Principal examiner reports for teachers

Principal examiner reports for teachers summarise what candidates did well and what candidates needed to improve for this examination series only.

This report is to be used in conjunction with the question paper and mark scheme.

For guidance on teaching and learning we provide resources for many of our syllabuses.

Resource	Where to find it
Grade descriptions – Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Syllabus and specimen materials
Schemes of work – Schemes of work are designed to support you in your teaching and lesson planning.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Lesson planning – Guidance on how to plan a lesson.	Lesson planning
Resource plus – There may be additional resources such as teaching packs containing lesson plans, resources and worksheets and videos for aspects of your syllabus.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Teaching tools	Teaching Tools
Exemplar candidate responses	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Learner guide – A guide for students to help them understand what the course involves.	School support hub Select: Subject > Resource finder > Teaching and learning
Community forums – Do you have a question or something to share? Our online forums are great way to keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community.	Community forum on the school support hub
Access to scripts for this series.	Access to scripts service
Results analysis is available for some syllabuses.	Results analysis
Test maker is available for some subjects.	Test maker

Other services from Cambridge International Education

- **Digital mocks service**
- **Insight assessments**
- **Professional development**
  - Focus on assessment
  - Online marking workshops

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/12
Reading

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Answered almost all parts of all questions.
- Worked through the question paper in the order set.
- Noted the marks allocated, word guidance and/or the space available for answers to help them to organise their response time efficiently.
- Based their answers on the correct text and/or section of text.
- Responded to the general demands of each task.
- Understood general and/or some of the explicit ideas in the texts.
- Identified some relevant examples of language in Text C.
- Avoided significant repetition of ideas within an answer.
- Attempted to use their own words where appropriate
- Planned at least some of the ideas they were intending to use in longer answers before writing their response.
- Used generally clear expression.

What candidates needed to improve

- Paying careful attention to the rubric and guidance offered in questions to help them – for example, in **Question 2(d)** identifying three choices from each of the two paragraphs.
- Identifying from the text just the relevant ideas for use in their answer.
- Focusing on implicit ideas in each section of a text.
- Using context to help make sense of meaning and avoid misreading.
- Planning and organising their ideas for longer responses effectively.
- Organising and expressing ideas precisely for an audience – for example, so that those ideas would be understood by someone who had not read the text themselves.
- Avoiding errors in their writing which affect meaning.
- Checking longer answers to ensure all of the ideas planned beforehand have been included.
- Understanding precise meanings of a wider range of vocabulary – for example, to understand why a writer might choose to use one word rather than another with a similar meaning.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates identified correctly that this was ten years/a decade.

Limited responses

- Some candidates incorrectly selected ‘20 years’ as their answer or interpreted the word ‘decade’ incorrectly – for example, as meaning 12 or 100 years.

(b) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explained the full phrase using their own words, showing understanding that the decrease in numbers affected a large geographical area.

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Limited responses

- Some candidates suggested only that there was a large drop in numbers instead of explaining the complete phrase.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates explained the full phrase using their own words, identifying 'combined' as meaning 'joint' and 'effects' as 'results'.

Limited responses

- Some candidates offered partial explanations that repeated rather than explained one of the words from the phrase.

(c) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates offered two or more of the three available reasons from the text.

Limited responses

- Some candidates offered incomplete responses, for example simply lifting 'looking for patterns' from the text without any sense of the context.

(d) (i) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates mostly identified the two findings related to temperature.

Limited responses

- Some candidates needed to pay more careful attention to the instruction to 'reread' the two paragraphs in order to ensure that they had securely grasped the relevant points in context.
- Some candidates relied on indiscriminate copying from the text that suggested misreading such as 'higher temperatures had a detrimental impact'.

(ii) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates offered full explanations, reworking the text to explain clearly the reasons given by the scientists.

Limited responses

- Some candidates offered incomplete ideas, or ideas that did not address the question, for example referring to the finding that higher vegetation greenness was associated with reduced survival of giraffes without offering any explanation.
- Some candidates needed to pay attention to grammatical markers in the text to help them to sense check their understanding and avoid errors such as misinterpreting 'its faster growth' as referring to the giraffes themselves rather than the nutrient quality of the leaves.

(e) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates offered three distinct reasons from the text, reworking the material and/or using own words where appropriate to evidence clear understanding.

Limited responses

- Some candidates offered explanations unrelated to the focus of the question – for example detailing the reasons for giraffe numbers plummeting.

