



Selective High School Placement Test

Writing

Sample answers with examiner comments

This document contains sample Writing responses along with comments and marks from the examiners. These are to help provide students with a guide to how the assessment criteria are applied to this section of the test.

You can find the assessment criteria, along with a short explanation of how they are structured, at the end of this document.

Please note, the students who wrote these responses did so on computer and their responses were typed. This is reflected in some places in the examiner comments, especially with reference to typos. Please also note, the students who participated in providing this material were in Year 7 at school. Their responses have been anonymised (names of candidates, their schools and other potentially identifying information have been removed).

Sample scripts and commentaries

Sample 1

Advice Sheet for High School Newcomers

Welcome, new students! Welcome to our school!

Friends

When you first arrive at this school, you will be guided by your peers and leaders. It isn't difficult to make friends, as everyone here is super friendly and welcoming! Just be yourself and talk to other people, there's no need to be shy or awkward. You will be accepted, as long as you are kind. Within a couple of days, you will have found the people you want to spend the rest of your years with, to sit with and talk to.

Clubs

There are a wide variety of clubs at this school that you can join. There are sport clubs, music ensembles, dance, drama, the school choir and other hobbies like sewing, gaming, lego, art. Joining clubs can let you try new things, give you a better record and report card, boost your reputation, let you meet new people with the same interests, make friends, improve your social skills.

Map & Timetable

It is recommended that you carry around your school map and timetable in your diary. Colour coding your timetable is a good way to see what your next class is easily. You can also put it on your phone digitally, photocopy it and stick it in your locker, above your desk at home, on your fridge, etc, so you have multiple copies everywhere you go.

Be Organised

Be prepared and organised for class, as this gets you on your teacher's good side, improves your reputation and affects your report card too! Bring all the necessary stationery supplies, such as pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, etc. Bring all the books that you require for that day. If your bag gets too heavy, you can hire a locker for the year and store your books in there when you don't need them.

Homework

Remember to start your homework when you get it, as it can pile up from all the different subjects you have. Starting it straight away and not the day it's due is good, as it gives you more time later and reduces your stress and anxiety. Doing your homework improves your academic marks and shows the teacher that you are motivated, intelligent and diligent.

Exams

Preparing for tests and exams that are coming up is important if you want to achieve good grades. This means studying and trying hard in general, not just the night before the test! You can also study with your friends if you study more efficiently this way. Take notes in class, make reference sheets, flashcards, anything that helps you study. Highlighting your notes with a highlighter is a good idea, as it shows you your main points and key concepts, etc.

School Counselors

If you're ever feeling upset or you witness something bad or traumatising, there are many people you can talk to who can help you. There's the school counsellor, your

teachers, your classmates and your friends. Don't be afraid to ask for help, as they truly just want you to be happy and feel safe and welcomed.

Getting Along with Others

Try to avoid making enemies and just try to get along well with everyone. If someone or a group of people are being mean or insulting you, just ignore them, or approach them with kind words. You can also turn to your teachers for help, as they are intelligent and helpful.

Safety

When outside of school, try to stick together with your classmates or friends when travelling from school to home. You shouldn't talk to strangers, or accept any food or drinks or strange objects from them. There may be dangerous or rude people who you don't want to encounter alone, so be with a few people you trust. This is just a safety precaution, as this area is generally quite safe and full of friendly people. Make sure you are carrying your phone, and stick to busier streets that you are familiar with.

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 1

This is a distinctive response containing an abundance of well-managed, practical information that is communicated efficiently to encourage the prospective students to settle in and do well at their new school. It begins by assuring the students that they will have a warm welcome from both pupils and teachers. There are references to the advantages of joining clubs and information about who is available for individual help and guidance. This is balanced with advice about how to be best prepared for lessons. There is a fleeting reference to the local area in the last paragraph.

The advice sheet is clearly organised with sub-headings appropriate for the purpose and audience. Paragraphs are mostly in a logical order and there is some excellent cohesion within them. However, the number of paragraphs means there is sometimes a lack of development and the piece lacks a satisfying ending.

The style of writing is controlled and precise, and the level of formality used is appropriate for both purpose and audience. The vocabulary is ambitious and always well-chosen, e.g., 'motivated', 'diligent' and 'traumatising'. There is a maturity of expression and the unquestionably helpful tone is maintained throughout.

Overall, this response fulfils some of the criteria for Band 6. Its focus on practical advice at the expense of inspiring enthusiasm, along with the lack of a satisfying end to the piece, means it is awarded 13 marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 13

The piece displays a secure use of complex sentences which, for the most part, are long but always well-controlled. There is measured use of commands and impersonal constructions that give a level of maturity to the writing. 'There are a wide variety of clubs...' is notable as a rare error.

