

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0524/13
Reading

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- followed instructions carefully, responding appropriately to the command words in each question
- read the texts thoroughly
- planned the ideas to be used and the route through extended answers before writing
- avoided unselective copying and/or lifting from the text where appropriate
- returned to the text when necessary to check understanding of an idea or important detail
- considered and used relevant ideas, opinions and details from the text rather than inventing untethered material
- gave equal attention to all aspects of each question
- paid attention to the guidance offered to help them focus their answers – for example, explaining six examples overall in **2(d)** and using just one example from the text extract in **2(c)**
- checked and edited their responses to correct any careless errors, incomplete ideas or unclear points.

General comments

Candidates seemed to find all three texts accessible and the majority demonstrated engagement through their responses. Occasionally, not following the rubric or complete a task fully limited the evidence of understanding and skills offered. This was most common in **Question 2(c)** where a candidate did not select an example from the text provided, or in **Question 2(d)** where some candidates offered three choices of language in total rather than three choices from each paragraph as specified in the task.

In **Question 1**, the most successful approach taken by candidates was to work through the tasks in the order presented, paying careful attention to the number of marks allocated and the space provided for their responses as helpful indicators of how detailed their answers needed to be. They also made efficient use of time, did not add further unnecessary material and focused on answering each question as set. Most candidates derived their responses from the text to evidence their reading skills, remembering that extraneous comment could not be rewarded. Less successful responses to **Question 1** tended to lack focus on the text or lacked relevance to the question. Some offered circular answers, repeating the language of the question where own words were specified as required; such responses demonstrated little evidence of understanding. In **Question 1(f)** some candidates relied heavily on the language of the text and/or copied whole chunks of texts, limiting the evidence of their own skills and understanding.

In **Question 2** candidates were required to identify and/or explain carefully selected words and phrases from the text. **Question 2(c)** supplied a short section of the text to select an example from as a preparation for the longer response in **Question 2(d)**. More effective answers were able to consider meanings in context and the effects of the powerful language identified, as well as often demonstrating understanding of the writer's purpose in an overview. Middle-range answers tended to focus on the meanings of a range of language choices, showing mostly clear understanding. Less effective responses missed opportunities to attain higher marks as they tended to select imprecise or a limited number of choices, offer generalised comments or repeat the language of the text in the explanation.

In **Question 3** the majority of responses addressed all three bullets in the question. Most candidates wrote from the perspective of a journalist, with the best responses developing a convincing voice and tone for a magazine article. More effective responses used the ideas and details in Text C selectively to work through the bullets logically. They were able to describe Jane Goodall's work using details carefully to explain what her work involves and its challenges, what she has learnt about the chimpanzees and their lives, and why her work is important and what she hopes to achieve. Responses in the middle range tended to use the text

rather mechanically, often missing opportunities as a result of uneven focus on the bullet points or offering a narrow range of ideas from the text. Less effective responses tended to lack focus on the passage or repeated sections from the text without modification. Unselective copying and over reliance on the language of the original should be avoided as it is an indicator of less secure understanding.

Paper 1 is primarily an assessment of Reading, however 15 of the 80 marks available are for Writing – 5 marks in **Question 1(f)** and 10 marks in **Question 3**. In these questions, candidates need to pay attention to the quality and accuracy of their writing to maximise their achievement. Candidates should be aware that unclear and/or inaccurate writing is likely to limit their achievement, as will over-reliance on the language of the texts. Candidates are advised to plan and leave sufficient time to review their responses to avoid inconsistencies of style and to correct errors that may impede communication.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 Comprehension and summary task

Questions 1(a)–(e)

In response to Text A, candidates were asked to answer a series of short answer questions. Effective responses paid careful attention to the command words in the instructions as well as the number of marks allocated to individual questions. The most successful responses made a careful selection of details from the text and were focused and concise. Less successful responses were often too long or did not follow the instruction to use own words. Candidates should note where use of own words is required. Where a candidate offered multiple possible answers, this indicated a lack of effective examination time use and diluted evidence of understanding.

(a) Give two examples of primates that have surprised and impressed research scientists according to the text.

In **Question 1(a)** candidates needed to provide two examples of primates that have surprised and impressed research scientists according to the text. Where candidates did not achieve the mark for this question, they either tended to provide examples of the skills shown that have impressed research scientists, such as ‘used tools to open cashew nuts’ without specifying the primate, or offered ‘apes’ as opposed to a particular primate identified in the text such as ‘bonobos’. More careful reading of the question would have paid dividends for a number of candidates.

(b) Using your own words, explain what the text means by:

(i) ‘provide evidence’ (line 2):

(ii) ‘range of gestures’ (line 4):

In **Question 1(b)** candidates were instructed to use their own words to evidence understanding of the phrases in the question. Where answers did not achieve both of the marks available for each phrase it was usually due to the candidate’s partial use of the words from the text. For example, in **Question 1(b)(ii)** a number of candidates used the word ‘range’ in their explanation of ‘gestures’ thus only partially addressing the task. More successful responses were able to explain the full phrase as used in the context of the text by demonstrating understanding of a variety of actions or signals. They showed an understanding of the sense of difference as opposed to a large number of them. In **Question 1(b)(i)** more candidates successfully explained the meaning of the whole phrase and gained both marks with many using phrases such as ‘give proof’ to explain ‘provide’ and ‘evidence’.

(c) Re-read paragraph 2 (‘Humans...talk?’).

Give two reasons why it seems particularly surprising that only human primates can actually talk.

To achieve both marks for this question, candidates were required to offer two reasons why it seems particularly surprising that only human primates can talk. The majority of candidates were able to score a mark for selecting appropriate details such as they have a similar vocal anatomy or that their tongues and larynx are almost the same. Where candidates did not gain marks, it was

usually because they only focused on one piece of insufficient evidence such as they 'have 38 distinct calls' or 'evidence of the early evolution of language' without fully addressing the question. Well focused answers showed that the question had been understood – either by careful selection of relevant quotation from the text, or through precise use of own words.

(d) Re-read paragraphs 3 and 4 ('As scientist...the earth.').

