

## November 2016 subject reports

### English B

#### Overall grade boundaries

##### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 14	15 - 28	29 - 43	44 - 57	58 - 70	71 - 83	84 - 100

##### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 44	45 - 58	59 - 71	72 - 85	86 - 100

#### Higher level internal assessment

##### Component grade boundaries

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

#### The range and suitability of the work submitted

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. On the other hand, there were slightly more candidates capable of expressing themselves with ease and fluency, as compared with previous years.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Productive skills

Most candidates communicated reasonably fluently and reasonably clearly – few required a significant ‘effort of translation’. As usual, in the middle of the range there was quite competent command of the language, marked with regular minor flaws in basics such as agreement, use of pronouns, and the like. Most candidates had an adequate middling range of vocabulary and structures, sufficient to express some complex ideas reasonably clearly. Pronunciation was usually quite clear; intonation tended to be rather flat, rather than expressive.

As noted in previous reports, command of the language is often different in the two Parts of the interview. In the prepared Part 1 presentation, grammar structures may be handled largely correctly, and some range of appropriate vocabulary used; whereas in the spontaneous interaction, more errors and hesitations may be apparent. This is to be expected, and there is more to be gained by encouraging relaxed, lively conversation (despite errors) than to strive for ‘correct’ production at the expense of genuine interaction.

Teachers should also pay attention to standard, consistent errors in each candidate’s production. These are often based on easily recognised interference from the native language (L1), and candidates will benefit from being given focused advice about how to concentrate on eradicating the commonest of these. This particularly applies to pronunciation errors: correcting these may be tedious, but poor pronunciation has a significant effect on the comprehensibility of oral production.

### Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Part 1 presentations were usually fairly methodical; and most correctly followed a brief but effective description of the photograph with a reasonably well developed consideration of the caption. Stronger candidates made a point of emphasising the structure of the presentations using sequence markers (“First of all...”, “... my second comment is that...”), which were presumably based on some simple but effective plan of bullet points. Weaker candidates did not use such techniques, and their presentations often appeared confused and confusing.

In the Part 2 discussion, almost all candidates responded promptly to questions, indicated sound comprehension skills, and most at least made an effort to deliver fully developed answers. In the majority of cases, the conversation was coherent, with the candidate showing engagement and ability to contribute something to the discussion, however simple. At the lower end of the range, conversations sometimes lost coherence due to candidates’ poor explanations – it was not always clear whether this was primarily because of weak command of language or lack of relevant ideas.

As mentioned in previous Subject Report, teachers’ question technique is crucial in enabling candidates to show their communicative abilities. Teachers should make sure, firstly, that they do not restrict their questions to checking on factual information or minor details of the photograph; and secondly, that they ask ‘open’ questions which invite candidates to state opinions and explore ideas.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

**Handling of the interview procedure:** It appears that most teachers now handle the procedure of the Individual oral effectively and correctly. Timing is generally controlled correctly; and a large majority of teachers stimulate lively interactive discussions in Part 2.

However, teachers should note the following areas which continue to cause concern:

- Choice of photographs: Teachers should ensure that the images chosen are ‘real’ colour photographs: *ie* they should be unaltered images of real life, and not images which have been ‘photo-shopped’. Nor should they be collages; or graphic images, such as cartoons or advertisements.
- Reference to Anglophone culture: A majority of centres in this session still failed to include any reference to the target Anglophone culture in the interviews. The instructions in the Language B Guide are clear: in Part 1, “The student describes the photograph and relates it to the option and the target culture(s).” (HL p.59); and in the Part 2 discussion, candidates should be encouraged and enabled to express “ideas, opinions and reflections upon what they have learned about the target culture(s).” (HL p.60).

**Teaching oral skills:** The basis of good performances in the Individual oral must be that candidates have had consistent practice in lively, genuine, engaged conversations in the classroom. To this basis of practising spontaneous interaction through speech, the teacher should add careful training, based on observation of the individual strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. Most commonly, this means teaching:

- Correction of flaws in expression: The teacher should progressively correct errors in a candidate’s language use, and encourage the use of an ever-wider range of vocabulary and phrasing. Making a candidate aware of his or her common slips in language use should lead to the development of self-correction.
- Organisation of clear explanation: Practice in the use of notes to organise presentations should naturally lead to a more organised pattern of ideas in spontaneous conversation.

## Standard level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

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

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of candidates demonstrated a command of the language that was at least competent; and were capable of maintaining a coherent conversation about different topics. This is in line, in general terms, with performance in previous sessions.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Productive skills

The general level of language observed was satisfactory just like November 2015, 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 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 hampering 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 fragmented structures at large 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. 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.

Many candidates were able to grasp the real point of the question and seemed active enough to direct the discussion to different angles, which helped the teacher to cover other related options. Weaker candidates, on the other hand, needed much prompting as their answers were restricted to “Yes” and “No” or very brief comments that lacked lucid explanations and vivid examples.

