

Edexcel International
London Examinations
GCE Ordinary Level

Mark Scheme with Examiners' Report

**London Examinations Ordinary Level GCE in
English Language (7161)**

June 2003

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July 2003

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Mark Scheme and Examiners' Report
June 2003

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161

Mark Scheme

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Chief Examiner's Report

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Grade Boundaries

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, MARK SCHEME

Section A: Comprehension (30 marks)

Mark questions (a) – (l) according to the following mark scheme and put the mark for each answer in the right- hand margin. **Ring the total for the whole of Section A in the right-hand margin at the end of the section.**

Section A

Text One

- (1) **(Mark first three only)**
swearing or shouting,
using a foreign language,
frantically searching through clothes/ baggage, (including sense of panic)
trying to pick up luggage and run/sprint back at the same time (3)

- (2) **any two from**
a) He was planning to have a relaxing train journey;
b) Having a drink,
c) Enjoy himself with friends
plus
d) Only (five) hours to sort out problems/time pressure
e) He was worried he would have to stay / sleep at the station (4)

- (3) **5 points for content**

The operators did not listen to his answers/ repeated stock responses (expand)
They could not help as he did not have a hotel or other address
It took four hours
He had to speak to seven different people/ two countries
He had to keep switching languages

Plus up to two bonus marks for use of own words (7)

Text Two

- (4) (a) If we know how criminals expect us to behave, we could avoid reacting that way and becoming victims. (1)
- (b) Do not keep checking valuables when warned of or aware of risk, as that shows an observer where to target the theft;
Makes you vigilant / aware all the time, especially in potentially hazardous situations (or examples) (2)

- (5) **(Mark first five only)**
 Near warning notices
 crowded places
 (near) cash machines
 restaurants
 hotels
 shops
 in the street/ or road
 markets
 public transport (only allow one example)

(5)

- (6) Below are **suggestions** but these are not in any way prescriptive. The candidate may produce a valid and reasoned argument which contains few (or none) of the elements listed below. Comments do **not** need to be equally balanced, though reference to **both** texts is required (i.e. a fulsome appraisal of text one but 'I thought Text 2 was boring' will not score highly). What we are looking for is evidence of 1) the candidate's understanding of **both** texts and 2) a critical ability **at some level**. The candidate does need to satisfy the examiner that s/he has understood and engaged with **both** of the texts.

(8)

Text One – Missing in Action	
Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anecdotal / story telling: more relevant. • 1st person / direct voice: interesting, engaging. People like to read about what has happened to others and how they felt. • Vivid and engaged descriptions: readers feel that they are 'there'. • Appeals to experiences which many people have had: the 'I know what they mean' response. • Dialogue gives a realistic touch. • An arresting opening / first sentence: engages the reader's attention. • Horror stories: other people's misfortunes are always interesting. • Moral of story left until the end: not preaching at the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rambling style: anecdote not appropriate for an issue as serious as this. • As a piece of advice, not very effective: needs instructions, what to do and where to go. • Rather limited information, dealing with just one possible area of concern, i.e. theft of wallet, credit cards, cash. Stodgy layout, with some long, dense paragraphs. • Not reassuring for someone planning to go on holiday: might panic readers into think that they are going to be robbed.

Text Two – Think Like a Criminal	
Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise instructions interspersed with short anecdotes: more meaningful and, perhaps, memorable. • Reassuring tone in these instructions. • Less of an article and more of an instructional piece. • 3rd person / objective tone gives clear and unambiguous information. • A range of information is given about different modes of theft. • Some memorable examples given in short, pithy sentences. • Layout, with subheadings, allows reader to focus on parts of the article rather than read all of it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd person / objective voice: rather dull, maybe even pompous or hectoring. • The range of possible thefts and ways of being robbed is alarming: might be off-putting for the sensitive traveller. • A lot of information to take in.

