

Support Document for English Language 7161 January 2006

This document will examine the work of candidates with different levels of achievement. We suggest you use it in conjunction with the examiners' report and mark scheme for this session. First, we have a complete paper.

Section A Comprehension

(You are reminded that technical errors are not penalised in this section unless they interfere with the meaning).

1 a) The speaker thinks she and her friend should go to the party because she knows that no one else would be going there.

1 b) The writer wishes to protect the girl's identity so that others reading the passage would not know they were actually reading about her.

(2 marks, clear understanding; many candidates answered 'because she was not popular' for b), without explaining the need for anonymity)

2. The mobile user was speaking more loudly than she would standing next to other people. She was laughing loudly. Her voice was very high-pitched.

(2 marks here, as the second sentence is a repeat of the volume point. The candidate has realised that a 3 mark question is likely to need three responses, but has not identified the confident body language, unawareness of others' presence or use of identifying detail in her conversation, any of which would have gained an extra mark. As this question does not specify the number of points required, examiners would mark the whole answer.)

3. We may get to hear the verbal fights that people have over the phone or romantic conversations.

(2 marks, having missed the progress reports on the journey to work itself. Many candidates confused this question with 4, not having read carefully enough the phrase 'on the journey to work'.)

4. We may reveal facts about the kind of jobs we do to support ourselves or what we do during our leisure. We may also reveal facts about our everyday diet.

(This answer to an own words question scores two marks for the first two points, from a possible four answers in the mark scheme. The candidate has confused the metaphor image in lines 28 and 29, thinking the conversations were really about food.)

5. Manufacturers can devise ways to make mobile phones useless when they are stolen from teenagers. Police should keep watch over places where many children/teenagers spend time together. Parents can urge manufacturers to make mobiles less attractive to criminals. Parents can find the serial number of their child's phone and preserve it.

(This answer scores three from four marks, as the third point is an alternative to the first, dealing with the same idea from a different perspective).

6. Parents can contact and find the whereabouts of the children when the latter go out and can also feel relaxed about having to let their children go out alone.

Parents do not want their children to carry mobiles because they know that street criminals may attack them or even kill them.

(This answer scores three from four, having missed the point about theft in the second sentence.)

7. Parents should advise their children to carry a mobile phone with the same care as they would carry money.

(This answer scores one from three, the candidate not having realised that a three mark question is likely to require three elements in the answer.)

8. I would recommend my friend read Passage One because it presents the usefulnesses and odds of using mobile phones in a really relaxed and engaging manner. It has an interesting title which has been derived from phone conversations and so my friend would find it more personal. The opening has a narrative touch which would engage my friend. There are lots of dialogue and little realistic conversations that ordinary people have over the phone. There are some factual information, eg 'the number of mobile phone subscribers ... land lines' which he would find useful as reference. He would probably find people unintentionally 'eavesdropping' on others' conversations hilarious and would have a little laugh after reading about other's 'mutual restatements of love' or 'who's on family size oven chips'. The passage is personal and anecdotal and it has a relaxed setting. There is also a lot of humour as 'the slim guy ... jumps and scrabbles in his pocket.' There are lots of pictures of teenagers and working people delightfully talking over the phone. This might convince my friend that talking over a mobile phone is something not to be missed.

I would not choose Passage Two because it is littered with advice and precautions that would scare my friend to the extent that he might consider not buying a mobile phone at all! He might simply find the idea of a girl being 'shot in the head' frightening as he is weak-hearted. The title is a little menacing for someone about to become a new mobile user. The language is completely factual and all the do's and don'ts would seriously give my friend a headache. The photographs are of older people and my friend would probably yawn at them. The statistics would convince my friend into forgetting the idea of purchasing a mobile phone because he knows it's 'not worth losing a life over.' The language has no narrative or anecdotal sense which he would find impersonal.

(This answer is interesting for various reasons. The majority of candidates expressed a preference for the second passage and this answer makes a well-argued case for the first. It is very long (nearly essay length!) and there is some repetition of ideas in each section, but there is a very clear focus on the purpose of the choice and the needs of the potential reader. There is a good balance between style and content with aptly chosen references to the passages, showing both understanding and appreciation of how language is being used for effect and purpose. There are clear reasons for not choosing the second passage, although some of the assertions are questionable - there is some narrative and one of the pictures is a child. This answer achieved 7 from a possible 8 marks.) This candidate scored 22 from 30 in this section, showing clear comprehension of the passages, but maybe missing a few marks by not understanding the requirements of some questions clearly enough.

