

# SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

## Year 9 2025 Academic Scholarship Exams – Teacher Commentary

### General Paper

#### *Section A*

Candidates provided clear responses to the text in Section A. Their responses provided insight into debates about the nature of happiness, as well as the usefulness of studies such as the World Happiness Report for individuals and governments.

For Question 1, candidates lost marks when they repeated phrasing from the article as opposed to explaining it in their own words.

For Question 2, some candidates did not read the text closely enough.

For Questions 3 and 4, candidates provided clear justifications for different responses.

For Question 5, candidates lost marks when they did not justify why their opinions were true and important.

#### *Section B*

The Section B responses were impressive this year. All candidates engaged specifically with their chosen essay question. The candidates who scored highest in this section grounded their points in a range of examples and explored alternative arguments. Candidates lost marks when their structure was unclear, and when they did not consider any counter-arguments.

### Humanities Paper

#### *Geography*

The range of marks was similar to previous years but some candidates didn't pay attention to the suggested time allocations resulting in weaker essay marks due to time restrictions. The pie chart infographics in Question 1 were well understood with largely good descriptions of the energy mix. Stronger candidates supported their descriptions with statistics. Some candidates failed to provide explanations for their comments resulting in only half marks. Candidates found Question 2 the harder question and several misunderstood the question's direction. Descriptions were often detailed but weaker candidates' answers lacked any explanation.

The essay question on the Global Climate Crisis was much more popular than the one on earthquakes. The candidates gaining higher grades gave a range of thoughtful, well-argued observations, several supported by excellent examples and also engaged well with the command phrase 'to what extent'. Weaker candidates failed to provide a clear structure to their essays and failed to understand the main direction of the essay. There was a wide range of understanding, and therefore usage, of correct Geographical vocabulary such as using the term 'poor countries' rather than a more sophisticated term such as 'LIC' or 'ELDC'.

### *History*

Students gave insightful responses to the source given. However, many needed to explain and support their inference with a direct reference to the source content. The responses to the essays displayed a clear understanding of historical periods, people and places from social, political, military and economic perspectives. In the best essays students used examples from their lessons which showed historical understanding rather than a diverse range of examples from general historical knowledge, which led to listing and limited analysis. Nevertheless, most candidates were able to effectively deploy their knowledge to argue to a reasoned conclusion although a formal style with clear punctuation aided the construction of a coherent argument. There were a few cases of planning which was impressive but careful planning by all candidates would have helped ensure consistently sophisticated analysis throughout the essay.

As always it was a pleasure to see student enthusiasm for the subject and the diverse range of topics students had been taught.

### **Science Paper**

#### *Biology:*

Most candidates answered the questions very well. Many successfully linked the changes in Mangrove distribution to global warming and were able to describe the adaptations of the manatee. A few did not make the connection between the manatee being a marine mammal and the fact that this means it is nourished via the placenta and umbilical cord before birth, and via the mother's milk afterwards. Most students were able to identify the trophic levels in the food web, and the majority made a reasonably good attempt at the experimental design questions. However, a few students misinterpreted the food web, which meant they were unable to correctly identify the food sources in the experimental design questions. The dichotomous key question was fairly challenging, and although there were a couple of errors, most students correctly identified the fish.

#### *Physics:*

Students had a good understanding of motion and forces and generally interpreted the graph correctly. There were some errors in the later calculations but only minor mistakes. Very few students identified that the cyclist's mass would impact their acceleration, rather than any other quantity. In the final parts of the paper, it was clear that electricity was a weaker topic overall than forces, with students managing the numerical questions and struggling more with the explanations.

#### *Chemistry:*

Students' graph drawing was very good, with the majority able to plot points accurately and draw a curved line of best fit. However, many students were confused by the request to draw and calculate the gradient of a tangent. Students were able to perform calculations accurately given a formula. Generally, students knew how to ensure the reliable data could be collected from an experiment but found it difficult trying to explain an observed trend in a set of rate of reaction data.

## **Languages Paper**

### *Section A: Linguistics*

Students performed well in this section of the paper and were able to spot language patterns successfully. The best responses paid attention to not only word endings but also word order, as illustrated in the examples given.

### *Section B: Writing in a language that you have been studying/learning at school*

The instructions for this task were written in English and asking to write a text including/developing 5 points. French (15) and Spanish (4) were the languages of choice and reflect that French is still more widely taught in prep schools.

The Section B responses were very good overall. All the candidates made a conscious effort to include the different parts of the task.

The candidates who scored highest in this section were able to show a solid score in both quality of language including the use of different tenses, a varied vocabulary and opinions justified as well as content coverage.

The candidates lost marks when they only used one tense (i.e. present tense) and were not able to cover all the content accordingly.

### *Section C: Latin*

The students who opted for the Latin translation performed very well with the storyline. Students gained highest marks when they made sure not to leave out any words and made sensible guesses with any unknown vocabulary. The best translations were wonderfully accurate over grammatical items such as the present participle and pluperfect subjunctive. It was pleasing to see the future participle dealt with very well by several students.