Application of marks

Mark range	Comments
8 – 6	Comprehensive and subtle observations. The best answers will make a distinction between the two texts in terms of style and content, and how helpful they might be to the traveller abroad, eg the factual style of the second text might be more reassuring and give better information, the anecdotal style of the first piece engages the reader's interest whilst delivering important information. Better candidates might wonder about the original target audience for both pieces, and conclude that neither really satisfies the brief in the question. Quotes and references should show understanding and support remarks.
5-3	Candidates will understand the broad outline of both texts. There will be a clear demonstration that, for example, the candidate understands the point of the anecdotes in Text One, even though the 'punch line' is not introduced until the final paragraph. The candidate will be able to make a reasonable judgement about the usefulness of the texts and offer examples which demonstrate interpretation as well as understanding. At the top of this band, candidates might light upon the instructions in Text Two, which are clear. Weaker candidates might simply suggest that the anecdotes in Text One are interesting. There should be a range of quotes and references.
2-1	Candidates will make a few observations, possibly fact-based, on both texts. Understanding will be demonstrated simply. Critical ability will rest on fairly obvious elements: Text One shows what can happen to you if you're not careful. Similarly Text Two. There will probably be a resort to simple narrative.

SECTION B (35 marks)

Use material from both texts

Write the text of a leaflet giving people advice about the security of their possessions while they are travelling. Use ideas from **both texts**. Do not write more than 220 words.

Use your own words as far as possible as direct copying will be penalised.

Guidelines

Word limit

The number of words should be **approximated** using the grid. Any words over the limit should be crossed through **from the beginning of the next sentence**.

Average words per line	Lines required		Average words per line	Lines required
4	55		10	22
5	44		11	20
6	36		12	18
7	31		13	17
8	27		14	15
9	24		15	14

Layout

No reward for **layout** appropriate to a leaflet. The text is all that is asked for. However, note form appropriate to the task is fine. This is directed writing (A03).

Content points

These are **possible** but not exclusive points which the candidate **might** include, and will satisfy A01. A02 invites the candidate to 'select, order and present' information from the stimulus text, but **not** to try to second guess the mark scheme. Thus, the points listed below are only a guide to examiners. These suggestions should be read in conjunction with the '**Mark grid for assessing content, style and audience**' but **not** be assessed separately. As always, if the candidate simply lifts material from the stimulus, s/he will be less likely to satisfy Assessment Objectives A03 and A05.

Main point	Examples
Spread valuables around	
Train yourself not to check your valuables in an obvious manner	
Be aware of possible opportunities for fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At cash machines • Hotels • Restaurants • Shops
Be aware of possible distraction devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Spilt sauce / food • Dropped coins • Anything unusual
Be careful when walking near a round in a shopping area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk against the traffic • Carry bag on side away from traffic
Be vigilant when in crowded places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queues • Public transport • When standing close to people
Take copies of all important documents / numbers and keep this information in a safe place.	

SECTION B: Mark grid for assessing content, style and audience (AOs 2, 3, 5)	
Mark range	Candidate should be able to:
20-17	Show a comprehensive understanding of the stimulus text Sophisticated response to written style and tone Show exact understanding of explicit meaning Show subtle understanding of inferential meaning Select a wide range of relevant points from the stimulus Distinguish clearly between fact and opinion Incorporate with some subtlety the selected material Style and register are clearly appropriate, showing a complete and confident awareness of the intended audience
16-13	Show a sound understanding of the stimulus text Sound response to written style and tone Show good understanding of explicit meaning Show insight into inferential meaning Select a good range of relevant points from the stimulus Distinguish between fact and opinion Incorporate with some skill the selected material Style and register are appropriate, showing a clear awareness of the intended audience
12-9	Show a clear understanding of the stimulus text Clear response to written style and tone Show a clear understanding of explicit meaning Show some understanding of inferential meaning Select a range of relevant points from the stimulus Make some distinction between fact and opinion Present selected material in an appropriate way Show an awareness of the style / format, and has some feel for the intended audience
8-5	Show that the stimulus text has been understood within the context of the question Show understanding of explicit meaning Select some points from the stimulus Present selected material in a style / format which is suited to the task
4-1	Show that the stimulus text in general has been understood Understand some explicit meaning Select a limited number of points from the stimulus Write simply and communicate at a basic level

Directed writing (to supplement Mark grid for assessing content, style and audience)

1. Appropriate tone for a leaflet (*satisfies directed writing*)
2. Note form **or** sentences (*satisfies directed writing*)