- (i) Identify the two main tasks Dr Dunn completed to carry out his research.**
- (ii) Explain why scientists are studying these different primate species.**

To answer **Question 1(d)(i)** successful responses needed to select two pieces of evidence from paragraphs 3 and 4 to identify the two main tasks Dr Dunn completed to carry out his research and the majority of candidates were able to identify these. In **Question 1(d)(ii)** candidates tended to be reasonably successful at gaining two of the three marks available by referring to why scientists are studying these different primate species to understand how speech has involved in humans because they are the closest species to humans or that they cannot study human ancestors. Fewer candidates were able to get the third mark which related to understanding how the primate brain is wired or being intrigued by gaps in knowledge. Some candidates did not offer three distinct points.

(e) Re-read paragraph 5 ('However, other...explore.').

Using your own words, explain why some people might not accept the findings of the research.

This question required candidates to show both explicit and implicit understanding from their reading of paragraph 5. Candidates who recast the relevant information using their own words as instructed were best able to demonstrate that they had noted and understood the three aspects of the explanation that no human data was included, how the vocalisations of non-human primates had not been understood and their ability to combine calls had not been explored. Most candidates were able to achieve one mark, a reasonable number gained two marks, and few gained all three. The most common correct inference was that no human data was included. This was often offered on its own, which suggests that it is possible that some candidates did not look at the number of marks available for this question and therefore offered a less developed response than required.

(f) According to Text B, what was Project Nim, what exactly did it involve, and what criticisms might people have of the project?

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should not be more than 120 words.

This question was based on Text B and required candidates to select relevant ideas to use from the text and organise them into a focused summary which addressed the task. The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate at least a general understanding of the text and offer some relevant ideas to demonstrate understanding of what Project Nim was, what exactly it involved and what criticisms people might have of the project. All points on the mark scheme were covered over the range of answers seen, though repetition of the same idea and/or inclusion of material not relevant to the focus of the question meant opportunities were missed by some candidates to target higher marks.

The most successful responses were carefully planned and coherent, focusing sharply on the task by referring to a wide range of ideas related to the project according to the text. These responses had made a consistent attempt to use their own words, to keep explanations concise and to organise their ideas helpfully. Responses in the middle range tended to consider a more limited range of ideas, often providing extended explanations of how Nim Chimsky was clothed or travelled in a pushchair. Some less successful responses were either too brief, offering only a limited number of ideas or copied extensively from the text. Length was often an indicator of the level of the response with some responses being too short and others very long and wordy, showing a lack of selection due to unnecessary information and comments. In most responses, there was an attempt to use own words although some candidates did rely on lifting phrases from the text. In less effective responses, there was some misreading of the text, most commonly when candidates described Nim Chimsky as learning to talk or using grammatically correct sentences. They omitted

to describe him being taught sign language, or interpreted aspects of the project such as his upbringing with a human family or life at the institute as being positive.

Less well-focused responses copied from the text, with minimal or no rewording or reorganisation of the original. Whilst candidates are not expected to change all key words or terms in their prose response, they should not rely on lifting whole phrases and/or sentences from the text. Indiscriminate copying of the passage, repetition and adding comment or example should all be avoided as these do not allow candidates to successfully address the selective summary task and are likely to evidence little understanding of either the ideas in the passage or requirements of the task. One common example of this was the reference to 'chimpanzees could use grammar to create sentences if they were taught sign language' and 'When the experiment ended, Nim could only use fragments of sign language'. Most candidates appeared to be aware of the need to try to use their own vocabulary where feasible without changing or blurring the original idea and organise points helpfully for their reader. Another feature of less effective responses was a tendency to repeat ideas – most commonly in relation to being brought up in an environment similar to human children or being sent to join a human family.

There were some extremely effective and well-crafted responses that demonstrated both concision and precise understanding of a wide range of relevant ideas. More effective responses evidenced careful reading of the text and showed candidates successfully identifying both explicit and implicit ideas related to Project Nim. Candidates who had spent time reviewing their initial selection of ideas were best placed to avoid repetition of ideas or inclusion of unnecessary detail such as the use of 'archive footage, photographs and interview' in the new documentary. Candidates producing effective answers were able to demonstrate that they had understood a fairly wide range of relevant ideas, communicating these accurately and concisely in their own words.

Advice to candidates on Question 1(f):

- re-read Text B after reading the task instructions to identify potentially relevant ideas
- plan your response using brief notes to ensure the selection of a wide range of ideas
- organise the ideas, grouping them where relevant
- avoid including unnecessary details which do not address the question
- do not add comments or your own views
- avoid repeating ideas
- write clearly and informatively, using your own words
- keep in mind the guidance to write 'no more than 120 words'.

Question 2

(a) **Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:**

- The writer knew that although the chimps' day had begun quietly this could change to a chaotic, noisy situation.**
- The chimps made regular stops to eat.**
- The grassy ridge provided a place from which to observe the chimps.**
- People thought that chimps were calm, even-tempered animals who did not eat meat.**

The most successful answers to **Question 2(a)** focused on the underlined word or phrase, located the correct version in the text and gave it as the answer. Responses that used the text more widely than in the equivalent phrase/sentence could not be rewarded even if the correct word/phrase was included. A few candidates missed the opportunity to evidence relevant skills and understanding by attempting to offer own words equivalents of those words underlined in the question rather than those in the text.

(b) **Using your own words, explain what the writer means by each of the words underlined:**

A surge of memories flooded back. Gradually in those days I'd pieced together fragments from their daily lives, feeding habits, travel routes and social structure. Thinking back I relived the thrill of watching Greybeard fishing for termites with stems of grass – picking a wide blade of grass and trimming it carefully so it could be poked into the narrow passage of the termite mound. What a discovery – humans weren't the only tool-making animals!

- (i) **habits**
- (ii) **picking**
- (iii) **trimming**

In **Question 2(b)**, successful answers had carefully considered the precise meaning in context of each of the words underlined, recognising for example that 'habits' described the typical behaviour of the monkeys; 'picking' meant that the grass had been selected or plucked and 'trimming' meant to cut small amounts off or paring. Less successful responses had several attempts or did not explain the choice within the context of the passage.

- (c) **Use one example from the text below to explain how the writer suggests Jane's feelings that day.**

Use your own words in your explanation.

A surge of memories flooded back. Gradually in those days I'd pieced together fragments from their daily lives, feeding habits, travel routes and social structure. Thinking back I relived the thrill of watching Greybeard fishing for termites with stems of grass – picking a wide blade of grass and trimming it carefully so it could be poked into the narrow passage of the termite mound. What a discovery – humans weren't the only tool-making animals!

