

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8001/11

Paper 11

General Comments

In this examination session there were some very thoughtfully and cogently-argued responses that showed both a keen awareness of what was being asked and an ability to provide the evidence and experience that makes for a convincing answer.

Some candidates needed to ensure they included material that was more tightly focussed on the question set. The coherent shaping and ordering of material requires extensive practice. Candidates who had something of consequence to say did well, especially as essay-length responses are required on this paper. Consequently it is vital that candidates choose to write on topics that they really know something about. Those questions which appeared on the surface to present simpler options did not in fact do so. Every question in the examination is of equal difficulty and responses of equal sophistication are required.

Time spent reading the questions and thinking about them is time well spent. Every question requires evaluation and debate and invariably there are questions on topics of current relevance and controversy. Such questions are occasionally seized upon by candidates in order to give vent to uninformed opinion and prejudice. It is important that candidates demonstrate to their readers that they have subjected what they think to examination and perhaps re-evaluation.

The 'good' essay establishes a connection between the writer and the reader providing that what is written, matters. Whatever the prevailing culture it is always important for a candidate to produce responses that are spirited and thoughtful, devoid of the second-hand opinions that characterise the acceptable but dull. There are candidates who know more than just the names Gandhi, Mandela, Tolstoy, and it is such as these who are able to enrich their essays with the experience of life touched by writers, philosophers, scientists, musicians, and poets. People, hoping to do well in this examination and not just scrape through, must do some reading, thinking, and listening.

All the examination questions require evaluation, reflection, and debate. This session the majority of the candidates appreciated that simply listing all they know about a topic inevitably attracts a very average content mark. In addition there were only a few essays that seemed to have no coherent point of view. Candidates have grasped that evaluation requires judgement and that acknowledgement of other points of view does not necessarily mean agreement with them.

Essays which challenge cherished or inherited ideas often gained high marks. Those who sit the General Paper are invited to explore and question, not just come up with answers.

Use of English

There were strengths and weaknesses in style and accuracy of responses this session, but the majority of the candidates wrote in an appropriate academic style. The range of vocabulary at their disposal was at times sophisticated. Remarks in previous years' reports on linguistic accuracy still hold true but there was a marked improvement in spelling, punctuation, and grammar, though more attention could still be given to correct tenses and agreement. Informal and casual expressions were and almost all candidates employed the appropriate language register for an academic essay. Most candidates employed brief introductions. Longer introductions simply get in the way; purposeful introductions constructed on the day with a clear end in view are a joy to read. Moreover this session conclusions were succinct and clearly related to the purpose of the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular question and many candidates responded passionately and bravely to it. A high proportion of answers exhibited candour and focus. All parts of the question were addressed, although a few candidates simply listed a range of problems without identifying 'the most important political challenge'. Candidates could have been further rewarded had they made comparisons with how other countries deal with similar problems.

Question 2

A fair number of responses were seen to this question and there was clear evaluation in all of them. That aid per se is not harmful was recognised by all and several answers distinguished themselves by detailing how the rich countries were giving back what they had already taken from the poorer nations. There were no answers which could be described as patronising or insensitive.

Question 3

This question was attempted by several candidates across the Centres. Candidates wrote essays which were both informative and vivid, and sought to raise the consciousness of the reader. Many candidates showed great insight and were able to focus on the dramatic disparities in their own countries.

Question 4

There were very few strident responses to this question. Candidates took the trouble to define 'rights' and most of the ensuing discussions recognised the need for restorative justice and rehabilitation. What should happen to those responsible for the most heinous of crimes featured in all the essays but even in this context candidate's responses were thoughtful.

Question 5

This was a reasonably popular question and candidates were well informed on the topic; every form of green technology was touched upon, and the question of affordability was not subsumed in a general account of what green technology offers. Many candidates were able to identify key words from the passage and centre their discussion around these areas. In this case 'affordable' was the key word and it was given due weight.

Question 6

This topic appealed to candidates who excel in mathematics, but the 'delights' of mathematical study were sometimes not addressed by candidates, as many responses focussed on mathematics' usefulness. In this instance the key word was not always embraced. A few candidates were keen to show just how much is encompassed by mathematics, and the examples provided were illuminating and apt, ranging from the Pyramids to present-day pace travel. Successful responses to this question had to focus on 'delights' and not simply provide statements on the utility of mathematics.

Question 7

This was quite a popular question but it did require some specific knowledge. Many responses inveighed against drug trafficking, but candidates needed to discuss more examples and evaluation. A large number of candidates could have attained more credit had they included more factual references and examples. Candidates should be wary of questions upon which they have plenty of opinions but scant knowledge.

Question 8

This proved to be a very popular question. Few answers gave catalogues of scientific achievement; most of the essays were selective in content and firmly related to the phrasing of the question, the extent to which we are fortunate to live in an age of scientific discovery. Topics of a potentially broad sweep are best answered in a restrained way. Candidates who were less inclined to list everything they know about science, preferring instead to explore in some depth judiciously chosen examples that serve to crystallise their arguments, gave good responses.

Question 9

Candidates responded enthusiastically to this question, demonstrating detailed knowledge of instances of press intrusion. While the negative aspects of this practice were roundly condemned, several responses spoke about the mutually advantageous nature of the journalist/celebrity relationship.

Question 10

This was a popular question and generally well answered by the e-reader generation. Better answers considered aesthetic questions; the beauty of books, their dust jackets, illustrations, their tactile quality, the joy of building a collection of well-loved books. A few candidates misunderstood 'E-reader' to mean 'the Internet'.

Question 11

Most of the responses to this question agreed that most people are too smart to be manipulated by advertising. The answers were competent but not especially analytical, though a few candidates profitably explored the psychology at work in advertising. There were plentiful illustrations.