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

- Teachers should make sure that the visual stimulus is a real photograph. Graphic images such as drawings or Photo-shopped collages are not acceptable.
- Captions should be interesting and stimulating to quickly and directly guide candidates to option and topic under discussion.
- Teachers should ensure that candidates' presentations are limited to the 4 minutes required.
- Teachers should strive to make their questions clear and short, aiming to encourage candidates to speak as much and as easily as possible.

## Further comments

- Where more than one teacher is involved in Internal Assessment Oral, make every effort to ensure that marking is standardised, through discussion, cross-marking, *etc.*
- Just like in previous sessions, a few teachers failed to relate the aspect of the Option under discussion to any Anglophone culture. Specifically, in the Part 1 presentation "The student describes the photograph and relates it to the option and the target culture(s)." (P.52) 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" (P.53).

## Higher level Written Assignment

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The written assignments submitted for assessment this session were suitable but of average quality. The average candidate managed to identify an area of focus and to develop the task based on the plan presented in the rationale. Although a bigger number of candidates showed awareness of the requirements of the revised written assignment than last November, poor rationales remain to be the main reason why some candidates did not score well in the written assignment.

It was noticed this session that relatively fewer candidates scored 21 and above out of 24, and an increase in those scoring less than 12 out of 24. The reasons for this were mainly poor rationales, content that either departed from what was given in the rationale, or was not mentioned, or alluded to, in the rationale, and poor organisation and development of ideas.

As noticed in previous sessions, some candidates sacrificed clarity of work in their attempt to produce 'authentic' text types, which made assessing those tasks very difficult. Please continue

to observe the instruction in the guide regarding artistic merit: “Students may include illustrations in support of their work where this is appropriate; however, **artistic merit is not assessed**” (Language B Guide, 2015, p. 42); only basic **layout** conventions such as subheadings and titles and other conventions such as an appropriate register, awareness of audience and rhetoric are taken into consideration when determining how well employed a text type is.

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

A few candidates chose the essay as their text type, which limited their mark in the 3<sup>rd</sup> descriptor of Criterion A to 2 (please refer to the Language B Guide, and *The Handbook of Procedures*, 2016). In addition, examiners recommend that specific attention be paid to the choice of literary work. In general, poetry and symbolic short stories did not work well in the written assignment, and only the very able candidates were able to use a Shakespearian text as point of departure for the written assignment.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Rationale and task

The rationales offered this session were generally of average quality. Some provided a lengthy summary of the literary work used but failed to identify an aim or describe how that aim will be achieved. Others delved immediately into the aim and how it will be achieved without mentioning anything about the lit work, and in some cases, not even its title.

The low marks in this criterion can generally be attributed to the lack of synchronization between the rationale and the task. 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.

As in previous sessions, some candidates re-told the plot in a diary, blog entry, letter to a friend and sometimes review. Others chose to write newspaper articles about certain events in a novel and linked them to historical events. Those, when not coupled with 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.

### Criterion B: Organisation and development

Examiners noted that candidates’ performance in this criterion was not similar, in general, to previous sessions. While some candidates managed to organise their tasks and develop their ideas effectively, a good percentage wrote their tasks without carefully planning how their ideas are going to appear and be developed. Many tasks lacked coherent development of ideas

because candidates, it seems, wanted to include as much information from the literary work as possible. In some cases, there was much repetition that was not explained in the rationale, and in others, the task generally included a number of main ideas that lacked development.

### Criterion C: Language

Most candidates showed an adequate, sometimes effective, command of language in spite of many inaccuracies. Examiners often observed that candidates used a wide range of vocabulary, but that this use was sometimes either inaccurate or ineffective. Complex structures, when utilised, were generally effective. There were frequent errors in the use of narrative tenses, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, the formulation of a sentence, and phrasal verbs.

A few candidates presented tasks that were in part incoherent. Examiners reported that L1 interference and sometimes inability to formulate simple structures are what rendered a few tasks unintelligible.

Similarly to previous sessions, linguistic appropriacy was often an issue, especially when candidates failed to mention they were emulating the style of an author / character and provide examples of that style in their rationales.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should advise candidates to:

- pay specific attention to the requirements of the revised rationale. The Language B guide specifies that in 150-250 words, the rationale should introduce the assignment and include:
  - a brief introduction to the literary text(s)— in novels, for example, a summary of the specific part on which the assignment is based is required.
  - an explanation of how the task is linked to the literary text(s)- this should not be general; specific links between task and literary work should be explained in some detail
  - the student's intended aim(s)
  - explanation of how the student intends to achieve his or her aim(s)— context, choice of text type, audience, register, style and so on.
  - choose a specific focus for their assignments.
  - choose a text type that will help them achieve their aim(s)—remember that the formulaic essay is **not** an acceptable text type.
  - use the rationale to map out what will be included in the task.
  - focus on contextualizing their writing as that will greatly enhance their written work and help them to write and organize their points effectively.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - 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).
- provide a bibliography at the end of the task.
- **avoid including any form of identification-** either personal or by using school's official paper- in their assignments. This includes but is not limited to: name, session number, candidate number, *etc.*
- type their assignment and give the number of words used for the rationale and the task **separately.**

## Standard level Written Assignment

### Component grade boundaries

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

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of written assignments submitted at Standard Level was sufficiently wide in terms of core topics selected and text types produced. However, there was a perceivable narrow range of approach and focus across assignments from the same school. These similarities did not render the written assignments purposeful in that the candidates were unlikely to develop deep understanding of chosen topics, develop inter-textual skills, and select, use and reference sources appropriate to the chosen task (Language B Guide, p. 31).

