

Mark Scheme with Examiners' Report

GCE O Level English Language (7161)

January 2005

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SECTION A: Comprehension (30 marks)

Mark questions (1) - (7) 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.**

Passage One

1. (a) **Why is the writer travelling into the rainforest on this particular night?**

She wants to see/find/paint (or sensible equivalent) // the moonflower
(the flower of the Ipago tree).

(She wants to paint a flower = 1)

Do not award the first point if no mention of a flower is made at all:

She wants to paint/ paint in the jungle = 0)

or

This is the night on which she thinks the moonflower will open
(or sensible equivalent)

(2)

- (b) **What sort of transport is she using?**

She is travelling by boat.

(1)

2. **Look again at the first four paragraphs. List *four* creatures or animals that the writer either sees or hears.**

Mark **first four words/attempts** - or first four underlined or italicised words/attempts - only. Allow the bracketed additions to any answer but no others.

- (a flock of tiny green) parrots
- (large blue) butterfly
- (tiny) lizard (green with red markings)
- frogs (a resounding chorus of)

(If the candidate has copied from the beginning of the passage or written a paragraph which happens to contain the names of the animals - without underlining the appropriate words when he/she arrives at them - then, clearly, the first four words only will be looked at. Do not worry about confusion over singular/plural.)

(4)

3. **Which sources of light enable the writer to see the moonflower as she paints?**

Mark the whole answer. Award one mark each - up to a maximum of two - for:

- moonlight/moon
- torch/ (portable) battery light
- stars

(2)

4. *In your own words, give three reasons why the writer is so amazed and spellbound by the moonflower as it opens. Refer to lines 23 to 31 only.*

Mark first three only, but *allow for elaboration* on any single point. Although words and phrases from the passage may be used, they must be appropriately glossed to receive any marks. Be aware that three marks might be gained in one sentence.

Any three from:

- the flower opened so quickly
(Must gloss: 'Then the first petal began to move, and then another and another', or 'swiftly', or 'fully open in an hour', or 'burst into life')
- it smelt beautiful/ like honey/ intoxicating
(Must gloss: 'sweet' and 'perfumed/perfume'. Allow either or both only if appropriately qualified in own words)
- it was fragile
(Must gloss: 'delicate')
- it was surprisingly big
(Must gloss: 'unexpectedly' and 'large'. Allow 'very' or 'really' as a qualifier)
- it looked unbelievable/ out of this world/ supernatural
(Must gloss: 'magical')
- it looked exquisite/ gorgeous/ lovely
(Must gloss: 'Beauty'/'beautiful'. NB. Both words clearly allowable if linked to *smell*)
- it's the first time she's been able to see or paint the moonflower/ is excited by the fact that she doesn't have much time to observe it/ any sensible alternative expressing this sentiment.
(No lift really conveys these points).

(3)

5. Select two extracts from the passage (each one up to a maximum of twelve words) which you think bring the writer's experience to life. In each case explain how the language is so successful in doing this.

Give one mark each for the first two relevant quotations. (Do not count the words as the twelve word maximum serves as advice to the candidates only). Give a further nought, one or two marks each for an explanation as to why each quotation is effective. Use your professional judgement here, having read the following guidelines:

0 marks	Any generic/unspecific comment, such as, 'The language is all really good and the words are very well-chosen.'
1 mark	Any comment which clearly <i>identifies</i> something in the quotation which helps to bring the writer's experience to life: 'The colour green is mentioned.' or 'A large blue butterfly is alliteration.'
2 marks	A comment which applies to the chosen quotation <i>and</i> is <i>specific</i> as to effect. 'The 'tiny green parrots' sound exotic and like precious emeralds which helps to bring the writer's experiences to life.' OR 'The fact that the parrots are 'chattering noisily' makes them sound as if the writer has intruded on their personal space. She shouldn't be there.' OR 'The fact we are told that the butterfly has 'seven-inch wings' makes it sound as if it comes from another planet - no one has ever seen anything that big!' OR ' The sounds of the words 'blue butterfly' and 'flapped lazily' are soft and hypnotic helping us to imagine how the writer felt.'