Question 12

Fortunately only those who knew about and could offer examples of royal and celebrity weddings attempted this question. The responses were interesting and varied. Several responses commented critically upon the amount of attention given to such events in the media compared to the attention given to the challenges and problems faced by so many in the global community.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8001/12

Paper 12

Key Messages

Content

- Answer the **set** question and focus on the key words.
- Support your main points with appropriate examples.
- Keep anecdotal/personal evidence to a minimum.
- An introduction should immediately address the question and show understanding of it.
- A conclusion should be a reasoned assessment of the arguments made.
- Ensure that all aspects of the question are addressed.
- Re-visit the question after each paragraph.

Use of English

- Leave time to check your English thoroughly to avoid basic errors.
- Concentrate on using appropriate vocabulary so expression is fluent and precise.
- Basic sentence structure/grammar needs to be accurate to ensure clear communication of content.

General comments

More successful responses answered the question as set and included a variety of examples to illustrate the main points of the essay. Weaker answers offered few or no examples at all, resulting in vague and generalised arguments which either lacked conviction or were unconvincing.

When the set question demands it, candidates should focus on aspects of their own country; if this is not the prompt then a broader focus is required. Stronger responses demonstrated good topic knowledge and included local, regional and global examples to support points. Weaker ones wrote on topics with which they were insufficiently familiar and provided little or no evidence to support points made. Candidates need to spend time studying the chosen question to make sure they understand what is being asked and then re-visit after every paragraph to check that key words are being addressed. This would help further develop the considerable skills that candidates already possess.

Most candidates used the time reasonably efficiently and were able to produce a clearly structured essay of around the recommended length. Introductions were often too long and unfocused; this is where the candidate should begin to address the key words, to reassure themselves that, from the beginning, they understand the question. Less effective conclusions merely listed points from the essay rather than arriving at a reasoned, personal assessment.

Despite the rarity of Rubric infringements and 'short' essays (less than 375 words), the quality of the Use of English was variable. A substantial number of candidates have acquired a wide-ranging English vocabulary but need to improve putting these words in an appropriate context. Similarly, candidates could improve their English mark by checking for basic errors, as outlined below. A thorough and systematic checking for such slips would greatly improve the standard as well as clarifying content.

Use of English

Basic errors need to be checked and corrected in order to improve English marks. Typical examples are listed below:

- Subject/verb non-agreement
- Frequent incorrect use of definite/indefinite article (e.g. the society)

- Omission of apostrophes
- Confusion between their/there, to/too, your/you're
- Incorrect comparative forms
- Missing endings on plurals because of poor checking
- Incorrect use of vocabulary

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Very few attempted this question. Generally, less successful responses were uncertain about the concept of 'ethical business practices' and tended to focus more on 'profit making' but without examples of specific companies. Consequently, comments tended to be too generalised and only part of the question was addressed. However, there were one or two which did consider issues such as 'charitable giving', 'appropriate wages', 'using foreign labour', 'humane work conditions' and well-known brands exploiting 'cheap labour'.

Question 2

This was a popular question and prompted some interesting responses. Better ones were able to name state and private schools and explore their 'merits', as asked for by the question. Some were too one-sided and just compared the 'merits' of private schools with the disadvantages of state schools, or generalised and looked at the strengths and weaknesses of schools in general, occasionally moving beyond 'your country'. The strongest responses explored issues such as qualifications gained, facilities, teachers and overall success rates in each type of school.

Question 3

Not many candidates chose this question. Some responses suggested that the government was responsible for everything or were unsure of what 'foreign aid' was, and who actually pays for it at the moment. Less successful responses had few examples and there was a lack of focus on the question. Better responses argued that countries could become too dependent on foreign aid or that it encouraged corruption.

Question 4

A very popular question but not often done well. However, it did prompt a wide variety of views, some suggesting that 'bad influences' could cause prisoners to 'become worse' on release, encouraging them to seek revenge. Less successful responses just concentrated on ill-treatment (brutality, torture, poor food) with little balance. Better responses did focus on constructive efforts to rehabilitate prisoners through a variety of programmes and educational initiatives, some arguing that the isolation of prison itself could be seen as a time for reflection and introspection, hence contributing to prisoner reform.

Question 5

Quite a popular question. Many opted to begin by discussing what developing countries were and then continued to define 'green technologies'. Either there was too much description of 'green technology' or just a list of priorities, neither of which was answering the question. Better responses explored a country's urgent priority and balanced this with how 'green technologies' were or were not being implemented in their countries, often with an assessment of cost and ultimate benefit to the local community.

Question 6

A very popular question. Too many saw this as a question on climate change and were descriptive on how this was happening and what we can do to change the situation, with an emphasis on global warming. Responses tended to be repetitive of 'CFCs causing the icecaps to melt' or focusing on nuclear power (Japan and Chernobyl) as problems for climate change. Better answers were able to explore the issue of whether it is man, or nature, that has caused climate change, with some suggesting that it may be a combination of both working together. The best ones did address 'minority' and 'majority' but there were very few of these.

Question 7

Not many candidates chose this question but it was generally answered quite well with all of them providing examples of traditional values/ceremonies/attitudes and how these can enhance or hinder the chosen country's progress. Better answers provided a lot of knowledge and detail with a considerable assessment of 'progress'. Less successful ones were too generalised and did not really explain what traditional values were or looked at whether traditional values were a good or bad thing which was not the focus of the question.

Question 8

This question was chosen by the fewest candidates. A small number had just a limited understanding of how a census could be useful. A few did hint at important uses such as where to place resources, age related issues and healthcare/educational needs.

Question 9

There were a reasonable number of answers to this question. Many responses spent too much time on what makes a good advert and not what makes an advert unconvincing and ineffective, which is the focus of the question. Television adverts, billboards, adverts with lots of colour, good looking people, celebrities and lively sound were seen as effective adverts but better responses considered that exaggerations of product qualities were ineffective and used a variety of examples to illustrate their points.

