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**EXAMINATION
REPORT**

**Contemporary
English**

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**1998 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION REPORT
CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH**

PAPER 1 – Reading and Writing

Questions 1, 2 and 3

Introduction

This section of the paper was considered to be quite accessible. The stimulus material was both relevant and engaging. Tasks were varied and balanced, and provided a good test for a full range of candidates and represented the syllabus objectives/outcomes well. The skills examined ranged from recognition to listing, description, explanation, analysis and empathy.

There was a general understanding of the reading matter and the tasks tested a range of literacy skills, including visual literacies. This focuses the need for schools to continue to emphasise 2 Unit Contemporary English as a language-based syllabus. Students need a solid grounding in language skills and conventions. They also need to be reminded that the issues question is part of the reading test, and is part of what is being examined; they need to follow directions precisely. The more able candidates clearly demonstrated control in all these areas.

The following criteria are to be used as guidelines/pointers, not as a checklist. There may be scripts that do not fall exactly within these categories.

Marking Criteria

The following criteria are to be used as guidelines/pointers, not as a checklist. There may be scripts that do not fall exactly within these categories.

Question 1(a)

1 mark

Young adults in their twenties.

Young adults.

People who enjoy the lifestyle of being in their twenties.

Emphasis must be on the intended audience, not an incidental group.

Question 1(b)(i)

2 marks

Emphasis in the question is on EXPLAIN – there must be an attempt to explain in the answer. Sex, money, fame, adventure, etc are words that may be chosen.

Appeals, focuses, explains, grabs attention, etc are attempts at explanation (worth 1).

‘These are what appeal to this group because’ Is a more sustained explanation.

Answers should have examples and quotations – may be in groups or singly.

Could gain 0 for a simple listing of words without explanation.

Scripts score 0 for discussion of fonts or layout of words.

‘Words’ may be interpreted as text or language (by text – ‘the questions’, ‘the list’, etc).

Question 1(b)(ii)

2 marks

Emphasis in the question is on EXPLAIN – there must be an attempt to explain in the answer.

May be two distinct sets of images that are discussed or an integrated response showing good understanding.

Answer should have a basic understanding of visual associations and why they appeal to readers.

Question 1(b)(iii)

2 marks

Emphasis in the question is on EXPLAIN.

Answers may include –

- Central image that appeals and centres or focuses reader’s attention.
- Comments on the use of text and/or the positioning of text.
- Comments on the fact that graphics reinforce text.
- Rewards of success flowing across page – lead the eye across.
- Banner, fonts, shapes that draw attention and lead the eye down.

Answers may have two distinct points or explain one thoroughly.

N.B. Explanations and examples may overlap, and some of the better answers may have implicit rather than explicit explanations, but the answer will be clarified from the examples and comments made.

Question 2(a) **1 mark**

The following criteria are to be used as guidelines/pointers, not as a checklist. There may be scripts that do not fall exactly within these categories.

Be thinner/thinness.

Question 2(b) **2 marks**

The question asks for methods of presentation, not methods of survey.

Methods may include:

Bar graph; shading; division on gender/sex; bold heading; use of statistics; words on one side, % numbers on the other; heading and caption.

Answer may be any two.

Question 2(c) **2 marks**

Answer may include advantages/disadvantages or a mixture of both.

No need to explain.

Advantages may include:

Concise, accessible, see at a glance, stark, precise figures, clear, visual and numerical clues, clear layout.

Disadvantages may include:

Oversimplifies, no indication of group size, no real discrimination in bar size, no explanation/analysis, no detail, no framework for the survey, limited questions, sexist, not much choice.

Answer should clarify what is an advantage and what is a disadvantage.

Question 2(d) **5 marks**

Appropriate language, uses survey in context of a magazine article, focus is on comment or interpretation of the survey findings, sustains a journalistic tone, strong sense of audience, piece well structured, an 'article' may include a range of responses from personal to objective pieces.

4 marks

A competent comment/interpretation, fluent, does not dwell on actual results, generalises from the results, comments dominate, does not rely heavily on listing or summary.

3 marks

Competent summary of the report or the statistics with some comment or interpretation, some sense of an article being written, but labours to explain or provides a simple explanation, ordinary in expression, comments may be implied rather than stated.

2 marks

Poor expression, lists from the survey results, tedious/pedestrian in expression, may rely heavily on relisting or summarising, but must have a comment, even ‘bookend’ comments.

