

## Aga Khan University Examination Board

### Notes from E-Marking Centre on SSC-I English Compulsory Examination May 2018

#### Introduction:

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Part I (Class IX) English Compulsory. It contains comments on candidate's responses to the 2018 SSC-I Examination, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

#### E-Marking Notes:

This includes overall comments on candidates' performance on every question and *some* specific examples of candidates' responses which support the mentioned comments. Please note that the descriptive comments represent an overall perception of the better and weaker responses as gathered from the e-marking session. However, the candidates' responses shared (where deemed necessary) in this document represent some specific example(s) of the mentioned comments.

The following is a description of the tasks and skills required for fulfillment of those tasks.

Question No	Question Type	Skills Assessed
1 (a,b,c,d)	CRQs on a reading passage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Literal understanding of a reading text</li><li>- Inferential understanding of a reading text</li><li>- Reasoning skills</li></ul>
2 (a,b)	Letter/ Email Writing (informal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ability to write an informal letter/ email to friends/ family</li><li>- Ability to use accurate sentence structure, connective devices, spellings, etc.</li><li>- Ability to develop and organise information in a familiar everyday context</li></ul>
3 (a,b,c)	Essay Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ability to develop a piece of writing with appropriate focus, organisation and purpose</li><li>- Ability to narrate and describe ideas and real/ imaginary events</li><li>- Ability to use accurate sentence structure, connective devices, spellings, etc.</li></ul>

Teachers and candidates should know that examiners may ask questions that address the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in a manner that requires candidates to respond by integrating knowledge, understanding and application skills they have developed by studying the course.

Candidates need to know that the marks allocated to the questions are related to the answer space which is a guide to the length of the required response. A longer response will not in itself lead to higher marks. Writing far beyond the indicated space may reduce the time available for answering other questions.

Candidates need to be familiar with the command words in the SLOs which contain terms commonly used in examination questions. However, candidates should also be aware that not all questions will start with or contain one of the key words. Questions such as ‘how?’, ‘why?’ or ‘to what extent?’ may also be used.

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling, format or factual information.**

#### **Detailed Comments:**

##### **Question 1**

**Comprehension skills** are critical for success in the English Compulsory Examinations. Candidates are expected to be able to engage with a diverse range of texts and demonstrate the ability to retrieve information, draw inferences from what they have read, interpret viewpoints and perspectives and question or critically evaluate it, as required.

Question 1 was based on a reading passage. It had four sub-parts. Candidates were required to understand the reading passage and accordingly answer the questions asked on various aspects of the passage. The criteria against which marks were allotted are detailed understanding of the contents of the passage demonstrated appropriately in the responses and authentic interpretation and discussion of different aspects of the passage. Careful reading of a question, or essay topic, is vital if a student is to attain high marks.

The reading passage was adapted from the story ‘*The Rainbow*’ by D.H. Lawrence. Candidates who scored high marks tracked carefully through the text and made a range of valid comments. The candidates who copied whole sections unselectively received only limited reward. Those candidates who scored better marks were able to make clear inferences and, in some cases, gave insightful opinions, and demonstrated astute understanding of the text and questions.

