May 2016 subject reports

English B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 14	15 – 29	30 – 44	45 – 59	60 – 71	72 – 85	86 – 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 13	14 – 29	30 – 46	47 – 60	61 – 72	73 – 86	87 – 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 12	13 – 17	18 – 21	22 – 26	27 – 30

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 12	13 – 17	18 – 21	22 – 26	27 – 30

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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 Individual Oral Interview procedure was handled correctly in most respects by most centres, although a very small minority of centres appeared not to have read the instructions in the Language B Guide, since there were errors in most elements.

Timing: Overall control of timing was generally correct, although a few centres continue to allow the interview to run over the maximum permitted time overall. Some candidates were allowed to give presentations which exceeded the 4 minutes maximum permitted. Teachers should step in and interrupt over-long presentations, so as not to deny candidates the full time for Part 2 in which to demonstrate interaction skills. It is worth mentioning that examiners are instructed to stop listening after 10 minutes.

Suitability of photographs: Most of the visual stimuli submitted with recordings were as required by the instructions in the Language B Guide. The commonest 'unsuitable' stimuli were (i) graphics, cartoons or drawings; (ii) collaged photographs; and (iii) multiple photographs, even up to six small images.

Suitability of captions: Most photographs were accompanied by a suitable caption. Captions that were 'unsuitable' were either (i) so short or simple that they gave the candidate no support; or (ii) excessively lengthy so as to complicate or limit the scope of the presentations. The best captions are those which express a provocative statement, or a rhetorical question.

Presentations: The majority of presentations about the stimulus photograph were reasonably clearly structured, although a substantial minority gave no indication of planning or of a 'map' to help the audience to follow the ideas. In most cases, candidates explained their ideas at least competently. Teachers should advise candidates to aim for a balance between description of the photograph, and a detailed development of ideas relating the photograph to the option concerned, and ideally to Anglophone culture.

Teachers' question technique: The majority of teachers asked clear, succinct and supportive questions, which guided their candidates' responses effectively. A minority of teachers either (i) asked questions about trivial details of the photograph, thus preventing candidates from showing how they can deal with complex ideas; or (ii) asked questions which were long and rambling, thus depriving the candidates of time to speak.

Linkage to target culture: A significant proportion of the interviews had little or no reference to the Anglophone target culture. While this does not affect the actual marks awarded to candidates, such lack of connection with Anglophone culture means that the clear instruction in the Language B Guide is ignored.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Higher Level

Criterion A: Productive skills

The majority of candidates were sufficiently at ease in the language to be able to maintain a coherent conversation with few problems. Only at the bottom of the range were the cases where candidates failed to understand questions, or had difficulties in expressing even basic ideas.

Many candidates produced language fluently, perhaps with occasional hesitations or stumbles. At the lower levels of performance, production might be slow, or a little laboured, but in the end candidates managed to construct reasonably clear speech.

Almost all candidates displayed some slips or flaws in language structures or the use of vocabulary, but in most cases such errors did not significantly affect meaning. Typically, candidates used quite a wide range of vocabulary, often with interesting idiomatic or colloquial phrasing, and in few cases was the phrasing and usage unclear or misleading. In many cases, it was evident that candidates' errors resulted from L1 interference, sometimes very basic errors mixed in with an impressive range of more complex structures, correctly used.

Control of intonation and pronunciation was adequate in most cases. However, there were many examples of cases in which a single error of pronunciation caused confusion, especially if it involved a word that was central to the argument. In addition, in all but the best candidates, intonation tended to be a little flat and inexpressive.
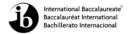
Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Much as in May 2015 session, most candidates produced Part 1 presentations which were clear and relevant to requirements. However, there is clearly room for improvement in (i) planning, and (ii) approach.

There was an evident difference between the (smaller) group of candidates who had clearly planned their presentation, and who explained their plan in an introductory 'map' or summary, and the (larger) group who did not appear to have structured the notes they had made, other than in the most rudimentary way, and so had no 'map' to introduce.

The issue of a lack of planning overlapped with some weaknesses in the general approach to the presentation. There were considerable variations observable in how candidates approached the presentation, ranging from a simple and lengthy description of trivial details of the photograph, through recycling of ideas from class discussions (sometimes relevant and sometimes only barely so), up to well-focused discussions of the central issues raised by the visual stimulus. Teachers should encourage candidates to decide on the central point(s) that they wish to make, and then to organise their ideas effectively around that purpose.

In interaction, most candidates replied promptly and appropriately to questions (helped, in some cases of weaker candidates, by tactfully supportive questioning from the teacher). Most candidates, correctly, at least tried to provide full and developed answers. The best

performances came from candidates who had a degree of mental agility; who could think on their feet and develop answers of some depth and complexity. It is worth noting that this quality of agility was sometimes apparent even in candidates who were hampered by deficiencies in their control of the language: who, in effect, might score relatively poorly under Criterion A but then scored relatively well under Criterion B.

Standard Level

Criterion A: Productive skills

Most candidates displayed a very good command of the language as they were able to use grammar and vocabulary accurately and effectively in general. The majority of candidates were generally fluent and communicated clearly most of the time. It is worth mentioning that there is very often a group of extremely fluent candidates at the very top of the range, who speak with great ease revealing an excellent command of the language.

Many were able to produce a good range of sophisticated vocabulary and structures. In the case of weaker candidates, well-selected photographs that were full of graphic text helped generate a varied range of vocabulary used accurately. Errors made were related to subject-verb agreements, verb forms, use of articles and singular/plural forms.

Most candidates used effective intonation patterns and were able to pronounce words clearly. There were some cases, however, in which L1 influence and flat intonation patterns seriously obscured meaning.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

In general, few candidates failed to understand the basic thrust of the questions they were asked, although some, even in the middle of the mark-range, failed at times to grasp the real point of the question, or went off on vague tangents.

