

## 2021 SEC 4 ENGLISH

### PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

#### PAPER 2 SECTIONS A & B

#### ANSWER KEY/MARKER'S REPORT

##### General Comments:

- Write legibly and clearly – it is not the marker's responsibility to decipher your words or to give you the benefit of the doubt.
- Answers lack specificity and precision – either they are too vague (there is no need to even read the passage for some answers) or are too imprecise (key details have been left out)
- Candidates must read the questions carefully and pick out the key words which help them to figure out what the answers must be – it is obvious that some candidates did not understand the questions or what they were required to do (make use of Task-Key word-Focus [TKF] to prepare the questions before answering)

#### SECTION A

1. The section **Adopt** begins with the words, "All the dogs and cats in our shelter deserve a second chance at happiness." What effect is this intended to have on the reader?  
[1m]

The reader will:

- **feel empowered/convicted** as he can **bring much joy** to these animals/these animals have been through a lot and should be treated better so that he will be keen to adopt them.  
OR
- **feel pity/sympathy for these animals** so that he will choose to adopt them.
- Common errors included 'empathise', which is not possible from human to animal or vice versa, or vague responses like 'feel bad', 'evoke emotions' or 'deeply touched' (what emotions are triggered exactly?)
- Negative emotions should be avoided, e.g. readers will feel guilty/guilt-tripped/emotionally blackmailed so that they will adopt ... [These are very cynical and inappropriate responses.]
- Many incorrect answers also stopped short of indicating what the readers should be moved to do, i.e. so that they would be moved to adopt these animals
- Students also mixed up 'pity' and 'pitiful', not knowing the distinction

2. Refer to the section headed **Adopt**. Which phrase tells us that the pet owner grows as a person from the experience of owning a pet? [1m]  
It is 'change us for the better'.
- The question asks for a phrase, which is an incomplete sentence. If the student includes the word 'pet' at the start of the sentence, it would make it a sentence. Read the question carefully and know the difference between a sentence and a phrase.
3. From the section **Adoption Procedure**, state how the measures written about are helpful to potential pet owners. [2m]
- (i) The bonding sessions help the pet owner the chance to find a suitable pet for his family. ['bonding sessions' must be included in the answer]
  - (ii) The home visit gives pet owners the chance to share any concerns and be fully prepared for the new pet. [BOTH parts must be present for the mark.]  
... ensures that the home has been pet-proofed and the family is ready for the new pet  
... - EXCESS DENIED [Focus on how the pet owner benefits and NOT the pet]
- This is a LITERAL question – students can simply copy and paste the relevant part for their answers. There is no need to use own words to answer the question. Those who tried to paraphrase tended to get it wrong.
4. Look at the photograph under the heading **Adoption Procedure**. What idea is the photograph trying to establish about pet owners? [1m]  
The photograph shows a woman cuddling with a kitten, which suggests that pet owners should be comfortable with animals/love them dearly/affectionate to their pets/close companions to their pets/forgo strong bonds (or close relationships)/treasure their pets.
- State clearly that the pet owners must be loving and caring **to their pets** and not just 'loving and caring'
  - Avoid 'not' answers, e.g. pet owners should not afraid of animals

## SECTION B

5. At the beginning of the text, the public park is described as an 'oasis of calm'. Explain how the language used tells the reader the park is very peaceful. Support your answers with three details from the text. [3m]  
The answer should focus on how the characters are feeling BECAUSE of how and what the park is like.
- (i) 'a sense of serenity filled her up like a balloon' suggests that Olivia was feeling extremely tranquil/calmness throughout her entire body/fully at ease, which highlights the serene environment.
- 'feeling relaxed' is not the main idea of this metaphor
  - Avoid explaining a literary device with another literary device, e.g. 'calmness filled up her body'

- (ii) 'so relaxed he could feel himself melting through the gaps in the bench' shows that Morton was so at ease that he seemed to be completely languid (loosen up completely)/so laidback that there was no tension in his body at all, which emphasises just how tranquil his surroundings were.

- 'relaxed' should be in the answer
- This is not meant to be taken literally – Morton did not lose control of his body or fall through the gaps.

- (iii) 'the soothing gesture of a kindly friend' shows that Olivia was comforted/welcomed/made to feel at ease by the gentle breeze in the park, thereby showing how the conditions at the park were restful/calm.