If the candidate has written one paragraph of explanation for two quotations, apply the criteria listed above as best you can. This type of answer *might* tend towards the general/unspecific but this *will not necessarily* be the case.

(6)

Passage Two

6. (a) Which *two* aspects of the voyage made it a success?

Mark first two only. Allow for some description of/elaboration on each.

- The globe has been circumnavigated for the first time.
- The passage linking The Atlantic and The Pacific Ocean/ separating mainland South America from Tierra del Fuego/ The Magellan Strait is found.
- Discovery (NOT naming) of the Pacific Ocean.
- It is proved that all the world's oceans are linked.
- It is proved that Southeast Asia/ East Indies can be reached by sailing westwards across the Atlantic Ocean.
- 1 boat and/ or 31 men and/or Juan Sebastian del Cano made it back alive. (The 'Vittoria' need not be specifically identified as the one boat but this point will be negated if the *wrong* one is named).

(2)

Which *two* important aspects of the voyage do you find negative or sad?

Mark first two only. Allow for some description of/elaboration on each.

Please note the use of the word '*important*' in the question.

- Magellan (the commander of the expedition) is killed/ didn't complete his voyage.
- Only 31 (of the 260) men who set out on the expedition actually survive/ only 1 of the 5 ships completes the expedition/ there is great loss of life.
- Conditions on the boats were awful. (An example is not needed for the mark but, if quite a number *have* been listed together, count this as 'elaboration'/as one attempt).
- No one attempted to sail around the globe for another fifty years (or more)/ for a very long time.

(2)

Passages One and Two

7. Although both of these passages are about explorers, they have been written in very different ways. Explain which one you prefer and why, commenting on any important differences you have noticed between them. You should include comments on the language and the style of the passages in your answer.

You should use your own words as far as possible, but you may include brief quotations to support your answer. Remember to comment on both passages.

Use your professional judgement - along with the chart printed below - to award a mark out of eight for this question.

Please tick appropriate comments.

8 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several clear differences between the passages are stated.• There is <i>some</i> focused and appropriate reference to style/language and/or genre, interest for potential readers etc• It is clear that the candidate has <i>appreciated</i>/ shown <i>some insight</i> into the passages.• A choice is made as to which passage is preferred.
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5 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate outlines some basic differences between the passages. • <i>Some</i> mention of language, style or potential audience etc is made. • Some understanding of both passages is shown. • A choice is made as to which passage is preferred.
2 - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate makes one or two relevant points. • <i>Some</i> limited understanding is shown. • (A simple explanation as to why one passage was liked could score 1 point.)

Award a maximum of 3 if only one passage has been discussed.

(8)

SECTION B: Summary and Directed Writing (35 marks)

8. Imagine that you were one of the thirty-one sailors who survived Magellan's voyage around the world. Write your diary account of the expedition, including as many important facts from the passage as you can. Describe your thoughts and feelings throughout your account.

Use your own words as far as possible. You will lose marks for direct copying.

Do not use more than 220 words.

Please count 220 words, then cross out the rest of the answer from the end of that sentence.

Content (14 marks)

Tick any points deserving note from the list below, up to 14 marks. Please number points.