## Detailed Comments:

### Question 1a:

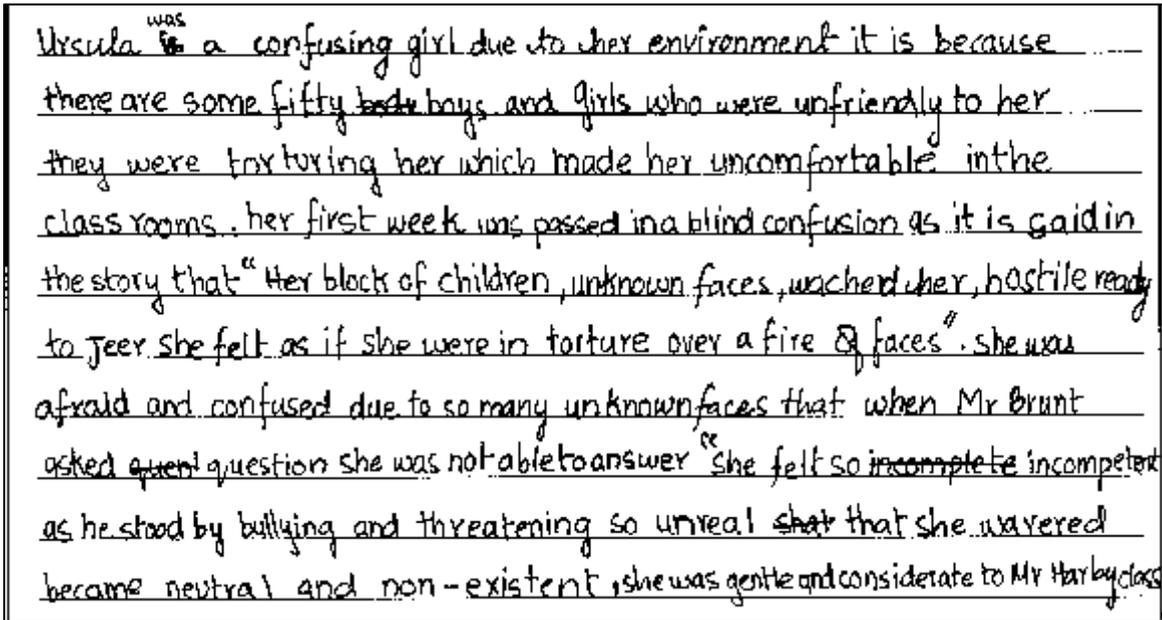
- a. Describe Ursula's personality as seen in the given story. Give textual references to support your answer.

The question was generally well-attempted.

In *better responses*, candidates were able to offer insights into Ursula's personality. Mostly, she was described with adjectives such as, 'nervous', 'gentle', 'determined', 'confused', 'hardworking', 'socially anxious'. Most candidates offered suitable textual references along with their chosen adjective to describe Ursula. Those candidates who made a good attempt to answer the question focused on the progression of the story and the use of vocabulary.

Occasionally, few candidates did not give specific adjectives/ phrases to cite the personality traits but presented their valid insights about personality in descriptive form. All such responses were considered for full marks.

### Example:



Ursula <sup>was</sup> a confusing girl due to her environment it is because there are some fifty ~~bad~~ boys and girls who were unfriendly to her they were torturing her which made her uncomfortable in the class rooms. her first week was passed in a blind confusion as it is said in the story that "Her block of children, unknown faces, watched her, hostile ready to jeer. She felt as if she were in torture over a fire of faces". She was afraid and confused due to so many unknown faces that when Mr Brunt asked ~~open~~ question she was not able to answer "She felt so incomplete incompetent as he stood by bullying and threatening so unreal ~~that~~ that she wavered became neutral and non-existent, she was gentle and considerate to Mr Harby class

In *weaker responses* of 1a, candidates erroneously mentioned that 'Ursula was a student who was uncomfortable/ Ursula was satisfied after doing hard work'. However, most candidates who did not fare well offered generalised details. A few of them wrote completely unrelated details; hence, such cases did not reflect an in-depth understanding of the reading text. Such candidates were not able to infer what Ursula's feelings and actions revealed about her. In most cases, some textual details were copied without any added value or paraphrasing.

**Example:**

1. Ursula is not comfortable with their classmates.  
2. Her teacher's was not comfortable with her.  
3. ~~He~~ She ~~want~~ to don't want to study from Mr Brunt because she don't like his personality.

**Question 1b:**

- i. What do you know about the environment of Ursula's school and relationship between teachers? Mention TWO points.
- ii. If you were in Ursula's place, how would you handle this situation?

*Better responses* presented the reasons that were explicitly mentioned in the passage in the first part of the question. Most candidates identified the school environment to be 'unfriendly', 'hostile' and 'scary'. A few candidates referred to Mr Harby and Mr Brunt's interference in Ursula's classes. For the second part of the question, better scoring responses offered practical suggestions, 'one-on-one meeting with fellow teachers to seek guidance', 'handling pressure calmly', 'preparing more for the classes' were amongst some popular suggestions.

