

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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## GCE Ordinary Level

Papers 1115/01, 1120/01, 1123/01 and 1124/01

Composition

### General comments

The writing tasks in this component of the syllabus met with enthusiastic responses from candidates across the whole ability range. It was obvious that both Teachers and candidates had worked hard in preparation for the examination, and Examiners commented on the improved level of communication achieved. The overall standard of written English appeared to compare well with that seen in previous years.

Many candidates showed their ability to write confident, well planned essays, which engaged and held the reader's interest, with original, thoughtful material, generally clearly expressed. Some candidates developed their essays at some length, sustaining a fair level of accurate writing and relevant content, although some candidates wrote at too great a length. Long answers often deteriorated in accuracy and presentation. Meaning was rarely in doubt, even where candidates struggled with verb forms and tense sequences, idioms and sentence structures, which are the aspects of English that appear to present most difficulty to candidates in this examination. There were some very poor scripts but an increased number of good ones, although linguistic inaccuracy sometimes prevented candidates from achieving the high marks that their ideas and planning might suggest.

Some worrying trends were so frequently seen across the whole range of Centres as to merit a special mention: the inappropriate use of the modal 'would' for the simple 'will', particularly, but not only, in responses to **Question 1**; the increasing use of e-mail/text message abbreviations, e.g. 'u', '4u', 'u r', '2moro', not only in the informal letter of **Part 2**, where it might have been thought appropriate to a young relative, but in more formal pieces of writing on other topics, where it is most definitely wrong and, finally, the growing use of colloquial Americanisms, e.g. 'I'm gonna throw you a party'; 'He is a dumb guy'. It is to be hoped that Teachers will point out these deficiencies to future candidates for this examination.

Some rubric offences were reported, but most candidates divided their time sensibly between the two tasks and made a genuine effort to address the chosen topic, although there were still too many recognisable examples of 'recycling' of practice essays on topics from past papers, or embarking on a topic but finding it impossible to develop relevant ideas to achieve the minimum length required. Candidates writing from personal experience or conviction, as always, produced the most lively and original responses, using a wide vocabulary with some precision and showing their ability to vary the tone and register of their writing to suit the subject matter.

Whilst candidates in most Centres produced neatly presented scripts in clear, precise handwriting, in some regions presentation was untidy, crossing out was frequent and handwriting was extremely difficult to read, which was not helpful to Examiners.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Part 1**

#### **Question 1**

This was a very popular choice, particularly for weaker candidates, since the topic was within the personal experience of every candidate for the examination. Unfortunately, in some cases, the instant recognition and familiarity of the theme led to a careless reading of the wording of the question.

Some candidates ignored the last phrase of the topic and wrote about activities and devices that brought them happiness and relaxation at any time or were specific to an occasion, for example, a very enjoyable family birthday celebration. Others failed to register the reference to each school day and wrote about their feelings of satisfaction and relief when their schooldays were over forever and they awaited final examination results, enjoyed a holiday, embarked on higher education or began a career and took on the responsibilities of an adult in the world beyond school.

Perhaps the familiarity and rather narrow parameters of the topic led to the many, somewhat predictable, tedious accounts of chatting with friends, bus rides home, cooling showers, tasty meals, TV, music, surfing the Internet and a welcome rest in bed. However, many competent candidates were able to present even these commonplace activities in an animated, humorous fashion and to portray a sensitive awareness of their debt to the security and comfort of family life after the generally accepted stress and pressure of a school day.

This question did give rise to considerable problems of tense uncertainty and inconsistency. The nature of the title invited the use of the habitual present tense, but there was often movement from present to past and back again and the ubiquitous but inappropriate use of the modal 'would' caused further confusion, e.g. 'When I get home I always had my bath and I would listen to music before I have my dinner...' Examiners also reported frequent and tedious repetition of the given phrase 'happy and relaxed' and a tendency to introduce the reflexive pronoun unnecessarily, e.g. 'I relax myself at home...'

## Question 2

As always, the narrative proved to be the most popular choice of topic on the paper, attracting candidates across the ability range. The two titles offered this year seemed very evenly balanced in popularity.

- (a) Examiners commented on the similarity of approach to this first option, seen in nearly all Centres: an unrevealed injury to an outstanding player, leading to the loss of a potential championship victory or a jungle or mountain trekking expedition, during which an injury to a participant forced the group to turn back before achieving the final goal. Some candidates had not noted the three elements of the question: injury; secret; trouble, and failed to include them all. Many candidates took the opportunity to include material already worked on in preparation for the examination, with over written descriptive passages or a sophistication of vocabulary in setting the scene that was not sustained in the body of the story.

