

**Location Entry Codes**

As part of CIE's continual commitment to maintaining best practice in assessment, CIE has begun to use different variants of some question papers for our most popular assessments with extremely large and widespread candidature. The question papers are closely related and the relationships between them have been thoroughly established using our assessment expertise. All versions of the paper give assessment of equal standard.

The content assessed by the examination papers and the type of questions are unchanged.

This change means that for this component there are now two variant Question Papers, Mark Schemes and Principal Examiner's Reports where previously there was only one. For any individual country, it is intended that only one variant is used. This document contains both variants which will give all Centres access to even more past examination material than is usually the case.

The diagram shows the relationship between the Question Papers, Mark Schemes and Principal Examiner's Reports.

Question Paper	Mark Scheme	Principal Examiner's Report
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
First variant Question Paper	First variant Mark Scheme	First variant Principal Examiner's Report
Second variant Question Paper	Second variant Mark Scheme	Second variant Principal Examiner's Report

**Who can I contact for further information on these changes?**

Please direct any questions about this to CIE's Customer Services team at: [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk)

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 8693/01

Passages for Comment

## GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates produced, in general, competent and sound work across the range. There were some answers which demonstrated clear analytical skills and engaged with aspects of style and language to great effect; directed writing tasks often appeared to bring out candidates' best work across the cohort. **Questions 1 and 2** were very popular choices; at best, there were some very perceptive and analytical responses. **Question 3** seemed to prove a little more demanding but even here there were some informed and consistent answers. All questions produced a wide range of marks and no candidates appeared to be handicapped in any way.

Some candidates still tend to simply list identified features when dealing with questions of language and style without developing closer comment on their effects. A number of candidates appear to have been taught to produce opening paragraphs identifying the passage's genre, purpose, voice and audience. Such a method can work well if the balance of the answer is analytical in its approach. Unfortunately, many answers went on to primarily identify language features, generalising about the effects produced rather than focusing on the specific one produced in each case. In some other cases, candidates produced highly descriptive accounts of what they took to be the plot of a passage without commenting directly on its style and language. Perhaps there are some issues here that Centres might wish to address.

Some candidates, in the directed writing tasks, sometimes rely on wholesale borrowing from the original extracts or add material which is far removed from that of the stimulus material, a process worth guarding against. There was effective management of time in evidence; there was, on occasion, some rubric infringement with candidates omitting part of a question or misunderstanding the nature of the directed writing task.

## COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

### **Question 1: The writer goes on holiday with his mother and father**

- (a) There were – in the main – sound and solid responses to this passage. Effective answers sensed the tone of gentle irony that was prevalent and picked up on the innocent ignorance of the parents in contrast to their children's propensity for mischief and trickery. The father's tastes and habits evoked some sensitive comments. The childhood propensity for exaggeration centring on how far away the parents seemed to be sitting ("miles away up front") was usually fully understood by most candidates. Some candidates labelled the mother as "stupid" or "submissive" without fully appreciating that her behaviour was severely tempered by the father's (often missing the reflective judgement, "mostly she wisely kept quiet"). In less successful responses the father came in for some harsh judgement, too, with a number of candidates unable to appreciate the humorous effect of the narrator's exaggerated accounts of his more desperate actions. Candidates of all abilities identified well with the long-suffering children (the narrator and his two siblings) although the encounter with the old man in the motel lobby was usually not engaged with, often meaning that the passage's final sentence - "It was all most unsatisfying" - and its import for the entire piece of writing was not noted and thus understood.
- (b) The tone adopted by the candidates usually depended on how the mother in the passage was interpreted: if she was thought to be rather dim then there was limited scope for insight in her reflections on the holiday experience. Most candidates viewed her as long-suffering, however, so there were some highly entertaining pieces written, usually featuring laments for her husband's thrift and the obsessive behaviour that character trait prompted. The letter's recipient was often a female relation (her mother or a sister) and thus many candidates exploited to good effect that opportunity for a sisterhood-like tirade. This proved to be a highly successful task that catered very

well for all candidates. Less effective answers tended to introduce new material into the letter so that the focus of the original extract became a little obscure or they spent too long on introductory salutations at the expense of necessary content. Letter formats were, on the whole, appropriate and succinct.

