at all levels were generally able to discuss these points with some concrete examples. Prompt 4 allowed some vivid descriptions of candidates' own experiences of being affected by both melody and lyrics, though there was occasional overlap from Prompt 1. One candidate said that it was good for people with Alzheimer's. Prompt 5 created strong opinions and used a range of modal verbs (should/must), as well as some business/work and ethical lexis: earnings, making a living, fairness, motivation, apps, sponsors and Spotify. Most candidates felt that we should pay for music as musicians need to make a living and being paid *'encourages and motivates'* artists. Only one candidate felt otherwise and said that *'music is a form of art and we shouldn't pay for art'*.

G – Numbers

Prompt 1 gave an accessible lead-in, using language of routines (shopping, passwords, telling the time, etc.). It gave rise to some advanced vocabulary, which included *'technological'*, *'cryptological'* and *'mechanised'*. Mathematical terms such as *'simplify'*, *'calculate'*, *'resolve'*, *'percentage'* and *'algorithm'* were also used. Prompts 2 and 3 worked well together, allowing candidates to focus on both negatives and positives with adjectives like *'complicated'* and *'challenging'* and (Prompt 3) nouns like *'calculation'* and *'score'*. Some candidates were able to talk about games and numbers (*'keeping score'*) and the use of statistics in sport. For Prompt 2 especially, stronger responses included emotional vocabulary around fear, confusion, etc.; some used passives, looking at the way maths is taught. Prompt 4 involved lexis to do with calculation, measuring, etc., but some candidates listed jobs where maths is important rather than engaging closely with the prompt. Prompt 5 enabled a range of future and conditional forms to be used. Some candidates spoke about robots and factory work as well as people being *'paranoid'* that computers will take over. One candidate mentioned *'Photomath'*; a phone app where you take a photo of the problem and it solves it immediately.

H – Habits

Prompts 1 and 2 allowed candidates to move from simple present to future and conditional forms while using relatively straightforward lexis. Some candidates tended to interpret *'habit'* as *'routine'* or behaviour trait and answered largely in terms of sport/fitness or diet, but there were also opportunities for more abstract language use around ambitions and goals. Some candidates spoke about how their routine had changed during *'lockdown'* and *'since COVID surfaced'*. Prompt 3 enabled use of a range of past and present perfect forms, and built on the use of personal experiences seen in Prompts 1 and 2. With Prompt 4, some candidates extended this, talking about (lack of) development, the importance of adapting, getting out of one's comfort zone, etc., and many linked their ideas to real-life examples such as older relatives. Prompt 5 gave candidates a way to talk about people they admired, and the strongest answers used details from the habits of successful people. This prompt appeared to be quite challenging for some candidates to access and resulted in a discussion about how to achieve success in life (rather than connecting success with habits).

I – Plastic

Some candidates could explain systems in their own countries and compare to others they had visited. Prompt 1 made the topic accessible by allowing a list approach; all candidates were able to name several plastic items and describe their use. Prompt 2 extended the vocabulary range, bringing in ideas of convenience, cheapness, etc. In response to Prompt 2, although candidates recognised the importance of reducing the use of plastic, they regarded it as a practical material as it is cheap, can be thrown away easily and is not *'cumbersome'*. They expressed an awareness and understanding of the need to recycle plastic and replace common items made of plastic with other materials such as metal water bottles and using our own shopping bags. Prompt 3 point initiated some good discussion about other materials that could be used instead of plastic (Teflon, aluminium) and the cost of materials (*'makeshift'*, *'reusable items'*, *'a sea of disposables'*, *'barely affordable'*, *'manufacture'*, *'durable'*, *'effective replacement'*). Prompts 3 and 4 encouraged second and first conditional use, as well as more concrete anecdotes about what candidates, their schools, etc. were actually doing to reduce plastic use. Vocabulary was often sophisticated with terms

like *'throwaway society'*, *'discard'* and *'conserve'* appearing. Prompt 5 also allowed some candidates to use expressions related to environment, marine pollution, contamination, etc., and produced some interesting discussion on global warming, toxic gases from inhaling burnt plastic, sea creatures eating plastic, differences between the rich and poor and the price of plastic (*'toxic gases'*, *'biodegradable'*, *'digging our own grave'*, *'priorities'*).

J – Laughter

Prompts 1 and 2 encouraged candidates to use personal experience; most could describe a favourite TV comedy/comedian or jokes and memes, while stronger answers used Prompt 2 to contrast generational attitudes using past and present forms. Some talked about personality and being alike to parents for Prompt 3 (*'hyperactive'*, *'same taste in jokes'*, *'good for a laugh'*). One candidate referred to *'ridiculous Dad jokes'*. Prompt 3 allowed a range of nouns and adjectives to be used, to do with relaxing, shared experience/bonding and the idea of *'laughter as medicine'*. One candidate said *'it is proven scientifically that laughter raises adrenalin levels'*. Another candidate said that some people use laughter as *'an escape mechanism in awkward or sad situations'*. Prompt 4 encouraged use of conditionals and modals of speculation as well as specific lexis around entertainment, audience, stress, etc. *'It's difficult to find something that everyone finds funny'*, *'You don't just go on stage and speak, you have to plan it very carefully'*. With Prompt 5, while some candidates did not get much beyond agreeing/disagreeing, stronger answers used examples of real-life people they admired, the use of laughter in therapy and discussed which qualities might be more important than a sense of humour, such as passion for subjects, responsibility, kindness.

