

November 2015 subject reports

English B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 29	30 - 45	46 - 59	60 - 71	72 - 84	85 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 44	45 - 58	59 - 72	73 - 86	87 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

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

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

At both levels, most candidates demonstrated sufficient command of the language to be able to communicate ideas at least competently. Only a small minority had such fundamental weaknesses in language as to have serious problems in understanding and expressing ideas.

At HL, the mean mark for Oral IA as a whole was comparable with the mean mark of November 2014. A similar pattern can be observed at SL as the overall mean mark was very much in line with last session.

Examiner feedback on the handling of the interview procedure indicates that most teachers now understand what is required in the Individual Interview, and put the requirements into effect. Timing is generally controlled correctly; photographs and captions are mostly selected appropriately; and a large majority of teachers stimulate lively interactive discussions in Part 2.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Higher Level

Criterion A: Productive skills

As noted in previous sessions, there was a wide range of command of the language, from fluent and authentic at the top end, through to stumbling and fragmented at the bottom.

In the broad middle of the range, it is worth noting two tendencies which display certain weaknesses. Firstly, different competence in the two Parts of the interview – typically, a stronger performance in the presentation, and weaknesses more evident in the discussion phase. This may indicate that such candidates have a sound underlying command of the language, but lack practice in oral discussion in class and so their language production falls apart under stress. Secondly, mixed competence throughout – typically, authentic, natural phrasing mixed with repeated errors in basics. Such candidates may have been taught by encouraging fluency and confidence, but with insufficient attention to correcting ingrained flaws.

Marked pronunciation errors remain a problem in a minority of cases, sometimes even in candidates whose command of the language is otherwise excellent. The issue here is that in normal classroom activity it is natural to ‘translate’ standard errors in pronunciation and intonation: everyone becomes accustomed to mispronunciations, especially in classes where all students (and possibly the teacher) have the same first language background. It is not that accent should be eradicated, but that elements of accent which significantly blur meaning should be identified and corrected.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

In the Part 2 interaction, most candidates responded promptly, indicating sound aural comprehension. Usually contributions to the conversation were quite full, with candidates demonstrating a willingness and ability to express a range of ideas in some detail. There were few cases, and then only at the bottom end of the range, where conversations became disjointed or incoherent.

The majority of candidates managed the Part 1 presentation very competently – sensible ideas were presented clearly and with some fluency. At the bottom of the range, candidates were sometimes distracted from the clear flow of ideas by their struggles with the language. There was some indication, at all levels of performance, that the presentations had been inadequately structured – relevant responses to photo and caption had been thought out, but these appeared not to have been structured methodically or clearly. If candidates are instructed to provide a ‘map’, or summary of the main points, at the beginning, this would encourage attention to lucid structure.

As emphasized in the November 2014 Subject Report, teachers are advised to help their students to interact more actively by making sure that the questions asked are (i) open and challenging, and (b) 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

Most candidates displayed a very good command of the language as they were able to use grammar and vocabulary accurately and effectively in general, successfully expressing relevant and some complex ideas at times. As usual, there is a group of extremely fluent candidates at the very top of the SL range, who speak with great ease revealing an excellent command of the language.

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

It was noted this session that there was a good number of candidates whose L1 and flat intonation patterns seriously obscured meaning and prevented them from attaining the top of the band marks.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

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

Many candidates were able to prepare clear presentations in which the photograph was described and linked to both Option and topic under discussion. Few were able to reflect on the target culture and express complex ideas and argued opinions.

Most candidates were able to maintain a natural flow of conversation with a coherent exchange of ideas. There seemed to be few cases of candidates who were prepared to ask for clarification when they were not sure what the question meant.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Choice of photographs

Teachers should ensure that the images chosen are 'real' photographs: i.e. they should be unaltered images of real life, and not images which have been 'photoshopped', or collages. Nor should they be graphic images, such as cartoons or advertisements.

Captions

Captions should be short, interesting sentences which are likely to stimulate a lively reaction from the candidates. Unsuitable captions are those which are bland generalisations stating the obvious, nor lengthy descriptions of factual background.

Stimulating questioning

The purpose of the teacher's questions should be to encourage candidates to interact through active debate of ideas – it is better to elicit an opinion than an obvious fact. In this respect, neither candidates in their presentations, nor teachers in the discussion, should devote too much time to simple, basic description of the photograph.

Reference to Anglophone culture

The majority of centres in this session still failed to include any reference to the target Anglophone culture in the interviews. The Language B Guide specifically requires this: (i) in Part 1, "The student describes the photograph and relates it to the option and the target culture(s)." (SL p.52; HL p.59); and (ii) in the Part 2 discussion, candidates should be encouraged and enabled to express "ideas, opinions and reflections upon what they have learned about the target culture(s)." (SL p.53; HL p.60).

Further comments

As noted in previous years, teachers should observe the following:

- The Interactive Oral Activities should be marked 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.

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

The written assignments submitted for assessment this session were of average to good quality. In their attempt to submit work that is true to the format of the text type, some candidates used different fonts and backgrounds that made it difficult for examiners to assess those assignments. Please note that artistic merit is not rewarded; 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.

