

## English B

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 28	29 - 44	45 - 59	60 - 72	73 - 87	88 - 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 46	47 - 59	60 - 73	74 - 86	87 - 100

### Higher level and standard level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The following observations apply to both Higher and Standard levels and are intended to reflect the consensus of views reported by examiners.

The new system of orals now appears to have been fully understood, and put into practice successfully, by the vast majority of centres. At both levels, there was a slight improvement in performance from last year. This may be explained, at least in part, teachers handled the interview procedure more effectively through now having experience of the new system and received feedback via the 2/IAF forms.

**Forms:** Almost all centres correctly completed the correct version of form 2/BIA. A few teachers still fail to enter any comments, explaining how marks have been decided.

**Marking:** Few unexplained differences between the Interactive and Individual orals marks were noted. Teachers must ensure that such differences are accounted for in the 2/BIA forms.

**Timing:** Timing was poorly controlled in at most 20% of recordings. In only a few cases was the Interview excessively long overall (up to 18 or 19 minutes with part 1 either exceeding 6 minutes or lasting for less than 2 minutes at times). More commonly, the candidates' presentations ran on too long, thus reducing time available for interaction. Candidates should be trained to know how much they can say in 4 minutes; and if they over-run, teachers can and should interrupt.

**Suitability of photographs:** Most of the visual stimuli submitted with recordings were suitable, in that they were (a) photographs, (b) in colour, and (c) fairly clearly related to the chosen Topic. A small but noticeable minority were 'iconic' - e.g. a photograph of a stethoscope, which clearly indicated 'Health' but which provided no opportunity for detailed description or varied interpretation. The Subject Guide clearly specifies that photographs should contain plenty of 'graphic text', i.e. be rich in detail.

**Suitability of captions:** Most photographs were accompanied by a suitably thought-provoking caption. However, a few simply stated the Option and aspect concerned. Similarly, while the majority of captions were suitably stimulating, interesting, provocative (so as to awaken the candidate's interest), a few were rather laboured 'exam questions' or very long quotations that confused candidates at times.

**Presentations:** The majority of presentations about the stimulus photograph were quite well structured (providing a 'map' and using sequence markers effectively). In most cases, candidates explained their ideas at least competently. In a minority of cases, presentations were weak, due to either excessive description of unimportant details of the photograph, or to rambling, disorganised, unconvincing commentaries on the topic raised by the photograph.

**Teachers' question technique:** In general, most teachers asked clear, succinct and supportive questions, guiding the candidate's responses effectively. Weak question technique fell into two main groups: (i) bland, factual 'examination' type questions, either about the photograph or about details of the topic studied in class; or (ii) long, rambling, unfocused questions. If a teacher takes a minute to 'introduce' and ask a single question, that is a minute less for the candidate to demonstrate language competence.

**Teachers' handling of the interview:** The majority of teachers handled the interview as required by the Subject Guide, covering appropriate areas in appropriate ways. However, a number of flaws were apparent in a minority of cases:

- a few teachers focused the Part 2 interaction excessively on descriptive questions about the photograph. This may be fine to start the interaction, but it is necessary to move on to discuss the topic, in order to elicit 'complex ideas'.
- a very few teachers introduced a mandatory 'second topic' (presumably echoing the 'Part 3' of the old Language B course). This didn't necessarily harm, but it sometimes meant that discussion of the photo and the topic was pretty cursory. A second topic should only be introduced if discussion of the first topic has run out of steam.

**Linkage to target culture:** The instruction given in the Language B Subject Guide is that "The student describes the photograph and relates it to the option and the target culture(s)." (SL p.52; HL p.59). Such reference to the Anglophone target culture was absent from either the candidate's presentation or the interaction in Part 2, in the majority of recordings. Such absence of an element does not have impact directly on the marks awarded, but teachers are urged to encourage discussion of the target culture, since this is a fertile area for developing the 'complex ideas' required for high marks under Criterion B.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Higher Level

#### Criterion A: Productive skills

The vast majority of candidates were clearly able to maintain a coherent conversation with some fluency and an effective range of vocabulary and phrasing.

At the top of the range, candidates had the command of language to be able to express themselves correctly with easy informality in simple exchanges, but also with more precise, sophisticated phrasing when appropriate for challenging complex ideas.

In the middle of the range, insecurity with the language sometimes caused halting production, but it was usually evident that the underlying knowledge of the language was essentially sound, if across a restricted range.

The weakest performances were by candidates who displayed repeated errors in basics (*eg* weak agreement, erratic verb construction, confused use of prepositions, *etc*), along with marked L1 influence in phrasing and the use of 'false friends'. Significant problems of pronunciation were sometimes an added factor, although this was not always directly associated with weak command of the basics of the language.

#### Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Most candidates approached the presentation methodically, giving a usually brief description of the photograph and then moving on to a discussion of the caption and the related topics. Many centres seemed to have encouraged candidates to give a 'map' outlining the structure of the presentation, and to use thesis statements to highlight key points. The majority of candidates presented clear and sensible arguments, touching on complex ideas at least competently.

The best candidates related several elements of the photograph to key issues raised by the caption, and expanded outwards from these effectively. In the interaction phase, such candidates responded actively and in detail to stimulating questioning.

Weaker candidates either got stuck on a tediously detailed description of the photograph - or rolled out masses of undigested ideas from classroom discussions, sometimes little related to the actual point of the photograph/caption. Such candidates need to be encouraged to use the preparation time more effectively, in order to focus their ideas more efficiently. In the

interaction phase, even weaker candidates usually managed to maintain a coherent conversation (helped at times by supportive questioning). There were few instances where the interaction broke down completely.

## **Standard Level**

### **Criterion A: Productive skills**

Most candidates were able to use a good command of language, maintaining fluency in both parts. The best candidates used a wide – at times sophisticated – range of vocabulary accurately with effective intonation patterns.

Many candidates in the middle of the range seemed to have sufficient resources to convey the message clearly with simple structures. It was when effective photographs were chosen, such candidates were able to produce a varied range of vocabulary although errors in different structures and hesitations remained noticeable.

Weaker candidates struggled with language and displayed laboured hesitation, many basic errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses/forms, singular/plural forms among others. In few cases, intonation and L1 influence seriously hampered communication.

