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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Papers 0510/01 and 0510/02

Reading and Writing – Core and Extended

General comments

The candidates seemed well prepared for both Core and Extended levels and very few candidates left out exercises in either Paper. Candidates dealt with the first two parts of the Paper very well indeed and the level of reading comprehension has shown improvement this session.

Performances in Part Three were generally pleasing to read and candidates have shown improvements in organising their work. Spelling and register are showing improvement also. The candidates seemed to have found the topics accessible and there was a very good range of answers encompassing all levels of candidates' work. There were many highly competent users of English as a second language who had been very well prepared for the examination.

However, some are still treating the word length requirement in a cavalier way. Many of the summary answers were far too long and exceeded even the maximum word length. This caused a lot of candidates to obtain low marks for language on this task this session. There were also variations in the length of answers in Part Three in both the Core and Extended Papers. Many candidates wrote just below the minimum required word length.

Some candidates are disadvantaging themselves by poor handwriting or using unsuitable pen colours or writing in pencil. The instructions clearly request candidates to write in blue or black pen.

Comments on specific questions

Part One

Exercise 1

Generally this very straightforward exercise was tackled well by all candidates in both the Core and Extended Papers. Most candidates used the headings to correctly extract information, but some were more haphazard. One or two Centres exhibited great difficulty in understanding the text and getting correct answers at all. **(a)** was usually answered correctly but many candidates prefaced their answer with £165, possibly hedging their bets and so could not be awarded a mark because the answer was too general. Candidates who answered in this way were probably unable to discern the difference between residential and non-residential. **(b)** was usually correct although a few candidates, mainly in the Core Paper, did not explain that the learners had to handle the catamaran single handedly. **(c)** was generally well answered. In **(d)** weaker candidates lifted the wrong answer, *'they have the opportunity to progress within a safe and exciting environment'*. **(e)** was usually answered correctly but **(f)** caused difficulties for those who did not realise that the event could be held indoors in a hangar. In **(g)** on the Extended Paper many candidates failed to understand that the instructors had sports training too. Many were unable to express this and wrongly lifted the final line of the text.

Exercise 2

Core Paper 01 only

This similarly straightforward exercise was well attempted by many candidates. It was not uncommon for some Centres to gain full or nearly full marks here. In **(a)** most gave the first answer on the mark scheme, *'swim with them'* but a few gave the other answers. Less able candidates were unable to cope with this question and their performance here influenced their performance in the rest of the exercise. In **(b)** some answers were too general with candidates lifting the information about the individual intake of food by the dolphins. **(c)** presented few difficulties. **(d)** was quite well answered, although some gave *'rolling over'* and *'flipping a ball'* which was the same idea. Candidates coped better with **(e)**.

Exercise 2*Extended Paper 02 only*

This similarly straightforward exercise was well done by all candidates many of whom gained full marks. In **(a)**, although some candidates mentioned the date '1694' at the beginning of their answer, if they came up with the vital information, '10 tons' they were rewarded. In **(b)** most candidates lifted correctly from the text. **(c)** caused few if any problems for candidates but in **(d)** some candidates incorrectly lifted information about the salvage companies. **(e)** was usually correctly answered either by candidates using the initials or explaining the answer more fully.

Exercise 3

This exercise was very accessible to extended candidates who generally scored well. For Core candidates there were some difficulties. In **(a)** many lifted the wrong answer, '*water makes up about 75% of the adult human body*' thus showing a complete lack of understanding of the question. **(b)** was usually correct although some gave '*a multitude of other ills*' which was not precise enough to gain a mark. **(c)** was not a problem for the majority of candidates either at Core or Extended level. After some preamble most got the correct answer to **(d)** and **(e)** although the answers in **(f)** varied between the correct one and those wrong answers dealing with a range of times when water is drunk which candidates lifted and listed from the text.

