**March/April 2011 Exemplars – Commentary**

**A652 Spoken Language**

**Scripts A & B task - "To what extent is Michael Parkinson an effective interviewer?"**

This task invites candidates to analyse Michael Parkinson's interviewing techniques and strategies, which is entirely appropriate to the specification. Phrasing the question in a way which asks candidates to evaluate his effectiveness adds an additional layer of challenge which is perhaps not necessary, and which invites undeveloped comparison with other interviews.

**Script A:**

**Band 3: 14 marks**

The opening paragraph here is primarily biographical information, which adds little to the candidate's response. The following paragraph in which the candidate attempts to define the requirements of an interviewer is more useful as it helps to define a structure for the candidate's analysis. The section about the interview with Ali G is rather superficial and lacks comment on the detail of the text. There is a sense of the candidate focusing on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, although the candidate has missed the opportunity to make some interesting comments about the fact that Parkinson is knowingly interviewing an actor in role. In the section in which the interview with David Beckham is discussed, there is again a sense of understanding of how features (such as supportive feedback) are used but again there is very little detailed reference to the text. In the section which discusses the Meg Ryan interview the candidate describes what goes wrong with the aid of some speculation about Meg Ryan's thoughts. The candidate recognises that turn taking has broken down in the interview, but there is limited comment on this. In the conclusion candidate recognises that the success of the interview isn't entirely dependent on the interviewer and this contributes to the failure of the Meg Ryan interview; more detailed consideration of this might have led to interesting consideration of the different contexts of the interviewees.

The candidate has made clear and sustained response and shown sound understanding of how some features of spoken language chosen for specific purposes; the lack of detailed support restricts the candidate to band 3.

**Script B**

**Band numeral 5: 6 marks**

The candidate's introduction is biographical and the candidate makes very little use of it in the remainder of the essay. The candidate identifies some of the techniques/features of spoken language, e.g. discourse markers and flirting, but gives no examples of them or their effects. The candidate then describes in general terms how Parkinson manages turn taking when interviewing more than one person. The candidate has clearly understood the tone of the interviews and that Parkinson's behaviour helps to create this tone but there is little attempt to analyse how this tone is created. In the second part of the essay the candidate identifies of range of features, such as different question types and lists some examples from different interviews, but there is no discussion of the reasons for their selection or the impact. The candidate goes on to identify the context of various interviews but again does not discuss the impact of this context on the interview itself.

This candidate fulfils the criteria for band 6, making some relevant comment and showing a little understanding of aspects of spoken language. The candidate has begun to organise the response, and this just lifts the mark into band 5.

**Script D - Obama**

**Band 1: 18 marks**

Although comparison is not a requirement for this component, this piece clearly shows how the context influences speech and interaction patterns. The candidate maintains a close focus on the language used and identifies patterns in language use, personal pronouns "old-fashioned words" and identifies their impact. The candidate discusses para linguistic features, for example, volume, pace and some hand gestures and there is some discussion of why these are used at the particular points. In the second part of the response. The candidate maintains a close focus on the language used discussing the choice of lexical sets and superlatives; although these points could be expanded the candidate clearly examines the reason for their selection.

This candidate meets all of the criteria for band 2; the cogent and precise references to texts lifts the response into band numeral one.

**A680 Exam - Foundation**

**Script E**

Total 56 marks – a **secure Grade C**

1a – 1c. Full marks.

1d. Clear understanding in own words of O and T points. Above B4: 13 marks.

2a. Some relevant comment, but quite a bit of the answer is overly general (e.g. ‘short and snappy headings have an edge to it’). Band 6: 3 marks.

2b. A range of Information [A] and Language [B] points show a sound understanding of the ways in which information and language contribute to the leaflet’s purpose. The ticks indicate pertinent comments. Band 4: 11 marks.

4. The writing is engaging, and the writer is ‘generally’ in control of the material. There is an understanding of task and purpose for the most part, and some attempt to paragraph effectively (perhaps too short/fragmented in places?). Band 4: 15/26.

Low Band 4 for AO3iii: 8/14.

**Script F**

Total 48 marks – **a solid D**

1a- 1c. Full marks.

1d. A range of O and T points. Answer has a generally clear focus, and some evidence of own words. Band 4: 10 marks.

2a. A short, mainly descriptive response mixing general and specific points@ ‘begins to develop a response…’. Band 5: 4 marks.

2b. An understanding of mainly Information [A] points is shown, together with some comment. There is a focus on the task, but this is not a developed response. Low Band 5 – mark of 8.

3. Not always able to control the material, but this is structured and has some sense of direction. The writing ‘generally’ engages the reader. Band 5: 13/26.

Band 5 for AO3iii: 7/14. Tendency to lose control of ambitious sentence structures – rather repetitive.

**A680 Exam - Higher**

**Script G**

This is an example of a script which achieved an overall mark in the **grade C** range. The response to Task 1 reveals a partial overview of the material with quite a good range of points; it achieved a good Band 4 mark. The response to Task 2 shows some understanding of the way the elephants are portrayed but there is a tendency to state details without explaining *how* the effects are achieved. There are similar limitations in the response to task 3; the candidate identifies appropriate examples without fully developing their implications. Again, both responses were awarded secure Band 4 marks. The writing response is confidently controlled, relevant and generally securely expressed. This was awarded Band 3 marks. Like many who sat this paper, this candidate has obviously revised her answers at the end of the examination and included additional material on the final page, indicated by asterisks throughout the earlier answers. Examiners will not penalise candidates for doing this but it is not an approach to be recommended, except *in extremis* Question 1: 5; Question 2: 6; Question 3: 6. Question 4: 18+10 Total: 45

**Script H**

This is an example of a script that overall achieved a mark in the **grade A** range. The response to Task 1 is effectively organised, has a clear overview of the material and makes a good range of points in a concise way. It is clearly focused on the task and achieved a good Band 2 mark. There is a similar clarity of focus in the responses to the other two reading tasks. That to Task 2 again shows secure understanding of both text and task and supports this with carefully made textual references with some explanation of how the elephants are portrayed. The response to Task 3 shows understanding of the how the writer’s language conveys his feelings and a clear attempt to explain how this is conveyed to the reader. The response to the writing task shows a confident treatment of the topic; is consistently relevant and uses a range of structures for effect. Question 1: 9 Question 2: 11; Question 3: 10. Question 4: 22+12 Total: 64.