

Candidate 6

The candidate evidence used in this workshop has achieved the following marks for this Course Assessment component.

Can I be Bothered?

This is a piece of personal writing entitled “Can I be bothered?” Here the candidate adopts a chatty, conversational tone which conveys a strong sense of the writer’s personality and individuality throughout. The topic is one which many candidates attempt, with varying degrees of success. This piece shows a strong attention to purpose with confident and varied expression.

The piece opens with the candidate acknowledging that he is lazy but that he realises that ‘the day of reckoning is looming’ in the light of recent school reports. The candidate tries to justify his laid-back approach, comparing his behaviour to that of the ‘boy . . . on the burning deck’ but ultimately recognises the ‘sad’ fact that the teachers may be right.

The candidate goes on to tell us that his lack of effort is also being criticised at home and makes reference again to the poem about the boy who stood on the burning deck although he – unlike the boy in the poem – is ‘all too ready to abandon my post’. The candidate’s easy, informal and self-deprecating style is very engaging and there is a strong degree of self-awareness throughout. This tone continues into Paragraph 4 with the acknowledgement that he deploys ‘many work avoidance tactics’.

In Paragraph 5, the candidate reflects on the fact that he was not always lazy and that ‘as a small boy, I rose before the rest of the household’. In this paragraph, there is also further reference to the children’s TV programme ‘The Hoobs’, first mentioned in Paragraph 4. The candidate is making an attempt to endear himself to the reader here by acknowledging that, despite getting up early; he was ‘not exactly throwing myself into an energetic pursuit’.

The easy, relaxed style of the writing should not blind us to the fact that the candidate is using confident expression and vocabulary with phrases such as ‘cultural allusion’, ‘luridly coloured’, and ‘vindicated’ in this same paragraph.

The candidate moves on from discussing children’s TV programmes to video games and virtual football in particular – ‘Why stand on a cold touchline when you can sink into the warm embrace of a sofa?’ He freely admits that he much prefers virtual football to the real thing, even though for a time he ‘even enjoyed playing in driving wind and rain’, but, eventually, he succumbed to the allure of ‘the easy option’ as ‘These gruelling conditions weren’t for me’.

His new career as sofa-bound manager left his mother singularly unimpressed: ‘my mum has shown me the red card as far as FIFA is concerned’. The red card image shows a skilful use of language.

The candidate says that despite the impression that he may be giving, he does have ambition and considers himself to be dependable, evidenced by the fact that he has a morning paper round. The candidate suggests that this offers some hope and this, combined with the inspirational recent visit from his 'model student' sister, should provide the impetus required to get them through their exams. The relationship with his sister is illustrated in the penultimate paragraph – she is described as having 'a bossy nature' and he admits that 'hearing about her A grades' brings out the competitive side in him and there is a note of grudging admiration in the description of 'her stoical approach to her studying'. As a result, the candidate seems to have resolved to change his lazy ways: 'it's time to take up the mantle. It's time to act'.

This resolve is short-lived, however, and, by the final paragraph, the candidate refers to 'the Nutella calling' and 'FIFA awaits', rounding the piece off by referring to the distractions which were mentioned at the start.

This piece characterised by a strong sense of the writer's personality and individuality and clearly belongs in the 15-13 band. This is a confident piece of writing and the candidate sustains an engaging stream of consciousness and uses an effective structure, moving between the past and present skilfully. Language use is also skilful, with word choice such as 'languorously loafing' in Paragraph 6.

The piece is not without some less successful aspects: the repeated references to 'The Hoobs' do take us a little off topic at times and the final rounding off paragraph could be seen as a little disappointing. Overall, though, there is no doubt that the candidate has a skilful command of the genre. He writes with strong and confident expression throughout and the observations he makes about his lack of motivation at times demonstrate a strong degree of insight.

This piece is awarded **14 marks** out of 15.