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Cambridge
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AS & A Level

Example Candidate Responses (Standards Booklet)

Cambridge International AS Level
English Language

8693

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Contents

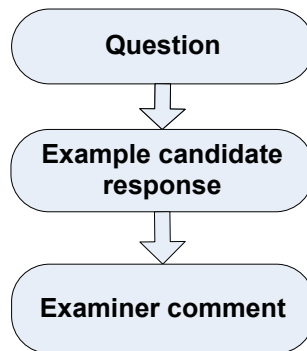
Introduction.....	2
Assessment at a glance.....	3
Generic mark schemes.....	4
Paper 1 – Passages for Comment.....	8
Paper 2 – Composition.....	37

Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS Level English Language (8693), and to show how different levels of candidates' performance relate to the subject's curriculum and assessment objectives.

In this booklet a range of candidate responses has been chosen to illustrate as far as possible each grade, a, c and e. Each candidate response is accompanied by a commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answers.

For ease of reference the following format for each paper has been adopted:



Each question is followed by examples of marked candidate responses, each with an examiner comment on performance. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and what they still have to do to improve their grades.

Past papers, Principal Examiner Reports for Teachers and other teacher support materials are available on our Teacher Support website at <http://teachers.cie.org.uk>

Assessment at a glance

AS Level

All candidates take:

Paper 1	Duration	Weighting
Passages for Comment	2 hours	50%

and

Paper 2	Duration	Weighting
Composition	2 hours	50%

Teachers are reminded that a full syllabus is available on www.cie.org.uk

Generic mark schemes

Paper 1

Part (a): Commentary (maximum 15 marks)

	Mark	Knowledge & Understanding	Analysis of language effects	Organisation
Band 1	13–15	Perceptive appreciation of content and ideas; Fluidly relates content to structure, audience, purpose, genre, style; shows keen awareness of intentions of passage.	Analyses text with sensitive and discriminating awareness of how language creates effects; moves with ease between part and whole in discussing specific examples of language use and the effect of the whole passage.	Strong structure; may be concise; quotation is used fluently, 'embedded' in the argument.
Band 2	10–12	Shows consistent appreciation of content and ideas; Able to relate content to structure, audience, purpose, genre, style, main aims of passage.	Analyses text, with awareness of the effects created; Able to relate part to whole in discussing specific examples of language use and the effect of the whole passage.	Strong structure used to convey clear argument.
Band 3	8–9	Shows steady engagement with content/ideas of piece; Shows general understanding of structure audience, purpose, genre, style of passage.	Thorough analysis of passage is made, correctly identifying a range of features of language, giving examples, and showing ability to explain how they create effects with some relation of part to whole.	Clear structure, sustained focus.
Band 4	6–7	Shows some engagement with content/ideas of piece; Shows general, overall understanding of structure audience, purpose, genre, style of passage.	Appropriate points are made, correctly identifying some features of language use, giving examples, and showing some ability to explain how they create effects. May be a fragmented approach.	Clear structure; may be line-by-line; essay may drift in and out of focus.
Band 5	3–5	Makes some relevant points about content; Shows some understanding of some aspects of the structure, audience, purpose, genre, style of passage; with some failures to identify key features and or misunderstanding.	Some relevant points made, identifying a restricted range of examples of language use; some examples are not related to the effects created; some examples may be listed without development; much generalisation.	Little structure; points may be rather disconnected.
Band 6	0–2	Comments on content of passage, may be confused.	One or two points made about language of passage; may be unclear.	Expression breaks down at times. Very short work. Unstructured.

Part (b): Directed Writing task (maximum 10 marks)**Marks**

8–10	<p>A perceptive recognition of context, audience and purpose supported by a good range of appropriate vocabulary and expression suitable for the task.</p> <p>Responses at the top of this band will be persuasive and confident, supported by a consistent, and at best personal, engagement with context and purpose, using fluent and accurate expression accompanied by a strong sense of audience.</p>
6–7	A clear and informed sense of purpose, context and relevance supported by a reasonable attempt to use language appropriate for the task.
4–5	An adequate attempt but marked by an inconsistent and uneven sense of purpose, context and style. Generally sound expression and accuracy.
2–3	The beginnings of an answer, but limited by an inappropriate sense of style, purpose and language. Expression and accuracy may be limited.
0–1	Confused and unfocused sense of purpose, context and audience. Wholly inappropriate language and style. Work may be brief or fragmented and expression very limited.

Paper 2

Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative Writing

Band 1	22–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginative, possibly original, appropriate approach to task, engaging audience; • Tightly controlled, appropriate structure; very directed writing; • Language used imaginatively to create specific effects on the reader; • Fluent, mature expression, achieves complex effects, with a high level of technical accuracy.
Band 2	18–21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginative approach to task, appropriate to audience and engaging interest; • Effective, appropriate structure, with a strong sense of purpose; • Language used to create specific effects on the reader, narrative or descriptive as appropriate; • Fluent expression achieves effects; occasional technical errors will not impede expression.
Band 3	14–17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent focus on a relevant form and content, with an appropriate sense of audience and some sustained imagination; • Clear structure that fits the task; with a sense of purpose; • Some effects of language are attempted and achieved, narrative or descriptive as appropriate; • Clear expression with some variety, a few technical inaccuracies.
Band 4	10–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear focus on relevant form and content, with some imaginative touches, and some appropriate sense of audience; • Structure is in place, though purpose is sometimes unclear; may drift in and out of focus at times; • Appropriate effects of language are attempted, narrative or descriptive as appropriate; • Clear expression, a little unvaried or with a number of technical errors (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, a range of spelling errors, absent punctuation) which limit the ability to achieve effects.
Band 5	6–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant form and content with some sense of audience; • Structure may not be fully apparent – may go on without clear narrative control or descriptive contrast; • Some effects of language are attempted, narrative or descriptive as appropriate; • Expression unclear at times; may not flow easily, with frequent technical errors (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, frequent spelling errors, absent punctuation).
Band 6	2–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of attempted focus on some appropriate ideas for content, but not fully appropriate to the task; form may be less sure, e.g. a wholly narrative response to a descriptive task; • Lacks structure, may be diffuse, may ramble; • Occasional effects of language are created, narrative or descriptive as appropriate; • Expression is unclear; technical and structural problems (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, frequent spelling errors, absent punctuation) get in the way of the flow of the whole.
Band 7	0–1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will be inappropriate to the task, confused or incoherent, with little grasp of suitable form or content. • Weakness of organisation and technical inaccuracy (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, frequent spelling errors, absent punctuation) will seriously impede the candidate's ability to create an overall impression.

Section B: Discursive/Argumentative Writing

Band 1	22–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting, lively approach to task, possibly original, in appropriate form, and engaging audience; • Tightly controlled structure develops ideas in logical effective manner; very directed writing; • Wide range of language and rhetorical devices used effectively to explain, argue or persuade; • Fluent, mature expression, capable of complex argument, with a high level of technical accuracy
Band 2	18–21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtful approach to task, appropriate in form, and engaging interest; • Effective, appropriate structure with clear exposition of ideas/argument, with a strong sense of purpose; • Language and rhetorical devices used effectively to explain, argue or persuade; • Fluent expression capable of complex argument; occasional technical errors will not impede expression.
Band 3	14–17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent focus on relevant content and form, with an appropriate sense of audience; • Clear appropriate structure with some development, with a sense of purpose; • Some language and rhetorical devices used to explain, argue or persuade; • Clear expression with some variety, with a few technical inaccuracies.
Band 4	10–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear focus on relevant form and content, with some appropriate sense of audience; • Appropriate structure is in place, though may drift in and out of focus or digress at times; • Effects of language to explain, argue or persuade are attempted to some purpose, not always fully achieved; • Clear expression, a little unvaried or with a number of technical errors (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, a range of spelling errors, absent punctuation) which limit the ability to achieve effects.
Band 5	6–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant form and content with some sense of audience; • Structure may not be fully apparent – may be lacking in development or argument; • Some effects of language to explain, argue or persuade are created; • Expression is unclear at times; may not flow easily, with frequent technical errors (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, frequent spelling errors, absent punctuation).
Band 6	2–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will attempt to be relevant, but not fully appropriate to the task, and will show some grasp of the topic under consideration; • Lacks structure, may leap from point to unconnected point, digress and ramble; • Occasional effects of language to explain, argue or persuade are attempted; • Expression is unclear; technical and structural problems (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, frequent spelling errors, absent punctuation) get in the way of the flow of the whole.
Band 7	0–1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work will be inappropriate to the task, confused or incoherent, with little grasp of the topic chosen; • Weakness of organisation and technical inaccuracy (confusion of tenses, wrong subject/verb agreement, frequent spelling errors, absent punctuation) will seriously impede the candidate's ability to create an overall impression.

