

# CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT MARCH 2004

## COMMUNICATION LEVEL 3

### General Comments

This paper provided an appropriately challenging test within the Level 3 specification.

The subject matter proved to be of general interest and some answers to Question 5 made use of personal details which, whilst not being wholly appropriate for a formal letter, did at least show that candidates were engaging with the topic! Candidates should be reminded, however, that they can be rewarded only for using material from the source documents.

Many candidates did not manage their time effectively, producing unnecessarily detailed answers for Question 1, which required only simple identification of relevant points. This left them insufficient time to complete, or in some cases, attempt Question 5, worth 50% of the total marks for the paper.

Overall, candidates appeared to perform less well than usual on Question 1, many being distracted by "toothpaste" or "titanium oxide" which the source documents did not link directly to pollution of drinking water, and/or paying insufficient attention to Document 2.

Candidates did not, on the whole, give very full accounts of the scientific responses to the issue of water pollution as required by the second half of Question 2, though there were some good examples of answers where a range of responses had been evaluated and carefully compared.

Question 4 was challenging and quite complex, and revealed widespread misunderstanding of the term "bias", as well as inability on the part of many candidates to distinguish between the words "bias" and "biased". Once again, there was little evidence that centres had prepared their candidates in terms of the correct format and style for a formal letter, despite this being a regular feature of Part B of this paper. Marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar rarely rose above the middle of Band 2, with many errors which are typical of lower level candidates.

### Recommendation to Centres

Ensure ALL candidates who are entered for this level have the knowledge identified in Part A of the specifications. Guidance should be provided in giving due regard to all elements of a question, and in interpreting what kind of response is required to the key words, such as *identify*, *explain*, and *consider*.

Candidates should learn and practice the skills of formal letter writing, and understand the correct format, including sender and recipient addresses, date, appropriate salutation and close.

It would be most helpful if centres would ensure that scripts are sent to markers in Registration Attendance Sheet order.