In **Question 2(c)** candidates were required to select one example of language from the specified section of the text and explain how it suggested Jane's feelings that day. A significant number of candidates did not follow the instructions to use an example but instead offered a very general response. The most successful responses offered a concise quotation, then considered how the writer was able to convey Jane's feelings through the language used. The most popular example was 'surge of memories flooded back' and many responses explored Jane's happiness and her sense of nostalgia when recollecting past events, indicating how powerfully they appeared to flow through her mind almost like a current of water that overwhelmed her. Other responses considered 'relived the thrill' and were able to explain Jane's excitement as she recalled witnessing the uniqueness of Greybeard fishing. Many candidates were able to offer convincing explanations of 'What a discovery – humans weren't the only tool-making animals!' and showed full understanding of the sense of Jane's amazement and the novelty of ascertaining that by creating tools chimpanzees share a similar skill to humans. Only one example could be rewarded, so offering more used examination time that could have been spent more effectively on **Question 2(d)** where more developed responses would have helped candidates to target higher marks.

- (d) **Re-read paragraphs 6 and 7.**

- **Paragraph 6 begins 'My attention...' and is about the rainstorm and Frodo's reaction to it.**
- **Paragraph 7 begins 'It must have taken...' and describes the scene after the storm has passed.**

Explain how the writer uses language to convey meaning and to create effect in these paragraphs. Choose three examples of words or phrases from each paragraph to support your answer. Your choices should include the use of imagery.

The most successful responses to **Question 2(d)** offered clear analysis of three appropriate language choices from each of the two paragraphs indicated in the question. They identified relevant words or phrases that they felt best able to explain, rather than selecting the first three choices in each paragraph they came across, by beginning with explanations of meaning in the context of the text and then considered effect. They considered words within their choices individually, as well as suggesting how they worked within the longer phrase and/or in the context of the description as a whole. These responses often offered a clear overview of the writer's intentions in each paragraph. Responses at level 5 frequently showed imagination and precision when discussing choices, for example in relation to the increase in intensity of the approaching storm. Middle range responses were usually more successful when explaining meanings, but struggled to explore the effects. Less successful responses offered lengthy choices and less developed analysis or repeated the same ideas about effects, such as 'the storm was powerful'.

Comments were often generalised rather than considering specific words more closely or included labelling devices without explanation.

In **part (a)**, many answers had identified 'grey, heavy sky' as a potentially interesting example to discuss, with most able to offer at least a basic explanation of the sense of the impending storm and the feeling of dullness. Others identified 'swinging vigorously' and described the urgency of the chimpanzees' movements between the branches of the trees. Rather than just identifying literary devices, other responses engaged fully with the language considering its impact and connotations, such as the image of the thunderclap as it 'growled on and on', likening it to the sound of a huge beast and the threat it imposed. More secure responses went on to explore what the image suggested about the rainstorm and Frodo's reaction to it, and on occasion were able to offer some interesting analysis of how this might be seen to be working in conjunction with other choices that suggested the power of nature. Some candidates selected one or more less interesting choices such as 'the rain began' or 'stopped playing' that did not engage them in a productive discussion about how language can convey meanings and effects.

In **part (b)**, many responses described how the rain gradually reduced or the storm moved off without fully exploring the aftermath. The metaphor 'the world seemed hung with diamonds' was a popular selection, though not always fully exploited in the explanation offered and often repeated the words of the choice. Where responses were most successful, candidates had often considered it in relation to the whole description of the aftermath of the storm, for example picking up on various suggestions of the delicacy of natural beauty that had survived the storm or the intensity of the colours and the rejuvenation of the vegetation. These choices could all be linked successfully yet considered independently. More effective answers were often able to provide an overview which described the sense of renewal and restoration of calm beauty that contrasted with the violence of the storm.

There was very little evidence of misreading in the two paragraphs specified in the question, but some candidates found it challenging to move beyond the intensity of the storm in paragraph 6 and the beauty of the scene after the storm had passed in paragraph 7. They tended to repeat these general ideas for every language choice selected, sometimes using the wording of the text in their explanations. Less effective responses were either very short or included very long quotations with general explanations, rather than engaging closely with specific words or simply listing literary techniques. Occasionally no quotations were included at all with a brief description of the paragraphs offered instead. Opportunities were also missed where guidance had not been followed and choices were from one paragraph only. Candidates are reminded that it is the quality of their language analysis which attracts marks and shows evidence of understanding. Candidates need to exercise care when selecting their language choices to maximise their opportunities for developed discussion. Successful responses considered different possibilities of meaning, associations and connotations, ahead of arriving at an understanding of how and why they might have been used by the writer in this context.

Advice to candidates on Question 2:

- select precise and accurate language choices from the specified paragraphs
- make sure explanations of meanings make sense within the context of the text
- consider each of the key words within an identified choice separately as well as how they work together
- avoid generalised comments when explaining how language is working
- when considering chosen examples, start with the contextualized meaning and then move on to the effect created by the language in terms of how it helps our understanding of the events, characters and atmosphere, for example.

Question 3

You are a journalist writing a magazine article about Jane Goodall's work.
In your magazine article you should:

- explain what Jane's work involves and the challenges it presents
- explain what Jane has learned about chimpanzees and their lives
- suggest why Jane's work is important and what she hopes to achieve.

Already familiar with Text C having worked through **Question 2**, candidates following the order of tasks as set were best placed to write a magazine article from the perspective of a journalist about Jane Goodall's work in the jungle. The three bullet points in the question offered guidance to candidates to help them identify relevant ideas for their magazine article. Each bullet point contains a second strand which indicates that an explanation is required for each. Where candidates had paid careful attention to each aspect of each of the bullets, they were often able to integrate supporting details and develop ideas, both explicit and implicit, in the text to include convincing, well related suggestions about the nature of Jane's work. The first and second bullets required candidates to retrieve relevant information from the text about what Jane's work involves and its challenges and what she has learned about chimpanzees and their lives. The third bullet required candidates to infer why Jane's work is important and what she hopes to achieve using ideas and clues in the text to support the inferences.

The majority of candidates were able to show general understanding of the text, addressing the task by using some of the main ideas in the text to support the response. Many of the responses were also able to develop the ideas by creating a convincing voice for a journalist, evaluating the ideas and adapting them accordingly.