Paper 1 – Passages for Comment

Question 1

1 In the following passage, the writer senses that her outlook on life may not always be right.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) After these events, Olivia writes a letter to another friend about the writer's visit. Basing your answer closely on the material of the original extract, write the opening (between 120–150 words) of the letter. [10]

What a huge palaver¹ it is, going on holiday. What a wrench, leaving one's dogs, home and daughter and plunging into God knows what. But how grim it was here: the work, the ghastly dog walkies, the daily chores, the dreary, sultry weather. So I went off on the train to France. I forced myself. It may sound like nothing to you more adventurous holidaymakers, but to me, a budding agoraphobic² who hyperventilates if she has to go further than the local park, it was a mammoth breakthrough. A triumph. Until the train stopped outside Paris for nearly two hours. Then it was a big mistake. I had a connection to catch. All my fears were justified. Why had I done this? What madness. Holidays are for people who work from 8am to 8pm daily for months on end. I just lie about scribbling and diddling with dogs. My whole life is a holiday. I need never have bothered. 5 10

However, I met old friends on the train, I caught my connection by a whisker and fell asleep, emotionally drained, in my couchette, until a voice woke me. "Carcassonne," it called out. My stop. Panic stations. I grabbed my baggage and fell onto the platform, shoeless, breathless, T-shirt awry, brassiere dangling, because I had loosened it for comfort. What comfort? Why expect any? There would be none on this holiday. I crawled to the cafe, the breakfast was heaven, Olivia arrived, we collected our hire car, we drove off along the sunny road, a few carefree moments passed, but then, suddenly, uproar. The junction was alive with shouting, cursing, pointing and beeping French motorists. What could be wrong now? Our front tyre was completely flat. 15 20

If anyone had asked me, I'd have said at that point that my cup was half empty, but then a handsome, cheery young man jumped out of his car and changed our tyre for us. "Cup half full," said Olivia strictly. And it was for a few moments, until we got lost in the one-way system. Then it emptied. Round and round we went, time passed, so did the same roundabouts, until a saintly young woman led us back to the hire place for a new car. We set off again. "Cup half full," said Olivia. She did this through our holidays – a sort of behavioural therapy for me, a training in positivity, because I like to expect the absolute worst. That way, one is never disappointed. But darling Olivia was always full of hope. We would get there, the sun would shine, we probably wouldn't crash and die, this or that road might be the right one. 25 30

Perhaps Olivia was right and my philosophy of life was wrong. The path ahead is not necessarily strewn with booby traps; buckets of ordure³ were not guaranteed to empty over my head. The sky stayed blue, the air was fresh, the vineyards stretched for miles, we found golden beaches and azure pools, youths apologised for blocking the pavement with their bikes and smiled pleasantly, and did not brandish knives and pitbulls.⁴ It was all worth it again. Olivia's house was heavenly, its terrace shaded by vines, the dinky, ancient village streets were cracked and cobbled, a luscious riot of wild flowers allowed to sprout from walls, with not the slightest whiff of health and safety. What heaven to get away from the fusspot English. 35 40

At least, it was for a bit, until we tried to visit a mountain lake up a narrow, winding road, which got higher and windier, with sheer, drillion-foot drops and blind hairpin bends, and the road too narrow to turn back. What peril. I longed for health and safety. The regrets returned. This holiday was cursed. Why had I not stayed at

home on the lovely flat plains of Holloway? Why come here and terrify myself? Why 45
drive up a near perpendicular slope in a prickling sweat, with breathing difficulties,
shaking, snivelling and calling out weedily for my dead mother to help me. This was
it. Cup completely empty, but Olivia remained cheery. Miraculous. "Take your time,"
she said calmly. "Cup half full. Breathe deeply." And sure enough, we found a wide bit 50
in which to turn round. And here I am, back home, alive. Olivia and I are still friends,
the dogs and daughter survived, the house is still standing, there are no love letters
on the mat, only bills. Outside, the rain continues. Why didn't I stay longer?

¹*palaver*: fuss

²*agoraphobic*: someone with a fear of going out

³*ordure*: sewage

⁴*pitbulls*: fierce dogs

Example candidate response – grade a

1)a) In this extract the writer's purpose is to retell her experience of travelling to France, showing the contrasting attitudes of her and her friend Olimia. To achieve this, the extract shows a fearful ~~tone~~, ~~since~~ she and doubtful tone, since she believes to have done "a big mistake", and tries to create a mood of understanding, by trying to explain the reader her reasons to be afraid.*

Firstly, the writer describes what she thought about going on vacations, ~~also~~ referring to it as "adventure" and "wrench". By using this negative words she reveals her dislike and discomfort towards it. She also makes this idea stronger by the use of the short sentence "I forced myself." The ~~fast~~ length of this quotation calls the reader's attention because it goes directly to the point, being very clear. The use of the word "forced" is also really telling ~~be due to~~ the fact that it proves that she would not have wished to go on holidays.

Furthermore, the use of short sentences can be spotted in several parts of the text. The writer uses this technique ~~to~~ when she feels afraid and regretful. The use of a succession of short sentences portray all the quick thoughts that go through the speaker's mind under these circumstances,

indicating her desperation. This can be seen in, "I longed for health and safety. The regrets returned." These sentences explain her worries and thoughts during a stressful situation, proving again that she did not like to go on holidays.

Contrasting her fears and emotions, the writer describes Olivia's way of behaving in the same situations and of comforting the speaker. In many parts of the extract, the writer introduces "Cup half full", the words that Olivia said ~~repeatedly~~ repeatedly. These words clearly contrast to the writer's reaction, since she always saw the worst of things - "shouting, cursing, pinching and weeping..." - while Olivia was positive - "We would get there, the sun would shine..." The use of a list of verbs in present continuous highlights the fact that the speaker felt everything mildly and going on all the time; it gives more strength to it. On the other hand, Olivia's thoughts and the use of "would" show that she ~~wrote~~ says positive things.

Additionally, in the first paragraph, the writer explains to the reader why he feels that she is "agegraphic" and that is why she feels so much. In this way, she tries to gain the reader's sympathy and to justify her reactions, which may be seen as aimed to the audience.

Finally, at the end of the passage, the speaker realizes that her thoughts were not totally justified and uses long sentence, in form of list, to ~~desert~~ mention all the ~~the~~ things that went on without her presence. With the use of the list she makes it seem longer and more important. The writer concludes the extract with ~~an~~ rhetorical question to ~~strengthen~~ her ~~thought~~ different thoughts at that moment.

All in all, the writer describes her vocations why shouting to her and Olivia's opposing views and making the reader understand her emotions by creating certain confidence.

⊛ Also, she delivers this with an informal and confident tone.

~~⊛~~

b) Dear Kenim,

I hope I've spent some lovely days in ~~the~~ Lucy's company. She ^{finally} came to France after so many years of ~~providing~~ travelling! I won't lie to you and tell you that she enjoyed every single moment, but I believe ~~she~~ she spent had some fun. We had some trouble when we went to visit a mountain lake because Lucy got really afraid due to the size of the path, but I tried calming her down

so as to at least get back home. I got ~~me~~ that
~~meanings~~, but would never let I get surprised at
 her reaction; she started trembling and breathing
 hard, but with my help she finally got herself
 together and calmed down. The important thing,
 I believe, is that although she obliged herself to
 come, she could deal with it and actually liked it.
 She must have done a great effort to achieve this! I hope
 I changed in some way her feeling about holidays,
 so that she tries it again. I could have achieved that,
~~right?~~ couldn't I? how I?

Examiner comment

The response to 1(a) shows a keen understanding of the purpose of the extract, combined with a sensitive understanding of the range of tone in evidence. For example, in the first paragraph, the candidate offers an overview of the 'fearful and doubtful' atmosphere created. It is noticeable that, as the answer moves into a more detailed focus, there are specific comments on individual words and phrases, such as the way in which negative vocabulary reveals the writer's discomfort. The answer does not offer a list of features that have been identified but, instead, when a particular technique is noted, tries to offer an evaluation of its purpose: for example, the reference to the use of short sentences offers an understanding of how the writer uses this technique to foreground her fear and regret, the succession of rapid thoughts passing through her mind. The answer maintains its focus on tone and structure by drawing on specific words and phrases. The contrasting attitude of the writer's friend is explored succinctly and, again, a technique is sensed but also thoughtfully commented on: a list of verbs is seen to convey how thoughts and feelings are felt vividly and with a degree of strength. Overall, the candidate displays a solid and informed grasp of the purpose, structure and progression of the material. The candidate has not attempted to comment on everything in the time possible but has selected individual words and phrases to comment on. Any reference to particular techniques or features is used to develop an evaluative comment: selectivity has been the foundation for relevance and discrimination.

The response to 1(b) is controlled and perceptive. The answer conveys Olivia's positive tone without the material being overwritten. She is seen to be careful in the way she phrases her ideas and this conveys the sense that Olivia does not over exaggerate difficulties or situations so that her restrained optimism is captured well: for example, she refers to how they 'had some trouble when [they] went to visit a mountain lake because Lucy got really afraid due to the size of the path.' The phrasing here balances the contrasting attitudes nicely – with 'some' and 'really' epitomising those differences concisely. Such contrasts are evoked steadily elsewhere in the answer: for example, the writer was 'surprised' but Lucy was 'trembling and breathing hard.' Olivia manages to elicit the one important thing from the visit – that Lucy 'could deal with it' – and this maintains her controlled positive attitude. In general, the answer is fluent, although the final two words seem to be a slip of the pen. This is a discriminating and focused response.

Example candidate response – grade c

1(a) The author's purpose in writing this piece is to inform her audience that her view of life, that the cup is half empty, may not always be correct. The first person narrative allows one to more easily connect with the author's thought and gives a somewhat confidential, but still informal tone. The passage begins with a great deal of irony and humor. As she begins, stating "what a huge palaver it is, going on holiday," the reader is immediately struck with the irony of the statement. Surely a holiday would be a pleasant affair. However, as it continues words like "grim", "dreary" and "ghastly" portray a somber, depressing mood to her everyday life, again finding it ironic that she is not eager to ~~escape~~ ^{escape}. The short sentence "I forced myself" displays the author's frame of mind, resolute, yet fearing that overthinking or elaboration as in a longer sentence would cause her to change her mind. The word choice of "mammoth" in this case though one would expect it as hyperbole is actually correct, showing the reader the woman's achievement. Then the tone becomes humorous as the woman decides it was a "big mistake". The reader is reminded of how much it takes the woman to travel.