Punctuation is ambitious: commas and apostrophes are well-managed and exclamation marks are used judiciously for effect. There is a capital letter missing at the beginning of the sentence starting 'if someone or a group of people...' in the penultimate paragraph, but this may well be the result of a typing slip.

Spelling, including that of more ambitious words such as 'efficiently', 'reference' and 'counsellor', is mostly secure throughout, with minor slips in 'reputaion' and 'recquire'.

Overall, this response is awarded 10 as the writing is sophisticated and measured and errors are rare.

Sentences, punctuation and spelling: 10

Total mark: 23

Sample 2

Heya! Welcome to our school, where you're free to do (almost) anything you want! You, being a citizen of this amazing selective school, are able to gain many new opportunities and increase your intelligence in many different aspects. This school will allow students to open new doors and look at the many great things of life and what it gives you.

There are multiple different jobs that you can take part in. Some of these include Rural Youth, Japanese Club, and the Student Representative Council, where you'll find me! There are also many different events here in our school, which includes an annual Swimming Carnival, Multicultural Day, Purple Day, and way more that are sure to cheer you up. If you aren't interested in either of these things, then don't worry! There's a list miles long that includes all the great things that you, yes, you, can take part in!

Now, you may be asking about the playground, or what happens during breaks. Well, our school is big. There are many different areas where you can enjoy your lunch breaks in, or many just have a little chat with your friend. Obviously, there are a few restrictions, but avoiding those should be a piece of cake. Just sit around where you please or feel free to have a stroll around the school!

Speaking of the playground and friends, let's talk about the students around the school. Many students in this school are quite welcoming, and you are sure to get a friend as soon as the first week of your entry is over. It may be hard having a new school because it means you need to find a new friend, but don't worry! You will always have at least one person by your side or someone to be your buddy. And if you don't, come talk to someone else, like an SRC or a teacher!

You're probably getting bored reading this, but that's ok! In the school you're about to enter, we allow you to have emotions and thoughts of all kind. You may hate something, but that's completely fine! Maybe you had a rough day or something happened to you along the journey, and we accept everything that you feel and everything that makes you, you. We won't judge you based on your appearance, gender, sexuality, skin colour, because our school is multicultural and we accept whatever you are. Maybe you're an alien, but who cares? At least you are taking this opportunity to your advantage!

And lastly, the essentials. Obviously you need a bag filled with all the stationary needed - books, pencilcase, food, a device, all the average school life stuff. Here, we offer an outstanding educational system where we provide many materials to help with your study, and nothing is too hard to get with the amazing opportunities that this school gives you. So, it's time to pack your bag and get ready for 6 years of one of the best experiences you have (hopefully) agreed taken part in! :D

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 2

This is a distinctive response, which shows originality in its combination of practical advice, empathy and entertaining touches designed to reassure and inspire new students.

The advice sheet includes reference to key aspects of the school prospective students are likely to be interested in, from opportunities to join different clubs to finding their way around. The selection of content is well judged, with a balance between specific details such as special events and more general comments about getting on with other students. There is, however, no reference to the local area.

There is skilful adaptation of form, with a friendly opening addressed directly to the new students. The next paragraph focuses on what students will get out of the school and links with the ending, which returns to this theme. The piece is clearly organised into paragraphs, and each section leads effectively into the next. The last sentence neatly combines practical reference to packing a school bag with the encouraging comment about six years of 'one of the best experiences'.

The style is light-hearted and informal, appropriate for the audience, with more formal elements when referring to rules and the inclusion policy. Some more abstract ideas are captured in metaphors such as 'open new doors'. Idioms create a sense of familiarity, e.g., 'a list miles long' and 'piece of cake', and are also appropriate to the audience and task.

Overall, this response fulfils almost all of the criteria in Band 6. Lack of reference to the local area and occasional imprecision in style, e.g., 'nothing is too hard to get with the amazing opportunities', mean it gains 14 rather than 15 marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 14

A range of sentence types is used, including questions and minor sentences. There is also variety in the length and structure of sentences, with assured shifts between verb forms, which are well controlled to create impact. '...agreed taken part in' is an odd error in the final sentence.

Punctuation is secure throughout, with some range used across the piece, and commas, brackets and exclamation marks used for effect, though the last of these are possibly overused. There is a missing apostrophe in 'lets' but this is untypical.

The spelling is accurate, including that of some more demanding words such as 'Representative' and 'restrictions'. 'opportinues' is a slip, as the word is spelled correctly elsewhere, and 'stationary' stands out as a rare error.

Overall, this response fulfils all of the criteria in Band 6 and so gains 10 marks.

Sentences, punctuation and spelling: 10

Total mark: 24

Sample 3

Hey! So you three have been lucky enough to enter this fabulous school. Well, first of all, congratulations on making it in here. It's not easy to ace the test, but you managed to do it. Very surprising! The High School Community is a loving and welcoming community having different cultural and religious backgrounds, a variety of clubs to suit your personal hobbies, great teachers and well-supplied school environment.