Most candidates provided prompt and active responses and maintained a coherent conversation. In addition, there was some indication that candidates were prepared to give full answers, to do more than give a simple basic response. At times, that was not the case due to some teachers focusing on factual knowledge which prevented candidates from remaining active as they did not know what to say.

Many candidates were able to prepare clear presentations in which the photograph was described and linked to both Option and topic under discussion. Few were able to reflect towards the end on the target culture and express complex ideas. As mentioned earlier, a good number of candidates dedicated the presentation to merely describing the photograph without probing into the target culture or further reflecting on the topic.

It is quite pleasing to note that most candidates were able to maintain a natural flow of conversation with a coherent exchange of ideas. There seemed to be few cases of candidates who were prepared to ask for clarification when they were not sure what the question meant. This is an aspect of real conversation since it demonstrates interactive skills.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is recommended that teachers:

- pay close attention to their students' typical language errors. Often, these are based on standard L1 interference problems, and these appear to affect whole groups of students equally. It is advisable to conduct a persistent campaign to correct such understandable, but deep-rooted, language flaws.
- ensure that candidates' presentations are limited to the 4 minutes required.
- select photographs which are suitable, as specified in the Language B Guide.
- strive to make their questions clear and short, aiming to encourage candidates to speak as much and as easily as possible.
- aim to include discussion of the target culture in the individual interview.
- mark the Interactive Oral Activities by the same standards as for the Individual Oral.
- make every effort to ensure that marking is standardised (where more than one teacher is involved) through discussion, cross-marking, etc.

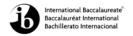## Higher level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 4	5 – 8	9 – 12	13 – 15	16 – 17	18 – 20	21 – 24

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general, the quality of the written assignments submitted for assessment this session ranged between average and very good. More candidates demonstrated awareness of the requirements of the revised written assignment (first assessment May 2015), which resulted in candidates submitting a range of assignments for assessment, most of which were considered appropriate. However, poor rationales remain to be the main reason why some candidates did not score well in the written assignment.

There appeared to be slightly fewer candidates scoring the highest mark ranges than in May 2015, and more who scored lower than 12 out of 24. The reasons for this were mainly poor rationales and content that either departed from what was given in the rationale, or was not mentioned, or alluded to, in the rationale. Kindly note that the examiner is not privy to the discussion that took place inside the classroom, and therefore candidates must provide clear rationales that map out their tasks without assuming that examiners will rely on their knowledge of the literary work.

As noticed in previous sessions, some candidates sacrificed clarity of work in their attempt to produce 'authentic' text types, which made assessing those tasks very difficult. Please continue to observe the instruction in the guide regarding artistic merit: "Students may include illustrations in support of their work where this is appropriate; however, **artistic merit is not**

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assessed" (Language B guide, 2015, p. 42); only basic **layout** conventions such as subheadings and titles and other conventions such as an appropriate register, awareness of audience and rhetoric are taken into consideration when determining how well employed a text type is.

Examiners noted that a few candidates wrote more than the stipulated 600 words, which meant that examiners stopped reading when they reached the upper limit. Additionally, and as per the instructions stated in the Language B revised guide (for first examination in 2015), a formal (literary) essay is not an acceptable text type for the written assignment. A few candidates chose the essay as their text type, which limited their mark in the 3rd descriptor of Criterion A to 2 (please refer to the *Language B Guide* and *The Handbook of Procedures*, 2016). In addition, examiners recommend that specific attention be paid to the choice of literary work. The works should be appropriate for second-language learners. In general, poetry and symbolic short stories did not work well in the written assignment, and only the very able candidates were able to use a Shakespearian text as point of departure for the Written Assignment.

Few candidates submitted hand-written instead of word-processed tasks. Kindly note that as of May 2015, all written assignments in Language B **must** be word processed. In addition, the 2/BWA form is no longer to be submitted with the assignments. Candidates, however, are instructed to include the word counts for the rationale and the task separately after each part.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale and task

Rationale

The rationale is a very important component of the written assignment. The task is marked in light of what is mentioned in the rationale, for examiners are no longer allowed to familiarize themselves with the literary work. Therefore, the requirements of the rationale that are mentioned in the guide must be adhered to, and the candidate should map out the task in the rationale. A good number of candidates this session wrote rationales that hardly told examiners what the focus of the task would be or provided a plan of the task. What is more, a number of assignments lacked a clear, specific aim; most aims were broad and some were vague. For example, many candidates mentioned they wanted to explore the feelings of a certain character or to highlight the importance of a certain symbol without clarifying what those feelings are or what the chosen symbol is.

As in previous sessions, the most common problem was that the ideas mentioned in the task were omitted from the rationale or, less commonly, vice-versa. A candidate would give an aim and a text type, but not provide a synopsis of the ideas that would appear in the task. Sometimes, the ideas mentioned in the rationale were not explored further in the task.

In addition, a good number of candidates either delved into discussing what they were going to do without introducing the focus of the assignment or clarifying the connection between the literary work and their task, or wrote a long summary of the literary work without specifying what their focus would be. In some instances, the context of the task was missing. For example, some candidates gave a general summary of the literary work that was not connected to the

focus of their tasks. Others paid particular attention to how they will achieve the text type without giving specific connection between their tasks and the literary work.

Task

Most of the ideas mentioned in the tasks were **not** provided in the rationale. As mentioned earlier, do note that as of May 2015, examiners are not allowed to take their familiarity with the literary work into consideration when assessing the written assignment because the task is assessed against what is given in the rationale. In a good number of assignments, candidates showed careful consideration of the choice of text type and audience, but some tried to disguise essays in the form of magazine articles and reviews in the form of personal letters. Additionally, candidates lost marks in the 4th descriptor when they failed to clarify who the audience of their task was or what their aim was because suitability of text type to aim and audience could not be determined. An example of this is not providing an audience when an interview was chosen as a text type.