K – City Life

This card was infrequently chosen. For Prompt 1, some candidates interpreted *'where you live'* literally and gave a description of the street/house. Many candidates could have benefited from a greater familiarity with terms such as suburbs, neighbourhood, residential, etc. Prompt 2 gave candidates an opportunity to use conditionals and modals, and to introduce collocations such as *'pursue my career'*, *'have more options'* or *'financially stable'*. Prompt 3 often elicited terms to describe urban problems such as pollution, traffic congestion, noise, transport facilities, criminality, etc. and allowed stronger responses to explore some environmental issues. Most candidates were better at identifying problems than describing solutions, although electric cars were frequently mentioned. Prompt 4 divided opinions between those already living in the countryside (who tended to speak up in support of qualities such as peace, knowing your neighbours, having more space, being able to keep animals, grow your own fruit and vegetables, etc.) and those who live in cities (whose view of the countryside was often that it is boring, lacking in activities for young people, and offers only a restricted range of social contacts). Often it was felt that this was a generational issue: older people might prefer the countryside, younger people the city, harking back to Prompt 2. Prompt 5 was seen as a reality for most candidates, and it gave them a chance to use a range of conditional tenses and the future tense to make predictions.

L – Happiness

This card was frequently chosen. Candidates tended to overuse the word *'happy'* and its forms and collocations (*happiness, unhappy, happy with, happy about*), and they would benefit from a wider range of vocabulary (e.g. *satisfied, pleased, glad, elated, content; the concepts of satisfaction, well-being, contentment*). For Prompt 1, candidates often responded by presenting a list, usually referring to family and friends, although some were able to expand on why some things made them happy (*'it means a lot to me, all that matters to me'*). Prompt 2 enabled the use of the past tense, which some candidates to good effect. It also enabled the use of adjectives like *'wonderful, joyful'* and expressions like *'best time ever'*, *'cheer me up'*. Prompt 3 led many candidates to equate success at work with having more money, so anticipating Prompt 5; others related this to their own career ambitions, talking about their priorities and objectives. For Prompt 4, many candidates reverted to talking about their family and friends and who else made them happy. Some candidates were able to develop a more nuanced discussion in response to Prompt 5, emphasising the importance of health, others pointing to problems that a lack of money can cause.

M – Design

Where the examiner had found out in the warm-up that the candidate was interested in art or architecture, for example, this was a successful topic. For stronger responses, there were good opportunities throughout to use passive forms. For Prompt 1, many candidates described their phones or other electronic devices, often focusing on how portable or compact they are; some of the more fashion-conscious chose to talk about clothes or bags. Some candidates came up with more surprising choices (*food containers, medical equipment, skyscrapers*), and others occasionally stumbled over the word 'item' in the prompt. In response to Prompt 2, some candidates were able to name elements of house decoration whose design they appreciated, although often this revolved around colour schemes rather than form or function, or was based on a distinction between modern (even minimalist) and traditional or classic. Weaker responses tended to list features such as *swimming pool, fireplace, garden, tennis court*, etc. For Prompt 3, most candidates were clear about the criteria needed to be a designer (creative, practical, organised), and many felt that it would be hard work to employ these skills full-time. All candidates were in agreement with this view in Prompt 4, but only few were able to articulate good reasons (*collapse, accident, life or death, start a fire, damage, earthquake, disaster*). Prompt 5 – again there was general agreement that this was already the case; stronger answers included terms such as 'ergonomic', 'artificial intelligence', 'algorithm', 'typography', 'imagery' and 'sketch'.

N – Mobile phones

This was by far the most frequently used card in this set. Prompt 1 elicited various ways of communicating and forms of entertainment, and even some educational uses were mentioned by candidates. Prompt 2, although phrased in the conditional, also elicited accounts of actual occasions when phones had been lost, so allowing candidates to use the past tense. Stronger responses included some powerful adjectives to describe feelings (*devastated, desperate, crazy, like I've lost a part of my body, awful*), with some candidates describing their relationship with their phones in terms of an addiction (withdrawal symptoms) or obsession, although others played it down ('*not a big deal, wouldn't mind*'). There was usually qualified agreement with the idea in Prompt 3, although several candidates pointed to the advantages of working (or watching movies) on a big screen. Prompt 4 elicited the most discussion. Most candidates acknowledged the time-consuming distraction caused by their phones and found positive aspects of being without one. For example, '*I would make more effort to meet up with my friends*' and '*I wouldn't sit watching films by myself*', improving their concentration and sleeping better. One candidate even mentioned '*the beauty of reading a real book*!' Prompt 5 – again, there was generally qualified agreement with this idea, perhaps strengthened by recent experience during the pandemic, when physical movement has been restricted for many candidates.

O – Watching films and television programmes

This was frequently chosen. Prompt 1 generally elicited more than just a list of different genres (action, fantasy, mystery, suspense, horror, comedy, thriller, etc.) as most candidates sought to justify their preferred viewing, sometimes in some detail (*intrigues me, clears my mind, in my own zone, takes me to another world, acquired a taste for*). Prompt 2 was successfully attempted by most candidates, with some describing problems watching with members of the family, '*my little sister is a pain as she talks all the time.*' Many candidates were conversant with the idea of streaming platforms and subscription services. Prompt 4 led some candidates to talk about health issues, lack of communication with others and not being so sociable. Weaker responses included disadvantages such as not doing school work. It helped if candidates could refer to eyesight, vision, eye strain, headache, damage. Prompt 5 – again, perhaps because of recent experience during the pandemic, many candidates defended the need for cinemas in the future, describing the '*immersive*' (even '*magical*') experience, '*the atmosphere when the lights go off*', the impact of watching a movie on a big screen, even the '*smell of popcorn*'. On the other hand, others said that televisions were so large now and the sound so amazing that home viewing would take over from cinemas.