



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Specimen Paper Answers

Paper 2 Writing

Paper 3 Language Analysis

Paper 4 Language Topics

Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language 9093

For examination from 2021



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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level 9093 English Language, and to show examples of very good answers.

We have selected questions from the Specimen Papers for examination from 2021.

In this booklet, we have provided answers and examiner comments for:

- Specimen Paper 2 Writing: Questions 1(a) and 1(b)
- Specimen Paper 3 Language Analysis: Question 1
- Specimen Paper 4 Language Topics: Question 2.

Each question is followed by an example of a high-level answer with an examiner comment on performance. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and how they could improve.

The mark schemes for the Specimen Papers are available to download from the School Support Hub www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

2021 Specimen Papers 02, 03 and 04

2021 Specimen Papers Mark Schemes 02, 03 and 04

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are also available on the School Support Hub www.cambridgeinternational.org/support.

Assessment at a glance

Paper 2 Writing

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

Candidates may not use dictionaries.

The question paper is set out in two sections:

- In **Section A** there is **one** compulsory question which is divided into two parts – **Question 1(a)** and **Question 1(b)**. Candidates must answer both parts.
- In **Section B**, candidates are required to answer **one** question from a choice of three.

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

In Paper 2, candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of written forms. They should understand the significance of audience in writing and reading texts and the ways in which genre, purpose and context affect the meaning of texts.

Candidates should be able to:

- write for a specific audience and purpose to respond to the question
- use an appropriate structure
- organise their writing to achieve specific effects
- express ideas accurately and clearly at word and sentence level
- reflect upon and evaluate the qualities of candidates' own writing, including aspects of purpose, form and audience.

Paper 2 assessment objectives (AO)

AO2 Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes.

AO3 Analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.

Paper 3 Language Analysis

Written Paper, 2 hours 15 minutes, 50 marks

Candidates may not use dictionaries.

Candidates are required to answer two compulsory questions:

- Question 1 in Section A (**Language change**)
- Question 2 in Section B (**Child language acquisition**).

Externally assessed.

25% of the A Level

In Paper 3, **Question 1**, candidates should be able to show knowledge and understanding of how the English language has developed from Early Modern English to Contemporary English. Learners should be familiar with concepts and terminology related to language change, theories and theorists of language change, *n*-gram graphs representing changes in language use over time, and word tables derived from corpus data.

Candidates should be able to:

- analyse unseen texts
- interpret and analyse *n*-gram graphs and corpus data relating to language change
- use context and relevant theories that relate to language change.

In Paper 3, **Question 2**, candidates should be able to show knowledge and understanding of the main stages of early development in child language acquisition. Learners should be familiar with the different functions of childrens' language, theories and theorists of child language acquisition, and the conventions and features of unscripted conversation and spoken language transcription.

Candidates should be able to:

- analyse spoken language transcripts as examples of child language acquisition
- interpret and analyse conversation involving children between the ages 0 and 8
- use context and relevant theories and concepts relating to child language acquisition.

Paper 3 assessment objectives (AO)

AO1 Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts.

AO2 Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes.

AO4 Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches.

AO5 Analyse and synthesise language data from a variety of sources.

Paper 4 Language Topics

Written Paper, 2 hours 15 minutes, 50 marks

Candidates may not use dictionaries.

Candidates are required to answer two compulsory questions:

- Question 1 in Section A (**English in the world**)
- Question 2 in Section B (**Language and the self**).

The paper is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge.

25% of the A Level

In Paper 4, **Question 1**, candidates should be able to show knowledge and understanding of theories, theorists and studies relating how English has developed as a global language. Learners should be able to discuss the historical developments that have led to English becoming a world-wide language, varieties of English and relevant ethical considerations. Responses should show candidates' considerations in a logical analytical essay.

Candidates should be able to:

- read and demonstrate critical understanding of unseen texts relating to 'English in the world'
- select and analyse ideas and examples from the text
- relate ideas and examples to theories, theorists and studies from their wider research.

In Paper 4, **Question 2**, candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories, theorists and studies relating to the key concepts of innateness and learning. They should be able to discuss the relationship between language and thought, and the relationship between language and social identity.

Candidates should be able to:

- read and demonstrate critical understanding of unseen texts relating to 'Language and the self'
- select and analyse pertinent ideas and examples from the texts
- relate these ideas and examples to theories, theorists and studies.

Paper 4 assessment objectives (AO)

AO1 Read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts.

AO2 Write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes.

AO4 Demonstrate understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches.

Paper 2

Question 1

Your head teacher has asked you to produce a leaflet called *Leaving Home*. The leaflet will be aimed at older teenagers who are going to live in another town or city to go to university.

- (a) Write the text for the leaflet, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, give advice and guidance on how to manage living away from your family for the first time. (15 marks)
- (b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set by your head teacher. (10 marks)

Specimen answer 1(a)

So, congrats! You've aced your A levels, and now it's the time you've been waiting for. Time to wave bye bye to your bro, sis, Ma, Pa and pet goldfish and head off for Universityville, Freedom County, zip code IND3P3ND3NC3. Yay! But before you pack your lifetime collection of odd socks and a year's supply of chocolate, hang on a minute and have a look at some valuable advice from me, your friendly expert Uni Preparation Guide.

