May 2017 subject reports

English B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 15	16 - 30	31 - 46	47 - 60	61 - 73	74 - 87	88 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 29	30 - 47	48 - 61	62 - 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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The overall performance of candidates in this session was very much in line with previous May sessions. The majority of candidates communicated effectively enough, with a reasonably sound grasp of a reasonably useful range of grammar and vocabulary. Only the relatively small number of weak candidates presented problems in basic communication, usually due to seriously fragmented grammar.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive skills

The majority of candidates demonstrated sufficient command of the language to be able to communicate quite clearly and effectively. The best were evidently at ease and fluent, and even displayed some capacity to organise lucid sentence structures based on a range of connecting devices. The range of vocabulary deployed was usually adequate to express reasonably complex ideas – sometimes through impressively sophisticated technical and intellectual vocabulary, but more commonly through the ability to use relatively commonplace phrases effectively to convey fairly complex meaning. As often noted, very capable candidates sometimes have a few residual errors in very basic elements of grammar, possibly due to L1 interference or more probably due to bad habits acquired years ago, which had never been corrected.

Problems with pronunciation affected the marks of the lower half of the range. Typically, weaker candidates pronounced reasonably clearly most of the time, but inaccurate pronunciation of a few sounds in a few words could affect comprehension if these flaws occurred in key words or phrases. As recommended in previous reports, teachers should make efforts to identify such ingrained flaws and target them for correction. Some candidates, across the range, showed that they could use intonation to convey emphasis or enthusiasm; this was often not really connected to the accuracy of the language used.

The interaction in Part 2 tends to revel what may be considered the 'underlying' strength of command of the language. This can work in two main ways: negatively, in that candidates may under the pressure of rapid response show their weaknesses in control of grammar, and/or positively, in that the stimulation of the interaction may encourage candidates to show their

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

genuine ability to communicate confidently and expressively, despite minor slips in language. The more that teachers can help candidates to relax and enjoy the interaction, the better.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Most candidates handled the Part 1 presentation at least competently, in that they evidently had prepared a short list of ideas to explain and did so reasonably clearly. However, there was a noticeable difference between those who introduced their presentations with a 'map' or brief summary of what they were going to say, in which order. This usually helped the listener to understand and appreciate the logic of the presentation better than in those presentations which seemed to proceed from idea to idea at random, or by free association.

Candidates usually responded promptly to teachers' questions, suggesting that basic aural comprehension was not a significant problem (although at times the teachers' questions were helpfully adjusted to the basic competence of the candidate). In addition, candidates usually worked to provide full and developed answers to questions: only a few restricted themselves to the minimum answer and then stopped talking, whether from insecurity in the case of some weaker candidates, or basic taciturnity in the case of a few stronger candidates.

Top marks tended to be reserved to those candidates who were so engaged in the interaction that they contributed actively: *ie* they introduced new ideas, or questioned the terms of the teacher's question, or elaborated in detail with lively examples. Skilful teachers encouraged such active contribution either by asking 'open' questions, giving the candidate the chance to take the conversation in any direction, or by asking 'follow-up' questions, suggesting that candidates should explain in more detail an interesting idea.
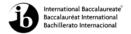
Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

While the interviews were generally well handled, all teachers should check that they comply with instructions in the following areas:

Choice of photographs: Images chosen should be 'real' colour photographs: *ie* they should not have been 'photo-shopped'; nor should they be graphic images, such as cartoons or advertisements.

Reference to Anglophone culture: The instructions in the Language B Guide are clear: in Part 1, "the student describes the photograph and relates it to the option and the target culture(s)." (HL p.59); and in the Part 2 discussion, candidates should be encourages and enabled to express "ideas, opinions and reflections upon what they have learned about the target culture(s)." (HL p.60).

Teaching oral skills: Teachers should strive to provide their students with regular practice in lively, genuine, engaged conversations in the classroom. Evidence of easy, natural, spontaneous interaction earns marks in the Individual oral.