- Again, the main idea is not about how relaxing Olivia felt but that she was made to feel at ease or welcome

6. In Paragraph 3, what is (i) unusual and (ii) effective about the phrase 'red-handed innocent'? [2m]

- (i) It is unusual because 'red-handed' indicates that a person is caught doing something wrong while 'innocent' means that he has not committed any offence, hence they are not used together/contrasting in meaning.

- Make sure to explain both parts of the oxymoron, i.e. 'red-handed' and 'innocent', in order to show how unusual the phrase is
- Avoid vague responses, e.g. 'red-handed' is the opposite of 'innocent' without explaining, stating that 'red-handed' has negative connotations while 'innocent' has positive connotations without further explanation or 'red-handed' is being caught for doing wrong while 'innocent' is being blameless/without guilt, but without pointing out that they should not be used together
- Students generally did not know how to answer this fully

- (ii) It is effective because it emphasises the fact that the boy did not know the consequences of his actions/had no intention of harming/hurting Larry although he did throw the sand/did do something wrong.

- Any suggestion that the boy was pretending that he had done nothing wrong or that he did not believe/think that he had done nothing wrong shows a misreading or lack of understanding of the text

7. In Paragraph 4, the writer says, "The boy looked at her in unblinking expectancy and in a state of sheer incomprehension. He was about Larry's age but perhaps ten pounds heavier, a husky little boy with none of Larry's quickness of thought and sensitivity in his face."

What words or phrases in the lines featured describe the boy? [3m]

Again, take note of the question requirements – students can either pick a word or a phrase, but NOT a sentence.

Description	Word or phrase
Great sense of anticipation	'unblinking expectancy'
Intensity of the anticipation must be conveyed in the chosen phrase, so it is essential to include 'unblinking' in the answer while 'expectancy' is a synonym of 'anticipation'	
Lack of intelligence	'none of Larry's quickness of thought'
It is mandatory to include 'none of' to show the 'lack' of intelligence while the distractor is in the second part of the phrase – lacking 'sensitivity' has nothing to do with IQ but, rather, EQ and should not be included in the answer	
Not fully aware of what was happening	'(sheer) incomprehension'
'sheer' is optional as 'incomprehension' already suggests that the boy is not fully aware of his surroundings and circumstances	

8. In Paragraph 5, the writer says that the man 'seemed to envelope the whole bench'. In what way is this expression particularly effective? [1m]

It is effective because it emphasises that the man was so large/big/huge that he took up all the space on the bench.

- The key idea is the man's size, which is emphasised when his body seemed to cover the entire bench, so the full explanation must include mention of his size AND what made people realise the extent of his size
- Many students only mentioned the size but not what made him appear so big
- Ideas of how intimidating/inconsiderate/disrespectful he seemed to be indicate a lack of understanding of the author's intent

9. Olivia wanted her son 'to learn to fight his own battles' (line 29). What does this phrase suggest about how she expected her son to be like? [1m]

She wanted him to be independent/to be less reliant on others/stand up for himself.

- Many students spelled 'independent' wrongly (there is no 'a' in the word)
- Students should not limit their answers to the context of the passage, i.e. it's not merely about fighting back against the boy, but in general
- Responses which included 'retaliation' or 'throwing the sand back on the boy' were grossly inaccurate

10. In Paragraph 6, the man says in response to Olivia scolding his son, "Don't mind her, Joe ... Throw all you want. This here is a public sandbox." (lines 31-32)

- (i) What is the tone of the man's comments? [1m]

It is dismissive/indifferent.

- 'nonchalant' is inaccurate as it implies that he did not show any interest in what was happening when he was clearly responding to what had happened while 'condescending' was not accepted as it suggested a sense of superiority on his part
- 'indifferent' was accepted as it had the element of 'not showing sympathy or concern'

- Many students did not have the vocabulary to accurately capture the tone of the character

(ii) What does the phrase 'sudden weakness in her knees' (line 32) suggest about how Olivia was feeling? [1m]

She felt powerless/helpless/defeated/daunted in the situation.

- It is important to consider the context – while she may have also felt scared, the weakness in the knees was clearly due to something else; in this case, it was because she felt that there was nothing she could do to improve the situation and not fear of the man

11. The writer says that Morton spoke to the other man with 'his usual reasonableness'. What does this tell you about how he had expected the other man to respond? [1m]  
Morton expected the man to be sensible/able to compromise/ to be understanding/civil/respond rationally.