Where responses attempted to rely on just tracking back through the text, replaying the passage, these answers often became over reliant on the language of the text to communicate ideas, signalling insecure understanding of both task and text. The least successful responses copied sections of text with minimal modification and/or included inaccuracies as a result of misreading of key details and information. The most convincing responses to **Question 3** indicated that candidates had revisited the passage to examine carefully the details of Jane's work in the jungle. Some candidates interweaved the first and second bullets by describing Jane's work, its challenges and what she has learned about the chimpanzees and their lives. This indicated that some prior planning had occurred and facilitated a structured approach. Less successful responses tended to track the text, often paraphrasing it closely and therefore lacking any development of Jane's work in the jungle.

The first bullet of the question invited candidates to explain what Jane's work involves and the challenges it presents. This offered opportunities to look at how as a scientist she studied chimpanzees, had to get up early, did not have time for meals and spent considerable amounts of time tracking them over long distances, whilst working outside in extreme weather conditions. The most successful approach to this bullet was one where candidates developed these ideas to describe her passion and dedication to her work. Candidates who offered a range of ideas showed evidence of understanding and evaluation. There was little evidence of misreading in response to the first bullet, but some responses did not consider many aspects of her work. Some mid-range responses only described Jane's work observing the chimpanzees without further development of what it involved. Sometimes there was confusion about Jane's role as a care giver to the chimpanzees and that she needed to feed them and then settle them down for the night.

The second bullet offered many opportunities to explore what Jane had learned about the chimpanzees and their lives. Some of the most effective answers picked up on Jane's developing relationship with the chimpanzees, how they had grown accustomed to her and that she was aware that she needed to gain their trust. These responses picked up on a range of details such as how chimpanzees live in family groups showing some similarities with human social structure, along with their habits related to food, travel and sleep. All of these ideas could be developed through convincing explorations of how as a group they were ordered, organised and protective of their young. Some less effective responses appeared to have misunderstood the reference to 'the males of the community had waged war against a neighbouring chimp group', linking it to humans or a nearby tribe. Others included extraneous information from Text B, believing that Jane was there in the jungle to teach the chimpanzees how to use sign language.

When responding to bullet 3 the most successful responses focused on the extraordinary nature of Jane's work, her campaign for animal rights and that she hoped to protect the chimpanzees. Many responses focused on Jane wanting to find out more about the chimpanzees and that such information could be useful

in the future. A number of more effective answers offered well related development in relation to relevant ideas for bullet 3, suggesting for example the benefits of raising awareness of animal rights through 'lobbying' and 'lectures', and by recognising that chimpanzees are similar to humans we can develop a better understanding of our place in nature. Less successful responses often added material from texts A and B about the vocal abilities of primates which missed opportunities to show understanding of the task. In others, there was lengthy description about the dangers of living in the jungle, such as the danger of being attacked by poisonous snakes or vicious animals, details of her accommodation and how she was missing her family. Candidates should be wary of moving too far away from the text and need to remember that any development offered has to be rooted in the facts and details of passage to be creditworthy as evidence of their reading skills and understanding. Where candidates moved into more speculative suggestions they were often missing opportunities to target higher marks. In some responses, candidates did not attempt to address the third bullet at all, instead ending the magazine article by describing the behaviour of the chimpanzees. Candidates seemed comfortable and familiar with the format of a magazine article with most adopting an appropriate tone. The less successful responses tended to be too narrative as they relied too heavily on the sequencing of the original text.

The Writing mark reflected the clarity, fluency and coherence of the response and how well it used language to respond in the required form of a magazine article, and how successfully it addressed audience and purpose. The language used was mostly appropriate and some more successful responses created a wholly convincing voice of a journalist. In less successful responses the language and voice were rather plain. Generally, accuracy was good with some skilfully written responses. Others struggled to maintain fluency, resulting in some awkward expression caused by errors in grammar and punctuation. Candidates are advised to check through their work carefully to correct errors where possible. There were few instances of wholesale lifting from the passage, but some candidates were over-reliant on lifted phrases and sentences.

Lapses into narrative, often relating extended conversation as part of an interview, indicated an inconsistency of style in less assured responses and missed opportunities to aim for higher levels. Candidates are advised to leave sufficient time to read back through their response to correct any mistakes or inconsistencies in their use of language – for example to ensure that meaning is clear and the register sounds appropriate.

Advice to candidates on Question 3:

- read Text C carefully, more than once, to ensure clear understanding
- pay careful attention to the perspective required for the task – for example, the voice being created and whether you are looking back at the events
- keep the audience and purpose firmly in mind
- plan your response carefully to ensure you have selected ideas relevant to all three bullet points and answered in reasonable detail
- ensure that your points are clearly linked to the details and events in the text
- remember to adapt and develop your ideas appropriately within the context of the text
- avoid copying from the text: use your own words as far as possible
- leave sufficient time to check through your response
- the suggested word length is a guide to help you plan your time, not a limit.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0500/03
Coursework Portfolio 03

Key messages

Candidates did well when they:

- Read critically and gave a thorough response to the implicit and explicit ideas, opinions and attitudes they identified in a text
- Assimilated ideas from a text to provide developed, thoughtful and sophisticated responses
- Supported their analysis, evaluation and comments with a detailed and specific selection of relevant ideas from a text
- Wrote original and interesting assignments which reflected their personal ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world about them
- Sequenced sentences within paragraphs in a way which maintained clarity of arguments, description or narrative
- Wrote with confidence using a wide range of vocabulary with precision and for specific effect
- Adapted their writing style to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of different audiences and context for each of the three assignments
- Demonstrated a high level of accuracy with their writing
- Engaged in a process of careful editing and proofreading in order to identify and correct errors in their writing.

General comments

A significant number of candidates produced interesting coursework portfolios which contained varied work across a range of contexts. There was evidence to show that centres set tasks which allowed candidates flexibility to respond to subjects related to their personal interests or experiences. The majority of coursework portfolios contained writing of three different genres.

The majority of centres provided the correct paperwork and completed all relevant forms accurately. The major concern for all Moderators was that markers of the coursework portfolios did not indicate errors in the final draft of each assignment. Failure to follow this process often resulted in inaccurate or inconsistent marking and was one of the main reasons for adjustment of marks.

Administration

Successful administration was when centres:

- indicated all errors in the final draft of each assignment
- carried out a thorough process of internal moderation
- supplied specific comments and marks in relation to the mark schemes at the end of the final draft of each assignment
- ensured that each portfolio of work was securely attached to the Individual Candidate Record Card (ICRC)
- accurately completed the Coursework Assessment Summary Form (CASF) and ICRC, including any amendments made during internal moderation.