1 mark

Partial summary of/response to the survey, comments are partial, clichéd, confused, an off-beat misinterpretation.

0 marks

A literal copy, very short, misinterprets, reformats list, inappropriate form.

Question 3(a)(i) & (ii)

2 marks

The following criteria are to be used as guidelines/pointers, not as a checklist. There may be scripts that do not fall exactly within these categories.

Skill in this question is ‘listing’ – students are required to recognise difficulties.

May include – expense, bills, rent, budgeting, communication, meeting, need to be completely independent, time management/co-ordination, sickness, cooking, washing.

Some answers will be ambiguous – to be accepted if they are clarified.

Question 3(b)(i) & (ii)

2 marks

Skill in this question is ‘describing’.

May include – allowed to make her own mistakes, allowed her to try, make arrangements to meet, treating her as an adult guest when she came to dinner.

If answer says ‘support her’, it also needs to clarify what the support was.

Question 3(c) (i) & (ii)

2 marks

Skill in this question is in analysing ‘how’.

May include – treating her like an adult, appreciated her mother more, learned how much they missed each other, guilt when using home as a convenience, mother’s new appreciation of her daughter’s company, new sensitivity.

Answer needs to acknowledge a change – a contrast between before and after moving out.

May make one point thoroughly or two points briefly.

Question 3(d)(i) & (ii)

2 marks

Skill in this question is 'explanation'.

'Independence' means support – it is a two-way process – affects everyone – daughter is helped by her mother – slight irony/contradiction.

For full marks the answer needs to explain the two parts of the heading – 'independence' and 'family affair'.

Question 3(e)(i)

3 marks

Question 3(e)(ii)

3 marks

The criteria for these two are very similar.

On the whole, what is most important is the VOICE the student adopts – it must be the mother's and it must be in diary form.

Time is also important. To gain full marks the first entry must be the day Clare moves out and the second, the day before she moves home.

It is primarily an empathy question. If this is not apparent, 0 must be given for both sections.

3 marks

Strong sense of persona or strong character, voice and empathy, a sense of control of language, well based on the text, understands both the mother and the daughter in the relationship, a sense of concern.

In the second response there should be a shift in perspective – pride - relief this may be tonal rather than stated, may suggest an acknowledgement of a change.

2 marks

Responses are more limited and less engaging, there may be one simple idea that is well expressed, voice may sound contrived/mechanical, there may be some use of detail from the reading and some kind of opinion or shift in perspective, but lacks detail or depth, content or empathy, students in this range may miss the time-frame slightly.

1 mark

Largely derivative, little empathy, may have time-frame incorrect, generalised reference to reading, commentary/narrative only, some misunderstanding, may imagine too freely outside the characters presented in the reading material, brief, may be wrong format.

0 marks

Wrong voice, no reference to stimulus material, recount of passage, extremely brief.

Question by question reports

Question 1

This question discriminated well between students.

Question 1(a) was accessible to most students and eased them into their next responses.

Question 1(b) proved to be more of a discriminator that allocated students well to the category. The separation of the question into three parts divided the candidates clearly. The direction to 'Explain' seemed to confuse some who merely summarised or listed without making connection between words, images, layout and the way they were used.

Question 1(b)(i) proved most difficult. Students did not seem clear about what 'words' actually meant. Many confused it with features of layout.

Question 1(b)(ii) was better explained and seemed to indicate that some good things are being taught in relation to visual literacy. On the other hand, poorer students seemed confused about what images were and talked about layout.

Question 1(b)(iii) was well dealt with in the sense that students recognised features of layout such as heading, the focus image, leading the eye, etc, but the explanations were poorer in this section.

Question 2

Question 2(a) again proved accessible to most students and gave them confidence to approach the rest of this question. Very few scored 0 on this question.

Question 2(b) showed some confusion over methods of presentation and methods of survey. Students need to be reminded to read the question carefully to avoid such confusion.

Question 2(c) gave rise to some ambiguity about whether to discuss advantages, disadvantages or a combination of both. It was decided to accept a range of responses. The graph itself was easily interpreted by the majority of candidates and some of the better responses were quite critical of it.