Part 2**Exercise 1**

In the main this was an easier task for candidates than the equivalent Part 2 Exercise 1 in previous sessions, and proved very accessible for the majority of candidates. That said, quite a few did not give '*ten*' in the first answer to **(a)** which of course denied them the mark. In **(b)** many candidates got the correct answer but a few wrote about seeing through the cosmic dust and did not pick up on the idea that the telescope was placed away from light pollution. **(c)** caused few difficulties but **(d)** attracted the cosmic dust answer again. However, in **(e)(i)** the majority of candidates were successful but some put '*15 bn years ago*' misinterpreting the information from the diagram. In **(e)(ii)** many candidates gave a half answer by omitting the idea that the solar system was formed. Many just wrote, '*solar system*'.

In the Extended Paper candidates generally did well in answering the paragraph length answer **(f)**, with many gaining the full four marks. A few however lifted practically the whole of the second paragraph of the stimulus gaining no marks whatsoever.

Exercise 2

Whilst there was obvious engagement with the subject matter, candidates must again be reminded that they are being asked to write a *summary*. A large majority of candidates wrote well over the maximum word length with a few writing beyond the lines of the Exam Paper. This can never result in candidates gaining a high mark for the language aspect of this question. The main fault was candidates not reading the rubric properly. So many candidates wrote about, or lifted at length, the information about Mr Khaire's activities before he opened the snake park. Many words were wasted on describing the 'stunt' in the glass enclosure which had little relevance to the question which asked about the aims of the park. However, there were many rewardable content points in the mark scheme which candidates readily found and wrote about; in this respect the exercise proved somewhat easier than previous summary tasks. The use of own words by the most able candidates was marked but many others lifted wholesale from the text. A few candidates, mainly in the Core Paper, wrote about their own experiences or feelings about snakes which gained them nothing.

Exercise 3 - Form Filling*Core Paper 01 only*

There was some improvement on previous years in this exercise. Most candidates who carefully copied the information from the stimulus without mistakes did very well in the first half of the exercise. The main problems were in the deletion section of the form where candidates did not successfully delete but used circling and underlining instead. The final section asking for the date also caused difficulties with some candidates using both dates or giving the wrong one. But generally this exercise was well answered and candidates are reading the rubric and understanding what they are being requested to do. Only a few candidates gave their own details.

Exercise 3 - Note Making*Extended Paper 02 only*

This was well done by the majority of candidates. Only a few candidates wrote too brief or irrelevant notes.

(a) mostly attracted the idea of fragrancy or cookery ingredients. Very able candidates gave three or more correct answers. (b) caused some difficulties but the majority scored at least one mark here. In (c) candidates managed to find most of the points on the mark scheme but this was a better discriminator. Some lifted 'full bloom' and 'entire villages'. (d) was quite accessible and those who did not score usually did so because they had repeated information from (c).

Part 3

It is pleasing to report that there are far fewer cases now of ignoring the rubric requirements. Almost all candidates are using the prompts to structure their answers and, moreover, Examiners reported evidence of real engagement with the subject matter. There is still a problem across some Centres with word length, and there were reports of significantly under-length answers in this section. The word length suggested in the question should be followed as it gives candidates an opportunity to expand on and develop their ideas.

Exercise 1

There were some good descriptions and impressions making for interesting reading from the majority. Even those Core candidates who did not have such a fluent grasp of the language were able to give a flavour of the place they had visited. There were some evocative descriptions of places candidates had always wanted to see like Victoria Falls or the desert at night, and many finished by saying that they would like to repeat the journey or had made firm friends with their companions. More able candidates made an attempt to conjure a scene using exotic language and unusual adjectives. Even if poor spelling or over-ambitious vocabulary marred some answers, enthusiasm was obvious.

Exercise 2

Stronger candidates developed the prompts and used a persuasive tone. There were often strong emotional arguments to keep the centre open. The tone and register were both appropriate and in some cases an earnest plea was given: 'I strongly believe that our centre should not be destroyed.' Candidates wrote about the centre as a tourist attraction or an old peoples' centre or a place for young people to meet. In some cases it was seen as an integral part of the community making its threatened demolition cataclysmic. In some cases the parking problem was hardly mentioned although most realised that it was an important part of the question and came to this prompt in the end. Quite a few suggestions were given about building on derelict land or re-using a ruined house or building the parking area underground.

A few less able candidates misunderstood the rubric altogether and wrote generally about the desirability or otherwise of using cars and the problems of parking and pollution.