Criterion B: Organization and development

Overall, candidates generally organized their work and developed their ideas. Some candidates wrote their tasks without carefully planning how their ideas are going to appear and be developed. This resulted in a number of main ideas being provided without being effectively developed or much repetition of the same idea. Moreover, some tasks lacked coherent development of ideas because candidates, it seems, wanted to include as much information taken from the literary work as possible.
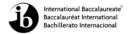
Criterion C: Language

Most candidates showed an adequate, sometimes effective, command of language in spite of some inaccuracies that sometimes obscured meaning. Very few candidates presented texts that were incoherent. Examiners often commented that candidates used a wide range of vocabulary, but that this use was sometimes either inaccurate or ineffective. Complex structures were generally effectively used. There were frequent errors in the use of narrative tenses, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, the formulation of a sentence, and phrasal verbs.

Similar to candidate performance in this criterion in previous sessions, 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.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should advise candidates to:
- type their assignment and give the number of words used for the rationale and the task separately.
- avoid including any form of identification- either personal or by using school's official paper- in their assignments.
- provide a bibliography at the end of the task.

- pay specific attention to the requirements of the revised rationale. The Language B guide specifies that in 150-250 words, the rationale should introduce the assignment and include:
  - a brief introduction to the literary text(s)— in novels, for example, a summary of the specific part on which the assignment is based is required.
  - 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)— context, choice of text type, audience, register, style and so on.
- practise writing rationales and to use the rationale to map out what will be included in the task; the clearer and more detailed the rationale is, the easier it is to gain marks in Criterion A.
- choose a text type that will help them achieve their aim(s), and remember that the formulaic essay is not an acceptable text type.
- choose a specific focus for their assignments, one that is neither too broad nor too narrow, and to use this focus to demonstrate understanding of the literary work.
- create an assignment that is connected to the literary text(s) as described in the rationale. In other words, candidates should develop the ideas provided in the rationale.
- focus on contextualizing their writing, for this would greatly enhance their written work and help them to write and organize their points effectively.
- avoid the dangers of verbatim copying from the literary work and clearly to indicate where the copied parts appear if they are more than a few words. Images should also be cited if they are copied.
- use a range of language appropriate to text type and communicative purpose in their tasks.
- limit their assignment to the prescribed minimum and maximum number of words (500-600).
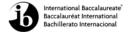
Standard level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 17	18 – 20	21 – 24

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, the work submitted ranged widely both in terms of topics and format. The work fell within the topics and text types suggested in the Language B Guide as expected, although in most cases the approach and aspects covered varied significantly, these being clear indicators of the extent to which candidates strove to be inquirers, critical thinkers, risk takers and

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reflective. However, in quite a number of cases, there were some striking similarities in the approach to the topic and text type selected. Please note that it is important teachers ensure that the written assignment is the independent work of individual candidates and that where necessary, they may advise candidates to adopt a different topic or approach in order to avoid overlap.

Many of the written assignments appropriately followed the objectives and requirements detailed in the Language B Guide. However, quite a number regrettably did not. The most noticeable divergence from the requirements was work that clearly fell within the requirements of the Higher level written assignment. This adversely affected the candidates as work submitted for Standard level must be marked against the Standard level criteria.

Other than this, selection of sources was generally suitable to the chosen topic, although the selection was not always appropriate in terms of fulfilling the aims described. It should be noted that the sources should be at the service of the aims outlined and should help to expand those aims. The aims were, for their part, at times focused but at times too broad and vague. The latter invariably proved unhelpful when choosing the right sources to achieve the intended aims. It is advisable that the final selection of the sources is made after the aims and how those aims are going to be achieved have been delineated.
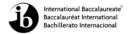
The sources were not always described. Many times, they were just mentioned. Information regarding sources at times appeared elsewhere in the assignment. It should be remembered that the sources need to be described within the rationale and not after the task, in the 'bibliography' section or any other label. Furthermore, the sources described in the rationale should clearly help to attain the aims, and there should be clear evidence in the task that those sources have actually been used.

In general terms, how the aims are to be achieved was tackled in enough details but at times it was limited to the identification of the text type only. Kindly note that the more details are given, the more focused the assignment usually is. The text types were usually appropriate for the aims although care should be taken that the text types are rendered in a way that matches the intended audience. When it comes to audience, some assignments mentioned 'the general public'. This may be a double-edged sword because it usually prompts the production of neutral tasks that are indistinct in terms of vocabulary range, tone, register, and even rhetoric.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale and Task

There was a noticeable attempt in several assignments to have clearer links between the rationale and the task. However, candidates generally still gain fewer marks in this criterion in comparison to the other two. There are several reasons to account for this. In the main, the sources in the rationale are not fully described, whereby 'fully' is taken to mean that their title, some indication of provenance and a brief description of the content relevant to the task is provided. Then, the selection of sources: While many times the sources clearly fed into different aspects of the topic and that could be neatly recognized in the task, many other times more than one source presented exactly the same angle, and thus created a redundancy because

the sources could add little content to support the views expressed in the task. In few but notable cases, it was not possible to detect that the sources had been used at all or that they had been used justifiably to fulfil the aim. When the sources were not mentioned at all in the rationale, then that also affected the relevance of the sources to the subject addressed in the task.

There were instances of aims that were clearly rendered, achievable and relevant to the topic. How the topic was going to be developed was most of the times mentioned but on occasions sketchily so. Identifying the text type is relevant but not enough to explain how the aim is going to be achieved. When all the elements that define how the aim was going to be achieved were perceivable in the task, the candidates achieved a good blend between the task and the rationale. It also happened that some tasks were exponents of elements that had not been announced in the rationale, resulting in confusion.

With reference to the task, it should be said that some tasks approached the subject stated in the rationale in broad terms, to the extent that they could well have been written without reference to the sources announced. Other times, the subject was developed throughout but the focus as defined by the aim was not maintained throughout the task.

