



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education

# Example Candidate Responses Paper 2

## Cambridge IGCSE™ / IGCSE (9-1) First Language English 0500 / 0990

For examination from 2020



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge IGCSE/IGCSE (9-1) First Language English 0500/0990, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle or low) relate to the subject's curriculum and assessment objectives.

In this booklet, candidate responses have been chosen from March 2020 scripts to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with a clear explanation of where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by examiner comments on how the answer could have been improved. In this way, it is possible for you to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and what they could do to improve their answers. There is also a list of common mistakes candidates made in their answers, where relevant.

This document provides illustrative examples of candidate work with some examiner commentary. These help teachers assess the standard required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme. Therefore, in some circumstances, such as where exact answers are required, there will not be much comment.

The questions and mark schemes used here are available to download from the School Support Hub. These files are:

**March 2020 Question Paper 22**  
**March 2020 Paper 22 Mark Schemes**

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the School Support Hub:

[www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)

## How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- or low-level response for each question. The candidate answers are set in a table. In the left-hand column are the candidate answers, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – Question 1, high	Examiner comments
<p>Billions of people and objects around the world all elegantly connected by a series of overlapping webs as if it is all a part of some grand design. These two things simplify modern life and will continue to do so. However, does that mean that you too should buy <sup>all of</sup> it? ①</p> <p>If you are reading this article, you probably have experienced the internet. In fact, you might be reading this on a phone or computer right now. What you may not know is, there's probably some company somewhere that knows that you are. ② They know what time you opened your device, which and article</p>	<p>① Effective opening focused on task and audience. Varied and precisely used vocabulary and sentence structures.</p> <p>② The candidate focuses on the specific audience and on one of the most important ideas in the texts.</p> <p><b>Examiner comments</b> are alongside the answers. These explain where and why marks were awarded. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams so you can help your learners to refine their exam technique.</p>

**Answers** are by real candidates in exam conditions. These show you the types of answers for each level. Discuss and analyse the answers with your learners in the classroom to improve their skills.

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For reading, the candidate recognised the purpose of Text B as being a marketing device. The candidate identified how the success of new technology companies depended on some wasteful and potentially sinister ideas. However, the response missed some opportunities to examine the implicit points made about the effects of the Internet of Things specifically and how young people in particular are affected by it.

This section explains how the candidate could have improved each answer. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams and helps your learners to refine their exam technique.

## Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- For reading, the most common mistake was the lifting of points from both texts and providing only a general discussion rather than an evaluation of the ideas. For example, technology in general, rather than the advances made in the Internet of Things, was the focus of many responses. Another common error was candidates taking the ideas in the texts at face value. For example, candidates did not take Text B as being part of a marketing strategy which categorised consumers in an attempt to sell technology to them which was not needed and had serious drawbacks. Where candidates saw each text as being separate and not linked in any way, this also led

Often candidates were not awarded marks because they misread or misinterpreted the questions.

the idea that people y  
res shown in Text

Lists the common mistakes candidates made in answering each question. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes and give them the best chance of achieving the available marks.

# Question 1

## Example Candidate Response – high

## Examiner comments

Read Text A and Text B in the insert and then answer Section A, Question 1 on this question paper.

### Section A: Directed Writing

#### Question 1

Write a magazine article for young people about how far they should keep up with the latest technologies.

In your article you should:

- evaluate the views and attitudes people have towards new technology
- give your own views, based on what you have read.

Base your article on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your article with a suitable headline.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.

Latest Technology: Is it worth it?

The internet and technology are both beautiful things. Billions of people and objects around the world all elegantly connected by a series of overlapping webs as if it's all a part of some grand design. These two things simplify modern life and will continue to do so. However, does that mean that you too should buy <sup>all of</sup> it? 1

If you are reading this article, you probably have experienced the internet. In fact, you might be reading this on a phone or computer right now. ~~What you may not know~~ If you are, there's probably some company somewhere that knows that you are. 2 They know what time you opened your device, ~~what~~ <sup>which</sup> search engine you used, and which website and article you went to. These 'tech' companies are not ~~selling your~~ <sup>sell your</sup> data because they have to other companies in exchange for money. These 'tech' companies are not selling your data because they have no funds and their owners are destitute. They have millions, if not billions, in investments for ~~their~~ the growing technology market. They are selling the data to make a quick buck. Knowing this, it comes as no surprise that 47% of people hesitate to buy new technology because of concerns with their privacy. Technology companies should be wiser about how they use our data. 3

1 Effective opening focused on task and audience. Varied and precisely used vocabulary and sentence structures.

2 The candidate focuses on the specific audience and on one of the most important ideas in the texts.

3 This answer picks up on the cynicism implied in both texts about how technology companies exploit their customers.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Of course, there is still a large group of people who do buy new technology. There is a group coined the 'early adopters' who simply get a thrill in knowing that they are part of an exclusive club of people with the latest in technology. They ~~switch~~ <sup>buy new</sup> between products like they are groceries. There is also a group of professionals who buy the <sup>new</sup> technology ~~to~~ to see the new ideas and how these <sup>ideas</sup> creations are implemented. They do this so they can improve a product that they are working on.