Question 10

This was quite popular but responses tended to be too generalised and vague. Better ones attempted a philosophical approach and addressed 'the ability to deal with problems' but there tended to be a lack of illustration. Too many responses took the word 'happiness' and tried to define it and then discuss what it was that made people happy or unhappy with insufficient focus on the key words of the question.

Question 11

A very popular choice. Good responses explored the various social networking sites and explained what made them useful and rewarding. Those that named specific sites like Facebook and Twitter, and explored their uses, were more successful than those that simply generalised. Less successful ones generalised about the Internet and did not look at social networking sites, with some confusion as to what a social networking site was. Good responses developed arguments around the concept of 'rewarding'.

Question 12

A popular choice. Many responses tended to describe 'own country' in considerable detail, emphasising the advantages of living there, but not comparing with other countries. Some differences could have been attributed to many countries (e.g. a good government, good education, friendly people). Better responses looked more at places, religious ideas, culture and festivals that were unique.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8001/13

Paper 13

Key messages

Content

- Focus on the key words of the question and ensure that all aspects of the question are covered.
- Choose the essay question carefully, making sure you understand it fully and have sufficient knowledge/examples to produce meaningful content.

Use of English

- Check your English thoroughly to avoid careless errors.
- Avoid writing in a 'chatty', informal style.
- Provide a clear linkage between sentences so that there is logical progression through the paragraphs.

General Comments

There were many detailed and thorough responses which addressed the question, with some focus on the keywords and supplying a variety of relevant examples to illustrate the main points. Unfortunately, a considerable number of responses contained few or no examples, resulting in vague and generalised arguments; credible evidence, not just anecdotes, is needed to support points.

Candidates should focus on their own country when prompted to in the question; if this is not the case then a broader focus is required. Many candidates did possess good knowledge of the topic especially if it concerned 'own country', and provided balanced answers to the question.

Quite a few candidates wrote their answers in informal, colloquial English which was inappropriate for a serious, formal examination. Often this reduced the impact of important statements. Some candidates did adapt the tone to match the requirements of the question and writing was often accurate with appropriate vocabulary.

Most candidates managed their time wisely and completed the essay.

Introductions should focus on the key words of the question, to show understanding of it rather than be a lengthy pre-ambles. Conclusions should not simply list the points made in the main body of the essay but should be a reasoned assessment of previous arguments.

Although there were very few instances of rubric infringement, a number of essays were 'short' (below 375 words) and lost marks for the Use of English, as a result. Also, this did not give sufficient length to develop a meaningful argument.

Candidates need to focus on answering the actual question set rather than writing everything they know about a topic area.

Use of English

Use of English marks can be needlessly lost through basic errors and informal expression, examples of which are listed below:

- Subject/verb non-agreement
- Informal vocabulary such as 'kinda', 'gotten', 'awesome'

- Words not separated e.g. 'alot', 'infact', 'aswell'
- Confusion between there/their, to/too, hear/here crisis/crises
- Incorrect use of apostrophes.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Not very popular. Less successful responses tended to be vague about 'social challenges', sometimes covering 'political challenges' as well. Better responses considered one social issue (poverty, immigration, global financial crisis) and did demonstrate knowledge with some consideration of 'how is it being met'. The quality of the response depended on whether both aspects of the question had been addressed.

Question 2

Not one candidate responded to this question.

Question 3

A few responses to this question. Some responses tended to consider extreme punishments (capital punishment, chopping off hands for theft) with the only justification that it was an 'eye for an eye'. Better responses did consider more community based options in the context of the justification for imprisonment itself. Responses which argued (rather than listed) and justified 'options' were more successful.

Question 4

Quite popular. Generally, there were reasonable responses to this question and an understanding of both 'durability' and 'quality'. Some responses tended to describe products, especially electronic goods, and explain what was expected from 'good quality'. Although examples were used, it tended to be very personalised. Better responses widened the scope and considered other issues which might address the second part of the question, 'essential' (e.g. cost, throwaway society, products for the less well off.)

Question 5

A few responses. Some responses just listed the advantages and disadvantages of 'wind power' with little reference to 'less enthusiastic'. Better ones considered the enthusiasm of the developed world for wind power in the context of the 'push' for renewable energy and alternatives to wind power. Some candidates did present a personal assessment in order to respond to, 'Is their lack of enthusiasm justified?'

Question 6

Quite popular and generally well done. In many ways a straightforward question just requiring a range of advantages and disadvantages. However, better responses did provide a personal assessment, as encouraged by the 'do you see' aspect of the question, presenting arguments in the context of a candidate's own online study experience.

Question 7

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 8

A popular question. Less successful responses described recent natural disasters (New Orleans, Haiti, Pakistan), even mentioning Japan. The responses could be knowledgeable but tended to describe what aid was available and what people did to help so was a more implicit reference to the question. Better responses did provide balance and considered 'the worst' (looting, exploitation by the media, selfishness). Occasionally a response considered 'best' as referring to dignity, pride, heroism, an instinct to survive and whether you need to see mass suffering before a nation is at its best.

Question 9

Just a few responses. Most responses considered health, competitiveness, team spirit, entertainment but better responses addressed, 'how far do you agree'. Here, balanced arguments were provided which examined the idea of 'significant', of whether sport is a mere distraction, waste of time/resources, expensive funding of an elite. The best responses needed to make a personal assessment after considering all arguments.

Question 10

A popular response. This was generally well done but many responses tended to describe hacking, giving out personal details, stalking, privacy settings on sites like Facebook and Twitter and then conclude that 'it is no more dangerous than you want it to be'. Better responses explored this idea, suggesting that it is about personal responsibility, taking control and education.

Question 11

No candidates attempted this question.