Tempted to squander? Try not to blunder!

Too posh to look after your dosh? Or in too much of a daze to save? At Uni, you'll be in charge of your own money for the first time in your life. It may feel pretty amazing to have all that filthy lucre to manage. Keep a track of everything you spend so you don't run out of cash when you're going to need it most. Always make sure you've allowed enough for rent, food, books and travel before you're even tempted to treat yourself to that extra-special customised Porsche.

JK! For that you'll have to wait until you've graduated...

Eating like Einstein

We all know that students need brainpower, brains need food and food equals fuel, but what kind of fuel are you going to feed that thinking machine inside your head? Burgers? Fries? Ice cream? Cake? Uh-oh! Take-aways are super-high in empty calories and astronomical in cost. Instead, take time to select fresh fruit and veg to cook yourself; choose pasta for slow-release carbs. Eating healthily, you'll feel good, learn more efficiently and you won't be allowing unhealthy choices to chow down on your budget!

Tickety tock

No doubt having made all those new friends, you'll be desperate to become the life and soul of the party, but late nights and disco fever can take their toll. Sure, use your planner to detail which nights you're meeting your mates, league match fixtures and hot dates with the girl who sits on the front bench of the lecture theatre, but plot in your lecture timetable, seminar dates and assignment deadlines first. If you manage your time carefully, you won't need to give your fave band's next gig a miss because you've an essay to hand in the next day – you'll have that essay proof-read and printed, smug as you like.

Good luck, peeps! And enjoy!

Examiner comment

Question 1(a)

The candidate has chosen a lively and engaging style in which to address the specified audience, of *older teenagers*, as described in the question. There is much use of ellipsis and rhythmic structures, and informal, popular colloquial language, which targets the audience well. It is clear that the candidate is confident in using literary features such as alliteration, assonance and end-rhyme, and a range of linguistic and rhetorical devices, including direct address, questioning technique, fragmentation, abbreviation and play on a contemporary semiotic system.

However, the candidate also addresses the secondary audience, the head teacher, and juxtaposes short structures with lengthier and more complex sentences. This demonstrates that the candidate has understood that the content of the leaflet needs to contain serious messages regarding leaving home to go to university, as well as using stylistic devices which would attract and maintain the attention of its primary audience. Marks were therefore awarded at Level 5 because the target audience was fully engaged and the content was fully relevant.

The response contains a high level of accuracy of expression and a wide range of lexical content which is required in Level 5. Although much of the lexical content is high frequency, chosen with the primary audience in mind, low frequency items from the lexical field are included throughout each paragraph. This shows that the candidate has understood that the purpose of the leaflet is to advise potential university students.

Graphologically, the candidate has set out the text logically, with an introductory paragraph under a main heading. The candidate uses subheadings to maintain the style of writing that the candidate has chosen and to separate each individual point of the main content of the text. This makes the text clear and addresses the overall required form of the leaflet.

Marks awarded = 14 out of 15 (AO2)

How the candidate could have improved the answer

Full marks could have been awarded if the candidate had included ideas on the fact that the *older teenagers* in the question were about to *live in another town or city*. However, the candidate has carefully selected three topics on which to offer advice and has fulfilled the brief of using no more than 400 words. Therefore, the task has been fully achieved and the criteria of Level 5 has been met.

Specimen answer 1(b): Reflective commentary

I decided to write the text for my leaflet in the same chatty style as that used in popular magazines which are aimed at teenagers, giving a light-hearted and humorous feel to the text whilst offering serious messages. My reason for the humour was to attract and maintain the attention of the target audience of older teenagers; on the other hand I felt that the information and advice the leaflet was offering needed to be sensible and worthwhile, as the original instructions had come from the headteacher – therefore he also needed to approve of what I wrote.

The structure of the leaflet is set into separate paragraphs, to make the overall graphology of the leaflet clear and easy to read. I used subheadings which have catchy titles including ellipsis and rhetorical question ('Tempted to squander?') coupled with a rhyming imperative ('Try not to squander!') and alliteration ('Eating like Einstein' and 'Tickety tock . . .') as I felt they needed to match the overall style of writing, rather than just state 'Healthy Eating', for example, at the top of the third paragraph which would seem too formal for the writing style I chose.

I used second person address throughout to create an intimate relationship between writer and audience. I wanted to enhance this by creating a very informal register, with flattery ('congrats') and colloquial terms such as 'JK', 'Yay!' and 'peeps' which were used to position the reader as an equal. The inclusion of 'zip code IND3P3ND3NC3' is set out to resemble text-speak which also lowers the level of formality and is in capitals to imply shouting and excitement.

My sentence structures include snappy fragments, 'So, congrats!' with the low register discourse marker opening the leaflet but more complex sentences containing the more serious messages, such as 'Keep a track of everything . . .' (paragraph 2) are positioned inside each paragraph. Hopefully this juxtaposition of structures acknowledges the fact that the leaflet is meant to appeal by being humorous whilst containing meaningful information.