The Moderation Team reported an increase in the provision of summative comments related to the mark scheme provided at the end of each completed assignment. These were extremely helpful in helping Moderators to understand how and why marks had been awarded and centres are thanked for following the process as instructed in the Coursework Handbook.

Centres who followed the instructions for carrying out internal moderation as directed in the Coursework Handbook are also thanked for engaging in this important process. There was a general trend of greater accuracy of marking by centres that had carried out internal moderation than centres that had not carried out internal moderation. Problems and some confusion occurred when centres did not record changes made at internal moderation on the candidates' Individual Candidate Record Cards (ICRCs). Centres are requested to make sure that any changes made at internal moderation are also recorded on the ICRC as well as on the Coursework Assessment Summary Form (CASF).

A cause of concern for all Moderators was that some issues persist even though there are clear instructions in the Coursework Handbook and the same concerns have been raised in previous Principal Moderator Reports. In order to ensure effective and accurate marking is achieved, and that all paperwork arrives safely for moderation, it is essential that all the instructions given in the Coursework Handbook, and on the relevant forms, are carefully followed. Below highlights some of the most worrying issues related to the administration and annotation of candidates' work.

Indicating all errors in the final version of each assignment:

- The majority of the final drafts showed little or no evidence of complying with the instruction in the Coursework Handbook that markers should indicate all errors in the final draft of each assignment. This process helps markers to effectively and accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of work and to apply the most appropriate 'best fit' mark from the mark scheme. If this process does not take place it is difficult for markers to make a balanced judgement. There was a significant and clear trend with the majority of centres, across all three assignments, for markers to award marks from the higher levels of the assessment criteria to work containing frequent, and often serious, errors. The absence of the indication of all errors in the final drafts could account for this rather worrying trend and the need for Moderators to adjust marking. It is important for all who mark the coursework portfolios to fully understand the importance of indicating and taking into account all errors in the final draft of each assignment. To avoid adjustment of marks for accuracy it is essential that centres engage in this process and clearly indicate errors in their candidates' work.

Individual Candidate Record Cards (ICRC):

- A significant number of centres did not attach the portfolios of work to the ICRC in accordance with the instructions in the Coursework Handbook and point 4 on the electronic version of the ICRC
- Some confusion was caused when centres included ICRCs for the whole cohort as well as the ICRCs for the sample sent; centres only need to send the ICRCs (securely attached to the coursework portfolio) for the candidates in the sample submitted for moderation
- A small number of centres provided their own version of an ICRC instead of using the one provided by Cambridge; these had to be requested by the Moderator, which slowed down the moderation process.

Coursework portfolios:

- A significant number of centres did not collate the individual assignments into complete coursework portfolios but instead placed the loose pages of work into the grey plastic envelopes and despatched them to Cambridge; this caused Moderators some difficulties and increased the risk of work becoming lost or mislaid
- All Moderators noticed an increase in the number of plastic wallets used to present candidates' work as an alternative to securely attaching the individual assignments to the ICRC; as with the point above, this caused Moderators some difficulties and increased the risk of work becoming lost or mislaid
- The tendency for some centres to include unnecessary cover sheets and extra copies of drafts continued from previous sessions; the only paperwork that should be included in the sample is clearly indicated in the Coursework Handbook.

Comments on specific assignments

Candidates were successful when:

Assignment 1:

- the form, purpose and intended audience of their writing was clear to the reader
- they responded to interesting and relatable texts
- they demonstrated analysis and evaluation with the provision of thoughtful and perceptive responses to the individual ideas and opinions identified within a text
- they wrote in a fluent, accurate and appropriate style.

Moderators commented that many candidates responded to texts which were of an appropriate length and challenge and which appealed to the interests of the candidates. Successful texts included articles about the merits of online learning during the Covid pandemic, feminism, political issues in the candidates' own countries and climate change. Less successful texts were those which were old and outdated, or were of limited personal interest to the candidates; for example, Katie Hopkins on migration or children's names, Jeremy Clarkson's article about tigers, gun control in America, the death penalty and euthanasia. Previous Principal Moderator Reports have commented on the limitations of texts such as these. Centres are encouraged to use a good range of relevant and up-to-date texts for Assignment 1. Other unsuccessful texts were chapters from a novel (e.g. *The Great Gatsby*) and advertisements (e.g. Nissan Micra) because they tended to encourage candidates to analyse and comment on an author's use of literary features and techniques instead of evaluating ideas and opinions, as required by the mark scheme.

Some centres set one, or a limited number of texts, for a whole cohort. When this approach was adopted by a centre there was usually a tendency for candidates to produce responses which were very similar in content and structure. This made it difficult for candidates to create the original and sophisticated responses expected of the higher-level assessment criteria and was a reason for adjustments of marks.

If centres are unsure about how to approach and set tasks for Assignment 1 they can refer to the Syllabus and the Coursework Handbook. Both documents provide advice and guidance about task setting and text selection and can be found on the school Support Hub via the main Cambridge website.

Reading:

Although some centres were accurate with their marking of reading, as with the previous moderation sessions, there was a significant trend for many centres to award marks from the highest-level assessment criteria to work which more appropriately met the lower-level assessment criteria. Candidates who successfully met the higher-level assessment criteria were those who demonstrated a consistently evaluative approach to most points in a text, and provided a developed, sophisticated response which made direct reference or included quotes from the text. Candidates who engaged in a general discussion about the topic or subject of a text, or those who did not thoroughly evaluate a text, tended to produce work which more appropriately met the Level 4 assessment criteria in Table B (reading). The most common reasons for adjustments to a centre's marks for reading were when Moderators identified a trend of candidates engaging in a general discussion about the topic of a text/s, or when the number of points covered were 'appropriate' rather than 'thorough'.

Writing:

Many candidates responded to texts in an appropriate form and style. Letters, articles and speeches were the most popular choice of form and many candidates demonstrated some understanding of audience and purpose. When candidates were less successful with writing it was often because the form, intended audience and purpose of the writing was not clear. Moderators noted an increase in this type of response to Assignment 1. Quite often, some discussion points were confusing because it was not clear who the intended audience was. This made it difficult for the candidates to meet the highest-level assessment criteria and was a reason for adjustments to writing marks for Assignment 1. Successful responses to Assignment 1 tasks were those in which the writing was highly effective, almost always accurate and consistent throughout with the application of form and style. Work which showed insecurity with form and style, such as the omission of an appropriate ending to a letter, a limited or inconsistent use of rhetorical devices for speeches, tended to meet the assessment criteria for Level 5, Table A (writing) or below. The Moderators noted that there was a general tendency for many centres to award marks from the highest-level assessment criteria to work which more appropriately met the lower-level assessment criteria.

