

# Commentary on Candidate A evidence – Holiday in Blackpool

The candidate was awarded **7/15 marks** for this broadly creative text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This is a personal essay recounting the candidate's trip to Blackpool with family.

## Content

Attention to purpose is reasonably well sustained in that the candidate deals with a linear account of a trip to Blackpool with family.

The candidate's feelings and experiences are explored with a sense of involvement throughout the essay. The candidate begins by explaining that *'I didn't think we were going then one day my dad said he had booked everything'* and that *'this was a very exciting time'* which the family were *'really looking forward to'*. The candidate then moves on to describe different activities undertaken on the trip and progresses to the moment when their eldest sister dropped her burger which prompted another sister to share. This *'was very kind of her as I ate my own without sharing,'* a comment which contains some expression of feeling. The candidate again deals with feelings, observing that they *'went on nearly every ride there, even the ones I was afraid of.'* The candidate then goes on to mention winning a *'stuffed teddy for my little sister'* and that *'she was over the moon with her new toy.'* The candidate refers to their experience visiting the Blackpool Dungeons, which was *'a good experience.'* The candidate finishes off by summarising: *'I really enjoyed my holiday to Blackpool and I hope to go back there again.'*

The candidate's response – in terms of content – sits within the 9-7 mark range but at the bottom end of the mark range. There is an exploration of feelings, but this does not go beyond the communication of a sense of involvement.

## Style

The technical accuracy of the piece is sufficiently accurate and a few basic language features are employed, for example: the alliteration/repetition of *'get washed, get ready and go.'* Similarly, there is the descriptive repetition of *'very nice and very welcoming,'* to emphasise the extent of the landlady's welcome to the family. There is the listing of the celebrities in Madame Tussauds, and the often used yet relevant metaphor describing the candidate's little sister as being *'over the moon'* about the stuffed teddy she was given. These techniques support the points being made and they are effective in the main.

The structure of the piece is appropriate to purpose in that the candidate writes the essay in chronological order and indicates the movement of time through the

experience with expressions such as: *'For months,' 'On the morning of,' 'The next day,' 'We then went'* and *'On the last day.'*

### Overall

In terms of both the content and style, this essay is placed in the 9-7 mark range. There is a sense of involvement, and language features are deployed with a degree of success. However, it just meets the standard in each aspect of the range, and was therefore awarded **7 marks**.

# Commentary on Candidate B evidence – School Uniforms

This candidate was awarded **7/15 marks** for this broadly discursive text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This piece is broadly discursive writing on the topic of school uniform.

## Content

The attention to purpose and audience is reasonably well sustained. The response is relatively brief, but stays on topic and maintains an argumentative purpose throughout.

The candidate's point of view is made clear from the outset: '*I personally believe school uniforms are a good thing...*' and is repeated in the conclusion: '*school uniforms are needed.*'

The candidate also makes some assertions: '*Children need to be able to express themselves with their style,*' and '*It's always adults or teachers who choose for us.*' (both from paragraph 3).

The information the candidate provides shows evidence of some research. This research material is not always clearly presented, but there is evidence that they are trying to use it persuasively, for example through the rounding of numbers and the phrase '*only a handful*' in '*only a handful (11 percent) are disagreeing.*'

The candidate puts forward at least four relevant ideas both for and against school uniform, but these ideas are not developed to any depth.

## Style

Features of the genre are deployed with a degree of success. There is a clear sense that the candidate is building a case for and against the topic. This is indicated through the obvious signposting of new points: '*One reason... Another reason... A third reason... A fourth reason...*'

At times the language lacks variety. An example of this is the simplistic use of phrases such as '*a good thing and a bad thing*' in the introduction. These are repeated throughout the essay. However, at times the language is used to create an effect, for example: '*deters,*' '*abandons,*' and '*halts creativity.*' The candidate also makes use of questions, such as "*People say that if kids are unique, why wear a uniform.*"

The structure of the piece is appropriate to the purpose of the text. The candidate offers a brief introduction and conclusion, and has decided to present the arguments for school uniform in paragraph 2, and the arguments against in

paragraph 3. For each point made, the candidate follows a pattern of giving the reason in one sentence, then following it with one or two sentences to develop the point. However, the structure of the piece then breaks down into four shorter paragraphs which offer statistics about how school uniform relates to bullying. This perhaps weakens the overall structure of the piece.

