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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. Its contents

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 1123/01

Composition

General comments

In the Composition component of the syllabus, most candidates wrote clearly and purposefully, making a determined effort to demonstrate their linguistic skills and to interest the Examiners. The question paper offered a range of topics with ample opportunity for candidates to use their abilities to advantage and candidates responded well to familiar or imaginative situations or to thought-provoking tasks. The narrative genre of **Questions 1** and **4** proved the most popular choice, especially for weaker candidates. The challenge of the discursive topic of **Question 2** proved too much for some candidates, especially those who did not fully understand 'preserving' in this context, though some were able to deal with it more successfully in purely personal terms of learning from their own past experiences. Weaker candidates wisely avoided the difficulties of tense and verb form that were likely to arise from the implicit time shifts of **Question 3**, and the difficulties of describing abstract concepts in **Question 5**. However, it was very pleasing to see that no particular question was markedly less popular than any of the others this year.

There were variations between Centres, as might be expected, but the overall standard of work produced was well in line with that achieved in past years and, although there were few really outstanding candidates, there were fewer very weak candidates this year, bearing testimony to the hard work of teachers and candidates alike.

There were no mis-interpretations of the rubric; candidates had used their time wisely and most were able to complete both parts of the paper at more than adequate length and evidently to have time to check and correct their work if necessary. It should be remembered that the instructions to candidates on the question paper state that correcting fluid must not be used. Errors should be crossed out neatly and the correct word inserted above, to maintain legibility.

Unfortunately, the practice of including memorised 'impressive' phrases, or passages from essays practised in preparation for the examination, has continued, despite the warning in last year's report that such devices are invariably obvious and intrusive, differing noticeably from the style and subject matter of the rest of the essay or from the standard of linguistic ability shown in **Part 2**. This was particularly noted in the opening paragraphs of the narratives in **Questions 1** and **4**, where the incident at school was prefaced with over-lyrical description of the weather and birdsong, or where a poetic description of dawn led eventually to a mundane awakening and preparation for an early flight.

Where language errors were found they were predominantly those of tense or verb formation, inconsistency of tense sequence, subject/verb number agreement or the use of 'would' or 'could' when the conditional was unnecessary or actually wrong. Poor punctuation of sentences, with boundaries blurred by use of the comma splice or omission of punctuation altogether, caused confusion for the reader. The use of 'texting' language, especially 'u', 'ur', 'abt' 'coz' and 'pls' seemed to be on the increase, although candidates have been warned in the past that there is no place for it in formal, written English.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

Write about a teacher who made an unfortunate mistake which caused a student to suffer as a result.

This was a popular choice. The subject was accessible to all candidates and the question itself provided a straightforward narrative structure, establishing a clear starting and finishing point and creating a logical story, with the opportunity to use effective, well-heard dialogue to dramatic effect. Some candidates chose to structure the story in terms of a 'flashback' and were apt to become confused with tenses, revealing some uncertainty in their grasp of the pluperfect. The best essays had realism, interest and immediacy, building up a sense of character, relationship and tension. Many candidates chose to enliven the story with the introduction of direct speech but care should be taken with paragraphing to identify the speakers clearly for the reader.

Many wrote about careless or inaccurate treatment of examination scripts, inappropriate teacher/pupil relationships or disciplinary injustice. Others described inadequate supervision of outdoor activities or laboratory experiments, leading to an accident or even a fatality. Teachers were sometimes harsh and peremptory in judgement but they showed great remorse when they discovered the mistake. Unfortunately, this was often too late to save the student from disgrace, a severe beating or even, in extreme cases, suicide. Some students were hospitalised as a direct result of cruel punishments e.g. being made to stand in the hot sun for an hour or run round the field until thoroughly exhausted.

Some teachers were also seen as human and vulnerable in stressful situations: 'He was tired after school, burning midnight oil.' In some cases the problem was a careless teacher, who gave the wrong instruction or tuition for crucial exams or simply did not bother to teach at all! Most stories were written from the student's point of view but there were some interesting accounts in which the teacher regretfully confided his or her mistake.

Some weaker candidates used the opportunity to re-work old stories, making them fit with varying degrees of success.

Question 2

'There is no point in preserving the past. We should be looking to the future.' What is your opinion?