### **Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills**

The majority of candidates were able to maintain a coherent conversation and express ideas and opinions clearly and at times effectively. Although few candidates were able to clearly map their presentations, the majority were able to succinctly describe the photo and link it to the option and topic under discussion.

Better able candidates provided complex ideas that went beyond the photo boundaries (in Part 1) and the teacher's questions (in Part 2), while being prompt and active throughout. Many candidates in the middle of the range were able to grasp the real point of the question although needed to be prompted by teachers to provide lucid explanations and examples.

Weaker candidates, however, provided factual and at times redundant responses and went off at times on vague tangents. It is worth mentioning that some teachers' questions focused on factual knowledge which prevented few candidates from remaining active although they seemed prepared to give more than simple basic responses.

## **Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

**Handling of interview procedure:** Teachers should pay close attention to the section "Teachers' handling of the interview" (above, under 'The range and suitability of the work submitted'), and ensure that they avoid the flaws there described.

**Linkage to target culture:** Teachers should aim to include discussion of the target culture in the individual interview, as noted under 'The range and suitability'.

**Marking standards:** As noted in previous years, teachers should:-

- mark the Interactive Oral Activities by the same standards as for the Individual Oral - significant differences between the two marks entered on form 2/BIA need to be justified in some detail
- where more than one teacher is involved in Internal Assessment Oral, make every effort to ensure that marking is standardised, through discussion, cross-marking, *etc.*

## Higher level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

### General comments

As noticed in previous sessions, it seems that candidates enjoy the task and some of the written assignments submitted for assessment were insightful, convincing and quite creative while remaining true to the literary work.

Examiners reported that they were generally satisfied with the administration of the written assignment. There has been a decrease in the number of teacher-set tasks and most candidates seemed to be aware of at least one of the requirements of the rationale. Examiners also noticed a decrease in the cases that did not adhere to word-limit prescription. Still, some candidate either failed to produce 500 words or exceeded the stipulated 600. Teachers are therefore asked to share the assessment criteria and the penalties incurred should the candidate fail to adhere to the word limit with their students. Candidates are also advised to provide separate and accurate word counts for task and rationale.

A few candidates resorted to copying sections from the literary work(s) verbatim, and in some of those cases, the copied sections were integrated convincingly into the body of the assignment. In others, however, those large chunks detracted from the authenticity of the piece. Teachers are to ensure that verbatim copying is kept to a minimum and is used only when it is absolutely necessary to do so.

Some examiners reported the use of works in translation. Please note that using works in translation is not permitted, for English B should help students develop international-mindedness through exposure to Anglophone culture(s) and its (their) literature as a manifestation of this (those) culture(s).

**Please remember that the written assignment has undergone review. The changes – effective as of May 2015 – are available on the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC).**

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, the success of the written assignment very often depended on the suitability of the literary work on which it was based, and the understanding and insight of its message and the characters. There were very few really poor assignments, but also very few really excellent examples of creative writing, using the text as point of departure.

Most candidates seemed to be aware of the aims and requirements of the written assignment. The difficulty remains in producing a rationale that included all the aspects specified in the Language B guide while remaining pertinent and concise.

Creativity and connection with the literary work were shown in a number of ways, especially in the aims candidates provided for their tasks and how those aims were achieved. New endings or extra chapters inserted into the storyline generally did not work well. Diary entries were successful if the tone and style of the text clearly supported the notion of personal reflection, and not just a narrative that became a summary of events. Letters and articles worked well in most cases.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Language

Most candidates showed an effective command of language in spite of inaccuracies. Very few candidates presented texts that were inaccessible because of poor language proficiency. Even if the command of language was just adequate, the message was still conveyed. The level of language used in the assignments ranged from adequate to effective, with very few cases that were deemed incoherent. Vocabulary was mostly varied and used accurately, and complex structures were effectively used in many assignments; consequently, candidates gained high marks in this criterion. There were, however, frequent errors in the use of narrative tenses, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, and phrasal verbs.

As in May 2013, linguistic appropriacy was often an issue, especially when candidates either failed to mention they were emulating the style of an author/character or provide examples of that style in their rationales. Please note that the use of cockney or very simple sentences/basic vocabulary, when explained in the rationale and linked to the literary work, is not penalised. If such use is not mentioned in the rationale, only the criterion's descriptors are taken into consideration when assessing the task.

### Criterion B: Content

Most candidates effectively and clearly organized their work and evidence of skilful planning was demonstrated. The most successful candidates related their task specifically to their chosen aspect of the literary work, using details from that text; less successful approaches involved using the theme of a literary work or one of its character's traits as a springboard to produce an assignment that is hardly linked to the literary work.

In some cases, candidates decided to change the ending of a literary work because they were not satisfied with the original ending. In other cases, candidates decided to base their

assignments on what they wished some of the characters would do, for example, a speech by Boxer in *Animal Farm* that aims at inciting a second revolution. Those were generally unsuccessful as they demonstrated lack of understanding of the literary work, its message and the role(s) characters play.

Few candidates scored low in Criterion B, but this was because the criterion's descriptors combine organization of the assignment and use of the literary work. The descriptor focusing on organization usually pulled the weaker candidates up to a higher level. However, the most common reasons for candidates to score low in organization was lack of development and repetition of ideas.

### Criterion C: Format

Most candidates scored 3 or 4 marks in this criterion. The few who scored below 3 out of 4 did so because there were features of several text types in their writing. For example, a diary entry that lacked reflection or a newspaper article that read like a news report. Texts that were longer than 600 words often had an influence on the mark, especially where the ending of a letter or a speech was not taken into account when determining how convincing the text type had been.

Suitability of text type to task was an issue. Some text types do not lend themselves effectively to achieving the aims stated in the rationale. For example, a news report is hardly suitable when aiming to explore the innermost feelings of a character. Therefore, candidates who did not score well in Criterion C generally chose a text type they mastered without giving much thought to the communicative purpose of their chosen text type or how that text type would help them achieve their stated aim.

In some cases, candidates specified a certain text type in the rationale and produced another. Examiners were instructed to assess the produced, rather than the specified, text type. In such cases, candidates lost marks from Criterion D for lack of clarity.