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

Unfortunately, only some candidates were aware of the requirements of the revised written assignment, which resulted in candidates submitting a range of assignments for assessment, some of which were considered inappropriate. Few assignments were deemed excellent. The reasons for this were mainly poor rationales and content that either departed from what was given in the rationale, or was not mentioned in the rationale.

Some candidates re-told the plot in a diary/ blog entry or letter to a friend. Others chose to write newspaper articles about certain events in the novel and linked them to historical events. Those, when not coupled by rationales that explained the candidate's aim(s) and provided clear connection between the task and the literary work often did not score higher than 6 out of 10 in Criterion A. 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. Those areas need to be explained in detail in the rationale.

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, in the Language B revised guide (for first examination in 2015), it is stated that 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*, 2015).

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale and task

Rationale

The criterion is entitled 'rationale and task', and this means that the task is marked in light of what is mentioned in the rationale. A good number of candidates this session wrote rationales that hardly told examiners what the focus of the task would be or provided a plan of the task. What is more, a good number of assignments lacked an aim. When an aim was provided, it was generally too broad. 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.

The most common problem was that the ideas mentioned in the task were omitted from the rationale or, less commonly, vice-versa. To explain further, a candidate would mention an aim and a text type, but not provide a synopsis of the ideas that would appear in the task. In other instances, some of the ideas mentioned in the rationale were not explored further in the task.

Additionally, a good number of candidates either wrote a long summary of the literary work without specifying what their focus would be, or delved into discussing what they were going to do without introducing the focus of the assignment or clarifying the connection between the literary work and their task. Sometimes, the context of the task was missing. For example, some candidates mentioned that *Lord of the Flies* discusses the innate nature of human evil, but such an introduction was largely unconnected with what was given in the task. More often than not, candidates were unclear of who the audience of their tasks was. Sometimes they gave readers even though their chosen text type was a diary entry.

Task

Most of the ideas mentioned in the tasks were not provided in the rationale. Candidates, it seems, assumed that examiners would be able to draw those links because they are familiar with the literary works. However, and as of May 2015, examiners are no longer allowed to take their familiarity with the literary work into consideration when assessing the written assignment because the task is marked in light of what is mentioned in the rationale. In a good number of assignments, candidates showed careful consideration of the choice of text type and audience, but some tried to disguise essays in the form of magazine articles and reviews in the form of personal letters. In addition, 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. Examiners noted that a good number of candidates wrote their tasks without carefully planning how their ideas are going to appear and be developed. This resulted in much repetition or giving a number of main ideas in the task without effectively developing those ideas. In addition, and in their

attempt to include as much information taken from the literary work as possible in their tasks, some candidates sacrificed coherent development of ideas.

Criterion C: Language

Most candidates showed an adequate, sometimes effective, command of language in spite of many inaccuracies. A number of candidates presented texts that were incoherent. Examiners often commented that candidates used a wide range of vocabulary, but that this use was generally neither accurate nor effective. Complex structures were sometimes effectively used but the vast majority relied on using simple structures, or showed difficulty when venturing beyond simplicity. There were 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 previous sessions, linguistic appropriacy was often an issue, especially when candidates either failed to mention they were emulating the style of an author/ character or provide examples of that style in their rationales.

The use of rhetorical devices was generally appropriate and sometimes effective. Those who included a summary of the literary work in letters or diary entries or wrote articles that largely read like essays lost marks in the 3rd descriptor in this criterion.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should advise students to:

- 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.
- take into account the requirements of the revised rationale. The Language B guide specifies that in 150-250 words, the rationale should introduce the assignment and include:
 - a brief introduction to the literary text(s)
 - 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.
- use the rationale to map out what will be included in the task, for the task is assessed in light of what is provided in the rationale; therefore, 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 academic or formulaic essay is not an acceptable text type.
- choose a specific focus for their assignments, one that is neither too broad nor too narrow, and to use this focus to demonstrate understanding of the literary work.
- create an assignment that is connected to the literary text(s) as described in the rationale. In other words, candidates should develop the ideas provided in the rationale.
- focus on contextualizing their writing, for this would greatly enhance their written work and help them to write and organize their points effectively.
- use a range of language appropriate to text type and communicative purpose in their tasks.
- limit their assignment to the prescribed minimum and maximum number of words (500-600).

Standard level Written Assignment

Component grade boundaries

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

General Comments

In the November 2015 session, quite a number of submitted Written Assignments were exemplars of work that answer fully to the requirements at Standard Level. This is a clear indication that many students and teachers grasped the essence of the demands and expected performance outlined in the Language B Guide. Familiarity with both the task requirements and the criteria in particular clearly proved beneficial to the candidates, and it is expected that all schools take this document as a source of reference.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a comprehensive range of subjects selected across schools, though a narrower range within some schools. Text-types ranged from blogs, news reports, essays, letters, diary entries, articles, pamphlets to speeches. Sometimes the choice of text-type was the best option to realize the aims outlined or to address the intended audience. However, this was not always the case. For example, a diary entry may be a suitable text-type when the aim is to reflect on thoughts and emotions though it is certainly not so when the aim is to inform others or to raise awareness, since a diary is essentially a private discourse type.