Even when the same core topics are chosen, the focus that each candidate takes should be different. The skills involved in processing and producing texts have real-life application, for example in university studies, so the uniqueness of each assignment should be highlighted. Reading more widely on the chosen topic will help candidates be more critically informed and they will show depth of understanding by adopting novel approaches to the selected tasks. Sources, then, need to be suitable to the intended tasks.

In regard to suitability, source texts should be fit for the purpose of the assignment, and each of the selected sources should help to develop a different angle of the aim. Many times, the sources approach the topics so broadly that the assignments could well have been written without reference to any of the sources mentioned, precisely because the topics are not focused.

Suitability also comprises the choice of text type, audience, writer, register, tone appropriate to achieve the aim delineated. This, however, was not always the case. At times there was a mismatch between the text type and the purpose and / or audience.

It is worth mentioning that it is as important to provide the context of the task as it is to support the choice of text type. Why a text type is suitable for the task to be developed is something



that needs careful thinking. Quite often, it was noticed that text type was a random choice more related to personal preference than to the development of the aim and to the audience.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: Rationale and Task

This continues to pose the greatest challenge. A deductive approach, from the general to the particular would be advisable here. First, it is necessary to set the context for the assignment and fully describe the sources: text type, publication, brief but precise description, saying why each is relevant, what aspect of the core topic each will develop, what it will prove, *ie* a justification for its selection. One of the main problems detected in this session were vague and / or general aims; precision is a requirement when spelling out the objectives *eg* 'to express the writer's feelings and emotions' (vague) *vs* 'to express the ordeal that Noah's mother went through the moment she learnt her son had been diagnosed with cancer until he finally recovered' (precise). Once the aim has been defined, it is essential to fully explain how that aim will be developed: suitable text type, register, tone, audience, writer, time of publication *etc.* These of course should be consistent with the purpose of the text.

When it comes to the task, a lucid rationale will translate into a coherent and closely related task. There needs to be clear evidence that all the sources described in the rationale are clearly used, and that the subject is addressed throughout the task. Another important requirement is that the purpose announced in the rationale is the one addressed in the task and that how the aim was said to be fulfilled in the rationale is actually attained in the same way, by addressing the items mentioned: text type, writer, audience, register, tone *etc.* This must be evident from start to finish.

The connection between the task and the rationale is still something that requires attention. Candidates seem to find this difficult and it is evident that they do not grasp how this should be done. It is important candidates are made aware of the marking criteria, and to be encouraged to use these as a checklist. Explicit attention needs to be devoted to the relationship between rationale and task.

### Criterion B: Organization and development

Overall there was evidence of organization. However, the main weaknesses had to do with paragraphing, undeveloped ideas, lack of exemplification, punctuation. Candidates tend to lose marks when ideas are inserted into the text and then left there to drift: there is not much sense in listing ideas if they are not to be developed or if the connection between one idea and the next is not marked. One idea should smoothly lead into the next with ease while repetitiousness should be avoided. A point also needs to be made of punctuation; as a piece of academic writing, the written assignment needs to adhere to the formality of correct language use, irrespective of the register used in the actual task.

## Criterion C: Language

The range of vocabulary was generally good. At times it was also well used, especially in those cases where the source texts were used appropriately. Overall, however, there were errors in sentence structure, and these often made meaning difficult to grasp.

Rhetorical devices suitable to the text type were not always used. Most of the problems concerned not differentiating between a blog entry and an article, between a speech and an essay, and between an essay and an article. It should be noticed that ‘article’ can become an umbrella term if the kind of article, its context and where it will be published are not spelled out.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are advised to:

- closely refer to the Language B Guide, SL written assignment sections.
- study the assessment criteria, bearing in mind that the expectations set out in the descriptors need to inform the instruction and activities in the classroom.
- introduce the descriptors in the assessment criteria and encourage them to use this as a guide for their work.
- start by giving candidates sequenced tasks that little by little provide practice in the different subskills required for the written assignment, *eg* select three texts and ask the candidates to answer a focused topic question with reference to the three texts.
- devise guided writing activities for producing the rationale.
- devote plenty of practice to having the candidates render focused aims.
- discuss how the aim(s) can best be achieved.
- have candidates include in the task everything contained in the rationale.
- have candidates identify in the task everything contained in the rationale.
- draw candidates’ awareness of the organization of paragraphs and ideas within paragraphs.
- have candidates check that the rhetorical devices used match the text type chosen.