Content Points:

1. Our diarist is on the *Vittoria*.
2. Ferdinand Magellan was the leader of the expedition.
3. Five boats and/or 260 men set off (from Spain).
4. in order to sail around the globe/ find a passage separating the mainland of South America from Tierra del Fuego/ reach Southeast Asia or the East Indies.
5. Magellan was not honest when asked where the men were going/ the men didn't know where they were going.
6. The passage is searched for almost a year/ a long time/ a year later, we reached the coast of South America.
7. There is a terrible storm.
8. The strait between the two oceans is discovered as a result/ by chance.
9. It is travelled along for thirty eight days/ over a month.
10. One of the ships deserts/refuses to travel along the strait.
11. The new ocean is named The Pacific because (at first) it is so calm.
12. The journey across The Pacific is long (three months and twenty days).
13. The men are starving/suffering from diseases related to malnutrition/ dying of scurvy.
14. They eat only old biscuits/ drink stinking water.
15. They are forced to eat rats/ sell them for a lot of money.
16. Magellan is killed in a fight in The Philippines.
17. Many sailors lose their lives here.
18. Two boats (the *Trinidad* and the *Vittoria*) escape.
19. Del Cano takes charge of the expedition/ the *Vittoria*.
20. Only 31 (of the 260) men return.
21. No other sailors try to sail round the world for another fifty years or it had been a success, **plus eg.**

Style and audience (6 marks)

Use your professional judgement and the grid below to award each candidate a mark out of 6 for this category.

Look for the extent to which the candidate has adopted a convincing voice, expressed thoughts or feelings in their account, engaged the reader and used an appropriate style and vocabulary.

Do not penalise a candidate for the layout they have adopted.

6 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The candidate makes successful attempts to engage the reader by capturing the magnitude of what is happening.• Thoughts and feelings - surrounding, say, the storm, the physical hardship, the death of Magellan etc are convincing.• An appropriate, consistent voice is established through appropriate use of style, vocabulary and detail.• There is a clear sense of time scale.
4 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The candidate makes some attempts to engage the reader by describing thoughts and feelings surrounding key events.• Voice, style and vocabulary are appropriate, but not necessarily sharply convincing or consistent.• The account is written in the first person.• There is some sense of time scale.
2 - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The candidate makes a few, rather limited references to his/her own thoughts and feelings.• The account has some limited appeal to the reader at times.• The account is not necessarily written from a sailor's point of view. (1 mark)• The odd date might be mentioned.

The sub-totals for content/style and audience should be added to the mark for Expression and Accuracy (see grid over the page) beneath the answer and the total for the whole question transferred to the margin, eg 12+5+12=29.

It would be exceptional for a candidate to gain 5 or 6 if they had not used a diary format/ style.

Expression and Accuracy (15 marks)

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 Show confident use of a range of sentence structures Show considerable skill in organising ideas Write very accurately with regard to spelling and punctuation Use an impressive range of vocabulary Express ideas with lucidity and precision 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 mostly accurate spelling and punctuation Use apt and varied vocabulary, using few words and phrases from the text Show ability to sustain theme and tone

9 - 7	Write standard English reasonably clearly Write with some variety of sentence structures Use some skill in organising material Use mainly accurate spelling and punctuation Write with appropriate vocabulary and mostly own words
6 - 4	Write understandable English Use at least two types of sentence structure Show some organisation of ideas 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, but may demonstrate only minimal original expression Write simple sentences Show a basic understanding of the conventions of spelling and punctuation

Please underline errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and general expression.

SECTION C: Essay writing

9. Choose one of the following titles on which to write in an interesting way. Do not base your answer directly on the content of either of the passages in the examination paper. You are advised to write between 350 and 400 words.

Either:

(a) The Discovery. (Tell a story, true or imaginary, in which something important or interesting is found).

Or

(b) A Place without People.

Or

(c) 'A quiet life can be just as satisfying as an adventurous life.' To what extent do you agree with this viewpoint?

