

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

**Paper 0510/01 (Core) and
0510/02 (Extended)
Reading and Writing**

General comments

Centres seem to have prepared their candidates well for the new format of the papers. Both papers offered a range of tasks with varying degrees of difficulty. Differentiation was achieved; the full range of marks was observed across both the Core and Extended tiers. Very few incomplete papers were submitted, and where they were, there were clear indications of the overall weakness of the candidate. There were few general misunderstandings of the rubric requirements and all the questions were well attempted. Time management did not seem to pose problems for the majority of candidates.

For Extended candidates, reducing the writing tasks to two has resulted in better quality writing. This is possibly one reason why so few candidates omitted exercises. Not all candidates adhered to the required word length for these final exercises and many were rather short. The introduction of the form-filling exercise for Extended candidates caught some unawares and not all were prepared for the accuracy of transfer of information the exercise requires. It is hoped that, in future, Extended candidates will be given more practice at this type of exercise and improve their performance in subsequent examinations.

Core candidates benefited from the changes to the criteria for the summary writing exercise and this enabled even very weak candidates to score marks. In some areas, notably Exercise 2, Core candidates had difficulties with the stimulus text and found it very challenging to extract correct information from the chart. Core candidates responded to the note-making exercise for the first time this session. It is hoped that, with further practice, their confidence and performance in this type of exercise will also improve over time.

There is continuing evidence that candidates are underlining and highlighting pertinent information in the stimulus texts which helps them respond appropriately to the questions.

In general, handwriting was legible and most candidates are now writing in blue or black ink. There are still, however, candidates whose handwriting is very poor indeed. Some candidates write across the column clearly labelled 'For Examiner's Use' which is not helpful for examiners or candidates. If extra space is required, candidates are encouraged to use the blank pages at the back of the examination booklet and indicate that they have done so.

Comments on specific questions

Exercise 1 (Core and Extended)

Most candidates did quite well on this exercise, although many found the first question challenging.

- (a) Some candidates wrote incorrectly, 'open parks'/ 'holiday parks'/ 'open bushed parks'/ 'accessible by car'. Many lifted 'rarest and most endangered animals' from the text.
- (b) Many candidates got this question correct. It was the exception to omit the \$, but candidates from some centres did use the £ sign or their national currency sign by mistake.
- (c) Candidates either got this correct or were confused about the idea of 'talks'. Common mistakes included 'safari treasure hunts'.
- (d) Many candidates achieved a mark here. Where there were mistakes it was because candidates had lifted all the information about times or incorporated information about the Gift Shop and Café.

- (e) Most gave the answer 'educational packs and talks' although some wrote 'parks' for packs. Where the website was given as a response it was usually accurate but sometimes the 'a' in 'coast' was missing. This was a careless slip which cost some candidates a mark.
- (f) Most got this correct, although a minority gave the wrong park and some answered with how to contact rather than which park to contact.
- (g) **(Extended only)**
About half the candidates got this question completely correct. Some omitted the idea of a 'full paying child' and gave information about the child being between certain ages. In the second part of the question some missed out the 'original' for the voucher.

Exercise 2 (Core and Extended)

Many candidates found this exercise challenging. It offered good differentiation across the tiers and through the ability range. As a result, a full range of marks was achieved. Some careless errors were made, and less able candidates struggled with the meaning of the stimulus text, the grid and the questions, so were unable to score high marks. It is possible that Core candidates are not accustomed to this type of question and need further practice at drawing information from graphs and charts.