There are occasional infelicities in language (for example, the spelling of '*bulling*' and the lack of punctuation), but overall the piece is sufficiently accurate so that meaning is clear at the first reading.

### Overall

This piece is placed in the 9-7 marks range: attention to purpose and audience is reasonably well sustained; there is evidence of some research, and a point of view is expressed. However, due to the lack of variety in language and lack of development of ideas – which are more typical of a 6-4 range response – it is at the bottom of this category and was awarded **7 marks**.

# Commentary on Candidate C evidence – The Long and Winding Road

This candidate was awarded **12/15 marks** for this broadly creative text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This is a personal piece in which the candidate writes reflectively about family holidays in the north of Scotland.

## Content

Throughout the piece, some feelings and reactions are expressed with a very good degree of self-awareness/sensitivity: *'There is something quite special about 'going north' in Scotland that fuels our souls and lifts our spirits.'* And: *'I like the feeling of knowing that my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother and many previous ancestors are rooted here.'* However, accounts of experiences – the hammocks, going to the Chinese restaurant – tend to be more pedestrian and lack the effectiveness of the reflective element contained in the examples above. These can only be described as having a *'good degree of involvement,'* and do, to some extent, weaken the overall effect of the writing.

## Style

The features of the chosen genre – personal reflective – are recognisable, and are deployed mostly successfully throughout the piece. For example: *'Looking back at my account,'* *'Another tradition.'*

In general, the language is apposite and is used at times to create particular effects. In the example *'These small moments of sharing this lovely place with family seem to burn into our memory'* the metaphor of *'burn'* works well. The following comparison is also apposite: *'The farmyard smell always hits us at first like a ripe French cheese...'*

The structure of the piece supports the purpose and meaning. The beginning of each holiday is described, main events are selected and highlighted, and the piece finishes with the writer's sense of a strong link with the past: *'As usual, my way to combat this is to go to sleep and dream of going back again.'*

## Overall

The piece is placed in the 12-10 marks range. It contains elements of the 15-13 range in that it shows a very good degree of self-awareness and sensitivity. However, descriptions of experiences do lack impact and sensitivity. The features of the genre are deployed, mostly successfully, and apposite language is used at times to create effect. Because of this combination of elements, the piece is placed at the top end of the 12-10 band, and was awarded **12 marks**.

# Commentary on Candidate D evidence – Why childhood beauty pageants should be banned

This candidate was awarded **14/15 marks** for this broadly discursive text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This is a strong persuasive piece which sits comfortably in the middle of the 15-13 range. In it, the candidate puts forward a strong argument in favour of banning child beauty pageants.

## Content

The candidate's attention to purpose and audience is consistent throughout. The information presented shows evidence of careful research. The candidate cites a range of examples from China, Australia and America as supporting evidence to highlight their own assertions about the physical and psychological damage that competing in beauty pageants can cause to children.

The candidate's ideas have a very good degree of persuasive force, and are used to convey a clear, confident point of view, for example:

- ◆ *'Beauty pageants are putting our young girls at risk.'*
- ◆ *'Parents should not be allowed to force their children to compete, altering and manipulating their child's appearance in order to achieve the "perfect" image to win. Child beauty pageants must be banned. Now.'*

## Style

The features of persuasive writing are deployed effectively in this piece.