SECTION C	
Mark range	Candidate should be able to:
35 - 30	Write a lively, relevant and engaging essay, clearly constructed, fluently and accurately presented
29 - 24	Communicate with some originality ideas related to the topic Write confidently in a form appropriate for selected title Use some rhetorical devices in an appropriate way Offer a wide variety of sentence structures Use some sophisticated grammatical structures Punctuate with accuracy Use a wide range of vocabulary spelt with considerable accuracy Use Standard English with accuracy
23 - 18	Communicate ideas clearly and successfully Write in a form appropriate for topic chosen Show successful organisation in writing Show control of paragraphing and punctuation which enhances meaning Use some variety of sentence structure Spell some complex words correctly Use a wide vocabulary, mainly accurately spelt

17 - 12	Communicate ideas linked to the title with success Structure ideas with some clarity Show control in a generally organised and accurate piece of writing Use correct punctuation and paragraphing to enhance meaning Try to use some variety of sentence structure and links Spell mainly accurately
11 - 6	Communicate ideas with some success Show some use of paragraphs Show some accuracy and control of agreement, punctuation and sentence construction Employ a limited range of sentence forms Spell with some accuracy
5 - 0	Communicate ideas with limited success Show limited control in organising written language Write simple sentences Show limited accuracy in punctuation, sentence construction and agreement Spell some commonly used words accurately

Please underline errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and general expression.

Identify strengths and weaknesses after each script

+	-
relevant clear structure varied vocabulary	sent bounds agreement unambitious

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General Comments

Examiners were pleased to see that candidates responded with warmth and interest to the passage about the moonflower, and with a mixture of admiration and horror to the exploits of Magellan and his men. The vast majority of them seemed to do the very best of which they were capable and tackled the various sections of the paper with real vigour. Teachers might find it useful to look at the support material, which will appear on the International website, to find further advice on how to tackle the 7161 'O' Level paper and to see examples of pupils' work from all three sections of the January 2005 examination. In response to recent requests, this will not just include *outstanding* examples of answers in Sections B and C, but also work of an 'average' A, C and E standard.

Section A: Comprehension

Most candidates got off to a good start with **question 1(a)** and gained the full two marks. Answers such as *'She wants to paint the moonflower'* and *'She is sure that it is on this particular night that the moonflower will open'* were typical responses here, revealing that the main point of the passage had been grasped. Some candidates failed to focus their answers on the 'moonflower' specifically, or did not pick up on the fact that it was the *blooming* of the moonflower - or the *fully-opened* flower rather than the buds - which the writer was hoping to witness, and thus lost a mark.

The majority of candidates, in addition to gaining one or two marks for the first part of this question, gained a further mark for **question 1(b)** by realising that the writer was travelling *'by boat'*. Examiners gave credit to candidates who named a particular type of boat unless it was, clearly, working against the spirit of the text - *'a huge pleasure-cruiser'*, *'an ocean liner'* and *'a sub-marine'* therefore gained no marks. Some, however, appeared to have mistaken the word *'paddled'* for *'pedalled'* and got the impression that Margaret Mee was penetrating the depths of the rainforest on a bicycle. Clearly, those who said that she was travelling *'by vigil'* or *'on a torch'* had misunderstood these words rather than the question itself. A significant minority thought that she was on foot, whilst one or two pictured her in a wheelchair. Candidates were not penalised - either here or elsewhere on the paper - if they thought that Margaret Mee was a man.

'Parrots, a butterfly, a lizard and frogs' were identified by a large number of candidates as being the animals which the writer could either see or hear in the rainforest. Very few included irrelevant pieces of information in between points, so were able to pick up the full four marks for **question 2**. The most common incorrect answers were *'buds'* and *'a cactus'*, with a tiny minority specifying *'petals'* or *'a vigil'*.

In **question 3**, a pleasing number of candidates identified both sources of light correctly: *'She was using a small battery light and the light of the full moon'* being a typical answer which gained the full two marks. As one would expect, quite a number of answers referred to just *one* source of light. Some candidates quoted *'a faint illumination and the light of the full moon'* from paragraph seven, which gained one mark only. *'Torch'* was allowed as an *alternative* to *'small battery light'* but the answer *'...a torch and a small battery light'* obviously counted as just one point.