Text types were mostly appropriate to the purpose and audience but some other times the choice of text type would appear to have been a personal preference unconnected to the demands of the task.

Criterion B: Organization and Development

Tasks were mostly organized and developed effectively. The majority of scripts reached the top mark band though not necessarily the top mark. This was generally due to weak paragraphing or an idea that was included apparently at the last minute, without giving it due thought and left undeveloped instead. The use of cohesive devices usually matched the text type with the odd clash in register.

Those scripts that scored lower in this criterion had major problems with the organization and sequencing of ideas. The difference between topic ideas and supporting material would seem to be not yet clear to some candidates. Arranging ideas logically so that the task gelled and relevant transitions marked so that the task is reader-friendly is still an aspect of production that needs attention. Some tasks read more like bits of different texts put together than like coherent tasks where main ideas were highlighted and subsidiary ideas did the work of expanding the topic.

Criterion C: Language

The degree to which candidates did thorough research on the topic of their choice and learnt vocabulary in context by being exposed to input from a variety of sources was reflected in the effectiveness with which they handled vocabulary. Sentence structure would seem to have been given thought and to have been edited cautiously. Fewer candidates seemed to neglect punctuation. Rhetoric suitable to the text type and to engage the audience addressed still needs more attention.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The written assignment is a combination of handling both text processing and text production. As such, attention needs to be given to processing skills as well as production skills. Exposure to topic-based input per se does little to help the learners grasp the topics and be in a position to give principled opinions.

Candidates should be given plenty of opportunity to engage in activities which involve interacting with texts for particular purposes. These activities may take different forms and outcomes as long as they involve drawing information from different sources and presenting that information to a particular audience for a specific reason.

It is important that the candidates, and not only the teachers, are familiar with the marking criteria so that they may do self- and peer- evaluation.

Careful planning of the written assignment is crucial for its success. This process needs to be informed by leading questions:

- What: What topic the assignment will be about? What aspect of the topic will be the focus?

- Why: What is the purpose? Why will the task be carried out?

- How: How will the purpose be fulfilled? Who is writing? To whom? When? Where? Through what medium (text type)? What is the most appropriate tone? What register does the communicative act require? What language is needed? What rhetorical devices?

- Where: Where shall the information come from? What sources would best support the what, why and how outlined above? What sources will be used? Do the sources provide relevant information to fulfil the purpose? Will the information provided by those sources prove engaging to the audience?

Answering these questions will set the learners on the right path to write the rationale and the task. The value of planning lies in knowing the route that leads to the finishing line.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 11	12 – 22	23 – 30	31 – 37	38 – 43	44 – 50	51 – 60

General comments

The IB Global centre in Cardiff wishes to express its appreciation to the 196 teachers who completed the G2 form. The comments and opinions provided by teachers in this form are valuable to examiners and paper setters, and are taken into consideration when setting grade boundaries during grade award.

This session, teachers and examiners thought that the paper was of a similar standard, maybe slightly more difficult, than that of May 2015. In fact, 93 teachers thought the paper was of a comparable difficulty level, while the remaining 103 teachers thought it was either a little easier or a little more difficult; only 12 teachers thought that the paper was much more difficult than the May 2015 one. 161 teachers thought the questions were at the appropriate difficulty level and that the choice of texts was suitable, interesting, and accessible to candidates. The presentation of the paper was deemed generally good to excellent.

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

As in previous sessions, candidates seemed to find difficulty in tackling the true/false with justification questions. Most candidates were capable of determining whether a statement was true or false, with the exception- perhaps- of Q15, but they either provided extraneous detail in their justifications or failed to provide integral parts of the answer. For example, some candidates added 'critics say' to the justification of Q16, which was not accepted because its addition changed the focus of the statement.
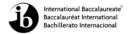
A number of candidates had difficulty in handling questions that required a word or phrase be taken directly from the text. A good number of candidates either quoted the full sentence in which the answer appeared, or failed to determine the exact phrase that should be provided.

Surprisingly, the gap filling exercise in text C was not handled well by many candidates. It is very important that candidates develop understanding of the text before they attempt to fill in the gaps.

In general, 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.

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

Examiners noted 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. In addition, candidates generally understood vocabulary in context and the overall purpose of a text. They were also quite adept at handling the multiple choice questions and choosing the true statements.

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

Qs 1-4: The set was answered correctly by most candidates; the most difficult in the set was either Q1 or Q2, for which candidates provided F as the answer. The text does not mention that Patil's interest in or understanding of farming was promoted by visits to his uncle's farm; it gives those visits as the only connection he had had with farming as a child.

Qs 5-8: This set proved to be somewhat challenging for a number of candidates. While Q8, the one deemed as the most demanding by examiners, was generally answered correctly by candidates, Q6 appeared to be the most difficult: candidates gave all sorts of answers that ranged from 'pesticides' to 'customers' or 'adherents'.

Qs 9-11: A manageable set for most candidates, with Q10 as the most demanding. A number of candidates provided 'no middlemen involved' or a combination of 'reaching more consumers' and the notion of getting no middlemen involved, or added a description of the process to the response.

Qs 12-14: Another manageable set for a good number of candidates. The issue some candidates had with Q12 was providing personal interpretations of 'Act pretty at all times', which sometimes rendered the answer incorrect. Very few candidates gave wrong answers to Q13. Q14 appeared to be the most demanding in the set because candidates added 'again' to the correct answer, which shifted focus and was therefore not accepted.

Qs 15-17: A somewhat demanding set: most candidates either ticked the wrong box, or added extra words/ phrases that shifted focus. For example, in Q15, the addition of 'especially among the poor' is irrelevant to the statement and was therefore considered wrong.

Qs 18-20: The set was generally easy and answered correctly by most candidates. When some were missed, those were mostly either 1 or 2 in Qs 19 & 20.

