

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 1158/01
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- In **Exercise 1**, candidates should focus on providing key details and a precise response. Excess details could make the response incorrect. Candidates should avoid trying to paraphrase the wording in the text.
- In **Exercise 2**, candidates are required to identify key details including attitudes and opinions, and to demonstrate understanding of what is implied, but not explicitly stated.
- In **Exercise 3**, candidates' answers should be brief and in the form of a note. It is important to carefully read the wording of the question heading and to supply a verb where necessary.
- In **Exercise 4**, the details in each option A, B, C will be mentioned in the text. However, only one option will contain the details which fully and precisely correspond to the wording of the question.
- In **Exercises 5 and 6**, candidates should focus on writing responses which contain sufficient detail and development. In **Exercise 5**, to gain access to the higher mark levels for Content, candidates must address all three bullet points in the rubric. In **Exercise 6**, candidates may use the prompts, but they will be given credit for adding original and independent detail to them. For both **Exercises 5 and 6**, higher level marks for Language will be awarded to those candidates who write accurately and with a wide range of less common vocabulary and more complex structures.

General comments

The paper offered a range of tasks within the six exercises, requiring the candidates to demonstrate a variety of practical skills of reading and writing. There were degrees of difficulty within each exercise and differentiation was achieved in individual questions and across the whole paper.

Candidates should be advised that throughout the paper, the spaces and number of lines are arranged to guide them as to the length of answer required and they should not consistently exceed this. This is particularly relevant to **Exercise 3**.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

This exercise was very well attempted by candidates with individual questions providing differentiation. The more successful candidates used brief, often single word answers lifted from the text. The less successful candidates tended to copy too much text with random phrases which had no reference to key words in the questions.

- (1) This proved to be a good discriminator and required an understanding of the key word '*passengers*' in the question. Many responses gave '*construction workers*' but also included '*transport materials*' and so therefore could not be credited. Some incorrectly selected '*tourists*' or '*sightseers*', which were the distractors.
- (2) This was very well answered. Most responses included the whole expression '*looked like a toy I'd played with as a child*' which correctly identified the key word '*toy*'. Some candidates incorrectly wrote '*train he had recently taken in Austria*', overlooking the importance of the word '*remind*' in the question.
- (3) This question was well attempted, with most candidates selecting the correct information '*carriages are all open-air*'. It was important to connect the expression '*at the top of my list*' in the text with the word '*prefer*' in the question. The candidates who did not, wrote a variety of answers including '*super modern huge windows*', '*red and yellow carriages*' and even '*view was amazing and beautiful*'.
- (4) This was very well answered, often with the single word '*back*'. A more common incorrect answer was '*next to an Italian passenger*' which appeared not to connect the key words '*in which part of the train*' from the question.
- (5) This question proved to be the most difficult in the exercise and was a good discriminator. It required careful reading of Antonio's words in the final three lines of the fifth paragraph in the text. He expressed the opinion that the writer would see plenty of wild goats, but in fact that turned out not to be so. Candidates needed to make the connection between '*unfortunately*' in the text with '*disappointed*' in the question and connect them with '*wild goats*'. Many other creatures were given as answers including '*cows and horses*', '*large vultures*' and, most frequently, '*brown bears*'.
- (6) Many candidates were successful in recognising all three correct details and were awarded with full marks. All the four possible answers on the mark scheme were used, although fewer candidates selected the first option, '*bright sunshine/sunny*'. The most common mistake was to overlook that the question required details of the weather that the writer experienced. As a result '*snow*', '*rain*', and '*you get soaked*' were incorrect because they were the experiences of Antonio, the Italian passenger.

Centres are reminded that for this final question in **Exercise 1**, candidates should be prepared to review the stimulus article as a whole, because key information may appear at any point in the text. Candidates should write brief answers in note form. In this series, there were a significant number who lifted lengthy sentences from the text.

Exercise 2

Question 7

This question proved to be a very good discriminator and there was a wide range of marks awarded. More successful candidates appeared to have approached the task in a logical manner by underlining key words in each question and then searching for the phrase with an equivalent meaning in the texts.

Candidates were most successful with **(e)**, **(g)** and **(h)**, with many also credited for **(c)**, **(f)** and **(i)**. **(a)**, **(b)** and **(d)** proved to be more challenging.

In **(a)**, candidates needed to match the statement '*which person highlights the sense of freedom that comes with mountain biking*' with the detail in text D '*there's just me, my bike and the landscape with no deadlines and no-one telling me where to go or what to do*'. The most common incorrect answer was B, where

candidates most likely linked the statement with the detail *'I understand wanting to cycle anywhere you feel like...'* which would indicate a degree of freedom. However, the writer follows this with the opinion *'but there have to be limits on what you do in all areas of life'*, which implies a certain restriction on the sense of freedom. Some candidates also answered C possibly because of the wording *'I love exploring new mountain biking routes through a beautiful national park near my home'*. This is a statement of where the writer likes to cycle rather than expressing the sense of freedom that she feels.

In (b), the correct answer was text C where it is stated *'The physical challenges and closeness to nature mean it's a whole world away from creating software security systems, which is how I make a living'*. The key words in the statement were *'different from'* which matched most closely with the expression *'it's a whole world away from...'* in the text. Many candidates selected statement B, perhaps because of the wording at the very beginning *'I work full time as a lawyer'* followed by *'too much work, tiredness and stress are often associated with this type of life...'*. The reference to *'work'* in both the statement and the text appeared to distract many candidates here. There was no idea of the difference that exists between mountain-biking and the world of work but simply that the work is tiring and stressful.

In (d), candidates needed to match the statement *'which person says that mountain biking has made them more self-confident'* with the detail in text C *'I'd been quite timid as a child, but I realised that if I could cope with mountain biking ...I needn't be afraid of anything, and that's still how I see it'*. The idea is that the writer has improved their self-confidence over time with the key word *'more'*. Common incorrect responses included text A or D. In text A, the writer mentions *'I have great belief in my ability'* but this has been a characteristic since childhood and has not changed. It may have been that the wording in text D *'there's so much to learn from it: how to concentrate etc'* led many candidates to an incorrect answer. However, the writer is stating that it is a learning process more associated with decision-making rather than any aspect of self-confidence.