Effective teaching of narrative techniques was clearly evident in the many excellent, well structured stories that emerged. Examiners noted the use of direct speech, to vary the pace of the narrative and to add characterisation, although this device raised many problems of paragraphing and punctuation. Many essays were written in the first person, showing a sensitive appreciation of the dilemma of the injured girl. Less successful, unconvincing stories involved wildly exaggerated serious injuries, e.g. continuing to climb the mountain with a broken leg. Others lost their impetus through inconsistency of tenses or pronoun confusion in dealing with the female main character. Inevitably, the stories most lacking in credibility were generally expressed in the least competent language.

- (b) This title was the more popular of the narrative options by a narrow margin. Obviously many candidates could write from personal experience here, and some good descriptive writing was seen, embedded in well structured, engaging stories. Drivers could be sinister, threatening, even criminal, although more were shown to be courteous and avuncular. Most candidates wrote about a new driver of the school bus and there were some interesting accounts written in the first person from the driver's point of view. The qualities needed by a good driver: care in driving and consideration of the passengers, were both clearly admired and expressed. Again, there were some examples of candidates 'adapting' previously written work to suit the topic, when a driver's sinister appearance belied his kind nature and the narrative ended triumphantly 'Never judge a book by its cover!' Sometimes unidiomatic expressions crept in, perhaps derived from 'first language' terminology, leading candidates to write about 'the new driver-bus'. Confusion of prepositions occurred when used in connection with movement on, off or within the bus: '...got up the bus'; '...got down the bus'; 'boarded (or even 'aboarded'!) the bus'; 'alighted the bus'. There were also problems of tense inconsistency, as candidates tried to convey the idea of change, contrasting the new driver favourably or unfavourably with his predecessor.

Nevertheless, some of the best work in the examination was produced on this topic by candidates writing with obvious ease and enjoyment.

### Question 3

Descriptive prose seems to have become an unpopular feature of creative writing unless it is the description of a person. This topic proved to be the least popular choice on the paper but produced some of the best and most interesting writing from some Centres, appealing to the more mature and able candidates. Personal experience was plainly in evidence and there was a real feeling for the buildings described, which included community centres, schools, libraries, temples, mosques, churches, hospitals, shopping malls, banks and government offices. These essays were usually well planned and carefully developed in orderly progression, although in most cases more attention was paid to the activities than to the building itself. Some candidates extended the scope of their writing to raise environmental issues or to comment on the effect of the building on the neighbourhood. These essays were always clear in meaning and of interest to the reader.

### Question 4

This was not a very popular topic, although, again, it was selected by some of the most able candidates. They argued their case clearly and fluently over a wide range of issues and showed a keen awareness of the nature of the modern world and the challenges, dangers and opportunities that it offers to young people. Many showed a maturity of thought and a remarkable level of understanding in the philosophical arguments presented, for young people with comparatively little experience of life. Occasionally the view of the quotation itself was challenged, with some perception.

In the hands of less competent candidates, the topic caused problems of subject/verb number agreement, e.g. 'Challenges is important in life. Being a student we face this all the time'. There was the usual difficulty in dealing with abstract concepts and often a reliance on repetition of the words of the title, with little to define, exemplify or support the statement. The topic made demands on a range of vocabulary and confidence in handling tenses and sentence structures that weaker candidates could not meet, and they were wise to avoid it. Careful planning and structuring of ideas in logical sequence before writing were the hallmarks of success in response to this topic.

### Question 5

This proved a popular choice in some regions. Many highly competent candidates proved amazingly knowledgeable about the subject. They appeared to have to hand a mine of information about the position of cats throughout history and produced very long, detailed accounts of the high status of the cat in Ancient Egypt, its fall from favour and association with witchcraft in mediaeval times and its contemporary position as a domestic pet or feral pest. Such a wealth of detail suggested either devotion to the species or remarkably good fortune in the appearance of a recently researched and familiar topic on the question paper! Written with enthusiasm, these essays displayed a wide range of precise vocabulary, a commendable control of structures and tenses and a high level of interest for the reader. The chronological, encyclopaedic approach enhanced the coherence and impact of these pieces.

