# English B

## Overall grade boundaries

**Higher level**

| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range - | 0 - 13 | 14 - 29 | 30 - 44 | 45 - 58 | 59 - 72 | 73 - 85 | 86 - 100 |

**Standard level**

| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range - | 0 - 13 | 14 - 27 | 28 - 45 | 46 - 58 | 59 - 74 | 75 - 87 | 88 - 100 |

## Higher level and 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 at both levels demonstrated a command of the language that was at least competent, and were capable of maintaining a coherent conversation about fairly serious subjects. This is in line, in general terms, with performance in previous sessions.

As noted in previous reports, teachers can help their students to perform better by (i) focusing attention on each student's typical persistent errors in grammar, pronunciation or intonation, and (ii) by encouraging active participation in discussion, with a particular emphasis on viewing all sides of an issue.

# Candidate performance against each criterion

## Higher Level

### Criterion A - Productive skills

On average, command of the language was quite sound, although there was evidently a wide range from fluent and authentic at the top end, through to stumbling and fragmented at the bottom.

The best candidates used language expressively and vividly, creating lively and interesting communication. Such candidates very often displayed a wide and effective range of vocabulary, including appropriate idioms or precise technical vocabulary. However, even the best sometimes displayed minor recurrent errors, such as failing to pronounce necessary endings properly, such as '-ed'. This rarely affected meaning significantly, but left an 'untidy' impression.

At the bottom of the range, a few candidates seemed to have serious problems even with the basics of grammar; they might communicate by using fragments of sentences, but this required an 'effort of translation' on the part of the listener. Such fragmentation of grammar sometimes existed alongside a rather more developed range of vocabulary. Such cases suggested that the candidates had picked up relevant vocabulary, but had lacked methodical training in grammar. More generally, many of the weaker candidates had noticeable difficulties with pronunciation - L1 influence was evident. Again, methodical correction is required to improve clarity of pronunciation.

### Criterion B - Interactive and receptive skills

Most candidates maintained a coherent conversation with reasonable ease. Very few cases were observed where a candidate had evidently failed to grasp a question, although clearly teachers often adapt the difficulty of questions to the known abilities of each candidate.

In general, candidates presented fairly well-structured presentations, and explained their points of view quite clearly and methodically in the interaction. While most candidates across the range responded in some detail to the questions asked, relatively few took a really 'active' role, by exploring the topic in more depth, or by initiating new aspects of the subject through association with the original question. The more that candidates can be accustomed to arguing vigorously and freely in class, the more likely they will be to demonstrate skilful handling of complex ideas in the Individual Interview.

Teachers are advised to help their students to interact more actively by making sure that the questions asked (i) are open and challenging; and (b) are not restricted to eliciting factual information or minor details of the photograph. They should stimulate their students to express opinions and arguments, and be prepared to debate these.

Standard Level

Criterion A - Productive skills

The general level of language observed was satisfactory, just like November 2013, with most candidates having the ability to maintain a reasonable level of communication. Only few candidates were able to produce accurate and effective language fluently.

Although the majority of candidates attempted to use a good to wide range of vocabulary, benefitting apparently from what was discussed inside the classroom about the topics addressed, in many cases those words and expressions were either ineffectively or incomprehensibly produced due to L1 influence, and intonation seriously hampered communication. At times, well-selected photographs with rich graphic text helped generate a varied range of vocabulary and structures.

Some candidates seemed competent enough to produce language with the minimum number of errors observed, while the majority presented either flawed or largely fragmented structures with errors ranging from subject-verb agreement and singular / plural forms to using past tenses and prepositions.

Criterion B - Interactive and receptive skills

Overall, candidates were able to express ideas and opinions independently, maintaining a coherent conversation. Weaker ones, however, required further prompting throughout. Fewer candidates this session seemed to reveal an ability to map their ideas in Part 1 methodically and clearly as they went on detailing 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.

Just like HL above, some candidates were prevented from providing full and active responses due to questions targeting factual information, focusing only on the details of the photograph or them not being open enough to elicit personal viewpoints and opinions. It was felt at times that some candidates did not know what to say, which resulted in an unnatural flow of conversation.

# Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Improving feedback to teachers:

Previous Subject Reports have mentioned the concern that "... some teachers do not see either the 2/IAF feedback or, indeed, this Subject report." There is some evidence that there has been more active response to suggestions made in the 2/IAF feedback, and a number of examiners have congratulated schools for correcting problems noted in previous years.

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Handling of interview procedure:

Teachers should make sure that the visual stimulus is a real photograph. Graphic images such as drawings or Photo-shopped collages, however interesting, are not acceptable. What's more, captions should be interesting and stimulating for the candidate. A few centres just provided simple titles (e.g. 'healthy food' or 'playing football'), thus failing to provide their candidates with a lively caption which could be discussed.