Qs 21-23: A manageable set for average and good candidates: very few got Q21 wrong. Q22 was somewhat more demanding, for some candidates missed 'appear' and therefore lost the mark while others added descriptions of Hans that were not relevant to his invisibility. As for Q23, a number of candidates wrote 'his manner' instead of 'his value'.

Qs 24-26: The set was generally handled well by average and good candidates. The most difficult in the set was Q26, for which some candidates gave 'C' instead of 'D' as the answer.

Qs 27-32: The set was generally demanding for most candidates, especially Qs 27 and 31: a good number of candidates chose 'smoking' instead of 'beneficial' for Q27 and 'gentlemanly' or 'soft' and sometimes even 'rich' instead of 'uncomfortable' for Q31.

Q 33: Most candidates managed to get at least 3, generally 4, of the 5 statements correct. A good number of candidates thought 'F' was a true statement.

Qs 34-37: The set proved to be accessible to good candidates. Most candidates copied the whole sentence for Q34, which was allowed. The most common reason for losing the mark in

Q35 was adding 'compelling' to 'local advertising' (local advertising and compelling). As for Q26, some candidates lost the mark for adding 'with that' to the answer. Q37 proved to be quite demanding for a good number of candidates: very few gave only 'a chip' as the answer, and a good number started with 'ability to access…' instead of 'a/the chip'. Q37 was most probably the most demanding question in the paper.

Qs 38 & 39: The set was generally handled well by a good number of candidates. Some candidates swapped the answers, giving D for Q38 and A for Q39 instead of the other way round.

Qs 40 & 41: Those were handled generally well by most candidates. The most common reasons for losing the mark in either question were failing to write 'while studying at a distance' in Q40, and not starting the answer for Q41 with 'each e-tutor'.

Q 42: This proved to be a demanding question that invited all kinds of responses from copying a whole paragraph to 'emails' and 'discussion boards'. It seems candidates were not familiar with the concept of 'traditional instruction'.

Qs 43-46: a manageable set that was answered correctly by most candidates. The most common reason for losing the mark in Q45 was adding 'online' or 'e-tutor' to 'students'.

Qs 47-49: These were accessible to the majority of candidates. A few gave 'because help' instead of 'but the support' as the answer for Q49.

Qs 50 & 51: These proved to be accessible for a number of candidates. Still, a number of candidates gave 'A' instead of 'C' as the answer for Q50.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are advised to:
- instruct candidates to write their answers in the answer boxes provided. If candidates do not want an answer to be marked, they should clearly cross it out, not put it between brackets. In addition, when an answer is written outside the provided box, the candidate must indicate where the answer appears (for example, 'please see attached paper' or 'see below').
- not encourage candidates to provide 'markscheme' answers with parts of the answer appearing between parentheses. Equally, teachers should not encourage candidates to write out the full sentence then underline the relevant words. Examiners are instructed to mark the whole answer, including the additional part(s) or the part that is not underlined, and candidates are not given the benefit of the doubt when deploying those tricks to gain unfair advantage.
- emphasise the importance of judicious consideration of the requirements of each question to determine when a problem could result from providing either too many words or too few as an answer. 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. Similarly, where "a phrase" or "a/

one word" is required, only that phrase or word should be provided.

- warn candidates against offering multiple responses for short-answer questions; this does not demonstrate understanding of the question and is, therefore, not awarded the mark. Candidates MUST clearly cross out anything they do not wish to be marked.
- remind candidates that a tick is required in True/ False with justification questions, that all parts of the statement must be justified, and that the crucial words in the quotation used to justify a true or a false statement must not be omitted.
- counsel candidates to write their answer clearly in questions where a letter is required, for if an examiner is not able to read the letter, the answer will NOT be awarded the mark. Among ambiguous answers are C/G, E/F, E/L, I/J, and B/D.
- counsel candidates to pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 7	8 – 14	15 – 22	23 – 28	29 – 33	34 – 39	40 – 45

General comments

IB Global centre in Cardiff would like to thank the 54 teachers who took the time to complete the G2 forms. Considering the submitted forms, 65% of the teachers deemed the paper to be of a similar standard to last year; while 11% each felt it was a little more difficult or a little easier. Most teachers thought that both the presentation of the paper and the clarity of the wording were very good or excellent. Many also agreed that all the texts addressed themes clearly linked to the core topics.

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

Similarly to previous sessions, candidates seemed to have difficulty in handling vocabulary questions. Qs 4 to 8 were particularly challenging as well as Qs 12 to 16. These questions are often included in Paper 1 so further practice is advisable.

In addition, some examiners felt that candidates struggled to tackle the true/false with justification questions. Most candidates were capable of determining whether a statement was true or false but failed to provide the right justification. It is important to remember that all parts of the statement must be justified.

Many candidates had difficulty in answering questions that required them to identify particular phrases from the text.

Candidates are also advised to read questions carefully before answering them. Many candidates gave a phrase as an answer when a word was needed.

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

The examination paper did not present major problems for a good number of the candidates. The average candidates succeeded in understanding the texts and handling the information needed to answer the full range of question types. In addition, they were quite adept at handling the multiple choice questions and finding to whom or to what the words identified referred to in the text.

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

Qs 1-3: These questions were quite easy. A good number of candidates answered them correctly. As for Q1 many possible answers were accepted: reduce our negative impact on nature; reduce our impact on the planet; help save resources; produce new products.

Qs 4-8: This set proved to be demanding for some candidates. Q6 was quite accessible, however.

Q9: This question was quite challenging for some candidates. Very careful reading was required to get the 4 answers correct. Many candidates chose J and failed to provide D as the right answer.

Qs 10 & 11: Quite easy and most candidates provided the correct answers. For Q10, both "hairspray" and "brown shoe polish" were accepted.

Qs 12-16: This set was also rather demanding. Many candidates gave "brief caption" or "disclaimer" as the right answer for Q13. Qs 14, 15 and 16 were difficult as well. Some candidates provided the whole sentence and underlined a word in the sentence. These candidates did not get the mark as the examiner must mark the full answer unless crossed out.