It's easy to slide into this school as the subjects and electives are designed for you to shape your future. The city in general is a great community, often holding festivals and celebrations for different cultures, community events to entertain the community and much more.

Your journey into this school will start of with orientation (if you're in Year 7) which is a fun way to have a taste of the school environment and the student body within the school. You should try to take in as much information as you can, because you'll need to have know it later on. After orientation, is the start of school, where you'll be divided into peer support groups.

A peer support group is a group of people oriented around helping new students transition from primary and feel comfortable within the school. You shouldn't worry too much on the first day, as it's an easy breeze. You'll get to meet new people and have the knowledge of a senior based on the school. If you have any questions, just ask your peer support leader!

After the first three days, you will be sorted into classes and have your first lessons. You'll have the opportunity to meet your teachers and your classmates. This is a fun and exciting time for everyone, as new things are approaching. After that, you've done it! You've succesfully moved into our school!

I hope you enjoy our school! We all love you, whether you be a boy, girl, straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, gender fluid, Indian, Australian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, or just different from everyone else. You'll have the 100% guarantee that you will be welcomed here no matter what. Even if you make a mistake, because mistakes make us stronger. Anyways, hope to see you out on the quad having fun!

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 3

This is a confident response, with interesting and carefully chosen content selected to reassure and inspire enthusiasm.

The advice sheet covers aspects that aim to make new students feel at ease about joining the school, such as an orientation event, involvement in a peer support group and being welcomed regardless of gender, sexuality or culture. There is also a brief but relevant reference to the local area.

There is effective adaptation of form, with an informal and congratulatory opening directly addressed to the three new students. The following paragraph makes reference to the general benefits of the school, from subjects designed to shape the students' future to festivals, celebrations and community events. The piece is organised into paragraphs, which creates a consistent whole. The final paragraph contains a blend of comments intended to reassure the new students and to offer friendship, e.g., 'you will be welcomed here no matter what' and 'hope to see you out on the quad having fun!'. Paragraphs are well linked but there is the odd misplaced comment, e.g., 'Very surprising!' in the first paragraph.

The friendly and informal style is appropriate for the audience and is sustained throughout the piece. Vocabulary is mostly well-selected, e.g., 'cultural', 'environment' and 'electives', and there is deliberate use of colloquialisms for effect, e.g., 'it's an easy breeze'. There is some repetition, e.g., 'community' in the second paragraph and 'fun' as an adjective, and also some awkwardness of expression in places, such as 'have the knowledge of a senior' and 'as new things are approaching'.

Overall, this response fulfils all of the criteria in Band 5 and so gains 12 marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 12

There is some variety in the length and structure of sentences, which are mostly well-controlled. The use of modals and shifts between verb forms, especially in the penultimate paragraph, is sound. However, 'you'll need to have know it' in the third paragraph is inaccurate.

Punctuation is mostly secure, with occasional use of punctuation for effect, such as brackets and exclamation marks.

Spelling of most words, including ambitious and less common words such as 'orientation', 'opportunity' and 'environment', is accurate. 'of' for 'off' in the third paragraph is a minor slip.

All of the criteria in Band 5 are fulfilled and so this response gains a mark of 8.

Sentences, spelling and punctuation: 8

Total mark: 20

Sample 4

Welcome to our High School!

Here students thrive in such a privileged, friendly learning environment. We hope that you can take this advice in stride to comfortably transition into a new life at school and in the local area.

The students here are always on the lookout for new friends and to strengthen relationships with peers. Strong and healthy friendships are absolutely necessary in a High School life and here it offers a range of activities and programs that can assist new students in making friends. There are many clubs and sport programs that you can join to get to know your schoolmates better. For example, you could attend the Sewing Club on Thursday afternoons or the Basketball team which practises once a week in the mornings. This is a great way to form strong friendships at a new school. A handy tip to gain more friendships is to surround yourself with those that have similar or the same hobbies. Your friends can be a vital help in navigating the school! Joining a club is a perfect way to make strong bonds!

We understand that settling into a new school can be a challenge - but it doesn't always have to be if you take responsibility for your learning and transition into High School in the best possible way. A great way to do so is to stay confident. You can achieve this feeling of achievement by staying on top of your homework, completing assignments on time and keeping organised. This is a simple piece of advice for settling in - don't let moving into a new school disrupt your consistency in academic grades and achievement.

Everyone has something that they are good at, whether it is drawing or sport or giving advice like this sheet does! A clever thing to do is to embrace your abilities and take them further. For example, if you can play a musical instrument, join the renowned school band! There are many ensembles that offer a range of amazing opportunities. This is also a fantastic way to make friends and to settle into the school - everyone likes others who share a hobby or talent.