The roller coaster ride of emotions begins from fear that she will miss her connection, as demonstrated by ^{the} rhetorical question, "why had I done this?" which employs humor, but also shows the depth of the author's despair. The exaggerated chaos which is the author's need to

catch a connect contrasts with the image of the author's daily life where she "lie[s] about", the reader empathizes with the author because of the contrast between how simple catching a connection is and how it is portrayed in the author's mind.

The empathy comes into play with the author's rhetorical questions in paragraph two as well, "what comfort? why expect any?" shows the author's feelings of hopelessness and we pity the image of the woman, "shoeless, breathless, T-shirt awry." By piling on these descriptions, each adding slight humor to create an overall pathetic image, the author evokes sympathy. The various rhetorical questions of the piece give insight to the author's psyche. These thoughts starkly contrast Olivia's succinct verbal reminder of ~~the~~ "Cup half full." By repeating this phrase throughout, Olivia gives the author hope that, "we would get there, the sun would shine..." emphasising that everything would be alright and slowly changing the author's outlook on the holiday. ~~images~~ ^{Pleasant} images of "sky stayed blue, and air was fresh" contrast the formerly grim tone as the audience rejoices with the author's change in perspective. The tone stays conversational starting "At least, it was for a bit..." bringing humor back into play that the author can so quickly change her mind. Short sentences follow as "the regrets returned" use of alliteration emphasises the author's emotions and lack of hope, and by being the bare minimum of a statement, leaves no room for interpretation. She feels hopeless and we as the audience are aware of this.

1(a) continued...

The author again uses imagery of "prickling sweat" and adjectives like "shaking, snivelling". The author conjures up sympathy via the pathetic image of a grown woman culling for her mother, which is ironic and evokes humor from the audience. Use of the non-sentence "Miraculous," cuts through the imagery and displays the utter disbelief that anyone could be cheerful at such a time.

Heavy use of commas ~~in the next sentence~~
 "And here I am, back home, alive," shows the disbelief and creates suspense as if the next statement revealed could be perilous. However, because everything is fine it is instead humorous that the author was being so dramatic. The solemn images of "no love letters... bills... rain," return to the dreary life described in paragraph one, the author has survived the journey to come full circle, yet ironically rather than the audience wondering why she does not desire a holiday, the author asks the question, "why didn't I ~~stay~~^{stay} longer?" This adds a final note of humor and completes the purpose of this passage, despite whatever terrible hardships dramatically tackled by the author, at the end she comes to realize she was incorrect: holidays aren't all bad after all.

1(b) Dear Susan,

It took some convincing, but I finally managed to convince Elizabeth to visit. She worried about leaving her daughter and dogs behind, insisting that her dull life could not possibly require a holiday. But after much pleading on my part I managed to get her to take a train to visit me in France. Unfortunately, when I picked her up from the café our car got a flat tire, Elizabeth began panicking, but I managed to keep her calm until a nice man fixed the flat and we were on our way. Another slight mishap occurred and we became a little lost, but thankfully we were pointed in the right direction. "Cup half full" became my mantra for the weekend and each time she looked at me, incredulous and disbelieving. ~~By the end of the~~ ~~weekend~~ ^{Later on} we went to visit a mountain lake and though we had to turn around, the fact we were still alive brightened Elizabeth's mood. Despite all the hardships, I think Elizabeth may visit me again soon when she returns to ~~fly~~ normal life and realizes adventure might not be so bad.

Stay in touch,

~~Olivia~~ Olivia

Examiner comment

The candidate's response to 1(a) is consistent and, in the main, proficient. There is a solid recognition of the tone as 'confidential' and 'informal'. Relevant examples of negative words are used as supporting evidence in the opening paragraph. Occasionally, comments could be developed a little more. The candidate notes the writer's use of rhetorical questions but does not resort to simple feature spotting: there is an attempt to comment on the effects of any device or image, techniques the mark scheme would hope to locate in answers in the upper range of marks. The structural contrast between the attitudes of the two characters is sensed well and how this underpins the change of tone as the passage unfolds: 'Pleasant images of "sky stayed blue" "air was fresh" contrast the formerly grim tone as the audience rejoices with the author's change in perspective'. The comment is supported concisely by reference to textual evidence. Again, some comments could be explored in a little more focus: 'the author conjurs (sic) sympathy via the pathetic image of a grown woman calling for her mother, which is ironic and evokes humor from the audience.' Perhaps these ideas seem a little too assertive and generalised in comparison with the solid sensitivity evident in other ideas explored in the answer. Overall, this is a consistent and generally engaged response, showing informed understanding of structure and mood.

The response to 1 (b) is also informed. It shows a pleasing awareness of Olivia's mood and intentions: 'I tried to calm her...' The writer is careful to ensure that any incident is seen as a minor event, not as a melodramatic catastrophe: 'slight mishap...a little lost'. Elizabeth's emotions are sensitively addressed: 'worried...dull life...incredulous and disbelieving.' Perhaps these emotions could be developed in a little more depth at times to bring out the contrasts between the characters even more. However, the answer as a whole was organised, informed and fluent with few lapses in technical accuracy.

Example candidate response – grade e

This passage talks about a ~~girl~~ ^{woman}, ~~Olivia~~ which is going on a vacation with her friend and she is really scared of what happened to her.

The passage starts with a negative frame connected to the author's attitude towards this trip "what a huge pain it is, going on holiday". It also starts with a sense of sarcasm as she describes herself as "a budding agoraphobic who hyperventilates if she has to go further than the local park". Then she carries on describing how the idea of going onto a holiday was bad "it was a big mistake" and "what a madness". Later on as she gets to the train she describes herself as "emotionally drained" and starts to describe how she had a sense of panic when she got to her stop "panic station" and later starts with her negative point of view again. This second part of the passage is mainly focus on her negative attitude towards this trip. She is making "what comfort? What expect any? There would be none on this holiday. Then she starts talking about "my cup" as this may represent her horrible feelings towards this trip and how they start decreasing as the cup becomes empty as her attitude becomes more negative "what could be wrong now?". Then ~~there is~~ a big contrast is shown as Olivia's attitude is being explain. ~~At~~ Olivia is described

as being positive ~~and~~ completely the opposite to the author "a training in positivity" as because I like to expect the absolute worst: "and ~~the~~ "darling Olivia was always full of hope" ~~and the way~~ The way the author describes this part helps ~~the~~ with the contrast as she put them together.

The next part is ~~the~~ a small sense of positivity in the author way of thinking as she realizes that Olivia's way is probably better "Perhaps Olivia was right and my philosophy of life was wrong" and she starts describing the place they are in, in a positive way: "The sky stayed blue, the air was fresh, the vineyard stretched for miles" and "Youths apologise for blocking the pavement with their bikes and smile pleasantly, and did not brandish knives and pitbulls" as she again creates this sense of contrast between both way of seeing things.

The last part is negative again as "The secrets returned" and "This holiday was cursed" and she starts questioning again why she even came to the holidays in the first place "Why had I not stayed at home on the lovely flat plains of Halloway? Why come here and terrify myself? Why...?" And goes on with all the negative views she has. At the end she gives up and return home "And here I am back home, alive." But there is a small hint of regret

on returning as she says: "Why didn't I stay longer?"

Overall this passage talks about the negative attitude the author has towards going on a trip leaving her safe home.

The author uses sarcastic language and questions to let herself be understood by the reader.

b) Dear Anna;

You'll never believe who came to visit me last holiday... Jessica! Could you believe it?

She came and she was all panicky like always, I had to fight not to laugh. You know I love her, but she is was too funny some times. We have been doing this stay positive exercise through the holidays and for some moments she was positive, but then all negativity came back again. She kept talking about her dog, her house and her daughter, fearing they might all die or get destroyed. There were so many kind people in Paris, that she couldn't believe it! She was impressed! I bet she thought they were going to kill us or something.

Well I really should be saying my goodbyes now I should tell you about my Jessica's holiday finish

At the end she ended up returning home with a lot of anticipation. Poor thing, but it was her first time, I bet next time it will go way better!

Well Sweetie, it's time to say my goodbyes. I hope to receive any news from you soon.

~~soo~~ best wishes,
Olivia.

Examiner comment

The candidate's response to 1(a) offers some relevant awareness of the tone of the passage, that it consists of positive and negative attitudes: yet the comments tend to remain slightly distant and undeveloped beyond this foundation. Analytical ideas could be developed in greater depth. The answer begins quite promisingly with an awareness of tone – its negativity and touch of sarcasm – but seems to fall into the trap of offering a recap of content so that further points remain unexplored. The candidate tends to use phrases like 'she describes' and 'starts talking about' which allows the answer to drift into moments of paraphrase. The supporting quotations which are employed need to be commented on with more detail and precision. This means that the point about negativity is mentioned again but the expression of it is not fully explored. The contrast between the writer and Olivia is sensed well and the latter's positive attitude is noted but needs to be commented on in terms of the language used to express it with more detail. The candidate notes that the last part of the extract is 'negative again' but could comment on the quotations cited and the effects they convey in closer depth. Overall, the answer seems to remain rather undeveloped beyond one or two points about contrasting moods; a reliance on forms of paraphrase rather than comments on specific words and phrases tends to limit the amount of marks which can be awarded.