- The clue is in the word, 'reasonableness' – this shows that Morton expected the other person to respond in a certain way and maybe in the same way
- Answers that included an apology from the man or for the man to admit that he was wrong and stop his son showed that the students were assuming too much and not looking closely at the contextual clues

12. In Paragraph 8, which phrase does the writer use to show that the man was a threat to Morton? [1m]  
It is 'edged with menace'.

- Most of the wrong answers included the phrase 'insolent voice', which showed that the students did not know that 'insolent' refers to the lack of respect from the man and does not indicate any threat or menace
- Students need to pick out the right phrase which focussed purely on the threat posed by the man

13. In Paragraph 8, we are told that Morton is placed in 'a situation so alien and so distasteful to him'. Explain **in your own words** what this means. [2m]  
Morton was not used to/not familiar with the experience of having a confrontation with others/found the situation foreign to him/not faced a similar situation (replace 'so alien') and he found it unpleasant/objectionable/repugnant/appalling/he despised it (replace 'distasteful').

- Students need to consider the meaning in context and not just replace the words/phrases with synonyms
- 'dislike' is too mild and will only be accepted with an intensifier like 'greatly'
- 'hate' is too generic and does not replace 'distasteful'
- 'upset' also is too specific enough and 'distasteful' has a different shade of meaning

14. The structure of the text reflects the main stages of the woman's evening at the park. Complete the flowchart by choosing one phrase from the box to summarise the main

event in each part of the text. There are some extra phrases in the box you do not need to use. [4m]

Worrying development	Lack of excitement	Unexpected disruption	Undisturbed peace
Complete solitude	State of satisfaction	Tense stand-off	

- It was pleasing that very few, if any, students spelt any of the options wrongly, unlike in previous years, when the students were very careless in transferring the answers.

#### Paragraphs 1-2: (i) Undisturbed peace

Key phrases as clues – ‘city noises came muffled’, ‘a sense of serenity filled her up’, ‘so relaxed he could feel himself melting through the gaps in the bench’, ‘an oasis of calm’, ‘all but deserted’, ‘empty’

The common distraction was ‘state of satisfaction’ but that was only communicated in one line, whereas both paragraphs focussed mainly on the serenity of the park.

#### Paragraphs 3-4: (ii) Unexpected disruption

Key phrases as clues – ‘The other boy suddenly stood up and with a quick, deliberate swing of his chubby arm, threw a spadeful of sand at Larry’, ‘Where was his mother?’

The actions of the boy changed the mood from out of the blue and there was no one to stop him.

#### Paragraphs 5-6: (iii) Worrying development

Key phrases as clues – “Don’t do that! You mustn’t throw sand!”, “Don’t mind her, Joe,” he said loudly. “Throw all you want. This here is a public sandbox.” She felt a sudden weakness in her knees as she glanced at Morton.”

There was a strong likelihood that the conflict will escalate as the other man did not seem to be reasonable or open to compromise.

#### Paragraphs 7-8: (iv) Tense stand-off

Key phrases as clues – “When he spoke to the man, it was with his usual reasonableness.”, “The man lowered his paper and looked at Morton slowly and deliberately. His insolent voice was edged with menace.”, “Olivia noticed the muscle in Morton’s jaw tighten”

There seemed to be no way out as the man did not respond well to Morton’s attempt to reason with him and he refused to back down at all.



## TANJONG KATONG SECONDARY SCHOOL

Preliminary Examination 2021

Secondary 4

CANDIDATE  
NAME

CLASS

INDEX NUMBER

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### ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1128/02

Paper 2 Comprehension

5 August 2021

1 hour 50 minutes

Candidates answer on the Question Paper Booklet.

Additional Materials:      Insert

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#### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, class and index number on the work you hand in.  
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.  
Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.

Answer all questions.  
Write your answers in the spaces provided in the Question Paper Booklet.

The Insert contains the texts for all the sections.

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

# Section C

# Mark Scheme

**Section C [25 marks]**

ct

**Refer to Text 3 on pages 4 and 5 of the Insert for Questions 15 – 20.**

- 15** Which **one** word in Paragraph 1 tells us that dreams are mostly ordinary?

The word is 'mundane'.

