

English B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 28	29 - 45	46 - 59	60 - 73	74 - 87	88 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 46	47 - 60	61 - 74	75 - 87	88 - 100

Higher Level and Standard Level Internal assessment

HL Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

SL Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The new procedure for Individual Oral appears to have functioned successfully. Most teachers handled the new procedure appropriately. However, a number of flaws were observed in a minority of cases - teachers should check their own performance against the criticisms noted below.

Control of timing: Generally, timing appears to have been controlled appropriately in that there were few cases of recordings which were significantly too long overall, and to a large extent the Part 1 presentations did not exceed the 4 minutes stated in the Subject Guide. Teachers are urged to cut short any presentation which seems to be running much over the 4 minute limit.

Suitability of photographs: Most of the visual stimuli submitted with recordings were suitable. However, teachers should note the following failures to conform to the instructions given in the Subject Guide:-

- a few were not in colour (although this may be because the material sent with the recording had been photocopied in black and white).
- a few were not photographs as such, either because they were clearly 'collaged' photographs, doctored by PhotoShop or some such software; or were simply not photographs, but rather cartoons, graphics, even diagrams taken off a computer screen.
- while all were linked in some way with the specific Option topic concerned, relatively few enabled the candidate to "reflect on the culture(s) studied", as stated in the Guide (indeed, few teachers asked questions which might elicit such cultural reflection). Some photographs were even clearly of scenes in non-anglophone societies.

Suitability of captions: Almost all photographs were accompanied by a caption (a very few simply stated the Option plus aspect concerned). However, while most captions were suitably stimulating, interesting, provocative so as to awaken the candidate's interest, a few were rather laboured 'exam questions', apparently aimed at testing the candidate's factual knowledge about what had been studied in class. This is clearly not what the photograph's caption is intended to achieve.

Presentations: The vast majority of presentations about the stimulus photograph were handled at least competently. They tended to fall into one of two patterns: (i) a detailed description of the photograph, followed by a brief commentary about the topic suggested by the caption; or (ii) a brief description of the photograph, followed by an extended commentary on the caption. Of the two patterns, type (ii) was the more common.

Only a minority of candidates gave clear signs of having made an effort to organise their presentation - signs such as explaining the structure of their presentation at the beginning (the 'map' idea), and using sequence markers sensibly to lead the audience through the sections of the presentation. This may be because such organisation was bypassed due to the time available in the preparation period. If so, this perception should be challenged: it only takes a couple of minutes to prepare a reasonable 'map' and introduce sequence markers.

Teachers' question technique: As with the previous oral interview procedure, teacher performance in handling the conversation ranged from 'brilliant and stimulating' to 'poor and boring'. However, it would appear that this new system has resulted in fewer of the weak performances, most probably because both teacher and candidate were well-informed about the topic raised by the photograph, having discussed it in class.

The majority of teachers appeared to understand that good questions in the context of these Individual Oral discussions should be clear, concise and supportive, guiding the candidate towards a topic that he or she can develop. Sadly, a small minority insisted on asking limited factual questions which necessarily restricted the candidate's opportunity to respond. Restricting opportunities to respond is highly likely to reduce marks for Criterion B.

Coverage of content - Option topic and target culture: In general, most candidates were able to reflect on the Option topic under discussion in Part 1 presentations. In addition, many teachers' question techniques encouraging further probing "more deeply into the student's understanding of the culture(s) reflected in the material", often creating links to candidates' own cultures. However, some teachers limited themselves to a factual discussion of details of the photograph, and/or did not allow candidates to express their own independent opinions.

Use of online uploads: Almost all samples were submitted by online upload. Generally speaking, there were no significant technical problems in using the online technology from the moderator's perspective. The use of digital recording has meant a significant improvement in recording quality.

Forms: Most centres correctly completed the correct version of form 2/BIA. However, there were some cases of inadequate comments provided by teachers on the 2/BIA forms, or of no comments whatsoever. Teachers are strongly advised to provide detailed comments to justify the marks awarded for each candidate.

Quality of marking by centres: The new procedure for Individual Oral appears to have led to less noticeable anomalies in marking. In a minority of centres, however, there continue to be inconsistencies (a) unexplained radical differences between the marks for the Individual Oral and the Interactive Oral Activity; and/or (b) significant differences between the marks awarded by different teachers at the same centre.

Improving feedback to teachers: As mentioned in previous Subject Reports, there is concern among examiners that some teachers do not see either the 2/IAF feedback or, indeed, this Subject report. It is the responsibility of IB Coordinators to make sure that these documents are passed on to all teachers concerned.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Higher Level

Criterion A: Productive skills

Command: The great majority of candidates showed that they had a sound command of the language. They could express themselves quite easily and clearly, and communicate effectively ideas of some complexity. The best could converse as skilfully as many sophisticated native speakers.

Fluency: Most candidates produced the language with relative ease. It may be noted that, at times, fluency may be dangerous - for instance, very competent candidates may rattle on with

great confidence, but that very confidence may lead them to fail to reflect carefully enough about what they are saying.

Accuracy and range: Almost all candidates displayed errors, although in many cases such errors were minor and had virtually no effect on communication. Candidates in the middle of the range were largely accurate in their use of the language, but obviously had flaws in their understanding of certain structures (often influenced by L1 interference). The weakest candidates struggled to communicate because of significant gaps in their grasp of basic structures.

There was some evidence of some range of knowledge of sophisticated vocabulary and idiomatic phrasing, at all levels of performance - e.g. the case of quite weak candidates, where natural, precise phrasing might suddenly crop up in the middle of a mass of fragmented sentences and limitations in grammar. This indicates that candidates pick up a lot of vocabulary in the normal course of life (especially in centres where English is the language of instruction), but may lack the conscious understanding of the complexities of grammar which can only come from deliberate instruction on the part of the teacher.

Intonation: Most candidates could pronounce the sounds of the language fairly clearly, although only a few did not have some kind of noticeable influence from L1 pronunciation patterns. Intonation, in the sense of overall rhythms and stresses, was less often successful, and seems the teaching of effective intonation remains a challenge for English B teachers.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Understanding: There were few cases of candidates obviously failing to grasp a question. That said, significantly more failed to grasp the precise nature of the question: they might understand the subject of the question, but not the precise point.

Interaction: Most candidates maintained quite competent interaction. Most responses were prompt, and usually quite full. There appeared to be slightly fewer active responses by candidates (taking a positive lead in the conversation), in some cases due to excessive concentration on details of the photograph, since there is only so much that one can say about those.

Presentation: Candidates' presentations about the photo (Part 1) were usually quite clear and effective. Around one third concentrated on describing the photograph, and two thirds used the photo as a springboard to talk about the caption and the topic. The presentation of ideas in Discussion (Part 2) covered the same range of skill as under the old system: roughly half of the candidates had some problem at some point, whether because of weak knowledge or restrictions in language.