The answer to 1(b), however, demonstrates a greater sense of perception and understanding. There is an effective recognition of task, content and audience. The opening sense of disbelief and surprise is refreshing and focused. The writer's sense of humour is also insightful and places the worries of her friend into a different, almost isolated and abnormal, context. The mixture of wavering negativity and positiveness is captured well and concisely exemplified: 'She kept talking about her dogs, her house and her daughter, fearing they might all die or get destroyed.' Olivia's confidence and optimism are conveyed implicitly through her sympathy and belief that 'next time it will go way better.' This is a discriminating and sensitive response.

Question 3

3 The speech below was delivered by George Bush, former president of the USA, after the devastation caused to New Orleans by a hurricane in 2005.

(a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]

(b) Write the opening of a speech (between 120–150 words) in which the same leader addresses the nation about a real or imaginary disaster elsewhere in the world, basing it closely on the style and language of the original passage. [10]

Good evening. I am speaking to you from the city of New Orleans – nearly empty, still partly underwater and waiting for life and hope to return. Eastward from Lake Pontchartrain, across the Mississippi coast, to Alabama and into Florida, millions of lives were changed in a day by a cruel and wasteful storm.

In the aftermath, we have seen fellow citizens left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones, and grieving for the dead and looking for meaning in a tragedy that seems so blind and random. 5

We have also witnessed the kind of desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know – fellow Americans calling out for food and water, vulnerable people left at the mercy of criminals who had no mercy, and the bodies of the dead lying uncovered and untended in the street. 10

These days of sorrow and outrage have also been marked by acts of courage and kindness that make all Americans proud. Coast Guard and other personnel rescued tens of thousands of people from flooded neighborhoods.

Religious congregations and families have welcomed strangers as brothers and sisters and neighbors. In the community of Chalmette, when two men tried to break into a home, the owner invited them to stay and took in fifteen other people who had no place to go. 15

At Tulane Hospital for Children, doctors and nurses did not eat for days so patients could have food, and eventually carried the patients on their backs up eight flights of stairs to helicopters. Many first responders were victims themselves – wounded healers, with a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. 20

When I met Steve Scott of the Biloxi Fire Department, he and his colleagues were conducting a house-to-house search for survivors. Steve told me this: "I lost my house, and I lost my cars, but I still got my family, and I still got my spirit." 25

Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost much and suffered much and given to the limit of their power, we are seeing that same spirit: a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before.

Tonight so many victims of the hurricane and the flood are far from home and friends and familiar things. You need to know that our whole nation cares about you, and in the journey ahead you are not alone. To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country. 30

To every person who has served and sacrificed in this emergency, I offer the gratitude of our country. And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes. We will stay as long as it takes to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives. And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know: there is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again. 35

The work of rescue is largely finished. The work of recovery is moving forward. In nearly all of Mississippi, electric power has been restored. Trade is starting to return to the Port of New Orleans, and agricultural shipments are moving down the Mississippi River. 40

In the life of this nation, we have often been reminded that nature is an awesome force and that all life is fragile. We are the heirs of men and women who lived through those first terrible winters at Jamestown and Plymouth, who rebuilt Chicago after a great fire, and San Francisco after a great earthquake, who reclaimed the prairie from the dust bowl of the 1930s. 45

Every time, the people of this land have come back from fire, flood, and storm to build anew – and to build better than what we had before. Americans have never left our destiny to the whims of nature, and we will not start now. 50

These trials have also reminded us that we are often stronger than we know with the help of grace and one another. They remind us of a hope beyond all pain and death – a God who welcomes the lost to a house not made with hands.

And they remind us that we are tied together in this life, in this nation, and that the despair of any touches us all. 55

I know that when you sit on the steps of a porch where a home once stood or sleep on a cot in a crowded shelter, it is hard to imagine a bright future. But that future will come.

Example candidate response – grade a

3)a) The purpose of this speech is to create unity in the country after the hurricane, in order to give hope and strength to those affected. It also aims to explain their action and help to those whose lives are affected from the outside. To achieve this the speaker uses a formal and reassuring tone. The mood ~~also~~ gradually changes throughout the speech: it starts as sympathy and ^{and pity} modifies to hopeful.

Firstly, a characteristic that can be spotted throughout the whole speech is that the speaker the use of "you", "we" and "our". By using these pronouns, the reader is addressed directly and feels every words is meant for him. In addition, the last two pronouns, reveal that Bush includes ~~him~~ himself and in the speech and does not separate

~~himself~~ himself from the rest of the nation, creating in this way a stronger feeling of unity.

Secondly, the speaker describes the city of New Orleans ~~as~~ "empty" using a chain of negative words: "empty", "partly underwater" and "waiting on life". ~~And~~ with the use of all these words he highlights the fact that they had gone through a terrible situation and ~~get~~ helps the audience to create a clearer image of what had happened, so as to gain their support and sympathy. ~~He~~ even refers to the storm as "cruel"; using this personification, he provides the nation somebody to blame and puts even more strength in the tragedy.

Moreover, the speaker devotes several paragraphs to describe all the help received ~~by doing this~~ from all different groups of society. By doing this, he shows that unity is needed and also proves that they have already started to help the victims. To highlight the fact that they must be together, so as to be able to continue, he quotes some words said by a member of the Fire Department who had survived the hurricane, but still helped. ~~And~~ In this way, he gives more facts and ~~and~~ gives the population some proof that his words are true.

~~After~~ The tone gradually changes and creates

a mood of hope. With the use of a parallel structure, "The work of rescue is largely finished. The work of recovery is moving forward" Bush shows that they are working to improve and they are announcing. However, ~~been~~ the use of this technique ~~strength~~ strengthens this idea and is useful for emphasis.

In the following paragraphs the speaker continues building the mood of hope, referring to past experiences and reminding them that their nation had gone through "fire, flood, and storm." By ~~beginning~~ telling previous situations, the speaker makes the audience hopeful and more comfortable, since they feel that ~~the~~ ^{their} situation had already been ~~overcome~~ overcome.

Finally, to set a stronger feeling of hope and improvement, Bush promises "that future will come." That certainty and that statement ~~in that~~ reassures the people, ~~feel~~ making them feel more secure, since someone ~~knows~~ ^{knows} them what will happen in the future.

④₂

b) Good morning. I am speaking to you to remind you of our ~~two~~ neighbors in Mexico. That wonderful country was suffered the effects of an evil man, who took over their beaches and houses during the night.

They are already receiving help; many countries have sent volunteers to look for missing people and

to help treat the affected ones. But we can not ~~stay~~ pretend nothing ^{has} happened. We can not leave them out there alone. They are our neighbors, our brothers, and our country is strong enough as to help them.

~~We must~~ They have suffered and lost many things and I send them from the USA an eternal feeling of hope and promise ^{that} their situation will improve, that we will help ~~them~~.

Q₂ To conclude, the speaker achieves his aim of giving hope and creating unity by giving people something to believe ~~in~~ and by providing proof that things are being done to get ~~us~~ where they want to.

Examiner comment

The response to 3 (a) shows an awareness of the extract's purpose and direction: the speaker's desire to offer 'unity' and 'hope'. There is an understanding of the progression of the whole passage as it moves from 'sympathy' to a 'hopeful' mood. The candidate comments on the use of personal pronouns as the speaker tries to establish a feeling of inclusion, again, not simply spotting a technique or feature but trying to comment on its effect. The contrasting tones of the passage are commented on effectively and supporting selective examples are cited proficiently. There are nice details, such as the idea that in describing the storm as 'cruel' the President 'provides the nation' with 'somebody to blame'. There is a consistent awareness of the speaker's purpose at each point of the answer, reinforcing the sense of detailed consistency the candidate offers in the answer. The progression of the passage is gauged in a discriminating way: the candidate senses how the President moves on to focus on the idea of the future and a sense of hope. There is an understanding of how the speaker's tone in his voice of 'certainty' endeavours to make his listeners feel 'more secure'. Overall, the answer is sensitively engaged with techniques and features of language and the effects that the speaker is trying to achieve consciously.

The response to 3 (b) opens in an effective register with a sense of the speaker's purpose, although there are one or two technical lapses in the first paragraph. The candidate tries to reflect the way in which the original passage describes a 'cruel' sea by conveying that here the ocean is 'evil', an attempt to give the listeners a thing to blame for its actions. There are some effective rhetorical techniques used as the answer develops: the use of repeated personal pronouns, the qualifying positive insertion of 'our brothers' and the switch to a more personal tone as the speaker adopts first person. The move from the negative to the positive, as in the original, is captured well so that the progression and structure of the material is reflected convincingly. This is a perceptive and focused answer which recognises tone and format very effectively.

Example candidate response – grade c

3(a) This speech by President Bush was made to encourage those who suffered as a result of hurricane Katrina and to provide hope for the future. The tone is formal but also compassionate, this is indicated by starting out with the simple, yet ~~sober~~ greeting of "Good Evening," it is almost as if it braces the audience of what is to come. Use of dashes, ~~and~~ commas, as well as repetition of the conjunction "and" serves to draw out the explanation of the state of New Orleans. Use of "and" also emphasises the desolate current situation. The storm is personified, described as "cruel and wasteful" serving to show the disasters nature can inflict upon us, by listing the scope of "millions" in many places that were effected, it informs the audience and again emphasises the magnitude of the situation. The president appeals to patriotism through stating, "this great and good nation," and by using alliteration and repetition of the "g" sound gives a power to the country, implying that it is possible to come back from such tragedy. Next follows a series of anecdotes each showing a different story but used for repetition of the same message that is: in times of need, unlikely heroes emerge. This is perhaps best shown in the oxymoron "~~wounded~~ ^{wounded} healers" demonstrating that even the injured aided those in more desperate needs than ~~themselves~~ ^{themselves}. Repeating this message via different stories gives hope to the audience by emphasising the good in people, an aim of the speech.

