

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER (MAURITIUS)

Paper 8019/01
Essay

Key messages

- Use planning tools to help select a question and organise the answer.
- Key words and phrases need to be highlighted and focused on more effectively in candidates' approaches.
- Ensuring that question terms are present in every paragraph helps maintain focus on the topic.
- Avoid long, unfocused introductions and make conclusions evaluative.
- Develop arguments rather than descriptions.
- Focus on control of communication and grammatical accuracy.

General comments

Many candidates took the sensible step of using basic plans to help them decide if they had sufficient content for their selected questions and also as a means to structure their arguments. However, an increasing number of candidates drafted their entire essay before writing it out again which left less time to concentrate on the essay itself and proof-read it. On the other end of this spectrum were poorly planned answers with so many cancellations that the essay was difficult to follow, and the cohesion was impacted.

Questions were, in the main, well understood, and there was less offloading of knowledge about a particular topic. Most candidates were able to identify the key requirements of each question, and the most successful introductions reflected both comprehension of the meaning and the main thrust of the task. Candidates must focus on answering the question as it is phrased and not put their own interpretation of it. It is important to incorporate all the key terms in their arguments rather than describing or explaining the general topic. There were some issues with misreading the question, for instance, in **Question 9**, explaining global warming rather than focusing on the question or **Question 7**, explaining the benefits of sport rather than whether the main reason for sports participation is to improve mental health.

Stronger candidates began with clear topic sentences followed by an explanation, a reason or an example, culminating in evaluation, while weaker candidates described or listed several ideas, and tagged the question at the end of the paragraph. This did not wholly address the question and in some cases only partially addressed the question. Some responses introduced many different ideas in one paragraph without developing them or giving specific examples to support the points being made. Evaluation is a key element of a successful response. At the higher point of level 3, a few well-chosen evaluations especially in the conclusion, could have tipped the mark into level 4. However, most conclusions were just a summary of the points made in the response.

Candidates were generally able to give a range of relevant examples from Mauritius and other countries, including examples from their own experiences. However, the quality of examples is crucial for progressing to higher levels of response. Examples and information should support arguments or develop lines of discussion rather than merely revised or offloaded information. A balance between named examples and more developed illustration is necessary for effective responses. Lengthy personal anecdotes or random quotations rarely offer insight into a question and general statistics gain little credibility.

There were continued difficulties with tense control, subject–verb agreement, plurals and apostrophe usage, and the frequent use of contractions. Candidates should avoid including vernacular expressions and informal language in formal written responses. Many candidates wrote at great length using a wide vocabulary but they avoid overuse of complex vocabulary that is not always appropriate or improperly used because they did not know the correct meaning of the word. Clarity of thought in expression is more important than isolated words used for effect.

In conclusion, there were many candidates who performed competently in this exam. Few students received level 1 or 2 marks and there has been a definite improvement in accuracy and control of communication. Most responses which achieved level 3 attempted to answer the question and there was evidence in both information and examples of background knowledge and understanding about the chosen subject. However, there was some evidence of these candidates using generic, prepared answers which did not fully address the question. Candidates who attained top marks had carefully chosen questions to fit their field of knowledge and interest and were able to present good examples and nuanced evaluative arguments.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was not widely attempted and responses generally fell into the lower to middle bands, with most addressing the issues effectively but offering limited support and development. Candidates mainly focused on the benefits such as managing money and budgeting, with a few mentioning disadvantages that included time or training needed for implementation. One misinterpretation involved discussing students earning money in school. Some responses argued that personal finance education is beneficial because it leads to solid financial foundations and keeps individuals away from negative aspects such as spending beyond one's means or incurring debt. Some broadened arguments to suggest improvements at the country's economic level, though these responses lacked detail. Counter-arguments often suggested that there was already enough content in the curriculum or that students were already stressed. Some responses spent too long discussing other curriculum topics rather than focusing on specific claims about the effects of implementing financial education. Mathematically inclined candidates performed well when they chose this option, providing good examples but often too focused on personal financial management without applying broader concepts or exploring the key word 'compulsory.'