Flow: Generally speaking, all candidates maintained at least some easy exchange of ideas in conversation. Weaker candidates might struggle with the mechanics of the language, but usually seemed to follow the thread of the conversation effectively enough. Where conversations broke down, this was usually due to the normal problem of sudden panic attacks.

Standard Level

Criterion A: Productive skills

Command: Most candidates displayed a very good command of the language as they were able to use grammar and vocabulary accurately and effectively in general, expressing successfully relevant and complex ideas at times.

Fluency: The majority of candidates were generally fluent and communicated clearly most of the time. It is worth mentioning that there is very often a group of extremely fluent candidates at the very top of the SL range, who speak with great ease revealing an excellent command of the language.

Accuracy and range: Many candidates were able to produce a good range of sophisticated vocabulary and structures. In the case of weaker candidates, well-selected photographs that were full of graphic text probably helped generate a varied range vocabulary used accurately, although there were still errors related to subject-verb agreements, verb forms, use of articles, singular/plural forms as well as effective use of complex structures.

Intonation: Most candidates used effective intonation patterns and were able to pronounce words clearly. There were some cases, however, in which L1 influence and flat intonation patterns seriously obscured meaning.

Criterion B: Interactive and receptive skills

Understanding: In general, few candidates failed to understand the basic thrust of the questions they were asked. However, some, even in the middle of the mark-range, failed at times to grasp the real point of the question, or went off on vague tangents.

Interaction: Most candidates provided prompt and active responses and maintained a coherent conversation. In addition, there was some indication that candidates were prepared to give full answers, to do more than give a simple basic response. At times, that was not the case due to some teachers focusing on factual knowledge which prevented candidates from remaining active as they did not know what to say.

Presentation: Many candidates were able to prepare clear presentations in which the photograph was described and linked to both Option and topic under discussion. Few were able to reflect on the target culture and express complex ideas and argued opinions.

Flow: Most candidates were able to maintain a natural flow of conversation with a coherent exchange of ideas. There seemed to be few cases of candidates who were prepared to ask for clarification when they were not sure what the question meant. This is an aspect of real conversation since it demonstrates interactive skills.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Preparing for the individual interview: The interview is based on a photograph related to an aspect of one of the Option topics studied in class. This means that candidates need to be prepared to:-

- identify the subject matter to which the photograph presumably refers (the caption should help with this)
- develop some ideas about the subject, drawing on what has been discussed in class
- relate these ideas to a brief description of the photographs
- present all of these ideas in a rapidly-organised and effective plan.

Accordingly, it would seem sensible for some part of oral work in class to be based on responding to photographs, deciphering what they 'mean', and preparing short presentations based on such photographs.

As pointed out in the Subject Guide, teachers “should encourage the student to express opinions, engage in a real conversation as well as lead to further understanding of the topic” in Part 2. In addition, “The teacher should allow sufficient time for the student to respond to questions” without aiming at testing any particular knowledge or background information.

Oral activities in general: Such activities based on photographs should form a natural part of a much wider series of oral activities in which teachers should:-

- identify, and set out to eliminate methodically, language errors prevalent among their candidates
- encourage as much natural, free-ranging discussion in class as possible, aimed at developing lively, active oral communication
- practise, and require as normal procedure, effective planning of presentations.

Marking standards: As noted in previous years, teachers should:-

- mark the Interactive Oral Activities by the same standards as for the Individual Oral. Significant differences between the two marks entered on form 2/BIA need to be justified in some detail.
- where more than one teacher is involved in Internal Assessment Oral, make every effort to ensure that marking is standardised, through discussion, cross-marking, etc.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

General Comments

Candidates' performance in the written assignment was good. It seems that candidates enjoyed the task and most centres and candidates were aware of the requirements of the written assignment, which resulted in candidates submitting a wide range of good, pertinent and insightful assignments for assessment.

As May 2013 was the first examination session for the reviewed Group 2 subjects, teething problems were expected and did- in fact- occur. Some centres were not aware that the deadline for submission was 15 March, while others did not instruct candidates to provide a rationale for the written assignment.

Some examiners complained about the number of literary works used by centres. The Language B guide specifies two, but there were cases where a centre with a candidature of 8, for example, used 7 different literary works.

Many candidates exceeded the stipulated 600 words, which meant that examiners stopped reading once the 600-word limit was reached. What is more, a number of candidates did not give the correct word count at the end of their assignments or in the box provided on the 2/BWA form; they gave a number of words that fell within the prescribed range. Teachers should advise candidates to write the exact number of words at the end of the task.

A few cases were reported that involved verbatim copying from the literary work. Some candidates even failed to indicate which sections were theirs and which were copied from the literary work. This meant that some assignments were flagged as possible cases of academic misconduct.

Some examiners reported the use of works that have not been originally written in English. Please note that using works in translation is strongly discouraged as Language B aims to help candidates develop intercultural awareness through exposure to a second language and its culture.

There were few teacher-set tasks reported. The Language B guide stresses the fact that the assignment should be the **choice of the student with guidance from the teacher**.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Generally, the assignments submitted were of good quality. The notable difficulty was in producing a rationale that included all the elements specified in the Language B guide while remaining short and pertinent.

Creative use of the literary texts was made in various ways, and this was evident in the aims candidates provided for their tasks and how those aims were achieved. For example, candidates used the assignment to highlight a particular character's thoughts or show a particular character's feelings. Others changed the ending of a text or continued the story from where the text ended. For the most part, those changes were successful. However, providing an alternative ending to the literary work was less successful than other 'formats' because candidates mostly concentrated on changing the ending to suit their own purposes (i.e. feeling

that the original work was too pessimistic) rather than showing understanding of the original work.

Essays, general book reviews and interviews with authors hardly had a good connection with the literary work, whereas letters, diary entries, personal interviews and interviews embedded in articles worked well.

Re-telling the plot should be avoided; candidates should reflect on their understanding of the literary work and choose specific areas to explore further in their assignments. Candidates who selected to focus on a minor character or incident in a literary work generally did not do well in Criterion B.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

Overall, language was used accurately and mostly effectively in most cases, with insignificant errors that did not obscure meaning. The level of language used in the assignments ranged from adequate to effective, with very few cases that could be described as limited; more scripts fell into the two top levels of Criterion A.

Assessing language appropriacy was at times difficult, especially in assignments in which candidates emulated the style of a character and failed to mention they were copying the style of that character in the rationale. This meant that examiners assessed the language used in the task against the descriptors provided for the language criterion without taking copying the style of the character / author into consideration. Please note that if the use of Pidgin English or very simple sentences / basic vocabulary is **not explained in the rationale and clearly and convincingly linked to the literary work/s**, it will not score highly against criterion A. Therefore, such tasks are best avoided.