Question 2(d) proved to be a good discriminator. The direction to comment on the findings of the survey was generally well understood. The poorer responses were little more than summaries of the statistics, but responses in the middle to better range included a variety of comments and showed an ability to adopt a voice or a tone like that of a journalist. There was a general understanding of what writing an article involved that did not narrow it to an objective report. Poorer students wrote letters which showed some degree of misreading or misunderstanding of the findings in Item 2.

Question 3

This question tested a hierarchy of skills that developed from listing, describing, analysing and explaining to finish with an empathy exercise. The choice of reading material also involved most students, even though it led to some ambiguity in interpretation. For this reason, students need to be reminded to justify or clarify their responses wherever possible so that their interpretations can be fully understood.

Question 3(a) was well answered, although some students listed along the line instead of at the two points indicated. It was in this section that interpretation of 'difficulty' proved ambiguous.

Question 3(b) meant that students had to infer from the text. Again, this led to some ambiguity, depending on attitudes to the way in which the girl's parents supported her. The best answers clarified any ambiguity in their descriptions.

Question 3(c) asked students to recognise two parts to the relationship or two points of view and show the change. Poorer students tended to focus on only one part.

Question 3(d) was a good discriminator. It required quite a sophisticated explanation expressed in only three lines. Poorer students showed confusion about the word 'affair' and were partial in their explanations.

Question 3(e)(i) and (ii) proved accessible to most students. The diary form was well used by most, although some still wrote letters or narratives. However, many interpreted the direction to 'imagine' quite literally and created personas that were not recognisable as Clare's mother from the stimulus material. Students need to be reminded of the purpose of this paper – the link between reading and writing – and to answer questions within this context. They also need to be reminded again that reading the question carefully is part of the examination.

Questions 4 and 5

Introduction

The examiners believed this section of the paper to be quite accessible because of the readability of the questions and the clarity of the instructions. The stimulus material was also relevant, contemporary and accessible. Since the tasks were varied, balanced and without gender bias, both questions tested the full range of candidates.

Generally, the section was a good measure of the syllabus objectives/outcomes because of a variety of tasks and text types. The skills examined ranged from interpretation to synthesis and manipulation of text.

The paper was well presented, clear and manageable, and followed the format of previous years.

The literacy skills of the candidates were generally quite high. There were very few non-attempts and most candidates were able to write a sustained response. It is evident that many schools are recognising that Contemporary English is a language-based syllabus. Therefore, students will continue to need a solid grounding in language skills and conventions. The more able candidates clearly demonstrated this.

Marking criteria

Question 4

6-5 marks

The following criteria are to be used as guidelines/pointers, not as a checklist. There may be scripts that do not fall exactly within these categories.

- Demonstrates clear understanding of the passage.
- Will probably have a balance between content and language analysis.
- Could just contain sophisticated language analysis.
- Writes with conviction.
- Writes with sophisticated vocabulary.
- Shows control of language.
- Will contain very few surface errors (spelling/punctuation etc.).
- Clear structure.
- Able to select and integrate examples.

4-3 marks

- Shows a reasonable understanding of the passage.
- May have placed too much emphasis on content, with only limited analysis of language.
- Writing may tend to be too personal and/or anecdotal.
- Valid comments but lack substantiation; tendency to generalise.
- Shows adequate control of language.
- May contain obvious surface errors.
- Tendency to list language features without substantiation.
- Uneven in structure.
- Valid points, but repetitive.
- Overquoting from the text.

2-1-0 marks

- Limited understanding/misunderstanding of the passage.
- Little or no mention of language.
- Too brief.
- Very basic.
- Poor writing skills.
- May quote large sections from text.
- Summarising or paraphrasing.
- Some points may be disjointed.
- May be mainly concerned with own agenda/irrelevant.

Questions 5(a) (i) and (ii)

The following criteria are to be used as guidelines/pointers, not as a checklist. There may be scripts that do not fall exactly within these categories.

4 marks

- A clear sense of audience, probably explicit, but may be implied.
- A sophisticated use of language evident.
- Should demonstrate the features of a radio advertisement (i.e. must obviously be a radio advertisement).
- Selects and integrates the appropriate information.
- Should be concise and succinct.
- May display flair and originality.
- Usually persuasive and includes an imperative.

3 marks

- Solid but without flair.
- Still with a clear sense of audience.
- Less convincing.
- Still good control of language.
- Usually selects and integrates appropriate information but there may be some inaccuracies.
- Less concise and succinct.
- Still 'sounds' like a radio advertisement.

