

CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

JUNE 2007 SERIES

Communication - Level 3

General Comments

This paper, though challenging, provided an appropriate test of Level 3 skills. The pass mark reflected the level of minimal competence, and was set at 26, at the lower end of the usual range.

Many candidates appeared to find the topic, "Building Heritage", and the source material, difficult, although there were some excellent responses. Answers to Question 1 were generally successful in identifying three reasons why many old buildings are no longer standing, though marks were lost by some through failure to focus on the precise details of the question (for example, **three** reasons; **two** documents; **old** buildings) or the source material (the writer of Document 2, for instance, is bemoaning the fact that the "cynically 'functional' buildings" built "in the second half of the 20th century", many of which "deserve to be demolished", are still standing!). Despite some curious interpretations of the statistics contained in Document 4, most candidates were able to provide three valid findings in their answers to Question 2. However, consideration of the extent of the charts' support for Document 1 was often limited. A surprising number of candidates incorrectly stated that the writer of Document 1 believed that people do **not** care about their heritage.

Although many answers to Question 3 did not clearly differentiate between the criticisms of preservation and its impact on regeneration, most candidates were able to score some marks for both parts of the question by correctly identifying the relevant material in Document 3. The concept of "regeneration" confused some, who interpreted the term to mean something to do with handing down heritage to future generations. This confusion also hampered the attempts of some to answer Question 4. Most identified the notion of using virtual reality, but many struggled to find another valid possible solution. Only the strongest candidates paid full attention to the requirements of the second part of the question, which asked for a consideration of both Document 1 and 2 and the extent to which they supported both of the identified solutions. Many candidates did not recognise that the two documents presented differing viewpoints on the subject of the preservation of old buildings.

As usual, it was rare to find candidates who could correctly incorporate all the elements of a formal letter. Common errors were the inclusion of the sender's name above the address, omission of the date, incorrect salutations (for example, "To The Editor"; "Dear The Editor"; "To Whom It May Concern") and inappropriate close to match the choice of salutation. Paragraphing was usually at least adequate, and most candidates achieved the mark for tone (though there were still some who lost this mark through reference to the document number). Some responses lacked an introduction, and some – perhaps through lack of time – were

not brought to a clear conclusion. A few candidates did not fully understand the term "historic built environment", and several did not provide a satisfactory definition, as required by the question. The best answers showed understanding of the range of reasons for preservation indicated in the source material, and were able to explain clearly and coherently the issues raised concerning the tension between the ideas of preservation and modernisation. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was rarely more than satisfactory for candidates at this level, and many answers contained basic errors such as confusion of their/there, its/it's, inability to write in sentences and incorrect use or omission of commas and apostrophes. In recent papers, examiners have noticed an increasing use by candidates of the verb form "gotten".

Recommendation to Centres

Centres are reminded that, at Level 3, mastery of the basic rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar is essential, and it should not be assumed that all candidates studying at Level 3 in academic or vocational subjects will necessarily have this ability. Ensure ALL candidates who are entered for the Communication Key Skill at this level have the appropriate skills and knowledge to allow them to be successful.

Candidates should be given opportunities to practice techniques which commonly feature in Level 3 tests: identifying and briefly summarising the main points of a text; analysing images used to illustrate text and evaluating their relevance and suitability; synthesising viewpoints from different documents. Centres where coaching is provided in examination technique and the conventions of writing letters, reports and articles give their candidates a considerable advantage when approaching the test. For example, guided exercises in writing letters for different purposes and audiences would be most useful.

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