Some of the features I used were intended to enhance the feeling of excitement about going to university. Therefore 'Too posh to look after your dosh? or in too much of a daze to save?' include rhyme on 'posh' and 'dosh' and assonance in 'daze' and 'save' inside rhetorical questions with ellipsis, to create an interesting rhythm. However, I also used hyperbole in 'super-high' and 'astronomical' to reinforce my warning about eating fast food in paragraph 3. By combining these features, I wanted to give an overall impression of everything that going to university might mean, which should be an exciting but maybe also a tricky time for young people leaving home for the first time.

On reflection, I feel that I have achieved my aims in my writing. I wondered at first whether I had chosen too many colloquial features and not enough low frequency lexis or formal grammatical structures although when I considered that my main purpose was to get teenagers to read my leaflet, when I read through my writing I felt that I had a good balance of informality of style and formality of sensible advice.

Examiner comment

Question 1(b)

The candidate identifies the ways in which the style and language were used to attract and maintain the attention of the audience and includes examples from the text in a selective manner. The candidate describes the stylistic devices chosen very clearly, confidently using a range of technical terminology with accuracy. The detailed descriptions of the candidate's choices are explained, including reasons for why the choices were made which makes this analysis very sophisticated.

The commentary is structured logically with separate paragraphs containing the individual points that the candidate makes. The structure of the commentary is sophisticated as the paragraphs move through ideas on form, structure, and language, demonstrating that the candidate understands how choices made have shaped meaning for the specified audience.

The candidate effectively reflects and evaluates the different levels of formality of their language choices. The candidate could have commented more fully on the fact that, although there is a purposefully low level of formality in the response, the writing should also appeal to an educated audience. This is evident in the use of the lexical field of education, for example, 'lecture', 'seminar', 'assignment' and 'proof-read'. This matches the audience of someone who has recently completed A levels and intends to go to university through several instances of low frequency lexis ('filthy lucre', 'efficiently').

Marks awarded = 9 out of 10 marks (AO3)

Total marks awarded for Question 1 = 23 out of 25

How the candidate could have improved the answer

To achieve full marks, the candidate could have written in a more concise style to avoid wasting words (and therefore exam time) – at times, the reflective commentary itself is written in the same 'chatty style' of the writing it describes. The candidate could have therefore written more formally. Nonetheless, the task is very successfully completed and the candidate achieves Level 5.

Common mistakes

Some candidates do not consider how the marks are allocated. It is important that candidates know that **Question 1(a)** has **15 marks** and **Question 1(b)** has **10 marks** so that they can plan their time in the exam effectively.

With regard to planning, some candidates spend so much time making a detailed plan that they do not leave enough examination time for the writing required. Although a plan is useful, it should be brief and used as a tool for reference only.

Candidates do not always make sure that their work is organised logically. In the example above, the leaflet is set out using well-defined paragraphs with a clear separation of ideas. It is a common mistake to include illustrations in the response as candidates feel that this will show the specified form – instead candidates should use the examination time to its maximum by concentrating on language choices relating to audience and meaning.

Often, candidates do not select examples from their own writing carefully enough. They should use one or two examples only to support each point made in their commentary, and not quote whole sentences from their work to support an idea.

When writing a commentary, candidates should write concisely and in an appropriate register. It is a common mistake to write the commentary in the same style and register used in Question 1(a). Question 1(b) should always be more formal, although using the first person is completely acceptable, as it should detail the personal choices made by the candidate.

At times, learners only describe the features that they have used in Questions 1(a). However, it is important to give reasons for any language choices made and to evaluate how successful their choices have been.

Paper 3

Question 1

Read **Texts A, B and C**

Analyse how **Text A** exemplifies the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. In your answer, you should refer to specific details from **Texts, A, B and C**, as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of language change.

Text A

Excerpt from a diary written in 1677 in which a writer named John Evelyn describes a visit to a palace

Since first I was at this place, I found things exceedingly improv'd. It is seated in a bottome between two gracefull swellings, the maine building being now in ye figure of a Greek II with foure pavilions, two at each corner, and a breake in the front, rail'd and balustred¹ at the top, where I caused huge jars to be plac'd full of earth to keep them steady upon their pedestals between the statues, which make as good a shew as if they were of stone, and tho' the building be of brick, and but two stories besides cellars, and garrets² cover'd with blue slate, yet there is roome enough for a full court, the offices and out-houses being so ample and well dispos'd. The King's apartment is magnificently furnish'd. There are many excellent pictures of the greate masters. The gallery is a pleasant, noble roome; in the breake, or middle is a billiard table, but the wainscot³ being of firr, and painted, does not please me so well as Spanish oake without paint. The chapel is pretty, the porch descending to the gardens. The orange garden is very fine, and leads into the green-house, at ye end of which is a hall to eate in, and the conservatory some hundred feete long, adorn'd with mapps, as the other side is with the heads of the Caesars ill cut in alabaster: above are several apartments for my Lord, Lady and Dutchesse, with kitchens and other offices below in a lesser form; lodgings for servants, all distinct, for them to retire to when they please, and would be in private, and no communication with the palace, which tells me he will wholly resign to his sonn-in-law and daughter, that charming young creature. The canall running under my lady's dressing-room chamber window is full of carps and foule which come and are fed there.

