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Examiners' report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

J351
For first teaching in 2015

J351/01 November 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

For information on the English Language Spoken Language Endorsement process, please refer to:
https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/stage-3-assessment/general-qualifications/orals-practicals-performances/gcse-9-1-english-language-spoken-language-endorsement/

Paper 1 series overview

J351/01 – Communicating Information and Ideas is one of two examined components for the new GCSE (9-1) English Language examination which was first assessed in 2017. The other component is J351/02 - Exploring Effects and Impact.

The main difference between the two components is that J351/01 is based on non-fiction texts whereas J351/02 uses literary texts. Both components follow a similar structure and, with one exception, test the same assessment objectives. The only exception is that in Question 2 of J351/01 candidates must synthesise information from two texts. Sometimes, however, candidates forget this and treat Question 2 as a language analysis question.

To do well in this component candidates must be able to read unseen texts with confidence and understanding, selecting relevant details from the text and explaining features of language and structure. They must also be able to compare and contrast texts and evaluate the impact of the texts on a reader. In the writing section they must show that they can write an effectively structured response in a style that suits the purpose of the task.

This is the third year in which this component has been examined. As this component is examined in both June and November each year, it is also the sixth time that candidates have taken an examination which follows this format. Candidates and centres have clearly learned from their experience of previous sessions and from previous examiners' reports. Responses to the questions in this session show that the requirements of each question are understood by most candidates.

Candidates write their answers on the question paper itself and the number of lines allotted to each question should give candidates a clear guide about how much they should write. In this session very few candidates wrote excessively long responses because they recognise that it is more likely to lower their mark than increase it.

Of the small number of candidates who wrote a very long response to the writing task, many had omitted to answer some or all of the reading questions in Section A. This is not a helpful approach to the paper as almost all candidates gain some marks for each question in the reading section and too much time spent on the writing section tends to lead to responses that are too long and not clearly structured enough.

Many examiners expressed concern about the quality of some candidates' handwriting. It was almost impossible to read what some candidates had written and, therefore, impossible to award the marks the candidate may have deserved. Centres must make sure that candidates with poor handwriting can use a scribe or word-processor to record their work. In such cases, to avoid allegations of malpractice, it is essential that centres follow the JCQ guidelines complete the correct record sheet.

More successful candidates:	*Less successful candidates:*
- used their time well - answered all the questions - wrote legibly - planned responses to longer questions	- ran out of time - left questions out - wrote illegibly - spent no time planning longer responses

Section A overview

The reading section contains two unseen texts which have a thematic link. The first text will always be from the 19th century and the second from either the 20th or 21st century. As this qualification is not tiered, the texts may be slightly edited to make sure that they are both accessible for all candidates and challenging for the most able.

Candidates responded well to the unseen texts chosen for this session. All candidates were able to engage with straightforward ideas in each text despite language in the first text which was sometimes quite complex. Higher ability candidates were challenged by the more complex ideas that were addressed by Desmond Morris in the second text.

The first text was taken from a collection of case studies of individual animals by a 19th century scientist who wanted to study animal behaviour. Candidates were engaged by the struggles faced by a dog whose good-natured character led initially to his repeated rejections by owners looking for a ferocious guard-dog but led ultimately to his acceptance by a family with young children.

The second text was from a book by Desmond Morris about why dogs behave the way they do. In this extract Morris explains how the relationship between dogs and humans has changed over the centuries since dogs were first domesticated. This text addressed the relationship between dogs and humans in general unlike the first text which was about a specific relationship.

A successful response to the reading section of the examination starts with a consideration of the similarities and differences between the texts. The key issue in both of these texts was how far the relationship between humans and dogs was beneficial to both parties. In the first text the emphasis was on how humans can benefit dogs whereas the emphasis in the second text was on how dogs can benefit humans.

Question 1 (a)

Question 1 is about **Text 1**, *Illustrations of Instinct* by Jonathan Couch.

1   Look again at lines 1–4.

    (a) What breed of dog does the writer write about and what made him different from other dogs?

        ....

        .... **[2]**

Question 1 (b)

Look again at lines 5–12.

(b) Give a quotation which shows the dog was not suitable for life on a ship.