Then, there are normal people who buy a product to fulfil their own needs. They are often hesitant to buy new technology unless it is absolutely necessary. <sup>4</sup> ~~now~~

Now to address the question: should you buy it? The truth is <sup>that</sup> there is no simple answer. <sup>5</sup> Young people tend to fall into all of these categories. ~~Based on your need,~~ I do, however, strongly recommend avoiding being like the first group. If you have a genuine interest in technology, you can always follow the news. It is best to not waste your money ~~constantly~~ constantly buying the latest products. If you still want to buy something, be willing to give up a little <sup>bit</sup> of your ~~privacy~~ privacy.

In conclusion, buying new technology can be brilliant but be aware of the financial and security implications. <sup>6</sup>

**4** The candidate rewords and develops some ideas in Text B. The answer is less evaluative here, although the points are well made and cogently expressed.

**5** The candidate returns to the specific audience, although could have done more with this idea to show how susceptible young people are.

**6** The answer fades a little in terms of effectiveness of style and evaluation but focuses on the specific audience and task.  
Mark for reading = 12 out of 15  
Mark for writing = 22 out of 25

**Total mark awarded =  
34 out of 40**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For reading, the candidate recognised the purpose of Text B as being a marketing device. The candidate identified how the success of new technology companies depended on some wasteful and potentially sinister ideas. However, the response missed some opportunities to examine the implicit points made about the effects of the Internet of Things specifically and how young people in particular are affected by it.
- For writing, the response was well argued and effectively organised with a clear sense of purpose and audience. The first part of the answer clearly demonstrated the candidate had an understanding of what was being asked. The ending needed a stronger finish in terms of style and evaluation.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

Read Text A and Text B in the insert and then answer Section A, Question 1 on this question paper.

Section A: Directed Writing

Question 1

Write a magazine article for young people about how far they should keep up with the latest technologies.

In your article you should:

- evaluate the views and attitudes people have towards new technology
- give your own views, based on what you have read.

Base your article on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your article with a suitable headline.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.

tech world  
The need for technology

In today's world; 24/7 we are surrounded by devices, which we call the ~~technology~~ technology. The world is changing and so ~~our~~ <sup>does</sup> our way of life is changing, which makes us adapted to the change. There are various people ~~some~~ who are thankful to technology and some who keep ~~on~~ criticising about it; which raises the question of how far we should keep up with the latest technologies. 1

Thanks to technology, the world has become a small place, where it is easier to connect with our colleagues and loved ones easily. The rising ideas, help to innovate some great things that makes our lives easier and improves the efficiency of the modern way of life. 2 The so called ~~Internet of Things~~ Internet of Things has been generating billions in revenue and bringing ~~new jobs~~ <sup>employment</sup> to people. Some people believe that they drive their social status by knowing the latest - and - greatest in the tech space. Moreover some people buy a new product in order to understand the core of the innovations. There are people who <sup>only</sup> buy a new product or service if it promises to meet a need. 3

1 This is a reasonable introduction that sets out the task. Clear style and register are used, although there is some awkwardness of expression.

2 Frequent errors, although most are minor.

3 This is a straightforward reproduction of points in Text B.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

In spite of all of this, some people believe that technology is destroying <sup>lifestyle of people</sup> the world. They believe that the ~~developed~~ developers aren't paying enough attention to privacy and <sup>security</sup> issues which result <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ devices to ~~be~~ <sup>slowly</sup> ~~purchase~~ <sup>by people</sup>. Secondly, many believe that ~~the~~ technology makes a life's <sup>more</sup> lazier <sup>4</sup> ~~instead~~ instead of easier, moreover they state ~~the fact~~ that new technology disrupts the traditional method of shopping. Moreover there are some people who do not need ~~the~~ the products they <sup>have</sup> ~~use~~, but they just purchase it to have a leading edge of use; adding on, when another product enters the market, they use the original one infrequently.

Although the use of latest technology has some adverse effect in the life of people, I am of the strong opinion that new technology is required in our life. We need to revolutionize ourselves and see the bright side of ~~the~~ life ~~itself~~. Still technology will only ~~make~~ make our life efficient, if we only ~~purchase~~ purchase the things which are required and seek for benefits. <sup>5</sup>

Latest technology is only helpful if it isn't misused by us. Hence it is great to buy new ~~technology~~ technology, to be a part of <sup>6</sup> a change and have an easier way of life.

**4** This is one of the evaluation points shown in the mark scheme, and shows some judgement of the implicit ideas in the texts, but needs to be explored more.