The range of sources cited, when they were cited, was indeed varied though the suitability of the sources to achieve the aim described was not always guaranteed. It is worth bearing in mind that there needs to be a close relationship between subject, sources and purpose(s). Otherwise, connections suffer.

The aims to be achieved were sometimes too broad to be feasible. Something to bear in mind is that aims need to be focused and attainable within the constraints of the word limit and the language ability of an SL student. Narrowing down the subject and the aim is definitely a practice that should be reflected in the Written Assignments. Assignments also ranged between thoughtful pieces that were the result of thorough research and risk-taking to plain texts fulfilling the minimum requirement and hardly ambitious.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale and Task

In most assignments the rationale and task were naturally two halves of the same unit. That is, the rationale was presented as a self-contained, reasoned exposition of what the task was about. 'Self-contained' here is taken to mean that there is nothing that the reader needs to imagine, no gaps for the reader to fill in. In these cases, the rationale informed the reader about what the subject of the assignment was, what the aim was, how that aim was going to be achieved, and what sources had been used to fulfil all of the preceding. All this, which is clearly explained in the Language B Guide and described through the criteria, constitutes a logical description to be developed in the task. Yet, some tasks contained elements that had not been announced in the rationale while in some assignments the rationale contained elements that were not expanded in the task.

Having said this, there were some issues with sources. For example, sources were not always mentioned in the rationale, or they were just enumerated but not described. Rarely were they 'fully' described. The selected sources should be suitable to achieve the stated purposes. As well as this, the subject of the assignment was not always narrowed down. In other words, if the topic is social networking, some working questions may be: will the focus be on the causes, the consequences, the effects on learning, the impact on the quality of communication, or on something else? The topic is always broader than the focus i.e. the focus is the aspect of the subject that will be tackled in the assignment.

How the aim is going to be achieved is something that still needs attention. The selection of a suitable text-type, a concrete audience, in a given context, the style required i.e. register and tone, the kind of language to be used and any detail that may help realize the aim should all be part of the rationale.

Then there is the other half of the assignment, i.e. the task. Some candidates selected sources relevant to the subject and focus while others omitted mentioning the sources altogether so it was not possible to measure their relevance in the task. As regards the text-type, it was often the case that the type of text followed the conventions of format though not always of approach so the text-type was not always convincing.

Kindly note that 'Rationale and task' is a component-specific criterion – an inherent part of the written assignment only – and as such it needs extra attention.

Criterion B: Organization and Development

Overall there was evidence of planning as shown through the linking and sequencing of ideas. There was also evidence of some well-organized texts with coherent and cohesive ideas that read smoothly, with one leading neatly into the next. Development was also in some cases well achieved with key ideas fully expanded and illustrated.

In some cases, however, there is still lack of planning. This is clear from a list of ideas that have been put together rather than expanded and explained. Cohesive devices, both lexical and grammatical, were not always present or if they were, they were not always used meaningfully. This resulted in weak organization and development. Paragraphing is also a clear indicator of clarity of thought. It may be worth reminding candidates that organization and development form the structure on which content is built. If there is not a solid structure on which to construct content, ideas fall apart and the essence of the whole is lost.

Time spent planning is time well used. Energy expended on marking a clear connection between and among ideas is energy invested in a good cause. Ideas that hang together usually make a meaningful whole.

Criterion C: Language

Candidates performed relatively well with varying degrees of proficiency. Those who used the sources well could use specific vocabulary appropriately and effectively. It is quite perceivable that when the candidates investigated the topic thoroughly, they managed to use vocabulary naturally. The same cannot be said of those tasks where it was quite noticeable that the outcome resembled a Paper 2 script, with no reference to sources at all.

Sentence structure proved a challenging aspect even for the strong candidates. This is not as easily picked up from source texts as vocabulary. It is an area of language that requires pedagogic attention and one that foreign language learners need to practise. This is so not only to be able to produce correct complex sentences but to be able to choose the grammatical structure that best conveys the intended meaning. Punctuation is also an area that deserves special attention.

Rhetorical devices suitable to a given text-type appeared not to be high up on the learning agenda. At times, if a paragraph was extracted from a task, it was not possible to identify it as being of any one text-type in particular. Such neutrality in rhetoric may easily be set right through making students more aware of their presence.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates-

Rationale and Task

- Study the criteria and discuss the descriptors together with the students. Build, together with the learners, a checklist of the essential requirements that a rationale should meet. Encourage them to use this checklist for self-evaluation.
- Provide three rationales for the same assignment so that awareness may be drawn to desirable features. Discuss what makes one rationale more suitable than the others.
- Give students a task and render three purposes with different degrees of specificity so that the learners may choose the most appropriate one.
- Draw texts on the same subject from different sources so that students may identify the aim and how it has been achieved.
- Have the learners write the rationale for a text that you provide and then give them a rationale and let them write the texts.