        .... **[1]**

Question 1 (c)

(c) Explain why his new master on land also rejected him.

        .... **[1]**

Question 1 is designed to be an accessible start to the examination. It should help all candidates, including the less able, to achieve some marks at the start of the examination. The question tests candidates' ability to select and interpret information. In this session both marks for 1a could be gained simply by copying out relevant quotations from the text. The only candidates who did not achieve two marks for 1a were candidates who did not offer two quotations in response to the question. A handful answered that the dog was born in some part of North America (presumably because it was in the same sentence as 'Newfoundland breed').

Many candidates gave a successful response to Question 1b which simply required them to copy out a relevant quotation but a small number did not achieve the mark because they copied out a quotation that was incomplete or irrelevant. Question 1c is designed to be slightly more challenging because it tests the second skill in AO1 which is the interpretation of information from the text. The command word 'explain' asks candidates to give the answer in their own words or use an embedded quotation to show understanding. Many candidates were able to respond to 1c correctly but too many simply copied out an incomplete quotation without an explanation and could not, therefore, be awarded a mark.

Exemplar 1

1   Look again at lines 1–4.

(a)   What breed of dog does the writer write about and what made him different from other dogs?

...The dog is 'of the Newfoundland breed'. He is different...

...to other dogs as he displays 'a good nature'. [2]

Look again at lines 5–12.

(b)   Give a quotation which shows the dog was not suitable for life on a ship.

'he could not be made to understand that men could be [1]
otherwise than honest'.

(c)   Explain why his new master on land also rejected him.

...The dog is too quiet and 'would not snarl at a [1]
stranger or quarrel with a neighbour'.

The candidate answers 1a in full sentences which helps to make the response clear. The response to 1b is just a quotation but it is acceptable because that is what the question is asking for and the quotation is clearly relevant. The candidate gives a brief explanation which, by itself, might not be clear enough but is supported by embedded quotations which clarify the candidate's point.

Question 2

Question 2 is about **Text 1**, *Illustrations of Instinct* by Jonathan Couch, and **Text 2**, *Dogwatching* by Desmond Morris.

2   Both texts describe the relationship between dogs and humans.

What are the **similarities** in relationships between dogs and humans here?

Draw on evidence from **both** texts to support your answer.

....

.... **[6]**

Question 2 is more challenging than Question 1 but should be approached in a straightforward way. The question should help candidates to see the connections between what the texts are describing. It also sets the scene for Question 4 which requires candidates to explore the differences between the two texts. In this question candidates do not have to analyse the methods writers use to present their ideas but too many do still waste time identifying features of language and structure. Although examiners do not penalise candidates for such comments, they cannot reward the comments so candidates are wasting valuable time.

Both texts should be read carefully and thoroughly before candidates attempt this question. The question asks candidates to identify similarities between the texts and give evidence for the similarities by referring in detail to each text. The similarities, however, must be relevant to the question and must be explained clearly rather than implied by the choice of evidence.

The best candidates explained three similarities between the texts. They gave evidence from each text to support each similarity. The best evidence was usually a short, relevant quotation embedded within an explanation, but detailed references can be just as effective. The most popular similarities were about the cruel ways in which dogs are treated by humans and the kindness which dogs show to humans in return.

Less successful candidates varied between two extremes. Some identified just one good similarity and gave relevant evidence but did not try to identify any further similarities. Other candidates listed more than three similarities but did not give enough evidence to support the similarities. Sometimes candidates gave two pieces of evidence that had no clear connection with each other and did not support the similarity the candidate had described.

The expected similarities are listed in the mark scheme, but the list is not exhaustive. Examiners were instructed to be open-minded and many other valid similarities were identified by candidates – and rewarded by examiners – during the marking of this question.

Exemplar 2

Both texts demonstrate how dogs may react in a way which to show their irritation at how humans treat them. In text 1, the dog thrusts the boy off his back when his riding of him becomes an annoyance. Similarly, in text 2 it is described that humans often act stupidly, making the dogs bite or run away disobediently.

Both texts represent dogs initial purpose as a protector of humans. Text 1 refers to the necessity of dogs to snarl at strangers in order to protect their owners. While text 2 similarly refers to the age old job of dogs to "protect" and "guard" us.