Question 12

Only a few but all explored the wording of the question, with examples. A less successful response simply celebrated 'rap' as personal preference, hence avoiding a more balanced argument. Better ones considered 'rap' in the context of various definitions; one candidate considering it as poetry for disaffected youths. This required clear arguments and illustration.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8001/21

Paper 21

Key Messages

- The standard of written English has been strong this session, with confident, fluent writing much in evidence, meaning that the majority of candidates were awarded an expression mark in one of the top two bands. There were few examples of candidates indulging in too much 'lifting' (copying exactly) from the text.
- One of the skills tested by this paper is the ability to write in a concise fashion, thus a number of questions deliberately have a maximum word length within the rubric to test this particular technique. Credit cannot be awarded to answers which break the rubric and examiners are directed to be vigilant in this respect. Some candidates could have attained higher marks if they had written more succinct answers that fit within the word limit. Obviously, the size of handwriting will determine to some extent the number of words that can be accommodated on a line, but candidates must realise that, if the answer continues beyond the lines provided in the booklet, then it is highly likely that the answer will be well in excess of the allowable words.
- It is important that candidates use the time provided to read through the paper thoroughly before choosing a question to answer. Candidates should ensure that they read all of the parts of the questions before choosing which question to answer. The evidence indicates that some candidates embark on a question, confident that they can answer the first parts, without appreciating the demands of subsequent parts.
- Many candidates could improve their marks if they provided more support and evidence for their answers. In some cases, candidates' arguments included unsupported assertions. In very few instances are such assertions appropriate, therefore candidates need to show sensitivity and phrase their answers in more nuanced terms with a judicious use of, for example, modal verbs or adverbs of degree. This would also impact positively on their use of English mark.
- The majority of candidates' responses were legible, and any crossings-out or additions were clearly made, so that answers were able to attract all the marks they deserved.

Question 1

This question proved to be the most popular option by far, attracting a majority of the candidature. A large number of candidates could have attained higher marks had they avoided writing out, or paraphrasing, the questions. Doing so uses up the candidates' time and word count which they could otherwise use to gain marks.

- (a) The vast majority of candidates made a sound case for Xenia's opposition to the rebuilding of the bridge, with Yuri taking a different view. Very few answers achieved maximum marks as concerns about health and safety were often rather generalised, without referring to specific issues such as jumping off the bridge, the dangers of the proximity of vehicles if walking across, or in some cases candidates should ensure that the points that were made are not too conflated. It is better for candidates to use the information within the passage and not to speculate, citing, for example, Xenia's children needing access to Fort Naash when they joined up and Yuri's age as a reason for preferring slow traffic. Most candidates were well aware of Yuri's commercial concerns, and some sensible comments were made about heritage issues and his loyalty to the town as it was. A few candidates did not state whether Xenia and Yuri would be for or against the option, or wrote a character analysis of the pair.

- (b) Most candidates found this question straightforward and handled it very well, many gaining full marks. A small number of candidates could have gained additional marks if they had noted or understood the phrase 'local shortage' as some candidates missed this, confused quarry for stone, or only mentioned the exhaustion of the stone. A reference to the cost or difficulty involved in importing was necessary for maximum marks.
- (c) Many candidates started off their response with a clear choice of option, and this was important to gain high marks, as this element can often be forgotten by the time the candidate finishes their response, or is not cited within allowable the word count. A number of good answers were seen, with many candidates evaluating both options and appreciating issues of cost, safety and communication. Some interesting developments outlined by candidates when discussing the options pursued economic and political themes. Ways in which candidates could have received higher marks included the following: showing balance rather than concentrating exclusively on one of the options; showing wider breadth by covering the same point from various angles; ensuring clarity between options I and III, especially when including a reference to a rebuild using the original type of stone; including references to the age of the ferry and its consequent dangerous condition; a suggestion that option III would be safer for youngsters to jump from into the river, and clarifying the reference to terrorist threats in the passage.
- (d) A number of candidates could have gained additional marks in this question had they taken note of the key word 'location'. Some candidates repeated information which had already been given in the passage, or referred to, for instance, the climate, height of the river, population, shopping habits or tourists, which were not related to the location.
- (e) The majority of candidates managed to make some contrasts within the available word limit, though to make four meant that the candidate needed to be concise. Some candidates needed to be more concise to gain higher marks, as some candidates had to exclude A, B and C from their discussion to keep to the word count. If candidates avoided explaining what A, B and C were, each time they discussed them, they would have been able to gain higher marks through better use of the available word count and time. The points concerning the partial versus total collapse, and the importance of the link, were the ones made most often. Some candidates could have gained extra marks by picking out relevant points from the newspaper whilst making the contrast with material in A and B. A number of candidates could have widened-out their description to gain extra credit, rather than making too much of the difference between a blizzard and a severe winter in C and A. A number of candidates could have analysed the content to gain additional credit, as well as or in addition to writing in general terms about the different styles employed.
- (f) Candidates could have gained additional credit on this question in a number ways. Point 3 was easily the most common response given by candidates, though candidates could have gained further credit by giving greater justification beyond suggesting that a novel could have little to do with any decision to rebuild a bridge. Point 17 was also frequently cited, which did gain marks when the justification given were reasonable. Candidates should ensure that any assertions made are always supported with pertinent examples. Candidates should make full use of the word count. Writing out point numbers is sufficient, and quoting entire points is not required or possible within the word limit. The importance of tourists to the local economy, and that some would visit Myndorp, was a point that could have been cited by many candidates to gain additional marks.

Question 2

This was the next most popular question attempted, but only by a small minority.

- (a) This question was well answered, as most candidates were able to pick out salient points, and combine them into a coherent narrative. Although few candidates scored full marks, very few scored less than half the marks available. A small number of answers could have gained additional marks had they focused on the storyline. Some candidates including such details as the 'mating habits of crocodiles... and the 'mechanics of company takeovers...' which did not gain credit. Some candidates were unsure of the demands of the question and needed to make their comments more specific, as comments, for example with regard to Mrs. Infance's background and tendency to annoy those around her, are too general and not specific enough to gain full credit. Succinct facts regarding the storyline gained marks quickly and easily within the word count.