In addition, teacher should aim to correct each candidate's individual slips and flaws in the use of the language; and to make sure that all candidates are trained in the efficient organisation of presentation, coupled with carefully clear explanation.

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of candidates demonstrated a very good command of the language and were capable of maintaining a coherent conversation about different topics. This is in line, in general terms, with performance in previous sessions possibly with a few more strong candidates at the top, and a few more weak candidates at the bottom.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Productive skills

The majority of candidates produced language with ease and were able to maintain a coherent conversation with few problems. Some candidates, though, at the bottom of the range had difficulties in expressing basic ideas and opinions clearly.

Many candidates produced language fluently, perhaps with occasional hesitations or lapses, using a varied range of vocabulary – sophisticated at times – with some idiomatic expressions used effectively. At the lower levels of performance, candidates struggled with language or produced it with laboured fluency, but even in those cases, there seemed a fairly good range of vocabulary used with clear speech constructed.

Some candidates seemed competent enough to produce language with the minimum number of errors observed, while the majority presented either slips or flaws that mainly resulted from L1 influence. Errors ranged from subject-verb agreement and singular/plural forms to using past tenses and prepositions. Still, such errors did not hamper communication at large. Intonation and pronunciation were controlled well. In many cases intonation was quite expressive and effective. It was only in few cases that candidates' pronunciation obscured meaning, causing confusion overall.

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Overall, candidates were able to express ideas and opinions independently, maintaining a natural flow of conversation with a coherent exchange of ideas. Many candidates were able to grasp the real point of the question and seemed active enough to direct the discussion to different angles, which helped the teacher to cover other related options. Weaker candidates, on the other hand, needed much prompting as their answers were restricted to Yes and No or very brief comments that lacked lucid explanations and vivid examples.

Most candidates replied promptly and provided relevant and well-developed responses. Some few candidates revealed the ability to provide opinions and ideas with a degree of depth and complexity. It is worth mentioning that due to the supportive teachers and varied question techniques, weaker candidates were able to maintain a decent conversation and express simple ideas clearly and coherently.

On the other hand, many candidates this session failed to map their ideas in Part 1 methodically and clearly; they tended to detail everything they knew about the topic under discussion, and thus covering many sub-topics that seemed either fragmented or had weak links to the caption. Others focused only on the description of the photograph without any substantial ideas raised in relation to the caption and topic.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should:

- make sure that the visual stimulus is a real photograph. Graphic images, such as drawings or photo-shopped collages are not acceptable.
- choose captions that are interesting and stimulating to quickly and directly guide candidates to option and topic under discussion.
- ensure that candidates' presentations are limited to the 4 minutes required.
- strive to make their questions clear and short, aiming to encourage candidates to speak as much and as easily as possible
- probe into the target culture in Part 2.

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 good and excellent. More candidates demonstrated awareness of the requirements of the written assignment, 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.

The candidates' performance in this component seemed generally better than in May 2016. The reasons for this were mainly improved rationales - to some extent - and content that was in sync with what was given in the rationale. Please continue to observe 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 note 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 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 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 attention be paid to the choice of literary work. 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.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Few candidates submitted the 2/BWA form, which is no longer required. Candidates, however, must include the word counts for the rationale and the task separately after each part.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale and task

A good number of candidates this session wrote rationales that generally told examiners what the focus of the task would be or provided a plan of the task. However, 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 other cases, a detailed summary of the literary work was provided but hardly any connection between the work and the task.

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.
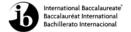
Please note that the rationale is a very important component of the written assignment. The task is marked in light of what is mentioned in the rationale, because examiners are not allowed to familiarize themselves with the literary work. Therefore, the requirements of the rationale that are mentioned in the guide must be adhered to, and the candidate should map out the task in the rationale.

In a number of cases, most of the ideas mentioned in the tasks were not provided in the rationale. As mentioned earlier, examiners are not permitted 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 to 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. Others wrote diary entries to clarify to 'readers' or 'parties interested' the feelings of a certain character.