As for your talent - don't be put off if you can't yet play an instrument. Music is not the only option. The local community provides a range of workshops outside of school hours to make your weekends or afternoons much more fun. Dancing, singing and drama are all options well within your reach. If you enjoy writing, you could join a writing club, or an art club if you are into drawing and painting. Attending workshops outside of school are an extremely effective way of making friends from all around the local area.

Our neighbourhood and surrounding suburbs are all wonderful place to live and grow. For new additions to the local area, getting to know locations and neighbours is essential. Forming friendships and visiting friends' houses or local areas is a great way to have fun whilst exploring the friendly neighbourhoods of the local area. One quick piece of advice is to get out of the house and explore! There is so much more to your local community than meets the eye - hidden playgrounds, small restaurants that sell amazing foods. Discovering these havens is a fantastic way to get to know your local community better - and while you're at it, you can try to remember how to get around town.

Purchasing a membership for your local library or joining your community centre is a great way to get involved in community events, many of which are held there. Attending these events are a great way to meet new people and to interact with your wonderful neighbours who share a passion of reading or helping out the community.

Another fantastic way to get to know your local area is to attend community events and get involved with the people of your neighbourhood. For example, you could participate in a local fundraiser or attend community events such as a street party or neighbourhood picnic. These are a few of many outstanding ways to get to know your community and local area better. The school itself often hosts fun and inclusive events at the school that you should be sure to attend, such as musicals and band performances.

We thoroughly hope that you will enjoy a fun-filled transition into High School here and the local area. Immerse yourself in the things you love, which no doubt can be found in such a wonderful community. Follow this advice and you will make brilliant, loyal friends in no time at all. We hope you will settle in to this community of wonders with a huge smile on your face!

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 4

This is a distinctive and original response, with thoughtful and confidently chosen content. It combines a focus on big themes such as confidence with well-chosen details and helpful tips to inform, enthuse and reassure new students.

The piece offers considered and mature advice about how to transition successfully into the school, e.g., how to make friends by joining various clubs and how to achieve well by taking 'responsibility for your learning'. There is an abundance of detail and helpful information about the local community and how to enjoy it, e.g., exploring 'hidden playgrounds' and 'small restaurants that sell amazing foods' and interacting 'with your wonderful neighbours'.

There is skilful adaptation of form, with a welcoming opening directly addressed to the new students. The next paragraph focuses on advice about forming friendships, a theme revisited throughout the piece. The response is deliberately structured using well-organised paragraphs to create a coherent whole. The final paragraph contains an effective blend of detail aimed at reassuring and exciting new students, e.g., 'We thoroughly hope that you will enjoy a fun-filled transition' and 'Immerse yourself in the things you love'.

The friendly and semi-formal style is appropriate for the audience, with more informality in the use of contractions such as 'don't', 'can't' and 'you're'. Vocabulary is varied, ambitious and well-chosen, e.g., 'thrive', 'consistency', 'embrace', 'navigating', 'havens', 'Purchasing' and 'participate'.

This advice sheet fulfils all of the criteria in Band 6 and so gains full marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 15

A well-judged range of sentences is effectively used, with confident shifts between first and second person and impersonal constructions. There is also variety in the type of sentences, with effective use of commands, and some short sentences used for effect, e.g., 'Music is not the only option'.

A range of punctuation, including dashes and exclamation marks, is used very securely and sometimes for deliberate effect, for example, to convey a conversational tone and a sense of enthusiasm.

Spelling is accurate, including that of ambitious and unfamiliar words, e.g., 'consistency', 'privileged', 'ensembles' and 'responsibility'.

Overall, this response fulfils all of the criteria in Band 6; the odd errors, such as 'Attending workshops... are' do not detract from the high level of control and impact, and so it is awarded 10 marks.

Sentences, spelling and punctuation: 10

Total mark: 25

Sample 5

Dear new students and (hopefully) new friends,

Hi, and welcome to our school! Congratulations on making it in! We are all so excited for you to join us, and hope you are just as excited to come to our school! I am a student in Year 7, having joined almost a year ago, and I know how it feels to be new and not know much about our wonderful school! Hopefully my advice will help you decide which path you want to take while here!

Our school has many opportunities to offer, including extensive academic work with wonderful teachers, beneficial and fun extra-curriculars, and an opportunity to make friends, and lifelong buddies! The teachers and other girls here all make it so fun and enjoyable too, and I'm sure you'll love it here!

At our school we have lots of academic extension, and we push ourselves to be the best we can. We have many subjects, such as English, Maths, Science, Geography, French, Latin, Chinese, Japanese Music, DT, VA and many others, that will give you amazing knowledge and information you hadn't had before! In our learning, we also have amazing teachers to guide and support us! They are always there to help us, and to shape us into independent young women! In year 7, we learn two languages, and I learn French and Latin, and although I haven't been here very long, I have learnt so much already! As a tip, always finish your homework and listen in class, because it is all very fast paced and we have regular tests to help us stimulate our knowledge, and it is extremely important to revise!