A different approach, often equally successful, was that of the personal narrative, giving an account of a much loved pet, with some convincing and humorous observation of feline behaviour. Some of the most interesting and amusing stories were written in the first person from the point of view of the cat, or of a cat hater, such as a dog or a mouse! Surprisingly few moved beyond the domestic cat to the 'big cats' of the jungle, although there were some very effective pieces of this kind, usually exciting narratives in which the cats were the predators or the prey.

There were a few highly unusual yet relevant responses: a review of the musical 'Cats'; a story of a long suffering male and his female work colleagues – the 'cats' who blighted his daily existence; the rise of a singing group known as 'The Cats'; even an attempt to make the word an acronym for a military organisation. At the other end of the spectrum, this familiar and open ended topic seemed to be the choice of the more desperate weaker candidates who seized upon the opportunity to write about something within the range of their personal experience if beyond that of their limited linguistic skills. They achieved some level of simple communication of meaning, despite the many errors.

### Part 2

The directed writing task in this part of the paper aims to assess different skills from those tested in the continuous free writing of **Part 1**. Here, the rubric suggests an audience to address, a purpose to be served

and some specific information to be conveyed. As well as carrying out the instructions clearly and accurately in the required format, candidates are expected to adopt a style and tone appropriate to the task.

These aims were generally accomplished by most of the candidates in all regions this year, with many writing with greater ease and accuracy here than in **Part 1**. Almost all gained the five marks awarded for the inclusion of the required points of content in the letter, although some candidates did not read the instructions with sufficient care and failed to cover all five aspects. Many candidates were also able to select the appropriate tone for the chosen relative. There was some amplification of the given points and tackling them in the order given on the question paper provided a basic structure for the letter which most candidates were glad to adopt, although paragraphing was sometimes forgotten. Some wrote to a relative of the patient but still managed to include all five points.

Most candidates expressed sympathy for the patient or apologised for not writing or visiting earlier. Some weaker candidates seemed uncertain about the meaning of 'well-being' and resorted to copying the phrase from the question paper. The 'news' element usually concerned births (human or animal!), promotions at work and examination successes, with some amusing anecdotes more specifically fulfilling the need to be 'light-hearted' and cheerful. Sometimes the party was not specifically to celebrate the patient's return from hospital so the mark was not awarded. The term 'minor operation' was open to a wide variety of interpretation from the removal of tonsils or the appendix to a heart transplant or limb amputation!

Conventions of letter layout (address, date, greeting, valediction and signature) were considered as part of the language and style assessment, giving 'credit to those candidates who can adapt their style to suit the needs of this particular writing task' (Mark Scheme, Page 11). It was surprising to see how many used the inappropriate valediction 'Yours faithfully' in these informal letters. The more suitable 'Yours sincerely' was frequently misspelt. Some candidates wrote in highly unconventional style, perhaps deeming the address or even the greeting and valediction unnecessary in a personal letter of this kind.

Examiners noted many examples of the following errors specifically found in this part of the examination.

- tense confusion using 'would' for 'will', e.g. 'I would visit you next Thursday'
- 'news' seen as a plural form, e.g. 'I have two news from home. One new is that...'
- the patient being 'warded' not 'admitted to hospital'
- the use of 'wish' instead of 'hope', e.g. 'I wish you will soon feel better'
- the unidiomatic 'I must pen off' instead of 'I must sign off'
- patients 'sent/brought/ fetched/carried to hospital' instead of 'taken to hospital'
- the use of 'upcoming' instead of 'forthcoming'
- 'You will operate on your leg'/'You will be operated on your leg'/'You will do the operation next week'
- 'Told' used without an indirect object, e.g. 'The doctor told that she was getting better.'
- the inappropriate 'You must always eat your medicine.'

Nevertheless, the vast majority of candidates from all Centres wrote clear, cheerful letters, which showed sincere concern for the well-being of members of the family and would have raised the spirits of those who received them.

### **Guidance for Teachers preparing candidates for future examinations**

There was much evidence of careful teaching and diligent practice to be found in the scripts from all Centres. Spelling was generally to be commended, even in the work of weaker candidates. There was noticeable improvement in the variety of structures used to avoid monotony and to achieve deliberate effects and in the use of punctuation and paragraphing to organise the text for the reader. However, sentence separation faults and the use of the comma splice still mar the coherence of many scripts. Examiners found it necessary to reread such scripts to establish communication. Happily, the inclusion of learned, rehearsed phrases out of context was less frequently seen this year.