Genuinely interactive questioning:

Teachers "should encourage the student to express opinions, engage in a real conversation as well as lead to further understanding of the topic" in Part 2. If 'real conversation' is vital in the Individual Interview, real conversation needs to be practised as a constant feature of work in class.

Timing:

There appear to have been few cases of recordings which ran significantly over the stipulated maximum, albeit with a few exceptions. The most common error was to fail to interrupt candidates whose presentation ran over the limit of 4 minutes. It is both acceptable and necessary to start the interaction at that point.

Teachers' question technique:

A few teachers still repeat the basic faults either of focusing exclusively on describing the photograph, or of asking a list of disconnected factual 'examination' type questions. Good questioning involves stimulating response from and interaction with the candidate, not checking on isolated facts.

Marking standards:

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

## Further comments

Exploration of Anglophone culture:

As noted in N13, quite a few teachers did not relate the aspect of the Option under discussion to the culture of the target language; i.e. to any Anglophone culture. This requirement is perfectly clear in the Subject Guide. Specifically, in the Part 1 presentation "The student describes the photograph and relates it to the option and the target culture(s)." (SL p.52; HL p.59); and, in addition, the discussion in Part 2 should "probe more deeply into the student's understanding of the culture(s) reflected in the material" (SL p.53; HL p.60).

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## Higher 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 - 18 | 19 - 21 | 22 - 25 |

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates' performance in the written assignment was generally good. Candidates seem to have enjoyed the task and most schools and candidates were aware of the requirements of the written assignment, which resulted in candidates submitting a range of appropriate assignments for assessment. Few assignments, however, were termed very good or excellent. The reasons for this were mainly poor rationales and content that departed from that of the original work. The literary works chosen for the assignment were suitable, but the candidates' treatment of those works relied heavily sometimes on inventiveness. Examples of this are Animal Farm's Snowball reappearing at the end of the novel to incite another revolution, Lord of the Flies' Jack regretting his behavior on the island, or Of Mice and Men's Lennie being aware that George was going to shoot him.

Some candidates re-told the plot instead of choosing a specific focus for their assignment, which generally limited their mark in Criterion B to the 5-6 band. Re-telling the plot should be avoided; candidates should reflect on their understanding of the literary work and choose specific areas to explore further in their assignments.

Examiners noted that some candidates wrote below the word limit, which meant they were penalised under Criterion A.  A few wrote more than the stipulated 600 words, which meant that examiners stopped reading when they reached the upper limit.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Language

Most candidates showed an adequate, sometimes effective, command of language in spite of many inaccuracies. A few candidates presented texts that were incoherent. Even if the command of language was just adequate, the message was mostly conveyed. Vocabulary was generally varied and used accurately, and complex structures were somewhat effectively used in many assignments; consequently, students gained relatively high marks in this criterion. There were, however, frequent errors in the use of narrative tenses, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, the formulation of a sentence, and phrasal verbs.

Similar to student performance in this criterion in November 2013, linguistic appropriacy was often an issue, especially when candidates either failed to mention they were emulating the style of an author/ character or provide examples of that style in their rationales.

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## Criterion B: Content

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

A number of candidates scored low marks in Criterion B because they hardly linked their tasks to the literary work. The descriptor focusing on organization usually pulled the weaker candidates up to a higher level. However, the most common reasons for scoring low marks in this criterion were re-telling the plot, and lack of development or repetition of ideas.

## Criterion C: Format

Format was the most successfully executed part of the written assignment. Most candidates seemed to be aware of the conventions of their chosen text type. Only a few formative essays were submitted this session, but there was a number of essays disguised in the form of newspaper or magazine articles.

New endings, extra chapters inserted into the storyline and book reviews generally did not work well. Diary entries were successful if the tone and style of the text clearly supported the notion of personal reflection, and not just a narrative that became a summary of events, which was clearly noticeable when the task was based on a novel or a play.

The most problematic area when choosing a text type was point of view. For example, when the original work is written in the first person, writing an entry of the protagonist's diary, especially if it addresses a theme or general idea, adds little to the literary work. In addition, there was some confusion where an alternative ending to the literary work was concerned. Many candidates included introductory paragraphs to contextualize their new endings, but those were out of context and affected candidates' marks in this criterion negatively.

## Criterion D: Rationale

As was the case in the previous session, examiners flagged the rationale as the least successfully accomplished part of the assignment. Candidates, in general, found it difficult to choose an aim for their assignments, and some tasks departed from the 'aim' specified in the rationale. In most cases, candidates also failed to link their tasks to the literary work and summarized their tasks instead. Others concentrated on explaining how their aims were achieved without providing appropriate links between the original work and the assignment. In a few cases, it was difficult to discern why candidates had chosen specific angles for their assignments; their aims were quite vague. Most candidates were clear on which text type they were using to complete their assignment, but failed to show how the text type would inform the content of the assignment.

