Cambridge Proficiency Writing Part One on science speaking
Student A
Work in pairs. Each person should read a different one of the two texts below, underlining key words as you do so. Summarise the text for your partner (using your own words as much as possible) and listen to their summary of the other text. Try to find similarities and differences between the texts, then discuss your opinions of what they say.

Read the two texts below.

Write an essay summarising and evaluating the key points from both texts. Use your own words throughout as far as possible, and include your own ideas in your answer.

Write your answer in **240-280** words.
Student A

Suspicions about science

It doesn't take much to come across stories of scientists, evil or otherwise, who cause more harm than good. From the development of weapons to human cloning, there is plenty of support for the opinion that we should be suspicious of what people in white coats are getting up to behind closed doors. After all, they are humans like us with the same weaknesses and biases. A clear example comes from economics, where experts rarely reach conclusions that clash with their own preconceived political positions. Although all these caveats about scientists are clearly true, we shouldn't take that to mean that we should feel the same way about science. The systems and safeguards of scientific institutions such as academic journals mean that we can certainly have more confidence in the scientific consensus than we can in the conclusions of any other group of people.

----------*fold, cover or cut*----------

Student B

Has science really made things better?

We are now in the Anthropocene era where most things that affect our lives are produced by fellow humans, and the same is true of most of our problems. Specifically, the majority of things that cause suffering nowadays, from pesticides and global warming to allergies, lifestyle diseases and addictions, can be traced back to scientific developments. Living in a typical ugly, dirty town, it's hard not to look back with longing at a time when the world was green and clean and we could at least be confident that our health problems were not self-imposed. Having said all that, nobody wants to be shivering in a cave hiding from sabretooth tigers, and it's impossible to find any particular point in time after that when we can clearly say that progress should have stopped. There is therefore little point in harking back to an age of innocence, and we no choice but to put ourselves in the hands of the scientists again as the only ones capable of clearing up the mess that they have made.

Read through the other text and underline important words, then compare what you have underlined in both texts with your partner.

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Student B

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Rephrasing
Try to think of as many other ways you can of rephrasing what the texts say, concentrating especially on the parts that you underlined. Then choose each time which language is most likely to impress the examiner (while still keeping close enough to the original meaning).

Planning
Plan an essay summarising and commenting on the two texts.

Decide which of the plans below is probably best for this essay, then compare them to what you discussed. The numbers refer to body paragraphs (as you don't really need to plan the introduction and final paragraph). Then discuss what you would put in the introduction to your preferred plan.

----------fold, cover or cut----------

Plan 1
Intro
1. Similarities between the texts
2. Differences between the texts
3. Your comments on the texts

(Brief summary)

Plan 2
Intro
1. Similarities between the texts with comments
2. Differences with the texts with comments

Summary

Plan 3
Intro
1. Description and comments on text 1
2. Description and comments on text 2 (mentioning any connections to text 1)

Summary

Plan 4
Intro
1. (Describing and commenting on) things you agree with in both texts
2. Things you disagree with in both texts

Conclusion with how much you agree or disagree with the texts in general

Plan 5
Intro
1. Positive views of science in both texts with comments
2. Negative views of science in both texts with comments

Conclusion

Homework
For homework, write an exam question with two similar texts on the topic of ecology. Note that the texts above are a bit longer than the real ones, so try to make shorter ones (about 100 words per text) if you can. You can also write an answer to the question above if you like, but the main homework is to create a similar exam task.

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