### Criterion D: Rationale

Similar to May 2013, the rationale was not well executed. Very few candidates displayed the necessary language proficiency to write a rationale of 150 words that was "clear, pertinent and directly linked to the literary work". Most candidates were clear on the text type they wanted to use and the reason why they have selected that text type. However, their aims were not always clear or related to the literary work. Most candidates were able to explain how they were going to achieve their aim(s) and made the necessary link between the aim(s) and the selected aspect from the literary work. Few candidates introduced the literary work or provided a brief summary of the part in the literary work that they were going to address. The most successful rationales justified the choice of text type in terms of how it would help in achieving the stated aim(s) or why a particular style was chosen in relation to the literary work.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should ensure that their students are aware of the requirements of the rationale. The **revised** written assignment specifies that in 150-250 words, the rationale should introduce the assignment and include:

- a brief introduction to the literary text(s)
- an explanation of how the task is linked to the literary text(s)- this should not be general; specific links between task and work should be explained in some detail
- the student's intended aim(s)
- explanation of how the student intends to achieve his or her aim(s)—choice of text types, audience, register, style and so on.

As of May 2015, a formal (literary) essay is not an acceptable text type for the written assignment. In addition, written assignments must be word-processed, not handwritten.

Teachers should advise candidates to choose a text type that will help them achieve their aim(s). In their assignments, candidates should:

- develop the ideas presented in the rationale
- use a range of language appropriate to text type and communicative purpose
- create a piece of writing that is connected to the literary text(s).

Teachers should advise candidates to choose a specific focus, one that is neither too broad nor too narrow, for their assignments; and to use this focus to demonstrate understanding of the literary work.

Teachers should warn candidates about the dangers of verbatim copying from the literary work and advise them clearly to indicate where the copied parts appear.

Candidates should focus on contextualizing their writing, for this would greatly enhance their written work and aid them to write and organize their points effectively.



## Standard level written assignment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

### General comments

This is the last May session of the Written Assignment in its present form and so some of the comments below will not apply next year. However, many of the general principles will remain the same. Teachers are asked to follow the instructions published in the new Language B Guide (first examinations 2015), available on the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) very carefully.

This session, as last year, there were some very impressive answers. These showed strong skills in understanding and selecting ideas and information from the source texts and using them in a convincing and realistic task. The topics of the source texts were generally appropriate even if not all the texts themselves were suitable. These topics included environmental issues, race relations, sex discrimination, and aspects of information technology such as internet addiction, cyberbullying and privacy settings on Facebook.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

#### The source texts

As in previous sessions, most of the administrative issues were in this area. Typical problems were:

- Some source texts were not in English and sometimes only two source texts were submitted.
- One examiner reported that 40% of his scripts had no printed sources. Sometimes a given web address turned out to be an article of several pages with no indication of what part the candidate had used.
- In some cases one of the texts was almost impossible for the candidate to use due to its length, complexity or suitability.
- The texts were not on a core topic.

The three texts must be usable, which means they must be relevant, clear and of the correct length. If the sources provided some clear ideas, then candidates easily used them in their writing. The language used in the texts should be correct English, which many internet texts

are not. It was often hard for the candidate to use all three texts well. One examiner commented, 'Some tasks were not really creative, but this was probably because of the 'poor' source texts, some of which just include factual information and are not really motivating for candidates.'

### Copying the source texts

As in previous sessions some candidates copied sentences from the source texts without acknowledging them. Significant copying is not acceptable. In these cases, the copied sections are not included in the word count and the script is penalised if it then does not reach the minimum limit.

The Guide is clear: 'The student should use the information from the sources to form a new text without copying.' Using individual words from the sources is a sensible strategy especially in the case of lexis specific to the topic, but copying whole sentences is not permitted.

Copied sentences must be acknowledged by the use of quotation marks and by some phrase such as 'As Text A says...'. Such quotation is normal practice but it should not be overused.

### Choice of text type

**The diary and the essay.** Although they are permitted, these are often not appropriate since they are difficult to contextualise convincingly. A diary is usually read only by the writer, and the essay is usually a pedagogic exercise to be read only by the teacher. It is therefore hard to assign realistic aims to these text types.

**Summary and analysis of the sources.** This is inappropriate because it cannot be given an aim or be situated in a realistic context. Such tasks will not score highly against Criterion B.

Examples of appropriate choices are a speech in which the candidate persuades the audience to take a specific action or a blog in which the writer makes readers aware of a particular issue.

### Academic honesty

As with any work that is not carried out under strict examination conditions, there is regrettably scope for plagiarism, and teachers must remain vigilant throughout the writing process.

### Word limits

Lower - A one-mark penalty in Criterion A was applied to all answers under 300 words. Whenever the examiner thinks that the answer may be short, the words are counted.

Upper - Some candidates exceeded the upper word limit, and the part of the text over the 400-word limit was not taken into account by the examiners when awarding marks in Criteria A, B and C.

## Rationale

The recommended length is 100 words. However, there are no penalties for being below or above this figure and the whole rationale is read and taken into account when marks are awarded.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Language

Examiners noted that most candidates did well. One examiner noted 'The few who scored lower than the highest band did so because of grammar errors usually of subject verb agreement, tenses and incorrect sentence structure.' Some inaccuracies are permitted in the highest band of 7-8, and thus high marks are to be expected.

The choice of vocabulary was usually effective, and it is a sensible technique for candidates to use relevant lexis (but not whole sentences) from the source texts.

The third requirement in this criterion is clarity of language. All candidates should read through their work before submitting it and make sure they change any sections in which the meaning is obscure.

### Criterion B: Content

This criterion caused the most problems. It involves effective use of the sources and is linked to the rationale as it assesses how well the aims have been achieved.

**Use of source texts:** As in previous sessions, this discriminated the strong and the weak candidates, and the use of sources seems to be the most difficult aspect of the Written Assignment. The synthesis of information from different sources proved difficult as some teachers chose sources which were unrelated and lacked a common subject. The choice of the source texts is at the core of this component so the chosen texts should be assessed for their complexity, length, and information in relation to the subject area and to the other sources.

Many candidates used only two texts and this was accepted as long as they were skilfully used. However, it is easier to achieve the highest band if the ideas, information and attitudes are taken from all three texts.