Qs 17-19: These questions proved to be easy to medium difficulty. A good number of candidates handled these questions well.

Qs 20 & 21: Candidates found these mostly easy, most getting both answers correct.

Qs 22-24: True or False questions. These proved to be of medium difficulty to difficult. Many candidates added extra words to the target answer, showing no clear understanding of the statement. Not many candidates got the 3 questions right.

Q25: This question was handled well only by some candidates. Many provided "sitting styles" as the right answer.

Qs 26-29: The set proved to be quite easy for most candidates. Q28 appeared to be more demanding since many candidates provided "girls' friendship" as the answer.

Q30: Some candidates had difficulty in answering this question correctly. The idea of envy was required in order for the answer to be accepted.

Q31: Many failed to provide the complete phrase "fellow camper", so no mark was awarded.

Q32: For this question to be correct the whole phrase "(a) novice camper" had to be provided. Some candidates added "dipping into a continental tradition" to the target answer, which rendered the answer incorrect because of the extraneous detail.

Qs 33-36: This set proved to be rather difficult for some candidates. The exact phrase from the text had to be provided. For instance, in Q33 some candidates gave as an answer "to be carefully planned" instead of "careful planning" and, therefore, they lost the mark.

Qs 37-39: Gap-filling exercise. Many found this set of questions quite accessible. A few found Q39 challenging, however.

Qs 40-42: These proved to be accessible to a good number of candidates. Q41, however, proved to be a challenge for some candidates.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is essential that candidates practise and familiarise themselves with the different kinds of questions that they have to answer. This applies to True / false with justification questions, identifying references and fill in the gaps questions as well as vocabulary ones.

As regards those questions that require a letter as an answer, the letter they choose must be written clearly and be inside the box provided. If the answer cannot be read then the mark cannot be awarded.

If the candidate needs to cross out the answer given inside the box and writes another letter outside the box, then it must be done in a clear and distinct way. If the alternative answer is given on a separate sheet of paper then this must be indicated (e.g. with the phrase **"please see attached paper"**).

When a word from the text is required, then just **ONE** word is accepted. Candidates should **not** write down the full phrase or sentence and then underline a word. Examiners are instructed to mark the full answer written down unless crossed out.

In the True or False with justification questions, both the tick or the cross and the justification are required for the mark to be awarded. As far as the justification is concerned, it must be an **exact** quotation from the text. A paraphrase will not be accepted. Besides, candidates should avoid using three dots (…) to indicate that words are omitted. Underlining parts of the answer/justification should also be avoided. This may lead to misunderstanding and the mark will not be awarded.

When a phrase from the text is required, it is just a short phrase that is copied straight from the text and no paraphrasing is accepted.

It is important to remember that candidates should attempt to answer every question. No mark is deducted for incorrect answers, therefore, it is not in the best interest of the candidates to leave answers blank. In this particular session, many candidates left one or more questions unanswered.

It is also essential that candidates write neatly. Candidates should pay special attention to the legibility of their responses.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

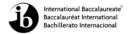| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 18	19 – 25	26 – 32	33 – 39	40 – 45

General comments

Performance in this session was very similar to that of May 2015. Feedback from teachers received via the G2 forms showed that the paper was perceived as having a very similar, and appropriate, level of difficulty to last year; this was also reflected in the examiners' marking experience. The paper itself appears to have been generally very satisfactory; no significant flaws were detected in any of the questions, such that might have affected performance or marking.

In general terms, then, candidates displayed command of the language that was largely sound and effective; the tasks were usually handled methodically and in relevant ways; and text types were almost always at least recognisable, and in many cases clearly so.

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

Section A

Brochure text type: This was the text type required in the least popular question (Q2), and this unpopularity may have been caused in part by the perceived difficulty of devising and writing brochures, leaflets, and the equivalent. It was noticeable that those few candidates who did attempt the task usually handled the text type effectively and with some imagination. It seemed very likely that they had been taught about the text type in detail by an effective and enthusiastic teacher.

Clear and coherent logical argument: The organisation of a chain of linked ideas continues to be an aspect of writing that a significant number of candidates find difficult. Despite welcome signs of a certain improvement in recent sessions, this year there were still many scripts filled with blunt assertions, without much linkage between statements, and without clearly relevant support. Teachers should continue to work in the whole area of planning the general structure of any piece of writing.

Section B

The text type issue: Fewer scripts wasted time "establishing the text type" this year (see May 2014 and May 2015 Subject reports). However, teachers should still make an effort to encourage candidates to concentrate on producing clear, well-linked explanatory prose, whichever text type they choose.

Effective coverage of the stimulus: Something like half of the scripts failed to cover the stimulus methodically, either because the candidate became distracted by the general subject area of 'fighting discrimination', or did not deal properly with both the groups clearly stated in the stimulus (the discriminators and the discriminated against). Failure to focus consistently and efficiently on the central elements of the stimulus lost them marks.

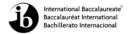# The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Section A

General command of language: The majority of candidates displayed a command of the language that was at least competent and reasonably effective. There was very often a mixture of some sophisticated range of vocabulary and phrasing, with perhaps regular slips in usage or influences of the L1 language in the case of stronger candidates, or some more serious recurrent errors in basics in the case of weaker candidates. Teachers should concentrate on identifying and correcting the characteristic slips and flaws of each candidate, at whatever level.

General handling of text types: In most cases, the text type's required conventions were generally recognisable, and often quite clearly recognisable and well-handled.

Section B

Relevance to the stimulus: Most scripts were quite well organised, demonstrating some ability to develop reasoned arguments in fairly coherent ways; it seemed that most candidates had been taught what they were supposed to try to do. That said, around half of the candidates lost marks by failing to cover the central issues raised by the stimulus sufficiently methodically. However, the stimulus was slightly more demanding than usual – performance is discussed in more detail under Section B, below.