**Example:**

1. Ursula was a teacher she was incompetent and little bit uncomfortable of speaking in front of class of 50 unknown faces  
2. As with teachers her relationship was also not as much good she was feeling strange in sitting between staff of teachers  
As if I would be in place of her so as a teacher I would likely to teach my student's very seriously and confidently without any shyness and gave them a direct and good command for studying and make a friendly environment between students & my self with teachers <sup>I would</sup> also be friendly.

*Weaker responses* displayed that candidates have misunderstood the theme and the mood of the passage. Most low scoring candidates wrote that the school environment was 'good'; no evidence was cited for this interpretation. This shows the tendency of not paying attention to the text and not referring to textual details closely.

**Example:**

- (i) The environment of Ursula's school is friendly and relationship between teachers were very strict. you can only talk about your subject with your teachers.
- (ii) If I were in Ursula's place ; will handle this situation by mixing up the with my class mates . I will make friends .

**Question 1c:**

What could be the author's message in writing this story?

The question was a good discriminator of candidates who understood the passage and author's intentions well, and those who struggled with it.

In *better responses*, candidates stated that the purpose of the author was to convey the idea that 'change should be welcomed'; 'how a hostile environment affects people'; 'we should support each other'. This was followed by adequate explanation of Ursula's situation in the school. Such responses offered a fresh insight into the story which reflected inferential understanding and not merely a surface reading.

**Example:**

In my view, the authors ~~for~~ message in writing this story would be to stop this ~~in~~ inhuman treatment and for distributing the power evenly among teachers so they can teach well to the students in a favourable environment. On the other hand, it is ~~also~~ also conveyed that the power of the children should be limited. In addition train teachers should be equipped for teaching.

*Weaker responses* demonstrated that most candidates copied irrelevant sections of the text which did not serve the purpose of explaining author's purpose. A few completely irrelevant responses received no credit. Close tracking of textual details and the ability to infer the hidden message seemed to be lacking in the skill-set of the low-scoring candidates.

**Example:**

Ans In this story we get more and more messages:

- ① Do not make noise in the class.
- ② Follow the rules of teacher and school rules.
- ③ Do not interfere any thing of teacher and master.
- ④ Do not beat the student of class.

**Question 1d:**

- i. How did Ursula feel by the end of this story?
- ii. In your opinion, why did students prefer Mr Harby over Ursula?

In *better responses*, the candidates demonstrated the ability to track textual evidences. In the first part, some common answers included details about Ursula feeling ‘exhausted’, ‘disappointed’, ‘weak’, ‘incompetent’, ‘threatened’ and ‘powerless’. Most candidates were able to attempt this part correctly. The second part of the question proved to be challenging for the candidates. Most high scoring candidates mentioned that the seniority and experience of Mr Harby was the reason why students liked him better. Very few responses shed light on power dynamics in school; that the students were influenced by it and responded to it.

**Example:**

(i) Ursula felt as if she was nonexistent when Mr. Harby was respected by the children and she was not. She felt as if she had no soul. She felt that she was a stranger in the school. The children made fun of her so she was very much disheartened.

(ii) The students prefer Mr Harby over Ursula because their class belonged to Mr Harby and not Ursula. He was gentle and considerate of his class. And Ursula was a wavering substitute. Secondly, Mr. Harby was the master, he had power that's why the children preferred Mr. Harby over Ursula.

Weaker responses showed lack of close reading of the text. It was surprising to note that candidates wrote that Ursula felt 'good', and 'satisfied' at the end of the story. It was clearly mentioned in the story that Ursula felt powerless and disappointed. The low scoring responses were not able to attempt the second part correctly either; as they mentioned that Ursula was liked as much as Mr Harby.

**Example:**

i. Ursula feel by the end of this story that's comfortable means that's now she know about school, childrens and others. She also have a power to manage the any situation. She also control the childrens. she teaching without saying and confidently and childrens also response him of any asking questions.

ii. In my opinion students prefer Mr Harby over Ursula because Mr Harby was a good and senior teacher in school. she have a good power.

**Question 2 (a, b)**

Question 2 had two parts. Candidates had to write an informal letter/ email on either of the given situations. A key issue here was for candidates to establish the purpose of the letter in the opening sentence to make clear exactly why their letter was important and deserved to be read. Moreover, a letter will help to persuade its recipient more readily if it is written accurately and clearly. A well planned letter should consist of a brief introduction, followed by two to four paragraphs, each pursuing a viewpoint or opinion. Informality should not be mistaken for slang. The issue of technical accuracy is vital for writing and, unfortunately, it was not uncommon to see scripts littered with technical errors (many of which were very basic – for example, their/ there, too/ to, where/ were, etc.).