**5** The candidate uses a clear style although there are a few lifted phrases and some errors.

**6** The candidate offers some thoughtful judgement, using the implicit idea in the texts that a balance is needed between the drive for technology and a more cautious appreciation of it.  
Mark for reading = 10 out of 15  
Mark for writing = 12 out of 25

**Total mark awarded =  
22 out of 40**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For reading, there were some sensible references to the ideas in the texts. For example, the point that new technology could make people lazy, as well as the considered discussion in the last few paragraphs, allowed for a mark to be awarded in Level 5. If the candidate provided some explanation of which aspects of the Internet of Things made people lazy, this would have provided sufficient detail for more marks to be awarded. A more consistent analysis of the attitudes in the texts was needed, rather than mostly reproducing ideas with some summarising at the end.
- For writing, the meaning was clear, although the style was fairly simple and inconsistent. There were some spelling errors, such as 'ourselfs', and also a limited adaptation of style for an article aimed at young people. A less discursive, personal style with more sense of audience would have allowed for a higher mark to be awarded.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

Read Text A and Text B in the insert and then answer Section A, Question 1 on this question paper.

Section A: Directed Writing

Question 1

Write a magazine article for young people about how far they should keep up with the latest technologies.

In your article you should:

- evaluate the views and attitudes people have towards new technology
- give your own views, based on what you have read.

Base your article on what you have read in both texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.

Begin your article with a suitable headline.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.

GOING UP WITH THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES 1

In this busy world, technologies is the only thing which is increasing day by day and helping people for their different kind of works. Thanks to the latest technology which had estimated an 1.5 trillion objects globally and soon it will connect every single household objects to the Internet. I don't know why the smart people have so much rush towards technology, this might be because they need to learn new technology they enjoy the thrill of having something before others or it might be for show off. 3

The smart people don't need products for themselves, they just want to be at the leading edge of use. Some people are usually in the tech community and they will buy every single product to understand the core of the innovation of the product. they are not interested in the product but they just want to learn new technology, they actually don't care about the product or the company that made the product. 4

1 Imprecise use of language.

2 This is the only real use made of Text A.

3 Some reproduction of points from Text B are made, but with limited comment on them. The candidate makes some basic errors in punctuation and sentence construction.

4 This is very close to the wording and structure of the text, and is a limited comment.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

There are some kind of people who will buy the product only if it is useable for them. other wise they will not waste their money on stupid technology which will not help ~~from~~ them. This kind of people will just wait for someone close to them shares their experience of the product or service and then only they will buy the product if they like it. they are the kind of people who will only see the needs and the benefits of the ~~the~~ particular product or a service and they will be more likely to try this type of product.

5 This demonstrates a hint of a judgement.

If I talk about my thinking about the latest technology, then I'm may to intrested in the new technology because I also have that thrill to buy new product and look what type of new technology they have in them, but I will only buy expensive product for technology and show off too for eg:- ~~the~~ iPhone 11 pro mazi. people should be toward technology to help themselves for different kinds of works. but they should not be using the techonology at the extreme level because it might harm their belongings.

6 The candidate begins to make some judgement and give an opinion, but the style makes these ideas unclear and some points are misunderstood.

Mark for reading = 7 out of 15  
Mark for writing = 10 out of 25

**Total mark awarded =  
17 out of 40**

### How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For reading, most points were reproduced from Text B with some lifting of phrases from the reading material. Some simple judgement was offered at the end, although some points were not clearly understood. The response was relevant, but it was not an evaluation of the ideas in the text. More understanding of the arguments in the texts were needed, for example, the risks to privacy posed by new technology.
- For writing, there were some consistent basic errors, such as the misuse of capital letters and sentences were not correctly demarcated. Where phrases were lifted from the texts, marks could not be awarded. More secure use of punctuation was needed, as well as a more articulate style which was not dependent on the original texts.

### Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- For reading, the most common mistake was the lifting of points from both texts and providing only a general discussion rather than an evaluation of the ideas. For example, technology in general, rather than the advances made in the Internet of Things, was the focus of many responses. Another common error was candidates taking the ideas in the texts at face value. For example, candidates did not take Text B as being part of a marketing strategy which categorised consumers in an attempt to sell technology to them which was not needed and had serious drawbacks. Where candidates saw each text as being separate and not linked in any way, this also led to some contradiction. For example, the idea that people were easily taken in by new technology in Text B was contradicted by the slow uptake of figures shown in Text A.
- For writing, the most common mistake was a lack of adaptation of style for the specific purpose and audience given. Candidates who did not demonstrate an awareness of purpose and audience tended to write about ideas from the texts using a simplistic style and lacked some persuasive and argumentative techniques vital to engaging the reader.
- Most responses were reasonably accurate but needed to have been proofread adequately to avoid the use of incorrect homophones and incomplete sentence structures.

## Question 2

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

## Descriptive Writing

2 Write a description of a place you would like to go back to.

Please write your chosen question number here (2, 3, 4, 5): 2

Beautiful  
A captivating catch!