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

Take-up was reasonably balanced, with Questions 3, 4 and 5 more or less equally popular. Only around 10-15% of candidates appeared to have selected Q1, and very few selected Q2. The lack of popularity of Q2 may have because it required the 'difficult' text type of a 'brochure' and required inventing art works about cultural backgrounds (possibly perceived as demanding an intimidating amount of imagination).

Section A

Question 1: Cultural Diversity – Letter to editor

Although one of the least popular tasks, responses were usually quite well done, with some thoughtful comments reasonably well-focused on the required elements of agreeing or disagreeing, and giving reasons. Better scripts including some personal experience and generalised from that successfully. The text type was reasonably well handled; and most scripts sensibly mentioned the original article in order to provide context.

Question 2: Customs and Traditions – Brochure

The few candidates who attempted this task usually achieved good handling of format. Arguably, those who chose this task had been interested in the brochure text type by good teaching, and felt confident with the format, at least. However, in most cases, the actual development of content was not very strong, typically consisting of vague descriptions of exhibits, and generalised superficialities about culture.
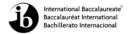
This kind of task does require a lot of imagination on the part of a candidate, in this case inventing art works and also inventing or selecting relevant cultural traditions, and finally fitting them all together in a convincing way.

Question 3: Health – Article

This was clearly an accessible subject area for many candidates. There was some thoughtful and relevant comment on the influence of media models, presumably using ideas studied in class; but there was also some rather predictable references to anorexia/bulimia and bullying, which were usually less relevant to the actual task. Many candidates achieved a good journalistic approach, writing in an attractive and entertaining style, but there were also some 'semi-essays', writing in a rather indistinct way.

Question 4: Leisure – Blog entry

Again, this appeared to be an accessible topic for many candidates, but sometimes their apparently informed views on the topic fell out of control, resulting in digressions and the required discussion of pros and cons was sometimes confused. Weaker candidates tended to more or less ignore the issue of 'true bonding', and so effectively gave little response to half of the required content. Most candidates produced a recognisable version of a blog style and approach, with lively and personal address to the audience, as well as requests for comments.

Question 5: Science and Technology – Talk

Candidates who attempted this task appeared generally well informed about the issue: both the potential dangers and suggestions were often detailed and convincing. That said, there were sometimes weaknesses in the clear organisation and presentation of ideas: weaker scripts had a tendency to wander from one 'danger' to another, at length, and then to have little to say about 'ways to protect'. In general, the text type was handled at least competently, usually with a clear sense of address to a specific audience.

Section B

The stimulus was demanding but very effective: it provided a general area ("discrimination"), but evidently focused on *benefits* for two groups, those who are *discriminated against* and those who *discriminate*. These elements of the stimulus therefore led to clear distinctions between levels of ability. Weaker candidates simply discussed discrimination in general, while stronger candidates focused correctly on benefits *plus* the two groups (with more or less success). The obviously most interesting idea – that discriminators could and should benefit – distinguished at the top level, since able candidates discussed this thoughtfully, while middling candidates merely mentioned the idea superficially.

Success in this task depends on firstly understanding the central issue in the stimulus, and then remaining focused on it while writing, without wandering off into digressions or irrelevance.

It is worth noting that fewer candidates in this session, as compared with previous ones, wasted time and words on 'establishing the text type'. Scripts might adopt the text type of, say, an e-mail, but most remained quite well focused on discussing the stimulus.
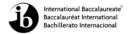
Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

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

Language: Most candidates in English B HL have sufficient command of the language to be able to communicate relatively clearly and effectively. However, all candidates' command can be improved. Teachers can help candidates to improve by (i) alerting each individual student to recurrent errors, thus encouraging self-correction; and (ii) providing targeted language expansion, particularly in the language which enables lucid explanation, such as complex linkers, modifiers, and sentence structure.

Message: Success in Paper 2 involves writing clearly and methodically about the required task. Accordingly, teachers should give a high priority to teaching careful planning and organisation of the sequence of ideas.

Text type: Teachers should make sure that all text types are analysed, understood, and practised (if possible, at least twice).

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Section B: While there has been slow but steady improvement in performance in this actually quite demanding task, teachers should give candidates as much practice as possible, with detailed and constructive feedback. Such practice should concentrate on helping candidates to (i) identify and think critically about the central issue of the stimulus, and (ii) structure and explain clearly the key points of their ideas.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

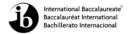| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 4	5 – 9	10 – 13	14 – 16	17 – 19	20 – 22	23 – 25

General comments

The IB Global centre in Cardiff would like to thank all the teachers who completed the G2 form via the OCC. Approximately 61% of the teachers who completed the form considered the paper to be of a similar difficulty level to that of May 2015, while almost 16% deemed it a little more difficult. Clarity of wording and the presentation of the paper were considered very good to excellent by the majority of respondents. As usual, all teachers are encouraged to submit their feedback in future sessions.

Overall, questions seemed accessible in a way that most candidates were able to relate to the topics presented. There were some intelligent responses that presented ideas in a coherent and developed manner with few significant errors. However, there was a good number of candidates whose errors in basic structures obscured meaning or who failed to understand what the question required. Many examiners commented on some candidates' inability to express ideas coherently and effectively.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates, and in which candidates appeared well prepared

Criterion A: Language

Similarly to May 2015, examiners reported that the majority of candidates were of the proficiency expected at Standard Level. As always, some answers were impressive in their use of language, while at the other end of the scale, there was a good number of candidates who demonstrated limited to adequate command of language with very basic errors made in verb forms, tenses, subject-verb agreement and punctuation. There needs to be more attention to very basic grammatical forms in such cases. Better able candidates were able to produce complex structures clearly and use a wide range of vocabulary both accurately and effectively.