**Fulfilment of aims:** This was fairly well done and was best achieved when the aims were clearly stated in the rationale.

**Organisation:** Most examiners commented that the organisation was effective. Generally, the progression of ideas was logical and evident. The use of discourse markers and paragraphing differentiated the better candidates from the average.

It is good practice for candidates to leave a blank line between paragraphs.

### Criterion C: Format

This report has explained how the essay, diary entry and analysis/summary are not appropriate text types for this task. One examiner wrote, 'At times the choice of text type was rather unnatural in combination with the subject and sources. For example, choosing a diary entry to talk about statistics is not a very successful decision.'

Having said this, the text types, including those chosen inappropriately, were generally realised well. However, sometimes a text type began and ended convincingly but became neutral in style and register in the middle.

Emails were convincingly realised but some blogs were difficult to recognise. Blogs are not easy to produce convincingly, and therefore some effort must be made to contextualise them. This might be done, for example, by addressing the readers directly and by referring to earlier posts in the blog.

Note that from May 2015 onwards, a requirement in Criterion A is '*How appropriate is the choice of text type to the task?*'

### Criterion D: Rationale

There was an improvement in the rationale in this session and most candidates included the required elements.

However, as before, some candidates had not been given suitable guidance and simply talked about the topic without mentioning their aims. Average candidates covered the aims and choice of text type, but the use of source texts and how the aims were achieved were weak.

The rationale should appear before the task and be clearly separated from it. Some candidates gave no clear indication of where the rationale finished and the task began.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

For November 2014:

- Teachers should apply the recommendations already made in this report. They should also:
  - Choose three source texts of 300-400 words each. Check the English of these texts if they are from the internet and make sure that all three texts can actually be used by the candidate.
  - Advise candidates not to use the essay, diary entry or summary/analysis for the task as these text types are difficult to contextualise convincingly.
  - Advise candidates that quotations from the sources should be identified with quotation marks.

For May 2015:

Please follow all the new instructions carefully and note:

- The rationale is longer (150-200 words) and must include:
  - The subject of the assignment
  - A brief description of each of the sources
  - The aims of the task
  - How the aims are achieved eg Choice of text type, how the register and style engage the audience *etc.*
- The source texts must be on one or more of the core topics.
- There must be three (minimum) or four (maximum) source texts, and one may be audio/audio-visual.
- The sources are chosen by the student (in consultation with the teacher).
- The sources must be referenced.

## Higher level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 11	12 - 23	24 - 31	32 - 39	40 - 46	47 - 54	55 - 60

### General comments

Many thanks to the 130 teachers who have taken the time to complete the G2 form. Teachers' comments and suggestions are found valuable by both paper setters and the Grade Award team, and are certainly taken into consideration during Grade Award.

Similar to May 2013, both teachers and examiners thought that, in general, the paper was of a similar standard to that of May 2013, and some thought it was a little more demanding. Teachers thought that the texts chosen were interesting, accessible to candidates and covered a range of Anglophone cultures. Many teachers thought the texts were longer and more demanding than those of previous sessions; however, this perceived difficulty was not reflected in candidates' marks. In addition, approximately 90% of the teachers who completed

the G2 forms rated the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper either good, very good or excellent. Few teachers deemed the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper poor.

When compared to previous sessions, fewer candidates failed to write their answers in the spaces provided this May, but the problem still exists. Please continue to advise candidates to write their answers inside the boxes provided on the Questions & Answers booklet.

## **The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates**

A number of candidates had difficulty in handling questions that demanded understanding of the whole text or the author's purpose. Surprisingly, Q10 posed a problem for less able candidates who gave B or C instead of D as the answer. Another problematic area was ability to infer meaning from the text, a skill that is required at higher level.

Many examiners commented on the difficulty some candidates still find in the True/False with justification questions. The commonest cause of a zero mark remains the failure to follow both parts of the rubric, which requires the correct 'tick' and a quotation that is precise and concise. The rubric requires that the quotation be brief; however, it still has to convey the exact reason why the statement was deemed true or false: the full justification. In other words, all parts of the statement must be justified. For example, 'the paving of the road' in Q12 was required to justify 'the new road surface'. Similarly, 'Mankind' was required for 'human beings' in Q14.

Examiners also reported that only a small number of candidates gave the correct answer for Qs 43 and 44 because they required understanding of the paragraph and ability to link this understanding to its opposite, the myth. Those questions acted as discriminators and similar questions should be expected every year at higher level.

## **The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared**

Examiners mentioned that the examination paper did not present major problems for the majority of candidates: the average candidate was generally successful in selecting and handling the information needed across the full range of question types in the five texts. Some examiners felt that candidates needed better preparation for questions that required close reading, understanding the meaning of a word or an expression in context, and inference.

Most candidates were able to manage their time properly; few questions were left unanswered. Furthermore, candidates seemed more proficient when dealing with a literary text, for a good number of candidates showed understanding of idiomatic expressions.

## **The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions**

Questions 1-5: Very few candidates answered any of these questions wrong, and the mistakes ranged from copying the whole sentence "I was a bump... manoeuvred into place" (sisters included) in Q1, providing 'chased and skidded' instead of 'squealed and shrieked' in

Q3, adding 'the table was moved aside' in Q4, and forgetting the burn or mentioning only the burn in Q5.

Questions 6-9: These were mostly answered correctly, with Q6 posing some problems to candidates, who gave I instead of J as the answer.

Question 10 was deemed an easy question by the awarding team. Few candidates, surprisingly, gave either B or C instead of D as the answer.

Questions 11-16: This set was somewhat demanding with Qs 12, 14 and 15 proving to be a little more demanding than the others: some candidates missed 'hardly' in Q12 and consequently ticked the wrong box; some did not include 'Mankind', 'ecological imbalance' or 'destructive potential' in Q14, while others forgot to include 'our encroachment' and 'in a variety of forms' in Q15.

Questions 17-22: Good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with this set. Qs 17, 18 and 21 seemed to be the most challenging in the set; 'partially' and 'given', in particular, appear to have confused some candidates.

Questions 22-23: These questions were accessible to most candidates; a few candidates provided B and C respectively for 22 and 23.