Exercise 3

This exercise was generally well attempted, and most candidates supplied brief answers in note form. The bullet points and the length of the lines are always a guide to candidates as to how to present their answers in this exercise.

Question 8

All the possible answers on the mark scheme were used by candidates and many managed to convey three of them correctly. Point 1 was particularly well attempted as was Point 5, where both options were selected in equal measure. For point 2, many candidates were successful by recognising *'teamwork'* but others, who chose the second option, tended to omit the key word *'people'*. *'Duties and responsibilities'* on its own was insufficient and could not be credited. For Point 4, the first option required the verb *'to be'* and those candidates who wrote only *'creative'* could not be credited. Point 3 was the least selected answer and proved to be the most challenging. Many candidates omitted either *'similar'* or *'colleagues'* which were both key words required for a full answer.

Candidates should check their answers carefully to make sure that they follow the wording of the heading and include all the key words. A good number of candidates seemed to randomly select any positive vocabulary that appeared in the text and looked no further for precise answers. For example, *'video games do a lot of good'*, *'well-established as a profession'*, *'earning lots of money'* and *'having international reputations'* were comments about video-gaming and games designers in general rather than specific to Rosa. There were very few occasions where candidates unnecessarily used their own words.

Question 9

This question proved to be very accessible for a large number of candidates, and many scored the maximum three marks for this task. Points 2, 3 and 4 were all well identified. Point 1 was more challenging and many responses which gave *'make some players aggressive'* which did not include *'games'* as the subject could not be credited. This shortened answer conveyed a different meaning and indicated that it was the work that made people aggressive when, in fact, it was the games themselves.

As with **Question 8**, there were many responses which had lifted general expressions which, for this question, conveyed a negative idea. For example, common incorrect answers such as *'individuals will work long hours'*, *'video games get criticised a lot'* and *'others accuse us of being irresponsible'* referred to games designers and their work in general rather than to Rosa's specific dislikes.

Exercise 4

This is a multiple-choice exercise, containing six questions, each with three possible options **A**, **B** or **C** as answers. Candidates should read for information and ideas which are connected in the text using, for example, pronouns as well as vocabulary and phrases which indicate time, cause and effect. Some information may be implied, and candidates should be aware of words and expressions that suggest the writer's attitude and feelings.

Many candidates answered this exercise well.

Candidates were most successful with **Questions 11, 12, 14 and 15** and the most challenging were **Questions 10 and 13**.

Question 10

The correct answer to this question was **B** and was found in the first paragraph. Many candidates incorrectly selected Option **A** *'saw it as an effective way to protect the environment'*. Although the text does refer to waste and the damage it causes and hence has connections to the environment, it is in the context of the litter-picking competition and not Erin's reason for making the decision to take part. Option **C** stated that *'she liked the idea of visiting another country'* but the wording of the text *'I had never visited Japan before and it was an unusual way of getting to know it'* did not support this. The statement in option **B** *'wanted to do some people she knew a favour'* was matched most closely with the text *'They're close friends of mine and I was keen to help out, so I offered to take Caitlin's place'*.

Question 13

This question proved to be the most challenging. The correct answer to this question was **A** and was found in paragraph four. Candidates needed to read the whole paragraph carefully to select which of the team's strengths was the most vital. For option **B**, the members of the team may have studied different subjects, but these did not refer clearly to *'a variety of backgrounds'* and the writer also stated that *'we all have lots in common'*. Many candidates selected option **C**, because the first two lines of the paragraph did indeed give details of the physical qualities of the team, namely fit, tall, strong and very fast. However, the wording in the statement emphasised *'key strengths'* regarding how they approached the competition and this matched best with the text *'I'm pretty sure this attitude is what gave us an advantage over some of our opponents'*.

Exercise 5

There are three bullet prompts in **Exercise 5**, and each one deserves a paragraph to give the whole response appropriate balance. The most successful responses tended to use paragraphs and punctuation to good effect.

Candidates are required to develop all three bullet prompts to achieve higher marks for Content in the writing criteria. In addition, they should convey a very good sense of purpose and audience by addressing the recipient of the email and engaging their interest.

Many responses this series included a suitably brief introduction and concluding statement, in an informal register. There were fewer prolonged greetings and conclusions with pre-learnt expressions than in past series. In addition, there was far less evidence of inappropriate and outdated idioms.

Candidates should use a wide range of less common vocabulary and more complex structures to achieve higher marks for Language. It is important that the writing should be grammatically accurate, particularly in the use of verb tenses, and well organised with linking words and punctuation used appropriately.

Question 16

Many responses were well-developed with an appropriately informal tone. The most successful responses contained a detailed description of how they heard about the language course, what they will do on the course and why they think their friend should also take part in it.

For the first bullet point, more successful responses expanded on factual details by expressing why such a language course would interest them. Some conveyed a real enthusiasm for the value of learning a particular language. For example:

'Honestly, I found out about the course during research on the language on a popular website. My grandfather is actually Chinese but he moved to the USA at the age of 25 for a better life with my grandmother. As a way to connect deeper with my heritage, I'm planning on surprising him later on this year when I learn the basics of Mandarin.'

Many responses explained how they needed the language to travel to a foreign country on holiday, to study at a university or even to find work. Others felt that it would be more enjoyable to have some idea of the language when watching Japanese anime or Korean movies. Less successful responses featured little detail with no development or sense of feeling:

'I heard about the language course from my class teacher.'

There was a wide variety of examples given for the second bullet point ranging from specific lesson details and what they would study on each day to examples of more social activities included in the programme.

Several responses mentioned activities outside the classroom and looked forward to making new friends, working with first language speakers to practise the language and even taking a short trip to the target country to have experience of a new culture. Many then expanded on the content of the course by addressing why it would be of value. Some emphasised the importance of being able to communicate in a global society and to contribute to debates on world topics.