Question 2

This was the most popular question and produced a full range of responses. Many responses narrowly focused solely on newspapers, overlooking other forms of print media such as books, textbooks and magazines. While some responses acknowledged that traditional print media are more reliable providers of accurate information, this was not explored in depth. Few responses explored the financial implications of accessing online content and there was a persistent misunderstanding regarding the costs associated with accessing information online, including internet fees, device purchases, and environmental impacts such as deforestation. Responses tended to focus on perceived benefits/disadvantages of digital media such as scamming, issues of damage to users' health and convenience.

Weaker responses compared the environmental impact of both print and digital media but did not provide a measured view. There was little understanding about environmental implications related to digital device waste. Many responses also referenced people/locations without internet connectivity, usually exemplified with sweeping statements and generalisations about sub-Saharan Africa, poor people or the reading habits of elderly people. Stronger responses recognised the difficulties faced by print media nowadays and their subsequent lack of sales leading to their transition to online platforms. Other good responses examined the idea of an interactive as opposed to a passive media and supported their arguments with specific examples of citizen journalism and social media participation. Some responses discussed the prevalence of misinformation and fake news online with good examples, both local and international, which had impact on elections, protest movements, and so on. Fewer responses referenced journalistic accountability and editorial integrity of printed publications – but those which did seemed to take the view that readers would not encounter fake news in newspapers as a result. There were also several insightful discussions about what the disappearance of print media could mean for culture, education and the preservation of free expression. Responses often concluded that the two media forms complement rather than rival one another, and that both will remain necessary.

Question 3

The question about traditional attitudes and their impact on progress in Mauritius was rarely answered, but those who did attempt it generally produced good responses, with many focusing on traditional gender roles, generational expectations and resistance to technological change within their society. While some provided insightful critiques of the traditional role of women as housewives and its implications for progress, others merely reiterated stereotypes without offering substantial counter-arguments. Strong responses critically evaluated both sides of the argument, providing concrete examples to support either position and weaker responses concentrated solely on the traditions and culture they had grown up with, lamenting their potential

disappearance without considering the significant progress made in areas such as gender equality. A number of responses failed to address these aspects adequately, instead summarising traditional arts and crafts, cuisine or discussing other unrelated topics. Other responses did not connect to Mauritius or provided insufficient examples. Some answers lacked explicit consideration of how far progress is being delayed, leaving implicit arguments that could have been further developed.

Overall, good responses were aware of the particular issues related to Mauritius, such as voting on racial or religious lines, attitudes towards women in politics and education, young people's behaviour, technology adoption, parental expectations for children's career choices, and economic diversification.

Question 4

This question was attempted by a small proportion of candidates, with some producing excellent responses. While most looked at causes of war and violence more generally without explicitly considering the idea of violence for political purposes, there were many strong responses that explored examples from history and recent conflicts from the perspective of political frustrations leading to conflict. Some thoughtful responses examined whether violence might sometimes be seen as a last resort when dialogue and diplomacy fail, citing examples from global struggles against oppression or dictatorship. Others firmly opposed it, highlighting the long-term damage it causes to societies, economies, and human relationships. A few strong responses were able to analyse how and why wars and violence take place, evaluating whether they are justified and offering their views. Many responses tended to offer numerous examples but were less skilled in terms of quality of argument. The actual question was often paid little attention until the final paragraphs, with examples such as the Ukrainian conflict and Israeli-Palestine conflict being common but lacking developed and convincing understanding of these issues. Overall, while there was no shortage of illustrations offered, many responses lacked depth and nuance, with stronger responses able to provide balanced arguments that considered both historical and contemporary conflicts.

Question 5

The question about data and statistics was not popular but elicited a range of responses, with some demonstrating thoughtful engagement with the topic. Strong answers explored the full scope of the question by discussing how data and statistics can guide important decisions across various areas such as health, finance, education, and lifestyle. These responses effectively linked theory to practical real-world situations, showcasing a clear understanding of how accurate data allows individuals to make informed and rational choices. To succeed in answering this question, a range of specific examples of data and/or statistics needed to be provided to support arguments. The lack of exemplification often resulted in theoretical or generalised responses. On the other hand, relying too heavily on examples led to descriptive answers that lacked evaluation, with each paragraph devoted to a separate way in which data and statistics might be used. Some thoughtful responses emphasised the need for reliable data and a broad evidence base, while others felt that personal preference and instinct play a significant role in decision-making. The reliability of AI-generated data was also discussed by some, with concerns about its potential to manipulate or favour certain circumstances.