Exercise 3

This was the least well-answered question in *Part 3* and there were varied results in the responses. In a lot of cases the sense of a teenage audience or any audience was missing and many wrote a prepared 'save-the-world'-type essay without focusing on the requirements of the question set. Some wrote exclusively about cars and spent the majority of their time talking about car pollution or general environmental pollution.

The abler candidates gave excellent advice to their fellows and the tone and register in their answers were very good indeed. Examiners reported some expert handling of rhetorical questions in some answers.

<p>Paper 0510/03 Listening (Core)</p>

General comments

There were few omissions and most candidates showed signs of having considered and - if necessary reworked - answers to focus on the requirements of the question. There was evidence of good examination technique here and thorough preparation by Centres. Legibility and presentation of answers were generally clearer this session than in some previous sessions. More preparatory work on numbers and measures is recommended for future sessions.

Comments on specific questions***Part 1***

The first part of the Paper comprised the short question and answer section in response to six short scenarios. 7 marks were available here. As always candidates who gave precise answers scored well. Those who merely transcribed what they heard failed to score because they embedded the answer in a great quantity of text. Generally candidates responded well to the subject matter and vocabulary presented in this part of the Paper.

Question 1

This was very well answered with most candidates writing "CD player"; only a few transcribed a list of what was heard thus failing to score.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to distinguish here and wrote "East Street". Examiners did not accept responses such as "E-Street".

Question 3

This carried 2 marks but many candidates wrote about Wednesday rather than the best Thursday offer and failed to score at least one mark. Many eventually wrote about guidebooks and worksheets and so scored the second point.

Question 4

This led to a few misunderstandings of "row" many thought this was "road 16" or omitted the second detail about the tins of tomatoes. Both details were required for the mark.

Question 5

This question gave rise to many misinterpretations of the correct £20.50 – many candidates wrote £20.15.

Question 6

This was reasonably well answered, although some candidates omitted page or chapter numbers.

Part 2

The second part of the Paper comprised two form-filling exercises in response to interviews with a young violinist and a manager of a perfume factory.

Question 7

This was well answered generally. The age of the violinist – 16 – was universally accessible but the countries of tuition led to many incorrect spellings/forms such as “span” or “Italian” which could not be accepted here. Many could not answer the number of years for which Kara had been playing violin – they wrote “since 2” whereas the required answer was 14. The type of music played – classical – was generally well answered but the idea of “never give up” was unfamiliar to some candidates who supplied “keep up” or “get up” or “keep off”. Most candidates fared well on the exercise overall.

Question 8

This was more demanding in keeping with the progression of the Paper, but candidates still engaged well with subject matter and task. Most able to score with “roses” in the list of flowers, but the other answers often showed difficulty with use of numbers and measures. For example, many wrote “14” for “40” for the number of perfume houses and the cost and number of flowers were invariably wrongly notated when in figures, but correct if written in words. Most candidates understood the idea that perfume had originally been used to scent leather (gloves) and scored well here. Many understood that one method was to boil flowers although some interpreted this as “oil”.

Part 3

The third part of the Paper comprised two true/false exercises in response to an interview concerning whale watching and a monologue about the Faroe islands. There was evidence of thought and effort on the part of candidates here in crossing out and re-working.

Question 9

Generally there was obvious engagement with taped text and task. The question where candidates most frequently failed to score was **(i)** where candidates thought that whales were nervous creatures. There were also many incorrect answers to **(b)** and **(d)**, showing lack of understanding.

Question 10

Results here were mostly encouraging and a fair number of candidates were able to score about 4 out of the available 6 marks. **(c)** and **(g)** often showed some misunderstanding because of the specific focus on particular words necessary for the correct answer. In response to **(i)** candidates tended to overlook “very soon to become (independent)” on the tape and for **(k)** missed the idea of the island being large enough to support “one family and their farm”.

<p>Paper 0510/04 Listening (Extended)</p>

General comments

As with Core Paper 3, were few omissions and most candidates showed signs of having considered and - if necessary reworked - answers to focus on the requirements of the question. There was evidence of good examination technique here and thorough preparation by Centres. Legibility and presentation of answers were generally clearer this session than in some previous sessions. More preparatory work on numbers and measures is recommended for future sessions.