The more successful rationales specified the part of the literary work that was included in the assignment and linked it to its content while commenting on how text type, audience, register and style helped them to achieve their specified aims.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should advise students to:

- limit their assignment to the prescribed minimum and maximum number of words (500-600) and to write the exact number of words at the end of the task.
- choose a text type that will help them achieve their aim(s).
- 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.
- develop the ideas presented in the rationale in their tasks.
- use a range of language appropriate to text type and communicative purpose in their tasks.
- create an assignment that is connected to the literary text(s).
- avoid the dangers of verbatim copying from the literary work and clearly to indicate where the copied parts appear.
- focus on contextualizing their writing, for this would greatly enhance their written work and help them to write and organize their points effectively.
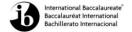
## Further comments

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

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

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

As of May 2015, a formal (literary) essay is not an acceptable text type for the written assignment. In addition, written assignments must be word-processed, not handwritten, and will be e-marked (please refer to the Language B Guide and The Handbook of Procedures, 2015).

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# Standard level written assignment

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range - | 0 - 3 | 4 - 7 | 8 - 12 | 13 - 15 | 16 - 19 | 20 - 22 | 23 - 25 |

This is the last session of the Written Assignment in its present form and so some of the feedback given below will not apply next year.  However, many of the general principles remain the same.  Teachers are asked to familiarize themselves with all the changes. They should meet the new requirements and should check the new assessment criteria in the Language B Guide (2015).

This report may seem to focus on what was not done well but this session there were some very good scripts. These selected relevant ideas, attitudes and information from the source texts and used them in a coherent, convincing and realistic task.

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

The source texts:

Typical problems were:

- Some source texts were not in English and sometimes only two source texts were submitted.
- The English of some internet sources contained many errors.
- Some schools did not include any printed sources.  When a web address was given, this often turned out to be a very long article with no indication of which part the candidate had used.
- Sometimes one of the texts was difficult for the candidate to use due to its length, style or content. One examiner commented that 'teachers should see that the source texts are suitable for SL students.' It is not enough that the source deals with the same topic.
- The source texts were not on a core topic.

Choice of text type:

Typical text types used were letter, article, speech, brochure, email, blog and interview.

Although they are permitted, care must be taken when using diary and the essay as text types since they are difficult to contextualise convincingly.  A diary is usually read only by the writer, and the essay is usually a pedagogic exercise to be read only by the teacher. It is therefore hard to give realistic aims to these text types, and this must be considered if choosing these.

Having said this, this session there was a diary entry which was successfully contextualised. The diary writer was an exhausted teacher who used her diary to express her distress and so overcome it. Moreover, she hoped that one day her children would read her diary and realise what she had been going through at that time. This was certainly convincing!

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

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A - Language

This was generally well done and all examiners commented on this. The highest band may be awarded to language that is 'effective despite some inaccuracies' and uses 'a range of vocabulary accurately with some errors'. As in previous sessions, high marks were achieved for this criterion.

A range of appropriate vocabulary was used, and good candidates used relevant lexis (but not whole sentences) from the sources.

The third requirement in this criterion is clear language. One examiner said that sometimes whole paragraphs lacked cohesion. They were 'chaotic' and did not use effective punctuation. All candidates should read through their work before handing it in and ensure they change any parts which are obscure.

### Criterion B - Content

The aims given in the rationale were generally achieved. Most candidates used two sources, though very few used all three. Quoting from the sources was not always done correctly. Some copied from the sources without acknowledging them.

As in previous sessions, the use of the source texts discriminated the strong and the weak candidates. One examiner commented that weaker students repeated information from the sources without using it in a coherent argument. Another suggested that to avoid copying, students should paraphrase sentences in the sources and added that this skill should be practised in class. Using information from the sources and incorporating it coherently are skills shown only by strong candidates.

Two examiners stressed the importance of using the sources before taking a more original approach. One noted that students should 'use the information and attitudes of the source texts first, so that then they may be creative'.

### Criterion C - Format

Usually the text types were appropriately realised, and marks were high for this criterion.

As explained above, care must be taken if selecting an essay or a diary entry as text types for this task.

However, the text types were generally realised well, though one examiner noted that some began as one type, for example an article, but then turned into an essay.

Note that from May 2015 a requirement in Criterion A is 'How appropriate is the choice of text type to the task?' so the text type should fit the chosen task.

Emails were generally convincing but some blogs were difficult to recognise and students should make more effort to contextualise them. This can be done by addressing the readers directly, by asking for their comments and by referring to earlier posts in the blog.

One examiner suggested more use of debates in class so that when the speech is chosen it will convey a clearer sense of audience.