Teachers need ensure candidates avoid:

- writing the rationale without a clear context.
- writing the text without bearing in mind the rationale.
- selecting sources that share the same viewpoint on the subject.
- selecting sources that are not suitable for the intended aim(s).
- selecting similar topics / sources / purposes / text types to each other.
- selecting a text type irrespective of the audience and aims.

## Higher level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Mark range:**            0 - 9        10 - 19        20 - 26        27 - 33        34 - 40        41 - 47        48 - 60

## General comments

The IB Global Centre in Cardiff wishes to thank the 45 teachers who completed the G2 form. The comments and opinions provided by teachers in this form are valuable to examiners and paper setters, and are taken into consideration when setting grade boundaries during grade award.

This session, most teachers and examiners thought that the paper was of a similar standard, while some thought it was somewhat less accessible than that of November 2015. In fact, 29 teachers thought the paper was of a comparable difficulty level, 1 teacher thought it was a little easier and 11 teachers deemed it a little more difficult. Only 1 teacher thought that the paper was much more difficult than the November 2015 one. In addition, a number of teachers reported the use of an unfamiliar question type, namely Qs 13-17. This question type appeared in a number of SL papers in the past, and although candidates were unfamiliar with it, a number managed to grasp its requirements. All in all, candidates' performance in the paper showed that it was indeed more demanding than last November's and the points discussed above were taken into consideration when grade boundaries were determined.

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

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

As in previous sessions, candidates seemed to find difficulty in tackling the true/false with justification questions. Most candidates were capable of determining whether a statement was true or false, but they either provided extraneous detail in their justifications or failed to provide integral parts of the answer.

Surprisingly, the gap filling exercise in text E was not handled well by a number of candidates. It is very important that candidates develop understanding of grammar in context.

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

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

Examiners noted that the examination paper generally 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 fact, the number of candidates leaving out large sections unanswered this session has dropped significantly.

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

Q 1: Few candidates scored less than 3 out of 4 in this question. The most recurrent wrong option was F.

Qs 2-4: With the exception of Q3, this set was not as straightforward as expected. The main reason is that candidates copied out whole sentences from the text instead of identifying the phrase required for Q2, or the educational approach for Q4.

Qs 5-7: A manageable set for most candidates. Very few gave B instead of C for Q5 or A instead of C for Q6. A few candidates also gave either C or D for the overall purpose of the text (Q7).

Qs 8-12: In comparison to previous sessions, this set was accessible to most candidates. However, lack of practice - most probably - resulted in candidates losing marks for the simplest reasons:

Q 8: Several candidates ticked the wrong box. Others provided either “warned that” at the beginning of the justification, or forgot to write ‘seriously’ at the end of the justification.

Q 9: a good number of candidates ticked the wrong box and provided a wrong justification, or ticked the correct box and forgot to include “to work on a national plan” in the justification.

Q 10: the easiest in the set. The most common reason for losing the mark was not including ‘science tells us that’ in the justification or adding “they are planning for a 60 cm rise by 2100” to the justification.

Q 11: the most difficult in the set. Many candidates provided the wrong justification or copied the paragraph for their justification: “Quite clearly that is the kind of planning we need to start and have conversations about. There is no central intelligence on this issue.”

Q 12: not a difficult question but many candidates were denied the mark because they did not provide “that hundreds of homes will disappear” as part of their justification.

Qs 13-17: Candidates were, as mentioned earlier, unfamiliar with question type. Many lost the marks for Qs 13, 14 and 15 because they did not include ‘more than’ or ‘almost’. As for Qs 16 and 17, a good number forgot to include either ‘that’ or ‘it’ in their answers (Q16), or provided only ‘forced to move’ or ‘moved to a safer area’ for Q17.

Q 18: Many candidates lost the mark because they added ‘melting ice caps and glaciers’ to their answers.

Qs 19-20: Generally handled well by most candidates, but this may be because both B and D were accepted for Q19. As for Q20, a number of candidates provided A or D instead of B.

Qs 21-24: Of medium difficulty with Qs 21 and 22 being the most demanding in the set. Many candidates provided either C or D instead of B for Q21, and D instead of A for Q22.

Qs 25 & 26: Most candidates got the 2 marks for Q25; generally, the question was quite accessible. A good number lost the mark for Q26 because they copied the whole sentence: "But when the star-holder came to wake me; I always sat up before he could touch me."

Qs 27-31: This set proved to be somewhat challenging for a number of candidates. While Q29, the one deemed the most demanding by examiners, was generally answered correctly by average to able candidates, Q28 appeared to be the most difficult: candidates added 'in' and 'at' to the target answer, which changed the meaning and was therefore considered wrong.

Q 32: Although not a difficult question, many candidates provided A, B or D instead of C as the answer.

Q 33: Generally, the question was answered correctly by a number of candidates. Some candidates wrote 'the Alchemy Festival' instead of the target answer.