For the final bullet point, many responses concentrated on the benefits that the course would bring for their friend:

'...I think that you should take part in the same language course because your English is not great and this would be the perfect opportunity to master the language properly.'

The most effective responses often referred to the recipient of the email and were written as if to a real friend, thus achieving a very good sense of purpose and audience throughout. For example:

'There's going to be lots of activities with native speakers, too. Sounds fun, right?' and 'I think it would be an excellent idea for you to learn French with me...how about it?'

Less successful responses tended to be written in the form of a narrative rather than an email to a friend.

From a Language point of view, most responses featured a suitably informal register. More successful responses communicated skilfully and appropriately through a wide range of less common vocabulary, including a variety of well-chosen adjectives, for example *'engaging exercises'* and *'shocked expression'*. In addition, a range of less common expressions and idioms were used, such as *'you never know what the future holds'*, *'that would really make my day'*, *'it caught my eye'* and *'I never say no to a challenge'*.

The more successful responses featured few errors with only single-word spelling slips, which did not impede communication. However, there were instances where a lack of plurals, for example *'a list of activity'* and *'different language from other country'* did not constitute a loss of meaning but tended to be intrusive when repeated. This was similarly the case with missing articles, for example, *'Teacher will teach us basic type word and we practice with partner'*.

More serious errors with structure were largely as a result of the misuse of verbs, such as *'I have take part in'*, *'I have see'* or *'I can't believed...'*. The email required an accurate use of different tenses, with the past tense to convey bullet point one and the future tense in bullet point two. Most candidates recognised this but there was some mixing of tenses within single sentences, for example, *'As soon as I saw that, I click on the link'*. In addition, there was often non-agreement of subject and verb, for example *'the language course have caught my attention'*, and *'the teachers and students was very nice'*.

Less successful responses often appeared to have ideas but were often unable to convey them with accuracy because of a breakdown of syntax, which impeded communication, for example, *'it good to learn it make you learn language'* and *'I'm hardly to have patient to study'*.

Spelling was good, even when more ambitious language and structures were used, although many candidates produced *'where'* for *'were'* and *'think'* for *'thing'*. There were also many who were unclear about the difference between *'interesting/interested'* and *'boring/bored'* and wrote sentences such as *'we wouldn't be boring in the lesson'* and *'I am sure the course will be interested'*.

Exercise 6

Question 17

There are four prompts to help candidates with basic ideas. However, there needs to be evidence that, if candidates use these prompts, they can develop and widen them and write with a formal register suitable to the requirements of a review.

To achieve higher marks for Language, it is important that the response should be in a more formal register. Candidates should aim to use more complex vocabulary and structures as well as persuasive language which seeks to convince the reader of their views.

Most candidates were able to adopt a formal tone, register and format for this final exercise. The more successful responses either ignored the prompts or used only one or two and developed the candidate's own ideas and opinions. Many presented a balanced review focusing on both the positive and negative features of the particular talent show.

From a Content point of view, the more successful responses included a clear opening statement about the purpose of their review and named a specific talent show. This was often based on brands such as *'America's Got Talent'* or more local versions such as *'Malaysia's Got Talent'* and *'India's Got Talent'*.

Some of the introductory comments were framed as rhetorical questions, which set the correct tone for the review, for example, *'Are you looking for a good television show to watch?'* and *'This show has been gaining a lot of popularity lately which begs the question...is it worth watching?'*. Others started with an early reference to the target audience, namely the readers of the school magazine, to good effect. However, some responses only included the wording of the rubric with no original language.

The most effective concluding statements tended to be those with ideas and opinions that had not been used before, such as how the talent shows could be improved or even awarding a success rating. For example, *'On reflection I would give this show a solid 9 out of 10'*.

Less successful responses tended to lack development and omitted personal views and opinions.

From a Language point of view, most candidates understood the need for a more formal register than in **Exercise 5**. The most successful responses included a wide range of simple and complex structures to express their ideas and opinions, for example:

'With the judges being celebrities that have amazing skills, the feedback and the comments that they offer are not to be taken lightly' and *'Though many have tried, only one contestant will bring home the grand prize'*.

Candidates do not always have to produce complex structures, very often a well-chosen and more unusual single word is equally effective. A good number of candidates achieved a strong register for a review with cohesive words and expressions such as *'in a nutshell'*, *'here comes the interesting part'*, *'the overall impression was...'* and *'the alternative view is...'*. The use of *'on the one hand'* and *'on the other hand'* significantly helped overall cohesion.

Common errors included the incorrect use of participles when using the past tense, such as *'After I have been watch this show...'* and issues with auxiliary verbs when constructing questions, for example, *'Does watching talent shows good for you?'*. Candidates should also be more aware of when to use both definite and indefinite articles, which were frequently omitted, for example, *'You can watch show but it is shown later in evening, so time is not good for student'*.

Overall, most responses conveyed a balanced review of their chosen talent show. To gain access to higher marks for Content, the review format requires the writer to express their own views as well as using the ideas in the prompts. Many candidates established a good balance to the writing by providing an introductory comment on the topic of the rubric and a concluding statement, both of which helped to give a sense of cohesion to many of the reviews. More successful responses provided a different form of words in the concluding paragraph to that used in the main body of the review, avoiding repetition of the same vocabulary, expressions and opinions.

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Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 1158/02
Listening

Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key	Question Number	Key
1	B	11	A	21	B	31	B
2	B	12	B	22	A	32	C
3	C	13	A	23	A	33	B
4	A	14	B	24	C	34	C
5	B	15	C	25	A	35	B
6	C	16	A	26	B	36	C
7	C	17	B	27	A	37	B
8	D	18	B	28	A	38	A
9	B	19	C	29	C	39	C
10	A	20	A	30	B	40	B

Key messages

- Candidates should be reminded to take care when transferring their answers from the question paper onto the answer sheet and to shade only one lozenge for each question.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read each question/statement very carefully to ensure they listen for and select the correct relevant detail/idea. They should pay particular attention to words in questions, such as *first, the most, the best thing, etc.*
- In **Exercise 4**, candidates should be reminded that all the details from a statement must be expressed by the speaker for the statement to be the correct response.
- Candidates should also be encouraged to listen to a wider range of listening text types, including longer monologues to ensure they can follow and *navigate* themselves through these texts (e.g. talks and presentations).