Criterion B: Content

The most successful candidates related their task specifically to their chosen aspect of the literary work, using details from that text; less successful approaches developed general themes from the texts with little specific reference to events/characters etc.

Creativity was evident in a large percentage of candidates' work and showed a good use of the literary work, which was translated into the assignment. In many instances, candidates effectively and clearly organized their work and evidence of skilful planning was demonstrated. Unfortunately, 'creativity' taken as 'inventiveness' seems to have been maximized at the expense of coherence with the literary work; several candidates created novel texts which departed from the original work. Although such tasks may have been interesting, the connection with the text was basic or little developed, with very few details from the original included.

In few cases, candidates wrote personal diary entries in which they reflected on the lessons learned from the literary work without making use of the actual text, which resulted in their scoring low marks in Criterion B.

Analytical essays in which candidates provided a general analysis of the literary work is not appropriate and did not score well in Criterion B. The assignment is a 'creative' one that should show understanding of the literary work through producing, not inventing, a text that is 'in sync' with the original work.

Criterion C: Format

To a large extent, most candidates were able to use the conventions of their chosen text type appropriately and effectively. Inability to score top marks in Criterion C generally related to candidates' failure to use the conventional features of specific text types.

Candidates who did not score good marks in Criterion C generally chose a text type they were comfortable with using without taking into consideration the communicative purpose that suits that type of text in relation to their stated aim(s).

In some cases, candidates specified a certain text type in the rationale and produced another. Examiners were instructed to assess the produced, rather than the specified, text type. In such cases, candidates lost marks from Criterion D for lack of clarity.

Criterion D: Rationale

In general, the rationale was not well executed. Most candidates were clear on the text type they wanted to use and the reason why they have selected that text type. However, their aim(s) was/were not always clear or related to the literary work. Most candidates were able to explain how they were going to achieve their aim(s) and made the necessary link between the aim(s) and the selected aspect / details from the literary work. Very few candidates introduced the literary work or provided a brief summary of the part in the literary work that they were going to address. The most successful rationales justified their choice of text type in terms of how it would illuminate the literary work as opposed to why the candidate particularly liked that text type; other successful elements were explaining why a particular style was attempted / chosen, again in relation to the literary work.

In some cases, a large part of the rationale consisted of a re-telling of the plot with a couple of sentences stating the aims at the end. Although the stated aims were clear, these could have been more extensively focused to provide a clearer context.

A number of candidates linked the literary work with themes from the options or the core as found in the syllabus, which is not required.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should ensure that their candidates are aware of the requirements of the rationale. The rationale should serve as an introduction to the task. A **convincing** rationale would:-

- introduce the literary work / provide a short summary of the selected aspect/s from the literary work
- specify the purpose / aim of the assignment in relation to the literary work

- explain how this aim was achieved by making the necessary links to the chosen text type and the selected aspect(s) from the literary work

Teachers should advise candidates to choose a text type that will help them achieve their aim(s).

Candidates should demonstrate understanding of the literary work in their assignments.

Teachers should advise candidates to choose a specific focus, one that is neither too broad nor too narrow, for their assignments, and to use this focus to demonstrate understanding of the literary work. Unconventional approaches, like changing the ending to make it more optimistic, must be convincingly justified in the rationale.

A basic premise underlying the written assignment aims to 'maximise understanding'; therefore, candidates should be discouraged from including false 'facts' or 'events' unless they justify them in the rationale.

Candidates should be strictly discouraged from copying large sections from the literary work into their assignments as this will negatively affect the marks awarded. When verbatim copying is necessary, candidates should clearly indicate where the copied 'chinks' appear.

It is recommended that the rationale be placed immediately after the coversheet.

Creativity is desirable as long as the candidates create texts that are closely connected to the chosen literary work(s).

Candidates must be advised on the necessity to produce work that is legible.

Candidates should be made aware that they lose a mark from Criterion A if they write less than 500 words and that examiners will read only the first 600 words if assignments exceeded the prescribed word limit.

Teachers should communicate to candidates that analytical essays should be avoided for the written assignment.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

General comments

This is the first time that this component has been examined and it is therefore natural that both teachers and candidates are still discovering what is really involved. In spite of this, the results and the examiners' comments showed that the candidates performed very well.

There were some very good answers which used effective language and gave a mature treatment of the content of the sources. The written assignment is proving to be an opportunity to use information in a convincing way on a subject that the candidate feels is important.

As often in the first session of a new component, there were many administrative issues, and these will be dealt with in detail below.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most of the administrative issues concerned the source texts, and the following should be noted for future sessions:-

- **Length of texts:** Each text must be 300-400 words each. Many texts this session were very long and some were more than 2000 words, which makes it more difficult for the candidates and very difficult for the examiners.
- **Number of texts:** The same three texts should be used for a group of up to 12 candidates. Additional sets should only be introduced in centres with large candidature.
- **Suitability:** To be on the same topic is not enough. The three texts must be usable. The teachers should choose carefully so that the sources facilitate the creative process rather than turn into an obstacle. There was often a variety in language difficulty, length, and amount and type of information. This made it hard for the candidate to use all three texts well. Texts that are too long, over-technical or tenuously linked should be avoided.
- **Poor English:** Some texts were taken from the internet and contained many errors of language. Teachers should choose internet texts with care. One examiner commented that having marked the script he was then tempted to continue correcting the glaring language errors in the source texts.
- **Enclosing printed copies:** Teachers should not merely give web addresses but should enclose a printed version of the actual texts chosen. Sometimes a given web address turned out to be a text twenty pages long. The candidate may have used only part of it, but this was not indicated.
- While it is not necessary to attach the texts to each script, at least two copies should be enclosed. In cases where two or more sets are used (for larger classes), which set each candidate used must be clearly indicated.

Copying the source texts: Some candidates copied whole sentences from the source texts without acknowledging them. Others copied larger sections, again without acknowledgement.

This is not acceptable - page 34 of the Guide clearly states, “the student should use the information from the sources to form a new text without copying.” Copying words or short phrases is a sensible strategy especially in the case of lexis specific to the topic, but copying whole sentences is not permitted. If whole sentences are copied, then the ‘use of the sources’ is unlikely to be ‘good’ (7/8 band) or ‘effective’ (9/10 band). Furthermore, such copied sections are not included in the word count and the script is penalised if it then does not reach the minimum limit.

If a candidate wishes to copy words or sentences for particular reasons, these must be acknowledged and they then become quotes. This is normal practice, though it should not be abused.

Choice of text type: There was an encouragingly wide range of text types, and in the whole these were well done. The essay was also chosen, and although this is accepted, it is not appropriate on the basis that the written assignment is a creative task. An essay is difficult to contextualise apart from being a pedagogic exercise and it is therefore hard to specify a convincing readership. The most convincing tasks are set in a real-life context.