Qs 34-37: This set was of average difficulty. However, many candidates got most of the questions wrong. The most difficult was Q34; many candidates wrote I instead of B, which shows lack of close reading of the text.

Qs 38-40: Qs 38 and 39 were two of the most demanding questions in the exam, judging by candidates' responses. Some gave 'from all corners' or 'all backgrounds' as the answer for Q38 and all sorts of responses for Q39. Very few got Q40 wrong.

Qs 41-43: A manageable set. The most 'elusive' proved to be Q41: many candidates provided A instead of D as the answer.

Qs 44-47: A manageable set. However, candidates seemed to have found Q44 somewhat demanding, for they provided 'smart' and 'lasting' instead of 'right'. The most common reasons for losing the mark in Q45 was writing 'good health' or simply copying out the whole paragraph.

Qs 48-51: This set was also perceived as quite demanding, judging by candidates' responses. The most elusive one was Q49.

Qs 52-55: Generally, of medium difficulty. However, many candidates missed Qs 53, 54 and sometimes Q55. The most common mistakes were 'even though' for Q53, 'however' or 'in contrast' for Q54 and 'besides' for Q55.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be advised to:

- write their answers **in the provided answer boxes**; anything written outside those boxes may not be seen by the examiner. When an answer is written outside the provided box, the candidate **must** indicate where the answer appears (for example, 'please see attached paper' or 'see below').
- **clearly** cross out an answer they do not want marked, not put it between brackets.
- **avoid** using 'markscheme' answers with parts of the answer appearing between parentheses. Equally, teachers should **not** encourage candidates to write out the full

sentence then underline the relevant words. Examiners are instructed to mark the whole answer, including the additional part(s) or the part that is not underlined, and candidates are not given the benefit of the doubt when deploying those tricks to gain unfair advantage.

- study the requirements of each question to determine when a problem could result from providing either too many words or too few as an answer. Where “one” detail is required, a candidate who gives more than one runs the risk of losing the mark: even if one answer is correct, if there is also an incorrect response, no mark will be awarded. Similarly, where “a phrase” or “a/ one word” is required, only that phrase or word should be provided.
- avoid offering multiple responses for short-answer questions; this does not demonstrate understanding of the question and is, therefore, not awarded the mark. Candidates **MUST** clearly cross out anything they do not wish to be marked.
- remember 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.
- write their answer clearly in questions where a letter is required. Unclear answers will **NOT** be awarded the mark. Among ambiguous answers are C/G, E/F, E/L, I/J, and B/D.
- pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 31	32 - 37	38 - 45

### General comments

In this session, 14 teachers submitted the G2 form and they all agreed that the level of the paper was appropriate and 93% considered the paper of a similar standard to last year’s.

They also commented that the topics were similar to those studied by candidates along the course and that the texts were interesting.

Teachers’ comments are always appreciated as they help in the process of grade award as well as in paper setting. We would like to thank those that sent their comments and would like to encourage teachers to fill in this form in future sessions.

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

Most examiners felt that candidates need to keep on working on exam techniques. In this particular session, many candidates lacked the skills to answer some particular questions.

A number of candidates had difficulty in handling vocabulary questions (Qs 6 to 9) that demanded understanding of the word in context. Most probably candidates were looking for words that had the same ending or form instead of showing understanding of the meaning of the word in the text.

When a word is required, only **one** word must be given and when a phrase is needed, just a short phrase must be provided. For example, in Q 13 the correct answer was “shocked and frightened”. Any addition to the target answer was considered wrong.

As for reference questions (Qs 14 to 17), candidates struggled to determine to whom or what the underlined words referred. A good number of candidates provided references in light of their holistic understanding, instead of searching for the direct reference in the text.

In the exercise in which candidates have to fill in using phrases from the text (Qs 20 to 24), it is important to highlight that an **exact** quotation from the text must be provided. For example, in Q 24 only “above international averages” was accepted, not “above international average”.

As in previous sessions, True or False questions (Qs 25 to 29) proved to be quite challenging. It is relevant to remark that **all** the information in the statement must be covered by the quotation given as the justification.

As far as vocabulary questions are concerned, when required to find a word in the text, candidates are expected to provide **one** word. For instance, in Qs 34 to 36 many candidates answered with a sentence containing the word, but they were not awarded the mark.

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

The examination paper seemed to have been quite challenging for a good number of the candidates. However, the stronger candidates attacked all the question types quite well. It seems that some schools are teaching the techniques needed for specific question types effectively.

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

Q 1: many candidates found this question rather demanding in spite of being the first one. They provided “many have called her an anti-feminist” as an answer.

Q 2: quite easy though some candidates had difficulty answering this question correctly.

Qs 3-5: a good number of candidates found it hard to answer the three questions correctly.

Qs 6-9: vocabulary questions. A challenging set for a big number of candidates. Not many managed to get the four questions right. For Q9 a large number of candidates provided letter "J" as an answer.

Q 10: mostly accessible.

Q 11: very few candidates managed to get the four answers right. Most of them chose "H" or "D" as the correct letter instead of "B".

Q 12: quite demanding. Although two possible answers were accepted ("give up sort altogether" and "drop out of organised sports"), many candidates found this question difficult.

Q13: a large number of candidates gave a sentence as an answer ("children are often shocked and frightened") instead of a phrase ("shocked and frightened")

Qs 14-17: Reference questions.

Q 14: many candidates answered this question correctly.

Q 15: quite difficult. Very few candidates got this answer right. The word "endless" was essential to get the mark.

Q 16: one of the easiest questions in the paper. Several answers were accepted (eg Gary, Lineker, Mr. Lineker, etc)

Q 17: many candidates found this question hard to answer. The most common mistake was the addition of "giving" or "putting" to the target answer.

Qs 18-19: quite manageable set.

Qs 20-24: In general candidates found this exercise quite demanding. A large number of candidates failed to provide an exact quote from the text.

Qs 25-29: True or False with justification. As in previous sessions, candidates found these questions rather difficult. Extra wording and no direct quote from the text were the most common mistakes.

Q 31: one of the easiest questions in the paper. Most of the candidates got it right.

Q 32: generally manageable though a number of candidates had some difficulty answering this question correctly.

Q 33: although the question was quite accessible, some candidates struggled to get it right. The addition of "materials found on the planet's surface" to the target answer was the most common mistake.



Qs 34-36: vocabulary questions. Medium difficulty to difficult. A good number of candidates provided a full phrase or sentence to answer these questions. Only ONE word is required.

Q 38: rather difficult. Very few candidates managed to answer this question correctly.

Qs 39 -41: manageable set, with Q39 probably as the most demanding.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- It is important to bear in mind that when marking, examiners mark the whole answer given, including the words in brackets. Therefore, please encourage candidates to avoid using parenthesis.
- Candidates should be advised to look for the direct reference in the text. They should not provide an 'inferred' one if a direct reference is given in the text.
- When handling True/ False with justification questions, please remind candidates that a tick is required and all parts of the statement must be justified.
- In questions where a letter is required, candidates must write their answer clearly. Answers that cannot be read will **NOT** be awarded the mark.
- Candidates should be warned against providing multiple answers for short-answer questions since that does not demonstrate understanding of the question. Candidates **MUST** clearly cross out anything they do not wish to be marked.
- When an answer is written outside the box provided in the Question and Answer booklet, the candidate must indicate in English where the answer appears (eg 'please see attached paper')
- Teachers should advise candidates to pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses.
- Candidates should answer every question. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers, so no answer should be left blank.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 32	33 - 38	39 - 45

### General comments

In general, the majority of candidates demonstrated a very competent command of the language despite slips and flaws, and dealt with the tasks fairly methodically and thoughtfully.

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

**Article, review, proposal:** These three text types (in Q1, Q4 and Q5, respectively) were also the least popular choices. Those candidates who attempted these text types handled them with mixed success. While most appeared to have a grasp of the basic approach required, for example that an article should inform in an interesting way, or that a review should express value judgements, many scripts lacked what might be called ‘professional techniques’. To be more specific:

- **articles** lacked attractive, engaging openings; and tended towards long rambling paragraphs
- **reviews** also lacked interesting openings and punchy conclusions; and often failed to make opinions clear or to be critical in any way
- **proposals** made little use of clear structural devices, such headings, bullet points, *etc*; and rarely seemed to be aware that a proposal is normally addressed to a specific audience.

**Purposeful structuring of ideas:** While almost all scripts showed basic planning in the sense of having an introduction, a main body and a conclusion, it was often difficult to detect a logical sequence of ideas *within* these basic units. Ideas seemed to be organised by free association, rather than a methodical coverage of sensibly-linked key points. In turn, this meant that sometimes ideas were thrown in which were not really relevant to the required topic (see comments on Question 3, below).

**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. In some cases, such errors were constant throughout the script, indicating that the candidate had a clearly recognisable lack of grammatical knowledge. Such weaknesses should have been dealt with as part of the Language B course.

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

**Overall command of language:** The majority of candidates had acquired sufficient language resources to be able to communicate reasonably clearly. Specific indicators of such resources are: (a) sound basic sentence structure; (b) cohesive devices and sequence markers to link ideas together; (c) a range of transferable conceptual vocabulary sufficient to explain ideas clearly; and (d) authentic phrasing used to express emphasis, enthusiasm, and so on.

**General coverage of task:** Most candidates appeared to have read their chosen question thoughtfully, and then covered what they were required to cover, in basic terms. However, coverage was sometimes not precisely relevant – most notably, Question 2 was based on “a recent development in social media”, and many candidates took this as an invitation to discuss social media in very general terms.

**Common text types:** The blog (Q2) and the speech (Q3), by far the most popular questions, were generally handled effectively and were clearly recognisable. Both required expressing personal views, in a reasonable lively colloquial language, and many candidates handled these elements very competently.

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

Questions 2 and 3 were by far the most popular questions, together being taken up by approximately two-thirds of the candidature. This was followed by Questions 1 and 5, each being selected by around one in ten candidates. The least popular question was Question 4, which was selected by very few candidates.

The popularity of Questions 2 and 3 is likely to have been because both of these questions must be considered highly ‘accessible’. Such accessibility is based on (i) text type – both blog and speech are relatively straightforward colloquial expressions of opinion; and (ii) subject matter – both ‘social media’ (Q2) and ‘sport/health’ are areas with which candidates are likely to be very familiar.

### Section A

#### Question 1: Cultural Diversity – Article

Most scripts correctly supplied several “different ways” in which language can be taught communicatively, presumably drawing quite effectively on personal experience. Detailed explanation of such techniques were often not very clear or convincing; and helpful basic information about the context (“your school”) was often minimal. A minority of candidates seemed to have been taught about the ‘article’ by studying the features of authentic journalism, and so produced lively introductions and conclusions, interesting phrasing, and short clear paragraphs. In contrast, many appeared not to have analysed real articles, and so tended to write in the style of a rather ponderous essay.

#### Question 2: Customs and Traditions – Blog

The blog here clearly required a focus on “a recent development” – *ie* a specific and limited recent change. In fact, a clear majority of scripts interpreted the question as something like ‘the *general* development of social media’ (over decades, sometimes). Such scripts lost marks. In addition, both ‘general’ and ‘specific’ responses showed a range of competence in explaining clearly changes in “manners and customs”. Most candidates appeared to be familiar with ‘blog style’, providing direct address to their readers, lively personal opinions, and a final invitation to comment. Candidates should, however, be reminded that expressing views informally does not mean that you can forgo effective sequencing and methodical explanation (see *Purposeful structuring of ideas*, above).

#### Question 3: Health – Speech

This speech required a clear focus on how sport relates to health and happiness. Good responses concentrated precisely on these three concepts, explaining how they were related,

but there were many scripts which either digressed into general comments on health (eg anorexia and bulimia, only vaguely relevant); or ignored 'happiness' apart from a cursory comment or two; or produced jumbled, disorganised explanations of all three concepts. So, the task discriminated between those who could concentrate on the precise task, and those who could not. Candidates should be reminded that a 'speech' or a 'talk' necessarily involves addressing a specific audience directly; and that this should include an effective introduction and conclusion. In addition, attention should be given to the use of sequence markers and cohesive devices – vital in providing structure to an oral presentation.

#### **Question 4: Leisure – Review**

The few responses to this task were usually competent at the basic level of covering both the event and the performance, but more often concentrated on the former than the latter. The approach tended to be simply an enthusiastic report of what happened, rather than to include the critical analysis and assessment which is a conventional element of any review. As noted under **Article, review, proposal**, above, few scripts used 'professional techniques' such as engaging openings or witty commentaries, possibly indicating that candidates had seen few authentic reviews and certainly not analysed them in any detail. It should be noted that an expected convention is that a review should include the reviewer's name with the title – a review is inherently a personal expression, which should be 'signed'.

#### **Question 5: Science and Technology – Proposal**

The relatively few responses adopted a generally competent approach, even if ideas suggested tended to be rather simple. Scripts tended to be poorly focused in terms of address to a specific audience, and in terms of structure. While there were occasional attempts to select ideas appropriate to the audience (eg 'technology can help the school to avoid wasting money'), these often appeared as afterthoughts, not as part of a focused argument. There was little evidence that candidates were familiar with structural devices such as headings, numbering, bullet points, and how these may help to structure arguments more convincingly.

### **Section B**

At first sight, the stimulus appeared a little challenging and/or obscure, but in fact the candidates seemed to have understood it competently, interpreting it - appropriately enough - to mean something like 'should you take a passive or active approach to life?' The term 'time' proved to be very open: candidates interpreted it in various justifiable ways (eg 'age', 'circumstances', 'history' or 'destiny'). Few provided any kind of *explicit* definitions of 'time', but their interpretation was usually pretty clear in implicit terms.

A major factor of discrimination was how much candidates could explain why one should be active rather than passive (by far the majority view). A very common approach was to tell an anecdote (eg "when I broke up with my boyfriend..."), but usually the meaning of the anecdote was not explained in ways which amounted to a real 'reasoned argument'. Only the more able candidates either explained their anecdotes clearly, or analysed the extent to which 'time' or 'personal decision' might interact.

Overall, then, the stimulus (i) did not confuse the candidates, who usually found something relevant to write; and (ii) discriminated quite well between candidates who could or could not explain themselves clearly. Candidates should be forcefully reminded that Section B requires a “reasoned argument” (Language B Guide p.40).

Relatively few candidates wasted words on ‘establishing the text type’ eg sections of irrelevant chat at beginning and end to show that it was an e-mail. Writing should be clearly focused on discussing the stimulus.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

**Rationales:** A few candidates appeared to have been advised to include a rationale (as for the written assignment) for what they wrote in each Section. This is definitely neither required nor expected. While candidates should indeed think carefully about what they want to write, how, and why, they should not waste exam time explaining this formally to the examiner. Any writing not required by the exam tasks is neither read nor marked by examiners.

**Teaching of communicative techniques:** Teachers should aim to improve candidates’ ability to organise their writing so as to present ideas as clearly and effectively as possible. This should involve detailed and well-developed planning (‘thinking ideas through before starting to write’); and then presenting those ideas through the use of standard techniques such as attractive openings (in articles and speeches, for example) and structural devices (such as headings, patterns of paragraphs, etc). Refer to **Article, review, proposal**, above.

**Planning notes:** As commented in previous years, it was very rare to find any evidence at all of planning notes. Use of methodical planning notes should be normal practice among candidates, and teachers are encouraged to emphasise this in their classrooms and also for the exams.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

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

### General comments

Approximately 78% of the teachers who completed the G2 form considered the paper of a similar difficulty level to that of November 2015. Clarity of wording and the presentation of the paper were deemed very good to excellent by the majority of respondents. The International Baccalaureate would like to thank the teachers who submitted their G2 forms. As usual, all teachers are encouraged to submit their feedback in future sessions.

The overall performance seemed to be slightly weaker compared to November 2015. 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

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.

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, Q4 and Q5) required a sequence of ideas leading to a coherent and convincing argument. However, many scripts, including the high quality ones, presented different interesting sub-ideas at times without clearly linking them to what came before and after.

What's more, and as in previous sessions, many candidates did not divide their answers into paragraphs. Good paragraphing is a way of structuring a text, and it clearly separates one idea from another. Poorly or non-paragraphed responses will not score high marks in Criterion B.

Handwriting was a major issue as many scripts were extremely difficult to read, while others were very messy with words crossed out. Clear writing and presentation become even more important with electronic marking.

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

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 text types 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.

In many cases, it was noticed that candidates effectively used personal experience, especially in Qs1, 4 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

### **Question 1: Cultural Diversity – Blog Entry**

This question proved to be the second most popular question (following Q4). Good answers explained vividly and lucidly a moment or phase in language development, using examples drawn from personal experience during the 2-year program. Still, a good number failed to clearly explain the background context prior to language development, and thus were marked down on relevance of ideas in Criterion B.

The majority of candidates were able to produce an authentic blog with effective conventions used, but some scripts failed to show awareness of the readers or use a lively interesting style.

### **Question 2: Customs and Traditions – Guidelines**

This question was the least popular by far despite the accessible text type required. When attempted, candidates clearly and effectively explained examples of ‘what to do and what not to do’ in an employment interview. Weaker candidates failed to address both parts of the question or superficially presented tips without adequate explanations and supporting details.

The few candidates who attempted this question managed to produce successful and effective guidelines with a short introduction and conclusion included, a focused title, an appropriate register in addition to the bullet points that set out the guidelines clearly.

### **Question 3: Health – Interview**

This was one of the least popular tasks this session probably due to some candidates’ inability to set clear parameters for what ‘health education’ means or entails. Many scripts rambled about different health issues without any clear focus on the role of families and schools. Some candidates failed to either (i) address both sides that contribute to making children better informed about health education: school and families or (ii) develop ideas effectively.

There were cases when the interview was cleverly and effectively embedded into the article, but many candidates failed to refer to the interview itself or produced a verbatim transcript of the interview, which resulted in marking responses down in Criterion C.

### **Question 4: Leisure – E-mail**

This question proved to be the most popular by far clearly due to (i) well-practiced text type and (ii) the familiar task set which many candidates could identify with. Almost all candidates attempting this question were able to describe the game invented and reflect on the experience. What prevented top of the range marks at times was the inability to cover occasion, time and place of the game as well as children’s reactions not to mention lack of effective cohesive devices and paragraphing.

### **Question 5: Science and Technology – Speech**

Despite the accessible topic of electronic devices vs. personal interaction as a means of communication, some responses lacked the required focus and digressed into technology at large or irrelevant topics related to health. Almost all candidates who attempted this question managed to take a clear stance for or against the topic and produced the general conventions of speech writing: addressing audience in the beginning and thanking them in the end.

The best answers not only produced a persuasively argued speech, but also maintained seriousness and attempted to leave a clear impression in the end. Many scripts also kept contact with the audience throughout the speech, for example by use of pronouns 'you' and 'we' and by direct address. The very best answers used speech rhetoric, such as direct questions to the audience.

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

Candidates should be 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 a legible handwriting. This needs practice well before the examination, and candidates need to maintain the habit of proof-reading their final drafts.
- use correct paragraphing and punctuation marks, something examiners always check on, and teachers are always advised to stress that in class.
- make sure they write the minimum number of words required.

Teachers are advised to:

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