2 marks

- May not identify the audience adequately.
- Loss of control of language – more surface errors.
- Indiscriminate use of information from the stimulus material.
- Mundane and unconvincing.
- Still recognisable as a radio advertisement.

1 mark

- Little or no sense of audience.
- Very limited response – poor use of language.
- May not ‘sound’ like a radio advertisement.
- Inadequate or insufficient use of stimulus material.

0 marks

- Misunderstood the question.
- Straight copying from stimulus material.

Question 5(b)

5 marks

- Succinct.
- Clear, definite focus.
- Contains all essential details.
- Establishes purpose immediately.
- May adopt a persona.
- Correct register including appropriate tone.
- Very good control of language (free from surface errors).
- Clear structure including appropriate conclusion/closure.
- May show flair.

4 marks

- Still a clear sense of structure.
- Good control of language.
- May be less well organised/structured.
- Solid, straightforward answer.
- Occasional surface errors.
- Should still address the purpose and include most details.

3 marks

- Sense of structure – may attempt a conclusion
- Should have been more precise and/or complete with booking details.
- Obvious surface errors.
- Pedestrian.
- May have an obvious misunderstanding of the difference between booking and confirming.
- Adequate control of language.

2 marks

- Poor control of language: lots of surface errors.
- May have omitted essential details.
- Structure inappropriate/badly organised.
- Irrelevancies and generalisations.
- Clearly inappropriate register.
- May be too brief.

1 mark

- Too short.
- Very poor control of language: excessive surface errors.
- Misunderstood the question/purpose.
- Lacks essential information.

0 marks

- Straight copying from stimulus material.
- Completely off task: total misunderstanding of the purpose/question.

Question by question reports

Question 4

This question was felt to be quite challenging. Candidates were asked to make a judgment between two pieces of writing and to provide reasons for their choice.

The majority were able to understand both passages and gave a full-length literate response, the better candidates writing in an economical and concise fashion. While some chose to compare and/or contrast the two passages, others were content to focus on just one article. Both approaches were equally valid.

The better candidates, as readers, were able to engage with the text and discuss language as well as ideas. In other words, they did not restrict themselves to a mere content-based response. These candidates tended to be more adept at integrating examples and demonstrated good control of language with few surface errors. Their responses were also better organised.

Many candidates tended to write generalised and unfocused personal responses which did not necessarily demonstrate full engagement with the text. Some were distracted by the published ages of the writers, as well as the fact that it was a primary school writing competition on aspects of Australian life as well as the content of the passages. Many tended to concentrate on a personal and often irrelevant anecdotal response. For example, the second passage by Andrew Pascoe presented an emphatic argument which created a situation where even many capable candidates discussed the issues raised rather than the quality of the writing.

Question 5(a)(i) & (ii)

These questions required candidates to recognise the different language needs for two different target audiences. They were required to be familiar with the form and register of a radio advertisement and to select and integrate appropriate material from the leaflet. The majority were able to respond adequately to this task, which shows that they were familiar with this medium.

The better candidates were able to create a radio 'voice' while at the same time being quite selective and succinct in their manipulation of the stimulus material. The intended audience was clearly evident.

Less able candidates' responses lacked a clear focus, often because of an indiscriminate use of the stimulus material. The target audience in these instances was not as obvious.

It would appear that some candidates had not read all parts of the question and, therefore, missed the point of having to identify two audiences.

Question 5(b)

It was felt that this was a 'real life' task which easily met the syllabus objectives. The question required candidates to write a letter incorporating information from the stimulus material. They were required to synthesise the original material in a precise manner and write in an appropriate form and register for this task. The question gave clear guidance which most candidates used as a basis for a structure.

The better candidates often adopted a persona, included essential details, understood the difference between a confirmation and a booking and their answers were succinct. They understood the conventions of letter writing.

The less able candidates were unable to synthesise material as well, often including irrelevant information inappropriate to the purpose of the exercise. These responses tended to be less well structured, with obvious lack of control of language.

PAPER 2 — Contemporary Issues

The style of the questions encouraged individual responses.

The standard and length of the responses were generally good. The majority of candidates appeared to be well prepared for both Sections I and II, and showed their knowledge and understanding of the Issue/text/related material quite well.

The quality of writing and literacy was heartening, with the better students presenting articulate responses.