Notes:

1 *balustred*: supported by a pillar

2 *garrets*: top-floor or attic rooms

3 *wainscot*: wooden panelling on the lower part of the walls of a room

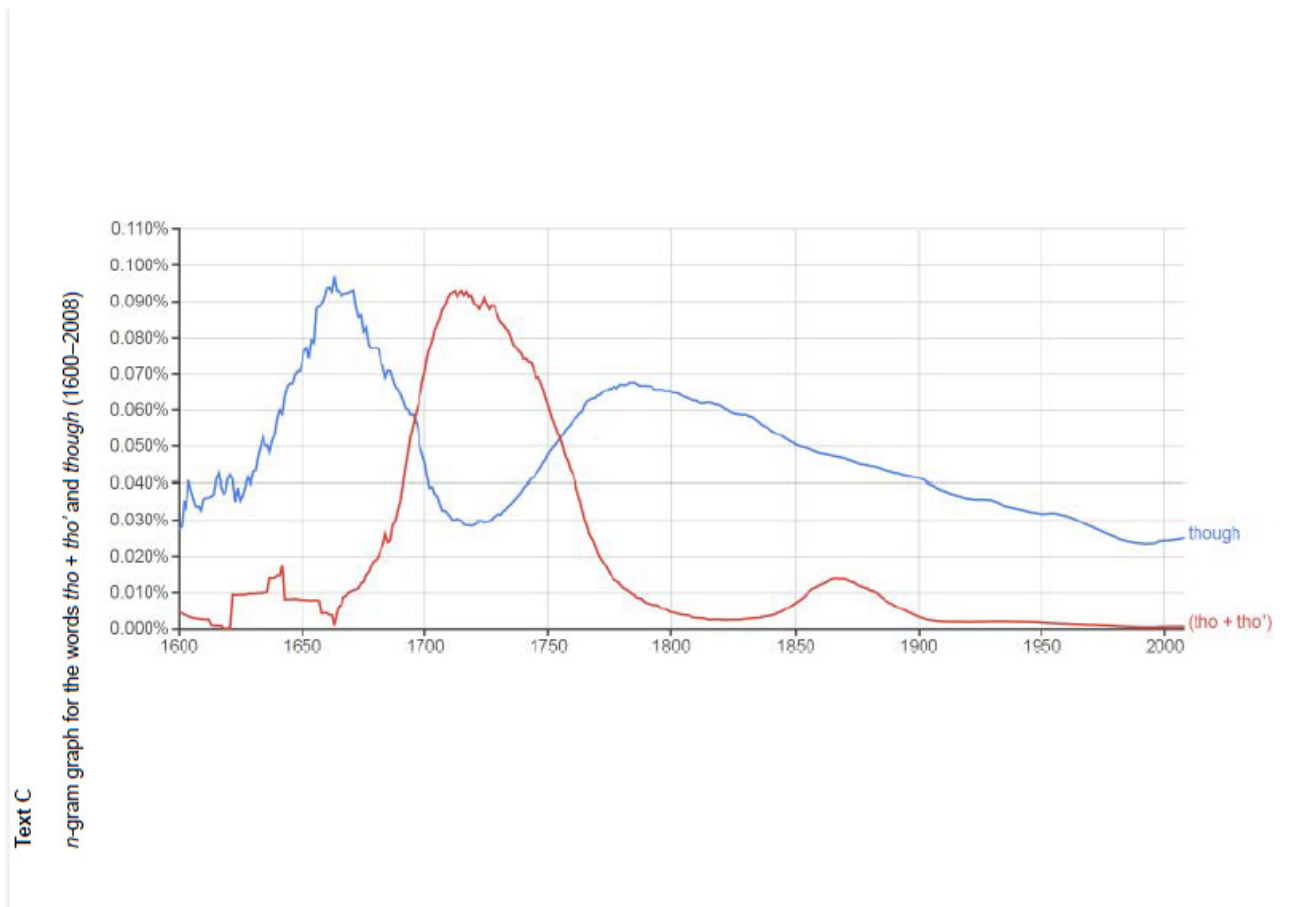
Text B

The top five collocates for 'room' and 'chamber' from the British National Corpus (1980s-1993)

'room'	'chamber'
dining	commerce
living	deputies
sitting	council
door	music
across	orchestra

Text C

n-gram graph for the words *tho* + *tho'* and *though* (1600-2008)



Specimen answer

The excerpt from John Evelyn's diary, written in 1677, shows how texts of the time were written in a continuous block, rather than being separated into paragraphs as we are used to seeing in contemporary writing. The graphology gives today's reader the impression that the text is difficult to read and rather dense, although since Text A is an excerpt from a private diary, the continuous block could also be a reflection of the flow of the writer's thoughts. Contemporary readers may expect paragraph breaks at lines 7 (after 'well-dispos'd') and 11 (after 'without paint') to mark a logical separation of ideas.