Some candidates found this difficult and it was not a popular choice. It attracted some weaker candidates who wrote rather confused and repetitive essays. Many chose to interpret the question in very personal terms, writing about past experiences and the benefits of learning from past mistakes. There were some problems with the meaning of 'preserving' – did it mean holding on to the bad aspects of one's past? Some candidates based their essays on frequently quoted proverbs, particularly 'Memory is a diary we carry around with us.' Such memorised proverbs were, at times, totally irrelevant and candidates struggled to return to the main theme. Repetition increased as ideas ran out. Those who treated it properly as a discursive topic, generally found ideas, vocabulary and, particularly, tenses difficult. Few were able to argue clearly and the weaker scripts were not well-planned, with a tendency to argue both in favour and against the proposition without coming down firmly on either side.

However, this was a topic that enabled a few of the most able candidates to show off their writing skills, their general knowledge and their knowledge of recent historical events. Some referred to the value of the past in encouraging tourism and thus contributing to the country's future prosperity. The freshest and most interesting scripts were the work of those candidates that could maintain a balanced argument and incorporate global, national and personal references in support.

Question 3

Imagine a reunion with three friends from your schooldays in 10 years' time. How will your lives have changed?

This was the least popular topic but still one chosen by a sizeable minority of candidates, particularly girls. The most skilled writers saw the problems with tenses implicit in the question but avoided the dangers with a narrative set firmly in 2013 and the changes in lifestyle and personality emerged from the friends' conversation. There were some interesting, entertaining and often amusing accounts, using contrast, suspense, anecdote and characterisation to engage the attention of the reader.

In the hands of weaker candidates who were perhaps unwise in their choice of topic, the tense confusion inherent in the question came to the fore. Few could handle past friendship, present situation and future possibilities and switched from one to another at random. There was also frequent interchange of 'will' and 'would'. There was misunderstanding over the appropriate use of 'how' and 'what' e.g. 'I was wondering how my friends would be like.' The narrow vocabulary range of many candidates was shown in the frequent use of 'alot of' (a lot of) and of 'get/got'. A number of candidates failed to read the question carefully and wrote about a total of three, rather than four, friends, or wrote only about themselves, looking forward or back ten years. The theme common to many essays was 'friends forever', irrespective of what had happened during the ten years since leaving school.

Question 4

Write a story about what happened when, on the morning of your journey to spend a year studying overseas, you were unable to find your passport.

This proved to be the most popular choice and was accessible across the whole ability range. Even weaker candidates seemed to enjoy this question, as they could draw on so much that was familiar to them: their homes, their rooms, their families, the drive to the airport and, to some extent, the check-in procedure followed there, although for some this was patently drawn from vivid imagination or hearsay and not from genuine experience! This topic proved to be a good discriminator, allowing scope for talented writers to display their skills and for the average candidates to write methodically and with reasonable accuracy. Some spent too long setting up the narrative with tedious descriptions of the reasons for the journey or the ritual of getting up in the morning, using stock phrases, or the faulty idiom that persists in this situation: 'I washed up myself..'; 'I wore my clothes/clothing(s)' or 'I dressed up'. This topic also involved the most frequently misspelt word in this year's examination: luggage. One Examiner mentioned twelve different spellings seen in the scripts, including 'luage; luagage; luggauges; luddgage; luggige' and, inevitably, the use of the incorrect plural form; 'I had two huge luggages' or the impossible singular with the indirect article: 'I packed my stuff into a luggage.' Less frequently seen, but equally troublesome, was the word 'baggage'. Candidates did not seem to be familiar with the more straightforward 'suitcase', although several used 'backpack' or, as it was sometimes written, 'bagpack', or 'handbag' for 'hand luggage'. Other common errors of idiom found in this topic were: 'finding' instead of 'looking for' – 'All the family was finding my passport..'; 'tear' for 'cry' – 'I began to tear uncontrollably'; 'bring' or 'send' for 'take' – 'My father was going to send/bring me to the airport'; 'make' for 'obtain' – 'I had to make a new passport'.

The best candidates managed to convey tension well, included effective dialogue and introduced some interesting twists in their stories to explain the disappearance of the passport. The consequences were sometimes over dramatic but the rising panic and frantic search were convincingly described. The blame was often directed at the younger sibling or doting grandmother, both unwilling to lose the owner of the passport; in other cases it was chewed by the dog. Usually the tale ended happily with the passport being found in time or with the opportunity of a later flight; sometimes the chance was lost forever – or the plane crashed!

Question 5

'What a wonderful sound!' Write about some of the sounds you like best and why they mean so much to you.