Related material was better sourced than in previous years. It should be remembered that students are disadvantaged if they restrict their range of material to only one or two pieces.

Poor students continue simply to retell the story, or to refer only to the text or to related materials.

Any scripts which, in their focus or language, are clearly influenced by previous HSC questions, can only be rewarded according to the degree to which they address the current question.

Contemporary English — 1998 Issues Marking Guidelines: Section 1

	A 20-19	B 18-17-16	C 15-14-13-12-11-10	D 9-8-7-6	E 5-4-3-2-1-0
TEXT TYPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good and sustained effort at text type. • Clear and thorough organisation, coherent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good effort at text type but may not be fully sustained • Clear organisation, coherent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable attempt at form and register will be evident. • Some attempt at organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually attempts text type but may be weak. • Poorly organised. • May lack coherence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak or no attempt at text type. • No organisation.
Strong text type with weak content OR weak text type with strong content unlikely to get above 'C'. Ought to be strong text type and content for A and B.					
CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays strong understanding of the material. • Shows a very clear understanding of the question and of the complexity of the Issue. • Uses a range and variety of appropriate source material. • Has unity and develops ideas. • Usually emphasises link between text and material. • Strong sense of question permeates discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays good understanding of the material. • Shows a competent understanding of the complexity of the Issue and the question. • Uses a range and variety of appropriate source material. • Has sense of unity and development of ideas. • May indicate link between text and material. • More sustained focus on question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows awareness of the requirements of the question. • May use only a narrow range of material or have a narrow focus on the Issue. • Generally gives an adequate treatment of the material and Issue. • Reasonably coherent development of ideas. • May lack meaningful link between material and Issue. • Answers which largely or only rely on inference of 'memorable' will probably not move above low C range. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not address the question. • Hardly touches the question or very soon moves off it. • Elements of story-telling supported by weak comments. • May be weak, short, superficial response. • Weak development of ideas. • May deal with text only, or related material. • Fails to deal adequately with Issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no understanding of the question. • Little or no comprehension of text or material. • Only retells story. • May be brief. • May deal with text only, or related material. • Little or no sense of the Issue.
Answers which do not discuss text at all, can't get higher than a 'd'. Responses which fail to address the terms of the question explicitly, cannot get above the low 'C' range.					
EXPRESSION (may have the following elements.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluent - articulate - shows flair - originality - good style - sophistication - sustained argument. • Minor weaknesses in expression are not a barrier if text type and content are strong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression generally competent and correct. • Communicates well. • Weaknesses in expression are not a barrier if text type and content are strong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional problems in expression. • Reasonably fluent. • A reasonable attempt to communicate ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems in expression may interfere with communication. • Often vague, repetitive and waffly. • Poor communication of ideas. • May be incomprehensible or convoluted in parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious problems in expression. • Incoherent. • Fails to communicate ideas.

Contemporary English — 1998 Issues Marking Guidelines: Section 2

	A 20-19	B 18-17-16	C 15-14-13-12-11-10	D 9-8-7-6	E 5-4-3-2-1-0
TEXT TYPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very good and sustained effort at text type. Clear and thorough organisation, coherent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good effort at text type but may not be fully sustained. Clear organisation, coherent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable attempt at text type will be evident. Some attempt at organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually attempts text type but may be weak Poorly organised May lack coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak or no attempt at text type No organisation
Strong text type with weak content OR weak text type with strong content unlikely to get above C. Ought to be strong text type and content for A and B					
CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays strong understanding of the material issue. Presents and develops clearly differentiated points of view on one or more aspects of the Issue. Uses a range and variety of appropriate material. Has unity and develops ideas. Usually emphasises link between text and material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays good understanding of the question and material/Issue. Presents and develops different points of view on one or more aspects of the Issue. Uses a range and variety of appropriate source material. Has sense of unity and development of ideas. May indicate link between text and material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows awareness of the requirements of the question. Reasonable understanding of Issue/material. Presents point(s) of view but may not be differentiated. Reasonably coherent development of ideas. May lack meaningful link between material and Issue. Adequate use of material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May misinterpret the question. Limited understanding of material/Issue. Weakly presented point(s) of view. Storytelling may occur. Could be weak, short, superficial response. Often deals with only text or only related material. Fails to deal adequately with Issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no understanding of the question. Little or no comprehension of text or material/issue. Poor attempt to retell text. May be brief. May not mention/deal with text/other material. Little or no sense of the Issue.
Responses with only one reference (text or material) are unlikely to get above the D range. Responses that fail to address the terms of the question are unlikely to get above the D range. Straight regurgitation of information is unlikely to get above mid C range.					
EXPRESSION (may have the following elements.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent and articulate. May demonstrate flair, originality, sophistication of style. May have minor errors of expression. Does not have to be a 'superscript' to get 'A'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression generally competent and correct. Communicates well. Weaknesses in expression are not a barrier if text type and content are strong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonably fluent. A reasonable attempt to communicate ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems in expression may interfere with communication. Often vague, repetitive and 'waffly'. May be incomprehensible or convoluted in parts. Poor communication of ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious problems in expression. Incoherent. Fails to communicate ideas.