[1]

While this is a pretty straightforward question, surprisingly about a quarter of candidates did not pick out the correct word. Incorrect responses included 'nocturnal' which showed that they did not know the meaning; 'typically' which is used in the context of indicating the duration of dreaming; and 'frequently' as used in 'frequently fleeting' which is an adverb describing the brevity of dreams.

- 16** In Paragraph 2, the writer gives examples of interpretations of dreams.

Give an example of interpretation related to each category:

Category	Interpretation
(i) Relating to forecasts of the future	prophets to help plan battles (or predictions of impending events)
(ii) Relating to the supernatural	visitations by the departed

[2]

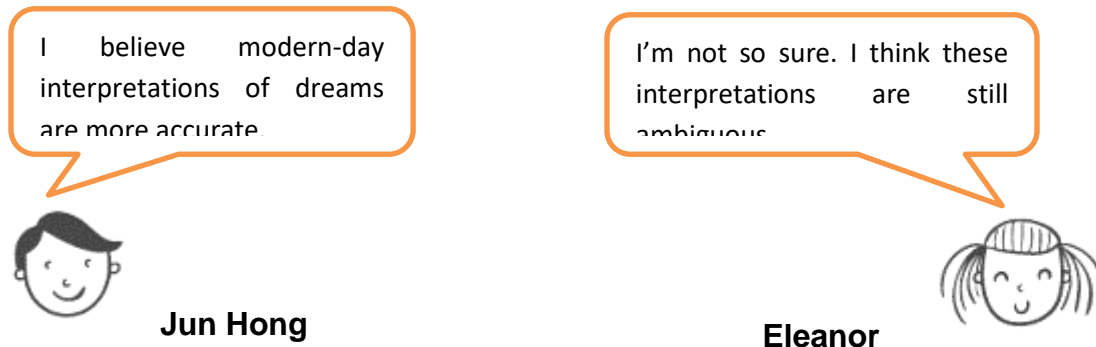
- It was disappointing that a significant number of candidates did not manage to score the 2 marks for this question despite it being a literal question.
- For (i), the example must include the word 'prophets' to match 'forecasts'. Simply quoting the example 'help plan battles' is insufficient as the idea of forecasting the future is absent.
- Incorrect responses for both included 'different forms of seeing' which does not point to forecasts of future or the supernatural; 'getting rid of excess data' which is so obviously wrong.
- Majority lost the marks due to either 'excess denied' or inaccurate paraphrasing. E.g. 'visitations by the departed' were written as 'signs given



by the dead'. Candidates should realise that they do not have to paraphrase the examples.

- Worse, there were candidates who lost the marks to bad handwriting: 'departed' written as 'deported' and 'impending' written as 'impeding'.

- 17 Here is part of a conversation between two students, Jun Hong and Eleanor, who have read the article.



- (i) From Paragraph 2, give one piece of evidence to support Jun Hong's view.

The interpretations are supported by brain imaging equipment. [1]

Majority of the candidates managed to gain the mark for this question. Some candidates lost the mark due to inaccurate paraphrasing. Again, they should be reminded that when asked to quote evidence, they do not need to write in their own words. E.g. 'The interpretation were supported by advanced technology.' This generalises the evidence. Others quoted that 'researchers have taken things to a more technical level' but left out the crucial evidence of 'brain imaging equipment'.

- (ii) With reference to Paragraph 2, how would Eleanor explain her position?

There is a lack of consensus on the purpose of dreams [1] as scientists

rely on hazy recounts [1] from research subjects. [2]

- A significant number of candidates did not score the 2 marks for this question. Given that this is a 2-mark question, the candidates should look for two distinct ideas. Majority focused only on the dependence on 'hazy recounts'.
- Some candidates lost the marks to inaccurate paraphrasing. E.g. 'The researchers could not reach a conclusion about purpose of dreams.' Actually the scientists have reached their individual conclusions. They just have not come to an agreement which the correct one is. Hence, replacing 'consensus' with 'conclusion' will cause the candidates to lose the mark.

- 18 'The least glamorous explanation for any dream is that it serves as a sort of data dump...' (line 14)

- (i) What does the term 'least glamorous' suggest about the explanation of dreams as data dumps?

It suggests that the explanation is boring/uninteresting/dull/unexciting.