### Question 2: A European's first experience of visiting Africa

- (a) There were some detailed and effective responses to the passage with many candidates exploring imagery and aspects of style perceptively and cogently. Effective responses ably explored the implications of the language used in the sunrise section and commented to good effect on the vegetation, the human inhabitants and the narrator's purpose as fully revealed in the discursive penultimate paragraph. Less secure answers tended to follow a series of invisible headings and tried to compartmentalize the extract according to these headings: for example, sentence length, vocabulary, figures of speech. Such approaches meant that the development of the passage was not always grasped. A sequential exploration of the extract can allow candidates to see such development. Other less secure answers tended to restrict themselves to explication of the sunrise section (first four paragraphs) without bothering very much with the second half of the passage, thus not fully appreciating the change in tone beginning with, "But still tress grow...." nor fully explicating the concluding sentences, "No, not the Dark Continent. This is the Luminous Continent".
- (b) There were some effective and skilful answers at the top of the range; such responses reflected the style of the original piece well and focused on a specific landscape or area. Some candidates appeared to interpret the rubric rather too restrictively, meaning they chose to write about another large-scale, natural environment (the Arctic and Antarctica were popular choices although some wrote about the landscape of the native countries); in a very few instances candidates wrote about urban environments. A lot of candidates mimicked the passage's preoccupation with the sun and to a large extent their own pieces described the sun in exhaustive detail (thus restricting themselves further to describing it not rising at all or barely appearing above the horizon in the case of polar locations). The alternatively clipped and expansive style was attempted by most candidates with varying degrees of success.

### Question 3; The narrator describes her confusion about her surroundings.

- (a) Most candidates appeared to have perceived the narrator as an elderly, senile occupant of an old folk's home or similar and appreciated her sense of bewilderment, of feeling trapped and being obsessed with routine and the time. Such answers also introduced a further figure which seemed as alien to her as the character and surroundings in the original passage. The narrator's persona was usually well captured. The setting for the next encounter was usually a dining room and the person met was usually a handsome young man, although intentionally amusing encounters with other institutionalised characters were seen a few times. Most candidates successfully portrayed their versions of the narrator who is confused as to the visitor's purpose although they did not always write subtly enough to suggest his real, as opposed to mistaken, identity. Solid responses made use of the clock and references to time throughout their directed writing. Less secure answers were marred by technical inaccuracy and a shaky grasp of purpose and context.
- (b) There was a mixed range of responses here. Effective answers sensed the stream of consciousness aspect of the original passage and the bemused nature of the protagonist and worked hard to compare features of the original extract to their own piece of directed writing. However, some responses seemed unsure about how to approach the task and commented only on the nature of the stimulus material at the expense of commenting on their own, thus restricting the amount of marks that they could be awarded.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Candidates produced, in general, competent and sound work across the range. There were some answers which demonstrated clear analytical skills and engaged with aspects of style and language to great effect; directed writing tasks often appeared to bring out candidates' best work across the cohort. **Questions 1 and 2** were very popular choices; at best, there were some very perceptive and analytical responses. **Question 3** seemed to prove a little more demanding but even here there were some informed and consistent answers. Some candidates still tend to identify features when dealing with questions of language and style without developing closer comment on their effects; others, in the directed writing tasks, sometimes rely on wholesale borrowing from the original extracts or add material which is far removed from that of the stimulus material. There was effective management of time in evidence; there was, on occasion, some rubric infringement with candidates omitting part of a question or misunderstanding the nature of the directed writing task.