Pilot Marking Observations

LETTER	INTERVIEW
CONTENT	CONTENT
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Each question requires reference to a range of material including a text</p> </div>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses with only one reference (text or material) are unlikely to get above ‘D’. • Responses which fail to address the terms of the question are unlikely to get above ‘D’. • Better responses integrate related material well. • Better responses focus on differentiated and/or conflicting points of view. • Letters may be from characters from texts/materials. • Some characters are totally imagined (not from text or related material) • Question invites narrow focus on Issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses with only one reference (text or material) are unlikely to get above ‘D’. • Responses which fail to address the terms of the question are unlikely to get above ‘D’. • Better responses integrate related material well. • Better responses focus on differentiated and/or conflicting points of view. • Interview participants may be characters from texts/materials. • Question invites narrow focus on Issue.
Text type	Text type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable introduction and effective conclusion. • Should not be in essay form. • Common text features observed: address, salutation, signature. • Sense of appropriate audience. • Evaluate wholistically. Letters may be unbalanced. Two or more is the requirement. <p style="text-align: center;">* 1 letter only unlikely to get above ‘D’ unless exceptional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable introduction and effective conclusion. • Should not be in essay form. • Script layout is expected. • Sense of appropriate audience. • Suitable language for spoken register. • One of the two people presenting viewpoints may be the interviewer. • Elaborate use of media conventions not a requirement.

Section I

Question 1

This question was, on the whole, a good one to which candidates responded positively, with most making some attempt to address the question. The focus on 'memorable' allowed for a wide variety of options and a wide range of responses; and for personal voice to be used well to add depth to the discussion of the materials. The question was also equally relevant for all options, although it was felt that the Peace and War option was handled less well than the others. It was pleasing to note, however, that this year more students balanced their answers here with references to both peace and war. Similarly the nature of the question also encouraged some students to limit their text discussion to a rather narrow focus, such as one short story (which they saw as 'memorable'). It was not felt that these students should be penalised when the question allowed such a response.

The criteria established that the words 'memorable ideas' related to aspects of the issue, and most students interpreted it in this way. Some students, however, interpreted these words in other ways. For some it was what they remembered; for others it was the memories of the characters, or what was memorable for them; and for still others the question elicited too much personal voice in terms of memories of their own lives. These other interpretations often resulted in simple description or retelling of what happened, rather than an analysis of why some aspects were 'memorable'.

Another problem related to students' confusion over what they were really answering. This is often a problem when a statement is provided, followed by a question. While it is realised that the statement is intended as a help for students in trying to lead them into the meaning of 'memorable', students showed uncertainty about whether it referred to 'stirring ... feelings' or 'memorable'.

The question did, however, provide for a good degree of discrimination. As in past years, the very general nature of the question in this section encouraged some students to present prepared answers, with a few aspects being briefly commented on, or supported only by retelling what happened in the resource material. For other students superficial, and sometimes repeated, references to the 'memorable' nature of these events served to link a prepared answer to the question. The better students used the question to explore and discuss more fully the issue and material, while clearly expressing a personal response.

Section II

Question 2 (a): Interview

This appeared to be the more frequently, and the more competently, answered question, since the less formal register suited many candidates.

The question did not specify if the interviewer could be one of the 'two or more' people to present a point of view. A significant number of candidates presented a viewpoint via the interviewer and the criteria given reflected this choice.

Many candidates padded out their responses with scene-setting at the expense of content, ie discussion of the Issue. While some use of media conventions demonstrated a good grasp of the genre, it should be noted that elaborate use of such devices was not expected. Integration of related material in this question was, however, poor.