Academic honesty: As with any work that is not carried out under strict examination conditions, there is regrettably scope for plagiarism, and teachers must supervise the candidates throughout the writing process. There were several cases of suspected plagiarism this session and if plagiarism is finally proved, the consequences are severe.

Teachers should supervise the written assignment very carefully, ensuring to collect the work in if it is being completed over multiple sessions. The use of a dictionary and reference material is allowed but this does not include the use of electronic material. Further details of permitted reference material can be found in the FAQ section of the Teacher Support Material and also in the Handbook.

Teachers should advise their candidates that the use of the internet (or additional source texts) is strictly forbidden, that any passages they include from internet texts are easily recognisable and that the consequences of proven academic misconduct are severe.

Word limits: Several candidates wrote less than 300 words. A one-mark penalty in Criterion A was applied to all answers under 300 words. Examiners count the words of any tasks they think may be under the limit, regardless of the word-count given by the candidate at the end of the text.

Conversely, some candidates exceeded the upper word limit, and that part of the text which is after the 400-word limit was not taken into account by the examiners when awarding marks in Criteria A, B and C. It is therefore in their own interest for candidates to make sure that their text is not too long.

The recommended length for the rationale is 100 words. However, there are no penalties for being below or above this figure and the whole rationale is read and taken into account when marks are awarded.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Language

Examiners were impressed by the level of language in most tasks, which in some cases displayed rich lexis frequently found at HL level. This may partly be explained by the fact that the time limit is generous for the written assignment and dictionaries are permitted. Furthermore, unlike in Paper 2, some inaccuracies are permitted in the highest mark band of 7-8.

In spite of this, one examiner noted frequent basic errors such as 's' in the third person singular present tense and in the use of 'this/these' and 'that/those'. These errors rarely affect meaning but they always leave a negative impression on the reader.

The choice of vocabulary was often good, and it is a sensible strategy for candidates to make use of relevant individual words (but not whole sentences) from the source texts. The best scripts showed a command of complex structures which reinforced the points that they were making.

Some scripts contained careless slips. A careful proof-reading would have removed these, and as the time allowed is flexible there is no excuse for candidates not to do this.

Criterion B: Content

The descriptors make clear what is required here: effective use of the source texts, fulfilment of rationale aims and clear organisation of the answer.

- **Use of source texts:** This discriminated the strong and the weak candidates, and there was a great difference in how candidates made use of the source texts: some used direct quotations, others hardly made any references at all but used an imaginary scenario linked to the main theme.

Examiners accepted answers that appeared to mention only two texts if these were skilfully used. However, an attempt should always be made to incorporate all three texts to maximise the opportunity for achieving the higher mark bands.

Candidates must reproduce at least some of the ideas and the arguments of the sources. For the 9-10 mark band, the use of the sources must be effective, and this is impossible if candidates ignore these texts in the interest of pursuing their own views.

Some candidates used the topic as a springboard for their own views and message. While it is positive to be creative, they must use all three source texts before giving their own version of the topic. First, some of the ideas, information and attitudes of the sources must appear. Having done this, the candidate may then be creative and develop other ideas.

- **Fulfilment of aims:** There must be a clear reference to the aims stated in the rationale and these aims must be carried out. In this session this was fairly well done but sometimes the examiner had to hunt through the text in order to make the links between the task and the rationale. Such links should appear clearly, and ideally they should be reflected in the paragraphing of the task.

- **Organisation:** There should be a logical progression of ideas, furthered by cohesive devices and paragraphing. The exact form depends on the text type chosen. Different forms of organisation would be expected in an e-mail, an interview and a blog, for example. Generally the organisation was fairly well done, and there were some answers that did not make full use of the sources but still organised the content well.

Production of a well-structured answer by use of discourse markers, pronominal reference and paragraphing differentiated the better candidates from the average.

- **Paragraphing:** Poor paragraphing was a weakness noted by some examiners, and some candidates did not divide their answers into paragraphs at all. Effective paragraphing is a way of structuring a text and clearly separates one idea from another. It is also something that examiners look for, and is an integral element of most text types. Some candidates with strong language skills, even, failed to separate their ideas into paragraphs.

It is good practice for candidates to leave a blank line between paragraphs.

Criterion C: Format

The text type chosen by the candidate did not have to be one of those listed for Paper 2. Many different text types were used, and generally they were produced well.

Format refers to the normal rules which govern the writing of each text type. These are summed up in the assessment criteria in the word 'conventions'. Conventions include two main areas: the layout (for example, sub-headings in a report), and the approach, which refers to the distinctive style tone of each text type. So in a formal letter, for example, examiners looked for an address, date and appropriate opening and closing salutations, but also for a formal register and tone of respect for the addressee.

Criterion D: Rationale

In spite of this being new, many candidates wrote a good rationale and included the required elements. However, not all candidates found it easy. The aims and choice of text type were usually covered, but the use of source texts and how the aims were achieved were often not.

The rationale should appear before the task and be clearly separated from it. Some candidates gave no clear indication of where the rationale finished and the task began.

The rationale should cover:

- Use of sources - What aspect of the topic is used? What ideas and arguments are taken from the sources? Are the main issues addressed? What attitude is taken?
- Aims - What is the purpose of the text?
- How are the aims achieved? This may be by choice and use of text type and by the choice of information used.

The rationale should serve as an introduction and conclusion to the task, and clear links between the rationale and the task are at the heart of this component. The candidate could say, 'I have taken X from source A and Y from source B' or make a less specific link, as in 'I concentrated on the idea of the importance of education in the sources.'

Examiners felt that the rationale was one of the weaker aspects of the written assignments. Although worth only 3 marks, the rationale is a vital element of this component and is linked closely to Criterion B and to the marks awarded there. It is therefore essential for candidates to give it importance and to get it right.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should apply the recommendations made under **Range and Suitability of Works submitted** and **Candidate performance against each criterion** (above).

Recommendations tend to focus on what needs improving, so it should be repeated that some scripts were excellent and showed that the written assignment is a very useful part of English B assessment.

Please bear in mind this checklist of recommendations when entering candidates for the next session.

- Choose three source texts of 300-400 words each. Check the English of these texts and make sure that all three texts can actually be used by the candidate.
- Candidates should include all the aspects of the rationale which have been outlined in this report.
- Candidates should not choose the essay text type as it is not appropriate and is difficult to contextualise convincingly.
- Candidates must use all three source texts in their answer and must fulfil the aims stated in their rationale.
- Candidates should be reminded to use the sources "without copying".
- Candidates should be reminded of the importance of academic honesty, and of avoiding plagiarism.
- Candidates must observe the word limits of the task.
- Centres should provide candidates paper with wide margins so that examiners can add comments easily.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 23	24 - 32	33 - 39	40 - 47	48 - 54	55 - 60

General comments

The International Baccalaureate is extremely grateful to the 154 teachers who have taken the time to complete the G2 form. Both paper setters and the Grade Award team find teachers' detailed comments important and beneficial.