Both texts make reference to the uncomplaining and calm nature that dogs have to the benefit of humans. In text 1, it refers to the "inward" rejection or immediate following of "commands" without question. This inward control of feelings is similarly demonstrated in text 2, where dogs are described as a "calming influence", whose lack of stress assists humans the humans in destressing.

The candidate has given a clearly organised response. Each paragraph begins with a clear statement of what the similarity is and then goes on to provide relevant evidence to support the statement. The candidate does not always use quotations as evidence but the detailed references are clearly explained.

Question 3

Question 3 is about **Text 2**, *Dogwatching* by Desmond Morris.

3   Look again at lines 10–28.

Explore how Desmond Morris uses language and structure to show how the relationship between humans and dogs has developed over time.

Support your ideas by referring to the text, using relevant subject terminology.   **[12]**

....

....

The first part of this question asks candidates to look at a specified number of lines. This is designed to help candidates by giving them a smaller amount of material to focus on so that they can write a reasonable response within the time constraints of the examination. There is still a significant minority, however, who are drawing on material from outside these specified lines to support their response. Such material is ignored by examiners.

The question asks candidates to spend an equal amount of time exploring the use of language and structure. For this qualification structure includes any feature of a text beyond word level: at sentence level this could include alliteration, repetition and listing; at text level this might include making contrasts within and between sentences and paragraphs as well as discussing the build-up to a climax.

The key to this question was understanding how Morris develops his ideas about the relationship between dogs and human beings. In the first part of Morris outlines the original relationship between the two and, in the next part, he goes on to show that it has changed significantly since then. The better candidates showed an overall understanding of Morris's ideas and summed this up effectively in an opening paragraph.

Many candidates pointed to the list of tasks humans had assigned to dogs and contrasted this with their newer role as 'calming companions'. The repetition of the word 'companions' was taken by many as driving home the key change in the relationship as was the antithetical sentence describing the replacement of the 'work dog' with the 'pet dog'.

A mark of the better candidates is consideration of the whole extract, especially how it ends. A small number of candidates engaged with the contrast between the 'simple innocence' of the dog with the 'conflicting compromises' of the human. In the same way an exploration of the metaphor 'dizzy whirlpool' for human civilisation was a distinguishing feature of more successful responses.

Less successful candidates often quoted examples of linguistic and structural features but did not use subject terminology to identify those features. These candidates also tended to explain what the quotation meant rather than commenting on its relevance to the question or the effect on the reader. Some might label the quotations correctly but make general comments about what it showed about the relationship between dogs and humans rather than commenting on the choice of words.

Exemplar 3

Desmond Morris use describes the development of dogs in our homes, from guards to members of the family, and our mistreatment of them throughout.

In the first sentence Morris makes the grand statement, referring to the "whole of human history". Later in this passage reference phrases depiction of the history of our relationship with dogs is shown by the phrases: "ancient" and "age-old", which both add to form a lexis. Through this lexical field of 'history', the extent of our their continuity of dogs with our lives, may be appreciated.

The History that we have maintained with our canine companions however, is is described within this passage as one of abuse and using of dogs. The mass of demands we place upon dogs is demonstrated in the listing of the third paragraph, where dogs are described as being required to "guard", "protect", "aid of our hunts", "destroy our vermin" and "pull our sledges". The connotations of using of on that transcend this vast history, are similarly demonstrated by the use of anaphora in the next paragraph to detail the amount they offer us while we fail to provide

them back the same treatness for example, "they are playful when we are in the mood for fun By repeating use of anaphora to exaggerate demonstrate her that dogs "they are loving companions "even" when we are lonely or depressed", dogs are shown to be there for us constantly, even when we are not helping them. Indeed, this anaphora is intensified by the lbs use of repeated use acts to intensify the ultimate strength of dogs as our best friends even of companion, which acts to demonstrate how dogs are there for us no matter what.

Finally, the last line utilizes on the metaphor "dizzy whirlpool we refer to as civilisation" to accentuate the calming influence that dogs have upon us, even in the different confusion of our world. Describing the adjective dizzy acts to further intensify this metaphor, creating of mass havoc. This havoc is imagery of a situation that would be impossible for someone described to be controlled by the impact of dogs as they are said to "remind us of simple innocence".