However, it is less clear as to where a break should occur from that point onwards as there is a very long sentence separated by colon (after 'alabaster') in line 14 and semi-colon (after 'form') in line 16, and which contains further clauses separated by commas, using the conjunction 'and' on multiple occasions. Although the genre of the writing, in the form of the diary, could influence the stream of consciousness effect which is gained from this long sentence, a contemporary writer may tend to use short or even fragmented sentences to gain a similar effect.

Text A demonstrates how orthography in written and printed English has changed over time to reflect changes in pronunciation. In line 5, an example of what Otto Jespersen described as 'The Great Vowel Shift' which took place between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries continued to affect spelling, is in the word 'shew' which we now expect to see expressed as 'show'. Similarly, at line 6 in Text A, 'stories' (meaning different levels in a building) is today expressed as 'storeys', changing the spelling of the vowel – indeed the orthography of these two different words now indicates two very different meanings.

It is clear from Text A that orthographical changes were continuing during the seventeenth century, as the text contains examples of expression of the definite article in two ways: 'ye' and 'the'. At the time of writing, due to technological development in the printing industry, following the introduction of the first printing press by Caxton in 1476, it was standard practice for printers to use 'ye' to spell the definite article. This is similar to what Hockett described in his Random Fluctuation Theory, where language has some form of instability – in this example it is the instability of the way in which writing could be printed due to inadequate technology – and the language presented is as a response to the fluctuating context (where the fluctuating context is the on-going development of the printing technology).

Some examples of how morphological change affected English orthography over time are provided in Text A. These are indicated by doubling the consonant at the end of adjectives such as 'gracefull' and nouns such as 'canall'. Contemporary English has also discarded the grapheme 'e' used as an inflected ending: examples from the text include 'bottome' (noun), 'foure' (adjective) and 'keepe' (verb).

It is interesting, however, to see that although written English of 1677 used these inflected word endings which made words longer, there are examples of apostrophes of elision used in the past tenses of verbs such as 'improv'd', 'dispos'd' and 'furnish'd' to shorten words to gain an effect as if they were being spoken – a feature which also is no longer in use. Moreover, Text A shows a shortened spelling of 'tho' '. Text C compares the way in which the contemporary

Specimen answer, continued

spelling of 'though' has changed over time, indicating clearly that English written at same time as Evelyn was producing his diary tended to use 'tho' or 'tho', thus it is likely that Evelyn was observing the emerging fashionable writing style of the time. Text C is an effective illustration of changing spelling of vowel or diphthong in its comparison of 'tho' and 'though', where contemporary English has reverted to the lengthier spelling. 'Tho' reaches a peak of 0.095% at around the time that Evelyn was writing before becoming obsolete at around 1980. Text C also shows that the present-day spelling of 'though' was used extensively at around 1650, but underwent a fall in use before becoming standardised during the nineteenth century. It is particularly interesting, however, that the electronic communication used now reverts to the short spelling of 'tho' (although without the apostrophe) therefore an *n*-gram graph constructed at, say, twenty years from now, could show a very different image with a resurgence of use in the form 'tho' as change in the English language develops further.

The lexical field of Text A concerns architecture and the domestic use of space. The lexical items are not necessarily low frequency to a contemporary audience, although nouns to describe domestic spaces may not be used in the same way as they are used today. However, clearly Evelyn is describing a grand establishment. For example, whereas the two nouns selected in Text B – 'roome' and 'chamber' are used synonymously in Text A, over time their meanings have undergone a pragmatic shift somewhat as Text B demonstrates. The top five collocates from the British National Corpus for 'room' indicate modern domestic life, with the first three (dining room, living room and sitting room) implying the intimacy of a family home. However, the collocates for 'chamber' indicate more formal situations or groups, such as a chamber orchestra, council chamber or chamber of commerce. Thus, 'chamber' can now be perceived as having a higher linguistic status than 'room' and has an amelioration pertaining to education or government.

One reason for the divergence in meaning of these words could be their etymology: 'room' is Germanic and entered Anglo Saxon as part of the lingua franca shared between invaders and natives, and has maintained its use through early and middle English to the present day. On the other hand 'chamber' is from the French 'chambre' and perhaps retained the elevated status of the French language which was brought to England in the Norman invasion of 1066. Other examples of French etymology from Text A and which are used to today but in more formal or grand instances are 'balustred' (which has become 'balustraded') and 'pavilion'.

According to Shaw and McKay in their cultural transmission theory, the different pathways that language is transmitted and received creates levels of understanding and bias across cultures. The way in which the meanings of 'room' and 'chamber' have diverged over time are examples of language transmitted and received through cultural change and development.

In text A, the use of the word 'apartment', also of French etymology, indicates an area in the palace separated for private occupation of family members. Today, the term implies a dwelling which is of a similar type although of higher status than a flat and thus is another example of divergence over time in pragmatic use of language.