### Criterion D - Rationale

In general, this has improved and most candidates now know how to include the required elements.

However, weak candidates did not state their aims clearly. Average candidates mentioned the aims and choice of text type, but did not cover the use of sources or how the aims were achieved.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Please follow the new instructions carefully and familiarise the students with the new assessment criteria.

Please note:

The rationale:

- The rationale is longer (150-200 words) and must include -
- The subject of the assignment
- A brief description of each of the sources
- The aims of the task
- How the aims are achieved eg. Choice of text type, how the register and style engage the audience etc.

The source texts:

- The source texts must be on one or more of the core topics.
- There must be three (minimum) or four (maximum) source texts, and one may be audio/audio-visual.

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- The sources are chosen by the student in consultation with the teacher. Many internet texts contain errors in grammar and vocabulary, and some students then repeat these mistakes. Teachers should warn students that not everything in English on the internet is well written.
- Quotations from the sources in the task must be clearly identified by the use of quotation marks.
- The sources must be referenced. Any of the usual, easily recognised formats of referencing can be used.  The sources themselves should not be sent to the IB.

## Further comments

Since the beginning of the Written Assignment a major problem has been the following of the instructions.  The examiners have done their best to assess the candidates' real ability, but this is difficult when the requirements are not met.

The Written Assignment now has different criteria and requirements, and teachers should familiarise themselves and their students with both.

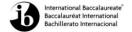## Higher level paper one

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range -** | 0 - 10 | 11 - 21 | 22 - 29 | 30 - 36 | 37 - 43 | 44 - 50 | 51 - 60 |

## General comments

The IB Assessment Centre would like to express its gratitude to the teachers who have taken the time to complete the G2 form. Teachers' comments and suggestions are valuable to both paper setters and the Grade Award team, and are taken into consideration during Grade Award.

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

Many examiners commented on the difficulty some candidates still find in the True/False with justification questions. The commonest cause of a zero mark remains  the  failure  to  follow both  parts  of  the  rubric,  which  requires the correct 'tick' and a quotation that is precise and concise. The rubric requires that the quotation be brief, however, it still has to convey the exact reason why the statement was deemed true or false; the full justification. In other words, all parts of the statement must be justified. For example, 'check' in Q17 was required to justify 'see'.

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A number of candidates had difficulty in handling questions that demanded understanding of the whole text or the author's purpose. Q57, in particular, posed a problem for some candidates who thought the style of the text 'nostalgic' instead of 'humorous'. Another problematic area was ability to infer meaning from the text, a skill that is required at higher level.

As for references, candidates had difficulty in determining what the underlined words in the questions referred to. A good number of candidates provided references in light of their understanding of the passage, instead of locating the appropriate reference in the text.

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

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

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

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

Qs 1& 2: Very few candidates answered these two questions wrong, especially Q1. The mistakes in Q2, which were infrequent, pertained to failing to include 'leave the water' in the answer.

Qs 3-6: These were mostly answered correctly, with Qs 3 and 5 posing some problems to candidates, who gave A and E for Q3 and Q5 respectively.

Qs 7-10: Although the set was deemed easy, a good number of candidates surprisingly gave 'imitate' instead of 'resemble' for Q9. Few wrote 'changes' instead of 'dangers' for Q7, or 'beach' instead of 'sea' for Q10.

Q 11: Average to good candidates found little difficulty in this question. A number of candidates, though, chose B instead of C.

Q 12: Although the question was accessible to candidates, a good number was unable to determine where the answer lied and included 'to look at' as part of the proposed solution. Few copied the whole part from 'a global response…' to '… the oceans' or gave 'a global response… the problem' as the answer.

Qs 13- 15: The set was generally accessible to most candidates, with a few candidates answering Q13 wrong. Q14 was answered correctly by most, and the most common error in Q15 was adding 'into' to 'blossomed' (question asked for a word) or copying the whole sentence: "social media have blossomed into news sources".

Q 16: The question was answered correctly by most candidates, but some gave either A or D instead of B.

Qs 17-20: These seemed to be the most demanding set in the paper, especially questions 18 and 20. A number of candidates forgot 'if possible' in Q18, and a good number chose 'Consumers will become better at spotting fakes, rumours and conjecture' as the justification for Q20.

Qs 21-25: The set was deemed of medium difficulty by the awarding team. Candidates, however, seemed to err on the side of specificity and tried to provide details that were not required for the answers.

Q 26: Average to good candidates found little difficulty with this question. It was surprising, though, to see 'pendulum' as the answer.  Like Q15, a number of candidates copied the whole sentence instead of writing only 'swing'.

Qs 27-31: The set proved to be somewhat difficult. Very few candidates got all 5 correct. Many gave G instead of I for Q27, K instead of B for Q29 and L instead of K for Q31.