This was not a very popular choice and it produced the greatest range of achievement. Some of the most impressive writing in the examination was found on this topic, particularly from candidates who were obviously first-class musicians themselves and wrote with passion and sensitivity of the intense pleasure they found in performing and listening to music. There were some mature and effective pieces in which candidates achieved the difficult task of describing a range of different sounds, using precise and well-chosen vocabulary, whilst remembering to explain the importance such sounds had for them by association with special people or occasions in their lives. The laughter and voices of relatives, as well as the sounds of the natural world, featured strongly, in some very interesting and convincing essays.

In contrast, the work of weaker candidates was confused and repetitive. The essays lacked planning and structure, tending to run out of ideas after the opening paragraphs. There was a tendency to list sounds rather than describe them in detail, or to offer conventional descriptions of sounds made by chirping birds, rustling branches, lapping waves, heavy rain – or even the sound of silence. It was more difficult to explain the importance of these sounds and many did not even attempt it or lost track of the subject and wandered off into anecdote or irrelevance. There was often little suggestion that candidates had really listened to the sounds they chose to describe.

Part 2

The Directed Writing task posed problems for some candidates this year. The letter format and the implied structure, suggesting a paragraph devoted to each content point, were recognisable features of this part of **Paper 1**, which had been practised in preparation for the examination. However, the concept and the term 'charity' proved to be unfamiliar in some regions and a number of candidates did not understand the main thrust of the task. They suggested that funds were to be raised *before* the event, to pay for the prizes, the refreshments or the rent of the hall or stadium, rather than money to be donated *at* the event, to improve the lives and fulfil the needs of those cared for by the charitable organisation concerned. In some cases the confusion arose through careless reading of the question paper.

Most candidates scored four or five Content marks; where one was lost, it was often because either the date or venue of the event had been omitted and both were required for that mark. Some candidates also failed to inform the special guest what he was required to do at the event or made no comment on the other arrangements made. A few candidates provided detailed addresses, date and salutation followed by short or incomplete letters, presumably under pressure of time. It should be remembered that in this exercise, where specific marks are awarded for the content points included, the format is less important than the body of the communication. Many candidates wrote in detail about their chosen charity – orphanages and homes for the elderly were the most popular - but overlooked other important details or produced letters that were far too long and thus gave more scope for linguistic error to occur. Too much time was spent on first or even second drafts, which were not completed in the final copy.

Some candidates had been well drilled in the conventions and lay-out of a formal letter but some still found it difficult to match the chosen salutation to a suitable close, i.e. 'Dear Sir,Yours faithfully', or 'Dear Mr. Tan, Yours sincerely.' Other Centres appeared to have received no instructions on the conventions of letter-writing and presented their communications without addresses, date, salutation or close. Many candidates found it difficult to adopt and sustain a suitable tone. Demands and instructions tended to replace requests and persuasion in peremptory fashion: 'The event will start at 7 o'clock sharp so do not be late. You will make a speech which we will give you when you arrive.' In some cases the tone was inappropriately informal and chatty, rather than a polite, respectful request to someone important.

Weaker candidates paid scant attention to the question paper's instruction '...try to persuade your guest that this is a worthwhile cause.' In some cases the charity was not even named but the money was simply designated as '...for the elderlies' or '...for the handicaps'. Other common errors were: 'to put up a performance'; 'to represent(sic) the prizes (prizes)'; 'to perform some skits (sketches)'; 'to give out a speech...' The confusion of 'would/will' and 'should/shall' marred the tense sequence in many letters.

The special guests most commonly chosen were The President or government ministers, famous pop-stars, or eminent sportsmen if a sporting event, rather than a concert, was to be organised.

Final comments

As in previous years, the many Examiners involved in the marking have emphasised their appreciation of neat presentation, clear handwriting, clarity and accuracy of expression and high level of interest to be seen in the essays presented in this examination.

Paper 1123/02
Comprehension

General comments

While there was some evidence that parts of the paper caused more difficulty than in previous years, the overall performance of the candidates was very similar. Answers to **Question 1**, for example, were less consistently successful than usual, but the content mark for **Question 10** was generally higher and this helped to redress the balance. Few candidates failed to complete the paper and in most cases the answers were well presented; spelling and punctuation were generally accurate.