Question 4 required candidates to use their own words which the more able candidates were certainly able to do. They selected three apt points and - crucially - found alternative ways to express them than those used in the passage. *'The fact that the flower opened really quickly, smelt beautiful and was much bigger than the buds had been amazed Margaret Mee'* was an answer which scored all three points. Indeed - although the valid points selected by candidates varied enormously - these were the

reasons for the writer being 'amazed and spellbound' that were most often selected. Slightly weaker candidates were able to score one or two marks - even if other attempts were not in their own words - for such answers as: *'It became a flower from a bud very fast'* (one mark) and *'It was like from another planet and smells so beautiful'* (two marks). If answers made mention of the 'fragrance' of the flower, this was given a mark as the word suggests a sweet smell without need for qualification. Unfortunately, a number of candidates lost marks here by *copying out* the relevant lines - or extracts from them - directly from the passage. This was particularly sad if they had closely identified the correct points *and* - as could be told from what they wrote elsewhere - understood what they had written. The phrase 'in your own words' is always used on the 7161 paper so is one with which all candidates should be familiar. It needs to be emphasised that, if this instruction is ignored in a particular Section A question, *then no marks can be given for the answer at all.*

Question 5 was - in many ways - the most challenging in this section as it allowed examiners to assess a candidate's ability to appreciate the *different* ways in which language works. Many pupils showed perception in selecting two separate quotations which brought the writer's experiences to life: *'A large blue butterfly flapped lazily along the forest edge'*; *'a tiny lizard, green with red markings was watching me'*; *'the sky was black and only the brightest stars showed through...'*; *'Luckily, the night was still without a breath of wind...'* and *'we watched, fascinated and humbled by the experience'* (each gaining one mark) were amongst the most popular extracts chosen. Examiners were generous - with good reason - when faced with slightly weaker choices such as: *'I had to prepare my painting materials'*; *'no large insect came by'* and *'the buds had not changed'*, although candidates making such choices were sometimes self-penalised when it came to making comments on the efficacy of the language. Generosity dried up, however, when assessing the likes of: *'In the early stages'*; *'the pollinator'*; *'the channel and then the other'* and *'it was still possible to detect'*. Able candidates then went on to both *identify* and *comment upon the effects of* something within each quotation which 'brought the writer's experience to life', thus gaining two marks: *'I liked the way that the butterfly flapped lazily because it's funny to think of the contrast between the artist almost falling off the top of her boat to paint the moonflower when the butterfly can hardly be bothered to move. She is a human and the butterfly is part of nature.'*; *'The artist wants to paint the moonflower and this tiny lizard is like a little policeman checking up on what she is doing. It should be the writer watching the lizard, not the other way round'*; *'The passage has lots of contrasts in it between light and dark and this is a really good one. The brightest stars can get through and not the others, this shows how very, very dark it is which tells us how scary it is there in the forest'*; *'There is no breath of wind which makes the jungle seem dead and dangerous'* and *'the verbs fascinated and humbled give an 'after the party' feel. The painter has just had the best moment of her life and is very tired but the most happiest she has ever been'*. This question, therefore allowed able candidates to flex their linguistic muscles and, in the case of each above example, gain an additional two marks for commenting closely on the effects of each quotation chosen. Average pupils could not compete with such excellence: many *identified* some important element within a quotation - such as an appeal to the senses, alliteration, contrast or repetition - without being able to *comment on its specific effect*. An additional one mark for each quotation was gained in such cases, as illustrated in the mark scheme. Weaker candidates - whilst still showing a laudable degree of understanding - simply paraphrased quotations: *'Extraordinary perfume wafted from the flower'*. *This expression shows that the flower had a lovely scent which attracted many animals to it* or *'I begged for the light to be dimmed...'* tells us that she wanted her friend to turn the torch down' scored one mark for each quotation and nought for each explanation. A small minority scored nothing for this question by failing to identify - or glossing - two extracts from the passage, and then floundering when attempting to explain their choice: *'I liked the bit where she is on the top of the boat because she's nearly falling off'* and *'all the animals like the frogs make it like you were almost there'* both scored nought.