Organization and development

- Have your students work in reverse from text to plan i.e. first writing the plan for a text you provide and then writing the plans for the texts that they will be writing.
- Word-process texts and have students put the paragraphs into the correct order.
- Draw your students' awareness to the different methods of paragraph development (exemplification, cause, effect, comparison, contrast, etc.) and cohesive devices typical of each.
- Give the students texts with some sentences that need expansion. Have them identify those sentences and then have them provide suitable expansions.
- Develop, together with the learners, a checklist of features that are indicators of effectively organized and developed texts so that they may self-evaluate their work before submitting it.

Language

- Provide twin texts: an original text that illustrates range of vocabulary on a given subject and an alternative rendering of the same text using a limited range so that the students may 'feel' what is meant by effective range.
- Provide texts with run on sentences and have the students correct them while awareness is drawn to punctuation and meaning.
- Prepare sentence transformation exercises where a sentence is provided and then the students need to rephrase it using a given grammatical construction.
- Have students analyze the different text types and discover the rhetorical devices that are typical of each exemplar.

- Encourage the students to self-evaluate their assignments using the descriptors in the criterion and to evaluate their peers.

Further comments

- Make sure candidates ask themselves the following questions before completing the assignments: Who is writing? To whom? Why? Then consider how the assignment needs to be written so that these questions are answered?
- Select sources that will help achieve the aims stated and address the intended audience.
- Beware of the excessive use of bullet points. These may be a feature of some text-types but artwork is not assessed.
- Although the instructions say that the rationale and task should be submitted as one document, they should be clearly separate within that document. The rationale should come first.
- Word limits. The maximum of 400 words must be observed for the task. If this is exceeded, the examiner draws a line after 400 words and only assesses the part within the word limit. Candidates should not give a word count of, for example, 415 words. They should edit their text and ensure that the word limit is met.
- The rationale is read and assessed in its entirety however long. In spite of this, teachers should encourage their students to observe the word limits of 150 – 200 words.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 10	11 - 20	21 - 29	30 - 36	37 - 44	45 - 51	52 - 60

General comments

The IB Assessment centre in Cardiff is appreciative of the effort put forth by the 34 teachers who have taken the time to complete the G2 form (teachers' comments on the examination paper). The information provided by teachers in this form is taken into consideration when setting grade boundaries during grade award, and is used to improve future paper setting. Therefore, the IB urges teachers to complete the G2 form after every examination session.

This session, teachers and examiners thought that the paper was of a similar standard, if not a little easier, than that of November 2014. In fact, 23 of the 34 teachers who completed the form thought the paper was of a comparable difficulty level, 4 thought it was a little more demanding while 5 thought it was a little easier. Most teachers thought the questions were at the appropriate difficulty level and that the choice of texts was suitable, interesting, and accessible to candidates. The presentation of the paper was deemed generally good to excellent, with no teachers thinking that the clarity of wording or the presentation of the paper was poor.

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

Like 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 Q40, but they either provided extraneous detail in their justifications or failed to provide integral parts of the answer.

In addition, some examiners felt that candidates needed better preparation for questions that required close reading, understanding the meaning of a word or an expression in context, references, and inference.

A number of candidates had difficulty in handling questions that required a word or phrase be taken directly from the text. Most candidates either quoted the full sentence in which the answer appeared, or failed to determine the exact phrase that should be provided.

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

Surprisingly, the gap filling exercise in text D was not handled well by many candidates.

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

Examiners noted that the examination paper did not present major problems for the majority of candidates: the average candidate was generally successful in selecting and handling the information needed across the full range of question types in the five texts. In addition, candidates generally understood vocabulary in context and the overall purpose of a text. They were also quite adept at handling the multiple choice questions and choosing the true statements.

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

Q1: The question was answered correctly by most candidates; very few forgot to include either 'backdrop' or 'harbour' in their answers. Few copied the whole sentence from the text 'The stunning backdrop of the Rose Bay Harbour and the state of the art sporting facilities add to the elegant ambience of the Clubhouse', which rendered the answer wrong because of the provision of extraneous detail.

Qs 2-5: This set did not prove to be difficult for most candidates, but a few found Q2, and sometimes Q3, quite challenging: a number gave G instead of J for Q2 and D instead of A for Q3.

Qs 6-8: Q6 was generally answered correctly by most candidates. Few did not provide both 'making' and 'confirming' diary entries. Some were tempted to provide full answers, but that

was permitted when the correct answer was provided. Q7, however, proved to be a challenge for a good number of candidates and not because they failed to give the correct answer, but because they copied the whole sentence. As for Q8, many candidates did not read the question properly and included in their answers areas 'inside', instead of 'outside', the Clubhouse where photos can be taken.

Qs 9&10: Most candidates managed to answer these two questions correctly.

Qs11-13: Average to good candidates found little difficulty in this set. In fact, a good number of candidates managed to answer two of the three questions correctly. The most challenging question in the set was Q12.

Qs14&15: some candidates found it difficult to pinpoint the correct answer for Q14, and provided a number of minor details instead of "some of the most inventive on air". Another problem was in paraphrasing the answer and forgetting to include either 'some of' or 'most' in their answers. As for Q15, and like Q7, candidates' major problem lied in copying the whole sentence instead of the phrase 'building the story over time'.

Qs 16&17: While most candidates provided the correct answer for Q16, the elaborate responses given for Q17 were very strange.