Further advice might be given on the wise use of the limited time available in the examination. The practice adopted by some candidates of writing **Part 2** first may be misguided. To follow a directed writing piece of suitable length (200 – 300 words) with an under developed or even a short **Part 1** essay is *not* in the candidate's interest, as the mark allocation, clearly stated on the Question Paper, shows. Very short answers in either section incur a penalty. Practice in writing timed essays in preparation for the examination should give candidates the confidence to tackle the two sections in the order and within the time limits recommended on the Question Paper and thus to avoid serious lack of balance in essay length.

Choice of topic in **Part 1** should be made with care, bearing in mind the individual candidate's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers had wisely advised uncertain candidates to choose a narrative topic or one from which they could write from personal experience. In all cases, the wording of the question must be read carefully and thoroughly understood before planning and organisation of ideas can be started. Many did not read the question with sufficient care in **Question 1**.

The importance of planning and developing ideas logically cannot be over stated. This is particularly important in a discursive response, to avoid repetition or incoherence in arguing on abstract concepts. The 'brainstorming or spidergram' type of plan is not helpful in essays of this kind, which need a logical, even list style approach in carefully linked paragraphs to ensure progression and coherence of argument. A clear definition of terms is also essential, especially of abstract concepts such as 'Challenges'.

Examiners noted that problems of tense consistency and verb formation remain the area of English that causes the greatest difficulty to candidates in these Centres, and can detract from the clarity of communication in the work of even some of the best writers. Clearer advice is needed on the use of the habitual present for a reflective discussion or a description such as that in **Question 1**. The use of the simple past tense is recommended for narrative, but caution is needed when direct speech is introduced. A clear explanation of the formation and use of the future and conditional tenses and of modal verb structures might correct the haphazard use of 'would' noted in many of these scripts. Teachers should stress the need for consistency once a tense has been selected.

As mentioned earlier in this report, Teachers must act now to eliminate the use of text messaging abbreviations, which have no place in written English – certainly not in an examination context!

It would be useful to revise the conventions of letter layout and format and the appropriate greetings and valedictions used in formal and informal contexts. Similarly, the generally accepted presentation and register of a report, a newspaper article, a speech, an eye-witness account etc. should be explained to candidates and practised in preparing for the examination, so that there is no confusion if such formats are required in the directed writing task of **Part 2**.

Teachers should advise candidates to leave time to reread their work at the end of the examination, to check for errors, omissions and inconsistencies of tense sequence that may have occurred and may be quickly corrected before the scripts are handed in.

### **Final Comment**

Examiners commented on how much they enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to mark scripts written by such hard working, well intentioned candidates, ambitious to succeed and eager to follow advice for improvement.

**Papers 1115/02, 1120/02, 1123/02 and 1124/02**

**Comprehension**

### **General comments**

A good number of candidates answered the early questions of the paper effectively, namely **Questions 1 to 4**, by following the lead of the question wording. Others, however, appeared to overlook it and often resorted to extemporising in general terms which had no bearing on the required answers. The response by the majority of candidates to subsequent questions was more variable, especially to those testing their ability to draw inferences. Such tests do not expect specialist knowledge from candidates; they are designed to see how well candidates can make straightforward deductions from given information. Candidates whose responses to Questions such as **5 (b)** or **6 (a)** were rather uncertain had, in the main, gone too quickly to the text to supply the answers, rather than looking carefully at what the question was asking. The level of success in tackling questions which centred on evidence from the text, such as **Questions 5 (a)** and **6 (d)**, was better overall, although again there were those candidates who were unable to locate the area of the text that tied in with the direction of the question.

Nearly all candidates made a convincing response to the test of vocabulary in **Question 11**. It was only the weak candidates who found difficulty in producing sound equivalents and who resorted to guesswork in some of their answers. Generally, candidates achieved a good average of marks and clearly tried hard to work out the text use of the words they had chosen, rather than offering ill-remembered dictionary equivalents for them.