Inaccuracy was another common reason for the adjustment of marks for writing. When errors impaired meaning, such as the incorrect construction of sentences or use of grammar, typing errors, or the incorrect selection of words from a spellchecker, the overall quality and efficacy of the discussion was affected. Errors such as these are classed as serious and make it difficult for candidates to meet the higher-level assessment criteria; this type of writing is more characteristic of writing achieving marks from the middle to the lower levels of the assessment criteria.

Advice to candidates for Assignment 1:

- Be prepared to thoroughly explore, challenge and discuss the ideas in the text
- Try to avoid making general comments about the topic or subject of the text: instead, try to make sure that your comments are specifically related to the ideas, opinions or attitudes that you have identified in the text
- Look for, and use in your response, inferences made indirectly in the text
- Look for contradictions or misleading assumptions in the text and comment on them
- Try to develop your points to create a thorough, detailed and clear line of argument or discussion
- Make sure that the audience and purpose of your writing is clear and adapt your style accordingly
- Make sure that you carefully proofread your work and check that your punctuation, vocabulary choices and grammar are correct.

Assignment 2:

The majority of tasks set for Assignment 2 were appropriate and encouraged candidates to write in a descriptive style. Many candidates wrote engaging and vivid descriptions from experience, which were a pleasure to read. It was also pleasing to note that the reduction in responses characterised by the inclusion of overlong narrative preambles explaining the events leading up to the focus on the description has continued from previous sessions and there was much greater focus on description. Moderators also noticed that there were fewer descriptions which slipped into narrative than in previous sessions.

The most engaging and successful descriptions were those where the candidates had carefully selected vocabulary to create a realistic and credible sense of atmosphere, place or person, and which were well sequenced and carefully managed for deliberate effect. Successful responses included descriptions of towns or cities in which candidates lived, important events in candidates' lives and descriptions of the thoughts and feelings about candidates' experiences of being locked down during the Covid 19 pandemic. Less successful tasks were those which asked candidates to describe events or scenarios of which they had no personal experience. For example: gothic descriptions, haunted houses and unlikely journeys into forests which involved the narrators finding dead bodies or being murdered. This type of writing is characteristic of work achieving marks from the middle to lower levels of the assessment criteria, although it was noticed that many centres awarded marks from the higher-level assessment criteria. This was quite often a reason for adjustment of marks from Table C (content and structure).

Whilst many candidates showed a secure and confident understanding of language there was still a general tendency by a significant number of centres to award marks from the higher-level assessment criteria to work which contained overworked or overwrought language. Some Moderators commented that this seemed to be actively encouraged by some centres. To achieve marks from the higher-level assessment criteria, candidates need to demonstrate a confident and secure understanding and use of language for specific effect. This is difficult for candidates to achieve if they over-use adjectives, include inappropriate images or idioms and/or use obscure or archaic language. The overworking of language was a common reason for Moderators adjusting marks.

Another common reason for adjustments to marks was when Moderators identified a trend of awarding marks from the higher-level assessment criteria to writing that contained a limited range of sentence structures, incorrectly constructed sentences, or contained frequent errors with punctuation and grammar. Writing that achieves marks from Levels 5 and 6 of Table D (style and accuracy) is expected to be consistently accurate, consistent with the chosen register and demonstrate an ability to use a range of sentences for specific effect. The Moderators saw some writing which displayed these characteristics, but a significant number of the assignments receiving marks from centres from Levels 5 and 6 in Table D more frequently displayed the characteristics of writing expected from Level 4 or below. Many candidates 'told' the reader about the scene being described, rather than 'showing' the reader with a careful and precise use of vocabulary and images. The Moderators also noticed a general trend for candidates to use repeated sentence structures and create almost list-like descriptions.

In addition, the work of a significantly large number candidates contained frequent and serious errors which impaired the meaning and overall effect of candidates' work. The most frequent errors were missing prepositions and articles, changes in tenses, typing errors, commas used instead of full stops and errors of grammar. Quite often, the meaning of sentences was blurred, or meaning was lost altogether. Errors which affect the meaning and clarity of writing cannot be considered as 'minor'. As mentioned earlier in this report, the absence of the indication of all errors made it difficult for the Moderators to determine whether errors had been taken into account when marks had been awarded. Accurate and effective application of the assessment criteria is achieved through the careful weighing up of the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing and the application of a mark which 'best fits' the assessment criteria. To achieve this, it is essential that all errors are identified and indicated by the markers. Engaging in this process allows markers to effectively balance the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing and award marks that are most appropriate to their candidates' work.

Information and guidance on how to apply the mark schemes are given in Coursework Handbook. Examples of the standard of work expected at the different levels of the mark scheme are also provided in the Coursework Handbook.

Advice to candidates for Assignment 2:

- Make sure that the vocabulary you use matches the context and content of your description
- Make sure that the images you create match the context and content of your description
- Try to 'show' readers your imagined scenario instead of 'telling' them about it
- Keep your focus on the details of your description and avoid slipping into narrative
- Carefully check and proofread your work to identify and correct common errors such as missing articles and prepositions, switches in tenses and typing errors
- Try to avoid repetitive sentence structures; instead use a range of sentences to create specific effects.

Assignment 3:

Much of the task setting for Assignment 3 was generally appropriate and Moderators saw some engaging, effective narratives which were well managed and convincing. Successful narratives were those in which the candidates created stories which featured well defined plots and strongly developed features of fiction writing such as description, characterisation and convincing details and events. The narration of personal experiences and events, or when candidates were able to create convincing details and events within their chosen genre (e.g. fantasy), tended to be quite successful. Candidates were generally less successful when their understanding of audience and genre was insecure, and the resulting narratives lacked credibility and were not very convincing. Moderators commented that this sort of writing was often seen when candidates were writing in the genre of detective, horror, murder mystery or revenge stories. Stories such as these, although containing a definite beginning, middle and ending, were often unrealistic and incredible, or lacked development of character or plot. This sort of writing is classed as 'relevant' or 'straightforward' and should expect to be awarded marks from Level 4 or below from Table C (content and structure). Moderators noticed that there was a trend with a significant majority of the work sampled for centres to award marks from Levels 5 and 6 to writing which more appropriately fitted the Level 4, or below, assessment criteria. This was quite frequently a reason for marks to be adjusted.