Q18: Like Qs 7 and 15, candidates' inability to pinpoint the correct phrase in the sentence meant they lost the mark.

Q19: some candidates did not understand the paraphrase of 'staggering line' in the question, and provided the whole sentence as the answer.

Qs 20&21: These questions were generally handled well by most candidates.

Q22: The set proved to be accessible to most candidates. The most difficult correct option in the set was D.

Qs 23-27: The set was generally handled well by a good number of candidates. The most frequent mistakes were providing the plural 'experiences' as the answer to Q24 and 'the ideas of technology types' instead of 'technology types' for Q26.

Qs 28-32: The most demanding question in this set was Q28, with a wide range of answers provided. Other questions that proved to be equally demanding were Qs 30 and 32, for a good number of candidates provided a number of words, except 'odd' and 'fragmenting' as the answers to these questions. The most common reason for losing the mark in Q31 was providing 'companionship' or 'knowledge of traditions' as the answer.

Q33: The question was handled well by most candidates.

Qs 34-37: Average to good candidates handled the set well. Qs 34 and 35 appear to have been the most demanding, with D, instead of C, given as the answer to Q34, and either F or J, instead of A, as the answer to Q35. Qs 36 and 37 were answered correctly by most candidates.

Qs 38-41: The set was generally accessible to most candidates. Many, however, lost the marks for Qs 38 and 39 for failing to provide essential words like 'the wind farm' or 'in this area'. As for Q40, a number of candidates lost the mark for ticking the wrong box.

Qs 42-45: Although these questions were accessible to candidates, a number of candidates failed to give the correct answers. The most demanding question in the set was Q43; a number of candidates gave 'concluded' as the answer.

Qs 46-52: These were accessible to the majority of candidates, who answered at least 4 out of 6 correctly. The most common reasons for losing marks in these questions was, as mentioned earlier, candidates' inability to provide an exact phrase or word when required.

Qs 53&57: These proved to be accessible for a good number of candidates.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are advised to:

- **not** encourage candidates to provide 'markscheme' answers with parts of the answer appearing between parentheses. Equally, teachers should **not** encourage students to write out the full sentence then underline the relevant words. Examiners are instructed to mark the whole answer, including the additional part(s) or the part that is not underlined, and candidates are not given the benefit of the doubt when deploying those tricks to gain unfair advantage. Anything that the candidate does not wish to be marked must be crossed out.
- encourage students to determine precisely what is required of the responses: if the question needs a 'phrase' or a 'word', then only that should be given.
- 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 students 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.
- warn students 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.
- 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. Where "one phrase" is required, candidates run the same risk when providing the whole sentence.

- counsel students to pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses.
- remind students to indicate where the answer appears (e.g. 'please see attached paper') when an answer is written outside the box provided in the Question and Answer booklet.

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

General comments

In this examination session, only 10 teachers submitted the G2 form. Out of the 10 respondents, 6 considered the paper to be of a similar standard to last year, while 2 felt it was a little more difficult. 1 thought that the paper was a little easier than the Nov 2014 examination.

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

Some of the examiners pointed out that many candidates had difficulty in handling vocabulary questions. Qs 28 to 31 were particularly difficult. These types of questions are often included in the paper so further practice is advisable.

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

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

The examination paper did not present major problems for a good number of the candidates. The average candidates managed to understand the texts and handle the information needed to answer the different kind of questions.

True/false with justification questions are generally difficult. However, this session many candidates managed to answer most of these questions correctly with the exception of Q11. This particular question turned out to be the most challenging of this bunch. A good number of candidates provided a full sentence as the justification for this question.

In this particular session, few candidates found reference questions demanding. A good number of candidates provided the right answer for most of the questions. Q21 seemed to be the toughest one of this bunch.

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

Qs 1-4: these questions were of medium difficulty. Many candidates answered Q2 wrong, choosing J as an answer. Q1 was the easiest. A good number of candidates got 2 or 3 out of 4 correct.

Q5: this question was of medium difficulty since some candidates answered the question with a phrase “air commuters”, not with a single word. Some others wrote “participants”.

Q6: this question was quite easy and most candidates got it right and answered the whole phrase. The word “building” was required for the mark to be awarded.

Qs 7&8: quite easy and most candidates provided the correct answer. Few candidates answered “pool” on its own in Q8.

Q9: this question was easy to medium difficult. Many candidates failed to provide a full answer. The word “announcement” was essential to get the mark.

Qs 10-13: True/false with justification. These questions are usually difficult. In this particular session Q11 was rather demanding since most candidates provided the full sentences as a justification to the question.

Qs 14-19: easy to medium. Both Qs 17 and 18 were harder.

Qs 20-23: Reference question. Mostly easy. Q21 was probably the most difficult since both phrases (“pre-teens and adolescents”) were required.

Q24: medium to difficult. Many candidates provided two whole sentences instead of the 2 phrases or they just added extra words, showing no clear understanding of the question.

Q25: easy. Most candidates succeeded in answering this question correctly.

Q26: The most difficult question of the paper. Most of the candidates gave the wrong answer.

Q27: quite easy. However, some candidates gave the word ‘guidelines’ as an answer.