Section B Summary and Directed Writing

9. Friends and teachers,

Can you imagine having to give up using your mobile phone in public places? One in six people in the world own this device and the number of subscribers are increasing every day. What would parents do if they had no cell phones to know about the whereabouts of their children when they go outdoors? Parents can use mobiles to converse with their children and feel at ease about having to allow them to go outside alone. (points 11b and 11a here, but benefit of doubt (BOD) who owns the mobile phone!)

Most young users also wouldn't do without cell phones. Mobiles make life a lot easier. Your mum can call you and tell you to bring home cereals if they are finished. (point 13) You can use your phone for having a great time with friends - by calling them up and have a great chat or texting them, which is simply fun! (points 8 and 14) Mobiles give you the confidence of conversing easily - you don't worry about being among unknown people. (point 10) Mind you, not everyone gets mugged. If you keep your phone safe and listen to your parent's advice, you don't have to worry about being robbed. (point 15) So why say no to cell phones?

Hey folks!

Do you think you'd like to reveal personal information about your lifestyle - your job, leisure, love life or diet - to complete strangers? Your very own cell phone can make this happen and in a public place like buses! (all four points for 5 scored here)

You have to constantly dwell in the fear of losing your phone to a street criminal. (point 1)

(The writer exceeded the word limit at this point, thus reducing the potential content and other marks. There are, however, a creditable 12 content points from a maximum 15 from 20 possible in the mark scheme. 4 out of 5 were awarded for tone and audience, as there's a good sense of rhetoric and engagement with the audience, but the length prevents more rebuttal and a conclusion. 12 out of 15 were given for expression and accuracy, as there is some lack of control of verbs and some idiom, but the overall impression is of confidence and appropriate form and tone. So a total of 28 out of 35 for this section.)

Section C Essay

10.c) What qualities do you look for in friends?

I know a good friend when I see one. My friend could be a desperate housewife, wringing her laundry and still managing to balance her three-year-old in her arms, while she offered me a tiny smile from her apartment, which is opposite mine. It could be the garment worker frantically walking off to her destination and looking up at me in my little verandah, while her footsteps reverberated down the dark alleys...

As you cannot probably guess, the first thing I would expect from a potential friend is a friendly smile, in other words a certain hint in his/her appearance, behaviour or even movements that he/she possesses a good heart, not necessarily one of gold but definitely not one of stone. My friend-to-be does not really have to plaster a fake, hundred mega-watt smile on his face, though! What I mean is that I would not be caught dead beside the prettiest and smartest girl in school, who also happens to be the haughtiest and most egocentric. In fact, the last qualities I would look for in a friend are selfishness or an egotistic aura.

However, the kind of aura I would want my friend to possess is one revealing her inner warmth and the ability to laugh at the silly, simple things in life. Yes, I would most certainly want my friend to have a great, if not corny, sense of humour. I would expect my friend to laugh at the innocent jokes I can crack at not at me. That does not mean that I would want them to pretend to laugh at my lame, dumb jokes because the last thing I would want my friend to be is a hypocrite. Do you think I would like my best friend Ayesha to go around stabbing my back when I am not around or my good friend Sakib tell his teenmates what a terrible singer I am (which I am)? I would want my true friends to be straightforward and let me know if I am doing something wrong right in my face - instead of telling that to other people, including strangers - in my absence.

Although I would not mind having someone like Albert Einstein for a friend, I would not want him to be stark and serious. Having a talking encyclopedia and a walking dictionary is useful, especially for someone like me, who has just about the same amount of general knowledge you would expect an anteater to possess! My friend does not necessarily have to possess an excellent fashion sense, but I would not want her to appear in my house in black skin-hugging leggings and a magenta sundress in the middle of autumn.

It is really quite difficult to sum up all the different qualities I would look for in a friend in a short essay. I guess, however, that a friend who would accept me for who I am and can love and respect my very own personality is someone I can go to the ends of the earth with. My friend should be someone I can completely trust and someone I can open my heart out to. I should be able to go window shopping at the new store near my house, watch the latest Hollywood flicks and dance mindlessly to the latest music video without having to worry that she is thinking of me to be an 'uncool' person. A friend is someone I can be my unadulterated and unalloyed self with.