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 were going to be presented. This resulted in a number of main ideas being provided without being effectively developed, or much repetition of the same idea.

Criterion C: Language

Most candidates showed generally 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 use. 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 and provide examples of that style in their rationales.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should advise candidates to:

- 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 rationale. The Language B guide specifies that in 150-250 words, the rationale should introduce the assignment and include:
  - o 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.
  - o 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
  - o the student's intended aim(s)
  - o 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 (academic) 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.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

- focus on contextualizing their writing, for this would greatly enhance their written work and help them to write and organize their points effectively.
- 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).
- avoid the dangers of verbatim copying from the literary work and clearly to indicate where the copied parts appear. When ideas that appear in any source are copied or paraphrased, they should be clearly cited, images included.

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

Candidates selected a wide range of topics. Some candidates are still focusing on topics that are far too broad to be dealt with within the word limit. Global warming and discrimination are vast topic areas and some candidates who selected these areas did not narrow down the topics further. This is a hindrance inasmuch as it affects marks in both Criterion A and Criterion B.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale and task

The rationale and task is still problematic. A good number of scripts scored 5 out of 10 and several 7 out of 10. Only a few got to the top of the range. The major difficulty still has to do with sources, which many times are not even mentioned in the rationale, which also affects the relevance of the subject to the chosen sources in the task. However, there have been more cases of sources being described rather than just referred to. Some scripts clearly show that the sources in the rationale have been used while others do not.

Another problem is that candidates do not define the audience properly when expanding on how the aim is going to be achieved and this also has an impact on the appropriateness of the text type to the audience. Much the same happens when the aims are rendered vaguely, which is quite often the case.

Low marks are mostly attributed to a mismatch between rationale and task. When marks are below 5, in general these are sketchy rationales that are not always easy to understand.

Surprisingly there were a few assignments that combined rationale and task in one piece.

Criterion B: Organization and development

Overall planning was evident, with a logical thread. Development, however, is still tinged with thinness at times, marked by lack of examples, expansions, explanations. Other times, ideas are coherent but not cohesive. Most of the candidates scored 4 or 5 due to faulty paragraphing, undeveloped ideas, and/or 'jerkiness'. Lower marks are often due to inarticulate development.

Criterion C: Language

Very few candidates scored 8. Though there are fewer cases of impeding grammatical errors that hamper understanding, there is a considerably higher proportion of run-on sentences compared to earlier sessions. This gradually affects sentence structure, not only with complex but also with simple structures. Vocabulary is less of a problem. We see more scripts where a good range is used consistently. Yet, there are some scripts where there is an astonishingly good use of vocabulary taken verbatim from the different sources *ie* lifted from the different sources without further processing. Inadvertently, there are different styles in the task then, and these do not always match the chosen text type.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to be better informed how to describe sources. It is also essential that teachers instruct candidates on what the text types should look like. It would be desirable that teachers exposed their students to real life text types and that they lead students to notice what the features of each text type are, not only in layout but also in approach. Another area that needs addressing is drawing the candidates' attention to features of planning, paragraph development, paragraphing and sequencing. Coherence and cohesion also needs more attention, and these need to be focused in terms of the different text types and registers used.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 22	23 - 30	31 - 38	39 - 46	47 - 54	55 - 60

General comments

The IB Global Centre in Cardiff (assessment division) wishes to express its appreciation to the teachers who completed the Teacher Comments form (G2) via the online curriculum centre (OCC). The comments and opinions provided by teachers in this form are of great value to examiners and paper setters, and are taken into consideration when setting grade boundaries during grade award.

This session, teachers and examiners generally thought that the paper was of a similar standard to that of last May, and almost an equal number of teachers thought it was either a little easier or a little more difficult than the previous session's paper. 171 teachers out of the 180 who completed the form 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 Q21 because candidate missed 'rarely', but they either provided extraneous detail in their justifications or failed to provide integral parts of the answer. For example, some candidates added 'The only way' to the justification of Q19, 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 vocabulary exercise in Text B was not handled well by many candidates. It is very important that candidates develop understanding of the word in context before they attempt to answer those questions.