[1]

- This question showed the candidates' gap in vocabulary as they could not accurately explain the word 'glamorous' in the given context. There were incorrect literal explanations which included 'not beautiful', 'ugly', 'unattractive' and 'unappealing'. Following are examples of responses not accepted due to inaccuracy: 'simple', 'least popular', 'unconvincing', 'straightforward', 'unimpressive', 'unpleasant' (Note: the list is not exhaustive)
- It is very disappointing to note that many students could not even spell 'explanation' (explanation X) correctly, especially given that the word is in the question. ☹

- (ii) Which two words from Paragraph 3 reinforce the idea of dreams being data dumps?

'clearing' and 'purging' (Both words must be right to score 1 mark.)

[1]

- This question asks for two words. The question stem was from an O level question which required students to come up with two separate words. If the question is asking for two consecutive words, it would have asked candidates to quote a phrase.
- Incorrect responses included: 'fleeting imagery', 'useless memories'
- There was a significant number of candidates who only managed to pick out 'clearing'. The incorrect word commonly identified is 'caching' which has an opposite meaning to clearing. This shows that they did not know that 'caching' means 'storing'. They must learn to read closely as there are clues to suggest the meaning: 'a clearing of the day's useless memories and a caching of the valuable ones' – why would anyone clear valuable memories?

- 19 From Paragraph 7, what two things can happen to us if we do not dream when we sleep? Answer **in your own words**.

**It is so frustrating to note that there was a handful of candidates who did not even bother to answer in their own words despite the question's requirement to do so. They simply lifted the answers from the passage. This is a blatant lack of effort on their part.**

- (i) Our minds may not be as fertile/productive/creative/ingenious/innovative.  
Again, this question exposes the gap in candidates' vocabulary. The candidates had to paraphrase 'our minds would not be as rich'. Some even

gave literal explanations: 'less mentally wealthy', 'not abundant in knowledge'. Examples of responses not accepted due to lack of precision are: 'shallow', 'less enriched', 'does not have much knowledge' (This list is not exhaustive.)

(ii) Our brains may not be as flexible/responsive/agile/dexterous/highly

adaptable.

[2]

The candidates had to paraphrase 'our brains (would not be) as nimble.' Examples of imprecise responses include: 'our brains would be slower', 'less sharp' which means observant or alert, 'less reactive' or 'less active'

**OR**

We can sleep more peacefully/ calmly (without disturbance).

Candidates had to paraphrase 'our sleep more serene'. Imprecise responses include: 'we have better-quality/high-quality sleep' (in what way?); 'our sleep is more silent/soudlessly' (person may snore); 'our sleep is more relaxed'; 'our night (should be sleep, not night) will be peaceful'; 'our sleep more comfortable'; 'we will sleep more deeply'

(Do not accept: 'our minds would not be as rich' / 'our brains as nimble'/ 'our sleep more serene')

- 20 Using your own words as far as possible**, summarise the benefits of dreaming, and its limitations, as outlined in the passage.

**Use only information from paragraphs 4 to 6.**

Your summary must be in continuous writing (not in note form). It must not be longer than 80 words (not counting the words given to help you begin).

*Research has long established that dreams are linked to our .....*

From the passage (benefits)	In your own words
1. emotional wellbeing while we are awake	1. <b>mental health/wellness</b> during our waking hours,
2. Bizarre dreams laden with symbolism allow some dreamers to overcome intense memories or everyday psychological stressors within the safety of their subconscious.	2. helping us <b>relieve overwhelming emotions or tension</b> in our subconscious.
3. Nightmares, on the other hand, can be warning signs of anxieties that we might not otherwise perceive in our waking lives.	3. They can also surface <b>worries we might be unaware of.</b>
4. ... the brain responds to potential future danger by running what amount to 'fire	

drills' while we sleep just to keep us sharp.	4. We can <b>stay alert</b> as we 'rehearse' <b>responses to possible threats</b> when we dream.
5. A far more productive function of dreaming is problem-solving, as the sleeping brain continues to work on jobs the waking mind during the day.	5. Another advantage of dreams is our <b>brains continue to process tasks</b> we worked on in the day to <b>come up with solutions</b> .
6. ... dreams can be a canvas for creative breakthroughs when they help us solve a problem that requires vivid visualization.	6. Dreams also help us <b>envisage work challenges</b> and <b>spark/inspire creativity/ingenuity</b> .

Transition/signal sentence: However, dreams are not without limitations.