3(a) continued...

Using a direct quote from a brave ~~the~~ firefighter gives a model for others to follow, despite the loss of material possessions he says, "I still got my family, and I still got my spirit." ~~The~~ The audience can both relate to his suffering as a victim but aspire to work and help others as he has.

In contrast of the images of heroes doing great things despite the tragedy, the president transitions to what must happen next.

Through "core strength" and "American determination" the president appeals to patriotism again giving the audience confidence to "clear the ruins and build better than before." This last statement is strongly delivered and emphasised by the plosive alliteration, there is no room for disagreement, it is what must ^{just} and will happen.

He proceeds to extend not ^{just} his own sympathy, but that of "our country", repetition of this phrase providing a sense of unity. The sense of unity is again ~~reinforced~~ reinforced by repetition of "we will." This was an attempt to give the audience, particularly those who suffered due to Katrina, hope and the sense they were not alone. He matter-of-factly states, "this great city will rise again." once more leaving no room for question using only simple words in a ~~statement~~ ^{statement} colored by the tone of certainty.

He then shows the transition from rescue to recovery he separates the two ideas into two sentences rather than combining them to give the sense that they are entirely

3(a) continued...

different, one chapter closes and another begins. The ending of his speech goes on to give examples of American strength in the sense "we have overcome before, we shall overcome again," appealing to common roots and unity once more. He describes the people of America as "tied together" the ~~repetition~~ alliteration giving a sense that it is one idea, or one word by repeating the sound, adding to the sense of unity. This is again demonstrated in "the despair of any touches all" not in the literal sense, but by showing a connection between all Americans that goes beyond physical.

Finally, by acknowledging the difficulty in imaging the future, he makes his final statement, "But that future will come" stronger. Again there is a tone of certainty, no room for negotiation. By emphasising heroism, the good in people, and unity Bush's speech successfully achieves his purpose to bring hope to Americans in times of crisis.

3(b) Good afternoon. As you are by now aware, our friends and allies in Asia have recently been struck by a tsunami. From the shores of Indonesia to the coast of Thailand, millions suffered as a result of nature's cruel ways. I appeal to you today to help those who so desperately need our assistance. We as a nation have endured hardship and we have persevered. Now is the time to help

3(b) continued...

those who cannot help themselves. With American determination we will rise to the occasion and offer assistance. To those who are suffering, your calls for help shall be answered, and I offer sympathy of our country. My fellow Americans now is the time to call upon our common ancestry and our common humanity and imagine a better tomorrow so that we can assure that better day will come.

Examiner comment

The candidate's response to 3 (a) shows a steady and informed sense of understanding. The President's initial tone is commented on effectively. Here, too, one or two comments do not quite seem to lead to any incisive analysis at times: for example, the references to the uses of dashes, commas and repetition in the first paragraph seem to make rather generalised ideas. Yet the candidate brings back the answer into focus with the comment on the techniques of patriotism at the beginning of the second paragraph. As in other effective answers, the identification of a technique is supported by textual evidence and an engagement with the possible effect created by the feature. However, at times the candidate could afford to try and comment on the quotation employed as supporting a technique. For example, the interesting observation about the use of a 'direct quote' as 'a model for others to follow' cites a reference to how the survivor 'still got my family, and I still got my spirit'. Perhaps the repetition of 'still' and the references to 'family' and 'spirit' are worth exploring in a little more depth. However, the candidate is consistent in exploring the rhetorical techniques that the President employs so that switches mood and the structure of the unfolding speech are commented on in an informed manner. The move to a sense of 'unity' and 'strength' is understood sensibly and commented on with insight. By focusing on individual techniques and using supporting textual evidence, the candidate gives an informed and measured answer.

The response to 3 (b) is informed and shaped by purpose and a sense of audience. The initial tone reflects that of the original extract in its seriousness. There is an understanding that the President is speaking to a nation and trying to be inclusive. There is a sense of the patriotism noted in the answer to 3 (a) as the President refers to 'American determination'. Perhaps the candidate could have incorporated another technique that is explored in the answer above: the use of a direct quotation from a survivor or a brief anecdote to enhance the reality and the seriousness of the situation. Overall, this is a steady and fluent piece of directed writing which embodies the ideas and structure of the original passage to some effect.

Example candidate response – grade e

a) This speech was given by former USA's president George Bush after the city of New Orleans suffered from a great tragedy.

The ~~the~~ speech starts with a small introduction of the place and the actual situation "nearby empty, still partly underwater and waiting for life and hope to return." This idea of disastrous and tragic situation is stress all through the speech. In his first part the speaker introduces the idea of "citizens left stunned and unprotected searching for loved ones" and "grieving for the dead", this both ideas explain the current situation Americans from New Orleans are experiencing and trying to overcome. ~~The~~ The speaker also introduces a sense, even though small at this part, of patriotism when he says "desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know." And it finishes with some strong words ~~to~~ to give an impact as it says "bodies ~~of~~ of the dead lying uncovered and unattended in the street".

The next part is a bit more optimistic as the ~~speaker~~ ^{speaker} shows how Americans are helping each other in this tragedy, "acts of courage and kindness". And again it states a sense of patriotism "all Americans proud" that will be much stronger in this middle part. The speaker give on examples to explain ~~the~~ what Americans are doing to help each other out. "when two men tried to break into a"

home, the owner invited them to stay and took in fifteen other people who had no place to go. and "doctors and nurses did not eat so patients could have food" one way in which George Bush communicate the generosity of their fellow Americans. Then he starts talking about how all Americans need to find their way to deal with this situation and to help each other out and he stresses this idea by saying: "I told me this: "I lost my house, and I lost my car, but I still got my family and I still got my spirit." And he finishes this part, just like the other, with a powerful phrase "a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before." Giving also a religious connotation in this ending.

In the next part it talks directly to the citizens by the repetition of the word "YOU" "you need to know", "care about you" and "you are not alone" giving us to understand he is talking to every single American giving them the same message "To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country" in this part he start mentioning himself and making the speech much more personal "for the gratitude" and "I also offer this pledge" He also mention "we" as the whole American people and promises to help "we will do what it takes, we will start as long as it takes" And also stresses the fact the city will rise again and that they will resolve

This matter by saying "All who question the future of this great city need to know: there is no way to imagine America without New Orleans and this great city will rise again".

The next part is a message of hope to all Americans with an enormous sense of patriotism on it. It starts by giving a record of all things that have been already done like "recovery is largely finished", "recovery is moving forward" and "electric power has been restored", making everyone understand the power of the country. It starts talking about patriotism when he recognizes that "nature is an awesome force and that life is fragile". And starts to give examples of what Americans had done "built Chicago after a great fire and San Francisco after a great earthquake, who reclaimed the prairie from the dust bowl in 1930" in an attempt to give courage and hope. And he finishes the speech with an interactive phrase "I know that when you sit on the steps of a porch where a home once stood or a bed in a cot in a crowded shelter, it is hard to imagine a bright future. But that future will come." In this way he sympathizes with New Orleans' people and finishes with a short phrase to leave an impact.

Overall this speech was made to give

here to all Americans in their pursuit of rebuilding the city of New Orleans and in recuperating of a terrible tragedy.

b) Good morning, today my fellow Americans I talk to you from the city of ~~Orlando~~ Florida ~~Florida~~ from where I ~~see~~ now see how in this city millions of life were taken away by an enormous ~~wave~~ wave. Today I stand ~~at~~ next to fellow Americans that has suffered one of the most horrible tragedies to this country. This tragedy has ~~been~~ left us ~~with~~ with citizens looking for their loved ones and fellow Americans being devastated in emotions of physical pain. We have seen young children without their mother looking for shelter and parent, looking desperately for their missing children. And last night, my fellow Americans, bodies were buried all on top of another as their were left in their streets and that is a pain no American citizen should go through.

The speaker uses ^{kind} empathy and ~~emotional~~ language to explain his feelings about this and what he plans to do.

Examiner comment

The response to 3 (a) displays some relevant understanding of the extract's content and some of the techniques in evidence. Some of the matters noted in the commentary on 1(a) above are evident again. The same point – here, patriotism – seems to be made a few times so that the other aspects and features of the passage are not explored in further depth; similarly, the reliance on forms of paraphrase or a recap of content tends to interrupt those parts of the answer which are more focused and grounded in exploring the material. The answer begins soundly with the candidate noting the way in which a tragic situation is stressed all the way through the speech and there is an initial grasp of how the President employs a patriotic tone. The move to a more optimistic note is sensed soundly but the rest of the third paragraph seems to be an extended summary of the content of the speech so that analysis of the effects of individual words and phrases is not forthcoming. The discussion of the use of personal pronouns brings the answer back into a degree of focus and the candidate gauges how there is then 'a message of hope'. The section after this seems to drift off again into more generalised areas, summarising content at the expense of commenting

on language and style. The answer tends to drift in and out of focus so that opportunities for further detail are lost under the pressure of time.

The response to 3 (b) is an attempt to address the directed writing task. It is marked by its inconsistency and its lapses in expression and technical accuracy, tending to limit the amount of marks which can be awarded: 'millions of life where taken...fellow Americans that has...left us with citizen looking for their loved ones...We have seen young childs without their mother...bodies were buried all on top of another as their were left in the streets...no American citizen should go though.' Although there is an attempt to capture the tone of the original, these lapses, and the focus on the tragic aspects of the original speech alone with no sense of future optimism or patriotism really in evidence, tend to limit the outcome of the task.