- (b) Some sound analysis was called for to obtain maximum marks in this question. Many candidates could have gained additional credit by writing a more balanced answer. Many candidates either thought Betty's contributions were successful (as she clearly had knowledge of the novel), or unsuccessful, because she was not able to speak and be listened to properly. Candidates could have commented on how successful Betty's contributions had been had she been able to express them. This would have benefitted many candidates given that found it difficult to think of enough points to bring up, and this was a clear point that was highlighted in the question. Some candidates repeated how successful they thought Betty had been for each point they raised, which was not necessary, and meant that they exceeded the word count. A few candidates interpreted the question rather literally, and listed all her contributions. Those candidates did need to explain why (or why not) those contributions were effective.
- (c) Candidates who answered this question by discussing the strength of Agnes' analysis of the novel demonstrated that they understood the question and gained the highest marks. Many candidates described what Agnes said, or analysed the content of *Against the Fence* itself. A number of candidates thought that Agnes was completely convincing, but would have gained higher marks had they incorporated balance into their answers by responding to the trigger words in the question, 'How convincing...?'
- Some candidates employed the phrase 'convincing to a lesser extent'. Candidates need to explain exactly how Agnes' analysis is or is not convincing. Other candidates analysed why Agnes did not solve the murder, which was not a part of the question. Candidates who wrote the most succinctly, gained the best marks. Some candidates gave very long quotes, using up the word count without gaining credit with regard to the Use of English mark. Candidates are reminded of the need to express their answers in their own words.
- Some other ways in which candidates could have gained additional marks would have been by differentiating the three characters, and referred to them by names, not all three as 'she'. The fact that Agnes had not finished the novel was rightly spotted by many as a major weakness in her position, and some insight was shown in the analysis of this point.
- (d) This question required a subtle approach to obtain the highest marks. Many candidates understood the question, but took the remarks at face value, or paraphrased the question. Only most perceptive candidates understood the subtleties involved. Candidates needed to ensure that they had read through the question thoroughly before they chose question 2, as a number of candidates misunderstood what was being said by the characters, whereas those candidates may have found that they could have fully understood questions 1 and 2, had they read all of the parts of these questions before they began.

Question 3

This was, by far, the least popular question, with very few scripts seen.

- (a) Most candidates obtained credit in response to this question through references to the Dutch, agriculture, land clearance, poor condition of the inhabitants and the position and transportation of the stones. Only a small number of candidates scored in the top two bands for this sub-section. Candidates could have gained marks in a number of ways: ensuring that the facts they cited were not disputed; writing succinctly and focusing on writing points that would gain credit, avoiding paraphrasing the question; stating facts (as asked in the question) rather than elaborating or giving their own opinions; alluding to all of the books, rather than just one; ensuring they were clear about which fact belonged to which theory, and ensuring it was clear whether they were discussing the Europeans, the Dutch specifically, or the Polynesians, and what each group did on a regular basis. Some candidates would have benefitted from writing longer responses to this question, so that they were able to explain their answers more fully. In some cases, it may have been better for candidates to have chosen an alternate question (Q1 or Q2).
- (b) The highest-attaining responses to this question carefully analysed the passage to unpick the two theories. Some candidates would have benefitted from carefully reading and thinking about the theories before they wrote, as some were confused regarding which theory was which, and the dates and the situation prior to the arrival of the Dutch in 1722.

Some of the comments about confusion and brevity of responses in Q3 (a) are also applicable to responses given in this sub-question.

- (c) This question required the candidates to think carefully. Most candidates accurately explained the 'subject matter' of the question. Many candidates could have gained additional credit had they connected the situation on Easter Island to the book's title and by focussing on the words 'how accurately does the title describe...?'
- (d) Almost all candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the vocabulary, though on a number of occasions candidates who had produced a sound definition in (i) would have gained more credit had they managed to use the word correctly in (ii). This applied particularly to the word 'notion'. Whilst 'theory' is acceptable as a definition, the use in a sentence referring to a well thought out and established scientific theory such as Einstein's *notion* of Relativity is not especially felicitous.

Some candidates would have gained additional marks had they avoided using the subject matter of the passage in their sentence, which the question disallows. The word 'consequences' elicited some excellent synonyms (such as 'repercussions', which was usually, and creditably, spelled correctly). 'Eventually' was also quite well defined, though some candidates included the ideas of 'subsequently' or 'inevitably', which could not be credited. Some candidates needed to check their use of the word 'conventional', but 'modified' and 'oral' were widely understood, though a few candidates used the wrong part of the verb for the former (e.g. 'change', or 'to change', for a purpose).

Use of English

- It has also been noted that the correct usage of certain conjunctions can cause difficulties for a significant minority of candidates. This interrupts the flow of their responses and can create confusion for the reader. There appears to be regular overuse and/ or misuse of the conjunctions 'that', 'where' and 'whereby', which are often favoured instead of the required choices of 'who', 'whom' or 'which'.
- In a similar vein, some candidates also have some difficulties with regard to prepositions, experiencing problems either when choosing the correct preposition to follow a particular verb, or adjective, or by omitting the necessary preposition completely.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8001/22

Paper 22

Key Messages

- The standard of written English has been strong this session, with confident, fluent writing much in evidence, meaning that the majority of candidates were awarded an expression mark in one of the top two bands. There were few examples of candidates indulging in too much 'lifting' (copying exactly) from the text.
- One of the skills tested by this paper is the ability to write in a concise fashion, thus a number of questions deliberately have a maximum word length within the rubric to test this particular technique. Credit cannot be awarded to answers which break the rubric and examiners are directed to be vigilant in this respect. Some candidates could have attained higher marks if they had written more succinct answers that fit within the word limit. Obviously, the size of handwriting will determine to some extent the number of words that can be accommodated on a line, but candidates must realise that, if the answer continues beyond the lines provided in the booklet, then it is highly likely that the answer will be well in excess of the allowable words.
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- Many candidates could improve their marks if they provided more support and evidence for their answers. In some cases, candidates' arguments included unsupported assertions. In very few instances are such assertions appropriate, therefore candidates need to show sensitivity and phrase their answers in more nuanced terms with a judicious use of, for example, modal verbs or adverbs of degree. This would also impact positively on their use of English mark.
- The majority of candidates' responses were legible, and any crossings-out or additions were clearly made, so that answers were able to attract all the marks they deserved.