The candidate begins the response effectively with a brief overview of the main way in which the relationship between dogs and humans has changed over time. In the next paragraph, however, the candidate makes the mistake of using support from a part of the text outside the lines specified by the question. This does not reduce the candidate's mark as it will be ignored by the examiner, but it costs the candidate valuable time.

In the next part of the response, however, the candidate takes an effective approach by tracking the development of the extract paragraph by paragraph. The candidate explores the structure of the next two paragraphs in detail using relevant terminology such as listing, anaphora and comparison to describe the writer's methods. This is not, however, a simple description of technique because the candidate links each detail clearly to the writer's overall purposes.

The discussion of structure is balanced in the final part of the response by a discussion of the writer's use of language. The candidate not only identifies and explains the impact of the metaphor 'whirlpool' being used to describe human civilisation but also refers to the effect of the adjective 'dizzy' which is used to modify the word 'whirlpool'. The point made in the last sentence about 'a reminder of simple innocence', however, is not clear enough.

Question 4

Question 4 is about **Text 1**, *Illustrations of Instinct* by Jonathan Couch, and **Text 2**, *Dogwatching* by Desmond Morris.

4   'Both texts show how a relationship with humans is good for dogs as well as humans.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

In your answer you should:

- discuss what both texts show us about dogs' relationships with humans
- explain how far you agree that a relationship with humans is good for dogs
- compare the ways the texts present the relationships between dogs and humans.

Support your response with quotations from **both** texts.   **[18]**

....

....

All the questions candidates have responded to so far lead up to this question. As the question is worth 18 marks, candidates should allocate 20-25 minutes to completing this question and should stop, think and plan before they start writing. This question requires candidates to make independent judgements about two unseen texts. This question builds on the work candidates have already done for Question 2. In this question, however, the candidates consider not only the similarities but also the differences between the texts.

The best approach to the question in this session was a sustained comparison of how far the relationship with humans in each text benefitted dogs. Most candidates felt that the relationship between dogs and humans seemed more beneficial for the dog in Text 1 than the relationship in Text 2. Although the dog in Text 1 was treated badly by its first two masters, it did eventually find a home in which it was given food and affection. In Text 2, on the other hand, the emphasis was almost completely on the benefits that humans derived from their relationship with dogs.

More successful candidates compared the overall approach taken in each text. Text 1 was an anecdotal account of the experience of one specific dog whose non-aggressive character made him an atypical member of his species. Text 2, however, was a more abstract account of the relationship between dogs and humans as a whole and therefore described the typical behaviour of dogs and humans.

More successful candidates would start each paragraph by identifying a specific similarity or difference between the texts. Candidates would then illustrate the similarity or difference between the texts with detailed evidence from the text and conclude the paragraph by evaluating how beneficial this evidence made the relationship seem. Evaluative comments were often clearly signposted by using statements containing quantifiers which described the relationship as 'more' or 'less' beneficial in each of the texts. Other evaluative phrases included adjectives or abstract nouns or 'not' statements, e.g. Text 2 does 'not' present the relationship with humans as beneficial to dogs.

(i)	**OCR support**	Candidate responses to this question tend to be better at evaluation that they are at comparison. There is useful advice in a resource called 'Developing Comparison Skills' on the OCR website.

Exemplar 4

I agree with the statement " that both texts present a benefit to dogs as well as humans,.. There is mention of : mental , physical and general use. Text 1 focuses on the benefit to dogs more.

Both texts present a clear bond between dogs and humans as they provide humans with help and vise versa. Th In the second text dogs are describe as being in 'an ancient contract', with 'specific terms of agreement' suggesting that us humans provide for dogs and dogs will provide for humans, like a work contract. The writers method here is using a humorous tone and a comparison as he is relating the relationship between two do them a dog and a human to one which two colleagues would have at work. In the so first text the writer decides to pick up on how humans help dogs. The child in the text gives the dog 'a portion of his own' food so that this dog is

able to feed. Here the writer is showing the compasion between the human and the dog as this child is reducing the amount of food that he is eating just to help the dog. This is a different idea from the other text as that picks up on an idea of nuetral support whilst this text is focussing on the humans help to a dog. The relationship clearly shows how dogs benefit here.