Qs 32 & 33: Few candidates failed to give the correct answers for these questions.

Qs 34 & 35: Average to good candidates found little difficulty with this set. A few, however, gave A and D respectively as the answers to the questions.

Q 36: this question's difficulty lies in the inclusion of 'for'. Many candidates either gave 'cries out' without 'for' or copied the whole sentence.

Q 37: The set was of medium difficulty. Most candidates managed to get either 2 or 3 out of the 4 correct. The most elusive one was G.

Q 38: Few candidates failed to give the correct answer for this question.

Qs 39-42: Good candidates found little difficulty with this set. A number of candidates, however, gave C and G instead of D and J as the answers for Q39 and Q40. Few gave H as the answer for Q42.

Qs 43-45: These proved to be accessible for a good number of candidates. Most candidates gave the correct answer for Q43. Some, as in previous questions, copied the whole sentence. Very few gave 'oppression'. As for Q44 and Q45, most candidates either provided the whole sentence for Q44, or failed to include 'propelled by' in the answer for Q45.

Qs 46-49: The set was somewhat demanding, with the exception of Q47. A number of candidates failed to include one of the occasions required for the mark in Q46. As for Q48, many candidates failed to include 'Sunday mornings' in their answers.

Qs 50-52: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with these questions. Some got Q50 wrong and this seems to have affected their answers in Q51 and Q52.

Qs 53-55: Good candidates found little difficulty with this set. Some, however, failed to identify the required phrases/ answers. 'Sky being a rancher' was one of the most common wrong answers for Q53, 'running' was the most common wrong one for Q53, and 'boys' for Q55.

Qs 56 & 56: A good number of candidates got both questions correct. The most common error was providing A instead of C as the answer for Q56.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Handwriting remains a serious problem. Teachers should advise students to pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses.
- In questions where a letter is required, students MUST write their answer clearly, for unclear answers cannot be awarded the mark.  Among ambiguous answers are C/G, E/F, E/L, I/J, and B/D.
- Students should be warned against providing multiple answers for short-answer questions; this does not demonstrate understanding of the question and is, therefore, not awarded the mark. Students MUST cross out clearly anything they do not wish to be marked.
- Students should be taught how to handle the True / False with justification questions: a tick is required, all parts of the statement must be justified, and the crucial words in the quotation used to justify a true or a false statement must not be omitted.
- Teachers are advised to educate students how to determine the effect of context on meaning. This will help prepare students for reference, vocabulary and gap filling exercises.
- Teachers should emphasise the importance of judicious consideration of the requirements of each question to determine when a problem could result from providing 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.
- When an answer is written outside the box provided in the Question and Answer booklet, the candidate must indicate where the answer appears (for example, 'please see attached paper').

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range - | 0 - 6 | 7 - 13 | 14 - 20 | 21 - 26 | 27 - 33 | 34 - 39 | 40 - 45 |

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## General comments

Teachers' feedback in the G2 forms is always essential, and their comments are welcome both on the positive aspects as well as on those which caused difficulty.  All comments are taken into account when awarding the grades, setting future papers and in compiling this report, and many thanks go to all those who have sent in their ideas.

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

As in many earlier sessions, the examiners mentioned the True/False with justification questions (24 to 27) as the question type which posed most problems.   All the information in the statement must be covered by the quotation chosen as the justification.

Candidates also had difficulties with vocabulary matching questions (8-10), the reference questions (14-18), the gap fill (28-30) and the paragraph summaries (33-36).  These question types appear regularly and so time should be devoted to them in class.

Candidates should follow the traditional advice to 'Read the question carefully.'  In short, success in Paper 1 depends on understanding the questions as well as understanding the texts.

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

It is clear that some schools are teaching the techniques needed for specific question types effectively, and the marks in the higher range confirmed this.  The stronger candidates tackled all the question types fairly well.

In general, the short answer questions, the find the true statements and the multiple choice questions were done well.

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

Q1- Most candidates had at least 3 out of 4 correct.  However, many put H instead of C.

Q2 - Of little difficulty to all candidates.

Q3 - Many candidates answered this incorrectly, often putting 'Toulouse'.

Qs 4-7 - These are of easy to medium difficulty, and average to strong candidates had all correct.

Qs 8-10 - Vocabulary in context.  These were of average difficulty except Q9 which was difficult. Many candidates gave H instead of C.

Qs 11-13 - 11 and 13 are medium.  Q12 is more difficult and several candidates gave C for this.

Qs 14-18 - Reference questions.  16 and 18 are medium - 14, 15 and 17 are more difficult. Weak and even average candidates found these demanding, as in every session.

Qs 19-20 - Of medium difficulty.

Qs 21-23 - Of medium difficulty.