There was a large measure of agreement this session between the teachers' feedback and that of many examiners. The general feeling is that the paper was of a similar standard to that of 2012 although many teachers and examiners thought the texts were noticeably longer and more demanding than those of previous sessions; however, this perceived difficulty was not reflected in the candidates' performances.

As in previous sessions, some candidates failed to write their answers in the spaces provided. Please continue to advise the candidates of the importance of writing their answers **inside the boxes** provided. There has been a significant improvement this session, and we sincerely hope to see this continue.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Many examiners remarked that some candidates still find the True/False with justification questions difficult to handle: some ticked a box but omitted the quotation; some gave the correct justification but did not tick either box; some selected the correct justification but ticked the wrong box. The commonest cause of a zero mark remains the failure to follow both parts of the rubric, which requires the correct 'tick' and a quotation that is precise and succinct. It is worth mentioning here that although the rubric requires that the quotation be brief, it still has to convey the exact and full reason why the statement was deemed true or false. A clear example of this is Q22, where many candidates wrote only part of the justification: either "intellectual, humorous letters" or "letters that distinguish great correspondence" while the appropriate justification was "intellectual, humorous letters that distinguish great correspondence".

A good number of candidates had difficulty in handling questions that demanded understanding of the whole text, its tone or the author's purpose. Another problematic area was ability to identify references, where some answers were vaguely relevant but hardly specific enough to gain the mark.

Examiners reported that only a small number of candidates gave the correct answer for Qs 19, 29 and 30. Such questions acted as discriminators and similar questions should be expected every year at Higher Level.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The exam paper did not present major problems for the majority of candidates: the average candidate was generally successful in locating/selecting and handling the information needed across the full range of question types in the five texts. Some examiners felt that

candidates needed better preparation for questions which required close reading, understanding the meaning of a word or an expression in context, and inference.

Some teachers felt that the addition of Text E put their candidates at a disadvantage and thought some failed to answer all questions. However, most candidates were able to manage their time properly, for few scripts were incomplete.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Qs 1-3: These were answered correctly by most candidates. A few gave answers that were specific to New Zealand in Q1 and/ or added something about the weather in Q3.

Qs 4-6: These were mostly answered correctly, with 5 & 6 posing some problems to a few candidates, who gave F and C respectively instead of G & E.

Qs 7-10: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with this set. Some candidates mixed warmth and atmosphere in Qs 7 & 8 and a number gave 'advantage' instead of 'letdown' for Q10.

Qs 11-14: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with this set. Qs 12 & 14 seemed to be more demanding than Qs 11 & 13. Some candidates gave a number of responses other than G to Q12, and J was a common wrong answer for Q14.

Qs 15-19: Average to good candidates found these mostly accessible, with Qs 17 & 19 being the most challenging because some candidates failed to include 'establishing' - an integral part of the answer - for Q17 and most candidates did not give the correct answer for Q19. Candidates should be advised to read the question carefully and understand what it requires them to do before they attempt to answer.

Qs 20-24: These seemed to be the most difficult set in the paper, with Qs 20, 21, & 23 more demanding than Qs 24 & 25. Candidates must make sure that the required justification appears in full in order for them to be awarded the mark, and that both the correct tick and the appropriate justification are provided.

Qs 25-28: Some candidates gave wrong answers to Qs 26 & 28. Please advise candidates to consider the context in which a word is used before determining what that word means.

Qs 29-30: These proved to be a little demanding for a good number of candidates. At HL, candidates should be able to read carefully and to understand the overall purpose of a written text.

Qs 31-34: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with these questions. 'Letters' instead of 'Lord Byron's/ his letters' appeared frequently as the answer to Q33, and 'past writers' appeared sometimes as the answer to Q32. Some candidates correctly inferred that the authors referred to in Q32 were future authors and were awarded the mark.

Qs 35-37: A number of candidates lost the mark for Q35 because they added 'Jon had been one of them' to the required phrase, which invalidated the answer. Some candidates included comments on Jon's demeanour in Q36 although the question clearly specifies physical attributes. Q37 was answered correctly by most candidates.

Qs 38-41: This set proved to be of medium difficulty to almost all candidates, who sometimes got all 4 correct, but more often than not missed one. Q39 was deemed a little unclear during standardization, but candidates' answers proved that the question was accessible in that it was rarely answered wrong, and when it was, the candidate showed weaknesses in the entire MCQ set.

Qs 42-45: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with this set. Some candidates gave 'already' as the answer for Q44, which mostly resulted in providing wrong answers for all 4.

Qs 46-50: Average to good candidates found little difficulty in these questions. The most common reason for losing the mark in Q48 was adding 'and guidance' to the required phrase. Q50 proved a little more demanding than the rest.

Q51: The set proved to be accessible to a good number of candidates, who sometimes got all 5 correct, but more often than not they missed either one or two, with D proving to be the most 'elusive'.

Qs 52-53: These were answered correctly by the majority of candidates.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- As mentioned earlier, teachers must draw the candidates' attention to the importance of writing their answers in the boxes provided. When an answer is written outside the box, the **candidate must indicate where the answer appears** (for example, 'please see attached paper').
- Handwriting remains a critical issue. Teachers should advise candidates **to pay extra attention to the legibility of their responses**. Furthermore, in questions where a letter is required, candidates **MUST** write their answer clearly, for unclear answers will **NOT** be awarded the mark. Among ambiguous answers were C/G, E/F, E/L and A/D.
- Teachers should advise their candidates carefully to study the context before answering vocabulary questions.
- Teachers should point out that the crucial words in the quotation used to justify a true or a false statement must **never** be omitted.
- Teachers should stress to the candidates that a careful reading of the instructions is essential, and that judicious consideration of the requirements of each question must be exercised to determine when a problem could result from offering either too many words as an answer or too few. Where "one" detail is required, a candidate who gives more than one runs the risk of losing the mark: even if one answer is correct, if there is also an incorrect response, no mark will be awarded. Similarly, candidates should refrain from providing multiple answers for short-answer questions; this does not

demonstrate understanding of the question and is therefore not awarded the mark.

- Teachers are advised to spend more time discussing how context affects meaning. This will help prepare candidates for reference and gap filling exercises, and indeed most question types, in future examinations.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 33	34 - 39	40 - 45

General comments

The International Baccalaureate assessment division would like to thank the teachers who have taken the time to complete the G2 Form. It is worth mentioning that only 10 teachers completed those forms, which indicates a noticeable decrease in respondents compared to previous session. Although this might be taken as a sign of satisfaction with the paper, all teachers are highly encouraged to submit their comments and brief explanations which are usually invaluable to the process of grade awarding.