Answers to the summary test of **Question 12** were very varied, not only in terms of the relevant content produced, but also in the standard of writing. Scripts containing very short summaries were frequently seen from the weaker candidates, and in some cases the question was not attempted at all. Much of the writing in the lower ranges was beset by grammatical inaccuracies, which, though they did not obstruct the meaning completely, cost candidates marks for their use of English. Candidates whose summary techniques were more secure kept their eyes on the direction of the rubric and thus could reproduce a range of relevant details. It was noticeable, though, that many of these better answers tended to rely rather heavily on the text wording, no doubt to avoid making the sort of errors that could creep in when originality was attempted. Thus high marks for own words were generally confined to the top range scripts, which also had a sound grammatical accuracy.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

As already noted, many candidates handled **Questions 1 to 4** confidently. The text detail at lines 3-4 regarding 'sleeping sickness' figured in their answers for **Question 1 (a)** or the sensible deduction from 'murderous' that the tsetse fly's bite is fatal. Similarly line 6 and its reference to fear was accurately set in answers to **Question 1 (b)**. Occasionally, answers were seen to these questions, which were too vague, such as the tsetse fly made people feel unwell or that it preyed upon people, or that people could not see in the Great Forest. No doubt such answers derived from a narrow concentration on 'sickness' or 'blind' in the text.

#### **Question 2**

Answers to this question usually picked up the essential detail about the 'hooked' or 'interlocked' nature of the thorn bushes. In some instances, candidates produced inadequate responses such as the forest was blocked by thick and thorny bushes, or that knives were not strong enough to cut through them. These answers did not properly explain what made it 'hopeless' to get through the thorn bushes, as the question asked.

#### **Question 3**

Only a minority of candidates encountered difficulty in tackling this question, with its emphasis on the worry the two men felt when confronted by the forest. Most referred correctly either to the time already wasted in trying to enter it or to the possibility of a long detour. Some ignored the direction of the question and drew their answers from the whole context of the passage in referring to the threat of other people in the forest, or that Laurens and Tickie might be captured or killed. None of these ideas appeared in the paragraph, which formed the focus for the question.

#### **Question 4**

In answering this question, candidates generally selected the appropriate text detail from lines 33 to 35, namely men carrying wooden boxes. There were answers, though, which never got as far as the essential detail of the wooden boxes, but stopped short with Laurens seeing a ship at anchor or hearing the murmur of voices. Candidates here had clearly failed to note the relevance of 'gun-smugglers' in the question and how the wooden boxes related to their activities.

#### **Question 5**

(a) It was important to note the question wording 'What at first made Laurens think...'. Candidates who picked this up concentrated on lines 37-38 and neatly selected 'the sound of rifle-fire'. Others copied over lines 38-39 and wrote 'men came running out of the camp and disappeared in the direction of the gun fire', but the 'gun-fire' detail in such answers was too obliquely set to deserve reward. Some moved further on and selected the detail about the torn bushes or the trampled

ground from lines 41-43. None of this corresponded with the question wording 'What at first made Laurens think...'

- (b) The first test of inference in the paper came in this question. Again, it was important to consider the question-wording carefully, 'What feeling do you think Laurens wants to create in the reader...'. Thus candidates who wrote about Laurens feeling scared, or that Tickie was lucky to be alive had immediately lost contact with the lead of the question set up by 'feeling' and 'in the reader'. Most answers put forward ideas that the fallen leaves represented death or that their colour suggested blood. Though they were sensible attempts to draw something from the comparison in the text, they did not convey any notion of a 'feeling'. The best candidates were able to make the leap from the idea of death to the feeling of sadness or sense of loss evoked by the overall scene. The mark scheme rewarded these ideas, and other similar feelings such as pity, sympathy or regret. To their credit, some candidates attempted to deduce the feeling, but hit the wrong notes in answers such as 'shock' or 'anxiety'.
- (c) With its highlighting of 'perilous encounter' from the text, this part led candidates to line 48. There the effect of this 'encounter' was set right alongside 'perilous encounter' in the text; namely that Tickie had 'passed into a painful maturity'. Many candidates appeared unable to recognise that this expression was spelling out the idea of an 'effect'. Instead they tried to extemporise and referred to Tickie becoming wiser or acquiring more experience. Others tried to work out Tickie's state of mind from what he had just experienced, and wrote about his feeling stunned or anxious. In themselves, these feelings were not wildly out of tune with the overall context of the situation, but they missed the 'effect' as described in the text. Others went for simpler but incorrect ideas, and said Tickie had become a killer. There were, in fact, a number of answers that did pick up the correct effect, but the candidates had overlooked the need for own words and directly copied over 'painful maturity'. Unfortunately, no marks could be given since the rubric had been ignored.

The best candidates obeyed the rubric and produced sound equivalents for 'maturity' such as 'had become an adult' or 'had grown up'. Even so, not all of them went on to render 'painful' effectively. Examiners readily credited ideas like 'in a hard fashion' or 'in a harsh way', but found them confined to a minority of answers. Nothing could be given for the literal equivalents such as 'in a hurtful way'.