(f) Comprehensive responses

- Candidates selected from Text B only the information relevant to the focus of the question.
- Candidates used their own words where appropriate to convey their understanding, grouping and organising their points for the benefit of their reader rather than relying on the order of ideas in the text.

Limited responses

- Some candidates relied heavily on copying from the text and included unnecessary details or irrelevant content such as examples of the ways in which the toy appealed to all five of a baby's senses.
- Some candidates needed to read more carefully to avoid making incorrect assertions such as that the giraffe toy had tiny hands or was covered in fur.

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Question 2

(a) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates identified only the required word/phrase precisely and accurately in each part.

Limited responses

- Some candidates added unnecessary material beyond the required word/phrase.

(b) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates explained each word in its specific context, for example recognising that 'sifted' implied that Emil was searching through the documents, discarding those that were not of interest, in order to find what he was looking for.

Limited responses

- Some candidates appeared to have misread 'sifted' as 'shifted' and so offered inaccurate explanations such as 'moved'.
- Some candidates needed to offer more precise answers – for example, 'looking' was too general to evidence understanding of the meaning of 'sifted' as used in context.

(c) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates selected and clearly indicated the one well-chosen example they were planning to explain.
- Candidates explained and explored the meanings of the word(s) they had selected precisely, using their own words, to illustrate what the example suggested or implied Emil was thinking and/or feeling at that point.

Limited responses

- Some candidates provided a general paraphrase of the whole extract and in doing so did not address the question.
- Some candidates repeated rather than explained words from their choice.

(d) **Comprehensive responses**

- Candidates selected and clearly identified three interesting examples of language from each paragraph – six in total.
- Candidates explored both literal meanings in context and the associations/suggestions of individual words used.
- Candidates commented on how words worked together within an image to create a particular effect.

Limited responses

- Some candidates repeated rather than explained words from the paragraph of text.
- A few candidates selected only three examples in total and needed to pay closer attention to the task guidance.
- Some candidates repeated the same generalised comment for more than one choice, missing opportunities to evidence their understanding of how exactly language was working in each example.
- A few candidates needed to pay closer attention to the detail of descriptions – for example, to avoid misreadings such as suggestions that 'squawking' was a noise being made by the giraffes.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates addressed all three bullets of the task, paying careful attention to the focus of each.
- Candidates used their own words to show understanding of Emil's concerns about the welfare of these giraffes.
- Candidates interpreted and extended relevant textual clues and details to show understanding of the experience of the giraffes through the journey as whole – for example, noting that one had died on the sea journey before Emil met them.
- Candidates used their own words and reorganised material to show secure understanding of the different stages of the giraffes' journey and Emil's role.

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- Candidates created and maintained a suitably formal register for their report.

Limited responses

- Some candidates wrote about zoos and giraffes in general rather than using relevant ideas from this text.
- A few candidates copied sections of text and/or simply tracked through Text C in order, making minimal changes, rather than reflecting on the narrative to identify relevant ideas for use in their own explanations.
- Some candidates needed to reread details of the text when planning their response to sense-check their understanding and avoid misreadings such as suggestions that the giraffes were on board an aircraft or that Emil was using giraffe skin to make suits for astronauts.

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/22
Directed Writing and Composition

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Wide-ranging references were made to the detail in both texts in **Question 1** and there was secure understanding of the ideas in them.
- The responses for both sections were organised and developed.
- Responses showed an awareness of the form required, with adaptations of style to show an understanding of the specific audience for **Question 1**.
- Candidates were able to consider the implicit ideas in the texts for **Question 1** as well as explicit meanings.
- In responses to ***Section B***, candidates were aware of the different demands of narrative and descriptive writing.
- Responses were written in clear, competent English, with accurate spelling and some varied vocabulary used for effect.
- Candidates were able to use detail, images, and create stylistic effects.
- Responses to narrative questions showed understanding of effective characterisation and scene-setting.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates needed to practise how to consider implicit ideas in **Question 1** and use them to write responses that go beyond summaries of the texts.
- Evaluation of some of the ideas in the reading texts for **Question 1** was needed, rather than paraphrasing of explicit ideas.
- Some candidates needed to practise using language in different ways to suit different audiences and forms.
- Practice in how to avoid the use of incomplete sentences, or sentences separated by commas rather than full stops, was needed for some candidates.
- Writing could have been strengthened by using clear, modern words to create effects instead of the archaic or obscure language used by some candidates.
- Some candidates needed to practice using interesting images in descriptive writing to avoid relying on cliched similes and metaphors.
- Practice in developing characters by using their speech, behaviour, thoughts and feelings could have strengthened some candidates' narratives.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Comprehensive responses

- Responses opened and closed aptly with rhetorical questions, humour or other rhetorical devices appropriate for the form and audience.
- Candidates wrote sustained, well-organised and paragraphed responses and argued their point of view coherently.
- Candidates structured their responses independently of the structure of the original texts, using the ideas to create a new article, rather than summarising the texts.