Qs 28-31: Fill in the gap (words). Medium difficult to difficult. Many found this set of questions hard. Q28 in particular; probably they did not know the meaning of “otherwise”.

Q32: medium. Many candidates got 2 or 3 questions right out of 4. Many put E as the correct answer.

Qs 33-35: easy. Most average candidates got 3 out of 4 questions right.

Qs 36-38: easy to medium. Many candidates answered at least 2 out 3.

Qs 39&40: medium difficulty. Mostly weaker candidates had difficulty answering these questions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is essential that candidates practise and familiarise themselves with the different kinds of questions that they have to answer. This applies to true/false with justification, reference and gap-fill questions.

As regards those questions that require a letter as an answer, the letter they choose must be clear and it must be inside the box provided. A mix of letters, such as F and E or A and D, should be avoided. If the answer cannot be read, then the mark cannot be awarded.

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

When a word from the text is required, then just ONE word is accepted. For example, in Q5 only "commuters" is accepted as the right answer and not "air commuters".

If two items are asked for, such as Q7, then one item must be given in each line. If an extra item is given, and it is incorrect, then the mark is not awarded.

In the true/false with justification questions, both the tick or the cross and the justification are required to be awarded the mark. As far as the justification is concerned, it must be an exact quotation from the text. A paraphrase will not be accepted. Additionally, candidates should avoid using three dots (...) to indicate that words are omitted. If essential words are missing, the mark cannot be awarded. In general, very long justifications are not required so the use of the dots is unnecessary. Underlining parts of the answer/justification should also be avoided. The entirety of the response will be taken into consideration, unless crossed out. This may lead to the mark not being awarded.

When a phrase from the text is required, it is just a short phrase that paraphrases the words given in the question and no extra words are usually accepted. For example, in Q24 "an extension of pre-teen's (their) self absorption" and "nothing more than an outlet for self expression" were accepted. Any further information was considered incorrect.

Candidates should be strongly encouraged to attempt every question. No mark is deducted for incorrect answers; therefore, it does not make sense to leave answers blank. In this particular session, many candidates left one or more questions unanswered.

It is also essential that candidates produce a neat handwriting. Candidates should pay special attention to the legibility of their responses.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 31	32 - 37	38 - 45

General comments

The mean mark in this session was slightly lower than last year. A majority of candidates handled written production very well, but relatively few performed with real excellence. Scripts generally displayed sound command of the language, although still hampered by recurrent flaws, and quite methodical handling of ideas (without really impressive development of argument and explanation).

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

Uncommon text types

The unpopularity of Q1 and Q4 may be because candidates were uncomfortable with the less conventional text types of 'proposal' and 'pamphlet'. Both these forms require quite careful planning and organisation, i.e. thinking skills which are not quite the same as the kind of thinking required for explanatory prose, expressing ideas and opinions.

Handling of tasks

The 'popular' questions (Q2, Q3 & Q5) appeared accessible in general terms, but actually contained elements which required methodical development in order to achieve the top mark band. Such development either required the clear explanation of basic factual materials (e.g. the custom of Halloween in Q2), or the development of argument in a certain amount of depth (e.g. the 'importance' of the healthcare organisation in Q3). Developed ideas were clearly required in the wording of the task, yet, for instance, the custom of Halloween was rarely explained clearly, and the importance of healthcare was often dismissed in a sentence or two. Significant elements of a question need to be addressed fully.

Recurrent language errors

As in previous sessions, there were noticeable errors in grammar, phrasing and usage, often in recognisable forms consistent with L1 interference. Typically these involved poor agreement in the use of pronouns, weak control of tense structures, and inaccurate prepositions.

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

Common text types

The blog (Q2), the article (Q3) and the speech (Q5) were generally handled effectively and were clearly recognisable.

Section B

On balance, the reasoned argument was better handled than in previous exam sessions. A clear majority of candidates directly addressed the issue of “useful information” (if in somewhat confused or poorly defined terms); and relatively few wasted words on ‘establishing the text type’, for which no marks are awarded.

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

Based on a random sample, the most popular question, selected by almost 40% of the candidates, was Q5. This was closely followed by Q2, then followed by Q3 answered by around 25% of the candidates. Only around 5% opted for Q1, and there were only one or two instances of Q4 responses encountered.

This suggests that three questions (Q5, Q2 and Q3) were vastly more popular than the other two (Q1 & Q4).

The ‘popular’ three attracted candidates, probably, because:-

- Q5 was perceived to be a straightforward pro/con debate speech. Candidates may also have had ideas about robots in factories either from Global Issues discussions in class or from Economics lessons.
- Q2 was a blog about Halloween. The blog text type often appears ‘easy to do’, and candidates general know something about Halloween. The task included writing about ‘what you did’, thus candidates might have thought it was asking for chat about fun and games at a party.
- Q3 was an article about working for an organisation promoting healthcare during the summer. This possibly appeared a more challenging task than the other two popular questions, but (i) some candidates would have at least some factual information about Health, and (ii) could perhaps draw on experience of summer jobs.

In fact, all three questions were more demanding than they appeared, and many candidates failed to cover all required elements of the task sufficiently fully or methodically.