## Question 6

- (a) Another test of inference was set in this question. Candidates who related the highlighted element of the question, 'danger on much larger scale', with what had just happened in the passage were able to see what 'larger scale' was implying: other gun-smugglers would come looking for Laurens and Tickie since one of their number had already tracked them down. A fair number of answers concentrated on this important element of searching for or looking for, which in itself coloured so much of the text. Other candidates went to lines 51-52 and wrote about the danger of detection, or about the danger of the two men being captured or killed, but these dangers had always existed for Laurens and Tickie, and were not by themselves dangers 'on a larger scale'. Some referred to the fear the two men felt in having killed someone or that the body would be found, which did not define danger 'on a larger scale'.
- (b) This question was well answered by the candidates who had picked up the word 'unusual' from the question and located line 57 to find its explanation. The fact that the birds were 'unconcerned', even though they were close to the two men, figured in a good many of the correct answers. Others emphasised the fact that the birds perched close to the two men, which also gained reward. Quite a number of answers initially gave a correct definition for 'unusual' but then went on unnecessarily to refer to other birds gathering in the tops of the trees. That in itself could not be deemed 'unusual behaviour' and cost a number of candidates the mark they had already earned. The weakest candidates seemed to concentrate solely on 'behaviour' in the question wording and described the birds as perching in the bushes or pecking at anything around.
- (c) The opening wording of this question, 'Why do you think the behaviour...' was intended to alert candidates to the need to look behind the text to work out the answer. Also the mark weighting of 2 marks indicated that the reason for the 'alarm' had to be explained in some depth. Some candidates began their answers well enough in stating that the movement of the birds towards the two men was in itself alarming but then were unable to deduce the reason why it was so alarming. They had been unable to work out anything from the prompt given in the text by 'Instinct had made these little creatures.... direction'. The best candidates saw that this instinct would

make birds move away from people who were coming, and so completed their answers with a cogent reason for the 'alarm' felt by Laurens and Tickie. Candidates who had not noticed the significance of 'instinct' tried their own deductions, stating that the birds were alerting the gun-smugglers to the presence of the two men below them, or that the movement of the birds would of itself lead the gun-smugglers to the two men, which was an unlikely development. Others came up with even more unlikely reasons about the birds being liable to attack the two men or that the birds knew that they were frightened.

- (d) The answer to this question lies in lines 56 and 57-58. Lying still and silent made 'time seem to pass so slowly' for the two men. Answers often indicated that candidates had not searched the paragraph to find the appropriate lines, for they suggested reasons beyond the immediate evidence of the text. Some reasons were hardly logical such as the birds were coming to peck at the men's feet. Others were more sensible in saying that the men were waiting for night to come or for the opportunity to escape, but did not get near enough to the reason in the text. Candidates who had searched the paragraph carefully came to the appropriate lines and produced the correct answer.

### Question 7

The test of linguistic understanding in this question, centring on 'heart-felt', produced effective equivalents such as 'sincere' 'with an urgent desire' or 'desperate'. Examiners also credited answers, which mirrored the feeling behind the expression in writing such as 'he prayed with a deep longing' or 'with a burning hope'. Many answers, though, relied heavily on the word 'heart', e.g. 'he prayed straight from the heart' or 'with all his heart', but Examiners can never credit answers in linguistic tests which lean too heavily on the given wording. Weaker candidates could not grasp the true import of the expression and wrote in simple terms about praying with the heart, or praying quietly. Others who came closer to understanding the English managed equivalents along the lines of 'he prayed for what he really wanted' or 'Laurens truly prayed for something'. However, they could not get a reward since these answers relied heavily on 'truly' or 'really', which did not render the full force of 'heart-felt'.

### Question 8

In answering this question, candidates had to avoid a merely descriptive summary of what Laurens did; they had to distil an 'aspect' of Laurens' 'character'. To their credit many singled out qualities such as 'brave' 'self-sacrificing' or 'unselfish'. Reward was also given to ideas that carried the same flavour even if their expression was more extended, for example in writing such as 'Laurens was ready to give his life for others' or 'Laurens showed how much he thought of others rather than himself'. Even though some attempts at distilling the character were not too convincing, e.g. 'he was a good friend' or 'a good leader', they showed that candidates were trying to distil qualities and not working in a superficial manner from the surface of the text. Answers which merely recast what Laurens did in slightly different wording, along the lines of 'Laurens doesn't want Tickie to stay behind if he is killed but to escape', could not score. Candidates who appeared to struggle with the question wording, 'aspect of character', settled for a straight copying of lines 69-70, without any comment on them.