The questions which produced the greatest number of correct answers were **2 (a)**, **4 (d)** and **6**, which could be answered by judicious lifting from the text, but candidates who went on to include irrelevant material copied from the passage denied themselves the marks. Answers to **Questions 4 (a)**, **4 (b)** and **5 (b)**, where the candidates were required to use their own words, proved rather more testing and **Questions 5 (a)** and **(c)** and **7** and **8** caused considerable difficulty. This was at times surprising since **5 (a)** and **8** could be answered by copying from the text: it appears that a lack of attention to the lead given by the question wording was largely to blame here.

Candidates who had struggled to score on **Questions 1** to **8** often went on to perform relatively well in the vocabulary and summary tests. In **Question 9**, only the weakest candidates failed to score at all and a pleasing number proved able to explain the meaning of the words in context rather than in isolation. While scores for **Question 10** were relatively high, this was often the result of textual lifting, a more fruitful method of obtaining marks this time as the passage used for the summary provided rather less in the way of irrelevant material than in some years; however, such candidates inevitably forfeited most of the marks available for style. Only the very strongest candidates were able to give a fluent and coherent exposition of the way money and its usage developed through the ages.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Failure to read the question with sufficient care led some candidates astray here. They focused on the process of bartering rather than on what went before it: how people made sure of the value of the things they took. This required the isolation of the idea of 'inspecting the goods'. All too often, those who did grasp this idea went on to lose the mark by answering correctly initially but then proceeding to describe the later stages of bartering: taking the goods and offering others in exchange. Their answers therefore lacked the precision required to gain the mark.

Question 2

- (a) This linguistic test was well within the reach of many candidates, particularly as it could be answered by lifting lines 7 and 8 straight from the text. The neatest answers stated merely: 'Bartering was laborious'. Those who tried to find synonyms for 'laborious' did so with varying degrees of success: words such as 'lengthy' and 'time-consuming' were clearly appropriate here, while 'hard' and 'difficult' lacked the sense of the tedious nature which characterised the task of bartering. Where there is no specific instruction to answer in 'own words', it is safer, especially for the weaker candidates, to adhere to the wording of the text.

- (b) While this question appeared at first sight relatively straightforward, the difficulty arose in that the answer as to why cattle were used in trading came in the sentence which preceded the mention of cattle in the text, rather than following it. The block copying of lines 8 to 10 was not enough; the selection of the essential idea of cattle having a 'common value' was necessary to score the mark and the majority of candidates were up to the task. However, the inclusion of excess material lost many candidates the mark here; they were required to distil the essential idea from the passage rather than leave the Examiner to do the work.
- (c) In this, the first truly inferential question, candidates who read lines 10 to 13 with care were able to deduce that the 'surprising' thing about the value of a servant was how unfavourably it compared with that of a suit of armour. Many focused merely on the basic incongruity of comparing an animal to a human being, i.e. that it was surprising that a servant should be worth only four oxen, without realising that the value comparison was needed.

Question 3

An element of deduction was required here. The question asked for a 'full' explanation of why some people regarded horses as a form of money and many candidates lost marks by stopping short of the essential element. It was not just that horses were a form of transport but that they were the only form of transport in wild, open country. The mark could have been scored by careful lifting of lines 15 to 17 'In some countriesmethod of travel', but those who went on to include lines 18 and beyond made it clear that they had not understood the focus of the question and wrote themselves out of the mark.

Question 4

- (a) This was the first question where candidates were required to use their own words in the answer and, as such, proved very difficult for the weaker ones. The question required a careful study of the problems which began to arise during the bartering process, from lines 21 to 25, and an explanation of why bartering 'could not last for ever'. The key to this lay in the increasing number of goods which were becoming available and the difficulty of judging the relative value of these items. Those who failed to heed the 'own words' instructions, whose answers relied solely on such text words as the 'variety' of the items and their 'worth' when compared one with another, scored no marks here; in general the idea of 'worth' was conveyed less successfully than 'variety'.
- (b) As with 4 (a), the 'own words' element proved a stumbling block to many here. The wording of the question, why 'metal objects acquired a special value as money', related to lines 27 and 28, where the answer lay. The essential element which gave the metal objects a 'special value' was the 'labour' which was required to 'extract' the metal from the earth. Some candidates gave the correct synonym 'mined' for the latter, but simpler alternatives like 'removed' and 'taken' were sufficient as long as they were followed by 'from the earth' or an equivalent idea. The concept of 'labour' - hard work - proved somewhat easier, although a common misunderstanding arose which was caused by a confusion with 'labourer', i.e. that a large number of people, or considerable manpower, was needed to obtain the metal from the earth.
- (c) This and the following question were rather less demanding. Candidates easily focused on the words 'a very basic form of money' which led them to read on to discover the knives and swords. The key idea here was that they were 'made in a small size' and most candidates understood this. Once more, those who simply copied out lines 25 and 26 were denied the mark for a failure to extract the idea of 'small' from the text.
- (d) While the majority of candidates had no problem with identifying 'basic' as the word which emphasised the simple nature of the money, a minority selected 'fashioned' instead. Many candidates offered the 'one word' answer which was required; those who included the word in a phrase like 'a very basic form of money' were able to earn the mark only if they highlighted it clearly by underlining or the use of apostrophes.