**Question 2a:**

You have been given an assignment to deliver a group presentation on 'Changes I Would Like in My Classroom'. For this, you and your group mates want to exchange ideas as a home task.

Write an email to your group mates and discuss some key points about the upcoming presentation on changes you want to propose for your classroom. In your email, discuss:

- the responsibilities of every person in the group.
- how you can make your presentation interesting.
- what essential changes must be suggested and why.

In better responses for Question 2a, the candidates:

- mentioned format of an email (To/ From/ Date/ Subject/ Greeting/ Body/ Complimentary Close).
- elaborated ideas about what changes candidates want to propose for their classroom. Some creative ideas included, 'art wall', 'newsletter', 'study charts', 'personalised lockers' etc. responsibilities of each group members were mentioned. Most responses mentioned tips to make presentation interesting which included, 'animations', 'headings/ bullets', 'use of colours/ tables/ charts'.
- used informal register/ conversational style. However, sentence structure and other grammatical aspects were mostly accurate.

**Example:**

Option <u>  a  </u>
From: Sender @ abc.mail.com
To: Receiver @ xyz.mail.com
12 May 2018
Subject: Key points about the upcoming presentation
Dear Friend,
How are you? Hope you are doing well. I am sure you that you will complete the assigned task to you on time. Now I am dividing some task and responsibilities among the group members so our group project can score highest marks.
Firstly we will have to make sure that all the members in the group is equally participated in the project or discussion as group co-ordination contain marks. As we all know we are making power point presentation along with the charts so I want every member of the group to send a one slide by each student so

as time management also contains make and we can manage time only when, when we will going to complete our responsibility by our own with honesty.

Secondly, how to make our presentation more interesting instead of boring. we will make sure that we will use bright colours and will use as much less text as possible. Instead of this we will use pictures, mind maps and flowcharts which will also increase our advantage heritage of our presentation and it will give a very professional professional impression.

Thirdly, what should we include in our slides and charts. Every member should make a checklist and please think outside the box not that same changes as that you wanted since from grade I. In the checklist include all the things you need to be changed like the desks as they are all broken and the glass of window should be fixed as it can hurt, change the soft board so more work can be showed or that everyone's hardwork can be conveyed to audience. And every group member will also make the chart according to the topic and I request you all not to memorize the information that you will going to speak in presentation. It will feel like we haven't not done the project from our mind instead we have copy pasted from computers. I request you all to complete this assigned task till the next two days. Do not delay more than that

fasted by clothes, more light should be placed as close as light makes the man more active. I hope you would have got my point.

Hope we will finish our presentation on time as you all know time ~~and don't~~ don't runs after you you have to run after time.

Regards,

word count = 257

X42.

In weaker responses for Questions 2a, the candidates:

- mentioned one idea repeatedly without any added value.
- wrote incorrect sentence structure with serious and persistent grammatical errors.
- used an incorrect or incomplete format of an email. At times, the format was entirely missing.
- used clichés, slangs or internet language.

**Example:**

Option \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_

Before 2 weeks. The class decoration competition will be held in our school. Over class teacher give us assignment to decorate the class. I'm the group leader. I have decide to first of all paint the classroom. we discuss our group members through internet. I sent the e-mail to over class fellow. we have discuss which colour are suite in over class. we have decide below the wall we painted brown colour and the top white colour. Second we decide design the door and cupboard. we attach the chart on door and over class girls making flower to put on chart and the cupboard we

decorated with blue soft paper and  
decorated with ribbon. we clean  
our class and clean the class  
windows and board. The board  
corner are decorated with red chart  
and our class girls put flower on

these chart. Next day the class  
coming to class and he checked  
and said "Wow! he said "You  
decorated our class very well." He  
congratulate to us.

### Question 2a:

You live in a populated neighbourhood where the most common issue that causes tension between neighbours seems to be noise made during children's playtime.

Write a letter to your friend and narrate how this issue is affecting you. In your letter, discuss:

- how you feel about the situation.
- what you plan to do about it.