In school, we also have a large number of extra-curriculars to join, and other fun groups and clubs. Although we are a selective school, lots of the girls here are very active! Many students this year participated in the rowing program, and there are many other sports you can join like netball, chess, fencing, basketball, drama clubs and plays, music ensembles, art clubs, coding clubs and so many opportunities waiting here for you! I suggest you join as many as possible, because they are all fun, and present many new opportunities. I joined netball, debating and rowing and found myself having fun with my friends while working hard both mentally and physically!

Here, you will also meet many new people, and even make some lifelong friends. The girls here are all nice and help you push yourself. They have similar interests and tastes, and we are sure you will fit right in! Here, we are not competitive, but we all help one another to be the best we can. There are prefects and student leaders who are always there to help and your friends are always there to talk to! Never be shy and don't hesitate to sit with someone new! You can never have enough friends!

The school community is welcoming, and there are many opportunities for the parents to work here at school too! The local area is supplied with many parks, and there are also bus stops and light rail stations nearby, making it easy to travel to and from school. I've only been here for a little more than 3 terms, but I can already feel the affect it is having on me, and I know that I have become more independent and hard working within my time here. I have made new and better friends than I have made before, and am excited to meet 3 new students, make 3 new friends, and spend the next 5-6 years with you here!

I know you will have an amazing time here, like me, and I hope to meet you soon!

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 5

This is a distinctive and original response, with confidently chosen content which makes use of well-chosen details, tips and personal anecdotes to inspire and put new students at ease.

The response offers thoughtful advice about how to transition successfully into the school, e.g., making friends by joining various extra-curricular clubs, listening in class, doing homework and revising for tests. Information has also been provided about the subjects offered by the school and there is brief reference to the facilities in the local community.

There is skilful adaptation of form, with a welcoming and congratulatory opening, which is addressed directly to the new students. The next paragraph focuses on what the school has to offer with mention of the importance of making 'lifelong buddies', a theme revisited throughout the advice sheet. Well-organised paragraphs are used deliberately to create a coherent whole. The final sentence is warm and reassuring, e.g., 'I know you will have an amazing time' and 'I hope to meet you soon!'.

The style is friendly and informal, appropriate for the audience, with elements of a more formal style when explaining the academic aspects of the school. Vocabulary is ambitious and well chosen, e.g., 'extensive', 'independent', 'stimulate' and 'competitive'.

Overall, this response fulfils almost all of the criteria for Band 6. It is only the lack of detail about the local area, some repetition of ideas and an element of disjointedness in the penultimate paragraph that prevents it from achieving the highest mark.

Content, form, organisation and style: 14

A well-judged variety of sentences is used, which are mostly very securely controlled. There is some use of commands and secure shifts between first, second and third person and different verb forms.

Some range of punctuation is used accurately to create clarity, in particular, commas. Exclamation marks are used deliberately for impact, though these are possibly overused at times.

Spelling of some ambitious and unfamiliar words is accurate, e.g., 'academic', 'extra-curriculars', 'opportunities' and 'ensembles'. There are, however, also spelling errors, some of which may be typing slips, e.g., 'firends', 'sprotts', 'independant', 'hestitate' and 'heven't', and 'affect' is used instead of 'effect'.

This response fulfils most of the criteria in Band 6, but the occasional weaknesses mean it gains 9 rather than 10 marks.

Sentences, spelling and punctuation: 9

Total mark: 23

Sample 6

Hello new students! Welcome to our school! I know it may be daunting, moving to a new area, but don't worry- you'll settle in. It is just like slipping into a cold pool on a summer's day; eventually you get your sea legs. Just remember we were all new here once and you are not alone. I here to help you along the way, so feel free to ask me any concerns and queries you may have.

Here are a few tips I have collected over my time here that will help make your transition as smooth as possible.

Remember to venture outside your comfort zone. This way you'll meet so many wonderful, likeminded people and make the most of your time here. We can't just live life in a cage of worry and anxiety, sometimes we just have to put ourselves out there despite possibly feeling uncomfortable.

Secondly, get familiar with your new routine. This will help you adjust to our school and manage your workload. Also, remember to keep a track of all the homework you recieve and plan out when you will get time for it in your week. You can always ask teachers for help when you need it; I promise they don't bite! They are all happy to help and assist you when needed.

However, it is crucial to balance your academic life with your hobbies and interests. Make time for them. It will help you relax, and help ease the stress of the day. Joining cocurriculars is a great way of doing this- we have an amazing diversity of clubs and sports you can join. The more the better!

I am so glad you have decided to come here! There so many oppurtunities and places to explore and people to meet. I'm sure you'll love it here.