Both texts decide to pick up on the mental and physical benefits in the relationship too. In the first text the writer focuses on the benefit a dog recieves from humans attention as they will 'Suffer without a murmur'. The writer is giving [using] a upsetting tone as all humans would not like to see a dog suffering. The effect on the reader is that it emphasises the importance of humans to dogs and makes them believe that without the company of men dogs would suffer in scilence. The second text takes a different approach, it focuses on the physical benefits of dogs to humans. The writer decides to use a fact that 'those who keep dogs live longer on average' suggesting a definite need for dogs in the home. This fact implies that without dogs humans will not live as long presenting a clear benefit to humans. This is not a benefit to dogs like in text 1 but,
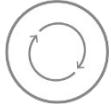
it is a benefit to humans instead.

The candidate makes an effective start with a clear overview of their response to question. There is a list of the benefits described and a statement about the difference between the two texts, i.e. Text 1 is more about the benefit of the relationship for dogs.

The second paragraph starts with a statement about both texts showing dogs and humans helping each other. The candidate then considers each text in turn and explains with support how each one presents the relationship between dogs and humans. The second paragraph then takes the evaluation further by showing that, although the two texts are similar, they do differ in detail. In this case the candidate clearly differentiates between the mutual support describe in Text 2 and the more one-sided relationship described in Text 1.

An important strength of this candidate's work is the developed explanations given of each quotation. For example, the comparison of the relationship between dogs and humans to a 'contract' is explained in detail as resembling the relationship between colleagues at work.

The next paragraph follows a similar structure but is not as successful. The candidate tries to highlight a difference between the two texts but the comments on the first text are not persuasive enough as it is not clear how suffering 'without a murmur' represents a benefit for dogs.

	AfL	In this session we have started to use the 'DEV' annotation to indicate comments which give a developed explanation of a quotation's significance. Such developed explanations are worth highlighting because they are a key indicator of a Level 4 response.

Section B overview

In this component there is a choice of writing tasks which can both broadly be described as non-fiction. Each task specifies a clear context for the writing and candidates are expected to adapt their style of writing to suit the form, audience and purpose of their chosen task. The writing tasks are designed to build on what candidates have read in Section A of the examination. It is unwise to advise candidates to do the writing task first because candidates may be able to use what they have read to inspire the content and style of their writing.

In this year's examination the first task drew on ideas in the reading extracts about the quality of relationships between humans and animals. Candidates had generally been well prepared to write talks and usually showed a clear sense of audience. Many candidates also made effective use of rhetorical devices. The second task drew on the approach of the first reading text by focusing on a particular experience if a particular animal. The key word in the question was 'dramatic' as this was designed to push candidates beyond a prosaic account of encounter with an animal to something much more entertaining.

It is pleasing to note that very few candidates are writing excessively long responses to the writing task. Three pages is enough for candidates to demonstrate their skills. A shorter piece of writing also allows candidates to spend more time planning and crafting the quality of their writing. Examiners were pleased to see that most candidates spell most words correctly and can write coherent complex sentences. Centres should, however, teach candidates how to use accurate punctuation between and within sentences and how to use paragraphs to organise their ideas.

There were some problems with type-written scripts this year. Centres must use the JCQ sheet to indicate clearly what support candidates have had in the production of their response as marks can only be awarded for what candidates have produced independently. If work has been type-written, candidates should double-space the work for clarity and the front sheet must confirm that spelling and grammar checks were disabled. If work has been scribed, the front sheet should specify whether punctuation has been dictated.

More successful candidates:	Less successful candidates:
• planned their response • had an effective opening and conclusion • used connectives between paragraphs • wrote coherent and effective sentences • used extended metaphors • punctuated for clarity and effect	• wrote very short or very long responses • had no clear sense of direction • repeated themselves • made no use of paragraphs • mixed past and present • used comma splices rather than full stops

Question 5

5   Write the words of a talk to advise pet owners how to make life more enjoyable for their pet and themselves.

In your talk you should:

* explain what stops life with a pet being enjoyable
* describe some of the ways to make life with a pet enjoyable for the pet and its owner
* explain why these ways would make life enjoyable for the pet and its owner.   **[40]***

....