Question 6

Whilst this was one of the least popular questions, the topic was generally well-handled. Some responses demonstrated thoughtful engagement with the pros and cons of living in one place versus another. These responses discussed how stability, community ties and a strong sense of belonging can contribute positively to personal well-being, while also acknowledging that such a lifestyle may limit exposure to new experiences and opportunities. The best responses displayed sound reasoning and mature reflection, weighing the desire for comfort and familiarity against people's curiosity and sense of adventure. Some took a personal approach, discussing individual experiences of moving from one settlement to another, while others tackled broader macro-level cases such as mass migration. Weaker responses lacked clear arguments or made vague references to relocation or discussed the benefits of holidaying abroad, although this was not directly relevant to the question.

Question 7

The majority of responses relied heavily on discussing the issues surrounding sport and mental health, with some responses examining the physiological benefits associated with exercise. Many examples were taken from famous sports personalities, which was acceptable when highlighting how successful athletes bring fame to themselves and their country. However, it would have been beneficial for more responses to acknowledge that most people who participate in sports are ordinary individuals seeking personal

achievements and companionship. The quality of responses varied greatly as a result. The question's implication that people only take up sport for mental health benefits led to a narrow focus for some responses. Those who excelled were able to link various attributes of participating in sports back to the initial premise, demonstrating an understanding of how all these factors contribute to mental well-being. On the other hand, those who performed poorly simply listed different sporting activities without referencing mental health or did so only briefly. A small number explored the idea that competition can be detrimental to one's mental health and the pressures faced by professional athletes as a negative factor. Some notable examples included the argument that participating in sports reduces the likelihood of drug use but also acknowledged the pressure to perform may lead some individuals to turn to performance-enhancing substances like steroids. Responses generally provided a wealth of information for addressing AO1 – selection and application of information. This often took the form of references to various sports, sportspersons, and biological knowledge. However, some responses were limited where the focus was on general aspects of sport rather than specifically addressing the question.

Stronger responses countered these examples by highlighting other reasons for participating in sports, such as physical fitness, friendship, leadership opportunities, and personal passion. It was crucial to evaluate whether mental health is indeed a primary reason why people engage in sporting activities

Question 8

Many responses were clearly well-versed in the language of business and advertising and could evaluate the importance of advertising a product with good local as well as international examples. Knowledge and understanding of consumer products and online services was consistently impressive. Some responses gave examples of high-end brands that barely needed to advertise at all, or local businesses that succeeded through word-of-mouth. However, most acknowledged that even very successful brands believed that advertising was worth investing in, and that advertising might be crucial to launch a new product and make the market aware of its specification. There was some recognition that well-known brands which were heavily advertised might not necessarily be very good products. A good number of responses gave examples of when and where advertising was necessary, how it could make or break a product, different types of advertising including digital advertising and influencers.

This question offered a clear way of exploring diametrically opposed arguments: the benefits of advertising versus the reasons to not advertise. Better candidates could analyse the varying stakeholders' needs for using advertising and evaluate these factors. Weaker responses gave basic points about well-known brands, tending to describe the content of the advertising rather than arguing.

Question 9

The essay question on protecting the Earth's environment was a popular one, with many responses familiar with the requirements and arguments for environmental protection. However, some answers tended to be vague in their approach, while others overestimated the powers or responsibilities of young people in this regard. The best essays focused on analysing the effects of young people's efforts rather than simply asserting that they should bear the brunt of responsibility. Some weaker responses included everything known about global warming with a few examples about young people's response to it, resulting in somewhat tangential answers. In contrast, better responses evaluated whether young people had primary responsibility for protecting the environment and explored this question in a balanced way. The best essays asked whether the responsibilities of young people could be as effective as possible actions by governments, NGOs, and international agencies. Some examples came from Mauritius, where government regulations and campaigns by young people were discussed.

Responses demonstrated familiarity with environmental issues currently of concern but sometimes explained them at unnecessary length or paid lip service to the question without fully addressing it. Rather than directly address the philosophical nature of the question, candidates focused on practical discussions of how young people are better positioned to protect the environment due to their age, energy levels and 'inheritance' of problems caused by previous generations. There was a tendency for many to believe that young people's primary role in saving the environment is simply posting on social media to raise awareness about environmental catastrophe.