(This essay has a real voice and personality, unlike many on this theme which were mere lists of qualities. The vivid examples, lively detail and self-deprecating humour all contributed to an enjoyable piece of writing. It is, however, rather long, which may explain some of the careless errors in spelling, verbs and constructions. There is also some repetition of phrasing and some points are rather drawn-out. If it had been a little briefer, allowing more time for checking, it could have achieved full marks. It was awarded 29. The total for this script was 79%, a clear A grade, and is presented as an example of what can be achieved at this level.)

We are also including some examples of answers at other levels, to indicate both what the grades represent and to show how more marks can be gained with some attention to detail.

8. (2) I would recommend my friend to read passage two because he/she would need to be aware of the dangers of a mobile phone as well as the cautions to take, such as finding out the 'serial number' of the phone and making a note of it. She can also 'property-mark the phone.' I would also want my friend to be aware that when she uses this mobile phone in public it would be easier for her to be a 'target for crime'. I believe it would be useful for her to know that 'if someone demands a phone, they should hand it over - it's not worth losing a life over.' It would be much less useful for her to read passage one because if she is aware of the dangers of using her phone in public, she would know better than to attract attention to herself by speaking with a high 'volume and pitch.'

(Although this candidate has a clear focus on the task, all the quotations are of content, with no mention of style or layout. It is also very limited on the passage not selected. 3 marks were awarded.)

8. (3) I would definitely direct him or her to passage two, as I think it is the more informative passage. Passage one is about one's privacy which is at risk when talking on a mobile phone in public. Of course privacy is important but, in my honest opinion, doesn't come anywhere close to the importance of one's safety! Passage two refers to the risk of safety taken when owning a mobile. The passage expresses many opinions, one of which contains a bold and shocking episode when a girl was shot for her mobile. This plain fact is more telling than the stories in the first passage. It also gives advice and courses of action that can be taken to minimize crime occurring to the owner.

Passage one just tells you of people's conversations and what they do when they get a phone call or text message. In passage two the style is set out in four different sections of four different people's opinions, which would be useful for him to compare.

(This answer gains 5 marks, but could be improved by a clearer focus on style with some examples from the passage to support them. It demonstrates a clear understanding of the passages and the differences between them and justifies why the chosen one would be more useful.)

9. (2) Speech One Supporting

Mobile phones should be banned in public places. As known, mobile phones cause a lot of distraction in class in all schools and colleges. When the phone rings, it does not only distract one's concentration but all students' in the class. The bell is very noisy. Even if it is in silent, students cannot resist to get messages from friends. As a student try to reply, he or she will miss a part of class which may be very important. To make things worse, sometimes it stops lecture's discipline. This kind of behaviour is totally unrespectiveness. The whole flow of class will be changed by a mobile phone. This kind of situation is strongly unacceptable. In addition, in cinema, for example, if no one turns off his her mobile phone, eventually one of the phones will be rang and disturb others. (point 3, allowed as an example) Therefore mobile phones should be banned in public places.

Speech Two Opposing

Mobile phones should not be banned in public places. In modern life, every one has a mobile phone as it has become an basic element to have. We cannot deny this new trend that every people own mobile phones. Mobile phones are used in every where for everything. For example, a business can also be done through a mobile phone. For emergency, we also use phones to call 911 or police station. (point 12) It provides us comfort and safety. (point 10) As a result, we may warn people to switch off or make the phone in vibration or silent.

(This answer is an extreme example of a student who is diverted from the task of summarising the points from the passages by strong opinions, presumably based on experience, of the distracting influence of mobile phones in the classroom and cinema. There is also a lack of accuracy and fluency, although there are some telling phrases, such as 'we cannot deny this new trend'. There is an awareness of purpose and audience, though the impact of the second speech is lessened as it was too long and the ending is omitted. 3 marks were awarded for content, 3 for tone and audience and 6 for expression and accuracy. Although there are a number of errors, the meaning is mainly clear.)

10. 2) Examples of modern technology which have had a major impact on family life in this generation.

In my generation technology has evolved very rapidly. In the last five years more and more companies produced hundreds of products. But does it effects family life? The answer to that question is obviously yes. The greater technological product that exists in almost every house is the personal computer.