- (a) This was a demanding first question, but the more able candidates managed to grasp both ideas of the 'first all women's team' to have 'reached both poles'. Wrong responses omitted one or both of these ideas and sometimes included 'north pole' or 'conquered the Antarctic'.
- (b) Many candidates failed to gain a mark for this question, sometimes through carelessness where they omitted 'kilos' or 'less' from their responses. Some were unable to interpret the weight grid and gave 12 kilos instead of 2 kilos. Less able candidates were unable to distinguish between 'normal' and 'start of the expedition'.
- (c) This was generally well attempted but some wrong answers included the direct lift from the text, 'areas of human endurance research'.
- (d) Once again this question relied on correct interpretation of the grid which some candidates found difficult. Some gave incorrect information that Pom Oliver was 13 instead of 15 years older or even 25 years older. Some offered incorrect ages for the two women; others claimed she was 'bigger than' rather than 'older than'.
- (e) In general, this was well answered by the majority of candidates. Where the question seemed to have been misread, the candidates offered the incorrect lift, 'eating bread and cakes'. A few had problems with the word 'insulation' and used it incorrectly as 'insulator'.
- (f) This discriminated between those who had read the information in the stimulus text carefully and those who had not. Some candidates failed to distinguish between Zoë Hudson's job in Britain and her job as 'base camp manager' of the expedition.
- (g) A large percentage of candidates did achieve the correct response for this question. However, some candidates did not answer this question clearly or concisely, writing vague responses such as 'they are heavier' without indicating which: the fruit or the multivitamins. Better understanding of relevant pronouns would have helped some candidates.
- (h) Generally well recognised and answered by many. A few candidates were unsure what 'natural resource' meant.
- (i) **(Extended only)**
This was a challenging question for many. Several candidates confused the physical with the mental difficulties experienced by the team. Some candidates offered only one part of the answer i.e. 'drifted backwards' or 'covered 5 miles' or crucially omitted the detail of drifting backwards twice the distance covered the previous day.

(j) (Extended and Core – question (i))

This question was well answered by those who really understood the stimulus text; often full marks were obtained by these candidates. Some candidates were confused as to what was required. In the main, mark scheme points 2 and 3 ('pulling nearly twice their own weight' and 'spending 10 hours each day covering the distance') were the most usual correct responses. Point 1 was often only partially given with many candidates writing about the team suffering from the cold without qualifying it. Point 5 was the least popular response.

**Exercise 3
(Extended only)**

This was a new exercise for the Extended paper. Some candidates were not fully prepared for the precision and accuracy this exercise requires. Some responses were disappointing, with even a few strong candidates scoring low marks. Those candidates who gave the exercise careful thought scored good marks. A number completed the form as if they were James and used the incorrect pronoun 'he' with the relevant verb form, which was not acceptable. Not all candidates remembered to follow instructions to circle, underline and delete as required.

Section A

Most difficulties were encountered in the first two lines. Some candidates seemed unsure what an initial is and many wrote the first name in full. Many candidates gave the address in the wrong order or added the unnecessary 'at' to the address. Quite a few candidates mis-spelt 'Russell Street'. Sometimes the age was given as 19 instead of 18. 'Time at the Camp' was usually correct as was the response to 'Age Group'.

'Number of Children' varied between 45 and the correct 8. 'Students came from' initiated a variety of answers. If the previous answer was 45, then the incorrect response of 'France' was often given. There were very many incorrect spellings of Britain which included 'Britten', 'Britian' and 'Britin'. A few candidates gave the acceptable response 'UK'. 'Problems at the camp' was not well answered as many candidates wrote simply 'yes' or 'no' without explanation. 'Work at the Camp in the Future' caught the unwary with many crossing out the incorrect option then realising their mistake and giving the correct response. This showed that candidates are checking their work and are able to make adjustments to their responses, which is to their credit. With 'Preferences for Future Work', quite a number of candidates wrote about their future hopes to go to university instead of potential future work at a summer camp.

Section B

This was again a challenge for Extended candidates. Many failed to follow the 'between 12 and 20 words' instruction and a number wrote in the third person. There were also errors with spelling, capitalisation at the beginning of the sentence and use of a full stop at the end. However, a good number of candidates had the right context, and scored both marks with a concise and accurate response.

**Exercise 3
(Core only)**

This is a familiar exercise for Core candidates who mostly did well. They were fully prepared for the exercise and very few filled in the form with their own personal information, as in previous years. Spelling was often accurate and candidates had obviously made an effort to copy and transcribe correctly which resulted in good scores in general. Most candidates for this tier took notice of the requirements to circle, tick and delete.

Section A

As with the Extended paper, there were some problems with the address. Where mistakes were made 'at' was added or the address was in the wrong order. More often the mistakes occurred in the 'Occupation' where 'explorers' was wrongly lifted or in 'Name of Employer' where the department was given instead of the name of the company. 'Destination' was usually correct, although a few thought it was 'an interesting place'.

Section B

Again this was a new exercise for Core candidates who dealt reasonably well with it. However, many did not link it to **Section A**, and wrote about themselves or wrote in the third person. Some did not write in full sentences, leaving out the subject.