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.

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

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 references 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. Very few provided anything other than 'uniquely' in response to Q1. The most common reason for losing the mark(s) in Q2-4 was either providing a full sentence instead of the required phrase, or providing a wrong answer.

Q5: This set proved to be easy or of medium difficulty. Most candidates scored at least 3 or 4 correct statements. The most elusive in the set was D.

Q6: Generally answered correctly by most candidates. When answered wrong, either A or D were provided as answers.

Qs 7-9: Another manageable set for a good number of candidates. Wrong answers were either completely wrong, or half-answers (e.g. Q8: 'Cradle of Art' without 'and town-planning').

Qs 10-13: A somewhat demanding set: most candidates failed to understand some of the words in context. The most difficult in the set was Q1, where many candidates provided C instead of D as the answer, which indicates that they did not understand 'invisible' in context.
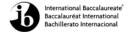
Qs 14-17: Those questions were generally easy and answered correctly by most candidates.

Qs 18-22: Generally of medium difficulty: a few candidates ticked the wrong box, while others provided extra words that shifted focus. For example, and as mentioned earlier, 'the only way' was added to the justification of Q19, 'the sharing of' to Q20 and 'but' to Q21.

Qs 23-27: The set was generally handled well by average and good candidates. The most difficult in the set was Q25: a number of candidates provided 'student's parents' instead of 'students' parents'. While this may have been a slip, such an answer does not correctly replace 'their' and was therefore considered wrong.

Qs 28 & 29: These were generally handled well. Very few candidates provided A for Q28 and D for Q29.

Qs 30-33: Most candidates managed to get at least 2 of those questions correct. The most difficult was Q30 because many candidates provided a detailed description of the season instead of quoting how it was described in the text. Another difficult question was Q33, for candidates seem to have misunderstood that the question was a paraphrase of 'she liked the rhythm of her regular chores'.

Qs 34-37: The set proved to be accessible to good candidates. It seems a few candidates were not instructed as to how to approach this question type, so they did not provide information as it appears in the text (direct quotation).

Qs 38-41: The set was generally handled well by able candidates. Q38 proved to be the most difficult in the set, for a number of candidates gave A or D instead of C the answer to this question.

Qs 42-45: Those were handled generally well by most candidates: a good number of candidates gave the correct answers. The most common reasons for losing the marks in these questions were adding 'with rural communities' (Q42), focusing on solutions instead of problems (Q43) or writing US instead of Swaziland (Q45).

Qs 46-49: This proved to be a somewhat demanding set, especially Q49, as many candidates provided G instead of C as the answer.

Qs 50-54: a manageable that was answered correctly by most candidates.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are advised to:

- advise candidates to write their answers in the provided answer boxes. 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'). It is worth noting here that a number of candidates used answer booklets to provide one answer, sometimes even a letter, which resulted in waste of paper and is not ecologically sound. If the candidate clearly crosses out the answer inside the box and writes the correct one next to the box, there is no need to use a whole booklet.

- answer questions using the exact wording of the text as much as possible; all questions can be answered using the exact words in the text, with very little or - more often - no transformation of the text.

- 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.

- 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 such methods of answering as they may gain unfair advantage.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

- 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 unclear answers 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 - 15	16 - 23	24 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 40	41 - 45

General comments

The International Baccalaureate Global Centre in Cardiff (assessment division) would like to thank the teachers who have taken the time to complete the Teacher Comments form (G2). All teachers are highly encouraged to submit their comments as they are usually invaluable to the process of grade awarding.

90% of respondents agreed that the paper was of an appropriate difficulty level while 10% of the teachers who had completed the form believed it to be a little more difficult.

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

One area which proved difficult was filling in the gaps with the correct word (Qs 2 to 6). Further practice is advised for this exercise.

When candidates are asked to provide a phrase from the text, such as in Q13, only a short phrase is required.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Some identifying references questions were quite challenging. In Q26, many candidates lost the mark as they wrote "9% of males and females" but the word "additional" was missing. In Q28 the word "teenagers" was essential.