Although a small number of candidates confused success with failure when addressing **question 6 (a)**, many provided satisfactory - or good - answers to it. '*31 men survive the voyage and the passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific is found*' and '*They discover the Pacific Ocean and prove that all the oceans of the world are linked*' were two typical answers, each of which gained the full two marks. Some candidates failed to score by identifying *minor* points - 'There was a storm and Magellan didn't tell his men where they were going' - without going on to *link* such things with the *key geographical discoveries*. On the whole, candidates equalled or bettered their score for **6(b)** when answering **question 6(b)**: many of them recognised the fact that conditions on the boat were awful and that Magellan/many of the crew died, and gained another two marks as a result. Indeed, as deduced from answers elsewhere on the paper, it was the *horrors* of the expedition rather than its groundbreaking *successes* which made the greater impression on candidates.

The vast majority of candidates were able to make a decision as to which passage they preferred in response to **question 7** and give some justification to support their choice. Both passages proved equally popular and - as a real *range* of comments were made on each - this was an enjoyable section of the paper to mark. Answers which gained between one and three marks tended to be those which concentrated on the content of the two passages, perhaps with some mention of the photographs and/or map. Many could receive credit for noticing one or two of the following points: two people made the trip in one passage, three hundred and sixty in the other; one was concerned with the blooming of a relatively small moonflower, the other with the circumnavigation of the whole globe; one concerns itself with the relatively unknown moonflower/ Margaret Mee, the other with the very famous discovery of the Magellan Strait/ Magellan; a woman was the explorer in one passage, a man in the other; one took place over a few hours, the other over almost three years; no one died in one passage, three hundred and twenty nine people died in the other. Some answers in this mark range tended to rely heavily on lengthy paraphrasing and/or long copied extracts from the passages, and thus lost the thread of the argument. The weakest answers tended to be very short, to comment on one passage only and to make rather trivial or general points concerning, for example, the quality of paper, the fact that one passage was more difficult to understand than the other or that the candidate did/did not like flowers/boats. Candidates gaining between four and six points noted some differences between the two in terms of content, but went further than those already mentioned by making *some* reference to differences in language, tone and style. Most typically, candidates gaining marks in this category received credit for commenting on such things as: one passage was written in the first person, the other in the third person; one contained lots of descriptive writing, the other was more reliant on dates, facts and numbers; one was personal/relayed feelings, one was historical/geographical/relayed facts (although this difference was sometimes rather overstated); one contained lots of colours and sound, the other was drier, more monochrome in style; one was 'happy', the other 'sad'/more concerned with danger and death. The most able candidates produced some outstanding close commentary on the passages, most notably on the descriptive style of 'The Moonflower', and so gained between seven and the full eight marks. Often - as allowed for in the mark scheme - such answers were substantiated by way of close reference or short quotations. These excellent responses tended to stem from personal response, so comments were really fresh and varied whilst remaining embedded in the actual texts at all times. There are some examples of answers which were awarded marks in each of the three categories in the support material.

Section B: Summary and Directed Writing

Many candidates seemed to really enjoy tackling this section of the paper, and a number of examiners commented on the fact that it seemed to bring out the best in them in many ways. In terms of *content*, only a few lacked sufficient precision when mentioning such things as the purpose of the trip, the conditions on board and the events in the Philippines to score the allocated marks; fewer still ignored the rubric altogether and described a