From the passage (limitations)	In your own words
7. the weight and importance people attach to their dreams depend largely on their biases (repeated idea) people are motivated to interpret their dreams in ways that support their already existing beliefs about themselves, the world, and the people around them	7. Dream interpretations may be <b>coloured by prevailing opinions/mental models</b> people possess of themselves, the world and the people around them,
8. confirmation bias and the self-serving bias can impact how people respond to their own dreams	8. resulting in <b>prejudices which affect the way they react to their dreams</b> .
9. dreams can also become something of a self-fulfilling prophecy.	9. Dreams may also cause <b>self-fulfilling prophecy</b> ,

10.If one dreams that he is going to fail an exam, he might be less motivated to study or even become so stressed out that he performs poorly.	10.resulting in <b>lack of drive</b> or even <b>inducing stress</b> .
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(Content: 8 / Style: 7)

Suggested summary:

*Research has long established that dreams are linked to our...*

mental health, relieving overwhelming pressure in our subconscious. Nightmares surface our hidden worries. When we dream, we 'rehearse' responses to threats, keeping alert. Furthermore, dreaming helps resolve difficulties as our brains continue to process tasks and even spark innovative solutions through clear visualisation. However, dreams coloured by prevailing prejudices people have of themselves and others can be limiting, affecting the way people respond to dreams. Dreams may also cause self-fulfilling prophecies, causing lack of drive or even inducing stress.

(79 words)

Majority of the candidates made a reasonable attempt at the summary question. Candidates from some classes focused on identifying the correct ideas and lifted information directly from the text and interweaved the lifted material with some of their own words. These candidates would score 2 or 3 marks for style. Those who scored 4 or 5 marks attempted to paraphrase more of the key words and wrote using varied structures.

### Key gaps of the summary were:

#### 1. Lack of signposting of the limitations or signposting limitations at inappropriate junctures

- There was a lack of signposting in the summaries. Students need to be reminded that there are two parts to this summary. Clear signposting (a transition sentence) needs to be given to 'inform' the examiner that one is starting on the second part of the summary, which in this case, is the limitations of dreams. A disturbing number of candidates did not include a transition sentence to signal the move from benefits to limitations. Most relied on the conjunction 'however' to do the job which was not sufficient as the word could simply signal a contrasting idea to the idea in the previous sentence. The lack of signposting is a problem mentioned in the examination reports from Cambridge markers

every year. **For this examination, marker accepted the use of 'however' as a signpost to signal transition into the discussion of limitations, albeit reluctantly.**

- Some candidates used the term 'however' at the wrong juncture, resulting in early transition into the discussion of limitations. This resulted in them losing marks for content as the benefits would be marked as limitations.

## **2. Lack of precision in describing the benefits and limitations**

In keeping to the word count, many candidates chose to cross out the words which were critical to explaining the benefits. For example,

- They removed 'running drills' for idea on how dreams help us rehearse responses for possible threats to stay alert.
- They failed to mention how dreams help to solve problems by allowing the brain to continue to work on tasks.
- They did not explain how dreams can inspire creative solutions by allowing one to visualise problems clearly.

### **Other gaps:**

**A few candidates resorted to listing the benefits and limitations. They need to realise that such a practice is frowned on by the Cambridge markers and they will receive 'zero' for their summaries. Candidates should learn to organise their ideas but not by listing.**

There is one candidate who wrote his/her using non-complete sentences (sentence fragments). The candidates must realise that in the O Level they would gain no marks for disjointed summaries even when written in paragraphs as they are simply note-form writing in disguise.

The stronger candidates attempted to substitute key words and paraphrased some sentences, but must be careful not to overdo it and distort the intended meaning. E.g. Many substituted emotional wellbeing as 'mental state' or 'intense memories' as 'strong memories', lacking precision

Some candidates had the problem of wrongly linking ideas which also resulted in the distortion of intended meaning. Many candidates were also not able to state points succinctly when the ideas were expanded and repeated in different words and examples given.

A handful of candidates wrote far in excess of 80 words and were dishonest in reporting the number of words they had written. The additional words were crossed out and resulted in crucial points being omitted. Candidates need to know that the markers would count all summaries.

Candidate must ensure that they check their grammar and spelling before submission. There were a number of spelling errors despite the words being in the passage. A number also made errors in subject-verb agreement.

**Candidates should be reminded to write in legible handwriting. It became almost impossible for the marker to decipher some candidates' bad handwriting. The same applies to a heavily corrected piece.**