All 10 respondents agreed that the paper is of an appropriate difficulty level and that the presentation of the paper was good. 25% of the teachers who had completed the G2 Form found the paper of a similar standard to that of May 2012, while 25% believed it to be a little more difficult. Clarity of the paper's wording was deemed good by 70% of the respondents, and many considered the texts accessible and interesting to candidates.

Please continue to advise the candidates to write their answers **inside the boxes provided** on the Questions & Answers booklet. There has been a significant improvement this session, and we sincerely hope candidates continue to indicate clearly where their answers appear in the afore-mentioned booklet.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

One problematic area was identifying the correct words or phrases from the text. Many candidates wrote either a complete sentence or more than two words for Q20 and Q27 when only one word was required in both, which resulted in a zero mark awarded.

Almost all examiners agreed that close reading and identifying references remain to be problematic just like in previous sessions. In Q4, many candidates lost the mark as they wrote "outside the classroom" which lacked the essential parts of "hearing different languages" as the way in which Aditya learned words. In Q35, many candidates wrote

“language” only, which was too vague to be awarded a mark, and a good number of candidates failed to identify “young people” as the required reference in Q37.

Many candidates lost marks for several multiple choice questions due to their handwriting being illegible. There were also instances of candidates writing two letters, one outside and one inside the box, without clearly crossing out one of them. Please continue to remind candidates that letters must be written clearly **inside the box** and that they **should avoid providing two answers without clearly crossing out one**. Both cases will result in a zero mark awarded.

There has been a significant improvement this year in handling the True/False with justification questions. Still, a good number of candidates continued to tick the correct box but provided extraneous details that resulted in losing the mark, while others ticked the correct box and wrote the justification but with essential parts missing. Candidates are to be reminded again that both the correct tick and the brief quotation must be provided to attain the mark.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

As evidenced from examiners’ feedback, the four texts presented no substantial problems for the majority of candidates. The average candidate was generally successful in locating/selecting and handling the information needed across the full range of question types in all texts.

Some examiners felt that candidates needed better preparation for questions which required close reading, matching words with their meanings, as well as identifying references.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Qs 1-3: This set was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. The most common wrong answers were E for Q2 and F for Q3.

Q4: Many candidates did not identify “hearing different languages” and restricted their answers to “outside the classroom” or “while in a Hindi School”.

Q5: This was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Few candidates wrote “outside” or “outside the classroom” instead of “foreign”.

Q6: Many average to good candidates found this accessible. A frequent wrong answer was “They will lose their identity”, and some candidates failed to include “mixing two languages” in their answers.

Q7: This was answered correctly by almost all candidates.

Qs 8-10: This set proved accessible as most candidates provided the three correct words.

Qs 11-15: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with this set. However, as mentioned earlier, it is necessary to provide both the correct response (tick) and the appropriate brief quotation to get the mark. Qs 12 & 13 seemed to be the most demanding as candidates failed to provide the correct justification in the former, and others wrote the wrong justification “the Fish Eagle will perch on a tree...catches the prey” for the latter.

Qs 16-19: Average to good candidates seemed to have little difficulty with these questions. Qs 18 & 19 seemed the most challenging. Many candidates wrote J for Q18 and H for Q19.

Q20: This proved to be accessible to most candidates, who were able to identify “soaring” or “soaring up”.

Qs 21 & 22: The majority were able to identify the correct answers for these questions.

Qs 23-25: Many average to good candidates were able to answer the three questions correctly. The most demanding one was Q24 as candidates wrongly wrote either H or D.

Q26: This set proved to be of medium difficulty in general. A good number of candidates identified all five statements. D, K & B were among the frequent wrong answers provided by some.

Q27: Many average to good candidates found this accessible. “Hypersonic velocity” was the most frequent wrong answer.

Q28: This did not prove to be of difficulty to the majority of candidates. Few wrote “Tokyo” or “east coast of the US”.

Qs 29-31: Some average to good candidates found this set a little difficult. Many candidates wrote C or A for Q29 while others wrote D for Q30.

Qs 32-34: This set also proved to be a little difficult to many candidates. Among the frequent wrong answers were C for Q32 and F for Q33.

Qs 35-38: Many average to good candidates correctly identified all the references. The most demanding one seemed to be 35 as a good number of candidates wrote only “language”.

Qs 39-41: This set did not prove problematic to many candidates. Among the frequent wrong answers were C for Q39 and B for Q41.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must write their answers clearly, especially in multiple choice questions and must avoid writing two letters without clearly crossing out one. Unclear answers will **not** be awarded the mark. Among ambiguous answers were E/F, and A/D.
- Teachers are advised to focus on close reading techniques and referencing; two essential skills that must be continuously reinforced in class.

- Teachers must continue to draw their candidates' attention to the importance of writing their answers in the boxes provided. When an answer is written outside the box, the candidate **must** indicate where the answer appears (for example, "**please see attached paper**").
- Teachers should familiarize candidates with the common types of questions and with appropriate strategies to answer each.
- Teachers should advise candidates to provide complete justifications in True/False questions and that crucial parts in the quotation should never be omitted. The use of dots (...) in the justifications should not be necessary if the quotations are, as required, brief.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 39	40 - 45

General comments

The HL Paper 2 examined for the first time in this session proved to be a more demanding paper than the previous Paper 2. Essentially, for candidates it involved two tasks to complete instead of one, within the same time allowance. However, there was no evidence to suggest that this was too demanding - indeed, there was some evidence that the time-pressure led to more succinct, better thought-out writing.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Section A

Two text types mentioned in last May's report as areas candidates found difficult - the pamphlet and the review - was included in this May's paper. There was a clear division between candidates who appeared to have been actively taught how to handle these text types, and those who seemed to have no real idea about them.

Format of a proposal: Most scripts were presented in the framework of a formal letter, which was fine, but then failed to structure the actual details of the proposal in short clear paragraphs, or under headings, or as bullet points. The purpose of such format conventions is to present information and arguments as clearly and economically as possible.

Control of argument in a speech: A significant number of responses to the 'speech' task (Q1) appeared rather un-structured, or rambling. This is not in respect of the use of paragraphing or cohesives, which was in general satisfactory, but rather in terms of the logical

connections of the argument.

Command of language of weaker candidates: At Grade 4 and below, there were candidates whose command of the language was seriously weak. There needs to be more attention to very basic grammatical forms in such cases.

Section B

Many scripts read as rather disorganised and rambling. There are specific skills required for this task, including the ability to formulate a view quickly and then explain it succinctly, and these will need attention in the future.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Section A

General handling of text types: While there were specific problems with certain text types (c.f. proposal), the general level of competence in handling text types was quite strong. This is encouraging since the range of text types required by the questions in this paper were all quite demanding, and needed skills and knowledge to handle well.

General command of language: Command of language was at least effective in the great majority of scripts - ideas were communicated reasonably clearly, despite flaws in details of grammar. Most candidates, overall, had a solid basic store of linguistic resources.