Section B: Mark grid for assessing expression and accuracy (AO4)	
Mark range	Candidates should be able to:
15 – 13	Write using the standard grammatical forms and idioms of English Write with confident use of a range of sentence structures Show considerable skill in organising writing Write with an impressive range of vocabulary Express ideas with lucidity and precision Write very accurately with regard to spelling and punctuation Describe vividly using own words and phrases Show control in sustaining theme and tone with clarity of expression
12 – 10	Write clear standard English Write with a variety of sentence structures Demonstrate skill in organising material Use appropriate and varied vocabulary Use mostly accurate spelling and punctuation Describe clearly using mainly own words and phrases Show ability to sustain theme and tone
9 – 7	Write standard English reasonably clearly Write with a variety of sentence structures Write with some skill in organising material Use accurate spelling and punctuation Write with apt vocabulary and mostly own words
6 – 4	Write understandable English Write with some variety of sentence structure Show some accuracy in spelling and punctuation Write with appropriate vocabulary, but some may be copied from text
3 – 1	Write at a level of basic coherence in English Write simple sentences Show a basic understanding of the conventions of spelling and punctuation Minimal original expression

SECTION C

Mark range and language skill descriptions	Content-related descriptions
<p>30-35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows outstanding flair and originality in content, combined with considerable ability in the control and application of language skills 	
<p>24-29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates with flair ideas related to the topic Writes confidently in an appropriate form Is aware of purpose and audience Sustains an appropriate register Organises writing into paragraphs Offers a variety of sentence structures Uses sophisticated grammatical structures Punctuates with accuracy Spells with accuracy Uses a sophisticated range of vocabulary Uses Standard English with some accuracy 	<p>Question 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a confident embrace of the stimulus, often with imaginative flair and creativity Includes characters, description, dialogue that are well-constructed and actively contribute to the narrative Handles the narrative structure with assurance, and is not afraid to play with tension, humour, etc <p>Question 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a confident grasp of the task Employs rhetorical devices to enhance the argument, or examples of skilful description and feelings Employs a structure which is unobtrusive, yet effective, allowing intro/conclusion to contribute to the overall effect <p>Question 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a confident understanding of the task, and with the same confidence explains the key ideas and arguments raised by it. Offers a number of sophisticated reasons, well-illustrated and supported, to argue for / against Offers, with some frequency, generalised comments which build the argument Uses a structure which enhances the argument

<p>18-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates ideas clearly and successfully • Writes in a form appropriate for an essay • Writes in an appropriate, sustained register • Shows clear awareness of purpose and audience • Employs devices such as the rhetorical question, humour or irony appropriately • Shows successful organisation and control in writing • Shows accuracy in paragraphing and punctuation which enhances meaning • Uses an appropriate variety of sentence structures • Spells complex words correctly • Has a wide vocabulary 	<p>Question 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a sound appreciation of the potential of the stimuli for creative writing • Includes characters, scene-setting, some plotting • Includes some confident description or dialogue • Offers a finished and structured piece of writing, with an interesting opening and a rounded conclusion <p>Question 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a sound understanding of the topic • Presents anecdote(s) or example(s) to illustrate • Employs a clear structure, with an engaging introduction and a rounded conclusion <p>Question 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a sound understanding of the topic • Shows an awareness of the implications of key elements of the topic; eg do we sacrifice independence to technology which supposedly liberates us? • Offers clear and cogent arguments for / against with strong examples • Offer some generalised thoughts, with some sophistication, eg how necessary is modern technology? • Offers a thoroughly controlled and structured argument
<p>12-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates ideas with success • Writes in a form appropriate essay (as directed) • Shows an awareness of purpose and audience • Uses an appropriate register • Shows control in a generally organised and accurate piece of writing • Uses correct punctuation and paragraphing to enhance meaning • Uses a variety of sentence constructions • Spells accurately 	<p>Question 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows an understanding and appreciation of the stimuli as prompts to a piece of creative writing, eg, continuing the direct speech • Offers a piece of writing which works as a narrative, eg elements of tension, humour, direct speech which furthers the narrative • Offers a narrative structure – beginning, middle, end or simple variants.