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- Candidates made references to the ideas in both texts and showed understanding of them (for example, the emphasis on enjoyment rather than perfection in Text A and the discussion of Niksen in Text B).
- Candidates used their own words throughout their responses, other than 'Niksen' or some listed hobbies.
- Responses showed evidence of evaluation of some ideas in the texts (for example, young people need a social life and hobbies can strengthen friendships, Niksen can help young people to appreciate nature and a sense of peace).
- Candidates wrote accurately and with a range of vocabulary chosen with precision.

Limited responses
- Candidates made reference to some explicit ideas, even if not wide-ranging.
- Some awareness of the required form was shown at the beginning of responses, even if not sustained.
- Candidates made an effort to offer advice to young people on the use of their leisure time (for example, they should try a range of activities or should not be concerned about being proficient in hobbies).
- Candidates showed understanding of some salient ideas, with some emerging development and reaction.
- Candidates' writing showed some clarity of meaning in responses which were mostly in their own words.

Section B

Question 2

Comprehensive responses
- Responses were written from interesting points of view (for example, from the perspective of a bee gathering pollen, a poor worker describing back-breaking work in an incongruously beautiful landscape, or a farmer under pressure from an incoming storm).
- Imagery and personification were used sparingly but in striking ways to engage the reader and create evocative scenes.
- A range of controlled sentence structures was used, including short sentences and more complex ones, to create specific effects and evoke atmosphere.
- Candidates used structural devices to create cohesion (for example, the dawn and setting of the sun on a rural landscape as a harvest takes place).
- Candidates chose a range of details and a changing focus of attention to add interest in sustained, organised responses (for example, from a broad view of a landscape to a close focus on the appearance and movement of farm workers).
- Candidates used a wide vocabulary, chosen precisely to create effects.

Limited responses
- Candidates chose relevant scenarios, even if there was a tendency for narrative to overwhelm descriptive detail.
- Vocabulary was usually apt, if not wide-ranging, and some emerging control of sentence structures was evident.
- Some descriptive details were included (for example, the colours of clothing and the types of fruit harvested).
- Responses showed some organisation of material, even if paragraphing was insecure.

Question 3

Comprehensive responses
- Candidates selected objects to describe which evoked ideas, images and memories for the writer to help engage the reader (for example, a gift from a relative, a toy from the writer's childhood or an apparently ordinary object which was significant in different ways).
- Candidates used the wording of the question to describe contrasting details of the object before and after it is cleaned.
- Responses described the emotional impact of the object on the writer in interesting ways, as well as its appearance.
- Candidates used images, personification and symbolism sparingly but with precise and complex effects.
- Sentence structures were controlled by precise punctuation within sentences.

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Limited responses

- Candidates selected relevant objects, even if the process of cleaning it or the narrative of how it came to be in the writer's possession tended to overwhelm descriptive detail.
- Candidates made an attempt to include some descriptive detail (for example, colours of the object before and after cleaning).
- Candidates attempted to control sentence structures, even if commas were used where full stops were needed.
- Candidates attempted to describe the impact of the object on the writer, even if some vocabulary was repeated.

Question 4

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates chose scenarios and plotlines in which the loss and restoration of trust played a key part, often based on relationships which were realistic and credibly developed (for example, school-based friendships, family relationships and characters who were let down in familiar but painful ways).
- Candidates paid attention to effective characterisation through close observation of characters' behaviour, speech and motivations, and to setting the scene carefully before narrating events.
- Responses were constructed with the reader in mind, to create moments of tension and drama, changes in tone and pace and some interesting perspectives (for example, controlled flashbacks, withholding information from the reader, dual narratives and reflective stories).
- Responses showed secure control of tenses and sentence structures, with some use of style and language to create effects.
- Dialogue was used to develop characters and was punctuated accurately.
- Vocabulary was wide-ranging and precisely used to create specific effects.