completely different expedition - most memorably involving an intrepid attempt to build an igloo in a desert - thus gaining no marks, or just the odd few, for their 'summary' skills. Some candidates did become confused as to what happened when - assuming, for example, that the storm occurred as they were travelling *through* the Magellan Strait or that they began to suffer from virtual starvation at the very *beginning* of the voyage or after they had left the Philippines - which meant that these points became invalid; others spent too long on an introduction and so were unable to complete their summary of events within the word allowance, though this was not such a widespread problem as it has been in other years. The majority of candidates, however, picked out quite a high number of relevant points from the text - a number even gaining the maximum of fourteen - within the allocated two hundred and twenty words. With regard to **style and audience**, the majority of candidates were able to engage closely with the thoughts, feelings, hopes and fears of the sailors on this dramatic voyage, choosing an appropriate voice through which to relay the magnitude of what was happening. Many personalised the trip by making brief reference to a wife and children left at home, how they missed the delicious wine and food of their native land or how they felt about being lied to by Magellan at the start of the voyage; others - either by stating feelings directly, or by deft inclusion of well-chosen adverbs, adjectives or perceptive detail - did equally as well, if not better. Success with conveying the timescale was more variable, with only the most able candidates showing the passing of time with clarity and precision. A few transferred the action to the 21st century, suggesting that many of the problems on board could have been avoided if Magellan had had the forethought to take a mobile fridge, and that the monotony would have been quickly relieved by a television or Playstation. Several sailors were described taking 'photos of key moments - most notably Magellan's death - on their mobile 'phones, whilst one candidate even went so far as to say that it would have been much more sensible for them to have flown instead! Almost all candidates wrote in the first person, thus giving a clear sense of 'diary' to the reader, whilst some of the most able controlled the voice, tense and time-stance with real aplomb, often splitting their account into several dated entries or writing one entry on their return. All in all, therefore, this element of the task was well-handled by the majority of pupils, with only a few - most typically those who had copied extensively from the original text - offering rather dry, narrative accounts which gained, typically, two marks or below. Success in personalising accounts helped candidates to avoid wholesale lifting from the passage, which is crucial when attempting to gain a high mark for **expression and accuracy**. When awarding a mark out of fifteen for this element of the task, examiners must be able to see that the candidates have described events *in their own words*. Of course, some nouns and very short phrases can not be changed - without resorting to the ludicrous - so words such as 'storm', 'Portuguese sailor', 'coastline', 'ocean', 'fresh food', 'scurvy', 'water', 'rat' etc. as well as all dates and proper nouns do not detract from 'own words' accounts, but as soon as longer extracts are copied directly from the original, then marks begin to go down. Extensive direct copying means that candidates gain no more than three out of fifteen; if the whole thing is copied, then no marks can be awarded as, clearly, an individual's ability to write accurately can not be judged. The marks awarded here were - as one might expect - variable. Most typically, candidates who find difficulty in controlling tense, agreement and sentences tend to be placed in the four to six category as they write 'understandable English' without sustained control or accuracy. There were, however, some outstanding attempts which demonstrated the ability of the most able candidates to write with considerable flair, lucidity and precision. As with all English examinations, some candidates raised smiles by inaccurate spelling: the picture of Magellan and his crew setting out to circumnavigate the globe on 'five giant sheep' vied with that of them boarding 'specially made chips' for being the most surreal! I include this for amusement only, as these small errors - in themselves - made no difference to the overall marks. Again, examples of answers will be included - with examiners' comments - in the support material.