Qs 24-27 - T/F + Justification. As always, these questions are difficult because candidates have to a) get both parts correct and b) give a justification that covers all and only the information in the statement.  For example, Q 24 needed 'claims' and Q 25 needed 'vowed'. Q 26 was easier, but Q27 had very few correct answers.

Weak candidates paraphrased the justification and did not use a quotation from the text.

Qs 28-30 - gap fill (words). All examiners commented that these turned out to be surprisingly difficult, especially Q28.

Qs 31-32 - Of medium difficulty.

Qs 33-36 - Paragraph summaries. Medium, though many put E instead of I for Q36.  Probably the words 'acute crises' suggested urgency and led to the choice of E.

Qs 37-38 - Of medium difficulty.

Q 39 - Medium to difficult since the phrase had to be exact.

Q 40 - Of medium difficulty.

Qs 41-42 - Most candidates had these correct.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Practice the different question types with your students so that they learn the strategies for answering them. This applies particularly to the True / False with justification and the grammar reference questions.
- Candidates should answer every question. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers, and so no answer should be left blank.
- Candidates should read every question carefully.
- When a phrase from the text is required, it is usually short and should be no more or less than the information given in the question. An example is Q39, where ''supported' is needed in order to match 'gets help' in the question.
- If one word is required, as in Qs 37 and 38, then only one word should be given.  A phrase, which may well include the word, is not given a mark.

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- Whole sentences are not needed in the short answers. So for Q2 and Q3 ('Which company…?'), it is not necessary to write 'The company is…'.  The name of the company is sufficient.
- Make the answer clear.  For answers requiring a letter in a box, candidates should never create a mixture of two letters. This often happens with the letters E and F, or with A and D.
- If the letter is outside but next to the box, it must be clear.  If it is on a separate sheet, this must be indicated (for example, "please see attached paper").
- Use of three dots (...) to indicate omitted words.  The best advice is never to use this. The required quotations in the True / False + justification questions are never long, and so the use of dots is not necessary.
- Candidates should not underline parts of their answer.  This is never necessary and can lead to a loss of marks if the incorrect words are underlined.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

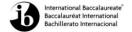| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range - | 0 - 7 | 8 - 15 | 16 - 20 | 21 - 26 | 27 - 33 | 34 - 39 | 40 - 45 |

## General comments

There were clear indications that, in general, candidates had been competently prepared to deal with the paper (see 'Exam technique', under 'Areas for which candidates had been well prepared', below).

That said, many candidates displayed weaknesses; typically, persistent flaws in details of grammar and phrasing, and / or a lack of focus and complex development of ideas. In general, then, the performance of this cohort was competent or very competent, but not outstanding.

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

Recurrent language errors:

There continue to be noticeable errors in grammar, phrasing and usage, often in recognizable forms consistent with L1 interference. Typically these involve poor agreement in the use of pronouns, weak control of tense structures, and inaccurate prepositions. However, such weaknesses were somewhat less noticeable this year, and tended to interfere less with the clear transmission of meaning.

Improvement in the handling of sentence structure, noted last November, was also apparent in this session. Fewer scripts were marked by the typical 'run-on' sentence which continues for half a page or more through a long series of commas.

Recommendation: Teachers should make students aware of their individual 'most common errors', and encourage them to review and self-correct.

Text types:

The unpopularity of Qs 2 & 4 may, as suggested above, be because candidates were uncomfortable with the less conventional text types of 'guidelines' and 'embedded' interviews'. Both these forms require quite complex planning and organisation, which are not quite the same as the kind of thinking required for straightforward explanatory prose, expressing ideas and opinions.

Recommendation: Teachers should ensure that they give full attention to studying and practicing all of the text types listed in the Subject Guide.

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

Exam technique in general:

Candidates appear to have been competently prepared to deal with the paper. This view is based on three indicators -  (i) very few scripts were over-written -  most candidates wrote less than the maximum, carefully, (ii) text-types were usually well handled, at least in terms of basic, recognizable features, and (iii) the majority of the responses stuck fairly closely to the required content; they remained reasonably relevant to the task. At least, all of this was the case in terms of the two most popular tasks (Q3 and Q5, which accounted for three-quarters of the scripts).

Handling of argument:

Reports for the last three years have drawn attention to weaknesses in the way that arguments were constructed. It is pleasing to note that some improvement in this respect could be noted this year. Such improvement was reasonably clear in the responses to Q5 (even if this question only accounted for some 20% of responses). However, teachers should strive to train their students in the skill of clear, sequential argument. Attention is drawn to the recommendation under Q5, that students should be encouraged to make full use of the principle of rebuttal - arguments are strengthened if they acknowledge and then deliberately rebut any counter arguments.

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

The most striking feature in terms of the take-up of questions is that Q3 (the article in the school magazine about 'unbalanced diet' and suggestions for improvement) was by far the most popular, and accounted for a large number of the responses.