The other two questions may have been unpopular for a mixture of the following factors:

- ‘Difficult’ text type: Q1 required a proposal, which has not often been set for HL P2; and Q4 required a pamphlet, which seem to be not covered much in class.
- Lack of background knowledge: these two questions involved subject matter which may have been remote to the experience and knowledge of many candidates; such as archaeology (Q1), or detailed tourist information about a country’s capital (Q4).
- ‘Intimidated by invention’: it is nice to think that candidates like using their imagination, but perhaps many find it frightening to have to think outside the box and make things up.

Section A

Question 1: Cultural diversity – Proposal

As indicated above, few candidates attempted this task. Very few scripts offered any kind of description of what the remains actually were and very few described with any clarity what the centre might involve. The majority of competent responses simply constructed reasonably credible arguments that remains and centre would increase tourism and so help the city's economy. A couple of scripts attempted some kind of justification on the grounds of 'education about culture'.

Most scripts used the format of a formal letter. Few scripts made any attempt to use formal structural devices such as headings, or demonstrated a methodical intellectual approach such as 'What ... who ... how ...why?'.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – Blog

This task seemed to attract quite a few candidates, presumably because the 'blog' text type, and the subject of Halloween, appeared accessible and 'easy'. However, the majority of scripts were flawed in one way or another. Both required elements ('the custom of Halloween' and 'what you did') were usually at least mentioned, but often thinly or in confused ways, leaving the impression that Halloween was like any teenage party but with a bit of fancy dress. In particular, few scripts attempted any direct description of Halloween, leaving the customs to be mentioned in passing while describing 'what we did'. A minority of scripts paid no attention to the question's requirement of "an English-speaking country". Students should be warned to read the requirements of 'easy' questions very carefully.

Most scripts achieved a recognisable 'blog' format, with a title, address to the blog's usual readers, and requests for comments.

Question 3: Health – Article (school magazine)

This task was generally handled at least competently. Both elements required ('what you did' and 'importance') were usually at least mentioned, in better scripts with concrete details of health care were linked to the overall importance of helping people in deprived circumstances. That said, there was a wide range of credibility in the experiences described – some candidates had difficulties in imagining what health care in a developing country might involve. The 'importance' of the organisation was often not addressed directly or clearly, but merely implied vaguely through anecdotes.

There was also a range of success in handling the 'article' text type. Only the best scripts included vivid and engaging introductions and conclusions, provided necessary information clearly and concisely, and demonstrated a sense of what might be interesting to a 'school magazine' reader.

Question 4: Leisure – Pamphlet

Examples of responses to this question were very hard to find. However, the very few examples were generally successful – they showed a sound knowledge of how to structure the text, of

how to select relevant information and explain it concisely, and even of how to use appropriately enthusiastic language. This suggests that these candidates had been actively taught about pamphlets, and even enjoyed the imaginative challenge of presenting ideas attractively. The value of teaching the writing of pamphlets is argued in 'Teaching full range of text types' under Recommendations.

Question 5: Science and Technology – Speech

This was the most popular task, possibly because of its text type. Most candidates made at least some attempt to address the audience, to catch attention at beginning and end, and even to use some form of rhetorical technique, such as the use of questions, thus scoring well under Criterion C.

The handling of Message (Criterion B) was generally less well handled. Many scripts displayed arguments which were rambling and hard to follow, repetitive at times, and lacked a clear sense of organisation leading to a convincing conclusion. The main problem seemed to be that candidates often failed to identify, and thus present, the key ideas of their argument. In short, many scripts, however well informed, were poorly focused, and in turn this clearly suggested a lack of thoughtful planning.

Section B

The stimulus quotation worked well; all candidates had some comment to make about the subject matter. In addition, it discriminated effectively between more and less able candidates; the more able discussed directly the usefulness of internet information, while the less able tended to drift off into peripheral issues of overuse of information technology, or the dangers of social networks and so on. Few candidates offered an explicit definition of what 'useful' meant for them, although many implied that useful meant 'reliable'. Teachers should consider that 'define your terms' is a fundamental element of methodical and effective reasoned argument.

It is encouraging that a majority immediately began to discuss the key issue of 'useful information', without wasting time establishing the text type.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teaching full range of text types

As this report shows, it is unwise to focus teaching on only those text types perceived as 'accessible', such as the e-mail, the blog, or the speech, since the specific topic or content associated with these text types in the exam paper may prove to be demanding. The proposal and the pamphlet require writing in a specific style, with a specific structure, about subject matter which may be impersonal or not related to personal experience. Furthermore, they require adapting ideas to a particular purpose and audience. Such adaptation is an important skill to teach, and teachers should insist on them, whether or not such tasks are 'popular'.

Planning

It was very rare to find any evidence of planning notes, suggesting that the use of methodical planning notes is not normal practice among candidates. It should be.

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

It was noticed this session that fewer teachers completed the G2 form (teachers' comments on the examination paper); the International Baccalaureate would like to thank them and as always encourage all other teachers to submit their comments and brief explanations which are deemed valuable by paper setters and the Grade Award team.