Paper 2 – Composition

Questions

Answer one question from Section A and one question from Section B.

You should write between 600 and 900 words for each composition.

Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative Writing

- 1 Write a descriptive piece called *The Lost World*. In your writing create an atmosphere of decay and isolation.
- 2 ‘She read the text message on her phone. She paused, gasped, and took a very deep breath...’
Continue the story. In your writing bring out a sense of suspense and tension. (You do not have to complete the story.)
- 3 Write two contrasting pieces (between 300–450 words each), one about your most enjoyable experience, and the other about your least enjoyable experience.
- 4 Write the opening to a short story called *A New Romance*. In your writing create an unusual setting in which two strangers meet for the first time.

Section B: Discursive/Argumentative Writing

- 5 ‘Giving aid to less developed countries does more harm than good.’
What do you think – and why?
- 6 A magazine publishes two contrasting articles (between 300–450 words each), one called ‘The Future Still Looks Bright’, and the other called ‘It’s Not Going to Get Any Better’. Write the two articles, bringing out clear differences in their viewpoints about the ways in which the world is changing.
- 7 ‘Education provided by the state is good enough for everyone.’
‘Private (paid for) education is far more beneficial for students than state-funded education.’
Which view are you in closer agreement with – and why?
- 8 A product which you cannot do without is about to go out of existence: the company which makes it is about to cease its production. Write a letter to the company in which you describe the origin and history of your relationship with the product and – most of all – why it is an essential part of your life.

Example candidate response – grade a

- 4 Write the opening to a short story called *A New Romance*. In your writing create an unusual setting in which two strangers meet for the first time.

Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative page 1
 4 Stupid, creepy place. ^{"A New Romance"} Why, oh why did I take that bet? I knew better than to let my ego get the best of me. My best friend Linda had bet me a weeks worth of laundry that I could never make it through two horror movies at the theater where she worked. It was a double feature, showing "Killer Thoughts" and "Worse than the Monster Under the Bed." I hate ~~the~~ horror movies and I am a wimp who willingly admits it. Just the thought of the ominous music was enough to start me perspiring. However, I hated laundry as well. I figured four hours of closing my eyes and jamming my fingers in my ears was a small price to pay for an entire weeks worth of laundry. But I wouldn't go easy on Linda, I'd be sure to change at least three times every day.

I approached the ticket booth after waiting in line and ordered my tickets. I couldn't help but notice the dilapidated exterior of the theater. It was run-down and in a less than desirable neighborhood. The blue paint was peeling to reveal the gnarled wood beneath. I gulped, the place alone gave me the creeps.

"So, you showed after all?" Linda's voice from the doorway startled me.

"Yep, better get your detergent ready," I replied shakily.

She didn't look convinced, but took the ticket and let me in nonetheless.

Section A continued...

"You won't make it through the ^{opening} credits. Remember, I'll be checking the bathroom every ten minutes, so no cheating." She walked away laughing as I headed toward the entrance to ~~the~~ theater ^{thirteen} like it was my funeral march.

It would be theater thirteen I thought to myself. Though my triskaëdecaphobia was not extreme, something about the theater number made me feel anxious.

Carefully, I proceeded down the narrow aisle, avoiding the tears in the carpet as I went. I chose a seat near the middle of the center row. The chair ~~creaked~~ ^{creaked} as I pulled it down and sat, avoiding the gum covered arm rests. The large screen was currently blank and apart from myself, the theater was empty. "No one will hear you scream..." I laughed uneasily remembering the quote from a movie I had only heard about, never seen. In the dim lighting I could make out the stairs ^{on the} red curtains which hung on ~~the~~ either side of the blank screen.

Suddenly, the lights lowered further. I cursed myself for ever agreeing to this bet. The projector started, displaying a shaky black and white image. I braced myself for the hours to come.

I could feel the hairs on the back of my neck rise as not a minute ~~later~~ later the theater door squeaked open. The sound of shuffling feet echoed in my brain and my pulse was hammering.

Section A continued...

page 3

"Gross!"

The exclamation from behind me brought a scream to my throat ~~as~~ ^{as} I whirled around in my seat.

Apparently, I was not the only person who had been startled. Just as my eyes brought into focus the shape of a man behind me, I found myself, white shirt particularly, drenched in cold soda. ~~It~~

What a mistake today was, I thought. I really hope that soda won't stain my shirt; I couldn't make out its color in the dim light.

"I'm so sorry! I thought the theater was empty and I stepped in gum and— I'll go get you some napkins," The stranger said looking extremely apologetic.

I admit defeat. "No, it's okay, this was a bad idea from the beginning."

I got up and proceeded out of the theater, aware this time I was being followed.

"Honestly, you don't have to go, you can borrow my jacket. I feel terrible—" was all he got out before I ~~cut~~ ^{cut} him off.

"Really," I smiled in assurance, "you did me a favor. I hate scary movies."

The man before me was tall, maybe a few years older than me. His handsome features and glittering green eyes showed a great deal of remorse and now, confusion.

"Then why ~~were~~ you watching a horror double feature?" he inquired.

"A bet," I said not wanting to explain further. "Which it seems I've lost," I admitted, smiling.

Section A continued...

page 4

"What do you have to do?" he asked.

"My laundry, for a week!" Linda exclaimed, showing up just then, carrying two bags of laundry. "I knew you'd lose! Get washing!" She tossed the bags my way and took off, before I could retaliate in any way.

"Well, at least I'll only need one trip to the laundry mat," I shrugged, looking at my soiled top.

"I'm sorry about that again... by the way, my name's Tyler," he informed offering his hand.

"Lizzy," I said taking his hand, "and my laundry throwing roommate is Linda."

He laughed, "Seeing as I cost you the bet, how about I keep you with the clothes?"

I considered momentarily, but my hate for laundry won out.

"You've got yourself a deal," I replied with a nod.

He smiled. My heart stopped.

5 'Giving aid to less developed countries does more harm than good.'

What do you think – and why?

Section B: Argumentative / Discursive page 5

5 Depending on the situation, giving aid to less developed countries can cause more harm than good.

Continually offering aid to less developed countries does not give them a chance to stand on their ^{own} feet. What child would work hard to get a well paying job when they know their parents' doors are always open? None. If a country is shown that dire circumstances will always result in outside aid, it sends a bad message. As a result they become reliant on another country. Yet, there is always the threat of war or world economic crisis which could shift the position of the helping country, leaving those ~~less~~ ^{less} developed nations ^{unable} to ~~stand~~ fend for themselves.

With the assistance of a country, there is the inevitable cultural influence as well. During the era of the Marshall Plan when the US loaned money to suffering European countries, they also imposed western ideals. This caused inevitable loss of culture in the less developed countries. Culture is a thing too great to sacrifice. It is a thing to be safe guarded at any cost.

Offering aid is rarely done without personal gain in mind. Perhaps offering aid to Africa seems selfless, but in reality when there are cheap crops to gain it is entirely selfish. This is seen as encouraging and maintaining a cycle of greed. Humanitarian goals often mask more sinister aspirations, something which should be discouraged.

Section B

5 continued... page 6

Aid may overlook the root cause of a problem. Behind the impoverished and ill families may stand a corrupt government. To offer aid would ~~be to~~ encourage corruption. There is no guarantee the people's suffering will be eased. Perhaps aid would strengthen government control. Surely, this is not desirable.

Hierarchy. In our world it seems that it is unavoidable. But by aiding the countries who are less developed or "third world" do we elevate them to our "first world" status? No, we only support the hierarchical system where few exist on top and the others below. We do not promote equality through offering aid; we promote the status quo.

In all, offering aid to another nation does that country more harm than good. Yet, what if their is a greater goal than just the assistance of merely one country?

During the Cold War, a Red threat loomed on the horizon. The past had shown that with times of trouble and economic crisis, governments would be overthrown and result in a new system: Communism.

~~The goals of communism made it a threat to the whole world. This, is easily a reason to aid a country.~~ The goals of communism made it a threat to the whole world. This, is easily a reason to aid a country. In ^{comparison to} preventing the Domino Theory or spread of communism, the cons of offering aid are weak. ~~For example,~~ For example, the Marshall Plan may have caused the loss of culture, but it stoped the ~~spread~~ ^{spread}.

page 7

Section B
5 continued...

of communism, a more important goal. In cases of protecting the world, or a greater good, ~~the~~ the benefits of offering aid out ~~to~~ weigh the risks.

In conclusion, the aid offered to developing countries usually does more harm than good. It promotes hierarchy and greed. It causes dependence and loss of culture. ~~However~~ Yet if the fate of the world is at stake, these risks are meaningless in regards to the benefits.

Examiner comment

The candidate's composition about a new romance shows a pleasing sense of voice and fluency. The answer draws effectively on the conventions of different genres to establish a narrative that is presented with confidence and precision. There is a degree of light-heartedness to the initial situation where a character who admits to being 'a wimp' allows herself to be put in a context where all her fears are to be tested purely for the sake of ego. A range of vocabulary and sentence variation is in evidence, showing a tight sense of control: 'I am a wimp who willingly admits it. Just the thought of the ominous music' Brief pieces of description are inserted carefully into the narrative but do not detract from the flow of the whole piece. Similarly, dialogue is employed to add depth and form to the narrative. There are some uses of comparison: 'I headed toward the entrance to theater thirteen like it was my funeral march.' Even the theatre number causes further consternation, adding depth to the character. The cliché conventions of the horror genre – a vulnerable teenager alone in an isolated location – are employed effectively. Tension mounts: 'I braced myself for the hours to come.' The writer intensifies the reader's expectations as the 'door squeaked' and the protagonist's pulse is 'hammering'. The meeting with the stranger switches expectations to a romantic mode and the vocabulary accordingly and appositely develops this way too: 'His handsome features and glittering green eyes...' The central character and the stranger, Tyler, connect and the composition ends on a romantic cliff-hanger: 'He smiled. My heart stopped.' Overall, this is an imaginative and sustained response blending conventions, description, dialogue and narrative into a cohesive whole. While there are a few spelling lapses, they do not detract from the quality of the answer in its entirety.