Question 5

- (a) This was the section of the paper which proved considerably more testing. The many candidates who scored no marks for this question did so because they failed to read the passage with sufficient care. The focus here was clearly on the inferiority of the 'metal objects' but many candidates ignored this and concentrated instead on the superiority of cowrie shells. Very often the only mark scored came from a rather fortuitous copying of lines 37 to 39, which refer to 'the more cumbersome metal objects'. Very few candidates earned the second mark, for pointing out that metal objects were also difficult to count up.
- (b) Candidates were asked, in this and the two following questions, to examine in some detail the use of the cowrie shell as money. Here the question - why was it a reliable form of money - constituted an exercise both in deduction and in the use of 'own words' and many candidates found this testing. Most simply quoted 'they defied any sort of imitation' straight from the passage, thus earning neither of the marks that were available here. There was evidence, too, that many misunderstood 'reliable' and answered in terms of convenience, or the ease with which cowrie shells might be handled and counted up. The ablest candidates recognised that the reliability of the shells resulted from the fact that they 'defied imitation' and offered simple alternatives like: 'they were unable to be copied'.
- (c) This and the following question were different sides of the same coin and candidates tended to score both marks or neither. Here, in order to answer correctly, they needed to recognise that 'their power to purchase things increased' meant that their value as money increased. Once this was accomplished, it was relatively easy to home in on lines 36 and 37 and deduce that it was the small numbers that were shipped abroad which was the cause; both of these points were relevant here and, while the idea of scarcity was relatively commonly presented, an understanding of the reason for this scarcity was less so. This lost many candidates the mark, as both elements were required to score in this question. One common incorrect answer - 'the bigger the cowrie shell, the greater its buying power' - occurred when candidates strayed from paragraphs 6 and 7, to which they had been directed, into the preceding one.
- (d) The wording of the question, which referred to 'their loss of value', clearly directed candidates to line 42 and the mark could be gained by either copying or paraphrasing what followed: 'increased amounts were shipped abroad'. This was a relatively simple question which many candidates handled successfully.

Question 6

As probably the most straightforward question on the paper, this was answered correctly by all but a very few candidates. The necessity of carrying around large quantities of coins was clearly seen as a considerable disadvantage.

Question 7

Many candidates lost the mark here by ignoring the instruction to select material from paragraph 9; as a result they made comments about the general convenience of paper money as opposed to other forms, particularly in terms of weight. The answer to this question was clearly to be found in lines 59 to 61: it is the weighing of precious metals which is avoided by the development of bank notes and which therefore makes them a 'convenient form of money'. Other problems posed here centred on a lack of precision in many answers. The mere lifting of line 61 - 'to avoid the elaborate process of weighing' - was insufficient to earn the point as Examiners needed to know what was being weighed (precious metals or gold and silver). Indeed, many of the weakest candidates demonstrated a total misunderstanding of this area of the passage by writing that it was the metal coins which had in the past required weighing.

Question 8

This was the question which caused by far the most difficulty in the paper and very few candidates scored the mark here. In attempting to answer why modern coins needed to have their value guaranteed by the state, some candidates appeared to misread 'why' as 'how' and therefore went on to explain that the coins had a 'mark' stamped on them; others merely wrote that modern coins were made of cheap metal rather than focusing on the idea that they no longer contained any precious metal. The question was answered most simply by those who lifted part of line 87: 'coins in circulation lost their value in terms of the metal in them', while more ambitious versions emphasised the idea that the metal they contained did not match their economic value.