....

This was a popular task and many candidates showed real engagement with the topic. There was much reference to the candidate's own experience of life with a pet and the challenges of making life enjoyable for both pet and owner.

Matching style to purpose is another crucial discriminator in the writing tasks. Most candidates were able to write in a style suitable to giving advice in a talk and many drew on their own experience to give wise advice which struck a chord with examiners whose own pets had perhaps been neglected during this marking session,

Candidates approached the requirement to write a 'talk' much more successfully than in past sessions. Almost all responses to this task had a clear sense of audience and addressed the audience at more than one point in the talk.

The main area for improvement is the use of structure. There were a significant number of candidates of all abilities who made little or no use of paragraphs to organise their ideas. Many also struggled to develop their ideas in a logical order and conclude their responses effectively.

Exemplar 5

Desmond Morris one said that 'in the whole of human history only two kinds of animals

with pets certain animals 'we have a special relationship, an ancient contract, with specific terms or agreement'. This agreement being that these animals and us humans, we help eachother with emotional and physical support. This is why treating your pet in a loving and caring way is so important.

Pets have feelings just like yourself and if they dont recieve the right attention they will feel lonely and depressed. However when treated right they will be energet

are treated in a pernicious way
and are treated in a pernicious way they will feel lonely and depressed. However when treated right they will be energetic and compassionate towards you and others. In turn this will make you feel better as always being around someone or an animal that is happy will bring out positive effects on you even on the worse days. Dogs and humans can have this special relationship for example when a US soldier was killed, his service dog refused

to leave his side at the ceremony laying down next to the coffin, it still by his side even after he was gone. A special relationship like that between man and dog can only be achieved through genuine compassion from the owner who will take time out of their day to be with them. Instead of paying someone to walk your dog or look after whatever which animal you have do it yourself and don't rush it making them feel valuable and worthy to you. Teach your pet tricks or buy it a toy to play with so it can enjoy time when you are away

It is also very important to give a pet freedom like letting a cat outside maybe slowly so it doesn't run away or gets lost and let a dog off it's lead in a park and let a caged animal out from time to time. This will help show them the world and let them run free. How would you like being locked in-doors all day? This wi

Another great thing you could do is take your pet to an event for pets, for example my grandma took her pug to a pug festival

So Izzy (her pug) can socialize with other dogs like herself. This will bring your dog a lot of happiness and enjoyment as they will be able to play ~~with~~ see they aren't the ~~only version of~~ aren't alone in the world. Another great thing you can do for a pet is teach it tricks like a parrot how to talk ~~for~~, a dog how to roll over ~~a~~ or a cat how to climb obstacles. This is more bonding time with your pet again makes them feel appreciated and lucky.

~~Doing all 8~~ The last thing you should do ~~for~~ a pet is research what meals are best ~~for~~ it and how much it should be allowed a day without over or under feeding it as a healthy diet will make your pet live as long as it can and ~~make~~ you won't accidentally feed it something that it shouldn't have like chocolate with dogs as it can make your pet seriously ill.

So now you know ~~that~~ how to look after your pet, ~~follow your~~ treat it right, feed it right and don't abuse it otherwise it might bite. Thanks for listening.

The candidate begins by drawing explicitly on one of the texts in the reading section. Although the writing tasks are loosely related to the texts in the reading section, there is no requirement to make explicit links but the candidate does so effectively here.

The candidate uses a style that is suitable for the task, sometime persuasive and sometimes advisory. The use of the second person pronoun 'you' creates a sense of audience but there is no reference to context so it could be mistaken for a written text rather than a spoken text. The candidate uses complex vocabulary which is spelled accurately and complex sentences which are controlled successfully. More effective use of paragraphs, however, would make the development of ideas clearer and more coherent.

Where paragraphs are used, there are simple discourse markers between them such as 'lastly' and 'so' which begin to guide the reader. Between sentences, however, the progression of ideas is less clear and punctuation is sometimes inaccurate. A comma splice is used on several occasions. Overall, the response is effective because it has a suitable style and a clear overall structure. At sentence level, however, there are too many inconsistencies in punctuation for a higher mark to be awarded.