Limited responses

- Candidates attempted to reflect the idea of trust, even if that was not the main focus of the narrative.
- Responses showed some sequencing of events to make them clear to the reader.
- Vocabulary was apt, even if not wide-ranging, and most common words were correctly spelled.
- Responses included some emerging description of characters and places as well as actions and events.

Question 5

Comprehensive responses

- Candidates chose 'moments' of special significance for a character or narrator which were unusual or decisive, marking a change in the character's life or relationships, on which their narratives were based.
- Careful, concise characterisation helped to build credible scenarios and imbue the 'strange moment' with significance.
- Narrative responses were well-managed to provide satisfying climaxes and denouements (for example, when the narrator's perspective of another character changes as a result of the 'strange moment' depicted).
- Candidates' writing was controlled and varied in style, using features of developed narrative such as description, changes in pace and drama.
- Vocabulary was wide-ranging and precisely used to create specific effects.

Limited responses

- Candidates attempted to describe a 'strange moment', even if the narrative itself was less developed.
- Candidates' writing generally conveyed clear meaning.
- Some attempt was made to vary vocabulary, even if some archaic or complex words were not used precisely.
- Responses included some range of sentence structure, even if sentence separation was inconsistent.

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/03
Coursework Portfolio

Key messages

Coursework portfolio

What candidates did well
- Most candidates adapted their writing style to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of different audiences and context for each of the three assignments.
- Many candidates read the text critically and thoroughly evaluated the implicit and explicit ideas, opinions, and attitudes they identified in a text.
- Many candidates supported their analysis, evaluation and comments with a detailed and specific selection of relevant ideas from a text.
- Some candidates assimilated ideas from a text to provide developed, thoughtful and sophisticated responses.
- Many candidates wrote original and interesting assignments which reflected their personal ideas, feelings and interpretations of events and situations.
- Many candidates demonstrated a high level of accuracy in their writing.
- Some candidates wrote with confidence using a wide range of appropriate vocabulary with precision and for specific effect.
- Some candidates sequenced sentences within paragraphs in a way which maintained clarity of arguments, description, or narrative.
- Many candidates engaged in a process of careful editing and proofreading to identify and correct errors in their writing.

What candidates needed to improve
- Following feedback from the teacher, revising and editing their first drafts to improve the accuracy and impact of their writing.
- Some candidates responded to a limited range of the writer's ideas and opinions in the text used for **Assignment 1**.
- Some candidates did not maintain a descriptive style in **Assignment 2**.
- Some candidates did not produce convincing narratives in **Assignment 3**.
- Some candidates did not check their assignments carefully to eradicate errors.

Comments on specific tasks/activities

Assignment 1

What candidates did well
- Many candidates responded to interesting texts which contained engaging content and were an appropriate length.
- Many candidates wrote an original response showing genuine engagement with the chosen text.
- Many candidates demonstrated analysis and evaluation of a range of individual ideas and opinions identified within a text.
- Many candidates ensured the form, purpose and intended audience of their writing was clear to the reader.
- Many candidates wrote in a fluent, accurate and appropriate style.

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What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates repeated the ideas of the text in their response because they did not challenge the writer's ideas and opinions.
- Some candidates should avoid using references to further texts in their response to stay focused on the selected text.
- Some candidates simply agreed with the ideas and opinions in the text, and this limited opportunities for developed evaluation.
- Some candidates made grammatical errors that impeded fluency.
- Some candidates did not sufficiently check responses for errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Assignment 2

What candidates did well

- Many candidates created images appropriate for the context and content of the description.
- Many candidates used a range of vocabulary suited to the context and content of the description.
- Many candidates created an engaging imagined scenario using language and structural techniques designed to have an impact on the reader.
- Many candidates proofread responses to identify and correct common errors such as missing articles and prepositions, switches in tenses and typing errors.
- Many candidates maintained a consistent tense.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates slipped into a narrative style.
- Some candidates overworked the vocabulary and made the response less effective.
- Some candidates used too much complex imagery that overwhelmed the reader and made the described scenario difficult to visualise.
- Some candidates used repetitive sentence structures.
- Some candidates made grammatical errors that impeded fluency.
- Some candidates mixed the past and present tenses.

