

# Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for the portfolio–writing component.

## Candidate 1

The candidate was awarded **12 marks** for this broadly discursive piece.

### Summary

In this piece, the candidate examines the problems of fast fashion. The piece considers what fast fashion is, discusses two central problems caused by it and concludes by considering ethical solutions to the issue.

### Content

The piece shows clear attention to purpose and audience from the start. The introduction establishes the candidate's stance: consumers and manufacturers should be held accountable for the unethical business of fast fashion, both in terms of the environment and the garment-workers. The introduction finishes clearly by stating that consumers must become better informed about fast fashion and make better choices as a result.

The second paragraph discusses the impact of fast fashion on the environment. The candidate starts by considering carbon emissions, clearly supporting the point by referring to the fashion industry being 'responsible for more ...carbon emissions than all international flights and marine shipping combined'. Excessive water use in the fashion industry is then compared to the equivalent of one person's water consumption for over two years. A point about the problem of cheap fabrics encouraging a throwaway culture concludes the candidate's stance that the environment is badly affected by our 'addiction to fashion'.

The candidate goes on to consider the working conditions of the people employed to produce this cheap clothing. The candidate references the Rana Plaza disaster to demonstrate that garment workers have to endure sometimes dangerous working conditions, supporting the point by referring to the statistics detailing deaths and injuries. The candidate's engagement with the issue is clearly conveyed by a statement about 'big bosses' who aim only to make money while 'not caring if they exploit lives...'. In the next paragraph there are several examples of workers being mistreated at the hands of unscrupulous factory owners. The candidate outlines conditions in the Shein factory in China and comments that the Chinese government considers these conditions illegal. The connection between the Chinese government and conditions in the Shein factory is perhaps not as fully explained, and the supporting quotation from research is less successfully incorporated here.

Paragraphs 5 and 6 consider 'ethical and sustainable' solutions to the problem of fast fashion. The distinction between the efforts of designer brands and fast fashion brands is explored, as well as the concept of 'greenwashing'. Finally, the candidate discusses the merits of charity shopping and online resale sites. The discussion of potential solutions is detailed and the candidate's engagement with the issue is clearly demonstrated.

The conclusion ends the piece effectively. The candidate restates key points made in each section of the essay, ending with a statement which combines the candidate's stance and clarifies the central issue of the piece: that being 'conscious consumers' will force fast fashion brands to 'change their ways'.

## Style

In terms of style, the candidate's expression throughout the essay is clear and the overall structure is supported by topic sentences which signpost the argument. Overall, the structure clearly, rather than skilfully, enhances the purpose. Several linguistic features are used to persuade the reader, and sometimes these are skilfully deployed. The candidate makes use of questions in paragraph 3 to illustrate consumers' lack of awareness ('What is it made from? Have the workers been paid enough?'); and exclamations at key points ('...enough water for one person to drink for 900 days!') create tone and add a sense of engagement. Emotive word choice adds persuasive force: 'outrageously cheap', 'despicable', 'deep corruption and an alarming level of callous immorality'. Varied sentence structure in the conclusion skilfully expresses the culpability of fast fashion brands: 'They treat workers like machines. Glamorise the truth.' Throughout the essay, sources are used as a springboard for the candidate's own opinions and, for the most part, are smoothly integrated.

## Overall

This piece of writing displays the candidate's careful research and selection of evidence. There is a clear line of thought and an engaged stance. The candidate uses some linguistic features with persuasive force. It is placed at the top of the 12-10 range and awarded a mark of 12.

## Candidate 2

The candidate was awarded **10 marks** for this broadly creative piece.

### Summary

This is a broadly creative piece of writing entitled 'The Sound of Silence' and takes the form of a short story told from the perspective of a young boy. The candidate focuses on the child's distant relationship with his father, and the solitude that he experiences in his young life. This story is set against the backdrop of the outbreak of World War II, in a small village in England.

### Content

The short story shows clear attention to purpose from the start, opening with the narrator's focus on the single word sentence 'Silence'. This is followed by an elaboration on the significance this has had on his life. The setting in time is clearly established with reference to the outbreak of war and the disruption this has caused in the narrator's life. Ending the opening paragraph with the dramatic statement 'Including mine' foreshadows the difficulties that will be the focus of the remainder of the story.

The beginning of the second paragraph again refers to the wartime setting and the changes this has imposed on the narrator's life. The rest of this paragraph focuses on the nature of the relationship he has with his father, and how 'I have always been unable to connect with him'. The candidate adequately develops this sense of a distant relationship by referring to all of the things that his father 'never' did through the remainder of the paragraph. The narrator also reveals that his absence when out with his friends would go unnoticed, and that the housekeeper hired by his father was 'hardly ever around'. The motif of sound is revisited with the phrase 'I've almost forgotten the sound of his voice', which reinforces the distance in the relationship between father and son.