Question 6

6   Write an article for a travel magazine to describe your dramatic encounter with an animal.

In your article you should:

- explain where the encounter with the animal took place
- describe what happened when you encountered the animal
- explain what made the encounter so dramatic.   **[40]***

....

....

The magazine article genre is a task which candidates enjoy but the conventions of the genre are quite loose. A magazine may contain a wide variety of types of writing so examiners are instructed to be open-minded and reward any plausible approach.

Many candidates approached the task as a piece of narrative writing in the first person centred on a dramatic moment when the narrator encountered an animal. Others chose to address an imagined regular readership with whom they had a synthetic ongoing relationship.

Most candidates wrote a response of a suitable length – about three pages of the answer booklet. A few, however, spent so long setting the scene that the dramatic encounter with an animal had to be rushed through at the end.

Overall, candidates responded well to this task. The most successful candidates set the scene effectively and moved quickly to the encounter with the animal which was described in dramatic detail. The candidates then left themselves time for the narrator to reflect on the experience.

Exemplar 6

6) In today's weekly issue, and I will be writing about my recent trip to the beautiful Maldives. Have you ever been? Fresh sea food, dazzling beaches and the rhythmic clapping of the ocean oscillations what is there not to love?

However, a certain day on this trip made me want to run and never look back. It was a stunning evening, the sky was dyed deep crimson by the splendid sun. I was taking my routine walk on the beach, until I spotted something truly terrifying...

~~Engulfed~~ Engulfed and completely induced in it's heat and triumph the monster turned to face me. It was a bear-sized monkey or chimpanzee or something! The demented stare that followed felt like a lifetime; blood of it's poor prey dripping from it's shark-like teeth terrified me. My own blood pulsating, hands shaking, sweat dripping into my vest for cover - was this the end?

Anxious and petrified, I stood as still as a lapost - I knew i couldn't out run the thing, or could I? I will have you all know that I actually come first place in a lot of my sports days in the 100 meter race as a child! (By 'a lot', I mea once). It felt as if we

were in a perpetual ~~staring~~ staring contest. I felt like screaming, but i knew I couldn't. One wrong move could have spelled the end of your favorite travel magazine writer! Luckily, it ~~wasn't~~ was not

The pulsating adrenaline was still high as my flight or flight response was activated, and ~~yes~~ yes I only have flight or flight settings.

The stretched predator began to move towards me. Slowly scaling the palm trees, meticulously calculating his next move. As it began to move closer, I thought of everything that mattered most to me: family, close friends, my ~~column~~ weekly column. In that moment I truly appreciated the fortues of my life.

~~_____~~ Extremely quickly, these fortues were only amplified. As

the creature began to approach me,
my repugnance faded away. The bear-
sized creature was no longer so bear-sized,
and began became just a regular monkey.
Blood dripping from his fangs onto the

sand was actually the blood of a
pomegranate! How could I have
been so deluded? As the monkey swung
from palm tree to the next, I no
longer felt my insides devouring themselves
so that the monkey could not.

Joyous and reflective, I continued my
stroll on the beach and enjoyed
my evening. This signalled end of
the end of one of my most dramatic
experiences.

The candidate establishes form, audience and purpose very clearly in the first paragraph. There is a reference to the latest issue of a travel magazine and direct address to the audience in the candidate explains the purpose of the piece of writing.

The candidate writes in an effective and engaging descriptive style. The adventurous vocabulary and varied sentence structure is enjoyable to read and creates a vivid setting for the account. The candidate does not dwell too long on setting the scene, however, but moves quickly to the moment of encounter.

The dramatic description of the terrifying creature encountered by the narrator is somewhat undermined by several humorous asides which foreshadow the outcome of the encounter. The revelation that the terrifying animal is, in fact, harmless us well-managed.

The length of the piece is well-judged with enough detail to engage but not so much that the main point of the task is forgotten. Ambitious vocabulary and complex sentence structures are used and, despite a few lapses, worthy of full marks for AO6.

Supporting you

(sidebar)

Supporting you

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