Section B

Most candidates were prepared to form a point of view about the stimulus and to make at least some attempt to justify that point of view in thoughtful ways.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Section A

It appeared that Q1 was the most popular choice, followed by Q3, Q5 and Q4. Q2 was rarely selected.

That Q1, the speech debating inter-cultural mobility, should be so overwhelmingly popular is not surprising, given that not only had many candidates studied related issues under the Option of Cultural Diversity, but also because many had direct personal experience of the issue as international students. In contrast, Q2, the dress-code proposal, was probably a task and concept remote from the experience of most candidates.

Question 1: Cultural diversity – Speech

This was by far the most popular task, perhaps because the subject matter seemed

accessible and straightforward. The very wide range of success, from brilliant to seriously confused, indicates that the 'straightforward' perception might have been deceptive in some cases.

Most scripts handled the text type competently, with a clear sense of address to the audience at beginning and end, at least, and often maintained skilfully throughout with the use of personal pronouns such as 'we' and 'you'. A minority of scripts made a token address to audience at the start, but then fell into a 'general essay' category.

A factor distinguishing the best scripts was the ability to use cohesive devices such as sequence markers to give a clear sense of structure to the 'oral' text.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – Proposal

The proposal was usually presented in the framework of a formal letter. This was entirely acceptable, but there was very little evidence of other conventions of proposals, such as headings, numbered sections, bullet points. This may be related to the way that most scripts were not particularly clearly organised, lacking a convincing argument through methodical step-by-step explanation.

Question 3 : Health - Pamphlet

This task was surprisingly well done by quite a few, demonstrating a clear sense of 'pamphlet' format, expressed in imaginative layout, with a lively address to audience, and organised efficiently in short, punchy paragraphs. It would seem that such candidates had actively studied the value of layout in communicating written ideas.

Perhaps half of the scripts, however, showed some weaknesses of treatment: either due to format or, to a lesser degree, approach. Such candidates had clearly never considered main headings, subordinate headings, numbered lists, bullet points, etc; or there was little sense of attempting to convey the advice in concise, interesting ways. A pamphlet that is tedious cannot be seen as fulfilling its purpose.

Question 4: Leisure – Review

This was not a very popular task, but it was usually quite well done by those who chose it. Quality of some of the detailed comments observed suggested that those who chose it had some interest in the visual arts. Most scripts displayed some sense of appropriate format (e.g. title), and some attempt at appropriate tone ('enthusiastic') as well as reasonably sound journalistic style and approach.

Question 5: Science and technology – Article

Those candidates who attempted this task generally handled it at least competently, possibly because of being familiar with such articles about technical innovation. Almost all provided a range of relevant ideas about the invention, the inventor and the development process. A significant weakness, even in inventive scripts, was a tendency to fail to control and structure the information provided - logical linkage between topics was sometimes not clear.

Almost all scripts correctly chose the 'embedded interview' format, in which quotations are embedded into an explanatory discourse, as clearly instructed in the question. In many cases, quotations were lively and interesting, and were skilfully edited-in to support the thrust of explanation. In short, in most cases this relatively complex text type was handled at least competently and often skilfully.

Section B Personal Response

Evaluation under Criterion B was based on (i) whether the candidate's response was "relevant" to the central point of the stimulus, and (ii) how skilfully the candidate was able to "justify" the response, as required by the Section B rubric (to 'structure of the argument', as mentioned in Criterion B).

However, candidates displayed a very wide range of approaches to the task, from discussing the central point of the stimulus in some detail (critique), to agreeing generally with the central point (basic response), to using the stimulus simply as a starting point for associating other ideas ('springboard'). These three categories are simplifications of the many, many variations which candidates produced, one of the commonest being a confused mixture of all three.

Handling of the stimulus: Almost all scripts made *some* reference to the stimulus quote, and most appeared to have grasped the central point of physical poverty contrasted with emotional poverty. However, relatively few attempted to explore exactly how these two conditions might be related.

Below are some typical treatments, listed in descending rank order:-

- Focused on central point ... discussed in depth
- Central point mentioned ... discussed on a superficial level
- Central point mentioned ... then mainly peripheral issues (e.g. 'loneliness in general')
- Central point ignored ... discussion of vaguely associated ideas (e.g. 'donation: good or bad?')

The text type issue: The mention of text types in the rubric was ignored by a majority (who simply wrote their views in straightforward explanatory prose), but led a minority to devote effort to creating believable versions of a wide range of text types, and such effort sometimes distracted from the real point of the task. Unlike in Section A, there is no Criterion for 'Format' in Section B, so no marks can be directly won or lost for the handling of the text type in itself.

Candidates should be advised that, whatever text type they choose, it should be a text type that enables them to communicate *arguments* clearly and concisely.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

On the basis of performance in this session's Paper 2, teachers are advised to pay particular attention to the following areas:

- teaching concepts of format and structure (c.f. pamphlet, proposal, all kinds of journalism)

- practising the planning of argument (c.f. speech)
- addressing significant grammar errors

Section B Personal Response: More and better preparation is required for this quite demanding task. Candidates should be encouraged and enabled to:-

- identify the central issue of the stimulus
- think critically about the central issue, questioning assumptions and debating consequences
- plan, organise and explain concisely the key points of their ideas

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

General comments

This was the first session for the new Paper 2, and candidates generally performed very well. The assessment criteria are the major change, and most other aspects of the component are similar to those before.

As in the previous Paper 2, it is essential for the candidates to use effective and accurate language, to cover all the required parts of the task and to use the text type appropriately.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates AND in which candidates appeared well prepared

Criterion A: Language

In general, the handling of language was effective. The better answers used some complex structures clearly and produced error-free simple structures. They also used a wide range of vocabulary. The main requirement was language that expressed meaning without causing undue strain on the reader, and most candidates achieved this.

Several points emerge and these have also been noticed in previous sessions of this component. Firstly, proof-reading by candidates before handing in their paper would remove many of the careless slips. A check list of each candidate's usual errors would help them to focus on their typical errors, for example in verb forms, prepositions or punctuation. Secondly, there are still many basic errors (for example, 'she go', 'childs' for 'children' or 'he thinked'). These sometimes appeared in scripts which managed some complex structures effectively. Although the meaning may be clear, such basic errors should not be made at this level. Thirdly, an examination is not the time to take risks. If candidates are not sure if a word

or phrase is accurate, then they should replace it with something less ambitious and original but which they know to be correct.

Word limits: The minimum word limit of 250 words must be met, and if not, a penalty is applied in Criterion A. In all doubtful cases the words are actually counted, and so candidates must make sure that they do not fall short of the limit by a few words. There is no penalty for exceeding the upper limit of 400 words and the whole answer is considered when awarding marks. However, a very long answer is rarely a good one. The organisation becomes loose, there is tendency to repetition and the candidate, short of time, often makes basic mistakes. One examiner noted that in this session some speeches fell into this category.

