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Principal Examiner Feedback

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In English

JEH11/01 Year 6

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Introduction

Candidates appeared to engage very well with both the non-fiction and fiction texts and the grammar and writing sections. In particular, the writing task was addressed enthusiastically. There were a wide variety of interesting and creative responses seen, which indicated a high level of engagement by candidates, regardless of ability.

Throughout the three sections of the paper, there were very few instances where questions were not attempted, across all ability levels. This would indicate that both the questions and the availability of marks were mostly appropriately accessible for all abilities, across the specification.

Question 2

This question (**RA02**) simply asked for candidates to give the word in the text that was an appropriate match for 'persistent'. 'Competitive' was a frequent incorrect answer; but also, a range of others picked from the quoted phrase such as 'both'.

Question 4

This question (**RA05**) required learners to explain why the writer selected the question as a subheading. Few responses achieved two marks. Candidates frequently were awarded one mark. One-mark answers mostly referred to the second bullet point in the mark scheme. Responses which were not awarded the mark mostly referred to the content of the paragraph or re-worded the question. Candidates who were not awarded the mark often did not take on board the question focus – *why* the question was a subheading – and gave general responses to the purpose of a subheading.

Question 7

The question (**RA04**) required candidates to select the word in the list that was an appropriate match for 'dominated'. Most candidates responded to the instruction to 'circle' but other correct and unambiguous responses were accepted. This question proved unexpectedly challenging, given that the texts are pre-released, some weeks prior via the source booklet, for class study.

Question 8

This question (**RA01**) required candidates to identify the similarity between different runners. This proved to be well answered with most candidates achieving the correct answer.

Question 9

This question proved challenging for candidates (**RA02**).

Most answers referred to 'explosively' meaning sprinters were extremely fast, therefore being incorrect. The interpretation/inference of the concept of explosiveness needed to be explored in more depth. Frequently incorrect answers included additional modification such as 'extremely' or 'incredibly'.

Correct answers gained credit by referencing strength, power, energy - such as 'run with a lot of power' or 'their feet strongly push off the ground.'

Question 10

This question had an **RA01** focus, and candidates performed as well as expected at the target level.

Question 11

This question had an **RA05** focus, and candidates performed as well as expected at the target level.

Question 13

This question had an **RA02** focus. A few references were made to 'garbage and dirtiness', which were incorrect. Others merely lifted the words from the question stem 'sand...dry grass' which did not address the RAO in this question. Some responses referred to the fact that it was in a 'desert' but did not interpret the quotation in the question, specifically.

Correct responses made judicious use of the words 'only' and 'just' to indicate their understanding that very little, if anything, failed to grow there.

Correct responses indicated some good vocabulary choices as: 'desolate', 'isolated', 'barren' regarding the minimal plant life.

Question 15

This question proved to be a 'differentiator' for candidates. The question focussed on **RA02** and **RA05**. The second mark was a key indicator of accessibility for students able to achieve the full marks to demonstrate this level of challenge.

Many candidates were able to identify how the author felt accurately from the text mostly by using 'tired/exhausted' for one mark. Some one-mark answers included the question wording 'the writer is feeling...' as a lead in. Some candidates identified authorial intent but didn't include specific reference to the quote given in the question. Others often borrowed

heavily from the quote and missed the authorial intent aspect of the question. Higher ability candidates were able to achieve the second mark but many candidates that were more literal achieved only one mark.

Question 16 (RA04) was answered extremely well by many candidates. Correct responses referred to implicit links between the two words ('pain is not pleasurable' was a frequently correct response). Creditworthy responses also identified that the words were opposites, contradictions, antonyms and, in a few instances, oxymorons. Some incorrect responses referred to alliteration. A few incorrect responses explained the phrase literally – 'the author is happy to be in pain'. Some pupils obviously misunderstood the question and responded that the writer was showing how much pain he was in. Quite a few candidates simply referred to the words being 'different' or meaning 'different things' which failed to secure the mark.

Question 17 (RA01 and RA02)

Most candidates achieved just one mark (out of the possible 2) for this question. Others misunderstood the question, giving responses about the writer's location – 'because he doesn't know where he is' etc. The most popular correct response referred to the runner being low on water. Candidates often included more than one of the acceptable bullet points for one mark e.g., low on water and extreme heat, though few candidates developed their response further by including reference to danger/death. Candidates also mentioned finishing the challenge he had set. There were various ways of expressing the third bullet point – e.g., 'he had come too far to quit'.

Question 23 (RA02)

There were frequent one-mark responses, but also a few two-mark responses. Bullet points 1 and 3 were less referenced. The most frequent response was the bullet point 2 route, referring to the man being bossy/firm with the runner. Candidates used various ways of expressing this – most identified the encouragement that the couple gave him. There were some direct lifts from the question with no explanation – 'Come on barked the man' or some direct text lifts from a different section – 'I can't sit here all day'. There were also several examples of responses which referenced motivation but did not link it to a third person/newcomer.