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 6

This is a confident response which immediately shows empathy to the prospective students and adopts a positive tone which is maintained throughout. The main emphasis is reassurance, telling the new students that they are not alone. Perhaps this is to the detriment of the sharing of practical information, as ideas are not fully developed; there is little detail and everything is rather general.

The material is presented in an appropriate form with an open and friendly greeting, and the sentiment is repeated with a supportive final paragraph. The content has been logically structured into clear paragraphs, which flow easily from one to the other, and ideas have been capably linked with appropriate cohesive devices.

A friendly, informal style, suitable for the audience and purpose, is maintained throughout. Stylistic features such as 'slipping into a cold pool on a summer's day', 'venture outside your comfort zone' and 'I promise they don't bite!' have been deliberately included for the purpose of encouragement. Vocabulary is well chosen, on the whole, though there are a few clumsy expressions that are not so successful, e.g., 'feel free to ask me any concerns' and 'a cage of worry'.

Overall, this response fulfils all of the criteria in Band 5 and so gains 12 marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 12

Some variety of sentences has been deployed, mostly well controlled. They vary in length and some are constructed to create a deliberate effect, e.g., 'You can always ask teachers for help when you need it; I promise they don't bite!'

A range of punctuation is used mostly securely and occasionally for effect, as the above quotation illustrates.

Spelling of most words is accurate, including less common words, such as 'anxiety', 'academic' and 'diversity'. There are errors, for example, in 'recieve' and 'oppurtunities'.

Overall this response fulfils all of the criteria in Band 5 and so gains 8 marks.

Sentences, punctuation and spelling: 8

Total mark: 20

Sample 7

Hello! I am a student in class 7O. This sheet is a brief welcoming and list of advice/tips for your first days at this school.

Firstly, I know that making new friends at a brand new school might seem incredibly nervewracking, but keep in mind that we have all been in this position before. Whether you had some people you knew at the school to begin with, or you were alone on your first day here, everyone has friends that they spend time with in and out of school. The students at our school are friendly and open to new ideas and suggestions. We love hearing feedback and acting upon advice given to us. On your first few days at school, you might feel intimidated or nervous, but be reassured that there is no reason to feel that way, the students and staff at this school will make sure you feel comfortable in this environment and that you are happy and your wellbeing is taken care of.

Another piece of advice is knowing where you are going and knowing your classmates. The buildings here look somewhat similar, and so it is incredibly important to know where your classes are and who they are with. On your first week or two at the school, travelling with your classmates to and from classes is easiest, because it means that in case you get lost, you have people around you who can help you find your way. Even if you don't know the people with you, or are too nervous to ask where a certain room is, remember that the students are not only academically talented, but also welcoming and warm towards everyone. The main spots you should aim to remember is the office and the math classrooms, as well as the buildings near the library. These areas are where you will commonly have lessons or where you will go in your breaks. It is also vital to know at least a few of the people in your class, and to remember your teacher's names, because you will most likely see these teachers around a lot, and you will spend your entire school year with that class.

I know from experience that this might already seem like too much to handle, so lets talk a little bit about the activites you might really enjoy. There are all kinds of extracurricular activities at school, like the house games, carnivals, dance groups, musical theatre groups, bands, sports teams etc. Here we try to include activities in out curriculum which students will enjoy and will find entertaining. There are so many activities you can choose from that I'm sure you will find exciting and/or want to watch.

From memorising your classes to joining extracurricular activites, there is obviously a lot to learn in a short amount of time, but that is exactly why you're here. It is a selective school. To enter our school you would've been required to sit a test you should be familiar with - the Selective Schools Test. This test gives you the chance to be accepted into a variety of schools with only the smartest and most academically talented students. Although being accepted into the school here might be one of your most valuable and proud achievements, you should always remember that no test can define your worth. In this school, we believe in equality and accepting others. Here, you can be YOU.

Finally, I would like to say congratulations and goodluck. Congratulations for getting accepted into the school, and goodluck for the future and your time here.

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 7

This is a distinctive response which concentrates on conveying empathy, reassurance and advice for the new students during their first few days. It comprises a friendly welcome and help with getting to know classmates and the school buildings, as well as useful information about extra-curricular activities. It concludes by congratulating the students on obtaining a place at the school and emphasising that they will be valued as individuals, which is a mature concept.

This piece is skilfully organised into paragraphs, with each one having a distinct topic. The ideas within the paragraphs are clearly structured and follow a logical sequence, and they are fluently linked with a range of cohesive devices.

The friendly and enthusiastic tone is entirely appropriate for the audience and is confidently sustained throughout the whole piece. There are some balanced sentences, deliberate use of repetition, and well-chosen phrases, crafted to reassure the new students, e.g., 'From memorising your classes to joining extracurricular activities, there is obviously a lot to learn in a short amount of time, but that is exactly why you're here.'