The sun was rising up the mountains, rising behind the fluffy thin clouds shining brightly as it spilled into the valley - a little ~~shat~~ shadowed. It was like a moving watercolour. The light reached the river, for a moment it was ~~the~~ a living expanse of water and rippling mirror showing shimmering <sup>pink</sup> gold and gold. The cold, misty night seemed to mitigate as the brilliant blue <sup>mellowed</sup> sky into a placid orange. The salty sea breeze spraying onto the ~~boardwalk~~ light brown boardwalk. ①

Rain trees swayed gently in the breeze and I felt refreshed and exhilarated. As soon as I stepped, I could see the clear sky and the frenzied pulses sent out by my heart pounded so hard at my chest. The adrenaline rush sent an electrical impulse swirling down my spine and giving me the shivers. I was breathing in a haphazard manner and the mesmerising beauty completely took over my soul. ②

The smooth subtle sand; waves rolling up and down ~~and~~ filled with brine; mellifluous background music - ~~it~~ it all captivated me. The waves on the shore were rolling up and down on repeat like a radio show. Every wave ~~and its accompaniment~~ ~~to~~ ~~accompany~~ with its sound

① This is quite a polished opening, effective and quite evocative. The last sentence is incomplete but is written fluently and with an appropriate style.

② This is a nicely focused paragraph on the impact of the landscape on the narrator. There are a few errors with expression but secure style.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

gave me a new motivation. The light brown sand that mixed with the water seemed like two beautiful colours are merged together. On the sides, there were shiny yellow, orange and purple coloured sand too, ~~to~~ framing the beach all together. <sup>3</sup>

~~The colours~~ The ~~lovely blue~~ <sup>flowing</sup> water ~~which~~ seemed to meet the endless sky over the horizon. While, the water seemed of three colours - sunshine yellow, sky blue and light brown. The magnificent scenic beauty filled with multihued colours ~~to~~ left me stunned.

Small villas like nuts stood along the coastal line, ~~in the woody~~ strong and moody, the villas seemed to consists of floors chawling the tourists to stay. They were 10 of them, all symmetrically arranged with the same colour, texture and size of wood. ~~to~~ The villas nearly camouflaged with the soothing sand. <sup>4</sup>

Although, ~~the beach was pollution free~~, The idiosyncrasy of this place was smoke. It roiled sullenly in slow folds from the tiny chimney of ~~the~~ a iron-foundary - the only iron-foundary. It ~~settles~~ <sup>settles</sup> down in slimy pools on the muddy beach. Smoke on the wharves; smoke on the dingy boats ~~to~~ on the yellow river - coating in a greasy soot to the nosefront; the two faded poplars; the face of the labours. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Most of this section builds a picture of a beach landscape quite effectively, although there are errors with tense.

<sup>4</sup> A different focus for a new paragraph. 'Strong and moody' for quite mundane-sounding buildings seems a little unclear.

<sup>5</sup> This section seems out of place and incongruous (actually the opening scene of a Dickens novel). It strikes an odd tone which is not evident earlier on.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

But all in all, it seemed pollution free as the smoke didn't really make its presence felt. The colourful cocktails and mocktails being served while the tourists were grooving with some ~~dance~~ ~~pop~~ music on the dance floor. Girls gently flowing their hair to get into mood. ~~Boys~~ ~~too~~ whereas boys were trying so hard to do some hip-hop. Watching this, a series of giggles ~~was~~ <sup>burst</sup> ~~came~~ ~~burst~~ out ~~from~~ ~~me~~. 6

6 The sentence construction is less secure here.

The delicious sea food smelled so strong that it seeped into one's nose, ~~with~~ ~~making~~ hypnotising the people around. Time froze for a few seconds, I couldn't hear anything nor move a muscle. Only my eyes cooperated with me to take a mental picture of the captivating ~~catch~~ I had got with my eyes, seeing the beauty. 7

7 The style here is a bit insecure, especially towards the end.

8 The candidate commendably attempts an ambitious ending and the piece, although inconsistent, is often engaging and sometimes effective.

Mark for content and structure = 11 out of 16

Mark for style and accuracy = 13 out of 24

**Total mark awarded = 24 out of 40**

As the sun was blazing, it burned the sky into a powerful and gorgeous mix of amber tint and blood red. The dying sunlight ~~burned~~ ~~filled~~ soon started emptying the whole area though it dedicated to burn brightly till there is no end... 8

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For content and structure, there was some ambition and a clear attempt to create a consistent, convincing picture. However, there were some sections where there was a shift in tone and the writing became disjointed. The different parts of the scene were organised and paragraphed, although they were not always linked effectively. Some choices of images and ideas were made consciously for effect and while some were effective, others were less so. Therefore, the description was sometimes generic, lacking focus on closer details.
- For style and accuracy, apart from one paragraph which was inconsistent with the rest of the answer, the writing was clear and varied with some precision. There was some inconsistency in sentence construction.