## **COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS**

### **Question 1: The writer's secret observation of her great-grandmother one night in her house in Paris**

- (a) Nearly all candidates who did this question found it accessible and were able to pick out the points about the fairy tale and mysterious mood. They saw the change in tone from anger to pity and were able to comment on the change when the great-grandmother heard the clocks. Many commented on the idea of the contrasts of age versus youth and black versus white. In addition, some of the best answers came from this extract with some very perceptive comments about the effect of time on the great grandmother, noticing the contrast of adult memories and the child's viewpoint. Such answers immediately focused on how the sense of suspense was created in the passage so that they could then focus on the shifting feelings of the narrator towards her great-grandmother. They could also succinctly explain her lifestyle, appearance and experiences in relation to the house and the clocks. In the middle of the range, many candidates noted the change in the narrator's tone from fear to pity in the third paragraph and attempted to engage with the prevalent adult perspective (the note of circumspection prompted by recalling her childhood eavesdropping transgression) underpinning a childhood reminiscence. Most candidates made some reference to the clocks as having great significance for the great-grandmother and her transformation in response to their striking the hour. Weaker answers emerged where candidates misunderstood the context of the piece or wrote about line lengths and other language features without relating them to the content. Such answers tended to gloss over the end of the passage too.
- (b) Although a few candidates responded as the great-grand daughter, this task proved to be highly accessible and of interest to the vast majority of candidates and an excellent discriminator of ability. Responses ranged from simplistic representations of the great-grandmother as extremely cantankerous (often with an unjustified hatred of the grand-daughter that occasionally approached borderline psychopathic behaviour) to perceptive and confident ones featuring warm reflections on the innocence of childhood and the character's own happier past, fondly recalled. The great-grandmother character served here as the conduit for some highly entertaining fiction writing. Less secure answers involved those where candidates wrote the views of an angry old woman.

### **Question 2: The writer's experience when he visits Kathmandu in Nepal**

- (a) Most candidates focused quite admirably on the narrator's physical state, the corresponding mood changes and the distinct contrast in atmosphere between the two temples. Effective answers immediately grasped the atmosphere described by the narrator and demonstrated how this was conveyed. They also considered in detail the reflective discussion the writer had and continued to focus, making perceptive comments about the flute seller and the link to humanity. Less successful responses tended to focus too much on the initial paragraph or tended only to refer to the contrast between the two temples. Those who continued to the end of the passage understood the narrator was exhausted but did not discuss the change in style. Again most referred to the simile comparing the flutes to the quills of a porcupine but the weaker answers did not comment on the effect of the music on the writer. The final two paragraphs appear to have puzzled a few candidates. Implicitly they understood the significance of the flute seller episode as a balm for the narrator's physical weariness and ennui but failed to fully appreciate the zen-like epiphany clearly being described in the final two sentences (ll. 53 ff.) and thus its function in the passage as a whole (especially as a significant embellishment of the third paragraph's nearly cursory account of that

“haven of quietness” the narrator perceived the Buddhist shrine to be before his encounter with the flute seller, a feature of the passage only the most astute of candidates noted).

- (b) The majority of candidates fulfilled the requirement to write in a persuasive manner. A significant number wrote on behalf of a tourist board representing the country of Nepal (effectively, a national rather than the specified “local tourist board”) and thus endeavoured to promote destinations mentioned in the passage’s fifth paragraph rather than being inspired by the narrator’s vivid descriptions of the sites of interest he visited in Kathmandu. A weakness of many responses was the propensity to borrow phrases from the passage without perceiving the need to adopt them to meet the website’s purpose of enticing new, open-minded visitors to the city. Good responses invariably came from candidates who endeavoured to capture the spirit of Kathmandu as presented in the passage whilst being aware of the differing requirements of independent travellers as opposed to more well-heeled tourists and catering for both groups accordingly. Less effective material emerged where candidates tried to promote their own country.