In Qs 31 to 34, candidates were expected to extract an exact phrase from the text to fill in the sentences. No paraphrasing is accepted.

As regards True/False with justification questions (Qs 39 to 42), some candidates provided extraneous details that resulted in losing the mark, while others wrote the justification but essential parts were missing. Candidates are to be reminded that both the correct tick and a brief and precise quotation must be provided to attain the mark. No paraphrasing is accepted.

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

The four texts presented no substantial problems for the majority of candidates. The average candidate was generally successful in locating, selecting and handling the information needed across the full range of question types in all texts.

Some examiners felt that candidates needed better preparation for questions which required close reading and understanding the meaning of a word or an expression in context.

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

Q1: Quite accessible. A good number of candidates provided at least 3 correct answers.

Qs 2-6: Quite demanding. Some candidates had difficulty getting all these questions correct.

Q7: Some candidates gave "A" as an answer.

Qs 8-11: The set proved to be accessible to a good number of candidates. Some candidates chose letter "D" for Q10.

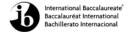Q12: Quite accessible. Very few candidates gave the whole sentence as an answer.

Q13: Very few candidates managed to provide a phrase. Most of the candidates just copied the whole sentence.

Q14: Quite demanding. All kinds of answers were given.

Qs 15-17: Quite easy though Q17 was more challenging. Many candidates gave "D" as an answer.

Qs 18-20: A quite accessible set.

Q21: Many candidates wrote "abbreviation" as an answer but it was not accepted.

Q22: This question proved to be accessible to most candidates.

Q23: Quite demanding. A good number of candidates added "try" to the target answer.

Qs 24-28: Reference questions. This set proved to be of medium difficulty to a big number of candidates.

Q24: The majority were able to identify this answer correctly.

Qs 25-26: Quite demanding, especially Q26 since many candidates failed to include "additional" to the target answer.

Q27: Many candidates gave examples of stressful situations as an answer but, in general, not difficult.

Q28: Many failed to answer this question correctly even though we accepted many possible answers.

Qs 29-30: Medium difficulty. For Q30 many answered "D".

Qs 31-34: Medium difficulty. Q31 was more demanding.

Qs 35-38: Vocabulary questions. Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with this set. Some candidates wrote "prank" for Q35, "picking up" for Q37 and some gave "original" or "the first" as an answer for Q38.

Qs 39-42: True or False questions. Demanding set of questions. Q39 was the easiest while Qs 40-41 were more difficult since the justification provided was incomplete.
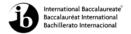
Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should familiarise candidates with the common types of questions and with appropriate strategies to answer each of them.

Teachers should make candidates practise how to frame words or phrases. Where "one" detail is required, a candidate who gives more than one runs the risk of losing the mark. If one answer is correct and another answer is incorrect, no mark will be awarded. Where one "phrase" is required, candidates run the same risk when providing the whole sentence.

Candidates should be advised to look for the direct reference in the text. They should not provide an 'inferred' one if a direct reference is given in the text.

Please continue to advise the candidates to write their answers inside 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". If the candidate clearly crosses out the answer inside the box and writes the correct one next to the box, there is **no** need to use a whole booklet just to clarify that a letter has been corrected.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Teachers should advise candidates to provide complete justifications in True/False questions and that crucial parts in the quotation should never be omitted. The use of dots (...) in the justifications must not be included as the quotations required are mostly brief.

Some candidates lost marks for multiple choice questions due to their handwriting being illegible.

Candidates should answer every question. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers, so no answer should be left blank.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

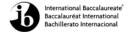| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 33	34 - 39	40 - 45

General comments

Overall performance in this paper was slightly better than in the May 2016. This seems to have been in part because candidates in the middle of the range did a more competent job of handling the tasks. While command of language remained much the same as in recent years, the handling of the two most popular tasks and, in particular, of Section B appear to have contributed to the better performance.