## Question 3

## Example Candidate Response – high

## Examiner comments

## Descriptive Writing

3 Describe the other contestants in a competition before, and after, the winner has won.

Anticipation filled the air as <sup>I and other two</sup> the ~~three~~ contestants waited for the judges' verdict. Each contestant was different but at the same time, so similar. I stood up straight, my back arched, and my posture perfect. We had just finished a Slam Dunk Contest filled with jaw-dropping and awe-inspiring dunks. We had each taken a turn to slam a basketball into a hoop in the most creative way possible. The objective was not to just <sup>to</sup> show creativity but also to show our athleticism. ①

I stood in the middle, between the other two finalists. To my right, stood a boy roughly two years older and six inches taller than me. ~~He wore~~ His face showed exhaustion and he kept adjusting his hair to keep it out of his hazel-coloured eyes. His nose was slightly crooked and he was completely clean-shaven. He was tall and lanky ~~but~~ but also incredibly athletic, as was seen by a 360°. He wore a purple and gold jersey that was three sizes too large. He along with matching shorts. He sported large and thick basketball shoes which were so long that they covered up his socks, if he – if he was wearing any. He looked ~~panicked~~ heavily but also looked eagerly at the judge. ②

To my left, stood the other boy. He had a darker skin tone and was only a little bit taller than me. He seemed calm and laid back. He looked down at the ground, engrossed in his own thoughts. He had ~~brown~~ dark brown eyes, <sup>and</sup> a small nose. He

① The candidate sets the scene in a fairly straightforward way with an accurate and controlled style.

② The description is mostly factual but builds a detailed, realistic image.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

gursed his lips and rocked his head back and forth to some song playing in his head. His hair was covered by a dark plain ~~grey~~ black hoodie with a zipper pulled all the way up. It came as a surprise ~~that~~ that the scorching sun had not ~~5~~ already singed a hole into the back of his head. He wore ~~ten~~ sweatpants and neon orange shoes. **3**

The judge stood in front of a table. He ~~examined~~ clutched a clipboard and examined it carefully ~~with one hand~~. ~~In the other hand~~ The other hand was wrapped around a microphone. His short sleeves exposed two visible tan lines on his arms. He brought the microphone towards his mouth and switched it on. A deafening, screeching sound filled the gymnasium causing everybody to cover their ears and cringe. After this had stopped, the judge began "And the winner is <sup>in the air</sup> ~~is~~". The anticipation turned into a tension. As the boy to my right faced upwards with his eyes closed and fingers crossed. **4**

"Aaron!" <sup>5</sup> the judge exclaimed. The boy to my left ~~lumbered over to where the judge~~ The gymnasium erupted. The boy to my left lumbered over, relatively unphased by the big announcement. He ~~dis~~ displayed the a light grin as he held up his new trophy. The boy to my right seemed on the verge of tears. As for me, I smiled and congratulated the winner. **5**

**3** Another pen portrait of a contestant. Some closely observed detail is provided, although it lacks the emotional impact to engage the reader. The style is accurate and precise.

**4** A little more evocation of atmosphere here, especially towards the end of the paragraph.

**5** Some use of varied sentence structures to create specific effects is used. A cohesive, realistic overall picture is created. The candidate organises and paragraphs securely.  
Mark for content and structure = 13 out of 16  
Mark for style and accuracy = 21 out of 24

**Total mark awarded = 34 out of 40**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For content and structure, the overall impression created was credible and detailed. However, overall it was a rather objectively observed scene which did not quite sustain the reader's engagement with the drama and emotional intensity of the occasion. Some sections lacked the complexity and range of effects needed to be awarded a mark in Level 6.
- For style and accuracy, the writing was almost error-free and was efficient, controlled and precise throughout. For a mark higher up in Level 6, a more nuanced and subtle style was needed, with a more precise use of language to evoke the occasion and engage the reader.

## Question 4

### Example Candidate Response – low

### Examiner comments

#### Narrative Writing

4 Write a story which involves some sort of delay.

Once upon a time there was a boy named Rakesh Ghande. he lives in Tamil Nadu and he used to bully his friends a lot from a very low age. he was very weak in studies but he had a lot of power to make the other person down. the whole village knows him because of his misbehaviour. ①

Every single child was scared of Rakesh and because of this he had no friend. Not having any friends made him uglier and angrier towards his life. Rakesh have only 2 members in his house including himself and his father. his mother died ~~die~~ during delivering ~~die~~ Rakesh. his father is sub inspector in police and his father is very lenient toward their job. ②

One day his father called him for a serious talk about his career. Rakesh had no answers what he want to become in his rest of the

① Some attempt is made to introduce and establish a character, although perhaps a little simple. The candidate makes use of a clear style with some basic errors, for example, capital letters are missing and tenses are insecure.

② The response develops the backstory a little, in a straightforward way. The meaning is clear, but there are errors in tense use and spelling.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

life. then Rakesh started thinking about his carrier and focused towards his studied and he also had a goal to make his father proud. In 10<sup>th</sup> he had scored 84% and he was the topper from his village. the village people had a doubt that how can such a dumb child be the topper of the village. After seeing his percentage his father called him again to ask him about his carrier, but this time Rakesh proudly said that he want to take the aditory post of his father.

3 Some grammatical disagreement is evident. The answer is paragraphed and organised accurately with a simple progression of narrative.

He went out of the village for three years for his sub. Inspector post training. After 3 years when he came back from the training he was looking for his job of police. then the father had given him his aditory post to be a successful police man. he started doing his job perfectly and within two years he had clear all the crime from his village.