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Examiners mentioned many errors resulting from L1 interference which obscured meaning at times.

In the very few scripts that did not meet the lower limit of 250 words, a penalty was applied in Criterion A as stipulated in the Language B Guide. In all doubtful cases the words were actually counted, and if found to be below the lower word limit the penalty applied without exception, so candidates must make sure that they do not fall short of the limit by a few words. It is worth mentioning that there is no penalty for exceeding the upper limit of 400 words, and the whole answer is considered when awarding marks. However, a very long answer is rarely a good one as the chances of making more repetitions and basic mistakes increase.

Criterion B: Message

Despite the fact that many candidates attempted to use paragraphing, those were not necessarily well-connected and did not contribute much to the intellectual clarity of the argument presented. Some questions (for example Q1 and Q5) required a sequence of ideas leading to a coherent and convincing argument. However, many scripts, including the high quality ones, presented different interesting sub-ideas at times without clearly linking them to what came before and after. What's more, and as in previous sessions, many candidates did not divide their answers into paragraphs. Good paragraphing is a way of structuring a text, and it clearly separates one idea from another. Poorly or non-paragraphed responses will not score high marks in Criterion B.

Some questions asked for **two** or **three** aspects to be covered, such as Questions 2, 3 and 5. Candidates should address each of these required areas clearly; otherwise, scripts are marked down on relevance of ideas in Criterion B. Underlining the required aspects on the question paper may help to remind candidates of what elements they should cover.
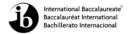
Criterion C: Format

Examiners commented that the vast majority of candidates produced the required text types effectively, in terms of conventions, layout or register. However, it was noticed that the very few candidates attempting Q2 failed to produce the required conventions of a formal report and thus ended up writing a very chatty and informal response that lacks an objective style or a clearly structured layout.

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

All questions were attempted by candidates with Questions 1, 4 and 5 being the most popular. Q3 was attempted by a good number of candidates but statically comes with a fewer percentage compared to the rest. Q2 was by far the least popular task.

Question 1: Cultural diversity – Article

This question has proved to be the second most popular one. The majority of candidates focused on the 'benefits of attending a multicultural school' while using examples drawn from personal experience. Still, a good number failed to consistently focus on 'multicultural schools'

and ended up discussing cultural diversity in general **OR** about the activities offered by the school or the nationalities attending the school without clearly explaining the benefits.

The majority of candidates used an appropriate register and a suitably serious tone with an engaging introduction, body and conclusion. Only in few cases there seemed to be no relevant title provided or that the whole article is not engaging enough to be published in a school magazine.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – Report

Statistically, this question was attempted by a very small percentage of candidates. Except in very few cases, the task was handled poorly in terms of both ideas and text type conventions.

Different reports read like a personal reflection with first person narration of an exchange program candidates took part in or a superficial description of an activity they participated in when travelling. The very few good responses, however, managed to fully and effectively describe an outdoor activity then clearly explain how it could benefit the outdoor or sport activity program at school.

The majority of reports lacked the neutral objective style required as well as the clearly structured layout (sub-headings, short paragraphs, etc.) expected. Teachers are highly advised to practice such text types among others as stipulated in the Language B Guide.

Question 3: Health – Brochure

Despite the accessibility of this question, it has proved to be one of the least popular prompts. When attempted, the question was handled generally well though there seemed to be an over-emphasis on the artistic part of the brochure which came at the expense of content. Good scripts, however, explained clearly and full both aspects of the task (i) giving advice on how to enjoy fast food responsibly and (ii) negative effects of fast food, producing authentic brochures that grabbed readers' attention.

Some responses, on the other hand, failed to include a clear aim and focused on the negative effects only **OR** provided advice on how to lead a healthy life in general by cutting down on fast food, which is not the aim of the task. Accordingly, those two were marked down under 'relevance' in Criterion B.'

Question 4: Leisure – Blog entry

Successful blogs were generally authentic and effective. Most candidates managed to explain clearly and effectively the aim of the entry made to the competition and shared their feelings about the expectations of winning being shattered while referring to the trigger experience of the photography contest and the dream city. Different scripts cleverly reflected on the experience while expressing feelings of disappointment, while others failed to organize ideas and provide some reflections, which resulted in narratives with lots of rambling and repetitions. Feelings about preparations for the contest, the shooting of the photo, waiting for results or disappointment and lessons learned were all possible sides of 'the feelings' shared and thus were all accepted.

Good responses provided an engaging title and used a lively interesting style to engage the audience or invite them to comment towards the end. However, there seemed a good number of entries that were not well-rounded off **and** a few that read like essays without any awareness of readers revealed.

Question 5: Science and technology – Email

This was the most popular question by far and probably the most effective one produced by those attempting it. Almost all candidates attempting this question were able to explain similarities and differences lucidly and fully based on their personal experiences and then provide a well-developed recommendation. What affected the mark at times, though, was their inability to clarify similarities **and/or** organize ideas coherently.

Many candidates presented 'advantages and disadvantages of e-books and hard copy books', which resulted in stressing differences over similarities. Candidates are advised to adhere to the parameters of the question and meet all aspects required.

Almost all emails included the required conventions. A very few responses utilised a rigid and somehow 'formal' register in their response – one that does not suit a friendly email.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are advised the encourage candidates to:
- carefully read all parts of the question and underline the essential key words. When two aspects/things are mentioned in the question, BOTH have to be addressed; otherwise, message will be deemed "partially communicated".
- maintain a legible handwriting. This needs practice well before the examination, and candidates need to maintain the habit of proof-reading their final drafts.
- use correct paragraphing and effective cohesive devices. This is something examiners always check on, and teachers are always advised to stress that in class.
- 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 place them at a serious disadvantage.

Furthermore, teachers are advised to:
- frequently address significant grammar errors.
- practise with candidates how to develop ideas coherently and effectively.
- practise with candidates ALL text types mentioned in the Language B Guide.

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