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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Papers 0510/01 (Core) and 0510/02 (Extended)

Reading and Writing

General comments

Candidates seemed to have been well prepared for the exam as in recent sessions. There is evidence that teachers are studying previous reports and preparing candidates well so that they are able to cope with the demands of the paper within the time limits of the examination. Just one or two Centres are entering very able candidates for the Core tier when they should be entered for Extended.

The majority of candidates are understanding and responding to the questions in the manner expected of them and are able to differentiate between the varying requirements of the paper in a satisfactory manner.

Reading comprehension in both papers has shown improvement although candidates are tending to write very much longer answers which are not required in the first part of Papers 1 and 2. Better candidates showed a good level of comprehension in their closely and clearly focused answers. Writing too much is not a good way to deal with **Parts 1** and **2** of this paper as candidates are likely to penalise themselves as hit upon the right answer.

There were some particularly good responses to **Part 3** this session, and even those with a more limited command of the language made a creditable effort. However, the overall impression this session was that the majority of answers in this section were more or less average in spite of the impression that candidates were able to deal with the prompts well and seemed to enjoy writing the responses.

Some candidates are dividing their papers into columns for **Exercise 3**; this is not necessary and can sometimes cause the candidate to fall below the minimum word length.

There were fewer omissions of questions or whole exercises on the paper this session. Handwriting and word length in **Part 3** are still causing some problems. When word length is short then marks are inevitably going to be lower if the candidate cannot develop their ideas. It is in the candidates' own interest to make sure they have written within the word length set for each question. Centres should remind candidates about these matters and make sure that word length requirements are noted because some otherwise very good candidates lost marks this session by not writing nearly enough.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Exercise 1

Owls

Candidates did well in both tiers in this exercise, with many obtaining full marks.

- (a) The vast majority of candidates obtained the mark. Those who did not usually included the opening times, 10.00 17.30 and the months March to November.
- (b) Many gave the idea of resting or being nursed back to health or being cared for and all these responses were rewarded. However, some wrote 'to help the environment'.
- (c) Generally well answered and any reasonable lift was allowed.
- (d) Generally well answered with no real problems. Many lifted the entire piece about the discounts.
- (e) Quite well answered although a significant majority wrote 'via the website' which was an inference and not actually included in the text.
- (f) **(Paper 2 only)** This was well answered although sometimes prefaced by 'our interactive website about owls which is packed.....'.

Exercise 2 Paper 1 only*Fougeres Castle*

A significant number struggled with the entire exercise.

- (a) Many candidates found this a difficult question, giving details of the castle such as 'built on a rocky cliff'. Often 'in Europe' was missing from the answers.
- (b) Incomplete and incorrect answers were often given, with candidates incorrectly lifting 'towers and battlements'.
- (c) This was usually correct. Wrong answers here included the 'sights and sounds' of medieval castle life.
- (d) Generally well answered by the majority.
- (e) Most candidates answered correctly with days and times although a few mentioned only the time and the fact that it is closed for the month of January.

Exercise 2 Paper 2 only*Record Breakers*

- (a) Surprisingly this relatively straightforward question caused even able candidates a problem as they often gave only one part of the answer. Some candidates wrongly put, 'interests and delights readers around the world' or 'it was 50th edition' or 'had existed for 50 years', or substituted 'many' for the number of years.
- (b) This was generally well answered.
- (c) A significant number of candidates responded with the answer 'conventional and extraordinary records'.
- (d) Most candidates answered correctly that he was the youngest visitor to both poles or that he visited the North Pole at the age of 9 and the South Pole at the age of 11. However, phrasing the answer sometimes caused problems such as 'he took two years to go from the North Pole to the South Pole'.
- (e) Generally well answered, but most candidates could have gained their point without going into so much detail.

Exercise 3*Tea*

- (a) Some wrote simply 'by accident' and many candidates omitted to mention that the water was boiling and several tea bushes were blown into pots. Some candidates gave the response '4,700 years ago' as if the answer was 'when' not 'how'.
- (b) Some candidates became confused in this answer and several gave the answer 'milk'. More able candidates found no difficulty with this question in spite of the long lift which accompanied the correct response.
- (c) Although the answers were in the main correct, there was a lack of precision by candidates who wrote at some length before arriving at the correct answer. Many referred to the long distance or absence of trade routes.
- (d) Very few got the correct answer. The most frequent error referred to drinking in the afternoon. Others included the addition of milk, the availability and/or reasonable price, opening of trade routes or affordability.
- (e) About half of the candidates got this right while the other half just wrote that people wanted a cool drink.
- (f) **(Paper 2 only)** A well attempted answer and in spite of some muddle over the wording most candidates scored full marks. It was quite a difficult question for weaker candidates although some of these did gain the mark simply by writing a great deal. This is not a ploy to be encouraged.