Rhetorical questions are used sparingly but effectively, for example, *"How could we possibly let our children go through this trauma?"*

The reader is often addressed directly, to ensure continuing involvement, for example, *"Imagine such a horrific ordeal happening to your daughter. How could you ever recover?"*

Emotive language is employed, and chosen to add weight to the candidate's case, for example: *'...the gruelling competitions...'*, *'This is deeply immoral...'*, *'Those competitions are abusive and deeply damaging to our children...'*

The structure of the piece enhances the purpose. There is a sense that the piece builds to a strong climax, which is reinforced by the effective use of a minor sentence: *'Child beauty pageants must be banned. Now.'*

## Overall

The content and style of this piece matches most of the requirements of the 15-13 marks range. As such, it is placed in the middle of the range and was awarded **14 marks**.

# Commentary on Candidate E evidence – My Story

This candidate was awarded **9/15 marks** for this broadly creative text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This personal piece describes the candidate's experience of discovering, and dealing with, a father's illness.

## Content

This piece shows 'some', rather than 'good' creativity. Examples include: '*... as if my life was about to be turned around. And it was*'; '*I felt as if I was in my own bubble*'; '*The house was so cold and still*'.

Feelings and reactions are explored with a sense of involvement, for example: '*Those words broke me in two*'; '*It broke my heart*'. However, at times, the candidate goes beyond this and a good degree of self-awareness is apparent: '*I wanted to run home but something was holding me back, the fear of the unknown*,' and '*The kind of smile you put on when you're pretending everything is ok*.' This would suggest that the piece is securely placed in the 9-7 range with some indications of the 12-10 range.

## Style

The majority of the language in the piece could be described as being 'effective in the main,' for example: '*I couldn't believe this was happening*,' '*I just stared at the clock*.' There are only occasional glimpses of stronger use of language, for example: '*knowing the unknown*.'

Genre features are deployed with a degree of success, mainly in the exploration of feelings and reactions. Examples include the sense of dread in paragraph 1, the slow passage of time in paragraph 2, and the establishment of the chilly atmosphere at the start of paragraph 3.

The candidate adopts a linear structure which suits purpose and meaning. The piece ends with an appropriate reflection on the impact the experience has had on the candidate.

## Overall

This piece is very securely within the 9-7 marks range. Because of the stronger elements in the candidate's exploration of feelings and reactions, and some aspects of the language which carry some indications of the 12-10 range, the piece is placed at the top of the category and was awarded **9 marks**.

# Commentary on Candidate F evidence – New Punishments for Hacking

This candidate was awarded **10/15 marks** for this broadly discursive text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This essay discusses the issue of hacking and argues that punishments for hacking should be more severe, in accordance with the severity of the crime.

## Content

The information presented shows evidence of relevant research. The candidate gives examples of hacking from history, through to hackers and anti-hackers in the present day. However, some of the comments are of a more general nature, such as in the fourth and fifth paragraphs. In this respect the piece is mixed, in that it displays elements of both the 12-10 and 9-7 ranges.

However, it is apparent that information is presented in a clear sequence. The introduction covers the key points of the candidate's stance and is followed by clearly ordered sections: history; what cybercrime can do; effects on people and society; punishment; conclusion.

Ideas deployed to inform and argue are used to convey a clear line of thought but do not always have a good degree of depth. While placing the piece in the 12-10 mark range, this puts it at the lower end of the range.

## Style

Features of the genre are deployed, mostly successfully, including rhetorical questions in the opening paragraph, an effective exclamation, and the use of 'we' to engage the reader.

Language is apposite and at times used to create an effect, such as the reference to hacking as a '*deadly tool*' in paragraph 5 and the cumulative list of the effects of hacking in the same paragraph. Structure supports meaning in that paragraphing allows for a line of thought to be communicated.

## Overall

Overall, this piece lies in the 12-10 marks range. However, as there are occasionally elements in the 9-7 range (mostly related to content), the piece is placed at the bottom of the range and was awarded **10 marks**.

# Commentary on Candidate G evidence – The Loft

This candidate was awarded **15/15 marks** for this broadly creative text from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This short story, written in the first person, is clearly placed in the 15-13 range. The persona, in the course of searching in the loft for Monopoly, discovers facts about her birth.