General comments

The paper consists of 40 multiple-choice questions and, overall, they were attempted reasonably well by most candidates.

Candidates listened to five exercises which consisted of monologues (e.g. voicemail messages, announcements and extended explanations), informal dialogues, informal and semi-formal interviews and a longer semi-formal talk. The exercises gradually increased in difficulty and complexity and tested a range of listening skills from listening for specific information (e.g. specific locations, gardening jobs, types of musical

performances, preferred volunteering tasks and pieces of art) to listening for more complex ideas (e.g. opinions, attitudes, reasons, personal preferences, and evaluations) and understanding the connections between these ideas (e.g. sequencing, ranking, mutual decisions and agreements). The script for each question also contained distracting information, in addition to the targeted key idea, in order to test the level of detail and the range of grammatical and lexical structures candidates are able to understand.

On the whole, most candidates dealt better with items that focused on identifying specific information which was stated rather than implied. Many candidates also seemed to have found everyday exchanges in the form of a dialogue easier to follow than tasks that took the form of monologues, or extended monologues. Only slightly over half of the candidates dealt well with items which focused on more complex ideas, such as speakers' opinions, and the connections between these ideas.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1

In this part of the test, candidates listened to eight short recordings on familiar topics and selected one visual prompt from four options. On the whole, candidates performed well in half of the questions in this set. Many achieved a fairly high level of success in **Questions 1** and **8** but were most successful with providing the correct responses to **Questions 5** and **7**. The vast majority of candidates demonstrated extremely good understanding of explanations, the speaker's intentions and mutual decisions. In terms of lexical ability, most candidates were familiar with the vocabulary of means of transport, different volunteering tasks and everyday objects needed for outdoor activities, like camping and hiking.

Candidates were least successful in **Question 3**, where only about half of the candidates provided the correct response. The question targets a band the speaker saw perform. The correct response is introduced by the speaker's friend: '*...everyone played a different instrument and sang at the same time!*' and confirmed by the speaker herself: '*Luckily I didn't miss them!*'. Less successful candidates were possibly tempted by the speaker saying: '*the one I wanted to see...*' and '*Apparently the band with the drummer and singers was amazing*', which led them to selecting options **A** and **B** instead.

Question 6 was another question which did not seem to be fully understood, with many candidates selecting option **B** as the incorrect response. The speaker is asked about her favourite photo. She wavers between two photos but later confirms her favourite one by using the phrase '*the latter*'. This may suggest that many candidates are not familiar with this phrase.

There was a relatively low level of success in **Questions 2** and **4**. **Question 2** targets a job that the speaker wants his gardener to do *first*. Less successful candidates were possibly unfamiliar with the phrase used to confirm the sequence: '*Can you make that top of today's list?*', and selected option **D** instead, as it was the first job mentioned first in the recording, but not the job the gardener was asked to do first before anything else. In **Question 4**, candidates had to select the place where the students should meet after lunch. Many were possibly tempted by the mention of a *statue* and gave option **D** as their response.

Exercise 2

In this part of the test, candidates answered two multiple-choice questions per recording. On the whole, this exercise was attempted reasonably well. Candidates showed a particularly good level of understanding of ideas such as giving reasons, expressing feelings and explaining various issues. They also demonstrated good listening skills of understanding a range of ideas around the contexts of computers and travelling and topic-related vocabulary. This was particularly evident in **Questions 15–18**, with **Question 15** producing the highest level of success.

Overall, candidates tended to be less successful with questions which targeted attitudes and mutual agreements. Questions testing gist ideas also did not seem to be fully understood by candidates. This was particularly the case in **Questions 11** and **14**. **Question 11** targets an aspect of hotel accommodation which the speaker appreciated the most. Less successful candidates were drawn to the distracting ideas in options **B** and **C** in equal measure. Both ideas are expressed quite positively in the recording. However, it is only the idea in option **A** that *came top* for the speaker – a detail which many candidates missed. This is underpinned in the recording by the phrase '*It was the catering that we all gave top scores for though*'. Many candidates were also possibly unfamiliar with the word '*catering*'. In **Question 14**, candidates were asked what detail the speaker found out about one particular object. Options **A** and **C** were often given in error, in equal measure.

Candidates may have been tempted by the speaker saying, '*And possibly foreign?*', for the idea of 'where it came from' in option **A**, and '*It was in such a bad state*' for the idea of 'how it got broken' in option **C**.

Questions 10 and **13** did not seem to be fully understood by many candidates. **Question 10** tested how the speaker felt about her friend's interest in cooking. Many candidates mistakenly selected option **B**, possibly because the speaker is keen to *try* what her friend cooks, but she's not keen to encourage him to cook.

Question 13 targets a mutual agreement about what the best thing was about a TV programme they watched. The agreement is confirmed by the phrase with a negative verb: '*I can't argue with that!*', which may not have been understood as an agreement by some candidates, as option **C** was often given in error. Less successful candidates were possibly distracted by the verbs 'fix' and 'mend' in the recording when both speakers talk about the experts' skills of repairing things. However, they do not say this was the best thing about the programme.

Exercise 3

This part of the test required candidates to follow a longer talk about a sport called *padel*. Candidates had to complete each of the eight statements with one of the three multiple-choice options. On the whole, candidates dealt very well with most of the questions in this exercise, which suggests that they are familiar with sport related vocabulary.

Candidates were most successful with **Question 23**, and demonstrated very good listening skills for specific detail, in this case an aspect that the inventor of *padel* lacked when building a court. Many candidates also performed very well in **Questions 19, 21** and **24**. In addition to more specific details (e.g. locations), these questions also tested ideas such as a comparison.