Part 2**Exercise 1***India Calling*

- (a) Quite well done on both papers although several candidates did not look at the map and gave the answers 'Canada or Australasia or even Austria'.
- (b) This was also well done with both parts of the answer clearly given by the most able candidates. Weaker candidates explained what might be moved to India such as 'telephone sales' and 'enquiry departments'.
- (c) Mostly well answered. Stronger candidates were precise in their response, while weaker candidates generalised too much, writing 'many candidates' or included '3000 telephonists' and missed out the key idea that every job was oversubscribed.
- (d) Some candidates gave less than three ideas and some conflated 'discussions and weather'. Some described ways in which the call centre looks after its employees which was the question posed in (f) while others picked up on the word 'global' and lifted 'back into the Indian night'. However, a large number of candidates managed to get all three ideas.
- (e) Stronger candidates coped well in this exercise but some common wrong answers here were 'visualise huge bills' or 'guess' or 'they don't say they are calling from India'.
- (f) **(Paper 2 only)** Some candidates had already answered this question in (d) and repeated the information about newspapers and clocks. Those who were able to discern the requirements of this answer usually scored very well with the common answers being 'doctor and canteen' and 'good conditions'. Overall many candidates came out of this question with good marks.

Exercise 2*Flamenco Summary*

This caused the most problems on the paper because candidates did not really read the rubric properly. A very high percentage concentrated on the origins, history and where it is staged rather than the method of performance. Even so, those who did interpret the rubric correctly managed easily to identify at least four content points even if the language mark was restricted. Some misunderstandings included the idea of a 'sombre' being played instead of the guitar.

Exercise 3 Paper 1 only*Form Filling*

Not enough notice was taken of the precise instructions on the paper to use capitals, to tick circle and delete. Many did not give capitals in the first section although there were hardly any errors in giving the correct name and spelling it correctly. The date of birth caused difficulties and many candidates put the year as 2004; more careful checking would have shown that this must have been incorrect. The current age was often given as 16 and not 15 and the address sometimes included 'the capital of Japan' which could not be credited as being appropriate.

In the second section the instrument was usually correct but years of experience was often incorrect with answers varying between 4 and 2 years. The deletion for player in the orchestra was often wrong or not deleted but simply either the 'Yes' or 'No' circled. No marks were given unless the instructions were followed properly. Very few candidates gave both reasons for the application for the residential music course and the incorrect use of the 3rd person singular, 'to improve his trumpet playing' denied many candidates marks. However, a significant number of candidates did score marks here. The vegetarian option was usually correctly circled and in the main the e-mail address was also correct but some candidates had continued with the capitalisation from the first section of the form and therefore did not gain a mark for this.

Exercise 3 Paper 2 only*Note Making – Bergen*

This was a most accessible exercise to most, and there was plenty of evidence that Centres seem to have prepared candidates well for note-making tasks.

- (a) This was almost always correct for both marks although weaker candidates gave 'cost' for coast. Some lifted the second sentence about snow. A few were confused between the Antarctic and the Arctic.
- (b) Not so many candidates gained both points here. The first point about the Viking trading post was recognised but not so many understood the idea of trade with specific places or the 'wind-dried' fish. Some wrote that it has been there before Columbus had discovered it.
- (c) Also well answered with the most common points given to 'wood' and 'brightly painted'.
- (d) Usually candidates scored one mark, mainly the 'market' idea followed by 'bathing pool'. Least recognised was the tour of the fjords, and some wrote about the harbour or the shopping.

Part 3

It was encouraging to see successful attempts at suitable tone and register in the different exercises. It is evident that Centres have been training candidates to use connectives and whilst this is effective in most cases some candidates overuse the strategy. This session even able candidates did not seem to bother overmuch with paragraphing and there has been a decline in punctuation.