Question 25, an RA05 focus, proved to be a straightforward question for most candidates, with most gaining credit. Most structured their response as a question rather than a statement. A small proportion of incorrect responses asked a general question which was not linked to the end of this extract, e.g. – 'How did he feel?' Others incorrect responses merely quoted the question – 'What happened after the extract finished?'. Overall, the question was correctly interpreted, with some well thought out questions asking if he

finished the race/won a medal at the end/saw the old couple at the finish. The format of this question has been used in many tests now so is likely to be quite familiar to candidates.

Questions GA1 26 - 34 Grammar Section

Question 26 (GA01)

This question was challenging – with very few candidates achieving the second mark (all three prepositions identified correctly). Many candidates incorrectly identified ‘out’ in the sentence as a preposition. Candidates would benefit from additional study in this word class area.

Question 27 (GA01) was generally answered very well. Candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of subordinate clauses.

Question 28, (GA01)

This question was answered very well (identification of tenses). There was clear evidence of candidate performance having improved in this assessment area since the last series.

Question 29 (GA01)

Candidates were very confident in identifying the subject in the sentence. Some also included the determiner (**The** sun) but this was also acceptable.

Question 30 (GA01)

Most candidates were able to achieve at least 1 mark for this homophones question, with many gaining the full 2 marks. Candidates are improving in this area of grammar from series to series.

Question 31 (GA01)

Candidates are steadily improving in the area of correctly identifying and demarcating direct speech alongside the use of other correct punctuation. Where candidates achieved just 1 mark, this was an even spread of those who only inserted the full stop and question mark correctly and those who only inserted the speech marks correctly.

Question 32 (GA01)

Candidates generally answered this question well and many achieved at least one mark. Candidates are steadily improving in their knowledge and application of contractions from series to series.

Question 33 (GA01)

Most candidates were able to gain at least 2 marks for identification of the nouns in the sentence. Where 2 marks were achieved, this was usually for 'heat' and 'sand'. The most difficult noun to identify was the noun 'intensity'. Future candidates would benefit from further study of abstract nouns.

Question 34 (GA01)

This question was answered very well by most candidates. They are increasingly confident with the identification of the correct prefix.

Question 35 (WA01 and WA02) Form, Communication and Purpose (FCP)

Most candidates responded extremely positively to this writing prompt. The task was to nominate either themselves, or others, for a prize as a reward for facing a big challenge. Candidates wrote enthusiastically about a huge range of challenges e.g., sporting, creative and career achievements. Many wrote extremely candid accounts about family members, topical events, or political figures. It was interesting and positive to see them drawing inspiration from the wider curriculum and current affairs.

It was very rare to see the task not attempted and candidates evidently left themselves sufficient time in the exam to be able to compose a fair response, which continues to improve with each series.

Stronger responses showed evidence of planning and/or annotation of key prompts in the question.

Question 35 (WA01 and WAO2)

The mention of the local newspaper in the prompt caused some candidates to write a newspaper report of someone facing a challenge rather than making a nomination – in some cases this was laid out in columns, occasionally accompanied by space for a photograph. While competent writers were still able to maintain links with the task, weaker writers 'lost their way'. Others launched into writing a 'story' about an adventure containing a challenge of sorts – in some cases several challenges; this often strayed far from the original task. There were a

wide range of challenges featured from climbing Mount Everest to a homeless person winning a dance contest. It was interesting to note what candidates viewed as a challenge.

Sometimes the piece was written as a letter, often to the editor of a newspaper. A number of responses paraphrased the prompt as their introductory paragraph with some incorporating parts of Text A or Text B within their response. The reading texts were used as support by some candidates. While a few wrote about a marathon, Finn's challenge was occasionally used as support for a description of a different sporting challenge e.g., a cycle race, long distance swim or climbing a mountain. Better writers were able to personalise their piece.

Question 35 (WA03) Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS)

GPS skills appear to be steadily improving based on previous paper performance. Basic sentence structure and punctuation is evidently becoming more secure, alongside the appropriate use of commas.

There was some evidence of higher-level punctuation (colons, semi colons, brackets and dashes) though these were not always used appropriately. Some candidates attempted to use a range of punctuation (not always appropriately) in an effort to achieve higher marks, when a greater variety of well-constructed sentences would have been more effective.

Sometimes sentence demarcation (even in more ambitious writing) was weak and had a detrimental effect on the marks awarded. There was a good understanding of tense in many pieces and stylistic features were often used. In weaker pieces these were overused or used inappropriately.

Spelling overall was mostly accurate or phonetically plausible. Handwriting was mostly legible and appropriately sized and spaced.

Whilst most pieces of writing were awarded marks in the middle to lower bands, it must be acknowledged that, with the time restraints imposed by the test, overall the quality of the work submitted continues to impress and improve year on year.

Summary

It will be of immense benefit for candidates if all centres ensure they maximise the opportunity to explore the pre-release of the JEH11 Source Booklet (non-fiction and fiction texts). This will ensure that all candidates have had the opportunity to become familiar with a range of vocabulary, linguistic devices and underlying themes, prior to attempting the Question Paper.

Candidates are showing positive developments in the GPS strand, showing better understanding of basic grammatical sentence structure and punctuation. In the FCP strand,

a continued focus on planning tasks and expanding on this to develop sections and paragraphs, across a range of text types, would be beneficial.

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