After some time the comishner of police decided to transfer rakesh

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

To mumbai ~~to mumbai~~ and make mumbai also a crime free city. After listening to this news his father got heart attack and from which he died. As his father died he cancelled the decision to going to mumbai and he talked to his comishner, the comishner said it's the last time and ~~if~~ if you will not go you will lose the opportunity. then he agreed to comishner.

while he was waiting for his flight at the airport the ~~flight~~ flight got delayed and because of it he was very upset because he thought that might lose such an big ~~oppor~~ opportunity.

4 Characters' motivations and reactions are not explained or explored.

5 This is a rather abrupt ending to address the task but without a real climax or denouement. Mark for content and structure = 7 out of 16  
Mark for style and accuracy = 10 out of 24

**Total mark awarded =  
17 out of 40**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For content and structure, the response began in an engaging way although this was limited towards the end. Although the sequence of events was reasonably well outlined and organised, there was limited characterisation beyond the first paragraph. The reader was given little insight into why and how the protagonist behaved. The ending lacked impact and the story overall was incomplete and lacking cohesion. To be awarded a higher mark, more attention should have been paid to revealing the characters' inner lives as well as what happened to them. The response fulfilled the criteria for Level 3 but did not meet those for Level 4 in terms of management of its structure.
- For style and accuracy, the meaning was always clear, although errors were sometimes serious and the language too simple for a mark to be awarded in Level 4. Errors in tenses, grammar and a limited range of vocabulary would have needed to be addressed to be awarded a higher mark.

## Question 5

## Example Candidate Response – high

## Examiner comments

## Narrative Writing

5 Write a story set in two different times or places.

"Beep, beep" the irritated sound  
 A loud crash shook me from my ~~the~~ day dreams, my  
 fingers toying with the duct tape but not actually taping  
 anything particular, unless you count winding my left hand into  
 a sticky mess. I went to investigate where the sound had come  
 from, only to find the boxes that I had painstakingly  
~~carefully~~ stacked in the garage had toppled over. I sighed and ran a still sticky  
 hand through my greying hair, bending on my knees to  
 pick up the photos that were strewn all over the polished floor.  
 I turned <sup>one</sup> over and blanched. It was a picture of a young  
~~man~~ couple smiling lovingly at each other. I stroked the  
 fraying picture, and slowly the memories of a better time  
 resurfaced, and I slipped into a different realm altogether. ①

It was 1939, the war had just been announced, and all the  
 Jews in Germany were petrified and unsure of their fate  
 in the Nazis' hands. My husband Paulo and I were blissfully  
 unaware, just how newlyweds are until they come off that  
 honeymoon high. We were highschool sweethearts and had  
 decided to tie the knot right after Paulo landed his  
 first but lucrative job at <sup>a Jewish</sup> the consultancy a few blocks  
 away. We had rented a small grey apartment that was  
 drab as they come, but I was determined to make it as  
 comely as I could. ②

At breakfast one morning, Paulo received an unexpected letter.

① This is an engaging opening, carefully controlled to interest the reader. Very few errors are made and a precise, varied choice of language and vocabulary is used.

② This is quite a broad canvas for a narrative but the characterisation and setting are assured and controlled.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

it was unexpected as we hardly ever got mail, but he tore open the seal, not knowing that what was inside would change our lives forever. It was addressed to the both of us, we were supposed to be relocated to a place in ~~the~~ Auschwitz, Poland; it was a transfer for Paulo's new job, we were supposed to leave that <sup>very</sup> night. We quickly packed all our meager belongings and set about to the train station, where many of Paulo's Jewish colleagues were there too. **3**

Once boarding the train, I fell into a deep slumber and only awoke once we reached the end of our journey. Suddenly, members of the Nazi party, the SA, flew into the cabin and dragged Paulo and I out. Bewildered, I stared at my surroundings, we were in the middle of a camp-like area, everything was painted grey and black. Another guard dragged Paulo away ~~and~~ yelling, and that was the last I saw of my beloved husband.

I was herded into a pile of shrieking women and howling children. My head was whirling as they stripped me of my clothes, but thankfully, I had taken my gold wedding ring and stuffed it in my mouth. I was given blue-grey striped pajamas to wear, and had a tattoo, PIA 2060 across my forearm; this was the start of my never-ending nightmare, which ~~only ended it~~.

Shaking, I was brought back to reality, pushing away the darker memories of the concentration camp. I blinked rapidly, not realising that tears were now rolling down my face. In 1945, I was rescued by the allied troops. I <sup>then</sup> relocated to the US, living with some cousins who had luckily escaped before the war started. There, I learnt that Paulo had died trying to escape. Now, ~~at~~ ~~over~~ 65 years later, I still wear my wedding ring, ~~around my neck~~, the one he saved two months of his salary for, around my neck, a reminder of what could never be. **4**

**3** The candidate begins to lose some accuracy and control in this paragraph, for example, sentence demarcation with commas where full stops are needed as well as fairly frequent spelling errors.