Question 10

The essay question on film censorship was rarely attempted though it did attract responses which were well-informed and passionate about film and television shows. Some answers lacked depth and did not engage with the complexities of the issue. Some developed answers tended towards assertiveness, arguing that all films involving nudity or violence must be censored to protect younger viewers, without considering alternative perspectives.

A notable trend was the tendency for responses to assume that censorship is a rare occurrence in Western countries, when in fact it can take many forms and have significant impacts on artistic expression. Many responses also overlooked the invitation to make personal judgments about film censorship, instead focusing on general principles or moralistic arguments. Some responses were unable to distinguish between different types of editing or certification, mistakenly equating these with authoritarian governments banning features or documentaries that opposed them. Some stronger answers explored the cultural significance of film censorship, drawing on examples from conservative cultures. These responses demonstrated a good understanding of the topic and were able to balance artistic integrity with social responsibility, highlighting how excessive censorship can restrict creative expression and limit public awareness of important issues.

Many responses focused primarily on the need for film censorship to protect young children from harmful content or prevent the spread of explicit material. Some responses covered the dangers associated with political motives for the censorship of movies, while others argued that freedom of expression allows filmmakers to investigate uncomfortable truths about their societies and challenge attitudes. Stronger answers often cited specific examples of films that were censored in different territories or time periods, exploring how this affected artistic expression and public awareness. Weaker responses failed to engage with the complexities of film censorship, instead relying on unproven claims that children are likely to emulate activities they see on screen or arguing for blanket censorship without considering alternative perspectives.

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER (MAURITIUS)

Paper 8019/02
Comprehension

Key messages

- There were some very detailed responses to **1(a)**, with most candidates recognising the requirement to explain, without referring to the email in the material.
- In **2(d)(i)**, **2(d)(ii)**, **2(d)(iii)** and **2(h)**, some candidates copied words and phrases from the Insert. These questions require candidates to use their own words; therefore words and phrases copied from the Insert could not gain any credit.
- **Questions 2(c)**, **2(e)** and **2(g)(ii)** specified the word limit and in most cases, candidates kept within this limit. There were, however, some overlong responses, and candidates are advised to take note of the requirements.
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, as there is useful guidance which they should follow. **Question 1(c)(ii)** required candidates to focus solely on the content of an email. Any references to stylistic features could not gain any credit.

General comments

- Some questions direct candidates to write a response in their own words, or to write within a certain number of words. If there is no direction like this, it is recommended that candidates use the relevant wording from the material.
- It is advised that candidates indicate clearly if their answer to a particular question is not in the correct response area for that question.
- Candidates are advised to take particular note if the question directs them to a specific piece of the material provided, or specific lines in the passage.
- If the question appears to relate to financial material, candidates are advised to check all aspects of this carefully.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This question required candidates to assimilate a wide range of information, including the Additional Information, and explain, exemplify or link at least two separate statements supported by the material to show logical reasoning skills. Higher level responses demonstrated the ability to interpret the evidence and make logical deductions from this. The most convincing responses showed an understanding of nuance. Material was gathered from across the material and used to produce a cogent assessment of the candidates' level of understanding. Such responses offered a valid idea that had been logically developed with either an explanation or a second piece of evidence from another part of the material, demonstrating pertinent analysis.

A key strategy when answering this question was to explain the advantages of choosing Curatini Catering for a planned event, using the material provided but without reference to anything contained within the email material. Better responses understood the need to explain and hence avoided general statements such as 'It is healthier' and instead gave apt developments of relevant points. Many of the points made were well structured and followed immediately from the point under discussion.

Details such as Midori Sato's food allergy, the dietary requirements of some employees, and positive online reviews about the catering company were well considered by many responses. A number of responses combined details about nutritional information with locally sourced, fresh food, but did not always appropriately develop either of these points. Many who conflated these two points often equated local with being healthy and thus conforming to Leila Booth's concerns regarding healthy eating. *E.g. 'Curatini Catering have a lot of healthy options like fruit platters and salads which will help Leila Booth encourage her staff to adopt healthy diets and lifestyles'*. While linking fresh food to her concerns had some validity, the idea of being local and therefore healthy was too tenuous for credit. Responses which focused more on the local aspect and linked it to the sustainable nature of Purer Packaging's work, did gain some credit. *E.g. 'The locally sourced ingredients align with the company's sustainability values'*.