Section C: The Essay

As always, this was a very enjoyable section of the paper to mark as - on the whole - the individual written styles of the candidates allowed their personalities and views to shine through. Although, of course, the standard of essays varied considerably, there were some outstanding pieces of writing here, and almost none which did not manage to communicate something of interest to the reader. The ones which *did* fail to do this were usually those which lifted extensively from one of the passages on the examination paper, or which had been learnt - with limited success - beforehand. On a few occasions, sadly, rather able candidates - even those who had scored highly for expression and accuracy in Section B - attempted to do this, which meant that they did not receive the mark that their potential warranted. The most usual reason for candidates scoring lower marks than they might have expected here is when errors in grammar, syntax, sentencing, tense and expression begin to hinder communication with the reader; essays which are accurate but mainly monosyllabic, repetitive in terms of vocabulary or content and contain only simple sentences are becoming rarer but would still, obviously, not gain a mark in one of the top categories. **Question 9(a) - *The Discovery*** proved popular reflecting, no doubt, our common love for story-telling. At their least sophisticated, these action-driven stories displayed basic narrative techniques and involved an important find - most notably of some sort of treasure or archaeological relic- towards the conclusion of the tale. However, ineffective planning sometimes meant that little time was left for the moment of discovery itself and only a sentence or two given to its significance. More able candidates created convincing settings and characters as their stories unfolded, used direct speech effectively and included close detail to *suggest* mood or atmosphere; the most talented writers used a range of narrative techniques - such as flashback - as well as creating tension and suspense in their readers. These excellent essays often involved a discovery of a rather less material, more cerebral or philosophical kind hinging, say, on the realisation that money is not necessarily the root of all evil or the discovery that successive generations do *not* progress in terms of morality and altruism, in line with technological and scientific development. Many secrets were uncovered such as the fact that the writer was adopted, that he/she had a life-threatening disease or that someone who appeared to be a good friend turned out to be quite the opposite. Of course, such introspection was by no means an essential element to the gaining of a good mark. There is always room for the 'cracking good yarn' - some of which can be based on the simplest of ideas - which keeps the reader in suspense and surprises him/her at the end whilst remaining believable. Many candidates used local legend and familiar settings in their stories which almost always seemed to give them a sense of verisimilitude and vitality. **Question 9(b) - *A Place without People*** - proved a popular choice, also, and prompted a range of essays from the purely descriptive through to the discursive and philosophical. Narrative attempts tended to involve being in a life-threatening situation - such as being chased through some sort of wasteland by a lion/murderer/alien etc - without recourse to human help. More evocative responses included the depiction of a widow's house after the departure of her relatives, the experiences of a recently-blinded man and the description of a particular place after a devastating war or natural disaster, most notably the recent tsunami. The success of such essays often hinged on the candidate's ability to structure the description effectively - just as vital here as in a narrative - and to create mood. A few spent too long describing the journey *to* the 'place without people' and could, therefore, only devote a few sentences to the close depiction of it; others got into a bit of a muddle when trying to advertise such a place as a possible tourist destination - keen to use their ability to persuade - because describing the absence of human beings did not *always* sit easily with the plea for lots of people to visit it. A number of candidates used the title as a starting point for the contemplation of whether a place *with* people was more edifying than one *without*. These essays were often well-structured, aptly-substantiated and written with conviction and energy, only on occasions did they read as little more than an introduction which was repeated - using slightly different words - in subsequent paragraphs. As with choice (a), some uncomplicated ideas worked very well: the close description of a well-loved, isolated place often proved evocative and enjoyable to read, as did imaginative projections of what the moon, Mars or an underwater world might be like. Quite a large

minority of candidates chose to tackle question 9(c) - 'A quiet life can be just as satisfying as an adventurous life.' *To what extent do you agree with this viewpoint?* On the whole, these essays were thoughtful and well-substantiated, with candidates either presenting the two lifestyles and then offering a balanced compromise by way of conclusion, or taking a definite stance from the start and arguing the case throughout. Both approaches proved equally fruitful. Weaker answers tended to lack illustrative example, were somewhat repetitive and, at times, contradictory. Most candidates were adept - to varying degrees - in structuring their answers, and had an appropriate vocabulary at their fingertips which allowed them to do this. Some of the most thought-provoking answers voiced the opinion that the quietest of lives can provide adventure if we take an interest in the emotions and desires of our fellow man and that 'adventure' of the more dangerous kind can sometimes be a cover for internal blandness or a fear of the introspection resulting from quieter moments. Please look at examples of all three essays from this examination - along with examiners' comments - in the support material.

All in all, then, examiners were very impressed by the standard of many candidates' answers throughout this paper and were - as ever - thoroughly appreciative of the dedicated teaching that had clearly brought out the best in so many pupils of varying abilities.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 7161, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	63	53	43	38	32

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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