Overall, there was not the same level of success in **Questions 25** and **26**. **Question 25** tests who the majority of people are that go to the speaker's *padel* club. Less successful candidates were possibly tempted by option **A**, as the speaker refers to 'men' and 'boys' in the recording. They may also have been unfamiliar with the structure 'there used to be', which clearly rules out the idea in option **A**. **Question 26** targets a reason why the speaker could not attend an international tournament. The correct response is **A**, but many gave option **B** as their response, possibly because of the mention of 'classes'.

Exercise 4

In this multiple-matching part of the test, candidates were required to match statements to the correct speaker. The statements expressed ideas about where the speakers go on holiday and included, for example, opinions, feelings, preferences and explanations. Candidates had to choose six correct statements from a list of eight. Most candidates attempted this exercise fairly well, with about two thirds gaining 5–6 marks. On the whole, candidates dealt better with items where the responses were directly stated rather than implied by the speaker.

The vast majority of candidates selected the correct ideas for speakers 1, 5 and 6 (**Questions 27, 31** and **36**), but speaker 3 (**Question 29**) was also attempted fairly well. Candidates were least successful with speaker 2 (**Question 28**), and statement **E** was often given in error here. Statement **E** categorically rejects flying. However, the speaker says: '*I try to limit the number of flights I take each year*'. Many candidates missed this distinction between the two ideas and selected statement **E** as an incorrect response. Also, the targeted idea of recommendation is implied by the speaker in the recording: '*when a friend tells me about a destination that's worth visiting, I try to go, however far it is!*', which may have contributed to some candidates missing it.

Speaker 4 (**Question 30**) did not seem to be fully understood by many candidates. However, there was no clear pattern of incorrect answers for this item.

Exercise 5

In this part of the test, candidates were required to listen to a semi-formal interview with someone who creates art from paper and answer eight multiple-choice questions. Overall, the vast majority of candidates attempted this part of the test fairly well.

Candidates particularly excelled in **Questions 33** and **35**, which targeted factual information and personal preference.

Many were also successful in **Questions 38** and **40** and demonstrated good listening skills when identifying the speaker's opinion and future intentions. Candidates also showed good understanding of relevant vocabulary, including phrasal verbs and other fixed expressions (e.g. '*have a go at*', '*rarely short of material*').

The lowest level of success for many was mainly in **Questions 34** and **36**, which targeted the reason behind the speaker's decision and an implied suggestion. In **Question 34**, candidates were required to identify the reason behind the speaker's decision to work with paper. Many incorrectly selected option **B** possibly tempted by the mention of '*a pile of books from the library*'. However, the option refers to a talk at the local library, so option **B** was not the correct match. Some candidates were also possibly unfamiliar with the phrase '*I got hooked*'. In **Question 36**, many candidates may have incorrectly selected option **A** which cannot be the correct answer because the speaker says, 'It's **not** that I don't want to answer – **if I could**, I wouldn't hesitate!'. The correct option **C** is supported with the text, 'nobody should have to make a choice like that' i.e. it is an unfair question to ask the interviewee.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (COUNT-IN SPEAKING)

Paper 1158/03
Speaking

Key messages

- Examiners should read the guidance given in the Teacher's/Examiner's Notes carefully prior to the test.
- To allow candidates to achieve their full potential, centres should familiarise their candidates with the requirements of the different parts of the test.
- All candidates should be made to feel at ease throughout the test. Examiners should show interest in the candidates' responses and encourage them to develop their responses by using follow-up questions.
- Examiners should respond to candidates' questions for clarification of vocabulary. This will allow all candidates to perform to the best of their ability.
- Examiners should use the warm-up questions provided on the card. Alternative questions may disadvantage the candidate.
- Examiners should not interrupt the candidate during their short talk or ask additional questions at the end.

General comments

Conduct of the test

Introduction

Most examiners read out the script provided in the Teacher's/Examiner's Notes. Candidates sometimes asked for the format of the test to be repeated.

Warm-up

Most warm-ups were kept within the timing guidelines. Sometimes this part of the test was too short when the candidate responded briefly. When this happens, examiners should prompt the candidate to say more before they ask alternative questions.

Part 1 – Interview

The majority of examiners asked the questions in the order printed on the card. Occasionally, not all questions were used. Some candidates would have benefitted from the use of extension questions.

Part 2: Short talk

Most of the timings of the preparation period and short talk were appropriate. Some examiners read the card out either before or after the preparation period, making this part too long. Some talks exceeded the two minutes where examiners allowed the candidate to come to a natural close, which made the talk too long.

Part 3: Discussion

This part of the test was conducted well by most examiners. Some candidates would have benefitted from the use of extension questions.

Application of the marking criteria

There was a tendency towards severe marking in the lower mark range and generous marking in the upper mark range.

Grammar

Marking was generally accurate, with an occasional tendency towards severity. When awarding marks for grammar, examiners should consider whether errors genuinely impede communication. Examiners should also bear in mind that it is not necessary for a candidate to be of first language speaker standard to be given maximum marks.

Vocabulary

Marking candidate performance for this criterion was sometimes slightly severe. Candidates were not always rewarded for using idiomatic language or simple but natural, confident speech.

Development

Some examiners appeared to award lower marks to candidates who did not speak quickly, seemingly associating fast speech with fluency and development. This sometimes meant that candidates who spoke quickly received higher marks even though ideas were repeated and not developed.

Pronunciation

There was some inconsistency in the way candidate performance was marked for this criterion. Generous marking was often a result of lack of intonation not being considered. Candidates who demonstrated weaker performance in the other three criteria tended to be marked down here even if their pronunciation was good.

Administration

Recordings

Some of the recordings were of poor quality as some candidates were either too far from the recording device or background noise obscured their voice. Centres are reminded that this is a formal examination and a quiet room should be allocated for the conduct of the tests.

Documentation

Most centres carried out the administration well. There were few errors in transferring the correct marks to Submit for Assessment. Some centres uploaded a photograph of their summary forms, which were out of focus and very difficult to read.