Question 9

The vocabulary question was handled relatively well by a large number of candidates. The majority followed the rubric, correctly selecting five of the eight alternatives, and gave their answers in seven words or less, although a significant minority were still under the impression that they were required to write sentences demonstrating the use of the words in context. Many selected words which fitted well into the text. Common errors included 'basically' for 'principally', 'regular' for 'permanent', and 'reduce' for 'cover', while a considerable number saw the word 'fashioned' and concluded that it meant 'modelled' or 'designed' rather than 'constructed' or 'made'.

Question 10

Marks were generally reasonably high for content and some candidates attempted to use their own words, even though the rather technical nature of the passage often made this difficult.

Material selected from paragraphs 8 and 9 dealt with the reasons why the money developed by China proved so successful. Most candidates scored the first point, that the Chinese state guaranteed the value of the coins, as it was a straightforward run-on from the opening sentence, and the majority also picked up the next one, although some simply said that the coins conformed to a recognized design, without realising that it was the fact that the government ensured this conformity which was important. The best candidates were able to synthesise the first two points succinctly with sentences like: 'The state ensured their worth and their conformity to a recognised design'. The next two points available in paragraph 8, which referred to the increase in traders and the resulting popularity of money, were also included frequently, but many candidates lost marks by failing to establish the connection between this new money and the growth in business. Many used up valuable words by referring to the hole in each coin which enabled them to be strung together, and the fact that large numbers were needed in everyday trading, which had no relevance to the success of money but was, rather, one of its disadvantages at the time.

Paragraph 9 went on to examine a further stage in China's use of money, which was the development of the banknote, and points were awarded for this to those who saw its main advantage, that the weighing of precious metals would no longer be necessary, especially when large purchases were involved, although this point was often lost by the omission of what was being weighed. The relevant points were more widely spread after this and, while most candidates stated that each banknote was equal to a specific number of coins, and that it was the official guarantee which was important, few mentioned the overall convenience of the note as a form of money.

Paragraph 10 moved on to the second section of the rubric, concerning why the money produced later by other countries also proved successful, and, while many candidates made it clear that the emphasis was now on Europe rather than China, those who did not succeed in making this distinction lost marks here. Marks were frequently awarded for the idea that European cities fashioned coins from precious metals, but few candidates understood the notion that it was their intrinsic value which made them worth acquiring. Those who earned most of their marks by clever lifting from the text often merely copied the bald statement that European cities 'flourished' but stopped short of 'as the most successful trading centres', which would have earned them the mark, and they also failed to link this to the success of the coins.

Paragraph 11 formed a bridge between the success of European money and the reasons why, in the end, our money today follows the Chinese model so closely, which was the third element of the rubric. The majority of candidates failed to make the point that the gold and silver coins were used for a long time in many communities. It was interesting to note that many also omitted any mention of the cheap imitations or of those who dishonestly scraped the precious metals off the gold and silver coins. This was presumably because they saw it as a marked lack of success, not realising that it was this very undermining of the value of the real coins which led to our current use of cheap materials. A sizeable number, however, did mention the recall and melting down of coins but there was confusion between the coins which were re-issued at this stage in history, using less of the precious metals in their production, and the modern copper-based coins of the next paragraph, meaning that relatively few candidates scored the two points which were available here.

In paragraph 12, points were awarded for the mention of the official guarantees of value carried in recent times by both coins and banknotes, although many candidates mentioned one or the other but not both. The final mark was given to those who made a clear connection between the money of early China and that of the present day.

Conclusion

The majority of candidates earned marks for content by judicious copying. While only the very best produced summaries written in their own words, those who produced a synthesis of paraphrase and past wording were well rewarded because it was felt that the rather technical nature of the subject matter made a little more difficult than usual to avoid using some of the original phraseology.

Even the less able candidates obeyed the rubric concerning the maximum number of words, and fewer than in the past produced summaries that were so short that the number of points available for the style mark had to be reduced. The work was well presented and generally punctuated and spelt accurately. Many other weaknesses did occur, however, especially in verbal agreements and the use of tenses e.g. 'trading increased, which ensured the use of coins continue to flourish' and 'their value were determined by the government', while mistakes in the use of preposition were prevalent in some scripts, e.g. 'the banknote was a substitute of precious metals'. Other uncertainties included: errors in agreement like 'coins were collected back and lost its value'; the omission of the article in such expressions as 'it was guarantee of the state that mattered' and 'Chinese made the banknote'; the use of a noun rather than a verb and vice versa, e.g. 'there was no need to weight them', 'the introduce of this new money', and incorrect syntax, such as 'this made sure the future of coins to flourish'.