The second most popular, Q5 (the speech for or against the dam), presumably appealed because it was a straightforward 'argument' task; while the third most popular, Q1 (the review of the international food event), may have appeared attractive because it is easy to talk about stereotype cultural dishes.

The other two may have appeared intrinsically difficult - Q2 because it involved 'guidelines', a text type with which many candidates may not have been familiar; and Q4 because it involved the inherently complex text type of the 'embedded' interview.

Because of this, the comments below are most relevant to questions 3 and 5 when in considering the overall performance.

## Section A

Q1 - Review, in school magazine

The few who attempted this task usually did it competently  -  they provided sufficient sense of 'range', but often less on 'information' about the dishes, choosing simply to say how lovely everything was. Some were quite sound on describing the event itself, in 'review' mode, but sometimes at the expense of the required detailed aspects.

Recommendation: Suggest to students that it is usually good practice to support any general statement with relevant concrete examples.

Q2 - Guidelines

In addition to the problem of being unfamiliar with 'guidelines' (although a very few did indeed adopt appropriate layout and tone), it seems that candidates did not really grasp what was meant by 'fit in' and 'not give offense' - there were some pretty irrelevant details about general descriptions of life in the home culture (e.g. traffic problems in Lima). It may be that the apparently accessible subject of 'customs in your country' needed more experience and insight than candidates actually possess.

Recommendation: Make sure that students are skilled at checking whether their ideas are relevant to the specified task, or not.

Q3 - Article, in school magazine

It is noted that 'health problems in school' was the essence of Q3 in the N13 paper (although that question was about health problems caused by computers). Most candidates coped with the general thrust of the task, particularly with suggestions about a more balanced diet. However, (i) many candidates seemed to be vague about how diet might affect 'performance in school'; or, (ii) more seriously, drifted off into general comments about 'healthy living in general', or 'eating disorders such as anorexia'. So, responses were often sound enough in general terms, but weak in consistent focus on the task.

Recommendation: Remind students to give full and consistent attention to the required aspects of the task.

Q4 - Report of an interview

Of the very few candidates who attempted this task, some handled the 'embedded interview' form quite competently, giving the context of the interview clearly, explaining the interviewee's ideas lucidly and inserting quotations effectively. However, there was a general trend towards dealing poorly, or even not at all, with the concept of 'disabled sport'. Perhaps this whole subject area was rather too far outside the candidates' knowledge or experience?

Recommendation: train students to focus embedded interviews precisely and clearly on the required central issue.

Q5 - Speech at public meeting

Usually, candidates correctly took a clear stance for or against the dam project, and used appropriate rhetorical techniques of argument and address to present their case reasonably effectively. A general weakness was an inability to use rebuttal effectively - many scripts were pure rants for or against, with the other side of the argument either ignored or dismissed with contempt.

Overall, then, most scripts were competent, but few were really incisive or convincing.

Recommendation: Encourage students to rebut opposing arguments in order to strengthen the case they are presenting.

## Section B

Q6 - 'personal response'

The vast majority addressed the key issue ('whether or not television is educational'), and expressed a point of view. Most paid at least some attention to both aspects of the issue ('educational' and 'passing the time'), but only a few came up with any really perceptive arguments, e.g. defining what is meant by 'educational' in the first place, or debating whether 'passing the time' means the same as 'wasting time'. Explanation of ideas and points of view was usually reasonably clear, but there was a certain lack of evident critical thinking.

Recommendation: Stress to students that they should not waste the limited words available in this task on (i) copying out the stimulus quote verbatim (a simple paraphrase is sufficient); nor on (ii) establishing the text type (e.g. irrelevant chat to show 'email') - there are no marks whatsoever available for the handling of the text type.

# Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Refer to specific recommendations made at the end of most sections above.

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## Standard level paper two

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range -** | 0 - 4 | 5 - 8 | 9 - 12 | 13 - 15 | 16 - 19 | 20 - 22 | 23 - 25 |

## General comments

The International Baccalaureate would like to thank the teachers who completed the G2 form for their feedback. As usual, all teachers are encouraged to submit their feedback in future sessions.

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 the limited to adequate command of language as well as some candidates' inability to express ideas coherently and effectively.

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

Language errors:

Just like in previous sessions, L1 interference seemed to be one main cause of many errors produced and which obscured meaning to a great extent at times. Some of the grammar errors observed were past tenses, subject-verb agreement, singular-plural forms, wrong word order, verb forms and spelling. Very basic errors persisted in some scripts that showed, however, a good range of both structures and vocabulary. Although the better able candidates continued to reveal an ability to use sophisticated language and a wide range of vocabulary with few significant errors, examiners commented on the several awkward structures in the majority of other scripts. When coupled with inappropriate punctuation marks, such structures hampered message to a great extent at times.