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

Section A

Familiarity with text types: While most candidates demonstrated general competence in producing the required text type for the tasks, many lacked a real sense of the tone and register appropriate. These two elements of language require some sophistication and experience for a second language learner to get right, but teachers should strive to help their students to gain experience in recognising the techniques to achieve the right tone and register.

Overall structure: Despite repeated recommendations that teachers should develop candidates' ability to plan and organise their writing into coherent effective patterns, there are still a large number of scripts that appear to have been pre-planned in only the most sketchy way: in which ideas do not appear to be linked for any clear purpose, or in which there is a lack of balance between important sections.

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Section B

The Text Type Issue: In this session, even fewer scripts wasted time "establishing the text type" (see M14, M15 and M16 Subject Reports). This is very encouraging. However, teachers should still make an effort to encourage their students to concentrate on producing clear, well-linked explanatory prose, whichever text type they choose.

Defining terms: A common cause of loss of marks under Criterion B was a failure to explain with any real clarity what is meant by key terms in the discussion. For instance, few candidates stated what they understood by the term 'social media' in the stimulus, and it was apparent in some scripts this could be taken to mean practically anything that occurs on the internet, or even practically anything that can be done with technology. This inability to focus ideas precisely naturally encourages unfocused, rambling arguments.

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

Section A

General command of language: Most candidates demonstrated that they could communicate reasonably effectively in writing. In general, basic grammar and control of sentence structure was usually correct; and at the top end of the range there was much evidence of sophistication, both in the use of complex grammar and in the variety of vocabulary.

Appropriate approach to task: Most scripts showed that candidates were capable of at least attempting to adapt the tone and register of language to suit the required task (even if the tone and register was not always maintained consistently). This was particularly marked in responses to Q5, which required quite a complex combination of formal politeness and assertiveness (see comments on Q5, below)

Section B

Focus on the stimulus: The majority of candidates appeared to understand pretty well the idea proposed by the stimulus that social media may "disconnect" people – presumably because very few (if any) of them do not have direct personal experience of the impact of social media. This meant that almost all scripts, even the weakest, had something directly relevant to say about the stimulus, and many had interesting, even perceptive, remarks to put forward. In short, candidates, in general, showed that they could express serious ideas about a significant issue.

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

Questions 3 and 5 proved by far the most popular choice. This was followed by Q2. Very few candidates opted for Q1 or Q4.

The popularity of Q3 (the blog about children in hospital) and Q5 (the formal e-mail about the online surveillance system in school) is probably because both of these questions addressed subject matter with which candidates felt comfortable and/or familiar; Q3 was 'comfortable' because it is easy to imagine sympathy with sick children, and Q5 was 'familiar' because the issues of online access in schools, along with cyberbullying, are likely to be live questions in many schools.

The other questions were less popular probably because their subject matter was less familiar and/or required more imaginative effort. Q1 required imagining a 'summer programme' – many candidates might never have attended such a programme, and couldn't imagine detailed activities. Q2 would only appeal to candidates who had some real interest in art – and in fact some of the few responses were well-informed with well thought-out opinions. Q4 required either remembering a real documentary which fitted the task (there were some very suitable examples), or required inventing a documentary (a more challenging and more risky approach).

Section A

Question 1: Cultural diversity – brochure

Most candidates handled the format of the brochure reasonably well, attempting to use layout to emphasise the structure of the ideas presented. In general, candidates addressed the idea of 'different cultures' at a basic level, but many failed to develop and explain actual activities in much detail. This resulted in scripts which were somewhat superficial, although the requirement to 'promote' was usually quite successfully achieved by enthusiastic phrasing. As noted above, this task demanded significant imaginative skills in order to achieve high marks. The few candidates who attempted this question tended not to measure up to the task.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – debate speech

While relatively few candidates attempted this question, many did a surprisingly good job. There was evidence that such candidates already had some knowledge about the relationship between artists and culture, and had already formed clear views on the topic. Many of the arguments were quite clearly explained, and were supported by relevant examples. However, there was a tendency in many scripts to fail to organise the overall pattern of the arguments, perhaps due to a lack of preliminary overall planning. In a very limited number of cases, candidates failed to follow the clear instruction to argue either for or against, and this was penalised quite heavily, even when the 'balanced' argument was clearly convincing. Candidates should be warned to do exactly what the question asks.