### Question 3: A short story set in Canada

- (a) This was an extract that some candidates found testing, although, again, as in **Question One**, there were some excellent perceptive answers. The best focused on the connection between the wheat and the life of Martha and John and the realisation that there was some control over the wheat. They were also able to explore the symbolism of the wheat and explored in some detail the parents’ relationship, appreciating that John had not literally died and that Martha desired to rekindle their passion whilst being preoccupied with the children’s wellbeing. Comments were made about the hope that came into Martha’s head, especially about the children and her desire for change. Even answers in the middle of the range explored the symbolic significance of the cultivation of wheat for the farmers’ physical travails, and also their psychological impact. Less secure answers understood the idea of hardship and life on the farm but made only passing reference to the wheat and saw Martha as a sad person because her husband had died and she was left to bring up the children on her own. They tended to rely on the identification of language features without meaningful explication and tended to focus on the children’s - Joe and Annabelle’s - childhood experiences despite the hardships endured by their parents.
- (b) The writing question was generally quite well done. Effective answers saw Annabelle as enjoying her childhood but focusing on the strength of her mother; they balanced awareness of Martha’s heartache and essential loneliness with her strength of character as recalled by an appreciative, mature Annabelle who had fond reminiscences of carefree aspects of her childhood (such as the water trough episode). Less secure answers mostly focused on what was perceived to be Annabelle’s chief impressions of her childhood: her leisure activities, her mother’s efforts to ensure the children did not suffer too much and the belief that Annabelle could become a lady in spite of the family’s modest circumstances.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 8693/02

Composition

## GENERAL COMMENTS

As usual, there was a wide range of performance: at the top of the range, there were impressive and mature responses in both categories of the paper with candidates displaying sophisticated and appropriate understanding of style and conventions, supported by strong technical accuracy.

Accuracy is an important prerequisite for this paper and this needs to be borne in mind. Some candidates at the lower end of the range under-achieve because technical errors impede communication of ideas; matters such as subject-verb agreement and consistent use of tenses often seem to be forgotten in the process of planning and writing. Other candidates underachieve because they do not meet the minimum rubric requirement of producing a minimum of 600 words for each response and, thus, lose unnecessary marks. This is a point that cannot be stressed too much.

There were some thoughtful and imaginative interpretations of the first section of the paper combined with some very effective and informed ideas in relation to the second. Where candidates planned their work, there were some proficient and enjoyable pieces to read; however, some candidates seem to omit the need for planning so that narrative work in particular can seem to meander with no real thread or direction.

Time management was, on the whole, effective and rubric infringement was not strongly in evidence.

## COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

### ***Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative Writing***

- 1 This title was generally well answered; the question managed to elicit a vast range of experiences that would arouse a sense of mystery and suspense. The more effective responses managed to hold the sense of mystery till the very end, describing chilling scenes with great detail. Such responses had a well-developed sense of structure that kept the reader guessing until the end, avoiding the horror story/movie genre by focusing on creating a tense atmosphere and an effective climax. Less successful answers tended to rely on an outpouring of material with little sense of planning or artistic control.
- 2 Effective answers were quite imaginative and particularly successful when there was a strong sense of either a specific historical period or a futuristic world. A sci-fi approach was adopted by a number of candidates and this approach worked well in the main. Other effective answers took an unusual approach to the question to produce highly imaginative material: for example, one response explored a protagonist's obsession with timekeeping.
- 3 Creative answers made good use of pointed contrasts between idyllic settings and dystopian ones, paying detailed attention to the differences between them; such answers made stylistic and imaginative use of imagery too. Less effective answers failed to differentiate the two locations and described the same place at different times or seasons. There tended to be, in some of these responses, a little too much reliance on 'set piece' descriptive writing which was not always convincing: the more effective answers emerged when a specific river was held in mind.
- 4 There were many entertaining responses here. Many responses made the most of the opportunity to describe and develop diverse types of characters, producing zest and imagination in their work. The title evoked some of the most impressive answers on the paper because candidates with flair

and insight responded to it accordingly. Less effective answers had the characters meet each other, showing lack of planning and proper examination of the question's premises.

**Section B: Discursive/Argumentative Writing**

- 5 This question was answered well on the whole. Many candidates had an interestingly wide-ranging knowledge of the background to the topic and used exemplification and argument cleverly in their work. There was a strong sense of engagement with the material. There were many mature and thought-provoking answers, combined with passionate ideas, showing that this was perhaps a question close to the hearts of a number of candidates. Less effective answers tended to interpret the question as one about war in general.
- 6 This proved to be a popular choice of question, with many candidates displaying a strong ability to argue both sides of the case, though some seemed to assume that teachers work relatively short days! The best compositions argued well for both sides and these were very successful indeed: mature, knowledgeable and passionate, manipulating a number of rhetorical devices to persuade their audience. Less effective answers tended to produce unequal halves to the title.
- 7 The more successful answers showed a convincing build-up of an argument for one of the three issues, with good use of real-life examples in a personal and wider context. Much personal wisdom and courage was in evidence which made these answers inspiring reading. Less effective answers tended to ramble a little, only making a decisive conclusion at the end of the answer, thereby lacking clear manipulation of persuasive techniques.
- 8 This was not such a popular title. Those who did attempt it produced some informed and perceptive responses, arguing persuasively that teenagers have certain inalienable rights. Effective answers also considered future rights as well.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 8693/02  
Composition