Exercise 1

Many weaker candidates had difficulty in moving beyond the information in the prompts and made little attempt to describe the pool's other functions besides listing the ones mentioned. Some gave only vague details of alternative sites. However, stronger candidates used a very convincing tone to express their concerns and outrage about the demolishing of the pool. There were some heartrending phrases emphasising its importance such as 'I learned to swim here and so did my brothers and sisters, would you take away these memories?' Some dwelt on the fitness angle whilst others wrote about the necessity to learn to swim or to have life saving skills for the future. Sometimes the description of another location for the pool was limited to the last two or three sentences but the three rubric points were effectively addressed.

Exercise 2

A good attempt was made at an informal tone by many candidates at both levels. It seemed to be a subject of which many candidates had first hand experience. Most understood the idea of suggestions for filling time and gave many ideas from watching videos and television and reading books to more active things such as walking and playing tennis or swimming. Some recounting of what the friend was missing at school worked well. There was a lot of heartfelt sympathy and encouragement. However, quite a lot of candidates wandered off the point by concentrating too much on the type of injury experienced or the dreadful nature of the accident or recounted a similar experience that had happened to them instead of giving suggestions for filling the time.

Exercise 3

Candidates from all Centres dealt with this question well and found the subject accessible. Strong candidates gave pros and cons for the mobile phone using the prompts to expand their own ideas and hobby horses. Some candidates had extremely good knowledge and vocabulary to explain the various gadgets and uses of up-to-date phones. However, the weaker candidates relied on the prompts without too much development. Overall the responses fell into the satisfactory range with only a few candidates showing flair and a talent for argument.

Papers 0510/03 (Core) and 0510/04 (Extended)

Listening

General comments

Examiners reported good evidence of aural comprehension skills and of engagement with the subject matter and vocabulary with which candidates were presented on the tape.

Generally, candidates coped well with the format and length of the paper; there were no real omissions and candidates were all able to complete the paper in the time allotted.

Centres are reminded to pay particular attention to the layout and acoustics of the examination room in advance of the examination.

Comments on specific questions***Part 1 Paper 3***

Questions 1-6 formed the first section of the paper and comprised six short scenarios requiring short focused answers. Candidates usually performed well here. **Question 1** needed the answer 80 pence and many candidates chose to write dollars or to leave out the currency completely and so could not score. The telephone number for **Question 2** was very well answered with most candidates transcribing accurate numbers. This showed good evidence of aural comprehension and obvious consolidation of number work. **Question 3** required two items in the answer – cancelled and one hour – many candidates added the actual time to their answers although this was not necessary. Many candidates only answered one hour or cancelled and so failed to score the point. **Question 4** was quite well done – front gate and 8pm were needed here – but again some candidates only provided one option, scoring one mark out of the two available marks. **Question 5** was generally well done. **Question 6** needed the idea of getting change for the car park and most candidates understood this and scored the mark.

Part 1 Paper 2

Questions 1-6: **Question 1** was usually answered well, but some candidates provided only one option, scoring one mark out of the two available marks. **Question 2** was usually well done. **Question 3** needed the idea of getting change for the car park and most candidates understood this and scored the mark. **Question 4** caused some candidates to write about spare clothes, hats, and bags – the required answers were bat, lunch, and drink. **Question 5** was well done. The closing date for applications in **Question 6** often included the incorrect date – more work on dates would help this as many candidates wrote the wrong month or day or year.

Part 2

This comprised two note-taking/form-filing exercises in response to interviews.

Question 7 was a note-taking exercise in response to an interview with a young tennis player. In both tiers this exercise was generally well done.

Most candidates understood the fact that she was motivated by her parents, but a significant number (in both tiers) wrote a website address or charity for the final answer here.

For the extended tier version of the exercise some candidates wrote 3.45 for the length of time for the match. This had to be disallowed because it was not clear that it was a reference to a length of time (as opposed to a time of day).

Question 8 was a note-taking exercise in response to an interview with the director of an airport. Examiners were encouraged by a good level of aural comprehension being demonstrated by candidates generally.

The part about the date of the airport's being founded (1932) caused a significant number of candidates in both tiers a few problems; many wrote 1903 or start of flying or India.

'Billions' was not allowed as an answer to the numbers.

Many candidates wrongly thought that fuel and not fumes was the answer to the part about monitoring fuel and noise.

Part 3 Paper 3

There was, pleasingly, much evidence of working and re-working here (as opposed to mere guess-work). **Question 9** (an interview about the immune system) was well answered. Most candidates understood the taped passage and questions except for **(e)**.