Exercise 4 (Extended only)

This was a challenging exercise for weaker candidates. For stronger candidates, it was tackled reasonably well but there were fewer candidates scoring full marks than in previous sessions. It was in this exercise that candidates were often tempted to write rather long and rambling answers across the 'For Examiner's Use' column. It was noticeable, particularly in the third section, that candidates were trying to explain their answers rather than just give brief points under the sub-headings.

Problems associated with landfill sites

Many did well in this section and managed to score two or three marks. The most usual answers were 'smells', 'toxic compounds' and 'risk of birth defects' but sometimes 'risk' was missing. Mark scheme point 5 was hardly identified at all. However, a lot of candidates gave statistics which were unrelated to the question in this section or rephrased the same idea in three different ways. Others tried to use their own words for which they were rewarded when the meaning was clear.

Measures in place

This section caused a lot of problems to some candidates who seemed to have failed to read the heading. A number of answers related to the other two sections of the note-making. Those who had taken note of the heading carefully usually scored both marks.

Financial incentives

All three options from the mark scheme were identified by candidates although some included 'educational projects for schools and children' in this financial section.

Exercise 4 (Core only)

Core candidates found this a challenging exercise but many did manage to score quite well. Where mistakes were made in the first section, they were similar to those made by the Extended candidates. Core candidates managed the second section of this quite well with the 'pay as you throw' option being the most popular choice followed by the notion of 'educational projects' and 'funds to local councils'.

Exercise 5 (Extended only)

Since the emphasis of this exercise has shifted to identifying more content points, many candidates are making a real effort to identify them, but are not trying so hard to use their own words. A large number of candidates completely ignored the word limit and wrote to the end of the page. Candidates must be reminded that this is a summary exercise which requires them to keep within a restricted word length. Also, many wrote at some length about what happened before and during the operation rather than afterwards, which took up most of the 100 words.

All the points from the mark scheme were identified although often point 1 was repeated later on in the summary. In some instances, where candidates attempted to use their own words they tried to re-arrange existing vocabulary but sadly ended up giving incorrect information for example, 'Romina has shown little interest in Bongo'.

Once again, candidates must be reminded of the need to remain within the word length, and to focus on the specific summary question they are set.

Exercise 5 (Core only)

This exercise gave Core candidates a chance to attempt a summary based on their own notes. It was not always successful, as some candidates did not adhere to the word length or the guidelines for writing the exercise and mistakes were made in language, spelling and grouping/sequencing. However, there were exceptions and some Core candidates attempted to use their own words. In the main, those who had made good, accurate notes found the summary easier to write.

Exercise 6 (Core and Extended)

Most candidates seemed to enjoy this exercise and did quite well in addressing all three rubric prompts. There was some evidence that a number of candidates had previously written about a famous person and were able to draw on this to describe the celebrity and their achievements. The most interesting articles tended to be based on real people, but many also invited fictional characters from literature or history. Many candidates chose people from the world of sport such as David Beckham, Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane. Others chose television personalities such as Oprah Winfrey or film stars like Angelina Jolie and Tom Cruise whilst others wanted a whole pop group to attend. Many also chose their own country's famous star or politician.

There was flexibility in the idea of a prize day and a number of candidates described it as a 'prom' a 'party' or even a 'dance'. With some candidates, there was a lot of emphasis on the person and not so much on the prize giving and why their choice of famous person would be approved by others. This was by far the weakest part of many answers.

Most of the candidates achieved a good standard of grammatical accuracy, although there were errors in spelling such as 'price' for 'prize', 'guess' for 'guest' and 'there' for 'they're'. Missing articles were common and verb/subject agreement was a problem for some. In some answers, full stops were missing and there was lack of clarity about where sentences began and ended.

Many centres are teaching their candidates to use idioms. This is indeed a good way to inject interest and some style to the writing, for example, 'he has the gift of the gab', 'he is top notch' etc. However, over use can result in reader confusion. For example, one candidate writing about Ronaldo described him as a 'good egg person'. Idioms should be used judiciously and accurately - stronger candidates achieved this balance.

Exercise 7 (Core and Extended)

Candidates from some centres performed better on this exercise than Exercise 6. They had obviously been very well prepared for this type of argumentative writing and many were very comfortable with it.

There was generally appropriate paragraphing, with relevant introductory and concluding statements. Better candidates were able to look at both sides of the argument, using suitable tone and register. They developed their arguments with often quite interesting ideas about what the benefits of the factory might be to the community, whilst the opposing view gave candidates the opportunity to write convincing and powerful reasons why the factory should not be located in their area. There were emotive comments such as 'it would disfigure our neighbourhood' and 'but we know our influence is not likely to be big enough to stop the project'.