Internal moderation

Internal moderation was frequently not carried out where necessary. If more than one examiner is used, the candidates' marks must be internally moderated to ensure a common standard is applied to all candidates. To do this, the lead examiner/internal moderator should listen to a range of candidates (top, middle, bottom) from each examiner, identifying if there are points on the mark range where adjustments are required. This will produce a consistent rank order of candidates across all examiners at your centre.

If no adjustments are required to an examiner's marks, these are the final total marks submitted to Cambridge International. If an adjustment to an examiner's marks is required, the lead examiner should make this adjustment to all the marks given by that examiner in that mark range. The adjusted marks are then the final total marks which should be submitted to Cambridge International.

Comments on specific speaking assessments

Speaking Assessment A

Part 1 – Interview: Animals

The first question was well attempted by most candidates. Most talked about their favourite animals or their pets. Weaker candidates tended to simply describe the animal's appearance while stronger candidates also focused on the animal's character. A range of adjectives was used ('furry', 'cute', 'calm', 'brave', 'friendly'). In response to the second question, weaker candidates talked about another animal they admire, describing the animal. Stronger candidates talked about a visit to a zoo, farm or when they had watched a wild animal on TV. More successful responses revolved around the animal being fed in zoos or described a memorable scene from a TV documentary (e.g. the animal hunting). Stronger candidates were able to utilise very specific and precise topic-specific vocabulary ('prey', 'pollinate', 'chew') and sustain the correct use of a range of narrative tenses. In response to the last question, many candidates said that being the source of food was the reason why animals are important to people. While weaker candidates gave answers using simple structures and vocabulary ('They provide food. '), stronger candidates showcased a range of structures and collocations ('they are equally important', 'they're our companions', 'we've always relied on animals to assist us', 'they offer us protection').

Part 2 – Short talk: School friends

Stronger candidates were able to paraphrase the prompt on the card and used conditionals to discuss what they would choose in the same situation. They were able to explain what the different outcomes would be. Weaker candidates relied on present tenses and simple linking devices to compare advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Part 3 – Discussion

The vast majority of candidates excelled at responding to the first two questions. Weaker candidates tended to provide a list of activities they do with friends to relax in the present tense ('I enjoy shopping with my friends', 'we often go to a café', 'we chit chat'), or a list of nouns and adjectives that expressed the qualities they look for in a friend ('honesty', 'loyal', 'respect', 'trust'). Stronger candidates went on to provide reasons or illustrated their opinions with personal anecdotes. In response to the third question, most candidates disagreed with having shorter days. The reasons given tended to be mostly the same idea as in the statement ('we need time to bond with our friends'). Most candidates disagreed with the fourth question ('it would be difficult if we studied in different schools'). Stronger responses discussed the idea in detail, explaining how only strong friendships are likely to survive the distance. They included a range of structures to speculate about hypothetical situations, for example, the second conditional, and discourse markers, which made the discussion sound more natural ('that's an interesting question', 'for example', 'for me', 'I suppose').

Speaking Assessment B

Part 1 – Interview: People you admire

Most candidates were able to name at least one person they admire, mostly sports personalities, historical figures or successful influencers, and to explain why these people are famous. Weaker candidates used mainly present tense verb forms when talking about these people. Stronger responses used a wider range of tenses to talk about the person's life and achievements ('he's built his business from nothing', 'she's been helping young people since...'). Stronger candidates expanded their responses by explaining how these people have inspired them personally. Most candidates tended to agree that celebrities are good role models. Candidates who disagreed with the statement did not always justify their opinions. Stronger responses went on to speculate about both sides of the argument and supported their opinions with examples. Weaker responses used only a limited range of vocabulary to discuss facts and opinions.

Part 2 – Short talk: A family outing

Stronger responses discussed the advantages of a meal at a restaurant ('it would be a relaxing experience') and the option of a day at a theme park ('small kids would have a lot of fun') and then moved on to the disadvantages ('it might be expensive', 'the location of the park might be inconvenient'). They demonstrated a range of modal verbs of probability, structures to speculate about hypothetical situations and more precise

vocabulary. They were also able to link their ideas using a range of cohesive devices (*'however', 'on the other hand', 'consequently'*). Effective intonation patterns and word stress were often used to enhance the performance.

Weaker candidates simply gave a narrative of a time when they went to a restaurant with their family or gave a description of their favourite restaurant. Many of these candidates chose to talk about only one of the options and were often prompted by the examiner to focus on the advantages and disadvantages.

Part 3 – Discussion

In response to the first question, many candidates provided more than one reason (*'it's relaxing', 'they can get fit'*). Stronger responses used precise vocabulary and provided more in-depth justifications (*'to clear our head', 'you don't want to be stuck indoors', 'creates a lot of mental health issues'*). Some candidates developed their responses by giving examples of activities which can be done outdoors.

For the second question, most candidates stated that it is more enjoyable to celebrate with their family, (*'they know you much better', 'you can feel more comfortable with them', 'it helps you to bond'*). Stronger candidates provided a personal anecdote of a special celebration to illustrate their opinion. Successful responses included a range of structures used to express a personal preference (*'I'd much rather'*) and comparative forms (*'far more relaxing', 'much more fun'*).

Speaking Assessment C

Part 1 – Interview: Festivals

All candidates were able to name a festival, either a religious celebration, such as Diwali, Eid, or other celebrations, such as New Year or a National Day. Stronger candidates were able to showcase a wide range of structures, such as the passive voice and modal verbs. They often explored more complex ideas (*'we can learn a lot about our heritage'*) and developed their responses by giving their opinions about the festival, the aspects they liked and which ones they would like to change.

Weaker responses focused on more concrete ideas, such as the food people eat on this day, or what happens (*'fireworks'*), and used the present tense to talk the favourite festival.

Most responses tended to agree with the third question (*'because other religions have different festivals to ours'*). Weaker responses simply agreed or disagreed with the question but did not offer a reason, whereas stronger responses explored this idea in more detail. Some candidates compared how many festivals their country has to another country. Many also commented that more festivals would mean more time off school.