In *better responses* for Question 2b, the candidates:

- discussed a relevant situation where a noisy neighbourhood caused them problem in their studies and general everyday life. The expression was neither hackneyed nor dull, a freshness of thought was observed due to which the simple situations were presented in an interesting (at times, humorous) manner. The letters displayed the casually worded yet coherent register in which one may talk to a friend.
- displayed correct use of sentence structure, tenses and subject-verb agreement.
- used accurate spelling and punctuation.
- used appropriate connective and transition devices to create cohesion in the text.

Example:

Option B

Examination Hall,

A.B.C.Road,

Karachi.

12<sup>th</sup> / 5 - 2018

My dear friend,

Hello!, How are you?, How is life treating you?. With good regards and hopes I commence this letter forward but firstly, I would like to apologize for not replying the preceding month as I was feeling under the weather at that time but now I am healthy as a horse and completely at your service.

The reason I have written this letter to you is to tell you about the ~~tension~~<sup>fuss</sup> that is caused regarding children playing in the neighbourhood. I come home from school at five, 2-30, changing my clothes and eating food takes upto an hour. I finish my home work and then rest.

As soon as the clock strikes five all of the children in the neighbourhood come out to play. With most of

them abusing in loud voices. They play up till seven and as my mother has prohibited me to play with those children, I don't go out. The time between five to seven goes by at snails pace and all the shouting and playing makes it even worse. People get disturbed while sleeping plus our society's peace has also broken.

Few days back a boy broke our car window which resulted in a conflict between us and our neighbours. Before that some boy broke a terrace window while playing a high shot. Frequently every now and then a boy gets hurt while playing as no proper facility is present so that the boys can play like a park or a ground. It also interrupts prayers in the local mosque.

The situation in our neighbourhood is cal amitory but as the boys have are in their growing age, no one can stop them from playing outside. Many people in the neighbourhood have got their windows broken, frames cracked and cars damaged which leaves them down in the dumps. Recently, all of the neighbours consulted with the union in which we <sup>one suggested</sup> all came round to the idea that the local park should open its gates for the children which we all saw eye with.

I conclude my letter with good regards and lots of love. Hope to get a reply from you soon.

Yours Sincerely  
X.Y.Z.

In weaker responses for Question 2b, the candidates:

- reflected serious and persistent grammatical errors.
- displayed inaccurate expression: weak spelling, clumsy phrasing, inaccurate or missing punctuations.
- used clichés, slangs or internet language.
- described relevant situations but the expression was unclear and the write-up failed to reflect an effort towards creating a plausible situation; the suggestions offered were also unrealistic, reflecting a hasty approach rather than a focussed effort. One such example is shown below.

Example:

To: <sup>XYZ</sup> [redacted] 22@gmail.com
From: [redacted] Examination Hall.
Date: 10.5.2018.
Sub: Discussing issue's of neighbour's.
<p>My dearest cousin,</p> <p>It has been a long time we didn't talk, I have been in Spain from a year, year before I saw you and it was last, hope you <del>would</del><sup>will</sup> be same and healthy, in this last year, I <del>had</del> been so disturbed, by some issues, and the biggest issue is .my neighbour's here they <sup>we</sup> fight with each other cause at play time children use to play outside and they use to make noise all the time, <del>and</del> and they families near by are so disturbed by them, I'm <del>at</del> also disturbed by them, I think that we should provide them a playground, <del>far</del> away from our homes, I will talk to others, and send me a suggestion, I'll be waiting for your reply. your cousin,</p> <p>XYZ</p>

### Question 3(a,b,c)

The candidates were directed to write an essay on any of the three choices given.

#### Question 3a:

Think about a time when you had to perform a task that you usually do well. However, things did not go according to plan and you ended up messing that task. In your essay, describe:

- what you had to do.
- who was involved/ present.
- what went wrong.

The question was generally well-attempted.

In *better response* for Question 3a, the candidates:

- described a commonplace/ everyday task that ended up in an unflattering way for them. Mostly high scoring candidates used creative techniques, i.e. anecdotes and flashback or quotes to good effect. An attempt was made to create shock-value and, at times, humour by elaborating on unusual behaviour and strange occurrences.
- used connectors and cohesive devices were used to create coherence in the writing.
- displayed correct use of sentence structure; tenses and subject-verb agreement and tenses, spelling and punctuation.