## GENERAL COMMENTS

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Accuracy is an important prerequisite for this paper and this needs to be borne in mind. Some candidates at the lower end of the range under-achieve because technical errors impede communication of ideas; matters such as subject-verb agreement and consistent use of tenses often seem to be forgotten in the process of planning and writing. Other candidates under-achieve because they do not meet the minimum rubric requirement of producing a minimum of 600 words for each response and, thus, lose unnecessary marks. This is a point that cannot be stressed too much.

There were some thoughtful and imaginative interpretations of the first section of the paper combined with some very effective and informed ideas in relation to the second. Where candidates planned their work, there were some proficient and enjoyable pieces to read; however, some candidates seem to omit the need for planning so that narrative work in particular can seem to meander with no real thread or direction.

Time management was, on the whole, effective and rubric infringement was rare.

## COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

### ***Section A: Narrative/Descriptive/Imaginative Writing***

- 1 This was quite a popular choice and, when planned properly, answers produced evocative and imaginative atmospheres. Work was generally competent. However, some candidates described theme parks or circuses and missed out on the opportunity to develop a more specific descriptive task. In some cases technical inaccuracies impeded understanding of ideas.
- 2 Although some work was derivative in nature, it was also witty and engaging. There was clear evidence of grasping the style and conventions of the genre and the most effective responses stuck to stereotypical, though successfully drawn, detective characterization. There was also good use of setting and other ingredients such as the femme fatale. Less secure answers tended to lose focus and become confused by over-ambitious plots, thus losing sight of mood and atmosphere. Again, in some cases technical inaccuracies impeded communication of ideas.
- 3 This was not attempted by many candidates but the most effective answers grasped the nature of a monologue well. This title was often linked to romantic issues. Less secure responses tended to misconstrue the nature of a monologue.
- 4 This was a popular choice and was usually handled well in an imaginative and realistic manner. In the main, there was a pleasing sense of narrative perspective. The focus tended to rely, understandably, on romantic issues. Some drew pleasing responses by exploring different relatives' reactions to each other. On occasions, differentiation and contrast – as well as 'reasons' – were ignored as an element of the question.



**Section B: Discursive/Argumentative Writing**

- 5 When careful planning was in evidence, this question was answered effectively. It was a popular choice. Effective answers balanced the two ideas and explored them with a sense of focus and informed judgement. Where planning was not in evidence, some responses relied on an outpouring of emotions and ideas. Useful exemplification also helped answers at the top of the range.
- 6 This title produced some lively and entertaining pieces. Candidates seemed to relish the opportunity to deal with this kind of topic. Good answers had a clear sense of audience and purpose and kept a lively style in the foreground, combined with thoughtful and engaging ideas. Less secure answers tended to offer rather vague advice without specific exemplification.
- 7 This was a popular choice of question and provided candidates with a personal opportunity to explain their feelings. Many described in detail their passion for particular subjects and the reasons why they had been inspired to study subjects in further depth. However, a few candidates could not bring themselves to write about the joy but could about the misery and this, at times, led to a loss of focus: some concentrated on just one subject. Less effective responses were often rather rambling and chatty instead of organized and thoughtful.
- 8 This was a popular title and elicited some very strong feelings from some candidates. Better responses tended to make their arguments more concrete through references to history, current affairs or personal anecdotes. Some reflected on political systems in their own countries, producing reflective and thoughtful perspectives as they did so. One Examiner felt that the title gave rise to responses displaying mature, thoughtful and passionate conviction, answers that were on the whole well argued, supported with real-life illustrations. Less secure responses tended to narrow the material down to personal corruption only.