Question 2 (b): Letters to the Editor

A variety of interpretations was given of the editor as audience. Some candidates were confused by the word 'editor' and wrote to friends, characters in texts or authors. The criteria given reflected the need for responses to show an appropriate sense of audience.

A significant number of candidates, however, did not follow the requirement to present two or more letters, and were therefore disadvantaged.

The requirement for a more formal register in this option was a challenge for some students.

LISTENING CRITERIA

Introduction

The 1998 Contemporary English Listening Paper was generally a fair paper for all candidates. The content of the tape appeared accessible and interesting and the questions varied in demand, thus assisting with the task of ranking the candidates. Each question appropriately reflected the main aspects of the syllabus. Generally, the expectation demanded of the candidates for the majority of questions was reflected in appropriate working spaces being provided; however, the expectations attached to one question (Question 4b) did create certain problems (see Question By Question report).

Special Provision – Video Candidates – The quality of the Hearing Impaired Videos for the 2 Unit Contemporary paper was very good. They were clearly presented and provided the candidates with excellent sighting clarity and a very professional presentation style from the actors concerned.

Final criteria

Question 1

(2 marks)

2 Marks

- Use of music – lilting, nautical, sets tone/mood
- That no plane trip could ever match →
- Language – word choice – dangerous, descriptive, clearly describing Antarctica

any of these

- Detail – building a picture – ‘word picture’

1 mark

- Use of word ‘adventure’
- Content e.g. ‘last great journey’ – adventure
- Makes it sound ‘special’ – only by boat (‘has’ to be by sea)
- Tone of voice – enthusiastic

NOT ‘relaxing, tranquil, peaceful’ except, in contrast

NOT ‘because of the weather’

NOT ‘purpose’, ‘historical’

Question 2

(2 marks) N.B. 2 distinct words or phrases

any 2 get

- Fantastic ice sculptures
- Tranquillity of pack ice

2 marks

- Spectacular place
- Huge dome of candied honey
- Pristine
- Biggest yet driest desert
- Enormous icebergs, on the move, flows, carves off warming sea water
- Most spectacular 3000 metre volcano
- Fresh water

* N.B. split phrase or paraphrase = 1 mark

NOT Young fur seals. 3 little furries

NOT Factual information e.g. 70% of world’s fresh water

NOT 2% Land mass that is exposed rock

Question 3

(2 marks)

2 Marks

- Thoughtless
- Indifferent
- Treated it as his ordinary environment
- Had no attitude
- Had not thought about it
- Took it for granted

1 Mark

- Had problems
- ‘Didn’t know what to expect’
- Bad, negative, poor
- ‘Flicked his butts away’

NOT

- ‘He wasn’t a full-on Greenie’

* Both attitudes mentioned – treated it like his normal dirty hometown and cared enough about it to change = 2 marks

Question 4a (i) and (ii) (2 marks for 4a(i); 2 marks for 4a(ii))

An implicit understanding of what the 3 experiences meant was sought– some attitudinal comments.

1 mark

1 mark

flicking butts	stood out, obscene
rubbish	disgusted them
seals	horrified them
working with biologists	(words that are attitudinal, some attitude comment)

NOT use same experience e.g. rubbish in both (i) and (ii)

Question 4(b)

(4 marks)

'They' OR 'Scott and Dutchy' followed by description of a degree of attitudinal change could = 2

Further 2 marks from the following list:

- Conviction
- Personal experience
- Detail
- Re-inforced each other
- Condemnation of humanity
- Qualifies his stance
- 'not a freak' – Repetition 'nothing'
- Emphatic
- Time and effort into keeping it clean
- Words like: obscene, disgusted, horrified, shocked, offended

1 mark each

* likely to score additional marks here

- * Tone – really meant it, commitment, saddened
- * Changed behaviour
- * 'He' or 'Scott' or 'Dutchy' + elaboration equal 2 marks

* Answers without the subject 'they' or 'Dutchy and Scott' but still giving relevant points can equal 2

Question 5

(6 marks)

1 mark for each of 3 different features mentioned

Structure	Language	Tone, use of voice and other sound features
Introduction	variation of register	Variety
Explanation of content	visual and aural detail	enthusiastic
audio log	word choice, similes	sincere
interviews	technical language	relaxed
conclusion	emotive	jovial
scripted – conversational	humour	concerned
	clear concise ending	first person
	conversational,	varies pace and pitch
	colloquial slang	tone lifts at end
	scripted	audio log
	Tim Bowden’s final	intonation
	comments on the	background ‘outdoor’ sounds
	larkies	production, eg tape ‘clicking’

1 additional mark for each feature for elaboration which points towards realism and interest for the audience, eg ‘the language they all use is colloquial so that it is interesting for the intended audience’.