Examiner comment

The candidate applied a number of frameworks to analyse the text, looking at graphology, orthography, morphology, lexis, etymology and pragmatics. This is an effective way of working through analysis because it helped the candidate to structure their writing. Each paragraph leads logically on to the next. Candidates are not required to use any set structure for their response, although using a range of frameworks, as can be seen in this response, helped the candidate to write an insightful analysis of the data from all three sources. The candidate could have analysed grammar, syntax or semantics because Text A has many features from all frameworks. Candidates should first read the texts carefully before deciding how they are going to analyse the text as this may change depending on the text.

There is synthesis of evidence from all three texts. For example, comments on spelling in Text A flow naturally into analysis of morphology, and this in turn enables the candidate to support the analysis with reference to Text C. Similarly, the analysis of the lexical field narrows to lexical content, and points are supported by reference to Text B. It is clear that the candidate has detailed knowledge and understanding of how *n*-gram graphs and word tables are used in language analysis. Comments on Text C compare the data with the language in Text A and include a discussion on contemporary and future use of English. By doing this, the candidate is thinking creatively, addressing AO2 as well as AO5. The candidate discusses etymology in detail when referencing Text B and the candidate has selected 'apartment' from Text A to compare which provides further depth to the comparison of Texts A and B, therefore fully addressing AO5.

The candidate effectively refers to theories and theorists throughout their response. *Random Fluctuation Theory* and *Cultural Transmission Theory* are useful here and the candidate shows that they understand how and why they are appropriate to the analysis. By integrating these theories into the analysis, the candidate is able to develop the discussion fully enough to gain marks at Level 5 although the later discussion on Shaw and McKay could have been more detailed. Further knowledge and understanding is demonstrated by the candidate's reference to Caxton and the on-going technological developments affecting change over time in printed presentation of the English language. This reference is concise and clear. Similarly, the candidate refers to Jespersen's study of the changing use of vowels and how it affected spelling in printed English. The candidate clearly shows knowledge and understanding of how English is continuing to change. In both of these references, the candidate does not simply state the history of English, making sure that the references are brief and appropriate. Therefore the content remains fully relevant, with ideas being developed in a sophisticated manner.

Expression is sophisticated throughout the response, with a high level of accuracy. Use of technical terminology maintains the register required for marks at Level 5. There is no formal conclusion to the response. Although a conclusion would have given an overall sense of completion to an otherwise well-crafted essay, it is better to leave one out rather than add a conclusion that is irrelevant.

Total marks awarded = 23 out of 25

How the candidate could have improved the answer

For full marks in AO2, the candidate could have provided a final paragraph that concluded all the analysis. For full marks in AO4, the candidate could have developed their discussion on Shaw and McKay further. The response gained full marks in AO5 for the insightful selection of items for analysis and the sophisticated way in which the data was used.

Common mistakes

Candidates often do not bear in mind how the assessment objectives are weighted and therefore do not spend the appropriate amount of time on each one.

It is a common mistake for candidates to write in a less formal register, using a limited range of technical terminology. Writing should be appropriate to the audience and purpose and should use a wide range of technical terminology (AO2).

Candidates commonly spend much of the examination time proving a detailed account of the history and development of the English. This often makes the material irrelevant. Candidates should keep references to history brief and instead apply their knowledge of early developments appropriately to the texts presented (AO4). Any knowledge of history should be relevant to the analysis of the text and should not simply be a discussion of the time period that the text is from.

Often, candidates are too brief in mentioning theories and theorists by name and do not explain how and why they are fully relevant to the analysis (AO4).

Candidates often do not select relevant evidence for analysis from Text A so they cannot make successful, relevant comparisons with the data from Texts B and C (AO5). Candidates need to mention all three texts in their response and they should use Texts B and C to support ideas for analysis from Text A.

Paper 4

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from a blog on the website of SOAS, a college of the University of London. It was posted in 2017.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect social identity. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of Language and the self.

The rise of Multicultural London English, innit?

Received Pronunciation is under attack. An early threat to the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England dates back to the 1980s in the form of Estuary English. A more recent – and perhaps more potent – assault comes in the form of Multicultural London English (MLE).

MLE is a sociolect of English, in as much as it is a dialect specific to a particular social class. It is predominantly spoken by young, working class people in the multicultural neighbourhoods of inner-city London and its suburbs.

In a newspaper article, Dr Chris Lucas, Senior Lecturer at SOAS University of London, describes the spread of MLE beyond the capital: 'London accents have spread beyond London and are spreading still. You're seeing more and more features of this Multicultural London English being adopted and blended with the local, traditional, working-class accents of whichever city it might be – Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham.'

The power of cool

The term 'cool' to signify something that is fashionable and stylish may be thought to have its origins in the Jazz Age of the 1930s; however, the term was being used at least a century beforehand to similarly signify something that was desirable.

The spread of MLE beyond London can be seen as a triumph of the 'cool', with language taken from Grime, Street and Hip-Hop music and from a gang culture characterised in films such as *AdULTHOOD* and *KiDULTHOOD*, becoming fashionable in youth culture.

However, the rise of MLE in London has not been so much as a result of the influence of popular culture, but has occurred naturally due to an inner-city generation's exposure to a variety of accents, foreign languages, and pronunciations, which have shaped its everyday spoken language.