**Example:**

Option   A  

The auditorium was packed as I entered. The audible whispers died as Ms. Cox made her way to the stage. After giving a short introduction about the cultural programme to be held two weeks later, she called all the staff members in the Conference Hall. As we all settled down, she began, "Good morning everyone. As you all know that we are having a cultural programme after two weeks, for which I have divided work between all of you. Perform the given tasks well and make this event a success." I was supposed to look into the dance performances. I couldn't have been more thrilled.

The first week passed quickly. I gathered the children for the dance performance and they practised everyday. I was really happy and comfortable with my assigned task. Vanessa was assisting me in this. For the costumes, I contacted Ashley, who was the costume designer for this event, and told her about the idea of the performance. I was not at all dubious about my work. I was confident that I would perform the task with perfection. But fate had something else in mind.

The day finally came. The backstage was filled with students and teachers, running from here to there. I entered the dressing room to see that all the children had an unreadable expression on their faces. "Speed up guys. Get

ready fast," I instructed but nobody moved an inch. Just then, Vanessa spoke, "Everything's over Lexi. We cannot perform tonight. All our hardwork got wasted. We-" Before she can continue, I interrupted, "Stop beating around the bush, Van. Just tell." "We don't have costumes."

"We do. They were in the cupboard yesterday," I told. "The key is not there," argued one of the children. "Then where is it?" I asked, losing my patience. Nobody answered and I fell on my knees, covering my face with my palms. The sobs did not stop. Vanessa sat beside me, repeating soothing words. "There's no use of crying over split milk, Lexi. What's done is done. We have to focus on what's next." Her words gave me some hope and I wiped the tears from my cheeks. "Let's do this."

Thankfully, Vanessa and I had a backup costume, which was not quite eye-catching, but still would've worked. The children immediately changed and got ready for their performance. Fortunately, the audience really liked it and gave them a standing ovation at the drop of a hat. Vanessa and I hugged each other, happy that despite the problems, everything went well. But, as soon as the programme ended, I went to Ms. Cox and apologized for my irresponsibility. She smiled and said, "It's from mistakes that the people learn."

In *weak responses* for Question 3a, the candidates:

- wrote various run-on sentences to describe a situation that did not turn out as they had expected. Mostly, such responses presented random ideas with no connective devices; the write-up lacked organisation/ planning.
- displayed serious and persistent grammatical errors.
- used clichés, slangs or internet language.

Example:

Option a

The task which I perform, it's usually do well but when I feel burden - it was not good for me and the things ~~didn't~~ not go according to this. This task is about my school presentation which our teacher assigned me. It is very important for annual exams. It was a hot sunny day in August. I was ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> preparation of my presentation but my cousin ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> Makal plan for picnic. It forced me to attend this. I can't ignore them. It went for a picnic. I take a leave for 2 day from school - and went a picnic - and my presentation which is very important for me in exams, it will forgotten at home and didn't complete these presentation.

but after that picnic I went to school with out prepared for presentation. When I enter the class room my teacher asked me for deliver a presentation. but I was not prepared and didn't complete my presentation. I told them. but the teacher was very angry with me. It told me that you are become very lazy. ~~It~~ I think you didn't pass your class. You know that's it's very important. after that she ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> went out of class then she ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> for our annual exams was held, and the result was announced. but I can't pass and fail in our class. All of my friend passed the class. I go another school. and I really missed my friends. It the task which I have ended up. or did not complete it.

**Question 3b:**

“My alarm is set for 6:30, but sometimes I ignore it and drift back to sleep until 8:00, when my mother gets impatient for me to get up and have my breakfast before leaving home. On this day, I was leaving home for school when I witnessed the most unbelievable ...”

Write a story on the given situation.

Most candidates recognised that they had been given a topic which provides room for creativity and included worthy details to enhance the style of their writing.