The response to the question about giving aid to less developed countries maintains the high calibre of the script as a whole. The composition is mature in its approach and blends lines of argument, signposting linguistic devices and exemplification with a degree of confidence and authority in a fluent and concise approach. The candidate links paragraphs together effectively and is aware of counter-arguments and contexts as a way of substantiating and developing ideas. (There are references to the Marshall Plan and the Cold War, for example, where some of the outlined ideas are tested and explored.) A range of arguments is offered in support of the candidate's views: over reliance, cultural influence, personal gain rather than altruism, corruption, hierarchical societies. Yet, towards the end, the candidate offers an interesting counter-argument: that all these difficulties pale into insignificance if it means that giving aid can overcome world political issues; this is an argument returned to in the conclusion, leaving the reader pondering over the issues raised. This is a discriminating and quite sophisticated way in which to place further thoughts in our mind: the issue is more complex than we may initially think seems to be the implication.

Example candidate response – grade c

2 'She read the text message on her phone. She paused, gasped, and took a very deep breath...'

Continue the story. In your writing bring out a sense of suspense and tension. (You do not have to complete the story.)

2.

She read the text message on her phone. She paused, gasped, and took a very deep breath. Could it be true? Was this really happening? Suddenly, a smile formed upon her lips. The message was from Aaron Kensington, a boy at school whom she had liked since the eighth grade. It read, "Coming over, Pick ~~me~~ U up at 10." She looked at the clock above the mantle. 9:13 pm.

"Madison!" Her calm-voiced mother's voice from the door.

"Yes," was Madison's short reply. The door ~~opened~~ opened and her mother entered.

"Sweet heart we're leaving now. Dinner ends at ~~ten~~ ^{ten} and the movie at ~~12~~ ^{twelve}, so we should be back around one." Madison nodded and kissed her mother goodbye.

When she was certain her mother was gone, Madison looked through some outfits in her cluttered closet. She pulled out a pink tank-top and a pair of jeans.

She dressed quickly. Thunder could be heard in the distance. She checked her appearance in the mirror.

She was beautiful, Tan skin and deep honey blonde color for hair. Green eyes and naturally long eyelashes. Standing there, in her room, with the view of rain pattering against the window, she made a pretty picture.

It was now 10:15. Should she text him? Would that be too pushy? Thoughts raced through her mind. Then the phone rang. The shrill ringing was broken only by the clack of thunder outside. Medisa reached next to her and answered it.

"Hello?" she answered. Only the sound of breathing was heard. Only this, nothing more.

"Okay, listen, I'm seventeen. From California just in seventh grade. Maybe it's some old lady or something. Bye," she said putting the phone back on the receiver.

No sooner than she put it down, did it

ring again. Madison rolled her eyes and answered it again.

"Okay dude, not fun. -" but the voice she heard, was her own. Madison looked and saw that the back window was open, and the other hand set was off of its hook. Madison hung up, put the other phone back, and shut the window, a little frightened now. Where was Aaron? Was he behind this? He couldn't be. He had too much class for such ~~trivial~~ trivial games. It was nothing, she told herself. Madison sat back down, when the door-bell rang.

She nearly leaped in excitement. It rang again, and again. "Calm down Aaron, I'm coming." As soon as she unlatched ~~the~~ it, the door was thrown open, hitting her square in the forehead. Madison fell backwards, landing on her bottom. Her eyesight was blurry, ~~but~~ ^{and} all she remembered was seeing a dark silhouette across the doorway, before she lost consciousness.

[before she lost consciousness]

Madison's eyes fluttered for a second, before she opened them completely. She lifted her head, but it only rose a few inches before she smacked it on something hard. She tried to move but found she was in a very tight space. All was dark, as all she could see was a faint light through what looked like a crack. She felt around with her hands and screamed when she realized what was happening. The air around her was hot and heavy, as she could feel the lack of oxygen. She began to pant and hyperventilate out of sheer terror. What was happening? Where was she? Was this Aaron?

Madison's hand brushed against something on the floor next to her. She made out the shape quickly and realized it was a lighter. She fumbled with it clumsily, since it was at her side, and struck it, once, twice, three times before it flicked on. Moving her head around, she saw that she was in what appeared to be a car's trunk. She tried to scream, but only

of oxygen. The flame of the lighter began to waver. The air was now very heavy and too tight to breathe. Madisa tilted and gasped for just a little more breathe. She felt compressed now, as if all the air was totally gone. Next to her, in her hand, the flame of the lighter was completely gone.

Two days later.....

Jessica sat on her bed, thinking, when ~~she~~ she received a text-message. She read the message on her phone, while she watched TV. The news reporter announced that a young girl named Madisa was found dead, trapped in the back of a abandoned BMW. She read the message and smiled. It read: "Coming ~~to~~ over, pick ~~me~~ U up at 10." It was from Aaron Kensington, a boy she's liked since the eighth grade.....

- 6 A magazine publishes two contrasting articles (between 300–450 words each), one called 'The Future Still Looks Bright', and the other called 'It's Not Going to Get Any Better'. Write the two articles, bringing out clear differences in their viewpoints about the ways in which the world is changing.

"The Future Still looks Bright."

Optimism is a key factor in this increasing debate. Every day, things change, but, not always for the worse. The future is something we should look forward to, not fear.

The Planet Earth has been around for billions of years. Yes, in that time it has had some bleak, dark days. Yet, in the end, things always worked out. Whether it was the Ice-Age, or the mass-extinction of the dinosaurs, life never completely ended, and life always prevailed.

There are those who post ~~the~~ ludicrous claims about the so-called, "end of days," or "global warming," yet, in what sense? Humans have existed for thousands of years, or there has not been one claim of these ridiculous theories until the Twentieth Century B.C.E. Thus, to me, is a clear indicator that "they" need to find more evidence.

on their theories, and their ideas. They blame cars, we blame lack of evidence. While cars may not be great for the environment, they certainly are not destroying it! They blame humans for everything that is wrong with the environment. Did humans cause the mass extinction of the dinosaurs?

~~Did humans cause~~ Did humans cause the massive earthquakes that destroy villages and cities in less developed countries? No!

It is more than clear that the Earth is not going to die in the near future. Humans are all too smart to let such a tragedy occur, especially in this day and age. We have come so far in scientific discoveries, and breakthroughs to kill our mother Earth. We have only to sit back, continue to make such enriching breakthroughs, and watch for that brighter tomorrow...

6

↳ It's Not Going to Get any Better...^s

The Earth is withering. And, it is approaching faster than any body could have foreseen.

While tomorrow may not be our end of days, we have only to continue on the path of destruction.

We are on to witness that power. Remember the Dinosaurs? of course not! That is what will become of us if we are to continue

along the same path. It is our fault too. Extreme optimists are blind to this

and refuse to see our point. While we cruise down the streets in our Mercedes, or BMW's, and we continue to spray pollution

into the sky with our excessive needs for power, we fail to notice that our superficial world are slowly killing our Mother-Earth.

Those who fail to see our point! Claim that we are making such an effort up as we are only doing this to save people.

That it is a ludicrous accusation. We are doing our best to win people first, and educate them on the subject. If we cannot educate, how will they learn? How will the people realize the extent that they are causing?

The fact is this, it is happening, and it's not improving. It worsens daily, ~~and~~ because of our excessive use of fossil fuel, carbon dioxide, dangerous chemicals, and deforestation. ~~It has~~ It has been proven that if we continue to destroy the forests as we do, in a matter of decades, the Amazon rain forest will be a scorched field of dead trees and silence. If we do this everywhere, where will our supply of oxygen come from? How will we breathe. Our Earth will become a second Venus,

home to only sulfuric acid and a dead civilization.

But there is still time. It would take a lot of sacrifice and a plethora of money and time, but if we start now, we can slow the effects down. We have the power to cure it, we also have the power to stop it, only we can reverse what we have already begun - ..

Examiner comment

The candidate's response to the narrative continuation, unlike the imaginative response of the previous candidate, tends to offer a more traditional focus on the conventions of the horror genre. Yet, such focus is carried out in a consistent and effective manner with some solid use of linguistic effects. The situation is similar: a vulnerable teenager threatened by an unknown stranger is in an isolated situation. At the beginning, dialogue is used concisely and effectively and some description helps convey the teenager's mood well; her physical appearance helps to give the character some substance and the use of pathetic fallacy as the thunder rolls builds up an ominous situation for the reader. The focus on sounds foregrounds the protagonist's vulnerability – the thunder and the 'shrill ringing of the phone' combined with 'only the sound of breath' as she awaits a reply to her question. The narrative then moves on to focus on more tense events as a knock on the door is heard and it is flung open, leaving her stunned. Tension mounts as the protagonist is unable to breathe and cannot make out her surroundings. While the narrative moves forward perhaps some of the descriptive effects evident earlier in the composition are not quite sustained. However, there is an effective coda where the perpetrator of the attack is revealed and her motivation. Overall, this is a consistent and sustained piece of writing, aware of conventions and playing to them effectively.