Questions 20-24: Average to good candidates found little difficulty in this set. Q27 seemed to be the most demanding in the set. In Q25, some candidates copied the whole sentence 'Miss Bailey... listening', while others provided 'she was still an invalid' OR 'her baby was born dead' as one of the required phrases for Q27.

Questions 28-32: The set was generally accessible to most candidates. Some, however, missed 'comfortably off' in the text and provided either B or D as the answer to Q32. In many cases, all options except D were used in Q31.

Questions 33-37: These proved to be accessible for a good number of candidates. Some lost the mark for Q35 because they wrote 'the Clarks' while others forgot 'her' in Q36. The most common cause for losing the mark in Q37 was either missing 'members' or 'the Ladies' Aid'.

Questions 38-42: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with these questions. Candidates sometimes provided paraphrases for Q38. In Q39, a few candidates missed 'build' in 'build better relationships' while others provided either 'healthier' or 'more satisfying' life instead of both.

Questions 43-44: These seemed to be the most demanding questions in the paper. Many candidates provided one correct 'myth' while others did not seem to comprehend that what was required was the opposite of what was mentioned in the paragraph.

Questions 45-47: The set proved to be somewhat difficult. Candidates sometimes provided 'immediately' or 'inadequately' as the answer to Q46 and lost marks for at least 2 of the 3 questions.

Question 48: Good candidates found little difficulty in this set. A number of candidates got all 5 true statements correct, but the majority missed either one or two, with B and H proving to be the most elusive.

Questions 49-52: These were answered correctly by the majority of candidates with the exception of Q51, which proved elusive even to the most capable ones.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be taught how to handle the True/False with justification questions: a tick is required, all parts of the statement must be justified, and the crucial words in the quotation used to justify a true or a false statement must not be omitted.

Teachers are advised to educate candidates how to determine the effect of context on meaning. This will help prepare them for reference, vocabulary and gap filling exercises.

Teachers should emphasise the importance of judicious consideration of the requirements of each question to determine when a problem could result from providing as an answer either too many words or too few. Where “one” detail is required, a candidate who gives more than one runs the risk of losing the mark: even if one answer is correct, if there is also an incorrect response, no mark will be awarded.

Candidates should be warned against providing multiple answers for short-answer questions (and in rare cases for multiple-choice questions!); this does not demonstrate understanding of the question and is therefore not awarded the mark.

Candidates should be made aware of the importance of writing their answers in the boxes provided. When an answer is written outside the box, the candidate must indicate where the answer appears (for example, ‘please see attached paper’).

Handwriting remains a serious problem. Teachers should advise candidates to pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses. Furthermore, in questions where a letter is required, candidates **MUST** write their answer clearly, for unclear answers will **NOT** be awarded the mark. Among ambiguous answers were C/G, E/F, E/L, I/J and A/D. In addition, teachers should warn candidates against failure to cross out clearly anything they do not wish to be marked.



## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 22	23 - 27	28 - 32	33 - 37	38 - 45

### General comments

The four texts were varied in content and style, and in general the candidates engaged with them well. 29 teachers completed the G2 forms this session. Although the number of responses is good compared with the 10 received in May 2013, there are over 250 centres registered for English B SL, and so more feedback would be very welcome in the next session. The tendency is to complete a G2 to comment on some difficulty, and this is important. However, do also complete G2s to give feedback on texts that were particularly appropriate and on questions which worked well, as this is also useful. Teachers' feedback is essential in awarding the grades and in setting future papers, and so many thanks go to all those who submitted their comments this session.

28 of the 29 respondents said that the level of difficulty was appropriate. 22 felt that the level of difficulty was the same as last year, with 3 saying it was easier and 4 more difficult.

The paper was felt by the examiners to be slightly more demanding than last year as the markscheme required certain essential words in some answers, and this was taken into account when determining the grade boundaries.

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Examiners mentioned the True/False with justification questions (33 to 36) as the type which posed most problems. For example, the justification in Q35 was difficult to identify exactly. There are several decisions that candidates have to take when answering each of these questions, and it is easy to write the correct justification and tick the wrong T/F box or vice versa.

Nearly all examiners commented on the strategy for answering questions asking for a phrase. The phrase required is usually short and is never a complete sentence. An example is Q15 where the answer was 'blended learning'. Longer phrases such as 'to incorporate technology into the classroom through blended learning' were not accepted.

However, sometimes the shortest answer is not sufficient. For example, in Q8 the answer is 'reasonable travel expenses'. 'Travel expenses' alone was not accepted as it did not fully answer the question. Similarly in Q17, the word 'museum' was necessary.

The traditional advice of 'Read the question carefully.' remains valid. For example in Q20, the inside of the rhino is the focus, so answers mentioning 'steel' and 'wire', which form the outer structure, are not correct.

To summarise, success in P1 depends on understanding the questions as well as on understanding the texts, and all question types should be practised in class.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The candidates engaged well with all four texts. Nearly all candidates finished the paper and few left answers blank. In general all the question types were tackled reasonably well. The ones mentioned in the previous section are cases where strategies can be improved but even in these the majority of candidates showed that they were at least familiar with the question types.

The vocabulary matching questions were done well and, in general, vocabulary questions did not pose problems.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1-3: Most candidates had at least 2 out of 3 correct. Many answered Q1 incorrectly putting G for B.

Questions 4-5: Average to strong candidates had both correct.

Question 6: Weaker candidates wrote, 'Should expect to do full days in the field' probably because this was in the same sentence as the correct information.

Question 7: Of little difficulty to all candidates.

Question 8: The word 'reasonable' was required. Even some strong candidates did not provide this.

Question 9: Only weak candidates found this question difficult.

Questions 10-14: This series was of easy to medium difficulty level, except Q13 which was difficult. Many candidates put D instead of I, and, though incorrect, this did show logical thinking. Candidates must consider the meaning of the word in the particular context of the text when choosing the matching word.

Question 15: This question was difficult since only the phrase 'blended learning' was accepted. Many candidates gave the longer phrase 'to incorporate...learning'.

Question 16: This question did not generally pose difficulties.

Question 17: Even good candidates found this difficult since 'museum' had to be given. References to 'geography' or 'countries', which are mentioned in the same sentence, were not accepted since the geography students are not necessarily in isolated schools.