**4** This is a cohesive ending, returning to the opening idea in a carefully managed way. Mark for content and structure = 14 out of 16  
Mark for style and accuracy = 21 out of 24

**Total mark awarded = 35 out of 40**

### How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For content and structure, the opening and ending of the narrative were effective and controlled, the characterisation and setting were well described. The scale and backdrop of the story was a little over-ambitious and difficult to manage, which made some sections less effective and credible. To be awarded a higher mark in Level 6, more focus on the story of the individuals, rather than the context, might have engaged the reader more consistently.
- For style and accuracy, while there was a high level of accuracy and precision in most of the writing, there were sections where the need to compress complex events perhaps lead to a less secure control of sentence structures and more minor spelling errors. More consistency in these aspects was needed for a higher mark to be awarded in Level 6.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

## Narrative Writing

5 Write a story set in two different times or places.

5. The Promise

They ~~we~~ had promised each other of being present whenever they needed ~~each~~ someone's shoulder to cry on. The two best friends more like unseparable sisters were going to separate their ways for shaping up their future. Glances of water were filled in both their eyes trying their ultimate best not to roll of their cheeks. The environment set up around the room was difficult to stay in anymore. Sarah's hand had drifted, and Kylie quietly watched her vanish away through the corridors. <sup>1</sup>

A telephone rings - 'ting, ting' & waking up Kylie in a heart touching manner. She holds the phone close to her ~~heart~~ ears, and a voice speaks. The voice was squeaky but familiar. She realised it was the same voice which spoke to her four years ago in a room setting up a promise. She jumped up in profound hitting up her black-heeled boots at the ground which reminds her wearing them. On listening up the news, her mind felt sore, ~~and~~ her feet felt numb and she whispered, "I cannot do it, I am sorry" and quietly hangs up disconnecting the wire. <sup>2</sup>

The next evening, Kylie tightens up the belt to her black dress, fitting in ~~up~~ the

<sup>1</sup> There is a clear sense of what is happening, but the expression is awkward. Frequent spelling errors are made but clarity of expression is the main weakness.

<sup>2</sup> The storyline is generally clear, although there is an inconsistent use of tense and persistent problems with clarity of style.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

...same ~~to~~ black boots she wore yesterday. ~~she~~  
~~felt like a wrinkle~~ Her body ~~felt~~ felt as  
 wrinkled as an apricot, her eyes weary and  
 her head throbbing. On the other side, Sarah  
 put on her white dress, her mother setting  
 up ~~a~~ her veil, which continued behind her like  
 a river. The stars high above, covered the city  
 like a blanket. **3**

Sarah looked mesmerizing, with her  
 body straight up, and her heart throbbing. She  
 grabbed up her phone, dialed a number but put  
 it ~~so~~ back in disappointment, when a voice starts  
 screams from outside. Sarah does not recognise it,  
 but picks up her beautifully adorned, scarlet ~~red~~  
 red flowers and makes her way outside the  
 room. **4**

Kylie opens the door of her ~~house~~ and  
 grand house, as huge as ~~a cave~~ ~~an~~ a  
 genie's cave. It was raining cats and dogs  
 forcing her to carry ~~an~~ umbrella her widely  
 spread umbrella. The heavy drops of rain  
 banged her umbrella making her feel like a  
 dead cat buried under stones. She reaches  
 the ~~hitting~~ ~~opposite~~ church opposite her house, and  
 stand their quiet and numb as if ~~a~~ a portrait  
 of her was being drawn. **5**

**3** A more secure paragraph here.

**4** The candidate consciously attempts to create a sense of urgency but it is not convincing. Use of tenses is insecure.

**5** Some interesting imagery is used. There are a range of technical errors, including incorrect use of homophones, tense use and grammar.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

## Additional Page

If you use the following lined page to complete the answer(s) to any question(s), the question number(s) must be clearly shown.

Sarah reaches to a church as usual and stands at the door, all the eyes at her with ~~ex~~ long dropped down faces in fantasisation. She walks through the aisle slowly and steadily with a banana smile and the stage felt like a coloured gem ~~awaiting~~ to her. A few words of vows and Sarah was married.

on the other hand, a few words by the priest, and a whisper from Kylie saw "At May my husband rest in peace" Kylie burst out in tears and could not resist seeing her loved one go away. Kylie fell on her knees and felt like a hundred knives stabbing through her. **6**

The night hardly passed for both of them when next morning, Sarah picks up her phone with a hope of her best friend picking up her call, but suddenly sees a notification from Taylor, a friend asking her why she could not attend Kylie's husband's funeral. ~~A sudden~~

The noise did not persuade Sarah, words could not come out of her mouth and her heart ~~beat~~ ran like a race.