Approximately 70% of the respondents considered the paper of a similar standard to that of November 2014. Clarity of wording and the presentation of the paper were considered good to excellent by the majority of teachers who completed the form.

Overall, questions seemed accessible in a way that most candidates were able to relate to the topics presented. 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, and in which candidates appeared well prepared

Criterion A: Language

As always, some answers were impressive in their use of language, while at the other end of the scale, there was a good number of candidates who demonstrated limited to adequate command of language with very basic errors made in verb forms, tenses, subject-verb agreement and punctuation. There needs to be more attention to very basic grammatical forms in such cases. Better able students were able to produce complex structures clearly and use a wide range of vocabulary both accurately and effectively. Examiners mentioned many errors resulting from L1 interference, which obscured meaning at times.

It was pleasing to note that the majority of candidates met the 250-400 word limit required. However, and just like last session, many scripts were extremely difficult to read due to

handwriting. Students need to be reminded of the importance of clear handwriting to avoid being placed at a disadvantage in such an electronically marked component.

Criterion B: Message

A good number of candidates effectively and clearly organized their ideas, using paragraphing and cohesive devices appropriately. In weaker scripts there was no logical argument revealed. This was required particularly in Q2, Q3 and Q5. This ability to produce a coherent argument distinguished the best answers which developed the argument in separate paragraphs and supported it with specific points and examples rather than talking in general.

Some questions asked for more than one aspect to be covered, such as 'describing the game, the atmosphere during the game and how fans cheered' in Q4 as well as 'the dangers of video game addiction and how it can be avoided' in Q5. Candidates should address each of these required topics clearly; otherwise, scripts are marked down on relevance of ideas in Criterion B. Underlining the required aspects on the question paper may help to remind candidates of what elements they should cover.

Criterion C: Format

Just like last session, examiners commented that the vast majority of candidates produced the required text types effectively. It was only in those cases when the news report (Q4) was attempted that a very chatty style and informal register were produced (please see comments on Q4 below) or that no speech rhetoric was used in Q5, which resulted in the response reading like an essay/article.

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

All questions were attempted by candidates with Q1, Q3 and Q5 being the most popular, followed closely by Q2. Q4 was attempted by a good number of candidates but statically comes with a fewer percentage compared to the rest.

Question 1: Cultural diversity – Essay

This question has proved to be the second most popular one. The very good responses managed to make their opinions clear while focusing on how children whose parents come from different cultural backgrounds prove to be more open-minded than others. Argument in such scripts demonstrated a clear progression of ideas with supporting details and examples drawn from personal experience at times.

Weaker candidates, however, failed to provide coherent responses and at times seemed to focus on the importance of cultural diversity in general. Paragraphing and cohesive devices did not contribute to the overall structure of the essay. Such general responses were marked down under "relevance" in Criterion B.

The majority of candidates had no serious problems producing a recognizable and appropriate essay, using an appropriate register with a distinct introduction, development and conclusion.

Only in few cases there seemed to be no effective stylistic devices used to allow following the message easily.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – Blog

A very popular question that was in most cases handled quite well. Authentic blog entries were produced with effective conventions used. The majority of candidates were able to provide the trigger experience along with clear and practical guidelines on how young people should behave in formal functions – all supported with examples and lucid explanations.

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

Question 3: Health – Article based on an interview

A good number of candidates failed to draw the clear relationship between self-esteem and healthy lifestyle and ended up describing what should be done to have the latter. Some appeared not to have understood "self-esteem" to start with. Still, there appeared a good number of scripts where ideas were coherently expressed with direct quotations included and supporting details given to support viewpoint made.

Question 4: Leisure – News Report

This question proved to be the least popular, and examiners commented that very few of those marked presented a coherent and convincing argument. Many scripts failed to include a detailed description of the three elements required: game, atmosphere and fans, which resulted in marking them down under "relevance" in Criterion B. Other responses rambled throughout about the preparation and how significant the event is without actually describing the game.

The majority of the scripts encountered failed to produce an effective text type in which objective presentation of ideas and commentary features are required. Those seemed a personal reflection on the game with redundant and at times irrelevant details. The general impression made by examiners was that candidates did not seem prepared for this text type or even familiar with its conventions. It is worth mentioning that the 'News Report' is one text type that is required for Paper 2 as stipulated in the Language B Guide (Page 31), and thus it is highly recommended that teachers make sure candidates get prepared for all those on the list, including the news report.

Question 5: Science and technology – Talk

This was the most popular question by far, and it was indeed a successful choice on the part of those candidates attempting it. Personal experience was used to enrich the argument and practical ways of prevention were offered, which helped them achieve the top marks. In the weaker cases, it was either language hampering communication or the talks lacking concrete examples and/or missing one of the two elements required.

Almost all talks produced adopted an appropriate register and a suitably serious tone among other conventions. It was only in few cases where speech rhetoric seemed lacking and audience was not addressed consistently.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates are advised to:

- carefully read all parts of the question and underline the essential aspects.
- maintain a legible handwriting.
- use correct paragraphing and punctuation marks.
- avoid by any means writing the same response twice OR attempting two different questions without indicating if one of those is a draft. This may seriously place them at a disadvantage.

Teachers are advised to:

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