Question 18: Average to good candidates handled this well. 'Students studying geography' or similar words, had to be given for the mark. This is an example of a question where specific information is necessary.

Question 19: This question was of medium difficulty.

Question 20: Weaker candidates found this difficult. The question asks about the inside of the rhino so 'plastic (rubbish)' was the only correct answer.

Question 21: Most candidates answered this question correctly. Weaker ones gave too much information.

Question 22: Two answers were accepted, 'sensitizing the public' and 'send a loud message to everyone (including the authorities)'. Many candidates added extra words to these phrases and so lost the mark.

Question 23: Most candidates answered correctly. Some gave two dangers, which is inadvisable as if one is wrong, the mark is not awarded.

Questions 24-27: Most candidates answered this set well.

Questions 28-30: Most candidates answered correctly though some did not understand 'inheritance'. Both 'birth right' and '(national) heritage' were accepted for Q30.

Question 31: Average candidates scored 2/3 here.

Question 32: Only good candidates answered this correctly.

Questions 33-36: The True/False with justification set caused many problems, and Q35 was particularly difficult.

Questions 37-38: Strong and some average candidates answered both correctly.

Questions 39-42: Not a difficult set and some average candidates scored 3/4.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Above all, practise the different question types with candidates so that they are familiar with the strategies for answering them. This applies particularly to True/False with justification and the grammar reference questions.
- Candidates should attempt every question. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers, and so it does not make sense to leave an answer blank.

- Candidates should read the question carefully. An example is Q8 where the word 'reasonable' was needed for the mark.
- Remind candidates that if one item is asked for, they should give only one item. If a second is given, and it is wrong, the mark is not awarded.
- Teach candidates that when a phrase from the text is required, it is usually short and should be no more or less than the meaning given in the question. For eg in Q15, the meaning is 'a mixture of technology and classroom teaching'. The answer must be a noun and is 'blended learning'. 'To incorporate technology into the classroom through blended learning' is therefore not correct. The same principle applies to Q22.
- Whole sentences are not needed in the short answers. So for Q4, 'How many days a week will a volunteer work?', it is not necessary to write 'A volunteer will work for one day a week.' 'One' or 'One day a week' is sufficient.
- Please urge candidates to make their answer clear. For answers requiring a letter in a box, candidates should never create a mixture of two letters, for eg letters E and F, or with A and D. If the examiner is not able to read the answer clearly, marks cannot be awarded.
- If the letter is outside but next to the box, it must be clear. If it is on a separate sheet, this must be indicated (for example, "please see attached paper").
- Use of three dots (...) to indicate omitted words should be avoided. The required quotations in the True/False with justification questions are never long, and if vital information is not stated but is merely represented by the three dots, the mark is not given.
- Candidates should not underline parts of their answer. This is never necessary and can lead to a loss of marks if it is not clear what the intended answers are.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 39	40 - 45

### General comments

Many thanks to the 130 teachers who took the time to complete the G2 form. Teachers' comments and suggestions are invaluable for both the Grade Awarding process and for future

exam paper setting, so more teachers are encouraged to return these via the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) in future sessions.

Overall performance in this session was similar to the level observed in the M13 session. Most candidates handled their chosen task at least competently: usually, text types were clearly recognisable, and the specific requirements of the question were covered reasonably methodically. Command of the language was effective in most cases; while there was much evidence of minor slips and flaws in details of grammar and phrasing, meaning was normally clear enough.

However, there were weaknesses that need to be corrected, as summarised under “Areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates” and “Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates”.

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

### Section A

**Clear and coherent logical argument:** Weaknesses in this area were apparent in question 5, the speech about experiments involving animals, and in Section B. In both tasks, there was a tendency to make blunt assertions which were not explained or developed or argued in any detail. When such assertions were followed up by supporting examples, the linkage between these and the assertions was often left merely implicit or simply vague. Very often, there seemed to be no methodical sequence to the ideas put forward, with abrupt jumps between unrelated ideas. All of this suggests that the planning of argument needs to be taught more specifically and emphatically.

### Section B

**The ‘Text Type’ Issue:** A significant number of candidates wasted time and space, and thus marks, in establishing the text type chosen for the personal response. Typically, up to half of the available word-count was about context (eg irrelevant chat to show that ‘this is an e-mail’), leaving the other half as merely a thin and sketchy attempt at the ‘reasoned argument’ required. See further comments under Section B, below.

**The ‘Reasoned Argument’ Issue:** The problems of ‘Clear and coherent logical argument’ mentioned under Section A, above, also applied to responses to the stimulus. The majority of scripts tended to consist of simple assertions, little developed, poorly explained and weakly organised..

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

### Section A

**General handling of text types:** In general, the vast majority of candidates produced scripts which were quite clearly of the required text type. For example, for question 3, most

responses had appropriate address and an appropriate style for the teenage audience specified; very few read as standard, 'flat' essays. In short, the essential conventions of the text types had been well taught.

**General command of language:** As reported in May 2013, the vast majority of scripts showed at least a competent command of the language; ideas were communicated reasonably clearly, despite flaws in details of grammar. The better candidates often displayed a sophisticated range of vocabulary and phrasing, authentically expressed, with perhaps a few slips in usage or influences of the L1 language.

## Section B

**Relevance to the stimulus:** - Concern was expressed about this in the May 2013 Subject Report; it is pleasing to note that in this session most candidates evidently understood the main thrust of the stimulus, and developed arguments which were (more or less) relevant.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### Section A

The article about teenagers and appearance (Q3) was much the most popular, followed fairly closely by the speech on animal experiments (Q5). The article perhaps appealed to direct experience and understanding of the teenage world; while the speech most probably linked to issues discussed in science classes or TOK. Questions 1 and 4 were the least popular. The lack of popularity of the blog about imposing similar festivals (Q1), and the email about sport as not a leisure activity (Q4), might be because in both cases the basic proposition was a bit unconventional.

### Question 1: Cultural diversity – Blog entry

This proved to be a slightly tricky task for the candidates, and was not particularly popular. The majority of candidates, correctly enough, focused on discussing the viability of the proposal to impose standardised festivals. Most candidates were critical of the idea, arguing that it was both impractical and undesirable. A few candidates attempted to consider the issue underlying the task - the value of festivals in social and cultural terms, and so the significance of cultural diversity. Unfortunately, such responses often wandered off into generalities, and ignored the explicit task.