Weaker candidates listed the prompts and described them without really developing their own views or ideas about the project. Some candidates thought that it was a decision rather than plans or some believed that the councillor was the person actually building the factory. However, the tone and register were almost always appropriate in these responses.

As in Exercise 6, spelling and grammar have shown improvements, but spelling errors are still present. These include 'won't' for 'want', 'know' for 'now' and 'thing' for 'think'.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/03

Listening

General comments

There was a wide range of achievement, and the full range of marks was observed by Examiners. Many candidates had clearly been well-prepared for the test and knew what to expect. An equal number of candidates struggled to build up momentum and scored low marks.

As in previous sessions, in accordance with the 'listening for understanding' ethos of the component, phonetic attempts at an answer were rewarded unless they created a different word with a different meaning. Generally spelling was weak, however, and where it undermined communication of the answer, a mark could not be awarded.

Examiners reported that many gaps continue to be left. It is always a good strategy to attempt an answer, particularly if it makes contextual sense. Candidates should be encouraged to offer responses to all questions even if they feel their spelling may be inaccurate.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Generally candidates responded well to this section of the Paper.

Question 1

This was well answered, with most candidates recognising that the subject of the examination was science. There were many interesting and acceptable phonetic attempts at 'science'.

Question 2

Question 2 was mostly correctly answered as '5 minutes'.

Question 3

Many candidates struggled to spell 'basement' correctly, suggesting that it may have been a new word for them. However, there were a good number of reasonable attempts which gained the mark.

Question 4

This was mostly answered correctly: \$5. There were a few who opted for the incorrect \$7.

Question 5

Almost all candidates gave the correct answer for (i) 'open the windows', but (ii) was left blank by a large number of candidates. The mark scheme required 'turn off the power (to the toaster)'.

Question 6

This was generally well answered, with most candidates recognising that it was a surprise party and that guests should arrive early so they would have time to hide.

Part 2

This part of the Paper comprised two note-taking exercises.

Question 7

With 5 available marks, this question was based on an interview with a chauffeur. The responsibility of the chauffeur to ensure safety for his passengers was heard and conveyed by most candidates; however, 'comfortable' was often the response for the second part, and this was not acceptable. Very few candidates were able to spell 'routes' correctly, opting for 'roots', which is, of course, another word. 'Times' was

generally supplied, but 'journeys' offered some unusual spellings. In responding to aspects of the maintenance of the car, most candidates were able to convey 'clean and tidy', the checking of oil and water, and of the tyres and lights. Some candidates inverted the latter two answers, which led to them losing both marks because they related specifically to 'daily checks' and 'regular inspections'.

Question 8

This exercise was in response to an interview about earthships: environmentally-friendly houses of the future. It carried 7 marks. The lifespan (of 800 years) was answered correctly by most candidates, as was 'tyres', and 'bottles and cans' for the next two answers. Almost all candidates recognised that the direction built was south, but many omitted 'facing' and this was crucial to the answer because a *direction* was required. The answer for how the houses were heated was either known - in which case 'solar panels', or something very close (in spelling), was given - or candidates had not comprehended. The cost of building was generally correct, with many interesting attempts at the sign for the Euro. There were answers given as dollars or pounds, and these were not awarded the mark. The address of the website was often misspelled and there were quite a few candidates who used .com as the suffix. There were many phonetic attempts at .org including .orc .oak .og all of which were incorrect.

Part 3

Question 9

This question concerned a motoring expedition and was well answered except for (a) and (b) which were frequently wrong. A good number of candidates managed to score full marks on this question.

Question 10

This focused on the lives of red crabs on Christmas Island. There was a wider range of achievement for this more challenging true/false exercise than for **Question 9**.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/04
(Extended) Listening

General comments

Candidates had been well prepared by centres for the 0510/04 listening component and responded well to the taped text, generally demonstrating a fair level of aural comprehension and the ability to cope with the format of the paper within the allotted time scale.

Examiners commented on the high level of teaching evident in some very good responses which showed obvious engagement with taped text/task. As always, the paper was assessed for 'listening for understanding' and therefore feasible phonetic attempts at answers were allowed as long as another word was not formed which changed the sense of the answer e.g. 'break' for 'brake'.