When Moderators saw very accurate work containing precise well-chosen vocabulary, and which maintained a consistent register throughout, they could agree when centres awarded marks from Levels 5 and 6 in Table D (style and accuracy). As with Assignments 1 and 2, Moderators noticed a significant trend for centres to award marks from the highest levels of the mark scheme to work which contained frequent and persistent errors and which more accurately met the assessment criteria from Level 4 or below in Table D. This was a common reason for adjustment of marks. The comments made for Assignment 2 with regards to accuracy and the annotation of errors are also relevant to Assignment 3 and should be noted by all who mark coursework.

Advice to candidates for Assignment 3:

- Try to create stories that are realistic, credible and convincing
- Remember that characters' thoughts and feelings help to engage your reader; do not just rely on events
- Try to avoid clichéd scenarios and consider an individual and original selection of content
- Carefully proofread your work and check your writing for errors which will affect your mark, such as punctuation, your use of prepositions and articles, tenses and construction of sentences.

Good practice for the production and presentation of coursework portfolios was when:

- Centres followed the guidelines and instructions set out in the syllabus and the Coursework Handbook
- A wide range of appropriate texts were used for Assignment 1, which contained ideas and opinions to which candidates could respond, and were relevant to their interests
- Centres set a range of appropriately challenging tasks which allowed candidates to respond individually and originally to topics and subjects they were interested in, or of which they had personal knowledge or experience
- Teachers gave general advice for improvement at the end of the first drafts
- Candidates revised, edited and carefully proofread their first drafts in order to improve their writing
- Candidates revised, edited and carefully proofread their final drafts in order to identify and correct errors
- Teachers provided informative summative comments and marks relating to the mark scheme at the end of the final draft of each assignment
- Teachers indicated all errors in the final drafts of each completed assignment
- Centres engaged in a process of internal moderation and clearly indicated this in the coursework portfolios, on the Individual Candidate Record Cards and on the Candidate Assessment Summary Forms.

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH (US)

Paper 0524/04
Speaking and Listening Test 04

Key messages

Despite the ongoing disruption caused by the global pandemic, the administration of the component by the overwhelming majority of the centres that entered candidates for the June 2021 series was accurate and helpful to the moderating team. Centres are to be congratulated on their continued commitment and professionalism during the present most testing of times.

Generally, centre assessment was accurate and in line with the standard. It is pleasing to note that examiners have become aligned to the relatively new descriptors very quickly. Most adjustments recommended during moderation are the result of 'fine tuning' rather than a need to correct serious misinterpretations of the mark scheme.

The timings of the test are very important. **Part 1** should consist of an individual talk, most likely a presentation of a chosen topic, and should last between 3–4 minutes in length. A talk lasting less than 3 minutes will rarely satisfy the first descriptor for Level 5 that states the talk should consist of content that is 'full and well-organised'. Equally, a talk lasting considerably longer than 4 minutes also runs the risk of not satisfying the same descriptor. **Part 2** should consist of a conversation lasting for 7–8 minutes in length. Examiners who do not ensure this stipulation is met are doing a serious disservice to the candidates being tested.

Candidates should choose topics that they are familiar with and should consider that unfamiliarity will be exposed in **Part 2**, no matter how well **Part 1** has been prepared. Simply choosing a topic to 'impress' the examiner but that the candidate has only a superficial knowledge of will never be as successful as a topic chosen because the candidate genuinely has an interest in it.

General comments

Administration

As with previous series, centre administration was of a high standard. Where there were issues the following guidelines may help to clarify administrative requirements:

- Every test should begin with a full introduction to include the date on which the candidate is being examined. Think in the same terms as for a written examination where each candidate would be expected to complete their own information at the beginning of the answer booklet. For Component 04 it is the examiner who should complete the introduction but the same principle of identifying key information on an individual basis is still relevant. Generic introductions for even a small cohort of candidates is not acceptable.
- Centres may choose to create and use their own versions of the Oral Examinations Summary Form (OESF) as opposed to utilising the one provided by Cambridge Assessment but in these cases the form used must accurately reflect the information required. One centre chose to use its own form but there was no breakdown of the marks given for **Part 2**. Instead of showing separate individual marks for Speaking and Listening, only an overall total for **Part 2** was included. This is not helpful for the moderator and should be avoided.
- Perhaps because of restrictions caused by the pandemic, there seemed to be less internal moderation taking place in this series. If so it is understandable, but centres, particularly where more than one examiner is involved in the series, are urged to complete internal moderation if at all possible.

Conduct of the test

Generally, the standard of examining was very good with candidates being given many opportunities to express their views and demonstrate their range of oratory skills.

Where there were concerns, the following advice is offered:

- In some centres, examiners engaged in an ‘off topic’ conversation with candidates before asking them to begin their **Part 1** task. While this was aimed at putting candidates at ease before the test, it was not a necessary part of the process and is potentially distracting for candidates who want to focus on their prepared talks. It is strongly advised that each test should begin with the examiner’s formal introduction and be followed immediately by the candidate performing **Part 1**, the **Individual Talk**. If an examiner feels that a candidate is very nervous and needs a moment of calming prior to the formal test beginning, it is recommended this is done before the recording is started.
- Given that both Speaking and Listening are assessed in **Part 2**, it is important that the conversations last long enough for candidates to clearly demonstrate their strengths in both mediums. It is the examiner’s responsibility to ensure this minimum expectation of 7 minutes is met.
- **Part 2** is now a conversation between the candidate and the examiner based on the topic presented in **Part 1**. A **Part 2** that consists of a formal question and answer format is not beneficial for the candidate, particularly if the questions have little relation to each other and do not consider the candidate’s previous replies. A conversation which is more fluid and evolves in a more natural way offers the candidate more opportunities to satisfy the higher level descriptors because the candidate’s answers, rather than the examiner’s questions, are driving the conversation forwards.