Question 1

This question attracted a minority of the candidature. There was evidence that some of the candidates chose this particular question because of their interest in the content (the environment) rather than their ability to respond to the questions posed. Although candidates clearly had a great deal of knowledge and many opinions on this question, many candidates could have obtained higher marks had they ensured that their response was focussed on the exact questions. Noting the 'trigger words' before beginning to write a response would be beneficial. Some candidates did not answer all the sections, which was unfortunate as it is recommended to attempt everything – an incorrect answer related to the passage might still attract reward with regard to the Use of English mark. On occasion candidates wrote out the question stem one or more times in their response which used up the word count without gaining credits.

- (a) The candidates who understood the requirements of this question and exhibited perception often cited the following points: informality, personal antagonism, random interruptions, the evasions and ignorance of the protagonists, lack of technical detail, bias and both only amateurs. Some candidates wrote a general appraisal of the alternative sources of power or compared the contributions to the conversation of the two neighbours, using description rather than analysis. These responses could receive only minimal credit if they were not focussed on the specific question asked.

- (b) Candidates could have improved their answers to this question in a number of ways. The key phrase in the question ('To what extent...'), invited a balanced response and a conclusion, but many candidates missed out both of these elements of the task and, as in a), many candidates tended to describe or paraphrase rather than to analyse. Candidates who responded correctly to this question realised that Felix had got the better of Ernest overall, but made no allusion to Ernest getting the better of Felix at any point, and found it easier in the main to analyse Felix's contributions and offer insights about him rather than Ernest.
- (c) In response to this question, most candidates provided titles and reasoning that interpreted the passage very explicitly, however, many candidates only paraphrased the content. To obtain higher marks, candidates needed to reason and explain. Only a few candidates were able to read between the lines, but, when a candidate did manage to do this, they made some insightful responses (e.g. 'Gassy Neighbours' with reasoning which explained why this pun was offered as a title, and 'Solutions or Jokes?'). Candidates must ensure they observe the rubric on this style of question.
- (d) Candidates handled elements of this question confidently. Most candidates answered (i) very well, with some candidates providing other valid factors apart from diet and genes, such as stress at work and age. In (ii), candidates often gained marks for the first part of the mark scheme, recognising Ernest's scorn or dislike of regulations, but found it difficult to convey the idea of 'petty' bureaucracy in some way. On (iii), candidates needed look beyond the literal meaning of the word 'precious' to gain full marks. However, there were a few candidates who did grasp the idiomatic use of the word and answered well. On (iv), many candidates gained this mark and some excellent answers were seen (e.g. a reference to animal imagery to highlight how inaccessible the site was). On (v), a number of candidates interpreted this too literally and gave responses related to the rarity of the sight, but some candidates did manage to see a more implicit interpretation (e.g. to drop or change the subject). This comment also applied to (vi), with one good example of an idiomatic answers being 'buying time'.

Question 2

This question was the most popular question by far, with the vast majority of candidates choosing to answer it, and engaging well with the subject matter.

(a) and (b) Many candidates managed to score at least half the marks available as they found it quite easy to cite five factors. Some insightful developments were also noted (for example, it might have been a psychological trauma for patients to return to the site after the fire), though some candidates did not develop any of the factors, just listed them. The vast majority of candidates followed the rubric and only offered one location in (a), and one in (b) which was different from the one chosen in (a). However, some candidates could have gained more marks had they given a balanced response by giving a disadvantage in (a) and an advantage in (b). Candidates need to ensure they read the question carefully, and make sure they stay within the word count, as some candidates did not gain any credit for the opposing factor as it was given beyond the word count.

Some candidates could have gained additional marks had they understood the phrase 'some distance from', which a significant minority took to mean that the car park was near Radtar House, which was not the meaning. Of those who selected The Scala, some candidates misinterpreted the implications of point 14 with regard to their development of factors regarding The Scala, or struggled to make a case for choosing it. Many candidates started off their response in (a) with disadvantages, then giving the advantages and vice versa in (b), or giving more disadvantages than advantages in (a) and vice versa in (b). This style of writing did produce some valid results but could be confusing and is not stylistically best practice, and some candidates could have obtained Use of English marks in a higher band by avoiding it.

- (c) Many candidates produced valid responses to this question. Some candidates could have gained higher marks had they noted that the question asked them to find 'additional information', which meant that candidates could not develop one of the points they had already been given.

Candidates need to ensure they read this style of question carefully to ensure they answer within the rubric. Some candidates thought that they were being asked to cite which piece of information had been most useful to them when making their choices in (a) and (b). However, candidates who coped well with the question often cited Quadale, asking for more detail with regard to the

classrooms' size, their accessibility internally and externally, other nearby roads and the availability or not of the School's own car park and Old Park Practice's car park, all of which were valid responses.