Sarah In a nick of time, Sarah left a note, jumped in her car, and drove all the way to the other city in search of her friend. Sarah drove through the long roads, bridges, churches, shops and then comes across a manor like white house. She knocks the door, sees her friend when the door opens and says "I kept my promise" **7**

**6** The plotline becomes unclear.

**7** There is some cohesion in the ending, but the structure is not tightly controlled, with some sections of the narrative difficult to follow.  
Mark for content and structure = 9 out of 16  
Mark for style and accuracy = 11 out of 24

**Total mark awarded = 20 out of 40**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For content and structure, the narrative had some clear sections and began quite coherently, but overall could not be described as 'well managed' to be awarded a mark at Level 5. There was some cohesion provided by the idea of a promise made between old friends, and the story was relevant and addressed the task, although the clarity and effectiveness of the storytelling was inconsistent. More control over this aspect was needed for a mark to be awarded at Level 5.
- For style and accuracy, the range and nature of errors in the writing limited the mark that could be awarded, for example, some awkward expression which occasionally obscured meaning. Tense use within and between paragraphs needed more consistency and precision to meet the criteria for Level 4.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

## Narrative Writing

5 Write a story set in two different times or places.

## The School trip

This month ~~after~~ after the Boards Exam our school has <sup>announced</sup> ~~prepared~~ a Trip for the <sup>students</sup> school, so we all 10<sup>th</sup> grade students have decided to go to this trip as it is the last one for us. This trip is of 10-days and it is a Europe trip in which we all are going to visit a lot of places. As our boards exams got over we all started our shopping for the trip. Few of my best friend and me went together for shopping and atlast all packing was done and we were ready to go for the trip. ①

The night before the trip I bet no buddy could sleep because of the nervousness and the excitement for the trip. After that the next day everybody got ready took their luggage and ~~were~~ came to the International airport, we all said "bye" to our family and went inside the airport. We got our gate number

① This is a clear, if a little simple, opening for a story. The style has frequent minor errors and tenses are insecure. Expression is a little awkward in places.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

and ~~she~~ <sup>we</sup> were standing <sup>in</sup> the queue for checking in and that ~~at~~ time ~~of~~ me and my other 2 best friend ~~are~~ pleased the guy working to get our seats together and he did it, we ~~are~~ were so happy. Then we went to our boarding gate and ~~there~~ was then sat in the flight ~~to~~ to Dubai and then took another flight to Paris. The school took a package of 10 days with Thomas Cook so as we went out of the Paris airport there Thomas Cook guy was waiting for us. Everybody was tired of travelling so went to the hotel and just ~~sleep~~ slept. 2

The next morning at Paris when we looked out of our window it was so pleasant and beautiful. Then we got ready had a breakfast and went to Disney World. The world of Mickey mouse and Minny mouse and many other characters it was very good. We all friend sat in every ride in which we could sit, ~~to~~ we saw the roads show of the Disney World and our whole day was at there and ~~at~~ the night we ~~had~~ had our dinner and back to hotel. The next

2 A simple series of events with limited use of narrative techniques such as characterisation and scene-setting.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

day we went to Eiffel Tower and then to the place called Mini World in which all the wonders of the world were made in small size. Then we enjoyed more few day at parks and places near by then we went to Switzerland which was beautiful. ~~The~~ 3

There we went for city tour and then ~~at~~ we went to Mount Titlis which was at the height of 11,000 ft. In that height we friends did photo shoot played with the snow did ~~the~~ mischief and had our lunch at that height then in the evening we came back to our hotel. Then the last day of our trip was the shopping day we all ~~buyed~~ took gifts for our family and took something for us and left. Then we took our flights back to India. 4

3 Limitations of style are evident here. Frequent errors in syntax and punctuation are evident but it is mainly the simplicity of language and vocabulary that prevents this piece from being awarded a higher mark.

4 A series of events is reported rather than a developed narrative. There is some evidence of organisation and paragraphing. Mark for content and structure = 6 out of 16  
Mark for style and accuracy = 10 out of 24

**Total mark awarded =  
16 out of 40**

## How the candidate could have improved their answer

- For Content and Structure, there was some generally accurate organisation, although there was more simple reporting than storytelling. More attention needed to be paid to establish characters and plotlines which would have engaged the reader. This would also have demonstrated greater understanding of how narrative writing worked. While storylines did not need to be complex, this simple account made very limited use of narrative techniques.
- For Style and Accuracy, the simplicity of the vocabulary and sentence structures, along with the limited awareness of the genre's requirements, clearly fit this response in Level 3. The meaning was always clear, but more varied language and control of sentence structures was needed for a mark to be awarded at Level 4.

## Common mistakes candidates made in this question

- In Descriptive Writing, some candidates were overly reliant on narrative to structure their responses, which resulted in pieces which had limited descriptive content. For example, the descriptions for Question 2 were sometimes predictable pieces, often based on beach scenes or holiday resorts, which included generic details rather than closely observed and focused content. Similarly, in Question 3, some generic ideas and images to describe tension and nervousness were used rather than the more striking and original images which often have greater impact. This tendency to rely on rather stereotypical ideas and images was one of the most common mistakes in approaching descriptive writing.
- In Narrative Writing, one common mistake was a lack of preparation, especially in establishing characterisation and setting, for a narrative in which a sequence of events became the main content. The need to engage the reader with credible characters and plotlines was sometimes neglected, resulting in some action-driven narratives which were less effective overall.
- Style and Accuracy marks were often more limited by simple expression and language than by errors. A wide-ranging and ambitious style in terms of vocabulary and sentence structures, in which effects are created consciously and deliberately, was often more successful even where minor errors were frequent.

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