OR

Some students may write a detailed analysis of two areas or only one area, eg language (may be 6 points) demonstrating a high level of understanding of the purpose of the piece.

* ‘real’ and ‘interesting’ are interchangeable terms.

Question by Question Report

Question 1

(2 marks)

This question required students to identify the sense of adventure inherent in travelling to Antarctica.

The better students gave several examples of the 'how' in this question, with an explanation of specific aspects e.g. 'last great journey', 'only by boat'.

Many students recognised the effect of background music supporting the narration.

Weaker students confused hurricanes, 40s, 50s, 60s with chronological time and ignored the sense of adventure asked for by the question.

Very few candidates actually answered that Tim Bowden describes the trip as an adventure.

The very best students were able to discuss his enthusiastic tone of voice, as well as the emphasis given to action and adventure words and to the dangerous sea voyage through fierce winds.

A few commented on the effect of the alliteration and imagery used by Tim Bowden.

Question 2

(2 marks)

This question was a relatively simple task requiring candidates to identify two words or phrases which suggested the 'beauty of Antarctica'.

The weaker respondents were unable to identify words or even paraphrases that suggested beauty. Many simply repeated factual information such as '70% of water', 'young fur seals' or 'exposed rocks'.

Paraphrasing was acceptable, with some students providing more than satisfactory answers. Some paraphrasing was, however, incoherent or used incorrect information.

Question 3

(2 marks)

This question required an identification of 'Dutchy' Holland's attitude towards the environment when he first arrived on Heard Island.

Many students confused 'Dutchy' Holland's attitude at the beginning with his 'change' of attitude which occurred later in the story.

The best responses were able to explain how 'he did not think about it' – it was a subconscious action and mentioned words like 'indifferent', 'thoughtless', 'took it for granted'. They went further and elaborated with an example of 'throwing his cigarette butts on the ground'.

Good students identified his attitude to the environment, but failed to illustrate by giving an example e.g. 'He didn't care'.

The weakest candidates cited an example only – 'flicking cigarette butts' or focused on Tim Bowden's description of the environment.

This question proved to be a very good discriminator.

Question 4a (i) and (ii)

(4 marks)

This question required students to describe two experiences which changed the attitudes of 'Dutchy' and Scott to the environment.

Students were required to identify each experience and show an understanding of how and why these experiences changed their attitudes.

Two marks were awarded for each section when the experience and change were well explained.

One mark was awarded for each when a simple description of an experience was given.

The best candidates gave detailed elaborations of the experiences and the resulting change in attitude.

Most candidates readily identified the two experiences but many had difficulty in linking these with the changed attitudes.

Question 4(b)

(4 marks)

The question asked candidates to describe how they knew 'Dutchy' and Scott were sincere about their changed attitudes.

In order to answer this question satisfactorily candidates needed to demonstrate a high level of understanding of the story as well as an ability to analyse critically the language used by the speakers.

This task proved to be the most difficult question in the examination.

Given the amount of space allocated for the answer and the degree of difficulty associated with writing a critical analysis in the time provided, candidates presented an extremely broad range of responses.

For these reasons it was decided that 4 marks would be allocated to this answer.

The best responses exceeded the two lines allocated. Candidates needed to refer to both Scott and 'Dutchy' showing a good knowledge of their changed behaviour and attitude and supporting this with a concise description of how the language chosen expressed this change.

Good to average responses referred to 'they' or 'Scott and Dutchy' with an account of what made them change their attitudes.

The weaker responses came from those candidates who described only incidents from the story that alluded to attitudinal change.

Question 5

(6 marks)

Candidates were asked to describe how the passage made an experience of Antarctica 'real and interesting' for the audience. Guidance was offered in the form of a list of areas to be discussed. What appeared to be a very challenging question proved to be well within the range of ability of most candidates and most responses addressed the areas suggested in the question.

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