Very few omissions/blank spaces were left in responses to this component. Throughout, there were signs of obvious effort. It is worth noting that where a candidate has rewritten the answer, it should always be made clear to the Examiner which answer is the candidate's final version. Preparation for the component is obviously thorough and advice for the future is, as always, to practise under timed conditions using past papers in conjunction with a published mark scheme.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

This was the short answer section comprising six short scenarios presenting realia and demanding concise, precise answers. 8 marks were available and candidates generally fared well, showing engagement with the situations presented and accuracy in reading and assessing the demands of the questions.

Question 1 was generally well answered – Nuria paid '5 dollars' for her CD – although some candidates wrote £5 and could not be credited, or launched into a lengthy explanation without clarifying how much was actually paid.

Question 2 needed the ideas of 'turning off the power' and 'opening the window'. Some candidates omitted one answer even though the question carried 2 marks.

Question 3 was about the party guests arriving in 'time to hide' for the 'surprise party' and either element was credited. Generally this was well answered although some candidates reiterated the question in the answer.

Question 4 required the answer 9am for the supporters to be on the coach and most candidates were able to answer this although some wrote just 9 o'clock without specifying whether it was am or pm.

Question 5

Mr. Rasheed's telephone number caused some problems with number sequence reversal and often the distractor number was given instead of the correct 3247. More work on number and sequence would help candidates prepare for this type of question.

Question 6

There were two details required: 'the market' and 'to plan'. Many candidates failed to score the two available marks here by providing 'station' as the answer.

Generally, a good level of aural comprehension was shown in the responses to **Part 1**.

Part 2

Part 2 of the paper comprised two note-taking exercises of a more challenging nature, in keeping with the progression of difficulty of the component.

Question 7

With 7 available marks, this question was based on an interview with a chauffeur, and there were many accurate responses. His responsibilities were 'safety' and 'comfort' which most candidates were able to provide. 'Comfortable' was not credited since it failed to make grammatical sense in context. His behaviour was 'punctual' and 'polite' – again good responses were received. The plan for the day concerned 'times', 'routes', 'journeys'. 'Roots' was not credited as it altered the sense of the answer. 'Clean' and 'tidy', 'oil' and 'water', 'tyres' and 'lights' followed and were generally well answered by candidates. The training course was a 'specialist' one leading to an 'advanced' driving test.

Question 8

This exercise was in response to an interview about earthships: environmentally-friendly houses of the future. The lifespan was '800 years' which most candidates were able to provide, and the walls were made from 'tyres'. The insulation was provided by 'bottles' and 'cans' and the wood was used to make 'cupboards'. The houses were 'south-facing' and power was provided by 'solar panels'. Candidates engaged well with the idea that the roof 'collected' and 'filtered' rainwater. The cost posed some problems – the correct answer was 'one hundred thousand euros' and candidates fared better if they wrote out the sum in words because those using figures often added or deleted zeros. The website was often inaccurately transcribed: only www.earthship.org was accepted as correct.

Part 3

This was the most challenging part of the paper and comprised two exercises demanding longer answers.

Question 9 was about a motoring expedition; 6 marks were available and a number of candidates scored only 1 or 2 marks. **(a)** Rupani did not change driver, **(b)** it offered 'excitement' or 'adventure' to the driver while 'preserving nature'. Many candidates omitted the second aim even though the question did stipulate 'aims'. Sub-question **(c)** was well answered with a variety of types of landscape being given credit. Generally for **(d)**, '62 people and 18 vehicles' was accurately transcribed, although some omitted the number of vehicles completely. For **(e)**, there were also mostly accurate responses – 'doctors', 'check ups', 'water' and 'sunscreen' all featured. For **(f)**, candidates often reiterated the question as part of the answer e.g. 'crossing a river bed', and failed to score. Acceptable answers included 'steep slopes', 'flowing water', 'boulders', 'slippery surfaces'.

Question 10

This exercise was about an Indian craft and carried 6 marks. Some candidates fared well while others failed to score at all. **(a)** required simply 'mirrors', while **(b)** needed the idea of 'settlers' and the 'contrast to the desert'. For **(c)** the candidate needed to provide three pieces of information but many reiterated the question as the first answer, 'made walls smooth', thus reducing the possible score to a ceiling of 1 mark. The actions of 'framing', 'designing', 'inserting mirrors' and 'painting' were all credited. Sub question **(d)** was well answered although some candidates wrote 'cars' rather than 'carts' as items. For **(e)**, the idea that the craftspeople were now offered a 'better way of life' was required – this was well answered.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/05
Oral Communication

Part A – Welcome and brief explanation

Examiners are asked to give a brief explanation of the format of the Test – of what the candidates can expect to happen in the following 10 minutes or so. It is important for candidates **to be told** (even if they are aware of the format) what to expect. At Centres where the Examiner is meeting candidates for the first time, Moderators expect to hear a **full** explanation of the Test format.