### Question 9

This question focused on the gun-smugglers' energetic search for Laurens and Tickie. Therefore the question wording 'apart from their urgent cries', together with 'on the final phase of their search', aimed at giving candidates a lead to line 80 in the text, which contained the material for the answer, i.e. the sound of men crashing through the bush, without effort at disguise. The key words 'crashing' and 'disguise' had to be set in own words. Despite this lead, a number of answers offered somewhat vague descriptions of the gun-smugglers' activity in writing such as 'Laurens heard a whistle go up' 'the men were signalled to retreat' 'the whistle was loud and clear and they were getting near'. Answers of this type showed that candidates had concentrated too much on the 'whistle' element in the text and had not correlated the question wording with the men's activity of 'crashing' through the bush. Other answers were similarly detached from the text evidence and cast in the general form of 'men were searching all over for them'. Some candidates had not understood the question wording properly and said 'it was because the rain was no nearer'.

Although some candidates saw that 'crashing' was one of the details required for the answer, they missed its essential element of 'noise' and re-cast it in terms of speed alone, e.g. 'the men were rushing through the bush'. Better candidates managed to re-cast 'crashing' accurately but not all went on to render the lack of disguise. Unfortunately there were candidates who did good work in locating the essential elements for the answer but then simply copied over 'crashing' or 'without disguise' as they stood, ignoring the rubric's direction for the use of own words.



### Question 10

The reasons required to answer this question stemmed firstly from lines 91-92, and the onset of rain. Candidates had to keep in mind lines 53-54 and their statement that only wind and rain could erase the tracks of Laurens and Tickie. Locating lines 91-92 was not too difficult since the text phrase in the question wording 'our immediate danger was over' gave the lead to them. A significant number of candidates saw the significance of line 91 regarding the onset of rain, though by no means all of them were able to clinch this with the idea of the rain erasing their tracks. Some mistakenly thought that the two reasons were confined to lines 91-92 and consisted of the falling rain and the crackling lightning.

Lines 93-94 supplied the second element of the answer, i.e. the reference to commands ringing out from the camp up ahead (lines 93-94). Candidates who had not seen the full relevance of the rain often managed to light on this area of the text and make a sensible deduction about the gun-smugglers going back to their camp or moving away. Those who could not fully understand 'commands began to ring out from...the camp' tried to fashion a reason here, but often ended up giving a garbled transcription of the text. Candidates who located 'fade into the distance' in line 96 usually had more success in constructing the appropriate reason that the searchers were disappearing or leaving.

### Question 11

The test of word understanding in this question was within reach of a good many candidates and most made a careful appraisal of the use in the text of their chosen words. For example, they avoided offering the more literal note that lies behind 'dictated' and reproduced the meaning of the word in terms of the map and compass setting in line 12 with effective equivalents such as 'showed' or 'pointed to'. Although answers were seen where candidates resorted to guessing the meaning of words, such as 'dark' for 'desolate' or 'getting brighter' for 'fade', this approach was confined to the truly weak candidates who clearly lacked the linguistic range to tackle the overall run of words in the question.

There seemed to be no leaning towards any one set of words; all eight figured in the main run of responses. Perhaps 'desolate' was the least popular, and produced the most errors. Even so, false equivalents such as 'remote' 'abandoned' or 'isolated' carried something of the flavour of the word, even if they missed its essence of bleakness or emptiness. 'Fade' also proved a difficult choice for some candidates; they could not reflect the notion of something diminishing or disappearing. 'Assailed' too, proved a similarly difficult choice for them; answers such as 'bothered' or 'troubled' did not properly match the true force of the word. Nevertheless, candidates responded well to the question as a whole.

### Question 12

There was a wide variety of answers to this question, the summary question. Weaker candidates appeared very uncertain as to what the task involved. Consequently some extremely short summaries were seen, falling well below the 150 words allowed, and picking up only two or three relevant points at most. Much of the writing was devoted to a general account of the activities of the searchers and the plight of Laurens and Tickie, but with little bearing on the text proper. Some of these weak answers included material from the text that lay outside the parameters for summary, lines 52 to 98, or even ignored the parameters altogether in composing a general survey of events earlier in the passage. Often these answers were further undermined by frequent grammatical errors, e.g. 'we hoped people came to rescued us', 'we hid in bush', 'they were heavily armed', 'we were saved by the whistled', 'we have to make plan'.