Criterion B: Message

The fact that there is one question on each option may make preparation easier and may also help candidates to choose which to answer. However, some candidates wrote on the option or topic in general rather than answering the specific question set, for example on the health issues of tattoos in response to Q1 rather than focussing on the social and professional consequences. Such answers are marked down on relevance of ideas in Criterion B.

Some questions asked for two aspects to be covered. Examples are 'socially and professionally' in Q1 and 'More enjoyable or cheating' in Q5. Candidates should address each of these required topics clearly, and failing to do so will result in lower marks. Underlining the required aspects on the question paper may help to remind candidates of what elements they should cover.

In weaker scripts there was no logical argument. An argument should proceed step by step and the points should be supported by evidence. This was required in Qs 1, 3, 4 and 5, and Q2 also needed clear organisation. This ability to produce coherent argument distinguished the best answers. Very well organised and highly effective answers gave a preview of the arguments, then each argument was developed in separate paragraphs, and a review of these arguments was provided at the end.

Other effective techniques noted by examiners included using specific points and examples to persuade, rather than talking in general terms, and using counter arguments for rebuttal purposes.

Paragraphing: Effective paragraphing is something that examiners look for, and weaknesses in this area are marked down in Criterion B since they affect the way in which the message is communicated. Some candidates did not use paragraphs at all. Good paragraphing is one of the most effective ways of structuring a text, and it should clearly separate one idea from another.

It is good practice for candidates to leave a full blank line between paragraphs.

Criterion C: Format

Examiners commented that the speech and formal letter were often not well done. These text types have very clear layout conventions at the beginning and end (it is easy to see when

these are missing) and also in register, tone and style. In fact, there are two elements to text types in general which examiners look for: the form and layout, and the approach and tone. Both are important, and the second is probably harder to achieve.

There was a tendency for candidates to be better at informal than formal registers, so the formal letter was less successfully produced. For example, the opening and close were often formal but the language sometimes lapsed into the informal in the middle where the writer was trying to persuade the reader.

Candidates should remember that it is not enough to produce a text type in general. For example, Q1 was a newspaper article, but it was also in the Teen Talk section of the newspaper and so needed a lively, direct and immediate style that teenagers could relate to. The speech (Q4) was not part of a school debate but given was to parents and teachers and therefore needed a tone that showed respect and tact.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The article on tattoos and the formal letter on medical costs were the most popular options. The least popular was the question on guidelines for a special event. Q5, the essay on computers and films, was the third most popular choice. Candidates should consider both the content and the text type when deciding which question to answer.

Question 1: Cultural diversity – Article

Good answers covered the social and professional consequences clearly. Whenever certain content is required, as here, this should be clearly signalled, perhaps with a separate paragraph for each aspect. Weaker answers did not cover these aspects and often mentioned others, such as health issues. Some did not take a negative stance, which was demanded by the question.

It was also important to produce an article. This means a title and a distinct introduction, development and conclusion. The best answers also used a lively and direct style appropriate for teenage readers.

Question 2: Customs and traditions – Guidelines

This was the least popular question, perhaps because guidelines (just as leaflets or pamphlets) are a text type which is not frequently practised in class. The layout for guidelines must be clear and there may be headings and sub-headings, numbering or bullet points. These may then be within the framework of a letter or e-mail, but they may also stand alone. The good answers used the layout mentioned above, but some weak answers simply wrote a normal letter or e-mail.

Strong candidates included detailed explanations of what will happen at the event and what the friend should do, eat and wear. Weaker answers just mentioned one aspect, for example appropriate dress. Nearly all answers were helpful and enthusiastic, and this was the appropriate tone to adopt.

Question 3: Health – Letter

In this question the examiners looked for a well-argued point of view. This might be for or against or balanced, and it needed evidence in the form of examples or personal experience. The question was generally answered well, and there were some perceptive arguments on the ethical implications of who should pay for medical care. As always, the candidate's actual conclusions do not matter as long as they are reached logically and expressed clearly. Most candidates provided this type of argument but it could often have been made more effective by using clearer cohesive devices and more effective paragraphing.

Surprisingly, many candidates did not use all the aspects of a formal letter (address, date, opening and closing salutations). Some did not maintain a consistent register; they began correctly with 'Dear Sir/Madam' but then later used contractions such as 'I'll' or 'It isn't'.

Question 4: Leisure – Speech

This is not an easy context since the candidate has to put forward their views and suggestions to the very people whose conduct has to be changed. Furthermore a young person is speaking to adults. The best answers not only produced a persuasively argued speech, but also adopted a respectful attitude towards the parents.

Most answers had a convincing sense of audience. This means not only addressing the listeners at the beginning and end but also keeping contact with them throughout, for example by use of pronouns 'you' and 'we' and by direct address. The very best answers used speech rhetoric such as direct questions to the audience.

Question 5: Science and technology – Essay

It is a fairly specialist area, and yet most of those who chose it did it reasonably well. In fact, the best answers discussed the nature of art and reality in the cinema and in art in general with skill and originality, displaying some thought-provoking ideas. Weaker answers failed to cover both aspects of the question (enjoyment and cheating). Usually cheating was covered sketchily or not at all. Some weak answers focused on the history of the cinema, which was not asked for.

Most produced a convincing essay with semi-formal to formal register and argued a point of view logically and with relevant examples.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should apply the recommendations made in the two sections above.

As always, recommendations tend to focus on what needs improving, so it should be emphasised that much was achieved and, as always, some scripts were outstanding.

- **Answering the question:** It is essential to answer all parts of the question. Candidates should highlight or underline the various aspects of the question that need to be covered. This will ensure that they deal with all the required parts of the task.
- **Format:** Candidates should use the layout and approach demanded by the text type, but beyond this, they should imagine their text in the real-life situation indicated by the question. They should also take note of the details of the text-type in the question. For example, is the speech part of a class debate or is it a single address to a specific audience?
- **Handwriting and spelling:** Teachers should identify and help candidates whose handwriting is difficult to read. It is important examiners are able to read the responses in order to award marks. In addition, a final careful check for spelling mistakes in the last 10 minutes can often achieve a higher mark.

The aim of written texts is to communicate effectively and this effectiveness depends on the impression that the text makes on the reader. Thus poor paragraphing, handwriting, punctuation and spelling assume an importance beyond their immediate communicative value.

Finally, candidates should ask themselves these questions, which serve as a checklist:-

1. Is the language accurate, and is it easy for the reader to understand?
2. Have I answered all parts of the question, and made this clear to the reader?
3. Have I used the right text type and is this evident to the reader?

The real test is whether the text would be effective in the context that the question describes. Would the guidelines really help the friend when attending the special event? Would the speech really persuade the parents to put less pressure on their children at sports events? Although this examination is for assessment, the Language B course is to help the candidates to use the language effectively long after the examination has passed.