The text type was handled quite well by perhaps half of the candidates, using direct address to one's 'loyal followers', adopting a gently provocative style to arouse interest, and encouraging 'Comments' at the end.

### Question 2: Customs and traditions – Review

Specifying the text type as a 'review' appears to have caused a degree of uncertainty among candidates. A 'review' is normally concerned with evaluating anything that might be seen as an art form (from poetry to cooking), whereas the task here involved writing about an event,

which might normally be seen as requiring a descriptive or informative 'article'. This uncertainty was reflected in the very wide range of treatments submitted, from detailed descriptions of the cultural elements on offer in the Culture Day through to critical evaluation of the organisation or even the very purpose of the Day.

In fact the relatively few scripts which attempted the 'evaluation' approach were usually more coherent and effective than those which simply described a range of rather stereotypical 'traditions'. The latter left an impression that such customs were simply 'fun' (and politically correct), without giving indications of having thought about why customs and traditions might be important.

### Question 3: Health – Article

This was much the most popular task, presumably because the subject matter was familiar to many candidates, both from personal experience and perhaps from class discussions. The task was generally well covered: the two required elements, 'reasons' and 'solutions', were almost always at least attempted, although a minority of scripts had only a hasty or sketchy treatment of one of the elements. Candidates should be taught that a balanced treatment of required elements is highly advisable, since too little attention to one element will lose marks under 'development of ideas'.

The text type was generally handled well. Most scripts had a title, as well as introduction and conclusion which attempted to be interesting and vivid. Most candidates made effective efforts to achieve a lively and attractive address to the target audience of teenagers, based on a direct and personal style.

### Question 4: Leisure – E-mail

Most candidates discussed the issues raised by the stimulus quote in ways that were at least relevant and reasonably clear. The vast majority rejected the limitation of sport for leisure purposes, proposing that 'leisure sport' has many benefits in terms of physical and psychological health, and social relationships. Candidates drew effectively on ideas presumably drawn from class studies under the 'Leisure' Option, and on personal experience. While there were often many useful ideas presented, these were sometimes poorly structured and linked in overall terms. It may be that the 'email' text type encourages relaxed, informal communication, but serious topics need to be dealt with lucidly.

### Question 5: Science and technology – Speech

This task was quite popular, probably because candidates were to some extent informed about the issue of testing on animals from their studies in the sciences. The text type was generally quite well handled, with a sense of address to the audience reasonably apparent throughout, and competent use of rhetorical devices such as questions.

However, the arguments presented were often poorly organised overall, and inadequately argued in detail. There was much repetition of how horrible it is to see animals suffer, but this 'aesthetic' reaction was rarely linked to a solid and coherent set of arguments based on moral principles, or even scientific validity. In short, there was much dogmatic assertion and

relatively little lucid and convincing argument. In part, this may have been because of lack of solid factual knowledge. For instance, the assertion that "it must be possible to replace experiments on animals with other sorts of experiments" was rarely, if ever, backed up by explanation of which kinds of experiment. Factual information as such is not assessed in this paper, but tasks which require lucid argument need either solid support or a sound handling of convincing logic (and preferably both) - in many cases, candidates displayed neither.

## Section B

The stimulus was perhaps slightly complex, in that it contained three concepts or elements: (i) 'news is unreliable', because (ii) 'people manipulate the news for their own ends', or (iii) 'the news is adapted to what the audience wants'. Almost all candidates grasped element (i); many also grasped element (ii); but relatively few addressed element (iii). However, candidates could receive high marks provided they addressed two out of the three elements.

Concern was expressed in the May 2013 session that candidates made insufficient reference to the stimulus, and it was pleasing that this was not an issue this session. However, teachers should discourage candidates from copying out the stimulus verbatim as this simply wasted 28 of the restricted number of words available.

Many candidates lost marks through faulty approaches in one or both of the following areas:

- **The 'Text Type' Issue:** There appeared to be an increase, compared with last year, in the number of candidates who wasted words on 'establishing the text type', eg chatty, irrelevant introductions to show that 'this is an e-mail', or lengthy formal address to an audience to show that 'this is a speech'. Since no marks are available in Section B for the handling of the text type, such 'establishing' often rendered up to one third of the script irrelevant for marking purposes.
- **The 'Reasoned Argument' Issue:** The problems of 'Clear and coherent logical argument' mentioned under Section A in "Areas of the programme and examination which candidates found difficult", above, also applied to responses to the stimulus in Section B. The majority of scripts tended to consist of simple assertions, little developed, poorly explained and weakly organised. This kind of approach is not the 'reasoned argument' that the Subject Guide explicitly requires (p.41).

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

On the basis of performance in this session's Paper 2, teachers are advised to pay particular attention to the following areas:

### Section A

An emphasis is required on:

- practising the handling of argument (see comments under Q5 Speech).



- improving the planning of written work (this applies to both Sections).

## Section B

More, and better, preparation is required for this actually quite demanding task. Candidates should be strongly encouraged to:

- avoid devoting any words to 'establishing the text type'.
- concentrate on writing a 'reasoned argument', which means that they should:
  - think critically about the central issue.
  - link methodically and clearly the key points of their ideas.

Both sections

**The Word Count Issue:** the new Paper 2 format introduced in May 2013 has resulted in the disappearance of over-written, rambling, repetitive and disorganised scripts, which seemed to mistake quantity for quality. However, a minority of candidates now appear to have adopted the reverse flaw, in that they write the absolute minimum number of words, meticulously corrected (it seems). This often results in lower marks under Criterion B, since relevant ideas are mentioned but not developed or explained adequately. In a few particular cases, it may be wise to advise weaker candidates to write the minimum, carefully, but in general teachers should advise candidates to make full use of the words available, in order to develop and explain thoroughly.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

### General comments

There has been an increase in the number of teachers who completed the G2 Form on the OCC, and the International Baccalaureate would like to thank them for taking the time to do so. Approximately 58% of the respondents considered the paper of a similar standard to that of May 2013, while 31% deemed it a little more difficult. Clarity of wording and the presentation of the paper were considered good to excellent by the majority of teachers who completed the form. All teachers are highly encouraged to submit their comments and brief explanations, which are invaluable to both the paper setters and the Grade Award team.