The response to the two articles – one a positive view of the future and the other a negative one – also proves to be consistent in focus and purpose. There is evidence in the first article of some exemplification with reference to past ages and how the human race has survived in spite of previous calamities; there is a dismissal of doom and gloom critics and the threat of global warming. At times, the tone seems to become a little out of control, as if the writer is speaking out loud: 'Did humans cause the massive earthquakes that destroy villages and cities in less developed countries? NO!' Some more examples and arguments could be developed, it seems. For example, there is a reference near the end of the first piece to possible future discoveries and breakthroughs but little exploration of any examples; the balance here between invective and exemplification is slightly inconsistent. The second article offers a clear contrast to the first with some effective lines of argument in the first half; there is a nice contrast in the description of how people drive expensive luxurious cars whilst 'we continue to spew pollution' and 'are slowly killing our planet.' There is further reference to environmental pollution, the destruction of rain forests and a reliance on fossil fuels, and some pointed questions in relation to them. However, as in the first piece, perhaps the candidate could explore some of these ideas in a little more detail and cut down on some of the invective involved. The second piece also shows lapses in technical accuracy and consistency, causing the response to be placed in the lower range of its mark band.

Example candidate response – grade e

- 3 Write two contrasting pieces (between 300–450 words each), one about your most enjoyable experience, and the other about your least enjoyable experience.

3A) When I was in Römstein, Germany, I had the most wonderful experience at Legoland. I was only 8 when I went there with my dad, Richard. ~~He~~ Me and ~~him~~ him had to drive ~~at least~~ two hours to get there but it was worth it when we got there it was crowded but not too crowded. We bought our tickets and started going inside the most colorful and fun filled place. It had legs everywhere. There was ^{also} rides, games, and food ~~the~~

The first ride that we saw ~~was~~ was a dragon roller coaster that took you on a ride ~~through~~ before you got to the coaster dad didn't want to go so I went. It was the coolest thing I have ever seen done with legs. They had everything made ~~made~~ out of legs. ~~He~~ They had dragons, princesses, and wizards made out of legs when you ride the dragon. Even the furniture + scene behind was made out of legs. ~~It~~ It was the coolest thing that I rode it 7 times that day.

After we got off the dragon ride there was a small town and a driving course with lego cars which you could actually drive and get your lego licenses. I wanted to do it but there was ~~one~~ one thing wrong ~~the~~ the movie that teaches you rules was all german and no english. But the good thing is that they had a translator that would tell me what they were saying. After she told me everything we went and got my picture taken for the Lego license and started to drive the lego car. It was fun and cool too, ~~but~~ but the most funniest and awesomest ride there was ~~was~~ the Bionicle Arm.

The Bionicle Arm was so cool that my dad went on it and he doesn't usually ride rides. The Bionicle Arm was a machine that ~~you~~ was built ~~to~~ for people to make a program for it and tell it what to do. You got to choose what it did and what it didn't. I loved that ride and it will be the best thing

I have never rode in my life.

There were many other things about Lego Land that were cool like a peddle train above ~~the~~ Lego Land that went over everybody and you had to peddle it, there was also a lego ~~land~~ city, houses, and streets made into miniature, and the many lego figures that they built to welcome people and to show off their skills. They also had plays or shows that they would do and it would be funny and ~~and~~ cute. The german food was ~~as~~ good there ~~a~~ cause its german food. Who wouldn't want to eat that? They had pretzels, ~~the~~ German pan fries, & cotton candy. It was the most colorful & most spectacular place. Time has

~~Time~~

When I was in Korea, I had just moved into my apartment and was going to a new school. This school was the Osan ~~the~~ American High School on Osan Air Force Base. It was a very nice school but ~~and the most worst~~ it was the worst experiences ~~that~~ I will ever have.

The Band ~~program~~ program at that school was not that great just because of that Band Director. The Band Director, Mr. Waldron, was a heavy set man with white hair and a beard. He was nice but just didn't care for the students or the music education. I had just started band like a year before moving to Korea and the band director was great, but Mr. Waldron was the worst. He would take leave for about a week and wouldn't come back till the next ~~a~~ week. He would tell us to watch ~~some~~ ~~the~~ movies, which was only ~~two~~ two movies and take notes on them. We watched the same two movies over and over and it sucked.

I was getting tired of him because I couldn't play and I wanted to play because that was band class. We actually started playing a week and four days before ~~we~~ ~~we~~ we played our concert for the staff

and our parent's. The concert really sucked and I wanted to get out of band so bad that I started complaining to my mom. She told me to stop or I'll get grounded. So I stopped complaining and started to deal with ~~the~~ Mr. Wabron.

I finally had to say something to the principal because after the concert he left again and we watched movies again. The principal didn't know about this till the band students and parent's started complaining. She finally fired Mr. Wabron after I have left Korea and thank goodness ~~because~~ because if she didn't I would have felt bad for the students who had band. ~~Scrapped~~ So after all the bad experiences I had this was the worst. Teachers having no respect for ~~there~~ there students or music appreciation.

- 8 A product which you cannot do without is about to go out of existence: the company which makes it is about to cease its production. Write a letter to the company in which you describe the origin and history of your relationship with the product and – most of all – why it is an essential part of your life.

8B) Dear Owner,

When you stop the production of a product it affects everyone, especially play stations one and two. Playstations 1 & 2 ~~are~~ have been around for many generations and need to be around for people who can't buy these new play stations and X-box's. A lot of things that keep these play stations in use is the kids and their families who ~~can't~~ can't afford expensive stuff, and the parents and grandparents who grew up with this toy through childhood.

My dad has grown up with play stations when he was young and so have I. He passed his playstation down from him to me. I have fun and great times with old playstations especially his because it brings back memories to me and my dad. He's kept the playstation since he was eight years old and still has it but doesn't work anymore because one of the pieces broke off and now he can't find it or buy a new ~~one~~ playstation 1 or part.

I love playstations and so has the rest of my family, but he can't find old playstations because the new playstation 3 is everywhere and costs a lot more than the playstation 1 & 2. Everybody wants the new technology and 3-D playstations but that doesn't do anything except make the game pop off the screen and make it real life.

Whenever I play games on the playstation ~~it's~~ I've never cared how good the picture is or how well it sounds, I just care for the game itself and to make sure it works right.

Whenever I get home from band practice or from school I like to play my playstation to get rid of all the stress in under or just to relax. Playstations shouldn't be complex whenever you're trying to relax or just to have fun. Playstations have kept me calm whenever I have been stressed from a test or whenever my friends

come over and we just have fun. One of my friends has a p.s. 3 and her whole family loves it except her. She said it's all just technology and hurts your eyes after a while. She loves coming to my house to play my play station 2 and likes to see all the old games I have.

Another reason you should keep making p.s. 1 and 2's are because of the games. The new games are cool but the old games are better. If you stop making playstation 1 and 2, there going to stop making the old games which our parents and me grew up to, I love the old fashioned games and now there about to stop making them. When I grow up I want to show my kids what I played and to show them the old play stations. They really don't need new technology to make them happy, they should be grateful for what they got and get all the uses out of it before they get the new technology.

If you stop making playstations 1 and 2, then you would get no money and no bussiness to pay your workers and yourself. But if you keep making them then the price would go down but more people would buy them cause there cheaper. Everybody loves money so the won't spend all of it and you'll get more money.

When you stop production it will make people mad because if they break something on it or have a problem with it they have no one to go to and the parts would be expensive because they would have to search and it would be expensive. Even the games wouldn't be there and there would be nothing left for the people who have play stations and they couldn't get new games if they wanted to plus they would be expensive. It would probably cost around \$50 just for a game and if there that expensive nobody's going to buy them and you'll go out of bussiness.

So there are many reasons you shouldn't close or stop making play stations 1 and 2. It makes kids

happy and the parents feel proud that they've kept
 the old generation ~~in~~ the new generation. Please
 don't close playstation 1 and 2 down because it
 helps us relax, enjoy playing games, and gives us the
 place where we can be ourselves.

Examiner comment

The candidate explores the most enjoyable and least enjoyable experiences encountered in life so far. The two sections of the composition are relevant but contain lapses in expression and technical accuracy. Although there is a relevant focus, expression also tends to remain rather unvaried and, at times, seems a little repetitive. Phrases seem to be used like building blocks, drawing on pieces of expression already used: 'Me and him had to drive two hours to get there but it was worth it. When we got there it was crowded but not too crowded.It had lego's everywhere. There was also rides, games, and food. The first ride that we saw...They had everything made out of lego's. They had dragons, princesses, and wizards made out of legos...' The outcome is that the tone and style remain rather flat and unvaried. The second piece in the answer maintains this repetitive use of phrasing and the tone tends to remain the same: 'to a new school. This school was....It was a very nice school...' Both pieces tend to focus on narrative above all: opportunities for descriptive elements are not really developed.

The response to the question asking candidates to write a letter to a company which is intending to cease production of an item essential for their well-being seems to reflect similar qualities to the first composition. There is a relevant focus on the topic – here, a need for older versions of Playstation to be manufactured – but also a slightly unvaried approach in terms of vocabulary and expression, besides lapses in accuracy. The same patterns of repeated phrases and constructions is evident in the answer: for example, the number of times the word 'playstation' is employed creates a rather disjointed feel to the fluency of the piece. There are some valid lines of argument but they seem to be a little undeveloped and flat at times. The tone becomes a little inappropriately informal on occasions. Overall, the composition is focused but rather pedestrian in its style and approach to the topic: it needs a little more imaginative input and more in the way of linguistic effects to raise its level.

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