Answers which showed some appreciation of the directions of the rubric usually concentrated on one or two of the opening details related to the two men hiding and lying quietly and then moved swiftly down to the closing paragraphs. Points frequently selected here were the sounding of the whistled summons to the searchers, how close they came to Laurens and Tickie and finally the onset of rain and the departure of the searchers. Much of the material would be lifted from the text, though this copying preserved the grammatical accuracy to a large extent. These abbreviated summaries would frequently have a reduced word count, considerably below the 150 words permitted. Consequently the maximum mark for grammatical accuracy and use of own words had to be scaled down. Marks gained within this limited maximum, combined with a slim mark for content, meant that the total mark for the script suffered appreciably.

Candidates, however, who worked steadily through the text with the directions of the rubric to hand, nearly always included a sound re-cast of opening details, i.e. the two men clearing evidence of their presence, their quiet concealment under the trees and their preparation of their guns. The next element of the rubric centred on the signs they had that they were close to being discovered. Here the treatment was less well sustained. Only a minority of scripts referred to the birds assembling in the trees above the two men (lines

58-60) and how this indicated the proximity of the gun-smugglers. Candidates were more successful in coping with the point relating to the sudden appearance of the smugglers at lines 62-63, though the subsequent instruction from Laurens in lines 66-69 was rarely seen. Candidates probably could not link it to the rubric heading 'what they did to avoid discovery and capture'.

The better scripts up to this point in the summary had avoided irrelevance, whereas less watchful candidates had strayed into it by including material from lines 64-65 and again from lines 73-77. Concentrating on Laurens' prayers for rain or the appearance of thunder and lightning had no bearing on the 'signs of discovery' as prescribed in the rubric or the moves of the two men to avoid being found. Often candidates who had digressed into irrelevant areas of the text did so again in reproducing Laurens' orders to Tickie to return with the news of what they had discovered. Again, this had nothing to do with the need to avoid discovery. Candidates who had used up words in such irrelevance had to confine the rest of their summaries to the closing details of the gun-smugglers' search, whereas more skilled summarisers had words in hand to attempt Laurens' instructions to Tickie in lines 67-68 about firing at the enemy to confuse them, and the way the appearance of the deer signified the progress of the gun-smugglers.

The closing points referring to the whistle sounding at line 78, the consequent noise of the search party moving through the bush and how they came close to discovering the two men needed some care in selection from the text. The truly weak answers could not encompass them, while mid-range answers picked up just one or two of these and subsequent details; they often moved quickly on to round off their summaries with the onset of rain and the departure of the searchers. The best candidates, however, showed a neat skill in combining most of the relevant points in economical wording so that they could complete their summaries with the clinching details about Laurens and Tickie remaining motionless until the gun-smugglers departed.

Apart from the mark given for content, Examiners also reward candidates for their use of their own words in composing their summaries. They are not expected to attempt a wholesale re-cast of the text, and credit is readily given to writing which has a noticeable colouring of own words alongside text expression. Writing such as 'we hid so well that the birds came and pecked...' (lines 55-57), 'we will fire to distract them so that we can escape' (lines 67-69), 'a deer dived over a bush and was a sign of the enemy advancing' (lines 70-72), would have earned credit for own words, even though the text wording was also evident. Many of the mid-range summaries relied rather heavily on the text, and so could not score much to build up their overall mark. Possibly, they felt more secure in mirroring the text expression rather than risking their own expression and thereby grammatical inaccuracy. In the best scripts there was a well sustained use of own words, free from grammatical inaccuracy, e.g. for the opening details, 'We lay very quietly, not moving, flat on our bellies, with guns armed and waiting' and then later 'the bush was filled with the sound of men rushing along without trying to be discreet'.

Examiners felt that the work of many candidates in the summary question demonstrated a reasonable skill in approaching the task, but that a closer concentration on the specific direction of the rubric would have earned more marks. Certainly, the mid-range scripts showed that candidates could select apposite details from the text; it was their inability to sustain this selection that often diminished their overall mark. The skilled summarising of the best candidates resulted in a healthy tally of points set within very secure expression, all of which made a fine contribution to the total mark of their scripts.