Overall this response fulfils almost all of the criteria for Band 6. It is only the lack of reference to the local area that prevents it from achieving the highest mark; it is awarded 14 rather than 15 marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 14

There is variety in the length and structure of sentences, with assured shifts between first and second person and confident use of different verb forms, including modals; many sentences display a high level of control and sophistication.

Punctuation is secure throughout the piece and occasionally used for deliberate effect. There is a missing apostrophe in 'lets' at the start of the fourth paragraph, and the odd comma splice, e.g., 'there is no reason to feel that way, the students and staff at this school will make sure you feel comfortable...', but this is untypical.

Spelling of most words, including those that are ambitious or uncommon, is accurate, e.g., 'intimidated', 'environment' and 'academically'. There is inconsistency in the spelling of 'activities', but this is a rare error.

Overall, this response is awarded a mark of 10. The writing is well-controlled, the spelling of ambitious vocabulary is accurate, and errors are rare.

Sentences, punctuation and spelling: 10

Total mark: 24

Sample 8

Welcome to the majestic gates of our school, where you will enter a place of enjoyment, comfort and knowledge. Your nerves may be tensing up and your heart may be feeling jittery but you have nothing to worry about as this place accepts all. It doesn't matter how different you are or where you come from, everybody here is warm at heart and inviting.

Here, you will get the chance to gain and expand your knowledge along with challenging yourself to improve. There are a series of opportunities and activities you can join to enhance yourself, from a wide range of subjects such as aspects of the creative arts, academics, agriculture, social wellbeing and even sport. Everything here is exciting and helps you learn. For example, in sport there is a huge number of options you can choose from and include things like ice skating, basketball, rock climbing, badminton, soccer, dance and a whole lot more.

If you want to participate in activities more on the academical side then there are extensions for different subjects which also include ones related to art. Moreover, there are clubs run by students that may also intrigue your interest and help our community, such as social justice, sports, history, art, woodwork, technology and even one for enjoyment which include the Harry Potter club and Manga club. These are only a few to name and you don't even know what's in store for you.

We learn various subjects which are more expressive than primary schools. You will be able to conduct experiments, write creatively, learn about our past and of the earth. Along with that, you will have the ability to improve your fitness and well-being along with being able to create many things such as bags in textiles, toys in woodwork, learn to code and even give cooking a chance. The appearance of our school is also quite nice and tidy with a lot of classrooms for students to work in and spaces to spend time at lunch. Furthermore, the grounds are filled with greenery and have sufficient amount benches along with things such as table tennis areas.

Everyone here is extremely bright which will give you the chance to learn from others and improve your abilities and skills. There haven't been many issues of bullying and all students treat each other with respect and consideration. If you have a hard time then you can have a free visit to the councillor who will always be there to help.

Hope you may have been able to know our school a bit better and see how much of an amazing place it is. It embodies kindness, discipline, respect and knowledge making it one of the best places to be. We can't wait for you to join us and become a part of this community.

Examiner comments and marks for Sample 8

This is a response which demonstrates confidence in its recognition of the viewpoint of new students and its positive tone. The selection of content is designed to emphasise the range of opportunities on offer at the school, though there are perhaps too many detailed lists of subjects and activities and there is no mention of the local area.

The advice sheet is adapted in an appropriate form: it has a warm and welcoming opening and an ending that repeats the same message, effectively rounding off the piece. Paragraphs are used to organise the content, though ideas could be more logically and coherently divided between them. Sentences within sections are, however, mostly well linked.

The style combines a well-judged level of formality with appropriate elements of informality, suitable for the purpose and audience. There is some ambitious use of vocabulary, e.g., 'majestic', 'jittery' and 'embodies', though there is also some imprecision and awkwardness in the expression at times, e.g., 'enjoyment, comfort and knowledge', 'sufficient amount benches' and 'These are only a few to name and you don't even know what's in store for you.'

Overall, this response fulfils all of the criteria in Band 5 and so gains 12 marks.

Content, form, organisation and style: 12

There is some range in the structure of sentences, and most are controlled, though there are occasional lapses in the use of verb forms, e.g., 'one... which include' and 'Hope you may have been able to know...'. There could be more range in the type and length of sentences used.

Straightforward punctuation, including capital letters, commas and full stops, is mostly used accurately, though this is not completely consistent. For example, 'harry potter' is missing capital letters. There is some lack of range in the use of punctuation.

Spelling of most words is accurate, though there are errors in 'various', 'sufficient' and 'councillor' and some inaccuracies that may be typing slips, e.g., 'include', 'youy', 'you' for 'your' and 'will' for 'with'.

Overall, on a best-fit basis, this response fulfils enough of the criteria to be placed in Band 5, but the weaknesses keep it at the lower end of the band, and it is awarded 7 marks.

Sentences, punctuation and spelling: 7

Total mark: 19

Information on assessment criteria

Students' responses will be assessed using two sets of criteria, Set A and Set B (see below).