- (d) When candidates understood the question, some very creative responses were offered. A number of candidates needed to check what was meant by 'doctor's surgery', as some thought that they were being asked to describe an ideal doctor and discussing the skills, expertise, characteristics and qualities (e.g. risk-taker, able to multi task, fit, punctual and have emotional intelligence) of the perfect doctor and/or nurse in their opinion. Some candidates could have gained extra marks had they differentiated between different groups within the ageing population, rather than regard the ageing population and the skills thus required by medical staff to face the problems elderly people uniformly. Candidates should avoid repeating material they had offered in (a), (b) and/or (c).
- (e) Many candidates gained one mark by correctly choosing points 9 or 14, and very few infringed the rubric by offering more than one point in response to the question. A number of candidates wrote out the point they had chosen in full – quite unnecessary as citing the point number they want to select will always suffice – so most of their reasoning was beyond the word limit. Candidates should ensure they justify their choice with a reason for full marks.

Question 3

A much smaller number of candidate answered this question than (1) and (2), and so the feedback is limited because of the smaller number of scripts seen.

- (a) (i) Candidates needed to ensure they were clear as to the meaning of 'dateline' when they responded to this question.
- (ii) and (iii) Most candidates were able to appreciate more the importance of the relationship, which was the key factor is being able to respond effectively to this question. Most candidates were able to understand the synonyms for 'key' and 'just'.
- (b) When candidates cited the internal debate within Samoa and the reaction of the world at large to the changes, they were able to respond effectively and gain high marks. A number of candidates found this challenging, often struggling to compare the two countries' different approaches, apart from the dates, and so just selecting points in a rather haphazard manner. Some candidates referred only to Samoa or Kiribati, whereas responses that compared the dates and locations scored higher marks.
- (c) Many candidates by citing relevant points which gained around half of the available marks, but to gain full marks, candidates needed to develop or exemplify their points. There were efforts by candidates to use their own words as stipulated in the question, though certain phrases were often lifted straight from the passage (e.g. 'to assert national identity' and 'to make political connections' in particular), which candidates must avoid.
- (d) Candidates could have improved their mark on this question in a number of ways. On (i) candidates needed to give their own reason why the dateline runs through the Pacific Ocean. On (ii) a few more candidates than in (i) managed to gain one mark by citing that little confusion would be caused by changing at New Year, but, as with (i), they needed to give their own reason to gain full marks. On (iii), unfortunately, a number of candidates did not attempt this question.
- (e) (i) There are a number of ways in which candidates could have improved their mark on this question. It is crucial for candidates to remember to use the correct grammatical form as in the question (e.g. a synonym in the singular when the word in the question is plural, as seen when 'deviations' was being defined). Candidates should provide only one answer, as some candidates have two answers where it was not clear which they intended to be regarded as their final answers.

'Imaginary', followed by 'assert' and 'standard' were the words most frequently defined correctly, but candidates needed to check their meaning of 'straddled'. (ii) 'Imaginary' was the word that was most often correctly exemplified in sentence form, with many candidates referring to an 'imaginary friend'. 'Deviations', which was often glossed as 'changes' in (i) and did not gain a mark, but was better handled in a sentence and used correctly. 'Assert' was quite well used, as was 'standard', though some candidates lost the mark here as they used it as an adjective instead of the noun form. Many candidates could have gained a mark on 'specify', as most answers were

usually incorrect. Unfortunately a few candidates infringed the rubric by composing a sentence based on the content of the passage, or by offering two complete sentences, neither of which are allowed. In the latter case, the candidates wrote their two sentences separated by a comma (comma splice), when, if they had used a semicolon and thus created one sentence overall, it would have been allowable.

Use of English

- Many candidates competently handled complex tenses, manipulating them with ease. Therefore, it is all the more surprising to see incorrect present tense agreements on a regular basis: 'they is', 'he are', 'they has' and 'he have' were all common errors.
- A significant number of candidates find that the correct usage of certain conjunctions and punctuation, in particular the comma, can cause them difficulties. Both of these problems interrupt the flow of their responses and can create confusion for the reader. There appears to be regular overuse and/ or misuse of the conjunctions 'that', 'where' and 'whereby', which are often favoured instead of the required choices of 'who', 'whom' or 'which'. Candidates should also check that they are using commas correctly. Some candidates overuse commas, placing where they are not always required.
- The use of prepositions can prove problematic for some candidates. They experience difficulties when trying to choose the appropriate preposition to follow a particular verb or adjective or omit the necessary preposition completely.

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 8001/23

Paper 23

Key Messages

- The standard of written English has been strong this session, with confident, fluent writing much in evidence, meaning that the majority of candidates were awarded an expression mark in one of the top two bands. There were few examples of candidates indulging in too much 'lifting' (copying exactly) from the text.
- One of the skills tested by this paper is the ability to write in a concise fashion, thus a number of questions deliberately have a maximum word length within the rubric to test this particular technique. Credit cannot be awarded to answers which break the rubric and examiners are directed to be vigilant in this respect. Some candidates could have attained higher marks if they had written more succinct answers that fit within the word limit. Obviously, the size of handwriting will determine to some extent the number of words that can be accommodated on a line, but candidates must realise that, if the answer continues beyond the lines provided in the booklet, then it is highly likely that the answer will be well in excess of the allowable words.
- It is important that candidates use the time provided to read through the paper thoroughly before choosing a question to answer. Candidates should ensure that they read all of the parts of the questions before choosing which question to answer. The evidence indicates that some candidates embark on a question, confident that they can answer the first parts, without appreciating the demands of subsequent parts.
- Many candidates could improve their marks if they provided more support and evidence for their answers. In some cases, candidates' arguments included unsupported assertions. In very few instances are such assertions appropriate, therefore candidates need to show sensitivity and phrase their answers in more nuanced terms with a judicious use of, for example, modal verbs or adverbs of degree. This would also impact positively on their use of English mark.
- The majority of candidates' responses were legible, and any crossings-out or additions were clearly made, so that answers were able to attract all the marks they deserved.