Loanwords

The use of MLE words which derive from other languages is significant. For example, the suffix – *dem* as a plural marker in words such as *mandem* or *gyaldem*, or the term *dutty* to mean something that is either dirty, bad, or ugly, both come from Jamaican Creole. The concept of loanwords is nothing new in language: the English language would be nothing like as rich without the loanwords it has acquired from its neighbours, far and wide.

Urban British English (UBE)

Language is ever evolving. Even during the relatively short time it has taken for MLE to become established, spread and now studied, it is also becoming redundant. As MLE gains popularity beyond its original catchment area of London and the Home Counties, so its relevance is diminished. So RIP MLE; and hello UBE.

Specimen answer

Language has an important social function in that it can generate and maintain identification of oneself and one's place within, and a feeling of belonging to, a certain social group. By creating a language style, emerging social groups communicate by means of a sociolect and in turn that sociolect conveys its culture and values. The extract begins by using a lexical field of war to describe how the use of what it describes as 'the standard accent' of Received Pronunciation (RP) became less popular than what Rosewarne described as 'Estuary English'(EE) in the 1980s. RP remains the accent of the British acrolect – where the specific social group is the British aristocracy and highly educated members of the public. RP maintains its position in society, however there are signs that it continues with some phonological modifications inherited from the rise of EE which was initially heard spoken by lower class groups from the geographical regions surrounding the river Thames in south east England. Media evidence has shown that younger members of the British royal family are now being heard to use features of EE including glottal stop, intrusive rhotic (Labov) and /l/ vocalisation, despite pejorative connotations and perhaps in an effort to re-popularise what some may feel to be an out-dated institution. Wells challenged the term 'Estuary English', as did Trudgill, with both theorists arguing that the phenomenon of spread of changing accents was not new and that EE, although including phonetic features of the accent of working-class London was spreading at varying rates and levels into areas beyond south east England.

However, as the extract states, MLE is not an accent but a dialect, which by definition uses a different lexicon and alters syntax to shape and reflect the identity of its social group. Dialect is a more in-depth clue to social identity than the phonetic features of accent. As the extract states, MLE is used by 'young, working-class people in the multicultural neighbourhoods of inner-city London and its suburbs'. Thus, there are four elements which identify speakers of MLE: age, social class, cross-culture and region.

With regard to age, it may be youth culture making MLE a fashionable, or as the extract states 'cool', sociolect although fashion is only ever temporary and is always overtaken by the next fashionable influence. This is true of all slang and much colloquialism which can quickly sound archaic as new terms enter a language. The extract identifies genres of popular music which have influenced contemporary youth culture to use MLE but in its final paragraph states that MLE is 'becoming redundant', possibly as quickly as new genres of music have become fashionable among young adults. Thus, there is the idea that it is a shared sense of culture-specific values which shape the social group, with language features of that shared culture forming the basis of the sociolect.

Social class as a signifier of status appears fundamental to RP, EE and MLE, where RP may be the acrolect, EE becoming the mesolect and MLE seen as emerging from a basilect in stratifications of British society. However, although RP perhaps remains the standard form and therefore might retain overt prestige in any speech community, Labov argues that lower forms of language are used purposefully by some speakers to gain covert prestige, shaping their

Specimen answer, continued

language to gain acceptance by or and be identified with a specific social group. It could be that where a dialect is seen to have covert prestige, especially when it is associated with gang culture popularised in films with a young target audience, then a geographical spread of the dialect occurs. If MLE has been identified as a prestigious dialect, albeit covertly, in the capital city, then it is reasonable to expect that other inner city social groups might also wish to assume the prestige associated with the dialect and adopt it accordingly to enhance the power of the social group, where power is an important aspect of the 'gang culture' mentioned in the extract.

As the extract states, 'the rise of MLE' has been a natural evolution resulting from exposure to contemporary multicultural inner-city life, quoting 'a variety of accents, foreign languages and pronunciations' as features of influence. Where different cultures have met in areas such as inner-city London, convergence (according to Giles) occurs when speakers accommodate each other for mutual understanding. However, the spread of MLE to inner-city areas of other British cities is a form of divergence from traditional speech patterns of those regions for the purpose of gaining covert, although perhaps temporary, prestige. In this way, the divergence shows a wilful departure from one's usual linguistic identity in order to gain status from a new social group by using its speech patterns.

Border crossing and dialect levelling take place on contact with other cultures with new words entering the lexicon, such as the 'mandem' and 'gyaldem' from Jamaican Creole used in the extract to show how borrowing has formed part of MLE. Milroy argues that the phenomenon of koineization happens after cross-cultural contact occurs, creating a new language variety when speakers from other cultures mix their dialects to form a new one. The effect as far as using language to shape and reflect identity is similar to mutual accommodation but mixes features of different dialects, and leads to a completely new dialect. This could account for the emergence of MLE resulting from the 'exposure' occurring in contemporary London defined in the extract.