Question 3: Health – blog

This very popular question stimulated some very engaged, even moving, writing. Many candidates displayed real empathy with the situation of children with long-term illnesses, and described in detail credible ways in which such a situation could be alleviated. The question's requirement to explain how psychological factors might help such children recover was often less well handled than the description of 'experiences'. At all levels of performance, there was a tendency to fail to structure and organise the text lucidly: there was a sense of rambling from one moving anecdote to another in many scripts.

Question 4: Leisure – blog

The few candidates who attempted this question either did it very well or very badly. Those who performed well evidently had a clear idea of how to write a review, and also used a real documentary with which they were familiar. Those who did badly appeared to have little or no idea of what a review entails, and often invented a documentary in very vague terms with little or no supporting detail. This was actually a rather tricky question: those who did badly should not really have considered attempting it.

Question 5: Science and technology – (formal) email

This, the most popular of the questions, was actually handled surprisingly well by very many candidates. To start with, most candidates managed a 'polite but firm' register and tone rather well. The task clearly demanded courteous address to the principal, but also a firm insistence on disagreement. In addition, required content was usually covered, although the 'reasons for opposition' were usually rather better handled than the 'suggested alternatives'. In general, this question obviously addressed a subject area with which candidates were directly familiar: there was a sense that many of the arguments about the right to privacy or the problems of cyber-bullying had been considered and used in real life outside of the examination room. In consequence, many scripts exhibited both clarity of detailed argument and an ability to organise and link arguments convincingly.
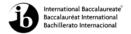
Section B

The stimulus dealing with 'connecting or disconnecting through social media' seems to have been accessible: very few candidates failed to take a reasonably clear point of view, and most had reasonably relevant observations to make. This is unsurprising given that very few candidates will not have experience of social media; and very few teachers will have failed to discuss the topic in class. That said, many responses in the middle of the range presented rather weak explanations, and/or were unable to organise ideas effectively into a clear and methodical argument. A common problem at the weaker end of the range was to fail to concentrate properly on the specific area of 'social media' – there was some tendency to take 'social media' to mean 'anything you can do on the internet' (*eg* shopping), or even 'technology in general' (*eg* you can fly everywhere using tickets bought on the internet). A key discriminating factor in Section B is whether candidates can focus closely on the required and specific subject area.

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:** As suggested in previous Reports, teachers should help their students to improve the accuracy and range of their language. Two ways of doing this are: (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.

- **Planning:** Teachers should give a high priority to teaching careful planning and organisation of the sequence of ideas; in other words, to thinking through what is to be said before starting writing.

- **Section B:** While the evidence of this session is that many schools are now teaching candidates to focus clearly and precisely on what the stimulus actually says, the more practice that can be given in this quite challenging skill, the better. This should involve (i) identifying the key points of the stimulus; (ii) thinking critically about the key points; and (iii) structuring methodically the final response.

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 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

General comments

Approximately 77.5% of the teachers who completed the Teacher Comments form (G2) on the OCC considered the paper of a similar standard to that of May 2016, and 95% deemed its difficulty level appropriate. Clarity of wording and the presentation of the paper were considered very good to excellent by the majority of teachers. More feedback would be welcome in the next session. Teachers' comments are needed on texts and questions which worked successfully as well as on those which caused difficulty. So many thanks to all those who took the time to submit their comments.

Overall, this session's paper seems accessible in terms of topics and text types (except for Q2 - please see below). At the top end of the range, there were some focused and creative responses that presented ideas methodically and intelligently with very few significant errors. At the bottom end, there were some responses that demonstrated lack of coherence as well as several basic errors in simple and complex structures.