Having a computer effects family life in many ways. Children become isolated. They even stop talking to other family members. They just sit in front of the screen all day. This way the relationships in the family go to worst. Many times I see my father in the house. But few times are there that I talk to him. My mind is somewhere else. And when I go to borrow some money, he answers to me: "Go ask your computer to borrow you some money, maybe it will." I've learned the phrase. But he finally gives me the money because he's not that mean. Computer also effects the relations between my brothers and my mother. They don't mind that much that I don't talk to them as my father does, but some damage is being done.

Game consoles effect the family life pretty much the same way as computer does. My brother has one and no one can bother him while playing. He won't talk back even if you shout at him. That is really annoying.

There are hundreds of other stuff that effect family life such as dvd players, mp3-players, every single thing that can keep you busy. My father just bought a satellite and even though he hates tv, now he sits day and night watching channels around the world. I think that's a payback for not talking to him, now he does the same to me.

Technology has strong influence on dialogue and this is a bad thing. Because without dialogue many problems are left unsolved.

The family must have very strong relations between it's members in order to be able to get through some difficult times. Maybe television, mobiles, computers and other stuff effect the life in the family but we should do our best to reduce the influences of technology in our lives.

(This essay has a clear relevance and focus on the specifics of the title which were missing in many answers which gave a stock response to technology, omitting the family element. It is structured, has a personal voice, some variety expression and constructions and communicates throughout in spite of errors. The repeated confusion between 'effect' and 'affect' does not limit the impact of the message, but there are also weaknesses in some sentence structure and division, some verbs and articles and agreements. It was awarded 19 marks; this candidate could achieve more with some attention to the errors identified in the previous sentence, but it is a good example of an above-average essay.)

10. 3) 'I'm glad it didn't happen to me!'

It was late one night and finally we could stop working. Everyone were totally exhausted. I could not feel my legs and my fingers were numb.

Supper was served and it was not filling and it never did filled our stomach up. Majority of us in the warehouse are pale and skinny looking. Some of them falls sick easily or they either have no energy to work due to the amount of food served.

We grew and lived our life in pain and sorrow. Lights were finally out and we were told to go to bed once lights were out and if we were caught being awake or suspected of doing something mysterious will be punished badly.

Many of us had always wanted to leave this horrible and miserable place and go out there to the world where we can be free. My friends and I had been working on a plan, an escape, a mission to get out of the place.

We gathered together once the lights went out and ensure that the guards went away. We decided to escape tonight due to the master was away for a night. We thought it would definitely be a great chance to do so.

When we realised that the guards were deeply asleep, one by one we slowly walked out of our dorm. My friend and I tried to steal the keys that would opened the main door to escape from the guard.

Luckily we succeeded and quickly meet up with the others and ready to leave. We reached the door and unlocked the lock and there we ran out. I could not believe that we actually made it, after all these misery years.

We were happy for sure but there will always be something evil or bad will occur. Unfortunately it did. We ran down to the main road and we found a light ahead of us. It was a vehicle heading towards us. My friend thought we could get a ride down to the city. He happily stopped the car and we realised it was our master's car.

We were frightened and turned our back, screamed and run. The car continued to follow us. A sudden sound was heard, it was a gun shot. I turned around and looked saw my friend was shot down by my master. I wanted to turn back but was pulled away and had to face the reality and leave.

As I keep running I turned back and looked at my friend. He was in pain and I could see my master torturing him. I tottered in tears and as we were hiding, we could see him being miserable. We couldn't help him. My friend was later being crucified and many other people saw him. He was in public for days, starving and thirsty.

I pitied him but I was glad it didn't happen to me.

(This is an ambitious piece of writing, with a clear narrative flow, good understanding of paragraphs and generally accurate spelling. There is some description and use of rhetorical devices, with some contrasting sentence length. The story is communicated, but in some places the choice of expression confuses the reader. The errors are mainly of syntax, omissions and verb forms with some repetitive connectives. A stronger control of sentence boundaries would also improve the fluency. The story seems more original than many responses to this title, with a clear feeling of the onlooker counting his blessings while feeling pity for the sufferings of his friend. This is in contrast to many essays where the writer's relief at avoiding the negative outcome is portrayed as insensitive or selfish, or the tag line is attached to a prepared dramatic account, with little emotion. This was awarded 14 marks and the candidate achieved a C grade overall.)

It is hoped that these examples of a range of student responses will interest and encourage you and your students.