Comments on specific questions**Part 1**

The first part of the Paper comprised the short question and answer section in response to six short scenarios. 8 marks were available here. As always candidates who gave precise answers scored well, whereas those who merely transcribed all that they heard failed to score because they embedded the answer in quantity of superfluous text. Generally candidates responded well to the subject matter and vocabulary presented in this part of the Paper.

Question 1

There were a few misunderstandings of “row”. Many thought this was “road 16” or omitted the second detail about the tins of tomatoes. Both details were required for the mark.

Question 2

There were quite a few misinterpretations of the correct £20.50 – many candidates wrote £20.15.

Question 3

This was reasonably well answered, although some candidates omitted page or chapter numbers.

Question 4

Some candidates failed to score here by not providing the idea of the “snack bar” and the “drinks machine”, but generally this question proved accessible and was well answered.

Question 5

Mostly this was well done and demonstrated obvious understanding. A number of candidates offered just one answer.

Question 6

Most were able to write about the piano but there were some strange interpretations of “trumpet” and some transcribed an obvious distractor from the taped text instead.

Part 2

The second part of the Paper comprised two form-filling exercises in response to interviews with a young violinist and a manager of a perfume factory.

Question 7

This was well answered generally. The age of the violinist – 16 – was universally accessible but the countries of tuition led to many incorrect spellings/forms that could not be accepted. Many did not answer the number of years for which Kara had been playing violin – they often wrote “since 2” instead of the required answer which was 14. Most understood that the album contained 12 of her favourite pieces – many wrote “peaces”. The type of music played – classical - was well answered but the idea of “never give up” was unfamiliar to some candidates who supplied “keep up” or “get up” or “keep off”.

Question 8

This was more demanding in keeping with the progression of the Paper, but candidates engaged well with subject matter and task. Many wrote “expansive” for “expensive” in response to the first question, but Examiners could not accept this as an answer. Generally most were able to score with “chemicals” for “methods” and “roses” in the list of flowers, but the other answers often showed difficulty with use of numbers and measures. For example, many wrote “14” for “40” for the number of perfume houses and the cost and number of flowers were invariably wrongly notated when in figures but correct if written in words. Most candidates understood the idea that perfume had originally been used to scent leather (gloves) and scored well here, also many understood that one method was to boil flowers although some interpreted this as “oil”.

Part 3

The third part of the Paper comprised two exercises in response to an interview concerning whale watching and an interview about “Baby Concorde”. There was evidence of thought and effort on the part of candidates here in notes and re-working of answers, and generally candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding.

Question 9

- (a) A number of candidates confused “fanfares” with “funfairs” and failed to give a full answer including two duties of the whale watcher.
- (b) This was generally well answered, but a few candidates wrote “1,500 metres” or “1,500 kg”.
- (c) Although most candidates recognised the correct months many failed to convey the idea of “June until December” here.
- (d) Many candidates gave only one detail here - “to give birth” for example - although many were able to add the idea of warmth or refuge and score accordingly.
- (e) Generally accurately answered: the rise in numbers of whales. Unfortunately some candidates negated the answer by adding an incorrect statistic to this.
- (f) Generally well done: the idea of the weight and features and the singing “Hump Backed” whale were often well conveyed,

Question 10

Most were able to point to the website for (f) and the environmental disturbance in (a). (b) was well answered, with either “quieter” or “faster” or “cleaner”. The answers to (c) were well done by the more able candidates who realised that the boom could disturb residents and shake buildings and shatter glass. (e) was probably the weakest area – the majority of candidates wrote “by a quarter” when the answer was “to a quarter”.

<p>Paper 0510/05 Oral Communication</p>

General comments

Moderators report that in the vast majority of cases candidates had been well prepared for this component and Teachers took great care to place candidates at ease and to then conduct efficient oral examinations. The accuracy of assessment has been maintained and there continues to be a gradual improvement in the conduct of the examination itself.