	<p>Question 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows a clear understanding of the topic• Offers persuasive examples and anecdotes and relates them with success• Offer some generalised comments as appropriate• Offers a beginning and conclusion <p>Question 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows that the topic has been understood• Shows that key elements of the question have been understood, eg benefits and drawbacks of modern technology• Offers reasoned arguments for / against with well-chosen examples• Offers some generalised thoughts• Offers a rounded argument
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<p>6-11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates ideas with some success • Attempts to use essay form • Shows an awareness of audience • Writes in an appropriate register • Shows use of paragraphs • Shows some accuracy and control of agreement, punctuation and sentence construction • Employs some variety of sentence forms • Spells with some accuracy 	<p>Question 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that the topic has been understood as a creative stimulus • Offers a piece of writing which is a clearly recognisable narrative • Includes some descriptive phrases or direct speech <p>Question 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that the stimulus has been understood as presented in the question • Selects a range of ideas and describes them • Shows an awareness of structure by giving a simple introduction and / or conclusion • Develops a continuous piece of writing that is relevant to the topic <p>Question 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that the topic (in terms of benefits / drawbacks of modern technology & some of the implications) has been understood as presented in the question • Presents a number of reasons, for or against the statement • Presents some examples in support • Offers a general conclusion
<p>0-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates ideas with limited success • Attempts to use the form as directed • Is aware of the audience • Attempts to use an appropriate register • Shows some control in organising written language • Writes simple sentences • Shows a limited accuracy in agreement, punctuation and sentence construction • Spells some commonly-used words accurately 	<p>Question 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that the general topic / idea has been understood • Offers a piece of writing which contains some elements of a narrative <p>Question 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select features of treasured possession as appropriate • Writes in the 1st person • Begins to develop a piece of continuous writing <p>Question 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that the general topic / idea has been understood • Presents some adequately expressed reasons for and against the statement

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

PAPER 1

General Comments

Most candidates responded well to the theme, problems with security of possessions and credit cards, especially when travelling. Those who tackled the questions in a different order from the question paper usually penalised themselves, as with a themed paper the essay titles are related to ideas from the texts, although no credit can be gained by copying. The centres, therefore, who had advised their candidates to tackle the essay first, often with a prepared essay which had minimal relevance to the stated title, put them at a disadvantage.

Most candidates seemed to have been appropriately prepared for the new syllabus and some scripts were a pleasure to read, gaining almost full marks. Some of the writers will long remain in the memory of those who read their work. Centres are to be congratulated on the quality of the entry in general, with an increase in the standard at grade boundaries.

It is hoped that the detail and examples in this report will help teachers and future candidates.

Section A Comprehension

1. Answers to this question were of two types. Those where candidates had made an attempt to express ideas in their own words, such as 'yelling swear words in a language other than Japanese', or 'frantically searching his clothes/opening his bags, trying to collect them and return to the taxi queue at the same time', were rewarded. Those who quoted 'foreign obscenities', 'frenetic' or 'simultaneously' in their answers were not. Even a change of the root word, such as 'obscene language' scored for showing understanding.
2. Selection was important here, so copying lines 11 to 16, which are identified in the question, could not score. It was also important to make clear which part of the question each point or quotation refers to. It was acceptable to give one positive and one negative point, then another positive and negative pair, as long as each was clearly identified. Candidates who reversed the answers without making clear they had done so could not be rewarded, as they could not be distinguished from those who had merely guessed.

Two answers, each of which would score full marks, are given here:

"The writer had clearly been looking forward to his next journey and this is shown by the fact that he admits that he wanted to relax and have a Drink or two, and upon arrival spend the weekend relaxing with his friends in Kyushu.

When his wallet is stolen the writer realises two things:
He must call the banks before they close and attempt to right the situation or he must prepare himself for a night at the train station."

"The writer was looking forward to:

- (i) relaxing in a train sipping a drink
- (ii) having a relaxing weekend with his friends in Kyushu.

The writer feared he would have to:

- (i) spend the night in the train station
- (ii) wonder how to contact the bank and report the situation to them, to get some money, in the five hours before they close.”

References to being stranded in a strange city with no cash or credit cards could not score, as that was already a fact, so could not be something he feared would happen.