Part B - The Warm Up

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 Teacher/Examiner, 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 more apparent.

Moderators are still unhappy with the conduct of the warm up at a number of Centres.

The warm up should not be too long or too short – Centres **should adhere to the 2-3 minutes** suggested in the *Teacher's/Examiner's Notes*. 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. Please do not ask a candidate how nervous he/she is, nor is it likely that a candidate will be placed at ease by talking *entirely* about his or her School.

Part C – handing out the Topic Card and preparation time

Moderators would prefer that tapes are paused at this stage, while the candidate considers the contents of the Card. This must be less stressful for candidates than leaving the tape running. Indeed, pausing the tape will be required from 2007.

It is not necessary to read out word-for-word what is printed on the Card – a summary of the topic is fine. Candidates are allowed to ask questions during this stage while they study the Card (and this **need not** be recorded), so there is no need to read through the prompts, etc. on the Test Card.

Examiners are reminded that the selection of Topic Cards should **not** be random. It is not actually fair to candidates to choose Cards in this manner (e.g. A, B, C, D, E - then a repeated pattern). Topics should be selected to try to match each candidate's interest and ability (from evidence in the warm up). Moderators are listening to see how, and how well this is done by Examiners. There is evidence that Examiners are improving in this area and that Cards are being chosen with care.

There is no need to use all of the Cards, and certainly no need to distribute topics/cards evenly. However, please do attempt to use a good range of topics.

Under no circumstances should candidates be allowed to choose their Cards, or be involved in the choice of the topic.

Part D – the Conversation

The aim of the Cards is to generate **focused discussion**, and many Examiners and candidates are achieving this in a variety of ways. The very best discussions are those during which Examiners create a relaxed atmosphere, allowing candidates to speak easily and at good length. Such Examiners are confident, in control (without dominating of course), possess an understanding tone of voice, are friendly but in a professional manner, and respond to most of what candidates say.

Some Examiners are reminded, however, that it is their responsibility to do as much as possible to ensure that candidates do not offer speeches, or do not try to sustain monologues. In these cases, the Examiner should intervene quickly and begin a conversation. If a candidate is talking continuously for more than 30 seconds, this is not likely to result in a proper conversation/discussion.

Moderators would like to hear discussion/conversation **from the outset** – there is no need for an introductory or extended speech by the candidate about the topic.

For a conversation to occur there needs to be input from both parties. It is **not acceptable** to regard the Test as an interview, proposing a series of questions in a formal manner. It is acceptable for Examiners to add to the conversation with views and/or ideas, which may lead to prompts for further discussion. Indeed, if we are to assess candidates' fluency (the ability to sustain a conversation) then Examiners need to provide candidates with the means to illustrate competence in this area.

The Topic Cards

Moderators report that all five Cards were within the experience of candidates and produced lively and interesting conversations. Card A – clothes – was perhaps the most straightforward topic and many Examiners were successful in adding vigour to it, although some allowed general chat about fashion to creep in. Candidates given Card B – transport – sometimes moved away from the focal point, resulting in general discussions about travel, and even holidays.

Card C – history – proved to be popular, with candidates enjoying talking about their own countries and the past. It was a challenging topic, but was generally given to stronger candidates. Card D – entertainment – was often chosen to suit individuals who had expressed some interest in performance art in the warm ups. Card E – copying – was perhaps the most challenging topic and many Examiners did well in broadening it. Some candidates clearly engaged with the issue of copyright and had strong and interesting views on it.

Many Examiners realise that these topics are starting points, with the aim of developing focused discussions. The prompts are not intended to be prescriptive, but are suggested as springboards for further discussion. The degree of difficulty does, however, increase with each prompt, the last prompt being the most challenging. Examiners should bear this in mind when they have stronger or weaker candidates.

Examiners are expected to differentiate. It is good examining to 'thin out' a topic for a weaker candidate, for example. Equally so, Examiners will need to ask more challenging questions of more able candidates – perhaps introducing more abstract strands of discussion. The assessment criteria are designed to accommodate such differentiation. Some of the prompts invite an element of critical analysis; others allow anecdotal/personal response.