Administrative procedures were usually completed well, with most Centres helping to make the External Moderation process as easy as possible. However, it is worth focusing on the following areas which need some attention:

- There is still some uncertainty about Internal Moderation. Centres are reminded that this should take place if more than one Teacher is used and that there should be some evidence presented confirming that Internal Moderation procedures have indeed been carried out. However, at most Centres, *the normal arrangement is that a single Teacher should conduct the tests* and he or she should be responsible for awarding the marks to the candidates and for recording those marks on the relevant CIE forms. The use of more than one Teacher should be seen only at large Centres – i.e. those with a large number of candidates. It is assumed that a single Teacher should be in a position to conduct at least 25 oral tests – many Teachers have shown that they are able to cope with significantly more than this number.
- Moderators found that they had to complete a surprising number of Amendment Forms because marks had been added and/or transcribed incorrectly. This is a time-consuming task for the External Moderators and should therefore be minimised as much as possible. It is recommended, therefore, that Centres ask a person other than the Teacher (e.g. a colleague in the English department) to check the addition of the marks on the Summary Form, and the subsequent transfer of those marks to the Mark Sheet.

- There were still a few Centres who sent deficient samples. When Moderators received samples which did not cover the full range of the marks, or did not include samples of commonly awarded marks in the middle of the range, the moderation process became very difficult.
- Some Centres are sending recordings of all of their candidates. The instructions for preparing the sample sent to CIE are very clear and are printed on the reverse of the Summary Form. Ideally, Moderators prefer to receive the minimum number of recordings (10 for most Centres, or 15 or 20 for large Centres) *on one or two cassettes*. Centres sending a large number of cassettes should discontinue this practice and adjust their sampling procedure.
- Moderators noted that some Centres appeared not to explain the examination process to their candidates. The *Teacher's/Examiner's Notes* booklet asks Teachers to "explain briefly what is going to happen in the course of the test." (Page 4, note 8A). It is important, therefore, that this is recorded.

Comments on specific aspects of the oral

The warm up

There was a considerable difference in the duration and the effectiveness of the warm ups. Teachers are reminded that the warm up potentially serves two purposes: to place the candidate at ease and perhaps to indicate which Topic Card might be the most productive for discussion. At Centres where the candidates are known to the Teachers, it is of course likely that a short warm up is all that is needed. However, at Centres where candidates are meeting Teachers for the first time, the Teacher's skill and sensitivity in conducting an appropriate warm up is probably more vital.

Warm ups should not be too long or too short – Centres would be wise to adhere to the 2-3 minutes suggested in the *Teacher's/Examiner's Notes*. The warm ups should not be too formal or formulaic – the focus should be on the candidate and an effort should be made to make that person feel as comfortable as possible given that he or she is about to take an examination. Centres should not, therefore, be conducting the same warm up for all candidates.

The topic cards

There were very few reported concerns about **Cards A, C and D**, which all seemed to work well. **Card D** was perhaps the most used card as it allowed many candidates to speak from direct personal experience. **Card A** produced generally solid and sound discussion and was seen to be appropriate in a wide variety of locations. **Card C** was received reasonably well, but there were occasions where conversations about friendship began to lose focus and became rather general. Moderators did report concerns, however, with **Cards B and E**, for quite different reasons.

Card B was either expertly dealt with or led to barren discussion. Teachers are reminded that 'subject' knowledge of a topic is not being assessed: in some cases it would have been perfectly admissible for a Teacher to re-focus the conversation on another aspect of climate, or indeed the effects of weather for example.

Card E did require sensitive use by Teachers. It was not the intention to invite discussion about personal experience of road accidents, but to raise the issue of the increasing concern about road safety across the world. If this topic became too personal (or indeed if any topic does so) Teachers would have been wise to move to more general matters.

The conversation

It is the responsibility of Teachers to initiate and help develop appropriate discussion. Merely working through the prompts on the Topic Cards in a pedestrian manner is unlikely to result in effective and productive conversation which encourage candidates to illustrate their full range of language skills. Teachers are reminded that they are obliged to move into more productive areas if a conversation is proving difficult. The choice of Topic Card can, of course, have a strong bearing on the conversation which follows and Teachers should use appropriate devices to ensure that candidates are able to speak about the topic as easily as possible. Candidates' oral skills are being assessed, not their knowledge of the topic.