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

The 'report' text type: In the majority of Q2 scripts marked, the report was produced ineffectively: text type read more of a reflective blog or an informal e-mail/letter with so much personalization and many embellishments.

Development of ideas and parameters of the question: In many cases, intellectual responses were produced with coherent and relevant ideas expressed clearly, but they lacked the lucid explanations and supporting details to award the top of the range marks. Those particularly were observed in questions 3, 4 and 5. In other cases, many candidates failed to meet the focused parameters of Q1 (please see below) which resulted in marking scripts down on message.

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

General command of the language: The handling of language was generally effective. Better able candidates produced excellent command of language: varied and sophisticated vocabulary, effective simple and complex structures, idiomatic expressions at times as well as minor errors that did not hamper communication, which in effect resulted in awarding 9 or 10 for Criterion A. On the other hand, we still have the mediocre and below average candidates whose language is deemed effective despite the inaccuracies made. It was in few cases only that inaccuracies hampered communication to award 4 and below.

General handling of text types: It appears that the essential conventions of the text types have been well taught. Candidates were able to produce recognizable text types with effective conventions in all questions, except for Q2 "the report".

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

All questions were attempted by candidates with questions 1, 3 and 5 being the most popular. Questions 2 and 4 were by the far the least ones attempted.

Question 1: Cultural diversity – Blog entry

This question proved to be the second or third popular question and seemed accessible in terms of the text type and topic set. Many candidates were able to reflect on their own school experience and explain whether home-schooling would have been beneficial for them or not, using coherent and well-supported ideas throughout. However, only a few managed to link the two aspects above to "academic performance" and "motivation". Many candidates were prevented the top of the range marks as they digressed into social skills, time management and other irrelevant topics when reflecting on own school experience vs. home-schooling.

Almost all candidates attempting this question produced authentic and effective blogs. 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, a few entries read like essays without any awareness of readers revealed.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – Report

This question was one of least popular questions, most likely due to the text type set. Almost all candidates were able to clearly explain the reasons why the cultural element was missing from the excursion and suggest reasonable to effective changes. However, in the majority of those, the report was produced ineffectively.

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

Question 3: Health – Talk

This question appeared the most accessible amongst all candidates due to (i) the very accessible topic of lack of sleep among students – something all candidates can relate to – and (ii) the 'talk' as a well-practised text type. Many candidates attempting this question were awarded high marks on Criterion B as they managed to explain coherently the importance of sleep and suggest ways to improve sleeping habits. In several cases, however, candidates failed to develop ideas effectively and support their opinions with concrete and ludic explanations or examples.

The majority of talks produced used the register and tone needed, maintained awareness of audience throughout and used rhetorical devices effectively. In some cases, however, the introduction did not seem to catch audience's attention, while in others no clear strong impression was left in the end- both cases resulted in marking 'Format' down.

Question 4: Leisure – Leaflet

This was one of the two least attempted questions despite its accessible topic. It was noticed this session, though, that a slightly larger percentage of candidates attempted the leaflet compared to previous sessions – in those cases, leaflets produced were effective and generally authentic with an engaging title provided as well as formal features and practical aspects of such a text type clearly identified.

Message was handled generally well with candidates producing relevant and lucid details about the film club to promote it. Similar to Q3 above, ideas were not developed adequately and effectively to award the top of the range marks at times.

Question 5: Science and technology – e-mail

This is probably the second most popular task due again to the accessible e-mail required and the topic set. Many candidates produced brilliant responses, reflecting on the enjoyable part of the application and effectively detailing the problems faced along with lucid suggestions to improve. However, there seemed a good number of scrips that again failed to meet all parameters, thus focusing on problems only without referring to any explicit recommendations, which resulted in marking the script down for relevance.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Effective e-mails were produced at large, but in some cases, the major problem was inability to maintain a formal register.

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 effective paragraphing and cohesive devices to structure ideas.

Teachers are advised to:

- frequently address significant grammar errors.
- practise with candidates how to develop ideas coherently and effectively.
- practise with their students all text types stipulated in the Guide.

International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional