

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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<p>Paper 1120/01 Writing</p>
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## Key messages

- Candidates are advised to respond to the **full** requirements of each bullet point in **Section 1**; often there is a word, such as **and**, in bold type, to indicate two parts to the bullet point.
- In **Section 1**, although candidates are invited to write out their speech, they are advised that the text should represent something spoken and should contain suitable spoken devices.
- Candidates are advised to plan each bullet point in **Section 1** to ensure that they have enough to say which is relevant in each of the bullets.
- In **Section 1**, Bullet 2 often relies on some narrative, but candidates should not introduce too much narrative.
- For both of the Writing tasks it is useful to see in the Mark Scheme band descriptors what is credited and to use it as a guide to effective responses.
- The use of correct tenses and agreement would improve the work of the majority of candidates.
- Correct punctuation (full stops, commas) and a more varied use of punctuation (colons, semi-colons, and exclamation marks) would raise the level of most responses.
- The overuse of the word *like* as in *I was like speaking to my friend...* is best avoided.

## General comments

The very best responses demonstrated a good standard in their use of language. For the Task Fulfilment in **Section 1** the vast majority of candidates fulfilled the task in a satisfactory way. As far as the use of language is concerned, candidates need to check their work thoroughly for any errors. In **Section 2**, most of the titles were popular and there was an increase in the number of candidates taking on the Argument and Descriptive titles. Time management for the vast majority was excellent.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section 1 – Directed Writing**

In **Section 1**, candidates were asked to imagine they were on the way home from school with a friend and they saw a poster about an event which led to an exciting experience for both of them. They had to make a speech to their class about the experience. The majority of candidates responded very well to the **purpose** and **situation** as it was a scenario they could easily imagine. Candidates had to be aware that in order to satisfy the requirements of the bullet points a perfect answer required:

- the name of the friend and what kind of event it was
- a detailed account of the experience
- the effect the experience had on the speaker and the friend.

For bullet point 1, successful responses named the friend and the better ones added details about that friend and the nature of the friendship. There were many different events mentioned, showing the wide range of interests among the candidates. There were music concerts and practical music sessions; there were arts and science instruction classes, talent shows and many different sporting opportunities. Most candidates supplied a catchy title for the event, while others mentioned only what kind of event it was. Some of the more unusual and interesting events were beach-cleaning groups (one of which saved a whale), cookery courses and even a competition to find the fastest eater at McDonalds. Most candidates mentioned either the friend or the event and therefore made a solid start to their response.

A few weaker responses relied on lifting (or giving a close paraphrase of) the opening two sentences from the question so that they said they were with a friend, rather than naming the friend; some said they attended an event, rather than specifying or explaining which event they meant. Some responses spent too long on this bullet point saying what they were doing when they came across the poster. A few candidates misunderstood the word *poster* and instead they read it as *post*, as in an internet post, so that it was seen on a computer or phone, rather than in the street. Some saw it as a *postie* or *postman*.

Bullet point 2 was straightforward for the vast majority who included a little narrative to give an account of the event. Concerts often meant detailing the acts and the music and some lucky candidates got to go on stage with their idols. Events which included a practical element saw candidates practise and perfect their skills while sporting events often led to winning a trophy or a medal – as well as meeting a sporting hero.

Less strong responses were unsure about when exactly the event and experience took place. They assumed that seeing the poster was the event and the most they could do to make an experience out of it was to consider the poster itself as a work of art. Some responses went a little further but only as far as buying the tickets in preparation for the event and this resulted in a thin response to the bullet point. Several responses were confused about the timescale and spoke about the event as if it had yet to happen rather than that it had already happened. It was difficult for such responses to give a convincing account of the event and furthermore struggled with bullet point 3 in urging classmates to attend and in saying how they were affected.

Successful responses to bullet point 3 were ones which made a good choice of event to allow them to say enough; going to a pop concert left very little to say as far as the effect was concerned, whereas those who did charity work were much better placed to expand on how the work affected them. All responses referred to enjoying the event and often how they benefitted from it. Strong responses explained more fully exactly how they had benefitted. Such responses were also able to say in what ways they had enjoyed themselves. The strongest responses spoke about how they felt they were improved by participating – including being more confident and less critical of others, especially their parents. Most responses referred to experiencing a joint effect with their friend, but better responses emphasised that both people were affected in different ways as well and so gave fullness to the response.

Generally, there was a very good awareness of **purpose** and **situation** and candidates were very clear about what they were doing in this text. The proper **audience** was the school class but also the teacher. Almost all responses showed awareness of this and some emphasised it by saying that the friend was present in the room. The **tone** and **register** were very well maintained and kept appropriately formal and polite to acknowledge the slightly formal situation and the presence of an adult. Several examples of appropriate technical language were useful in situating the speech in the correct context. However, candidates are advised to avoid overusing colloquialisms such as *you guys*, *gobsmacked* and slang such as *gonna* to make a speech sound spoken. The proper **format** was not always well handled and was the major weakness for many. Although candidates had to write out the speech because it was an exam, they had to recreate the speech as if it was spoken. A small number of responses successfully showed that this was a speech. Not only did they use the opening they were invited to use, but they also signed off at the end of the speech with something which was clearly spoken and clearly addressed to the audience. The most successful responses maintained the focus on a speech throughout by using a mixture of rhetorical questions (often challenging the audience to do something similar or urging the friend to take a bow) and appropriate sentence types, questions and exclamations. Less successful responses used the appropriate opening and managed a suitable ending – *thanks for listening* – but did not consistently maintain the focus on a speech. The least successful responses did not include many spoken devices or an appropriate ending.

Candidates understandably followed the structure provided by the bullet points for their organisation, together with a very short opening and closing paragraph. Responses which remained focused did not include too much narrative in response to bullet point 2. Overall, the vast majority of responses included a suitable amount for **Section 1. Opinion** and **justification** arose naturally when the effect was suggested in bullet 3. There were very few short scripts in **Section 1** and even fewer examples of a nil response.

Linguistically, most candidates produced a convincing piece of work. Spelling and punctuation were generally satisfactory. Paragraphing continues to improve in the **Section 1** task. In this text, there was some weakness in the use of tenses when weaker responses switched from paragraph to paragraph. Also, it is worth remembering that *very fun* is not the correct use of the adjective and candidates are advised to avoid using *like* so often – *I was like...* – (even though it is now so common in speech).

## Section 2 – Composition

### Question 2

**Describe two of your neighbours who are very different and what your relationship with them is like. (Remember you are describing the characters of the two people as well as their appearance.)**

The descriptive title was a popular choice as the subject of neighbours was accessible to all. The fact that it was two neighbours helped candidates to structure their answers as a contrast; this was usually a good neighbour as opposed to a bad neighbour or male as opposed to female, rich as opposed to poor, pleasant as opposed to unpleasant. Some weaker responses made this contrast too obvious so that every detail about one was contrasted with the detail about the other. – dark hair against light, tall against short, even to the colour of eyes and types of clothes. There was also a tendency in weaker responses to describe only the physical characteristics. The strongest responses referred to aspects of appearance, personality and willingness to help. The very best responses appreciated and applauded the subtle personalities of both neighbours and some very engaging portraits emerged of people and their foibles or eccentricities – people with... *a smile which was not just sunshine but an eclipse...* and someone with... *mascara as thick as my mum's homemade cheese sauce...*

Linguistically, those responses which evoked an atmosphere by close description and the use of adjectives and the senses did well on this topic. The range and precision of the vocabulary used by candidates continues to be excellent: *preferences*, *socially-mobile*, *muscular*, and *acrimonious* were just some of the words used to good effect.

### Question 3

**'We should always obey rules, both inside and outside school: there is never an excuse for breaking them.' What is your opinion? Give reasons and examples to support your view.**

This was an extremely popular choice. Some candidates appeared to be attracted by the reference to school and the chance to talk about first-hand knowledge, while others were equally tempted by the wider context and rules in society as well as school. There was a very common theme running through the majority of the responses, whether strong or weak. Nearly everyone felt that rules had to be obeyed; this view was very well articulated by a candidate who said that *fairness is distributed to all and mayhem is avoided*. There was one common exception and that was when a loss of life was a possibility. The most frequently quoted example was of jumping a red light when a person needed to get to the hospital. In some responses there was a little too much emphasis on school rules and the wider social context could have been explored a little more. The strongest responses gave interesting personal examples. These arguments benefited greatly from excellent planning with candidates using separate paragraphs to highlight different aspects of the argument.

### Question 4

**Which two aspects of your culture do you think people in your country should be most proud of? Give reasons and examples to support your view.**

This was not a popular choice. Candidates who chose this title gave some excellent evocative snapshots of food, music, art and personal characteristics, as well as emphasising more abstract qualities such as kindness, politeness and tolerance, which they felt exemplified their culture.

### Question 5

**Write a story which includes the sentence: 'I could see my friend shouting to me but there was too much noise to hear what my friend was saying.'**

This was the more popular of the two narrative choices and the most popular question of all the essay choices. The most common noisy venues were a pop concert and a party. Usually the narrator had gone to such an event, often against their will, only to become separated from their friend or suffer some other minor calamity. The friend was seen across the crowded room or public space, but communication was impossible. This inevitably led to confusion and panic, but it was usually resolved. One essay took place in the intensive care ward in a hospital dealing with victims of the pandemic and the candidate realistically captured the difficulties of treatment in the midst of the noise and uncertainty.

The best narrative responses were characterised by an understanding of narrative structures, ambitious vocabulary, the control of tenses and usually by a variation in tone through the selective use of dialogue. Weaker responses tended to repeat ideas, confuse tenses and overuse of simple grammatical forms and vocabulary. Candidates are advised to include more variety in their punctuation and to use it accurately. With specific reference to dialogue, two points are worth remembering here. First, if dialogue is added it should have a purpose – perhaps to show character in some way. Second, dialogue should be correctly punctuated, because it shows a skill as well as making communication clear.

### Question 6

**Write a story in which someone is accused of doing something wrong which they did not actually do.**

This was a less popular choice than **Question 5**. Responses to the title usually involved either shoplifting with the supposed culprit being cleared by the CCTV or cheating in an exam which turned out to be not true. As far as performance was concerned, it was very much the same as for **Question 5**.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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<p><b>Paper 1120/02</b> <b>Reading</b></p>
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## Key messages

- Candidates should try to gain a good, overall picture of both the given texts *and* all questions through close reading before they begin to answer each section. In both sections of the Paper, close reading and careful attention to detail were the attributes which brought the best results.
- Candidates might find it helpful to underline or highlight key words in the question, e.g. **Question 6(a)** 'How did the men show their anger?', or in **Question 6(c)** 'Give one other word...'. This will ensure the answers are focused and creditworthy.
- Candidates are advised for **Question 1(a)** and **Question 1(b)** to focus on identifying, specifically, the main overarching points from the text without the unnecessary inclusion of examples, repetition and extensions of those points.
- If examples are included in **Question 1(a)**, candidates need to identify them as such with the use of 'for example', 'such as' or 'like'. The use of brackets, dashes and slashes is to be avoided and they are not indicators of examples, nor is punctuation such as the colon, comma or semi-colon.
- Candidates do not have to use their own words in **Question 1(a)**; however, they should be aware that when substituting a word or phrase, it must be appropriate. While candidates need to be encouraged to write succinctly and also to avoid copying lengthy sentences, they must also be aware that brevity can exclude key information, e.g. 'governments solve production problems' misses the key word 'legislate'.
- In **Question 1(a)**, it is not necessary for candidates to restrict themselves to a maximum of 12 content points. They can, in fact, offer more than 12 points and each one will all be considered on merit, even though the maximum number of marks is 12.
- In **Question 1(b)**, the focus is on clear expression; this will ensure a well organised piece of writing that is easy to follow. Candidates should use the question to help structure the response in two halves: the importance of rice from ancient times to modern day *and* reasons for its continuing popularity.
- Candidates are encouraged to write to the recommended length in **Question 1(b)**; overlong or short responses are self-penalising since they cannot satisfactorily fulfil the criteria for Relevance or Coherence.
- For **Question 1(b)**, candidates demonstrated an awareness of the importance of linking devices to establish coherence; it is essential that these are appropriate and also used selectively. Words and phrases which are not standard English, such as 'moreso' and 'to add on', are best avoided. Many candidates would benefit from further practice using these devices to enable them to move from writing a competent summary to writing a summary which is skilful or even impressive.
- Candidates should be aware that accurate punctuation in **Question 1(b)**, particularly the accurate use of commas and full stops, can assist in the fluent and coherent presentation of content points.
- Candidates' performance on **Question 2** shows some improvement, but many responses demonstrated a difficulty in distinguishing between factual and non-factual statements, such as opinions, in the non-fiction passage. The opinion might be only part of the sentence and should be written without the inclusion of additional factual information. It needs to be reinforced that **Question 2** relates to Passage 1, not Passage 2. Candidates are advised to copy the opinion as it is given in the passage since own word attempts can miss some detail or include inappropriate alternatives.

- In the own word questions, candidates can improve if they avoid repeating the key words in their response, and instead provide suitable synonyms which work within the given context.
- In **Question 9**, the multiple-choice vocabulary question, candidates should be encouraged to try out each of the possible words and decide which is the most appropriate in the passage with which they are dealing. Candidates are asked to circle the correct letter. Occasionally other methods such as eliminating the incorrect answers or writing the letter in the margin resulted in ambiguous responses which could not be credited.
- In responding to the final question on the writer's craft, understanding of both literal and inferential writing is required. It was not always evident that candidates could distinguish between *meaning* and *effect*. Further practice on the approach to these questions on the writer's craft would be beneficial. Candidates are advised to provide a straightforward literal meaning under 'Meaning' and for 'Effect' to go beyond the literal and comment on the impact or connotations of particular words or an image.

### **General comments**

Candidates were asked to answer questions on two passages, each of approximately 700 words: the first entitled '*Rice*' and the second entitled '*Pedro*'.

Although the majority of candidates attempted every question, there was a small number who made no attempt at some of the questions in Section 2, particularly **Question 10**.

Responses were, for the most part, clearly written. A few candidates who wrote to excess – in **Question 1(a)** particularly – wrote at the side or at the bottom of the page which can result in illegible responses and this should be avoided. If the response needs to continue on additional pages, candidates should ensure that they identify the original question number, part and, if appropriate, the section which is being continued. This is particularly important for **Question 1(a)**.

In **Question 1(a)**, there were a few instances of candidates putting information in the wrong section. In **Question 2**, a small number of candidates referred to the fiction passage.

The first non-fiction passage explored the candidates' ability to read for ideas and the second fiction passage tested their reading for meaning. 22 marks were available for the summary **Question 1**, with 12 of these marks being awarded for the assessment of the candidates' ability to select content points from the passage, '*Rice*'. 10 marks were awarded for the assessment of their ability to express these points in a piece of writing which was relevant, well organised and easy to follow. Almost all candidates wrote to the required length in **Question 1(b)**.

In **Question 1(a)**, the majority of candidates wisely adhered to the suggestion in the rubric that they might find it useful to use bullet points for their notes.

A further question, **Question 2**, allotted 3 marks to the testing of the candidates' ability to read for ideas, in this case to distinguish fact from opinion in two different paragraphs of the text.

The second passage, '*Pedro*', tested the candidates' literal and inferential comprehension, their understanding of vocabulary, their ability to select appropriate quotations, their use of own words and their appreciation of the writer's craft. The remaining 25 marks for the Paper could be gained here. There was a range of questions, some of which everyone was able to deal with and other more challenging questions, which stretched the candidates.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1**

**Question 1(a)** was the first part of the summary question, carrying 12 marks. Candidates were asked to identify and write down the importance of rice from ancient times to the present day, and the reasons for its continuing popularity, as outlined in the passage. The summary was to be based on the whole text, and candidates were to write their answers in note form, where they were free to use either the words of the text or their own words. One content point under each heading of the rubric was given by way of illustration, although these given points were not rewarded with a mark.

Excluding these given points, there were 13 content points. The exercise was a discriminating one as a wide range of marks were observed. Few candidates achieved over ten marks and only a small number gave the maximum number of correct points. These successful responses were expressed concisely, using the suggested bullet points and avoiding repetition, unnecessary examples and additional information, ensuring that key words essential to making that point were included.

Less successful responses did not select the overarching point from the details in the passage and offered irrelevant material, notably the inclusion of examples and repetition. Examples of such are given in dealing with the individual points below.

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 described reasons for the importance of rice from ancient times to the present and, apart from the first given point, there were six content points which the candidates could make.

Paragraph 1 contained one content point that described the spread of rice as evidence of its importance. It could be expressed concisely with rice 'quickly spread' or alternatively by stating that 'it was transported to other countries'. If any country in this paragraph was mentioned, it had to be introduced with 'like', 'such as' or 'for example'. Many responses did not include this point or were focused on the recovery of grains in Iran or the Po valley which could not score as these are examples. 'Rice was so widespread' also was not creditworthy since it just describes the consequences of the global spread of rice.

Paragraph 2 contained two content points which focused on the cultural and religious significance of rice. The first point was that rice was used in 'celebrations', 'ceremonies' or 'special occasions' and many candidates correctly quoted the words from the passage: 'used to mark celebrations'. Several candidates went on to provide additional detail about harvest festivals, good luck and weddings and, unless they were presented as examples with 'for example' or 'such as', the point could not be credited. The examples of harvest festivals and weddings were often incorrectly presented as separate bullet points. The second content point was the link with religion. Although there was reasonable success by lifting 'links between rice and religious belief', any reference to Islamic texts and rice goddesses was not acceptable unless it was identified as an example.

In Paragraph 3, there were three further content points about the importance of rice as a staple food. There were three ways in which the first point could be made and although most candidates were successful in identifying the point, it was not unusual for it to be repeated, resulting in candidates unnecessarily using up lines on the page. In addition to the single word 'food', creditworthy responses could identify that it is a 'staple food' or that rice 'provides a fifth of calories people consume'. However, 'rice is the staple food of the country' could not score since it is referring specifically to Indonesia. The second point in this paragraph was to identify a government's role in legislating or passing laws to solve production problems. Where candidates failed to make this point fully, it was often due to the omission of 'legislate', instead referring to road building which is an example of action taken. The final point could be answered in two ways: the 'United Nations' declared an 'International Year of Rice', or rice 'alleviates global poverty and malnutrition'. Both alternatives required recognition of the global element and many candidates were successful in recognising this.

In the second section of the summary, the rubric asked for the reasons for the continuing popularity of rice as outlined in the passage, and there were a further seven content points, excluding the given point, to be found in Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6.

From Paragraph 4, candidates could make two points about rice in our daily diet, the first being that rice has a 'variety of food uses'. The inclusion of 'food' was essential to differentiate it from the other uses it has. Rice can be cooked in many ways or rice can make a range of meals were acceptable alternatives. While responses could include general reference to the three main cooking types, any additional information about

the cooking of the rice grains was incorrect. The second point was that rice is 'healthy', wholesome or nutritious and was often succinctly given with the acceptable lift 'rice is a healthy option'. Additional information about the health benefits of white and brown rice was not acceptable since these are examples. Several candidates offered 'It is impossible to become bored with eating rice' which was not creditworthy because it is simply an extension of rice's varied flavours and food uses, rather than a distinct point.

Paragraph 5 contained three points about the production of rice and many candidates were able to identify at least two of these points. The first point was that growing rice is 'an inexpensive way to obtain food' with the focus on rice-growing being cheap or economical. 'Rice is cheap' without the context of growing or cultivating could imply cheap to purchase which is not correct. The second point was that rice 'can be harvested for many seasons' or alternatively 'ratooning can produce a crop for up to thirty years', but it was not enough to simply describe the traditional method of growing rice. The final point that rice 'can be grown almost anywhere' was often successfully made, but could only be credited with the inclusion of the adverb 'almost' or similar, while 'rice can be grown anywhere as long as the temperature is high' is not entirely true so was not correct.

The final paragraph, Paragraph 6, contained two content points about alternative uses of rice. Many candidates found it difficult to select the overarching points in this paragraph and gave points which were examples alone: hulls can be used as fuel or powdered rice can cure skin ailments. Candidates were required to identify that a reason for rice's continuing popularity is its by-products. Reference to rice straw, hulls and rice oil was only acceptable if they were identified as examples with the inclusion of 'such as' or 'for example'. Strong responses showed evidence of candidates having read beyond the list of by-products to the point in the paragraph where the overarching point is clearly made: 'useful by-products.' Similarly, the second point in this paragraph that rice has medical benefits could not score if the examples were presented as if they were the overarching point. However, since the overarching point preceded the examples in the paragraph, there was much more success in identifying its 'medical properties'. It was not uncommon for this section to close with one or more examples of rice's medical uses which were not creditworthy.

In **Question 1(b)**, candidates were asked to use their notes to write a summary of the importance of rice from ancient times to the present day, and the reasons for the continuing popularity of rice. They were advised to write between 150-180 words (the first ten of which were given) in a piece of continuous writing which was to be relevant, well organised and easy to follow. Most candidates wrote to the required length. A small minority of candidates relied too heavily on the original passage instead of their notes, giving a summary which was close to verbatim.

Candidates who scored highly in **Question 1(a)** were often able to transform their notes into a relevant summary which did not rely on excessive copying of the text. The most impressive efforts were from candidates who expanded the relevant notes made in **Question 1(a)**, synthesising the material without repetition, examples and the overuse of unnecessary supporting detail. The strongest responses included only what was relevant and excluded unnecessary examples and additional details. These responses were balanced, giving equal consideration to both parts of the question. Candidates who relied on copying sections of the text included a lot of irrelevance such as details about specific ceremonies as well as references to the specific by-products and their uses.

Although the use of own words is not compulsory, those who did use them, together with some of their own constructions to link the main ideas, created a fluency which was easy to follow. The best responses demonstrated an impressive coherence using a range of skilful and accurate linking devices including the effective use of punctuation, adverbial connectives and original complex structures introduced by 'which' and 'who'. In order to achieve a high mark, repetitive use of 'and' or 'also' to link content is best avoided. It was common for some adverbial connectives such as 'nevertheless' or 'however' to be used incorrectly, and others such as 'in addition', 'moreover' and 'furthermore' to be placed at random at the beginning of a new sentence. 'On the other hand' and 'however' were regularly incorrectly used to move from the importance of rice from ancient times to the present day to reasons for its continuing popularity. The quality of coherence was also occasionally impacted by awkward attempts to link phrases such as 'pursuing this further', 'on the flip side of the coin' or 'adding on'. It is important for candidates to ensure that the continuation from the opening ten words is grammatically accurate, thus aiding fluency and coherence. Some candidates made no attempt to link the content and the result was a succession of simple or compound sentences which read rather like a list.



## Question 2

In **Question 2**, candidates were to select and write down three of the writer's opinions, one from Paragraph 1 and two from Paragraph 4. The key to answering this question is to identify words or phrases which are subjective rather than objective.

The opinion found in Paragraph 1 and correctly identified by some candidates was that 'It is astonishing that there is archaeological evidence of rice cultivation'. An alternative to 'archaeological' was '8000 years ago'. The key word here is the subjective 'astonishing' since not everyone might consider this to be astonishing or amazing. Many candidates incorrectly gave 'rice was so widespread' or that 'settlements in rice-growing areas became sophisticated cultures', but these are proven facts and could not be credited as opinions.

There was more success with the first opinion in Paragraph 4: 'It is impossible to become bored with eating rice' with the subjectivity located in the words 'it is impossible to become bored' since this is clearly not the view of everyone.

Candidates found the second opinion in Paragraph 4 difficult to identify since it required separation of what is an opinion: that rice pudding is 'delicious', the subjectivity located in the word 'delicious', from a fact: 'short grains are used to make rice pudding'. The factual statements that 'rice is a healthy option' or 'it comes in a choice of flavours' were often given but could not be credited because both are proven facts.

There was a small number of candidates who offered their own opinions rather than the writer's opinion, as required by the rubric, or provided a summary of the content of each paragraph such as 'In Paragraph 4, the writer tells us about the different ways we can cook rice.' Own word alternatives are best avoided because they rarely provided appropriate alternatives for all the details. Some candidates' responses were incomplete and only identified the subjective phrase such as 'is delicious' or 'It is astonishing'. Alternatively, others neglected to include the subjective phrase and only wrote 'there is archaeological evidence of rice cultivation'.

## Section 2

While several candidates found the narrative text to be accessible and responses demonstrated good engagement, this was not the case for all candidates; others struggled with understanding the context and this impacted on the quality of their responses.

Each question directed them to the paragraph or area of the text where they would find the relevant material on which to base their answer.

## Question 3

**Question 3(a)** was a literal comprehension question which asked how Pedro emphasised in his note that he could do 'all jobs'. There were several ways in which a candidate could answer this correctly, but what was crucial was that they identified that 'he offered a range of tasks', 'he was skilled in many areas' or, more simply, 'he could do everything'. Referring to 'the list' of jobs would also capture this idea. The answer could also be given by lifting from lines 2 to 3: 'He was offering his services for tree-cutting, housework, gardening, painting, decorating, rewiring and car maintenance, among other things.' Although it was not necessary to include all the jobs offered, what was essential was the inclusion of 'among other things' to sum up how much of a multi-tasker he is. Responses which relied on 'all jobs' from the question could not be credited unless there was some recasting such as 'he offered all kinds of jobs'. Similarly, 'There was a telephone number at the bottom of his list of accomplishments' was not creditworthy since the focus is on the telephone number rather than the many jobs. Reference to his 'spidery handwriting' was a common incorrect response.

Another literal comprehension question was **Question 3(b)** requiring candidates to locate in the final sentence of the paragraph the reason why the husband was 'impressed' by Pedro's note. There was a choice of two reasons here although many candidates gave both: his admiration for people who went out to find work and for people who showed ambition. Some candidates chose to answer in their own words: 'he liked ambitious people' or 'he approved of people who were motivated to look for employment'. Other candidates answered more inferentially, stating that 'he admired Pedro's ambition and efforts to get work' which was also creditworthy. It was, however, incorrect to say that he was 'impressed' by Pedro's note or his accomplishments.

#### Question 4

**Question 4(a)** referred candidates to the second paragraph and asked why the writer did not want to employ Pedro. Some candidates misread the question as 'how do we know the writer did not want to employ Pedro?' and wrote that '[she] voiced [her] reluctance to employ Pedro'. The more discerning responses identified her suspicion of 'those who claim the ability to turn their hand to everything.' 'Many things' or 'lots of jobs' were not acceptable alternatives for 'everything' or 'all jobs'. Similarly, 'she did not like' failed to capture the idea of suspicion and distrust. Occasionally, omission of key words from the acceptable lift distorted the answer so 'she was suspicious of those with the ability to turn their hand to everything' was incorrect. Explicit reference to Pedro could be credited such as 'she was suspicious of Pedro when he said he could do everything'. A few candidates wrote 'she was suspicious of Pedro' without providing a reason. The second reason why the writer did not want to employ Pedro was quite successful and the mark could be gained by lifting from the text at line 10: 'there was really little that needed to be done in the garden'.

**Question 4(b)** was a relatively straightforward literal comprehension question which most candidates answered successfully. The question asked what the husband wanted Pedro to do in the garden and the majority of candidates recognised that the task was 'to cut back trees'. The verbs 'cut', 'prune' and 'trim' were also acceptable but 'cut down' was clearly incorrect.

#### Question 5

Although not explicitly an own word question, **Question 5(a)** required some recasting of the words 'useless' or 'ageing' to demonstrate understanding of why the writer thought the men would not do the job efficiently, and it was not enough to copy these words from the quotation. Most candidates recognised that one reason was the nature of their tools. There were several adjectives that candidates could choose: 'old', 'ancient' or 'worn out' for 'ageing'; 'hopeless', 'ineffective' or 'inappropriate' for 'useless'. The second reason required inference about their 'ominously heavy lunch boxes' which suggested that they were more interested in their food and lunch than work. The significance of the adverb 'ominously' had to be appreciated for a clear understanding of the writer's opinions about the men. The impact on their work needed to be identified either implicitly: 'they would take a long lunch break', or explicitly: 'they would spend more time eating than working'. Consequently, responses which stated that 'they looked as if they had come for a picnic' or 'they had brought a lot of food' could not be credited. Instead of referring to the quotation in the question, some candidates incorrectly looked elsewhere in the paragraph, notably at the description of the 'ramshackle car' or Pedro's late arrival.

**Question 5(b)** was an inferential question asking why the writer was thankful she had not asked Pedro to do car maintenance. The mark was scored by identifying the 'ramshackle' or dilapidated appearance of Pedro's men's car or the fact that it is in 'poor condition' and they clearly 'cannot maintain it'. While some candidates recognised that their car was the reason, 'old', 'broken' and 'rusty' were not appropriate adjectives. Answers were only creditworthy if it was clear that the car belonged to the men and not Pedro who had, in fact, not yet arrived. The rubric advises candidates to focus on the third paragraph so any reference to Pedro's car was incorrect. Candidates found this question rather challenging and often focused not only on Pedro's car but also on the men's 'useless' tools or the fact that 'Pedro always arrives last'.

#### Question 6

**Question 6(a)** was a literal comprehension question which asked how the men showed their anger. Candidates could either focus on the men 'waving their tools like swords' or weapons, or that 'they attacked Pedro'. 'Waving their tools' without any reference to weapons or swords did not score because it lacked any sense of threat. Answers which simply stated that 'they attacked him' without reference to Pedro, failed to score since it was unclear who was the object of their anger. Several candidates provided a correct answer though equal numbers incorrectly focused on the men's 'mystified expressions', neglecting the fact that these 'expressions' preceded the anger, evident in the phrase 'which turned to anger'.

**Question 6(b)** required candidates to answer in their own words, as specified in the question, and the key words to be substituted were 'yelled' and 'in shame' for two marks. The strongest responses avoided repetition of these words and instead featured well-chosen alternatives such as 'shouted', 'scolded' and 'criticised loudly' for 'yelled', and 'embarrassed', 'regretful' and 'guilty' for 'in shame'. Successful candidates recognised that an own word question requires an explanation of the given quote rather than an explanation of the events causing Pedro to yell at his men, namely that they had attacked him. It was also incorrect to describe the relationship between Pedro and his men and the authority that he imposes on them.

In **Question 6(c)**, candidates were asked to identify one word in the fourth paragraph which conveyed the same idea as 'puzzled', the answer being 'mystified'. The paragraph was quite short, and the majority of candidates gave the correct answer, either as a single word or in a phrase with the answer highlighted by underlining or inverted commas. Some candidates incorrectly gave their own alternative word such as 'confused' or 'surprised' which are not in the passage.

### Question 7

**Question 7(a)**, a straightforward literal comprehension question asking what the writer had been expecting to hear, was answered correctly by most candidates who offered 'the whirr of the chainsaw', though 'chainsaw' alone was sufficient. The 'men at work' was also acceptable, but 'loud noise' or 'machines' lacked precision so were not creditworthy. It was also incorrect to identify what she had not heard: 'she had not heard the whirr of a chainsaw', or that 'she expected the men to be working' since this latter response distorted the question and lost the focus on sound.

**Question 7(b)** was a more difficult inferential question which required candidates to explain why the writer's question, 'Is everything alright?', was 'needless' and there were several ways candidates could answer – these all shared the common idea that things were not alright. The men were fighting one another could be captured by lifting from lines 30-33 as long as the lift included that they were 'pushing and punching one another'. It was incorrect to simply write 'without so much as a single branch trimmed' or that 'the men were arguing' or 'not working'. A second way of answering was to state that 'it was obvious that the men were not working' or that 'things were clearly not alright'. This idea could also be captured by explicitly considering the writer's perceptions: 'she could see that the men were fighting', or more succinctly: 'she knew the answer'. Several incorrect responses focused on the reason she went into the garden – to check on the men or to see what work had been done. It was also incorrect to suggest that it was 'needless' because the men were 'smiling, as though at a picnic' or because everything was alright.

### Question 8

**Question 8** was the second question which required candidates to answer in their own words. The meaning of the key words 'pittance' and 'hazardous' had to be captured, and, as with **Question 6(b)**, this had to be done within a sensible context. There was much more success with understanding the context in this question compared to **Question 6(b)**. However, the alternative words offered were not always close enough to the original words. The meaning of 'pittance' could be successfully captured in 'a little', 'mean' or 'meagre' amount of money. Their pay was 'low', 'not much' or 'not enough' could also be credited. Less successful attempts included 'they wanted more money' or 'they were not well-paid' since these answers did not capture the small amount suggested by 'pittance'. Candidates often recognised the challenging nature of their work in 'hazardous', but 'tiring', 'hard' or 'difficult' did not capture its 'risky' or 'dangerous' element. Other acceptable alternatives for 'hazardous' included 'unsafe', 'perilous' or that they 'could be injured'. Occasionally candidates ignored that this was an own word question and incorrectly shifted the focus to the argument about 'who should be the one to shimmy up the trunks'.

### Question 9

**Question 9** tested the deduction of meaning of words as used in the passage. The multiple-choice format allowed for candidates to take each of the four possible alternatives for the given word back to the passage and decide which was the most appropriate synonym for the original. Few candidates scored all five marks; many scored two or three marks.

The most successful attempt was with **Question 9(e)** where 'fallen' was correctly selected as a synonym for 'plummeted' by most candidates. There was also reasonable success with 'excuse' being correctly chosen for **Question 9(c)** 'pretext', and 'subject' correctly identified for **Question 9(d)** 'gist'. Very few candidates selected 'thin' which was the correct answer to **Question 9(b)** 'gaunt'. Instead, many were distracted by the description of Pedro's 'lined face' and chose 'old'. **Question 9(a)** was the most challenging question in which candidates had to select the most appropriate synonym for 'accomplishments'. Successful candidates recognised that Pedro was advertising not just the 'jobs' he could do, but, as 'the list' demonstrated, he was promoting his range of 'skills'.

### Question 10

**Question 10** was the section dedicated to the appreciation of the writer's craft and although many candidates tackled this more challenging question, several candidates provided no response to both parts. In both **Question 10(a)** and **Question 10(b)**, candidates were asked to give, first, the meaning of a phrase as

used in the passage, and then to give the effect of that phrase. As mentioned before in 'Key Messages', it is important that candidates distinguish between the two parts of the question. Too often candidates offered an effect as a meaning and vice-versa. No credit is given to candidates who simply identify a literary device, in this case the use of personification.

**Question 10(a)** directed the candidates to line 12: 'stealing sunlight'. There were two ways candidates could provide a meaning: the focus could be on the sun or sunlight, or it could refer to shade or darkness. It was not necessary to include specific reference to trees given the brevity of the quotation. Many candidates scored a mark by writing that the trees were 'blocking' or 'preventing' sunlight from passing through, 'the trees were getting all of the sun' or that 'sunlight was hidden' or 'taken away'. A small number made reference to the shade created by the larger trees and this was also correct, but it was not enough to state that the trees were covering the olive trees with no reference to light or shade.

Candidates found the effect of the figurative language very difficult to both recognise and explain. Instead, many candidates provided an alternative meaning or explained the consequences of the lack of sunlight: the olive trees would die. Other candidates justified the husband's decision to have the tall trees cut back which also could not be credited. However, a very small number of candidates were able to see beyond the literal, recognising that 'the tall trees were superior and dominant' while 'the olive trees were defenceless and vulnerable'. Very occasionally some candidates provided an effect which demonstrated thoughtful consideration of the 'stealing' image by suggesting that sunlight was 'precious' and the trees were like 'cunning' or 'crafty robbers', but answers like these were rare.

**Question 10(b)** directed candidates to line 45: 'Ripped from the main trunk' and many candidates provided a correct meaning by offering alternative verbs for 'ripped'. 'Separated from', 'torn off' and 'cut from' were all creditworthy as long as reference was made to either a branch or limb, or the trunk or tree. This meant that 'torn from the tree' scored a mark but 'torn from' failed to score. It was incorrect to state that Pedro and his men tore the branch from the tree and also to simply conclude that the tree was damaged.

As with **Question 10(a)**, candidates found the effect hard to identify, but there was a little more success here. Answers could focus on the incompetence of Pedro and his men or the suggestion of the branch being broken 'violently', 'forcefully' or 'brutally'; however, it was incorrect to suggest that the workers were brutal and violent and it was not enough to simply state that the tree was destroyed. A few correct responses also considered how 'shocking', 'dreadful' and 'ugly' the sight was, as suggested by the word 'ripped'. It was evident that some candidates looked for the answer by reading the rest of the details in the sentence, but comments about 'the limbs hanging in the evening light' and the damage to the tree's beauty were too unrelated to the original extract to be creditworthy.