3. The better candidates combined reference to details of the exchanges with the bank staff and a clear focus on the complaint. Some, however, included a long, irrelevant preamble describing in detail the circumstances of the loss before reaching the material connected with the bank. This could gain no marks and wasted time. The question is specific about the focus of the letter. Others wrote good letters of complaint in terms of tone and style, but omitted the information from the passage. Weaker candidates missed the point of the question, writing either a totally narrative account or a dialogue, in their own words or closely paraphrased.
4. Many candidates failed to read the question carefully enough, rephrasing the question in their answer to (a) and answering (b) either with the answer to (a), which could not be rewarded here, or giving examples from the passage without a focus on the need for vigilance. Others, forgetting that this question was in the comprehension section, suggested answers from their own experience or imagination or from the first text.
A few gave a questionable motive to the writer: “because if we put ourselves in the place of a pickpocket, then we can get ideas how to pickpocket others.”
A good answer, showing full understanding of the questions and the text, is given here:
“The writer of the article tells us to think like a criminal because if we do so we can plan precautionary measures with hindsight and avoid becoming victims.
If we know that thieves often work in pairs, one distracting the potential victim and the other carrying out the crime, we shall know to avoid spectacles in crowded places. Another way that thinking like a criminal can save possessions is that one would learn what tell-tale signs thieves look out for before they strike, such as a pat of a wallet, and make a conscious effort to avoid such actions.”
5. This was a straightforward question for which many candidates scored full marks, giving five from a number of possible locations. Some were confused and tried to find five names of places in the text (lines 60-61 plus Hong Kong or Madrid). Some missed the focus on places, offering hotel staff, or motorcycle riders. A few included examples from the wrong text, such as a train station, from the rubric for the summary such as a travel agent, or not on the paper at all, such as cinemas, lunar parks, mosques, sidewalks et cetera.
6. The question clearly stated that reference should be made to both texts in the comparison, to justify their choice. It was therefore a pity that some self-penalised by omitting any comment on the other text, or giving limited references, repeating for each point about their chosen text that the other did not include this. A few wrote summaries of both texts without any comparisons or clear choice. The majority of candidates recommended the second text, accurately stating that this was mainly to advise and on that count more useful, while text one was mainly narrative. The stronger answers did identify important advice from the first text,

while others dismissed it completely, not recognising the inferences, such as the final paragraph.

Some candidates were confused over the term “text”, although this is used frequently throughout the question paper. They selected one of the sections from the second text in preference to another section, thus limiting the points they could make and their maximum mark.

Errors made in this question, or lack of close scrutiny of the text, often resulted in problems with the next question, the summary, as any misunderstandings tended to appear in both. There was a significant minority of candidates who had been prepared for such a question with a list of prepared phrases, such as “evocative language”, “title not enticing”, “cold and clinical”, “didactic and informative style”, “overly descriptive”. These were unhelpful, often listed in point form, to support or criticise either text, with no examples or explanations. Candidates would do far better if they wrote individual responses, using some terms about style, tone, layout which they understand and can exemplify and relate to the specific question. Terms such as “landscape”, “bold grammars”, “alliteration” were also confusing to the examiner.

There were also a few candidates who misunderstood the point of the question, personalising the intended reader and saying one text was irrelevant since they would not have a credit card, or always be with a group of friends for safety.

A good response to this question, unusual in that the first text is selected, is given below:

“If my friend were planning to travel abroad on a holiday, I would recommend he reads Text One. The title is captivating and it creates suspense in the reader, who will want to read more to find out what is ‘Missing in Action.’ In Text Two, however, the title will only appeal to readers who are interested in the criminal mind.

Text One creates a relationship with the reader from the first paragraph, which is in bold. The first paragraph uses the pronoun ‘you’ which encourages the reader to continue to read. The second text is more impersonal.

In Text One, the writer gives an account of his personal experience and uses the pronoun ‘I’. This makes the experience more realistic as compared to Text Two where several incidents are mentioned as though a person would meet with all of them. Since Text One is a personal experience, it has a pitiful tone which would make the reader consider what the writer is trying to say.

Text One provides useful information about how to avoid such a crisis. It explains that cash and credit cards should be kept separately so that everything is not stolen at once. Text Two does not mention this important piece of information.

Moreover, Text Two will make my friend think about the ways of avoiding theft by being cautious all the time. This will disrupt the mood of my friend who intends to enjoy a holiday instead of being stressed.”

Section B Summary and Directed Writing

Many candidates could produce a version of a leaflet, recognisable in tone, target audience and purpose. Some spent time on layout, which, although attractive, could not be rewarded per se. Some put quotations from the texts in speech bubbles, but it was unclear to examiners whether they should be marked for content and therefore included in the word count. The majority kept to the word limit, and as bullet points or lists were appropriate, many points from the texts could therefore be included.

Some were wildly optimistic in their assessment of the word count; centres are reminded that summaries are counted. Those who gave a brief introduction were rewarded for awareness of purpose and audience; those who spent too long on this, or used inappropriate forms of address, such as a speech, lost marks.