Overall, performance was sound. At the top end of the range, there were some intelligent responses that presented ideas in a coherent and developed manner with very few significant errors in both simple and basic structures. At the bottom end, there were some candidates whose errors in basic structures obscured meaning or who failed to understand what the question required.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Language

Examiners reported that the majority of candidates were of the proficiency expected at Standard Level. As regularly noted, there continue to be recurrent basic errors in subject-verb agreement, awkward structures resulting from L1 interference, verb tenses and verb or word forms among others. Weakness in sentence structures was strongly observed this session as many candidates tended to produce the run-on sentence which continues for half a page or more through a long series of commas. Better able candidates, however, were able to produce complex structures clearly and use a wide range of vocabulary both accurately and effectively.

As in the previous session, very few candidates failed to meet the lower limit of 250 words, and thus a penalty was applied in Criterion A as stipulated in the Subject Guide. When in doubt, examiners actually counted the words, and so candidates are reminded again to make sure that they do not fall short of the limit by a few words.

### Criterion B: Message

The content was generally relevant, and it was the development of ideas and the overall organisation that again distinguished the better answers. Many examiners commented that "...ideas were poorly linked" or "...there was no logical argument revealed", especially in questions 1, 3 and 4. This ability to produce coherent argument distinguished the best answers which developed ideas in separate paragraphs and supported each with specific points and examples rather than talking in general. What's more, just like in previous sessions, many candidates failed to use paragraphing, which affected the message communicated and thus resulted in lower marks in Criterion B.

### Criterion C: Format

Examiners commented that the vast majority of candidates produced the required text types appropriately, in terms of conventions, layout or register. It was only in few cases where a very patronizing and aggressive tone was used in question 4 or the set of Guidelines in question 5 and the blog entry in question 2 missed a title.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

All questions this session were attempted by candidates with questions 1 and 5 being the most popular, followed closely by questions 2 and 4. Question 3 was attempted by a good number of candidates but still by fewer candidates compared to the rest.

The popularity of question 1 (essay about different population groups enjoying different types of food) was probably due to the accessible text type required. However, it was unfortunate to see a large number of candidates missing the main thrust of the question, and thus producing an excellent coherent essay but is considered "partially relevant" or completely "irrelevant". Question 5, on the other hand, proved to be accessible to candidates due to the topic handled "social media" and the fact that candidates seemed to have been properly advised on how to write an effective and clear set of guidelines.

The partial popularity of question 3, however, seemed to be because candidates did not have anything to say about "banning toothpicks on restaurant tables" or how to develop concrete examples to support their opinion. However, the candidates who did attempt the question clearly enjoyed the task and produced intelligent and coherent articles that were quite engaging in nature.

### Question 1: Cultural diversity – Essay

The majority of candidates who attempted this question focused on cultural diversity in general or failed to express their ideas coherently. Some candidates identified two population groups and listed some food liked by each but with no apparent links made between them. Such general or irrelevant responses were marked down under "relevance" in Criterion B. It is highly likely that due to the text type being an essay, such candidates thought the question to be accessible ignoring the importance of message.

The very few good responses managed to explore different population groups (by age, gender or culture) and mentioned the types of food favoured by each while explaining their significance and reasons for this food diversity within the same city.

The majority of candidates used an appropriate register with a distinct introduction, development and conclusion. However, many candidates copied the main stimulus in the question and used it as a title. Only in few cases there seemed to be effective stylistic devices used to allow following the message easily.

### Question 2: Customs and traditions – Blog entry

Many candidates wrote well-mapped and authentic blog entries focusing on the custom observed and clearly explaining the reason for it. Weaker candidates were unable to provide the required description vs. explanation, and few ignored the reason for the custom. They went rambling about what they did while on holiday and presented disconnected ideas that had nothing to do with a 'strange custom' observed.

Some blog entries read like essays or articles with no awareness of the readers revealed. Better responses, however, provided an engaging title and used a lively interesting style to engage the audience or invite them to comment towards the end.

### Question 3: Health – Article

Despite the partial popularity of this question, examiners commented on some intelligent scripts in which candidates discussed the implications of the new law, expressing a clear

opinion either for, against or a balanced one. Examples provided were genuine and personal, and some candidates embedded interview quotations effectively into the article and using a clever satirical approach that was appropriate for or expected from such types of articles.

Weaker candidates basically rambled about toothpicks or failed to provide appropriate supporting details as they went repetitive. Almost all articles produced were accompanied with a relevant title and had a distinct introduction, development and conclusion. Only few candidates, however, adopted a lively style.

#### Question 4: Leisure – Letter to the Editor

A good number of candidates were too general about the topic without providing specific examples or supporting details pertinent to spending on cinema awards vs. charitable causes or ignored charity all together as they rambled about the importance of cinema awards/cinema in general, and thus were marked down under "relevance".

Good responses presented a clear opinion (whether this is for, against or a balanced one) with reference to the original editorial given and methodically supported that opinion with illustrations while maintaining focus on the money spent on cinema awards celebrations vs. charity. Almost all candidates were able to adopt the serious tone, appropriate register and engaging/lively style required to interest the reader.

#### Question 5: Science and technology – A set of guidelines

The majority of candidates managed to clearly explain the purpose of the guidelines and presented both harmful and useful aspects of social media accounts. They methodically and coherently listed points and provided useful suggestions to avoid the harm caused by such accounts. In some few cases, however, guidelines were totally irrelevant as they focused on how to create a Facebook or a Twitter account or included redundant details that weekend the flow of ideas.

It was apparent that candidates did not have a major problem writing a set of guidelines clearly and effectively. The majority of responses had a title and guidelines that were set out clearly through using bullets, sub-headings or numbering. Few scripts, however, failed to use an accessible and attractive style suitable for a teenage audience.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates are advised to:

- carefully read all parts of the question and underline the essential aspects.
- maintain a legible handwriting.
- use correct paragraphing and punctuation marks.

- avoid by any means writing the same response twice OR attempting two different questions without indicating if one of those is a draft. This may seriously place them at a disadvantage.

Teachers are advised to:

- frequently address significant grammar errors.
- practise with candidates how to develop ideas coherently and effectively.