The candidate returns to this sound motif regularly in the early paragraphs of this story, allowing them to develop a clear sense of the quietness of the narrator's own life at home which contrasts to the world outside. In paragraph 4 the revelation that 'the noises had changed their tones slightly' sets up the disruption caused by the impending outbreak of war.

The 'fateful day' when the outbreak of war is declared is clearly described by the narrator, who is taking in the scene in the village: children running around playing, people talking, crowds forming around radios to hear the announcement. The writer's response to this is to run home in a panic.

The latter part of the story focuses on an encounter between the narrator and his father after he has returned home. The father is already dressed in military uniform, his presence announced by the 'rustle of newspaper coming from the kitchen'. The strained and distant nature of the relationship is clearly described in

the following paragraphs, with the father eventually speaking to his son after 'what seemed like a century'. The sound motif is utilised less successfully in this section of the story, with only adequate reference to how the narrator hates the silence he once claimed he loved and took comfort from.

## Style

The candidate has made an attempt to create a narrator appropriate to the genre, using language to describe his feelings and reactions to the various situations he finds himself in. References to 'suffocating emptiness' and 'the solitary confinement of the house' help to underline the impact of being so isolated from his father at home. The use of foreshadowing in the opening paragraph clearly establishes that the impact of the outbreak of war on his life will not be a positive one.

There is an attempt to use a recurring motif of sound throughout the piece: this is clearly evident in the first half of the essay but is used less confidently in later paragraphs. While the candidate also clearly creates the character of the father as a distant, uninvolved figure in his son's life, the language used earlier in the piece is repetitive and adequate in describing his absence.

## Overall

On balance, this piece was placed in the 12-10 mark range. The candidate has demonstrated a clear grasp of the genre but, at times, there are elements in the piece which sit more comfortably in the adequate category. Therefore, the essay was awarded 10 marks.

## Candidate 3

The candidate was awarded **9 marks** for this broadly creative piece.

### Summary

In this broadly creative piece, the candidate reflects on their personal experience of a bungee jump. A sense of the candidate's reluctance is established early on with the admission 'I am terrified of heights' before recognising that this is an opportunity not to be passed up.

### Content

The piece follows the events in a chronological order: the tension before the jump combined with the determination to conquer fears and not lose face in front of their family, the description of the actual jump, and the reflection on what has been gained from the experience.

There is a clear attention to purpose and grasp of the genre with a combination of the narrative and some personal observations and reflection, such as the metaphor of the bungee harness as a 'noose', although, at times, this reflection becomes more adequate and clichéd, eg 'I was like a deer in headlights'.

The candidate explores their feelings and experience adequately, describing both their own fear of heights and the contrast with other family members who 'jumped, howling with delight'. This sense of fear is developed when the candidate describes feelings of nausea, a dry mouth and churning stomach, showing a clear sense of reflection. The candidate's determination not to lose face is clearly described as they 'could not face the shame and embarrassment of climbing back down and not jumping'.

The key incident of the actual jump is described with a clear sense of involvement and provides a change as the candidate begins to enjoy the experience and appreciate the natural surroundings. This description is more adequate than clear, as it is later revealed that the actual jump 'only lasted for thirty seconds.'

There is an adequate sense of the writer's personality which edges into clear in places, for example, the humorous description of the jump when they 'bounced up and down and side to side, swinging through the air like a monkey' and the less successful, 'I was now hanging like a chandelier'.

The final reflective section of the piece is adequate as the candidate has concluded they 'did not care' about the mockery of their family and is 'simply happy' at overcoming the challenge of the bungee jump which, in turn, becomes a symbol for dealing with life's greater issues.

## Style

Linguistic features of the genre are used adequately, for the most part, for example, the use of questions such as 'what were the chances of me having this opportunity again?' and 'How could I ever bring myself to jump?' Short sentences are used to create impact, for example, the contrast between the candidate and other family members who jumped 'Some with joy and some with terror' while 'I felt sick'.

Expression, for the most part, is adequate and characterised by straightforward language such as 'my family decided', 'doing all kinds of activities', 'we got ready'.

The structure is chronological with the build up to the experience characterised by the candidate's fears and nerves, the actual jump and the final reflection 'you should take the leap because you never know, you might love it'.

## Overall

This piece demonstrates clear attention to purpose and a sense of involvement in the writer's experience and feelings. Linguistic features and expression are generally adequate rather than clear. On balance, the piece is placed at the top of the 9-7 mark range and was awarded 9 marks.