There is still a reliance on using the 'question and answer' approach in a number of Centres. The danger here is that an interview is the result, rather than a discussion. While questions are certainly needed, prompts should be the preferred method by which conversation develops.

However, in many cases, Teachers are conducting appropriate and interesting discussions with their candidates, and are approaching the Topic Card as a stimulus for conversation and not a rubric.

The delivery of speeches is becoming much less apparent and this is excellent news. Moderators would like to commend those Teachers who intervene early and stop a candidate who is talking continuously.

Assessment criteria

Where adjustment was made to Centres' marks, it tended to be the result of lenient marking. However, there was an increase in the number of cases of severe internal marking.

There seems to be general competence in applying the vocabulary criterion. However, some Centres should take note that the structure criterion invites more than a general accuracy of spoken language; it also requires that users can use a wide variety of structures to generate effective communication. Fluency is also sometimes over-rewarded – it is not just the ability to talk continuously, but to do so using appropriate pronunciation and intonation and to take note of the response of the listener. It is the fluency with which a candidate engages in conversation which is being tested.

Advice to Centres and requests from Moderators

- Where more than one Teacher is required, Centres should ideally offer a training session or workshop to ensure that the Oral Tests are conducted in a similar manner and that the assessment criteria are applied consistently. It is unacceptable for two Teachers to be operating at a Centre, and for one to conduct a warm up while the other does not.
- Moderators would be very grateful to large Centres (using many Teachers) if they were to provide a separate (and additional) Summary Form which lists the candidates who have been selected for the sample. These should, of course, be the only recordings sent to CIE.
- To ensure that audible cassettes with accurate listings are sent to CIE, Moderators request that Centres nominate a person to perform a thorough check of each cassette that is sent.
- Centres choosing to examine candidates in pairs are reminded that candidates with easily distinguishable voices should comprise the pair, and that both candidates should be given the same Topic Card. In pair examining, the onus is very much on the Teacher to facilitate discussion and prevent candidates talking exclusively to each other. In these situations, Moderators expect to hear a three-way discussion.
- While not compulsory, it would be very helpful to Moderators if all Teachers paused the tape at Part C, while candidates take 2-3 minutes to consider their Topic Cards and prepare for discussion.

Paper 0510/06

Coursework

General comments

In the ideal portfolio of coursework, a Moderator would perhaps see a candidate completing three different tasks, each with a different audience in mind. It would be very pleasing to see that candidates have been involved in group discussions and pair-work, but have also been able to deliver individual presentations. This is being achieved by several Centres; Examiners would like to see it happening in all who enter candidates for this component.

Comments on specific aspects

Tasks

The tasks chosen were generally suitable and allowed candidates to demonstrate a good range of second language skills. However, there is a tendency for some Centres to present three tasks which are all based on conversations – in other words, to mimic the Oral Examination (Paper 5) but to offer three discussions. When this is combined with the use of previous examination Topic Cards, the result is inevitably a limited and disappointing coursework portfolio. Centres are reminded that candidates need to be assessed using three criteria – structure, vocabulary and fluency - and the same Criteria Grid is used as in Paper 5. However, the Coursework option provides Centres with a much more flexible approach in terms of devising tasks and scenarios, and it allows the testing of the criterion separately if preferred.

Procedural obligations

Where three distinct and appropriate tasks were set, Centres have provided candidates with suitable guidance and have helped to collate and organise interesting and productive material.

Assessment

Assessment was sound in almost all cases. However, Moderators noted that a degree of leniency occurred in one or two cases where task-setting was limited to individual performance and, as a result, candidates' fluency was over-rewarded.

Advice to Centres

A Moderator is seeking to fulfil two main duties while listening again to a Centre's coursework: initially to confirm the Centre's interpretation and application of the assessment criteria, but also to confirm that a variety of appropriate tasks have been completed. For the Moderation process to be completed efficiently, Centres should submit a recording of candidates who can be heard individually (this is usually achieved through the medium of a conversation with the Examiner) but should also include a sample of other work.

If a Centre is in any doubt about whether it is completing or submitting appropriate Coursework, then it should probably consider entering its candidates for the Oral Test (Paper 05) instead.