Assessment Criteria

In a number of Centres, Moderators detected slight leniency. Adjustments were made to reflect this, particularly in lowering Band 1 marks into Band 2. Moderators also stated, however, that very few Centres were outside what might be regarded as tolerance for this component, suggesting that assessment is becoming more accurate.

Leniency was still noted in applying the Fluency criterion – Examiners need to be sure that candidates have contributed significantly to the conversation before being awarded 9 or 10. Moderators are listening for evidence that Band 1 candidates are developing the discussion, rather than just responding relevantly.

Administrative procedures

Many Centres are clearly aware of the tasks and duties that need to be carried out by the external Moderators and the moderating team are very grateful to the Examiners at these Centres.

However, there are several procedural matters, which, if carried out more efficiently, would make external moderation swifter and easier:

- Moderators continue to have to complete an unacceptable number of Amendment Forms. Mistakes in adding up and/or transcription will have been drawn to a Centre's attention on the Report – would these Centres please **nominate a person other than the Examiner** (e.g. a colleague in the English

department) to check the totals which are being arrived at. It really is unacceptable to award a mark to a candidate after an Examination, and then record a *different* mark on the official documentation.

- Some Centres are still failing to include **both** of the required forms. The Moderator's copy of the Mark Sheet (MS1) is important to confirm accurate transcription of the marks. The Summary Form is equally important, as this indicates the breakdown of marks into the three criteria for all of the candidates.
- As regards sampling, 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**. However, it is appreciated that cases will occur where a considerable amount of work is involved in transferring recordings to other tape(s). In these cases, Centres will need to make a decision as to whether the size of entry necessitates transference. Moderators are happy to receive a few extra recordings if this makes it much easier for the Centre.
- Centres are also reminded that the sample should include the **full range of marks** - that is, the lowest, the highest and a selection of marks spaced evenly between these.
- Moderators observed a number of Centres awarding half marks on the Summary Forms. This is unnecessary and should not occur. If an Examiner is in doubt about which mark to award, he/she should probably opt for the higher mark, rather than settle for a half mark.

Advice to large Centres

The use of more than one Examiner should be seen **only** at large Centres i.e. those with a large number of candidates. From 2007, the syllabus defines a large Centre as having **more than 30 candidates**. It is assumed, therefore, that a single Examiner should be in a position to conduct up to 30 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 and that assessment is consistent among the Examiners.

It is suggested that Centres who need to use more than one Examiner, **appoint a single Examiner to act as the Internal Moderator** and to be responsible for overseeing the Oral Test examination session. Duties should include: planning the tests; drawing up a suitable testing timetable; ensuring that each Examiner has a good number of candidates to examine (at least 30); monitoring the examining team to maintain consistency throughout the session; and organising and collating the documentation which is sent in to CIE.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Paper 0510/06
Speaking Coursework

General comments

In the ideal portfolio of coursework, a candidate should complete three **different** tasks. It would be very pleasing to see that candidates have been involved in group discussions and pair-work, in addition to making individual presentations. Evidence of this should be presented on the Individual Candidate Record Cards.

There was clear evidence again this session that Centres who comply with the above requirements make a very good job of designing, conducting and assessing coursework tasks. At these Centres, candidates clearly enjoyed being involved with coursework activities, which can be less formal than the Speaking Test.

However, at a few Centres, coursework was rather limited and occasionally inappropriate. The external Moderators urge these Centres to think again about why they opt for the coursework component. The aim of coursework is to broaden a candidate's learning experience, not to limit it, and to give a candidate more scope for conveying his or her oral skills than in a single, more formal test.

If an Examiner is not completely confident in designing and implementing three different and productive speaking tasks then it is advisable to opt for component 05, the Oral Test.

Assessment

Assessment was sound in cases where tasks had been carefully designed and carried out. In the cases where task were inappropriate, assessment proved to be lenient and/or erratic.

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, **it is requested** that Centres submit **only** a recording of candidates **engaged in a discussion or a conversation**. This might be with a Teacher/Examiner or it might be with another candidate.

There is no need to send in examples of group work, and/or recordings of candidates' presentations or speeches. Indeed, Centres are reminded that **there is no need** to record activities which will not feature in the sample sent in. It would be far too cumbersome to have to record all coursework activities, and it would negate the aim of assessing candidates in a more relaxed and creative/expressive atmosphere.