In *better responses* for Question 3b, the candidates

- mentioned/ explained a vivid description of unusual occurrences that they witnessed. Numerous candidates chose to write about alien intervention; ideas ranged from very imaginative aliens to the very simple occurrences like falling of a tree. The expression and coherence did the trick for the high scoring candidates.
- mostly used a simple structure of story writing, i.e., beginning, rising action, leading to some sort of resolution. Occasionally, creative structures; such as, beginning the story from climax was also witnessed.
- used appropriate vocabulary and correct spellings.
- inserted punctuation marks and cohesive devices where needed and displayed considerable accuracy in the use of tenses and subject-verb agreement.

Example:

Option   b  

My alarm is set for 6:30 am but, sometimes I ignore it and drift back to sleep until 8:00 am, when my mother gets impatient for me to get up and have breakfast before leaving home. On this day, I was leaving home for school when I witnessed the most unbelievable.....

I saw a two people throwing some bags in a black van and as soon as they saw me they drove away and I stood there bewildered by what I saw but since I was already very late I did not care less and started my journey towards my school. I am a very lazy person to be honest and as much as I try <sup>to</sup> wake up early I just cannot, I am usually the last person in my house as well as my neighbourhood to leave the house for work or school in my case. ~~THE SIXTH DAY~~

The other day as usual I <sup>overslept</sup> ~~overslept~~ after turning my ~~alarm~~ alarm off at 6:30, my mother came inside my room and saw ~~my~~ my peacefully sleeping body lying on my bed and <sup>panicky</sup> ~~panicly~~ started to scream at me saying that I was going to be late. I slowly got up and made my way towards the bathroom, washed my face brushed my teeth, changed my clothes and went downstairs and as usual I quickly <sup>upon having a glance at</sup> put my shoes on, <sup>the</sup> clock

grabbed my lunch, shouting good bye to my mother and she as usual shouting at me for not eating breakfast. I ran out of my house. I was walking down the side of the road in a speed in between running and walking when I saw a black van outside my neighbour's house on the other side of the street, I got suspicious since there is <sup>no</sup> one ~~supposed~~ supposed to be on the street at this hour, everyone is at work. I saw two men throwing some bags in the car, they noticed me and suddenly went in panic mode, started the car and drove away, without saying <sup>anything</sup>. I also ignored everything I saw and continued running towards my school. I came back from school extremely tired when I saw the news reporter talking about my neighbourhood. As soon as I heard the news I asked my mother about it and quickly ran to my neighbour's house to explain them what I had seen that morning.

I could not believe that I had witnessed a robbery and did not do anything about it. The police came and interrogated me and asked me to tell them everything in detail. That night I got a message from an unknown number telling me to not tell anyone what I saw but it was already too late. I was terrified and did not sleep the whole night and thought about the message and what I had done and what will happen next.

In weaker responses for Question 3b, the candidates:

- switched from one idea to the next with little sense of cohesion/ logic. This made their writing increasingly muddled. A few candidates described a very normal routine day and thus, the requirement of the prompt remained unfulfilled. Some responses showed formulaic approach, some wrote irrelevant and pre-prepared responses which is worrying for the examiner.
- displayed inaccurate sentence structure with serious and persistent errors.
- displayed wrong spellings and lack of punctuation and paragraphing. The expression was incoherent and/ or inaccurate.

**Example:**

Option \_\_\_\_\_

(b) =  
My alarm is set for 6:30, but sometimes I ignore it and drift back to sleep until 8:00, when my mom gets impatient for me to get up and have my breakfast before leaving home. On this day, I was leaving home for school when I witnessed the most unbelievable day in my life." Then I am walking on the road when I saw my best friend I meet with him and we will go for breakfast in the hotel we took the breakfast and I spoke the truth to my friend that I am leaving my home. Then my friend and me go my friend's house we ~~we~~ will play video games and eat lots of things then my friend's mom is enter to the room and ask my friend who is this? my friend asked mom he is my best friend. ~~At~~ At that time in the door some one ringing the door bell and my friend go and open the door

then I saw my mom they were come my friends  
home to say sorry and go to our home I say  
Sorry mom sorry my mom ask its ok let go  
to our home then me and my mom go to our  
home and we were thankful to our friend.

**Question 3c:**

Garfield is an overweight, orange tabby cat. He loves fish and hates bread. He causes mischief wherever he goes, is lazy and sarcastic, and despises dogs. He has a low opinion of his human owner. Often he goes away from home and gets stuck somewhere.