Comments on specific sections

Part 1 – Individual Talk

Formal presentations were almost exclusively the medium for approaching this part of the test in this series. This is an observation and certainly not a criticism. Candidates should be commended for preparing thoroughly for the test by researching their chosen topics in great depth. Many of the presentations were memorised: while this is not recommended, it is acceptable as long as there remains an element of natural fluency to the delivery. The most successful tasks attempted were those where the candidates displayed a strong base knowledge of their chosen topics and were genuinely interested in what they were saying. Less successful, in terms of the marks achieved, were those talks where the candidate had chosen a topic because the theme sounded ‘mature’ or ‘serious’ but where the candidate had little real in depth knowledge of the subject. This was not such an issue in **Part 1** where thorough preparation often disguised the lack of depth, but in the Conversation in **Part 2** the paucity of understanding of the topic was exposed and the performance suffered as a result. Choosing topics merely to try to impress the examiner/moderator is not recommended. It is much better to choose a topic of interest. When deciding on a topic for **Part 1**, candidates should bear in mind that half the total marks for the test are awarded in **Part 2** so it is vital that candidates choose topics that they are confident they can converse on in depth and at length.

A strong element of presentations achieving Level 5 in **Part 1** was the structure underpinning the talks supported by appropriate timing. A clearly defined persuasive argument or a cyclical arrangement that brought the concluding statement back to the initial point often helped candidates to fulfil ‘the full and well-organised’ descriptor for Level 5. Less successful structures tended to meander from point to point without such a strong sense of purpose. While structure itself does not confirm a mark in Level 5, it does provide a strong basis for candidates to exhibit their linguistic and presentational skills. Talks awarded marks in Level 5 also consisted of more than just linear narratives that described one event after another. Self-reflection and analysis are important elements in moving a talk beyond the adequate.

Some examples of productive **Part 1** topics from this series include:

- Introverts and extroverts
- Global Sustainability
- Temporal Illusions
- Feminism in literature
- Speaking as a tour guide at Chernobyl (in character)
- Learning languages
- The importance of money
- Beauty
- Being in care

- Pollution and its effect on the local environment
- How school could be better
- Should (name specific video game) be banned?

Some examples of less successful **Part 1** topics include:

- Education (Needs focus)
- Video Games (Too generalised)
- Social Media (Too generalised)
- My family holiday (If restricted to linear narrative)
- Television programmes (Particularly soap operas)
- Football (Too generalised – better to focus on own experience as a supporter, for example)
- Mental health (Needs to be carefully managed and avoid generalisations)
- Covid-19 (Better to focus on own experience during pandemic and effects thereof)

It should be noted that almost any topic chosen can be productive or less successful based on the candidate's own knowledge of the subject, the depth of research undertaken and the degree of preparation. However, some topics offer more opportunities for development and discussion than others. It is often the focus that is the deciding factor. One candidate's version of '*My favourite holiday*' could be a simple narrative exposition of the events that occurred whilst another candidate could use the same topic to develop a more interesting talk on how experiences have shaped maturity and a greater understanding of the world.

Part 2 – Conversation

Good examiners understand their role in **Part 2**. They are not in teaching mode, they do not feel the need to correct or contradict statements made by the candidates if they disagree with them and they do not try to monopolise the conversation. Good examiners are empathetic to the candidates, take an interest in the topics chosen and are flexible in their manipulation of the conversation to tease out the very best the candidates can offer by using lots of open questioning and subtle prompts. Sympathetic examining in **Part 2** is a really important factor in allowing candidates to thrive and there was satisfying evidence of such good practice being employed by examiners in this series. Examiners understood their role in **Part 2** was to provide stimulus for the candidates to express their ideas and opinions on their chosen topics. Generally, candidates were not interrupted when in full flow and examiners were not judgemental when the candidates' responses could be deemed inaccurate or potentially controversial. Examiners do not need to agree with the statements the candidates make but may seek to challenge more able candidates if they feel this will stimulate them to develop their ideas more fully. This is a judgement call for the examiner and should only be made if the examiner is certain a candidate's reaction will be a positive one.

Where there were issues and improvement can be made in examining **Part 2** the following advice is offered:

- The timing of **Part 2** is controlled by the examiner. It is the examiner's responsibility to ensure **Part 2** lasts for at least 7 minutes in order to give the candidates the fullest opportunity to demonstrate their skills and accrue marks.
- **Part 2** conversations solely conducted on a question and answer basis, where the series of questions is only loosely connected and responses from the candidate are then ignored in favour of the next question on the list, do not fulfil the descriptors in the higher levels.
- It is important that questions are open and not closed. Closed questions do not allow candidates to consistently answer in the necessary detail to move beyond adequate.
- Examiners must ensure the conversation is connected to the ideas presented in **Part 1** for the whole of **Part 2**. Veering into more generalised conversation does not help the candidate's performance. For example: if a candidate's topic is about Physics, the examiner is justified in asking a question related to the candidate's future career plans in this sphere. However, a more general question about how the candidate has performed in other subjects is not on topic.
- Allowing the conversations to progress beyond the maximum time allowed of 8 minutes is unnecessary and may become counter-productive. It is very doubtful whether any contribution made by a candidate after the 8 minutes have been exceeded will have any bearing on the mark being awarded for **Part 2**.

Advice to centres

- Keep preparing your candidates as you have for this series.
- Administering the conversation in **Part 2** can be quite challenging for examiners so it may be necessary to practise just as the candidates should. Knowing the topic in advance and preparing some relevant back-up questions may help the examiner but they should not be restrictive, and, of course, the candidate should have no prior knowledge of them.
- Helping a candidate choose the most appropriate topic is key to them being successful in the test.
- Try to dissuade candidates from simply reeling off a memorised talk in **Part 1** that may have fluency but lacks any emotional attachment and suffers from robotic intonation. It is much better to prepare using a cue card so that what is said has some level of spontaneity.
- Adhering to the correct timings for each part of the test will allow candidates the best opportunity to be successful.

Advice to candidates

- Practise your presentation but do not learn it by heart and then attempt to regurgitate it verbatim in the test.
- Make sure your talk lasts between 3–4 minutes. Aim for 4 minutes rather than 3 minutes to allow for speaking more quickly under pressure in the actual test.
- Have bullet point notes on one side of a cue card to help prompt you in **Part 1**. These bullet points give structure to your talk. Be mindful that full sentences and detailed notes are not allowed.
- Develop each bullet point in a lively and enthusiastic way when delivering your talk.
- Prepare for **Part 2** by trying to predict the kind of questions you may well be asked but do not prepare memorised responses.
- Listen attentively to what the examiner is saying in **Part 2** especially if being prompted to give a detailed response to a point being made.
- Do not be afraid to ask the examiner's opinion in **Part 2** or to ask a direct question related to your ongoing conversation as this demonstrates you leading the discussion in a positive way.
- If you do not understand a question then say so to the examiner who should repeat or rephrase it. It is better to do this than give a response that is irrelevant or off topic.