Question 10 (a talk by a lifeboat crew member) was likewise generally well tried. There was good engagement with the subject matter here and most candidates were able to focus on the correct answer required. Very few candidates this session put all marks in the same column or ticked both boxes.

Part 3 Paper 4

This section of the paper presented the most challenging questions. **Question 9** proved to be harder for many than **Question 10**.

Question 9 (a) needed the idea of the immune system preventing illness, and **(b)** needed the fact that white cells kill bacteria; both of these were generally well answered by candidates. In **(c)** a few wrongly wrote about stress or pollution. **(d)** needed the specific idea of being tired and having too much work to do, but again many candidates wrote about stress. **(e)** was a good discriminator – only the best candidates could answer that it reduced the response of the white cells by half. In **(f)** most candidates wrote about the blood going faster here and were awarded the mark.

Question 10 was generally fairly well tackled, but in **(f)** many wrote about thinking about every move, which was not a quality that the question required.

<p>Paper 0510/05</p>

<p>Oral</p>

General comments

Moderators report again that in the vast majority of cases candidates were well prepared for this component and Examiners took great care to place candidates at ease. There continues to be a gradual improvement in the conduct of the oral test – the warm ups were of a good length and focused on general matters, and the conversations were productive and allowed candidates to exhibit their speaking skills.

Administrative procedures continue to be completed generally well, with many Centres showing good awareness of the external moderation process. The introduction of the three additional tick boxes (introduced last November) is helping to highlight areas where there are shortcomings. There were several observations made by Moderators with regard to procedures:

- Moderators are still finding that they have to complete a surprising number of Amendment Forms because marks are being 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 again, therefore, that Centres *nominate a person other than the Examiner* (e.g. a colleague in the English department) to check the addition of the marks on the Summary Form(s), and the subsequent transfer of those marks to the Mark Sheet (MS1). Mistakes made here are serious; some candidates are effectively being given the wrong mark (by the Centre) for their examination.
- It would appear that even more Centres are now failing to include *both* of the required forms. The Moderator's copy of the Mark Sheet is important for Moderators to see, so that accurate transcription of the marks can be confirmed. The Summary Form is equally important as this indicates the breakdown of the marks into the three criteria for all of the candidates.
- It is pleasing to report that most Centres are now sending in suitable samples. However, there are still a few Centres which are sending the recordings of all of their candidates. The instructions for preparing the sample 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 are still not explaining the examination format to their candidates. The teacher's/Examiner's Notes booklet asks Examiners 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. Moderators are aware that in many Centres the candidates will have been prepared for the Test during 'mock' examination lessons (and that, therefore, they know what to expect). In these cases, brief reference to the procedure is all that is required. By contrast, at Centres where the Examiner(s) is/are meeting candidates for the first time, a full explanation of the Test format is preferred.
- Moderators would like *all Examiners to pause the tape at Part C*, while candidates take 2-3 minutes to consider their Topic Cards and prepare for discussion. There are too many problems arising from leaving the tape running and Moderators feel that pausing the tape will solve these problems.
- All tapes should be rewound before sending to CIE. An increasing number of Centres are failing to do this.

Comments on specific aspects of the oral

The Warm Up

There continues to be a considerable difference in the duration and the effectiveness of the warm ups. Examiners are reminded that the warm up serves two purposes: to place the candidate at ease and to perhaps 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 Examiners for the first time, the Examiner's skill and sensitivity in conducting an appropriate warm up is probably more apparent.

Warm ups should not be too long or too short – Centres *should 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. Examiners should not include the topic of examinations in the warm ups, nor is it likely that a candidate will be placed at ease by talking entirely about his or her school.

Moderators would like to see more Examiners probing candidates' areas of interest in the warm ups – helping to ensure that an appropriate Topic Card is selected for **Part D** of the test. However, please avoid in-depth discussions, as these should develop (hopefully naturally) in **Part D**.

It is, of course, permissible for Examiners to select a Topic Card which they feel suits a candidate – there is no requirement to hand out the Cards randomly. However, there is a requirement to use as wide a variety of the five Topic Cards as possible.

The Topic Cards

Moderators did not report any problems with the Topic Cards. It was felt that candidates were able to talk with ease and at some length about all of the topics.

Card E (leadership) was felt to be the most challenging of the topics and was generally presented to more able candidates. The most popular topic appeared to be the mobile phone (*Card C*), perhaps because most young people regard this item as essential.