General Comments

Almost all candidates followed the primary rubric and attempted one question only. The standard of written English continues to improve and a majority of candidates received a mark for expression in one of the top bands. Even on scripts where there were significant errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling meaning was rarely in doubt and the answer was easy to follow.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

This proved to be a popular question, the style of which should have been familiar to candidates.

- (a) The material in the Insert provided candidates with a wealth of information on organizations and individuals who might, in some way, have an interest in the proposed development. Almost all candidates were able to identify correctly the various interested parties, but some candidates could have attained higher marks by making their answers more specific instead of general comments e.g. referring to 'people in the town', or by offering reasons why such parties could be affected. It

was quite common to read about Madonnas factory wanting the go-ahead without any reference to production and the protection of their investment.

- (b) There were some good responses to this question and the more perceptive candidates could see that some in the golf club would be unhappy at losing their facility; others, quoted in (a), might be pleased at the compensation received. The concerns of the police and local residents regarding increased crime, the impact on the nature reserve and the loss of trade in the town were well understood. Some responses needed to clarify who would benefit, and who would not, to avoid confusion.
- (c) There are a number of ways in which candidates could have improved their responses to this question. The majority of answers focused on the pros and cons of the proposed development but could have gained more credit had they referred to the actual *inquiry* into the proposal. Some candidates did appreciate that the event could provide an opportunity for opposing groups to come into conflict, and a small number of answers referred to the potential problems of lots of people being involved. The benefits regarding publicity, revenue and employment proved elusive.
- (d) Almost all candidates scored credit in this part. Unsurprisingly, Gordon Bonah was the most popular choice though a number of candidates could have gained further credit had they made general comments such as e.g. 'someone against the construction in the town' more specific by adding more explanation or development. Some candidates misunderstood Thomas Jones's role or stance thinking he was pro-motorway.
- (e) The most obviously irrelevant point was number 6 and this was by far the most popular choice. Candidates could have gained extra marks had they supported the point, such as by pointing out that David Essex's impending retirement and the distance of his pig farm from the motorway were supporting evidence.

Question 2

This was quite an original style of question which, nevertheless, attracted a substantial number of candidates.

- (a) In identifying the writer of Letter C, the question asked candidates to consider the possibilities and give reasons for their choices. Only a few candidates fully appreciated the demands of the question; candidates could have gained substantially more credit had they discussed alternative people, whereas the majority of candidates confined their discussion to just one person (usually Mr Robinson or the neighbour at the first house). Some inventive answers were seen that brought in one of the other neighbours and one candidate believed it was the work of a local celebrity intent on self-promotion! Many answers were purely descriptive but could have gained more marks had they empathised with the character. Candidates should be clear when they use pronouns 'he', 'she' or 'they', as candidates' use sometimes made it difficult to follow who had written to whom.
- (b) Almost all candidates followed the rubric in offering three answers. On the whole, this question was well answered and most of the terms proved comprehensible. 'Charge' was sometimes confused with a punishment or a fine, whilst the meaning of 'nothing untoward' was often too vague to obtain credit.
- (c) This was well answered, as most candidates put together a sensible chronological sequence. Modest answers tended to be rather factual and descriptive but a significant minority of candidates showed insight and understanding by describing, using a relevant example, how Mr Robinson applied pressure. Some could see that the situation may have been exaggerated to improve his case and others described how Mr Robinson tried to induce a feeling of guilt in the Council.
- (d) The two issues of health and safety were spotted by most but, in order to obtain full credit, reasons for the council's actions were required. Although a number of candidates referred to public health, to gain full marks candidates also needed to refer to the concerns of the council regarding possible litigation, should negligence be proved.
- (e) Although some answers were rather brief, many candidates demonstrated a deep understanding of the character, and showed empathy with their chosen character. Many candidates took a firm line in either recognising the difficult circumstances of Mr Robinson's neighbour, or believing that the neighbour was a rather selfish individual with no concern for his actions on the rest of the

community. Some candidates introduced an element of balance into their answer; providing they reached a decision this could be a successful approach.

Question 3

This was, by some margin, the least popular question.

- (a) Most candidates obtained significant credit for their answers. The limited world of a farm labourer at the beginning of the nineteenth century was appreciated. The nature of the job, geographical isolation, and the range of people with whom he would converse were factors that were frequently mentioned by candidates. Answers that repeated the question or restated the same point several times received only minimal credit.
- (b)(i) Only a few candidates managed to convey the full meaning of the difficulty of recalling what the brain had stored up in their responses to this question. (ii) More candidates were able to gain credit on this question, though a number of candidates thought the expression meant simply half, almost half or exactly half.
- (c) Many candidates could have obtained higher credit for the question by ensuring that the points the mentioned were taken from the passage. Many responses included points which were not from the passage. Whilst some answers could be taken as oblique references to the bullet points in the mark scheme, this was not always the case. The stronger answers often picked out the fact that there are now far more words in existence now than in Shakespeare's time and quoted figures from the passage. Easier access to words from books and media sources was often mentioned as was the interaction between people as a result of increased travel.
- (e) This question was well answered by most candidates, though some candidates could have gained more marks had they did not repeat or write unnecessary material in their answers. The mark scheme did not require candidates to cite all three statements to obtain full credit, but answers which simply made a general point about wrong context without any exemplification fell short or full credit.
- (f) (i) In this question, the words 'assumption' and 'cites' were the best answered. Some areas in which candidates could have gained further credit would have been in avoiding common errors in definition. The most common of these were: 'fickle' – idea of complicated; 'glaring' – idea of staring; 'dizzy' – idea of faint/sick or spinning; 'brevity' – idea of short of time.

Almost all candidates created some sentences to explain the meaning of the words in (i). There were a few instances where candidates needed to ensure that they used the correct part of speech, and that the rubric concerning a single sentence was well observed.