A large number of responses stated that Curatini Catering's provision was within the budget; this, however, did not gain credit, as both options were within the budget. Candidates are advised to check financial information carefully. Credit could be given where responses linked the idea of this being within budget to Curatini Catering's attention to detail, or personalised service, but very few made this point.

Good understanding of the formal nature of the event was also shown. *E.g. 'Their sample, menu provides a formal sit-down meal with starter, main course and dessert, which is appropriate for an elegant company event where the managing director will make a speech'*.

Other valid points included linking the strong online reviews to excellent customer service and attention to dietary requirements, appropriate food for vegetarians and vegans, and awareness of Midori Sato's fish allergy.

- (b) The points made for this question were not always as well structured or developed as they could have been. Many lost the sense of the buffet being less formal or focused heavily on the disorganisation of Feast-Food-Fun, as highlighted in the reviews. Many responses developed this idea across two reasons, but sometimes in a repetitive way, and therefore scored little credit beyond the two marks allowed for each reason. Responses which focused on the food offered scored better. *E.g. Some staff members are vegetarian or vegan and since Feast-Food-Fun do not propose many vegetarian dishes, they will have very few choices'*. Responses which stated there were no vegetarian or vegan options did not gain full credit, as this is not strictly true – there are very limited choices available.

Responses did comment on both the company's financial issues and the fact that they had been fined for food hygiene breaches, but the development of these was sometimes vague. Some linked the financial issues to the provision of low-quality food, which was rather speculative. Responses which considered food poisoning to be an issue gained more credit. Some mentioned that 'intoxication' might be a consequence, and it was felt that this may have been an attempt at explaining food poisoning, with some confusion between 'toxin' and 'poison'.

Some responses explored the possibility of the company filing for bankruptcy or going out of business and therefore being unable to complete the contract. *E.g. 'their rumoured financial difficulties may lead to a last-minute cancellation of their services or their bankruptcy and refunding issues, thus jeopardising Leila's event, and making them a risky choice'*.

- (c) (i) Candidates had a clear understanding of the need to focus on the email response alone, and many gave very full responses. Most frequently seen answers mentioned the politeness, the respectful tone or the formality of the email, all of which were creditworthy. The notion of professionalism needed a little more detail for credit. Less detailed responses described the email as 'friendly' or 'pleasant', which were not really clear enough.
- (ii) This question was not so well read as previous ones; candidates were asked to focus on **content**, but many chose to consider **style** instead, and stated that it was 'informal', which did not answer the question. Some overstated the tone of the email, declaring that it was 'rude'. Some adopted the tactic of simply writing the opposite of what they had written for (c)(i), e.g. If they had said in (c)(i) that a face-to-face meeting was offered, they said in (c)(ii) that no face-to-face meeting was offered. Reversals such as this gained no credit. Good responses included *'Without confirming*

whether Feast-Food-Fun would be the one catering for the event, they have already written it in the diary', and 'Jose wants to have a chat at his own convenience, not considering Midori's preference'.

- (d) Almost all responses correctly identified the point about the quality of the food, or who did and would pay for the drinks, but a considerable minority failed to include any sense of time or comparison and so did not gain credit. A full response – *'The company itself will pay for the drinks compared to last year where the guests themselves were expected to pay for their own drinks'.*
- (e) This was another question which was not accurately read by many. The question asked why **Midori Sato** might find it time-consuming, with specific reference to the main course. Many focused wrongly on whether or how Curatini Catering would be able to deliver the supposedly large quantity of food, bearing in mind the number of options. Possibly, due to a misunderstanding of who Midori Sato worked for. Those who did focus on the question correctly, identified the need to inform the caterers a week in advance, or that Midori would need to ask people what their choice was. *E.g. 'They offered two options, and asked to be notified a week in advance of numbers for each dish. Sato will have to contact every guest to know which one they want and then communicate to the caterers. This takes up a lot of time'.*
- (f) Several responses failed to convey a sense of the fact that Cara would be leaving **after** the event, and assumed she would already have left, with her brother being in charge, and therefore the event might not be well managed in her absence. Better responses recognised that the event is being held in the month before she leaves, then considered that Cara may not be as focused as she might be preparing for her new role. *E.g. Cara Curatini is starting her new job in March. Thus she might be allocating more time to her new upcoming job and neglect the company's catering event in February. This might lead to reduced efficiency and quality provided.'*

There was some misinterpretation of 'concern' as 'worry', and this led to a focus on Additional Information points 1,2 and 7.