Part 2 – Short talk: A school project

Weaker talks included simple descriptions of the wildlife park in the present tense, whereas stronger responses used the passive voice to elaborate on possible unfortunate situations (*'we could get bitten'*). Stronger responses also used the gerund effectively to discuss consequences (*'being surrounded by animals would mean'*). Some stronger candidates were able to compare and contrast the more hands-on and personal experience of visiting a wildlife park where you could observe animals in person with online and library research, which they felt would give you access to a wider variety of information.

Part 3 – Discussion

Many candidates drew on their personal experiences in response to the first question. All candidates agreed that projects were a vital part of their studies. Weaker candidates produced responses using high frequency vocabulary and simple structures (*'we can learn from others'*). Stronger candidates used more precise vocabulary and explored more complex ideas (*'this teaches us to be less dependent on the teacher'*). They also developed their responses by describing a particular project they were involved in to support their opinions.

The third question showed that many candidates are interested in conservation work and the environment. Many were able to offer a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary (*'destroying habitats', 'cutting down trees', 'environmental impact'*) and grammatical structures, such as conditional sentences and the passive voice. Stronger candidates also explored the possible consequences of conservation work and made some predictions about what could happen if conservation is not taken more seriously.

In response to the fourth question, many candidates offered accounts of talks they had been to and how they had benefited from them.

Speaking Assessment D

Part 1 – Interview: The cinema

Most candidates were able to discuss the types of films they enjoyed watching. Successful responses included a range of structures such as past simple and continuous to talk about seeing a recent film, and future tenses and modal verbs to predict how people will watch films in the future. Strong candidates gave reasons and examples, and provided more complex structures, as well as film-related lexis (*'special effects'*, *'characters'*, *'storyline'*, *'director'*, *'genre'*). Responses to the last question elicited language of speculation, such as modal verbs and conditionals.

Part 2 – Short talk: What to wear

Candidates were split between those who advocated looking as smart as possible at a party and those who favoured practical clothes. Strong candidates used modal verbs to express preference and give advice on what to wear; comparatives (*'more formal'*, *'nicer'*, *'too expensive'*) to discuss advantages and disadvantages of different outfits; and future forms to explain and justify choices. Conditionals were used to speculate about impressions and consequences (*'if I wore smart clothes, they might be ruined'*). Strong responses included a good range of relevant vocabulary (*'designer clothes'*, *'comfortable'*, *'stylish'*, *'casual'*, *'messy'*).

Weaker responses used a limited range of structures and high frequency vocabulary to describe the preferred outfit. There was little consideration of the two options, or a choice between them. To achieve higher marks, candidates need to consider the options and choose one, giving reasons for the choice.

Part 3 – Discussion

Strong responses included modal verbs and conditional sentences. Candidates developed their arguments by providing examples and describing their personal experience. Many strong responses used a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary to describe clothes, social trends, parties and celebrations.

Weaker responses were brief and general, rarely drawing on experience or personal opinion.

Speaking Assessment E

Part 1 – Interview: School life

Stronger responses included a range of structures: past simple and past continuous to speak about a school trip; future tenses, conditionals and modal verbs to talk about possible future schooling. Development was achieved by giving reasons and examples as well as using relative clauses, discourse markers and speculative language.

Weaker responses were mainly short and simple, with vocabulary adequate to convey simple ideas. There was no development of ideas.

Part 2 – Short talk: Helping your family

Candidates who structured their talk, compared both options and then chose one, performed well.

Stronger candidates discussed the advantages of bonding with siblings while looking after them against the responsibility and work involved. They spoke about the difficulty of learning to cook and the social advantages of being able to do so. Successful responses included a wide range of vocabulary and collocations (*'to start with'*, *'juggle tasks'*, *'strengthen bonds'*).

Weaker responses did not always discuss advantages and disadvantages, so answers were less relevant. Many candidates said they could not cook so they would buy takeaway. Intonation was rarely a feature.

Part 3 – Discussion

Strong responses made use of a wide range of vocabulary and structures to discuss ideas and opinions about grandparents, cooking, doing chores and moving out of the family home. Stronger candidates gave reasons and examples to justify their views. Intonation was used effectively to express strong opinions such as the importance of moving out of the family home.

Weaker responses were brief, lacked detail, and did not develop ideas or support opinions with examples.

Speaking Assessment F

Part 1 – Interview: Holidays

Stronger responses included a range of past tenses to recount previous trips and modal verbs to compare travel options. Relevant vocabulary for destinations, accommodation, leisure activities, and travel preferences was used to address the questions. Stronger candidates were able to provide anecdotes and give reasons for their opinions.

Weaker responses were limited to short factual answers, which used simple tenses and basic vocabulary.

Part 2 – Short talk: A volunteer in a zoo

Stronger responses effectively compared working in a visitor centre to looking after animals, using a wide variety of structures, particularly modals and conditionals. Vocabulary was wide and varied (*'a people person', 'hands-on', 'educational', 'soft skills', 'habitats', 'risky'*). Modal verbs and conditional sentences were used to discuss hypothetical situations.

Weaker responses tended to list animals to be found in a zoo. No reasons were given even when a preference was expressed.

Part 3 – Discussion

Strong responses used modal verbs to talk about opinions. They developed arguments about volunteering, zoos and wild animals by providing examples. Strong candidates responded well to speculative questions, using conditional sentences and varied topic-specific vocabulary (*'protected', 'endangered', 'kindness'*).

Weaker responses were mostly relevant but not well developed. Candidates did not speculate or express opinions. Pronunciation was often unclear and intonation flat.

Speaking Assessment G

Part 1 – Interview: Free time

Stronger candidates were able to extend their responses and give details about why they enjoyed the activities, using a wide range of vocabulary (*'it did not end well', 'hiking'*) and complex structures (*'what I enjoy the most about my free time is being able to...', 'I was lucky enough to try...'*). Responses were often well developed and pronunciation was clear.

Weaker responses were limited to basic vocabulary and simple structures, with inaccuracies in subject/verb agreement, singular and plural forms. Pronunciation was not always clear; intonation was rarely used to convey intended meaning.