Set A criteria focus on content, form, including structure and organisation, and vocabulary and style, including level of formality; they are linked to Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 to 4. Set B focus on sentences, punctuation and spelling and are linked to AOs 5 and 6.

There are six bands for each set of criteria, 1 to 6, arranged from highest to lowest, with a set of marks for each band.

A maximum of 15 marks can be awarded for Set A criteria, three marks per band (apart from Band 1), and 10 marks for Set B criteria, two marks per band. The allocation of marks places more weight on the Set A criteria, which relate to the overall effectiveness of a response in communicating ideas.

In the Set A criteria, there is a summary descriptor (in bold) at the beginning of each band designed to help markers make an initial judgement about where to place a response on the scale. There are three bullet points in each band: the first relates to content, the second to form, structure and organisation and the third to vocabulary, stylistic features and level of formality. In the Set B criteria, the first bullet point relates to the length, type and structure of sentences, the second to the use of punctuation and the third to spelling.

Set A criteria: content, form, organisation and style

Students will be assessed on their ability to write effectively, showing awareness of purpose and audience, by:

AO1 selecting interesting content and relevant details

AO2 using an appropriate form

AO3 organising ideas coherently, using paragraphs and a range of cohesive devices

AO4 using a deliberately chosen style, range of vocabulary and level of formality

Set B criteria: sentences, punctuation and spelling

Students will be assessed on their ability to write effectively, showing awareness of purpose and audience, by:

AO5 using a range of sentence lengths, types and structures and correct punctuation

AO6 spelling correctly

Assessment criteria

Band	Set A: content, form, organisation and style	Marks
Band 6	<p>A distinctive and original response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is thoughtfully and confidently chosen, with inventive and imaginative details selected to create impact. • Material is skilfully adapted in an appropriate form, with ideas deliberately structured and developed to create a coherent whole, well-managed paragraphs or sections, and a range of cohesive devices. • Ambitious and well-chosen vocabulary and stylistic features are consciously used, with assured shifts between different levels of formality. 	13,14,15
Band 5	<p>A confident response, with flashes of creativity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is carefully chosen, with interesting details used to create particular effects. • Material is effectively adapted in an appropriate form, with ideas purposefully structured and organised to create a consistent whole, clear paragraphs or sections, and ideas linked using cohesive devices. • Precise and mostly well-selected vocabulary and stylistic features are used, with an appropriate level of formality sustained. 	10,11,12
Band 4	<p>A competent response, with elements of ambition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of content is sound and appropriate, with some relevant details chosen. • Material is securely managed, mostly in an appropriate form, with ideas clearly sequenced and organised, using paragraphs or sections, and ideas mostly linked. • Vocabulary selected includes some use of precise or interesting words and stylistic features, and an appropriate level of formality is mostly maintained. 	7,8,9
Band 3	<p>A straightforward response, with some loss of precision / control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some relevant material, with some details included, though selection not always appropriate. • Management of material, partially in an appropriate form, is inconsistent, with ideas mostly but not always grouped logically, and some use of paragraphs. • Vocabulary is mostly appropriate but is repetitive or lacks precision and ambition. There is some uncertainty in the level of formality adopted. 	4,5,6
Band 2	<p>A simple and limited response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material not always relevant, lacking in detail or with detail that is inappropriate. • Material lacks clear and consistent management in an appropriate form; there is some ordering of ideas but paragraphs are inconsistent or missing. • Vocabulary is limited in range and the level of formality is inappropriate at times. 	1,2,3
Band 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or nothing has been written and there is no rewardable material. 	0

Band	Set B: sentences, punctuation and spelling	Marks
Band 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-judged range of sentence lengths, types and structures is used with secure control to create impact. • A range of punctuation is used very securely and sometimes for deliberate effect. • Spelling of almost all words, including ambitious or unfamiliar words, is accurate. 	9,10
Band 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of sentence lengths, types and structures, mostly well controlled, is used, including some for emphasis or effect. • Punctuation is mostly secure, with occasional use of punctuation for effect. • Spelling of most words, including ambitious or less common words, is accurate. 	7,8
Band 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some range of sentence length, type and structure used mostly accurately, though there may be inaccuracies in more ambitious constructions. • Punctuation of sentences is secure, with some omitted or inaccurate use of internal punctuation. • Spelling of most commonly spelled words and irregular words is sound, but there are some mistakes in less familiar words and occasional errors in homophones. 	5,6
Band 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are limited in range, and there is a loss of control in longer or more complex constructions. • Straightforward punctuation is mostly secure, but there are inconsistencies, with some punctuation omitted or misused. • Spelling of most commonly spelled words is sound, but there are errors in irregular words and in homophones. 	3,4
Band 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are simple, repetitive or lack control. • Punctuation is variable or insecure. • Spelling has significant inaccuracies. 	1,2
Band 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or nothing has been written and there is no rewardable material. 	0

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