## Content

The piece displays very good creativity throughout. The candidate has created an interesting and convincing persona who experiences a wide range of emotions as she looks through items in the loft. There is initial fear: *'I dread the thought of climbing up.'* through surprise at finding her baby memorabilia: *'What is this? A box with my name on it?'* to shock and anger when she realises that her birth mother was her sister. By the end, she decides not to reveal what she has learned: *'I descend the ladder slowly. Each step confirming what I now know, but burying it deeper and deeper inside me.'*

## Style

Features of the short story genre are deployed effectively, and language is varied and used to create particular effects. A real sense of the character's personality and thought processes is enhanced by the use of the present tense, questions, repetition, sentence and paragraph variety, and ellipsis.

## Overall

The piece clearly meet all aspects of the 15-13 marks range. The candidate's vivid characterisation and effective use of language are especially noteworthy. It was awarded **15 marks** and is a very mature and accomplished piece of writing for this level.

# Commentary on Candidate H evidence – The Life of Robert So Far

The candidate was awarded **9/15 marks** for this broadly discursive piece from their portfolio-writing.

## Summary

This is a broadly discursive piece which conveys biographical information.

## Content

The candidate's father is the subject of this biographical piece. The candidate covers the subject's life in clear sequence, conveying information about birth, childhood, school, career, marriage and family. Information is presented in an anecdotal way: *'As a child if he was to get into trouble he would always fear what the village officer would say to his dad in the pub on Friday night.'*

All content is relevant and is presented in a clear sequence. There is evidence of some research with the candidate documenting the subject's formative years, detailing misadventures with his Jack Russell, Judy, and time spent on his grandparents' farm. Some detail is evident in the paragraphs on school life and naval career. The candidate's stance is evident in comments which highlight the speaker's admiration for the subject: *'Inspirational coming from a man that likes to think he is supportive, firm, but fair...'*

## Style

The candidate has employed a conversational tone which reflects the positive attitude the candidate has towards the subject: *'High school, what a time!'* This tone is deployed with a degree of success.

The structure of the piece – a chronological account – is appropriate to purpose and meaning. There is some linkage between paragraphs: *'After High school Rob went straight into the navy...'* Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence, which is developed and explained.

Language is effective in the main, with the candidate employing word choice (*'High School, what a time!'* and imagery, *'... flew under the radar'*), to hold the reader's interest and in an attempt to create effect. The piece contains numerous examples of light humour (*'a cheeky young lad'*, *'eating all of the bananas'* and *'making everyone smile was one of his dreams and he made it'*), all of which enhance the tone and reflect the purpose.

At times, however, the candidate's expression is clumsy and the syntax lacks some clarity: *'Being in love with Elaine for 25 years has been a blast since the moment he met her at a night out in the pub.'*

The line of thought tends towards the anecdotal, but this is entirely in keeping with writing of this nature: *'He felt this when he was travelling round the world but especially when he went to Kenya with the navy and worked with the locals to improve their living standards.'* This is seen throughout the piece: *'Their wedding was very low key but still sophisticated and the reception after was amazing, just like a special party.'*

The candidate concludes with the personal: *'I'm so glad that I have Rob as my dad to lead me through life with all the experience and kindness he has to offer.'* This captures the speaker's emotions towards the subject, and is reflective of the tone of the piece as a whole.

Overall, the candidate has made a genuine attempt to engage the reader deploying features of the genre with a degree of success.

### Overall

This is a piece of biographical writing that conveys (mostly personal) information about the candidate's father. The candidate has attempted to engage the reader with a degree of success through the use of conversational tone and corresponding word choice. The relationship between the candidate and chosen subject is made clear by the end of the piece, and this only serves to enhance the essay.

At times, the candidate's language is used to create an effect, but on the whole is best described as being effective in the main. Whilst the piece displays some qualities from the 12-10 range (language is apposite and used at times to create an effect), more often than not it falls into the lower range and as a consequence is placed at the top end of the 9-7 range and is awarded 9 marks.