Question 2

- (a) Almost all answers scored one point by identifying '2030'. Answers that were wrong or incomplete omitted reference to 30 per cent of the planet. Credit was given for responses that stated this was a key goal of the United Nations.
- (b) Overall, the advice given previously in reports to centres that unless the question requires own words or has a word limit, the original language can be used was followed. Consequently, this question was mostly well answered. Most responses were able to identify three problems, but a common issue was the over-simplification of the original material which resulted in the omission of key elements. *E.g. 'loss of forests and grasslands' (no sense of 'unprecedented').*

Where responses did not gain full credit, it could be seen that an important element had been omitted. This was most commonly seen with the third and fourth bullet points on the mark scheme, with 'under pressure' and 'serious' being left out, leaving the answers too vague for credit. 'Unprecedented rates' was sometimes expressed as 'rapid' or 'very fast' rates, which also gained no credit, as these words do not identify the idea of 'never having been seen before'.

- (c) It was pleasing to note that almost all responses were written in full sentences, although some did find it difficult to keep to the word limit. Some candidates used as many as 60 words and should be reminded that anything in excess of the agreed word limit cannot be considered for credit. Some wrote very concisely and effectively. *E.g. 'Healthy marshes and wooded spots can reduce CO2' and 'Degraded ecosystems that are allowed to recover can function to benefit society. Healthy wetlands and forests lock away greenhouse gas emissions, which help humanity combat climate change'.*
- (d) (i) – (iii) In questions such as these, which operate as 'own words' questions, candidates should realise that all elements in the original language must be glossed. In all of these questions, there was a considerable number of responses which had at least one element which had not been appropriately re-worded. Words such as 'particularly', 'could even', 'protect' and 'conservation' were not always replaced. Some responses found creative replacements, e.g. 'evacuated by force' for 'removed', although words such as 'eradicated' and 'eliminated' were inappropriate in the

context. A number of candidates glossed 'conservation' as *'protection'*, which is too vague for credit; some sense of environmental protection was more appropriate.

- (e) The same issue with excess word count as in **2(c)** was seen in this question, with some responses being overlong. The concept of land rights proved challenging, although credit was allowed where the management of the land was clearly undertaken by Indigenous peoples. There were also a range of interpretations of how much 'at least a quarter' is, with some thinking that this was 1/8th.
- (f) Again, the omission of key information impacted on the marks gained in this question. Ideas such as 'each' country protecting '30 per cent of its own territory' and protecting 'the *most important* biodiversity' (not 'land') were sometimes not included.
- (g)(i) Most responses identified three challenges, but again key information was sometimes omitted. Many recognised that 38 per cent of the seas around the British Isles had been designated as marine reserves but did not mention the damaging fishing practices which still took place. The third bullet point in the mark scheme was frequently misinterpreted as the UK government 'failing' to do something, rather than addressing the expectations people had of this government.
- (ii) Many responses provided the required information for this question but not within the word limit. Lengthy introductions or descriptions were problematic, and candidates should be advised against this strategy. Good examples of concise responses included '*Seabed fishing within the protected area has been hugely reduced*' and '*legally protected areas saw a huge decrease in seabed fishing*'.
- (h) This question proved to be challenging for many owing to the use of the word 'countries'. There were a number of acceptable alternatives for this word ('nations', 'states', 'lands' or even, 'regions'). Successful responses had re-worded this effectively, e.g. '*wealthy nations who have destroyed a lot of their nature*' and '*must donate funds to less well-off states*'.
- (i) (i)–(iii) For many candidates, these questions proved to be a positive way to end the paper, with many gaining at least 2 marks.