Candidates must remember to read the instructions carefully: those who used only one text, or gave sensible advice to travellers with no reference to either text, could not achieve good marks. Some of the latter were able writers, but the irrelevance of their material to the specific texts meant they could score minimal marks for content.

There were very few who copied wholesale from the text/s, but some who used judicious paraphrasing. It is recognised that some terms, such as 'pickpocket' cannot be easily and economically re-worded. Some did copy certain sections in detail, often revealing lack of understanding with incomplete statements.

Some answers showed confusion with the places for display of the leaflet, such as airports and travel agents, so wasted words mentioning them as venues for crime. Many others included their own ideas or advice, such as not going out alone at night. This is quite different from ideas which could be inferred from points in the texts, such as keeping valuables in a front pocket.

Some ideas were highly impractical, such as never going to crowded places or tourist spots, carrying your bag on the other side of the road, or always attaching your bag to your ankle, wherever you are! Some references, such as to your "hometown", were irrelevant to a traveller.

There was evidence of confusion between "bag" and "back", "protect" and "prevent", "advise", "advice" and "advices" (sic), "beware" and "be aware", "thief", "theft" and "robbed", "stolen" and "steal".

The word "crowdy" is not used by British English speakers. Terms from other Englishes, if recognisable, such as "mall" or "sidewalk", are acceptable.

Section C Essay

"Stop thief" was the most popular choice, and the one most clearly linked to the texts. Most students used a narrative approach, some very effectively, including descriptive scene-setting, pace, tension and often a change of mood or a twist. In such essays, dialogue was usually well handled with correct punctuation and paragraphing. Weaker writers relied too heavily on the texts for their storyline or phrasing. Many others developed the plot by making themselves the criminal, or wrote from apparent experience or observation, producing dramatic accounts. Those who relied too heavily on secondary sources such as action films were less convincing.

A significant minority interpreted the title as "How to stop theft or thieves" and wrote a discursive essay on the causes and circumstances of modern crime, including hackers, with some varied suggested solutions. These often had a regional slant which made them interesting and different for the examiners. There were some thoughtful, mature responses and ideas. Those who simply used the ideas and situations in the texts were less successful.

Essays about treasured possessions were also very varied. It is interesting that to many students their mobile phone is their most important possession. Some candidates wrote lyrically about their relationship with this relatively recently acquired item, describing features and usage, and dreading the impact of its loss. Some related it closely to the texts, with a rescue from an unpleasant situation using their mobile.

Others wrote, with varying degrees of credibility, about precious items, passed on to them by relatives or friends since lost or far away. Some chose diaries, or apparently worthless or insignificant items, such as a pebble or a piece of paper, but created a real feeling of the value of the item to them. A surprising number, despite providing ample illustration or anecdote, failed to describe their possession, missing an opportunity to further engage the reader.

Some altered the focus slightly by choosing a member of their family, although the title clearly said "it". Those who chose animals revealed an interesting variety of pronoun use for animals in different cultures. In Britain a pet is usually referred to as "he" or "she". This topic was generally well done at all ability levels because the sincerity tended to shine through, even if not matched by the skill and accuracy of the writer. Those who chose the modern technology question had more varied success.

There were some wide-ranging, thoughtful and balanced answers, but too many had problems with including a relevant amount of detail. Some essays lapsed into lists, with no development or exemplification; at the other extreme some focused very narrowly on only a few developments or ran out of time, so the drawbacks were dismissed in a short paragraph.

Some writers had an interesting concept of history, which would have consigned most of the examiners (and teachers) to the dark ages as far as modern technology is concerned. There was evidence of prepared essays on this topic, with some apt vocabulary. There were also those who seemed to struggle to remember ideas and wording, but still achieved marks for relevance and structure. This is quite different from those, referred to at the beginning of this report, who re-cycled learned essays, usually with minimal or forced relevance.

Overall, there were the usual problems of sentence construction and division, verb agreements, tense, mood, person, repetitive structures and phrasing and spelling errors, even of words from the titles or texts, such as "technology". Adverbial markers can be useful, especially in a discursive essay, but can seem too strained, particularly as the first word of every paragraph.

Some centres also tried too hard to incorporate outdated idiomatic phrases or flowery descriptions apparently learned by heart. Candidates should be advised to use the texts and titles as a starting point only; not to try to force pre-learned phrases uncomfortably into their writing and not to use speech unless they are reasonably confident about its punctuation and paragraphing.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	68	58	49	44	37

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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