Imagine yourself as the owner of the pet cat Garfield. Write a story about your cat. In your story, describe:

- a day when he went missing.
- how did you find him.
- what trouble did he make.

In *better responses* for Question 3c, the candidates:

- mentioned their feelings as the troubled owner of Garfield; expressed occurrences of a day when the cat went missing. However, even amongst high scoring responses, it was rare to witness an effort towards humour or imagination. The description was mostly hackneyed; however, sentence structure and expression prevented the responses from being considered average.
- used appropriate sentence structure, tenses and accurate subject-verb agreement. Coherence within sentences and paragraphs was observed.

Example:

Option C.

Garfield is my lazy, orange tabby cat who is not concerned about me. He loves ~~bread~~<sup>fish</sup> and hates bread. He causes mischief wherever he goes. Today, was a great trouble created by Garfield.

My aunt came to give some cookies she made. When she came in she forgot to close the door and it was a bit wide open. Garfield taking advantage of the house open, ran outside in the streets. ~~She~~ was walking by the dustbins, may be ~~she~~ would find something. But all ~~she~~ smelled was litter and garbage. Disappointed, ~~she~~ was turning back, when he smelled a fish being cooked. The smell came from the end of the street, where a house was partying. ~~fish and chips~~<sup>fish and chips</sup>. Garfield, quietly climbed the pipes, until he reached the kitchen, where the ~~fish~~ was kept to maintain. Garfield making through the open window spaces, got into the kitchen and started to have his lunch. Meanwhile,

I was searching for Garfield everywhere, but I was unable to search for him. I went down the streets, carried fish jellies, so if Garfield was around, ~~he~~ may smell and would come. But ~~disappointedly~~<sup>sadly</sup>, all cats and dogs and rats came except for Garfield. In the kitchen, Garfield was continuing ~~his~~ lunch when a lady ~~came~~<sup>came</sup> in and screamed "Aah! This cat is eating our fish. Why

are you running, <sup>away</sup> stay there, you little rubbish cat." And the lady running after Garfield somehow caught him and threw him out. Garfield, when was-thrown outside got injured and was howling in pain.

There, I heard a cat howling. I knew it was Garfield and followed the noise until the street ended where my cat ~~layed~~ laid injured, howling in pain. I came near and saw a sharp bone stuck in Garfield's foot. I tried to comfort him and took out the bone quickly. Garfield lowered but still howled as it was still bleeding. I quickly grabbed a piece of tissue from my pocket and ~~succeeded~~ <sup>tried to</sup> stop his blood bleeding. I quickly gave him some fish I had in my hands and after finishing his meal, took him to ~~veterinarian~~ ~~vet~~. The vet asked me not to let Garfield walk and give him food without letting him walk. This Garfield turned his days into better ones and I am still feeding him, serving him as a slave.

In weaker responses for Question 3c, the candidates:

- did not fully engage with the elements of the topics and prompts. At times, vague expression and run-on sentences prevented comprehension.
- displayed serious errors of grammar, i.e. tenses were incorrectly used, many words were misspelled, etc.

## Example

Option C

My cat "Garfield" I love my cat so much because ~~he~~ was gifted by my mother on my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. His skin is so soft and ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> only eat fish. ~~he~~ he is so lazy and sleeps all the day.

It was the day when I was busy with my friends and cousins because there was a party because there was birthday of our friend we wanted to give him surprise when ~~we~~ ~~to~~ ~~planning~~ all friends <sup>and cousins</sup> go home. I start calling Garfield but there was no any answer on it. ~~he~~ ~~do not~~ come - I ~~think~~ thought that maybe ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> was sleeping I ~~go~~ <sup>went</sup> toward ~~to~~ his box but ~~it~~ <sup>he</sup> was nowhere.

him I find ~~it~~ <sup>he</sup> at all the home but I can't find ~~it~~ then I start finding out side but ~~it~~ was also not there then I call my friends and cousins again we all meet together at home then we make a pair ~~of~~ 2 and start finding him in area.

we find it for 2 to 3 hours but ~~it~~ we cannot find him then we got tired suddenly we listen a voice of a cat we went to place from where