The extract states that the linguistic diffusion that MLE later experienced has meant that 'its relevance is diminished' and refers to the new term 'Urban British English' to describe the dialect now that MLE has evolved, moving away from London and towards other major British cities. The new term possibly illustrates that speakers of the dialect no longer identify themselves with a specific region, although it is a dialect used in urban areas. This is similar to the way in which Trudgill described the spread of EE in that once features of the general Home Counties accent were being adopted by British people throughout the UK in favour of their own regional accents, the term 'Estuary English' was no longer valid. With the occurrence of diffusion and generalisation, the loss of identity as a resident of the Home Counties also occurred as the British accent became more and more similar nationwide. It is possible that with the transformation of MLE into UBE, then the perceived covert prestige, gang culture power and class status of some speakers will also be lost – and the loss of those features may result in the ability for some to use language to shape and reflect their identity.

Examiner comment

The candidate has used the examination time well to produce a response of the appropriate length, which begins with an effective explanation of how language is important in self-identification and a person's position in a social context. This introduction is an effective start to the essay and the candidate begins the discussion well.

The candidate writes in a sophisticated way and accurately uses a high level of technical terminology. In the first paragraph, the candidate refers to the extract's lexical field but analysis of the stimulus material itself if not required. However, the remainder of the response is fully relevant to the question.

The candidate carefully selected ideas from the extract. The candidate discusses each topic in the same order that they are presented in the extract, moving through a discussion on Received Pronunciation to Estuary English, before talking about Multicultural London English. This gives a clear logic and structure to the response, making it easy to follow. Although the candidate does not provide a formal conclusion, there is a link in to Estuary English in the final paragraph, which draws together the whole response. This approach can sometimes be more effective than a formal conclusion that simply lists points raised in the essay. The response is therefore in Level 5 for AO2.

The candidate demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the text and gives a clear definition of the differences between *accent* and *dialect*. They are able to state why and how the adoption of MLE *shapes and reflects* social identity. Moreover, the candidate uses this phrase throughout the response so it is clear that the candidate is using the question to maintain focus on how the ideas in the extract can be used to start a discussion.

As the response develops, the candidate refers specifically to *young, working-class people in the multicultural neighbourhoods of inner-city London* and uses each of these four elements to develop a detailed discussion of how and why age, social class, cultural contact and region of origin affect a discourse community and result in the creation of a new dialect. Therefore, the response demonstrates the sophisticated understanding of, and insightful reference to, text required at Level 5 of AO1.

With regard to the understanding of linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches, the candidate refers to the theories of Wells and Trudgill and contrasts these to the views of Rosewarne in the opening paragraph. They offer some detailed description of each theory. There is also a detailed description of some of the phonological features of Estuary English, which demonstrates the candidate's depth of knowledge, although the undeveloped mention of Labov is out of place and not appropriate to the context. The candidate does not name *Giles' Accommodation Theory*, although elements such as *convergence* and *divergence* are described, leading to a description of *Milroy's Koineization* which increases the depth of the response effectively. Overall, the candidate demonstrates the sophisticated theoretical knowledge and understanding appropriate to AO4 at Level 5.

The extract provides a range of points for discussion and the candidate's selection of evidence provides a detailed response, rather than make short references to all of the points raised in the stimulus material. Other, equally effective discussions could have involved the use of specific loanwords in the English language, the constant change of the sociolect continuum, or the ability to codeswitch and reasons why some speakers do this. Candidates should select from the text according to the depths of their knowledge and understanding, answering as fully as possible, and not work through any prescribed list that they assume will be present in the text.

Total marks awarded = 23 out of 25

How the candidate could have improved the answer

There is some reference to slang and colloquialism, implying that the candidate has a misplaced inference from the text regarding those linguistic features. This detracts from the overall effectiveness of the response, which would otherwise have gained full marks at AO1. Full marks have been awarded for AO2 assessment objective because the response is crafted in a sophisticated manner with an equally sophisticated level of expression. Full marks would have been awarded for AO4 if the candidate had provided a more detailed description of Accommodation Theory.

Common mistakes

Candidates often attempt to analyse the language used in the stimulus material, which is not required by the question. Instead, they should concentrate on providing a developed discussion of the *ideas* contained in the extract provided – otherwise the response will become irrelevant which could result in a loss of focus. The extract is intended to be used as a stimulus for discussion, not a text to be analysed on the basis of language.

Some candidates refer to theories and theories without fully thinking about how relevant they are. Equally, candidates may introduce theorists by name, and not provide a full discussion of how and why the work of a theorist is appropriate to the discussion in hand. In the specimen response above, the candidate has inserted (*Labov*), who did indeed theorise on the intrusive rhotic, but the study was conducted in America and is therefore not relevant as well as being an undeveloped reference.

It is a common mistake in a discursive response to not use technical terminology and to write in a less formal register than might be used in an analytical essay. It is important in Question 2 of Paper 4 to write with sophisticated expression using a linguistic approach to avoid the response becoming too general.

Often, candidates will incorporate lengthy references from the extracts. These are time-consuming so it is important that references are brief, specific and relevant. This will help candidates to develop individual points in an organised fashion.

Some candidates do not develop points fully because they attempt to address all of the points raised by the stimulus material. To avoid a lack of development, candidates should select carefully from the extract to enhance the depth of discussion.

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