Planning and paragraphing:

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 (like Q1 and Q4) 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.

Handwriting:

Handwriting was a major issue, as many scripts were extremely difficult to read, while others were very messy with words crossed out and corrections written in. Clear writing and presentation will become even more important now that all scripts are scanned and electronically marked.

Length:

Examiners reported that many scripts this session failed to meet the minimum number of words (250). In all doubtful cases the words are counted, and so candidates must make sure they do not fall short of the limit by a few words and thus incur a penalty.

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

Format and text types:

Examiners observed that candidates seemed well prepared for Criterion C. Most of the candidates produced effective conventions of the text types required while maintaining appropriate tone and register. Many of the articles produced in Q1, pamphlets in Q3, speeches in Q4, and blog entries in Q5 were brilliantly authentic with basic elements of register and style deployed successfully even when candidates failed to address the message of the task as precisely as needed,
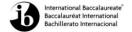
Supporting details and personal examples:

In many cases, it was noticed that candidates effectively used personal experience, especially in Qs2, 3 and 5, to support their argument. There was also an attempt to justify points raised using real or fictitious examples which when clearly linked in context, resulted in a coherent and methodically developed response.

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

All questions this session were attempted by candidates with Qs1, 2 and 5 being the most popular probably due to the accessible text type (especially in the case of an article and a blog entry) or candidates' familiarity with the topics addressed. On the other hand, Qs3 & 4 proved to be the least popular and were attempted by a lower percentage of candidates generally successfully.

Question 1 - Cultural Diversity - Article

This has proved to be one of the most popular but also demanding questions. In many cases, the question was handled poorly and ineffectively. While candidates had no serious problems producing a recognizable and appropriate article, they failed to provide coherent responses supported with examples and lucid explanations, and thus ended up either listing irrelevant ideas (how younger generations nowadays seem different from the older generation in the past) or listing very general and repetitive ideas that lacked coherence.

The very few outstanding articles had minor errors, but some lacked the effective paragraphing and cohesive devices at times. Almost all articles produced were accompanied with a relevant title and had a distinct introduction, development and conclusion with a somehow lively style.

Question 2 - Customs and Traditions- Essay

In many cases, this question was also handled poorly despite its popularity. Many candidates focused on fashion in general with few or no reference whatsoever to either individuality or conformity.  Such general or irrelevant responses were marked down under "relevance" in Criterion B. It is highly likely that candidates failed to notice the key words in the question and focused only on 'teen fashion', a popular and familiar topic to them, especially when coupled with an accessible text type.

The very few good responses managed to cleverly present a clear stance and explore conformity and / or individuality while providing personal and interesting supporting details. In some of the other cases where candidates revealed adequate understanding of the question, it was either language hampering communication or lack of development that prevented awarding top of the band marks. Just like in previous sessions, stylistic devices seemed the weakest convention in the majority of scripts.

Question 3 - Health- Pamphlet

Despite the accessibility of both the topic and the text type, this question proved to be the least popular among all. Evidenced from examiner's comments, candidates had no problem producing an effective pamphlet (going to the extreme at times to reveal unique artistic talents in the layout!). The problem in some scripts was candidates' failure to address both aspects: dangers of smoking and tips on how to give up this habit, which resulted in judging the message as "partially communicated". In few cases, there seemed to be a total misunderstanding of the question as candidates rambled about 'smoke' and environment instead of 'smoking'. The high quality scripts managed to clearly explain the purpose of the pamphlet and methodically explained both dangers and tips, while incorporating elements of a pamphlet, such as title, bullets, sub-headings, etc.

Question 4 - Leisure - Speech

The best answers managed to present a very convincing and well-argued speech taking a clear position in the beginning then providing examples to support it. However, in some cases, candidates misunderstood the question and supported the government's decision to cut finding which prevented the top marks being awarded in Criterion B.

Most of the candidates used the suitably serious tone and required register needed in a public hearing. The best answers attempted to leave a clear impression in the end and maintained contact with the audience throughout the speech, for example by use of pronouns 'you' and 'we' and by direct address.

Question 5 - Science and Technology- Blog entry

This was the third most popular question this session. Many candidates produced authentic blog entries while addressing both aspects -  possible changes to science classes and whether replacing all scientific experiments by virtual ones is a good development or not. Candidates provided examples derived from personal experience and supported each point lucidly. On the other hand, weaker candidates either focused on one aspect only or failed to develop ideas effectively.

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

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates are advised 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 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 punctuation marks, 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 seriously place them at a disadvantage.
* make sure they write the minimum number of words required.

Teachers are advised to:

* frequently address significant grammar errors.
* practice how to develop ideas coherently and effectively with candidates.

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