Assignment 3

What candidates did well

- Many candidates created an original and engaging story.
- Many candidates created stories that were realistic, credible, and convincing.
- Many candidates remembered that exploring characters' thoughts and feelings help to engage the reader.
- Many candidates carefully proofread and checked assignments for errors such as punctuation, use of prepositions and articles, tenses, and construction of sentences.
- Many candidates maintained a consistent tense.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates used clichéd scenarios and created unconvincing plots.
- Some candidates did not end the story in a way that met the readers' needs.
- Some candidates included too much direct speech.
- Some candidates did not maintain tense consistently.
- Some candidates did not proofread carefully to eradicate errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (ORAL ENDORSEMENT)

Paper 0500/04
Speaking and Listening Test

Key messages

What candidates did well

- Candidates chose topics that engaged the audience and offered further developmental opportunities within the Conversation in ***Part 2*** of the test.
- Candidates crafted well-structured talks in which they developed their ideas and opinions on their chosen topics.
- Timing was considered appropriately at the planning stage.
- Candidates understood the need to perform to a virtual audience and used a range of spoken language devices effectively.
- Candidates fully developed their responses within the ***Part 2*** Conversation and tried to be proactive within their conversations.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some topics needed to be chosen more carefully with more consideration given to the ***Part 2*** Conversation in addition to the ***Part 1*** Individual Talk.
- Candidates needed to organise their talks more effectively to create a more structured approach to the content of their talks.
- When planning, more emphasis needed to be placed on the timing of the talk.
- Candidates needed to develop a more performative approach to their talks that used a range of language devices to engage the audience.
- Candidates needed to be more confident in expressing their opinions in the ***Part 2*** Conversation rather than waiting for the examiners to ask further questions.
- Responses in ***Part 2*** needed to be more developed, even if the questions asked by the examiners were closed in nature.

Comments on specific tasks/activities

Part 1 Individual Talk

What candidates did well

- Candidates chose topics in which they were personally interested so that they could talk at length and with passion.
- Candidates spent an appropriate amount of time planning and practising their talks prior to the test taking place.
- Candidates used prompt notes effectively rather than attempting to fully memorise their talks and deliver them verbatim within the test.
- Candidates were conscious of the time allowed for ***Part 1*** and structured their talks accordingly.
- A range of language devices were used that enhanced the flow of the talks and made them more interesting for the listeners to hear.
- Candidates were confident in expressing their own opinions within their talks and offered developed arguments to justify their ideas.
- Candidates used sophisticated vocabulary and complex sentence construction to fully develop their ideas.

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What candidates needed to improve

- Some topics were restrictive in the sense they did not offer sufficient scope for the candidates to speak for the required time.
- Topics chosen in order to impress the examiner, rather than because the candidates had a genuine interest in them, led to talks that could have been more engaging for the listener.
- Candidates needed to be more aware of the performative nature of ***Part 1*** and, in doing so, the need to engage the listener through a more imaginative delivery.
- Some candidates chose to memorise their talks and concentrated on remembering them word for word which also resulted in unimaginative delivery and less engagement with the listener.
- There needed to be a wider range of spoken language devices included within some talks.
- Some talks required a more accurate use of vocabulary to offer more clarity on the ideas being expressed.
- Some candidates needed to vary their sentence construction and a wider range of vocabulary to express their ideas.

Part 2 **Conversation**

What candidates did well

- Carefully chosen topics allowed candidates to exhibit their full range of conversational skills.
- Candidates were able to converse for the full amount of time required because they had a good knowledge of their chosen topics and a desire to engage in developing their own opinions and ideas.
- Prompts were recognised and responses were fully developed.
- Candidates recognised that responses to all questions needed to be fully developed and spoke at length and with authority.
- Candidates attempted to speak on equal terms with their examiners in order to engage in genuine and natural conversations.
- Candidates expressed their opinions clearly and were confident in the assertions being made, even when challenged by their examiners.

What candidates needed to improve

- Some candidates had only considered their choice of topic in terms of their talks in ***Part 1*** and needed to be more aware of what they could talk about in ***Part 2*** that did not simply repeat what had already been said in ***Part 1***.
- Some candidates needed to speak at more length in ***Part 2*** as the answers to questions were short and provided little or no development for further discussion.
- Some candidates adopted a passive approach in ***Part 2***, being content for the examiners to ask questions before replying and then waiting for the next question before replying again.
- Some candidates needed to speak with clarity in ***Part 2*** by using precise vocabulary.

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