Part 2 – Short talk: Clean air

The most popular choice was to make all drivers pay to drive in the city. The most successful approach was to develop the talk by explaining how easy or difficult each option would be and then giving a final opinion on which option was preferred as well as providing reasons for this choice.

Stronger responses used topic-specific vocabulary (*'carbon footprint', 'climate crisis', 'environment', 'air pollution'*) to state opinions, and a wide range of grammatical structures, for example, modal verbs (*'drivers should be allowed in the city', 'it wouldn't be fair to disabled drivers'*) and the passive voice.

Weaker candidates tended to focus only on their preferred option. They used a limited range of vocabulary and structures. Although responses were relevant, they lacked development. Pronunciation was mostly clear, but intonation was not used to support communication.

Part 3 – Discussion

Stronger responses included a wide range of vocabulary (*'beneficial for mental health', 'wherever and whenever'*) to discuss a variety of ideas, facts and opinions. They used a range of structures including comparatives (*'it is far better to go by car because'*) and similes. Responses were relevant and well developed. Pronunciation was clear and intonation was used to convey intended meaning, particularly when giving opinions.

Weaker candidates produced mainly relevant answers but used a limited range of structures and vocabulary. Responses were brief and less developed. Pronunciation was clear with few instances of intonation when articulating opinions.

Speaking Assessment H

Part 1 – Interview: Technology

All three questions were answered relevantly. Stronger candidates developed their responses using a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary (*'computers', 'smartphones', 'tablets', 'scrolling on social media'*) and simple and complex structures (*'before I knew it, it was midnight', 'wasted so much time', 'jobs which require empathy'*). Pronunciation was clear and intonation was used to good effect throughout, enhancing meaning.

Weaker responses were limited to simple vocabulary and simple structures with inaccuracies in subject/verb agreement and over-reliance on the present tense. Pronunciation was mostly clear, but intonation was rarely used to convey intended meaning.

Part 2 – Short talk: Travel advice

The most popular choice was asking someone you know who has visited the country. Strong responses gave a balanced view of the options and discussed what could and could not be achieved by the different means, giving clear justification. Ideas were consistently well developed using a wide range of structures, such as present perfect, comparatives, conditionals (*'my cousin has visited the country, so I could ask him', 'can be time-consuming'*) and linking devices (*'so', 'because', 'although'*). Intonation was used effectively to convey intended meaning.

Weaker responses tended to focus on the chosen option and say very little about the second option. To achieve higher marks, candidates should aim to explore both options in equal depth, using a variety of structures and topic-specific vocabulary.

Part 3 – Discussion

Stronger candidates responded to the questions using a wide range of structures and appropriate vocabulary (*'although tourism boosts income', 'disturb the natural environment', 'promote cultural awareness', 'if you study abroad'*) to express their opinions and discuss a variety of ideas. Strong responses tended to be relevant and well developed.

Weaker responses included a limited range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Opinions expressed were rarely justified. Intonation was not used to convey intended meaning.

Speaking Assessment I

Part 1 – Interview: Popular dishes

Candidates responded well to all three questions with some relevant and detailed answers. Successful responses included a range of grammar structures (*'it can be tasty', 'it could be healthy if...', 'I would never say'*) and varied vocabulary to describe food (*'steam', 'crunchy', 'sour', 'acidic', 'spicy', 'unhealthy'*). Pronunciation was clear, and intonation was usually used to good effect.

Weaker responses were limited to simple vocabulary and a limited range of structures with inaccuracies in subject/verb agreement, gerund forms used instead of infinitives and errors in comparative adjectives (*'more better'*, *'more easier'*).

Part 2 – Short talk: Celebrating a birthday

The most common successful approach was to present the advantages and disadvantages of each option followed by a summary and a statement of preference for either seeing a new film at the local cinema or going to another city to watch a sports team play. Stronger responses included the use of subject-specific vocabulary (*'trusted source'*, *'detailed explanation'*) and conditional sentences (*'if you didn't have transport'*, *'you would need to'*, *'what would be the most enjoyable'*).

Weaker responses focused on listing the advantages of each option without mentioning the disadvantages or expanding the ideas. They tended to use present tenses throughout. A preference was often stated but there was no justification why.

Part 3 – Discussion

Stronger responses used a wide range of grammatical structures (*'used to'*, *'if you go to the cinema...you also need'*). Responses were consistently well developed and addressed all aspects of the questions.

Weaker responses were mostly relevant but used a limited range of structures and vocabulary. They were often brief and rarely provided justification for opinions.

Speaking Assessment J

Part 1 – Interview: Your country

Candidates responded to all three questions relevantly by describing places for the first question, producing a narrative for the second one and making comparisons for the final question. Stronger candidates used topic-specific vocabulary (*'broaden your horizons'*, *'explore local areas'*, *'an affordable option'*, *'a tourist trap'*) and a range of structures (*'it is located in'*, *'foreign visitors want to see'*, *'people read about it in guidebooks'*). Pronunciation and intonation were effective at supporting communication.

Weaker responses were brief and used mainly simple vocabulary and structures (*'you can'*, *'interesting'*, *'hot'*), with inaccuracies when complex structures were attempted.

Part 2 – Short talk: A healthy lifestyle

Strong responses stated how each option could potentially help create a healthier lifestyle. Some candidates gave a brief summary at the end of their short talk, restating their opinion on which option they would prefer and explaining briefly why. Stronger responses used linking devices effectively (*'firstly'*, *'then I'm going to'*, *'on the other hand'*).

Weaker responses tended to focus on the chosen option without sufficient justification and were often shorter than two minutes.

Part 3 – Discussion

Stronger candidates spoke at length using a wide range of vocabulary (*'home-cooking'*, *'purchase'*, *'cut down on'*), and complex grammatical structures (*'reduce how much we buy'*, *'considering what we intend to do'*) to present a range of ideas and perspectives. Pronunciation was clear and intonation helped to convey intended meaning, particularly when giving opinions.

Weaker responses were relevant but not well developed. They tended to rely on simple structures and used a limited range of vocabulary.