Moderators would like to remind some Examiners that the requirement is to discuss the topic as a whole. Examiners should not simply run through the six prompts, regarding them as six questions to be answered. Indeed, in many productive and interesting conversations, not all of the prompts are needed. If a candidate is struggling with the topic, the Examiner should make every effort to broaden its scope.

The Conversation

In most cases, Examiners are conducting appropriate discussions with their candidates, and are approaching the Topic Card as a stimulus for conversation.

Moderators have noticed that some conversations are exceeding the time limit by quite a few minutes. There is no need to conduct long conversations – 6 to 9 minutes is allowed, and Moderators would prefer Examiners to ensure that the discussions remain well within this range.

Some Examiners are reminded, however, that it is a conversation that is required. This session has seen a rise in the number of candidates delivering speeches. Speeches are contrary to the aim of this test – Moderators are assessing a candidate’s ability to *hold a conversation* with the Examiner. If a speech is given, some of the assessment criteria are effectively being ignored. A Centre allowing candidates to produce speeches will almost certainly witness a reduction in the original marks. This is unfair to candidates, who may well have been told that speeches are required.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment was generally accurate. Where adjustment was made to Centres’ marks, it tended to be the result of lenient marking, although there was a slight rise in instances of the need to adjust marks upward.

Moderators report that the fluency criterion is still causing concern. Fluency 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. There are concerns, therefore, that too many candidates are being placed in Band 1 (9-10 marks) for fluency when they do not exhibit “a sustained ability to maintain a conversation and to contribute at some length”. There are also concerns that the pronunciation and intonation element is not being given due attention for candidates at Band 3 level (5-6 marks).

Internal Moderation

Moderators are still experiencing problems with Centres who are using more than one Examiner *when there is no need to do so*.

At most Centres, the normal arrangement is that *a single Examiner 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 Examiner should be seen only at Centres with a large number of candidates. It is assumed that a single Examiner should be in a position to conduct at least 25 oral tests – many Examiners have shown that they are able to cope with significantly more than this number.

Where more than one Examiner is required, Centres should ideally offer a training session or workshop to ensure that the Oral Tests are conducted in a similar manner.

It is also important that steps are taken to ensure that the assessment criteria are applied consistently. It is very difficult for External Moderators to confirm competent examining when there is a difference among Examiners at the same Centre, in terms of the interpretation and application of the assessment criteria.

It is requested, therefore, that Centres who need to use more than one Examiner, *appoint a single Examiner to be responsible for overseeing the Oral Test examination session*. This includes: planning the tests, drawing up a suitable testing timetable, ensuring that each Examiner has a good number of candidates to examine (at least 25), monitoring the examining team to maintain consistency throughout the session, and organising/collating/signing all of the documentation which is sent in to CIE. In short, CIE needs to see that a single person has assumed responsibility for the Centre’s submission.

<p>Paper 0510/06 Oral (Coursework)</p>
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General comments

In the ideal portfolio of coursework, a Moderator would like to 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, in addition to making individual presentations.

Moderators are pleased to report that this is being achieved by more Centres. However, if all Centres could work towards a greater variety of activities, this can only result in strengthening the component further.

Comments on specific aspects

Tasks

The tasks chosen were generally suitable and varied, enabling the candidates to demonstrate their language skills appropriately.

Some Centres should avoid the repetition of three similar tasks. It is not acceptable to ask candidates to deliver three speeches, for example, or to take part in three similar conversations, albeit on different topics. The result of these approaches is inevitably limited and disappointing coursework.

Procedural obligations

Moderators report that in cases 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 continues to occur in cases where task-setting is limited (particularly to individual performance). For this component, the criteria do take into account how well candidates engage with others, and the criteria should be applied with this in mind.

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 (the Oral Test). However, the Coursework option provides Centres with a much more flexible approach in terms of devising tasks and scenarios, and it therefore allows the testing of the criterion separately, if preferred.

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 each candidate engaged in a discussion or a conversation*. This might be with a teacher/Examiner or it might be with another candidate. (Larger Centres will, of course, send a representative sample of individual candidates engaging in conversations).

In addition to the above, it would be useful if Centres were to include *one recording* of any group discussions that have taken place.

It is *not useful* for the External Moderators to receive speeches as the only examples of oral coursework.

If there is any confusion as to what is appropriate coursework, it is recommended that candidates are entered *for the Oral Test (0510/05)*.